



Old Testament
Prophecy & Restoration

Course 1
Minor Prophets, part 1

Leader's Guide

Lesson 1: Intro to the Prophets

Lesson 2: Prophets & Prophecy

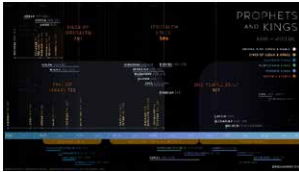
Lesson 3: Amos

Lesson 4: Hosea

Lesson 5: Jonah

Resource Pack: Graphics/Images

Prophets & Kings



Assyrian incursions



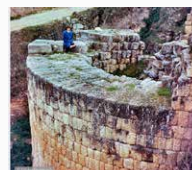
Samaria hills



Samaria acropolis



Samaria tower



Samaria ivories



Samaria ostraca



Lachish aerial



LMLK handles



Lachish siege ramp



Slingers relief



Sling stones



Siege panel



Jerusalem aerial



Hezekiah's tunnel



Model of Hezekiah's wall



Remains of Hezekiah's Wall



Isaiah 20–27; Ezekiel 33–37; Zechariah 12–14

 **In the Text**

Q. What is the primary lens the prophets use to view the behavior of Israel?

A. Judgment understood legally (some use a court-room scene) and covenantally

(even the pagan nations). God has an ownership claim on everyone and on Israel in a particular way. Judgment will climax in a final “Day of the Lord” for everyone, *especially* God’s people, for their idolatry, immorality, injustice and what we’ll call “insurance” (trusting other nations rather than YHWH.) Judgment clears God’s name; he would otherwise be viewed as lenient or even powerless in the face of rebellion. ([□□ Introduction to the Prophets](#), [□□ God’s First Covenant Is Not with Israel](#), [□□ Judgment & the Day of the LORD](#), [□□ Judgment Is Meant to be Taken Literally \[Bonus\]](#))

Q. What balances the strong and dark language of judgment in the prophets?

A. The prophets have beautiful language of hope throughout. Prophets are visionary “seers” who can see this “good news” reality on the horizon, after the “bad news” of destruction and exile they predict. The “re” word that relates to hope is restoration for a purified remnant. They will return to the Land in the context of a new covenant, a new Davidic king and a new temple in Zion.

This is all controlled by a God who is sovereign over nature, nations, history and the gods.

([☞ "Seeing"](#), [□□ Hope \[Bonus\]](#), [□□ Restoration in Zion \[Bonus\]](#), [□□ The Remnant \[Bonus\]](#), [□□ The Sovereignty of God](#))

Behind the Text

Q. What is the significant historical background to the prophets? (This explains how we organize Bible Journey.)

A. The international crises: Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian (through Exile), Persian (through Restoration). The local geo-politics for the first of these is shown in our iMap. This shows the fall of Samaria and Lachish and the near-destruction of Jerusalem. ([□□ Our Approach to the Prophets](#), [□□ The Historical Context of the Prophets](#), [☞ iMap: Assyrian Invasion Map](#))

In Front of the Text

Q. How was the promise of a restoration in Amos relevant to the Early Church in Acts?

A. The first church council in Acts 15 disagreed about the place of Gentiles in the Church. James points to Amos 9 to explain how God had already predicted the involvement of a “remnant” from all the nations. ([□□ The Remnant & the Gentiles](#))

Q. What roles in the early Church continued the work of prophets?

A. Evangelists and prophets. We noted that a lot of prophetic activity (including miracles) were clustered at critical moments in redemptive history. Signs and predictions come at these moments especially, although there is evidence of them at other times as well. (☐ [Prophets After the Old Testament \[Bonus\]](#))

Challenge Questions

- It's common today to refer to people in popular culture as "prophets." People like Bob Dylan, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates have been heralded as prophets in the media. Think of someone you might use this term for in a way that's consistent with the biblical, rather than a secular, concept of a prophet. What about a person makes "prophet" an appropriate description of who that person is in the present day?

A. ☒ [Who is Someone You Think of as a Modern-Day Prophet?](#)



Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1, 22, 36; Ezekiel 1–5; Hosea 1–3; Amos 1–3

In the Text

Q. Name some of the roles and terms of prophets and how they're categorized. Then mention what genres will be included in the writing prophets.

A. Messenger, sentry, intercessor, legal functionary, singer and mason. They were called seers and speakers who were often given advance warning of what God would do and commanded to communicate this to God's people. They were rooted to God's Word (both Torah and the particular words God spoke to them) and often had to experience their message personally as "living parables."

Some were "professional" while others were unofficial or "charismatic." Some were "pre-classical" (prior to this period) while others are "classical" or writing prophets we'll be studying during this period. Some are "true" (faithful to YHWH and 100% correct in predictions) and others "false." "Major" prophets are the longer books; "minor" prophets are the shorter ones.

Genres: Announce salvation, announce judgment, prayers, Wisdom sayings, trial speeches, and hymns.

([📖 The Varied Roles of a Prophet](#), [📖 Introduction to the Prophets](#), [📖 Prophetic Genres \[Bonus\]](#), [📖 True & False Prophets](#), [📖 Professional Prophets \[Bonus\]](#), [📖 Terms for the Prophets \[Bonus\]](#), [📖 People of the Book \[Bonus\]](#), [📖 Living Parables](#))

Q. What was involved in God's calling of a prophet?

A. They varied. Some were dramatic and others weren't. We should not turn a particular call story into a paradigm for all of them (or us). One thing was common to all: they were called to speak God's Word even when the response was guaranteed to be resistance. ([📖 God's Word & the Prophetic "Call" to Ministry \[Bonus\]](#), [📖 "YHWH Saying" pt 3](#))

Behind the Text

Q. Were there similar prophets in other ancient cultures? Explain.

A. They did have professional prophets who might use trances, music, drugs and animal entrail examination to discern the will of the gods. Prophets in Israel were part of a "checks and balances" structure with kings and priests. They could speak directly to the king or priests with God's Word. They had unique authority. Remember that magic was a common feature of ancient societies that God had condemned. Rather, Israel was meant to hear his words directly—words that were authenticated by miraculous signs. ([📖 Prophets & Prophecy in the Ancient Near East](#))



In Front of the Text

Q. How does the prophetic “calling” provide some insight into our own calling?

A. All of us are given God’s Spirit and called into ministry. Those who have a call to vocational ministry typically experience both confirmation and chaos and opposition. Calling is serious! (□◁ [Being Called by God](#))

Challenge Questions

Workbook Question following Michael Card’s Song:

- Reflect on the hardships of a prophet. Consider those in today’s world who are called by God to proclaim a message that might not be easy for their audience to hear—Christian authors, pastors, preachers, etc. Record any other ideas about why obstacles and difficulties accompany those responding to God’s call to share his Word?
- A.** (☒ [Michael Card’s “The Prophet”](#))
- How can we discern the truth among the many voices we hear today?
- A.** It wasn’t clear back then and it’s not clear now. As humans we are limited and easily persuaded. If we are careful and grounded in God’s Word, we won’t be as likely to fail. (□◁ [Discernment Among Many Voices \[Bonus\]](#))

Resource Pack: Graphics/Images

Symbol for Amos



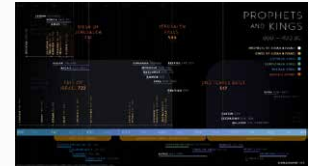
Four "I" words



Map with Tekoa



Prophets & Kings



Amos

 **In the Text**

Q. Explain “hollow ritual.”

A. The classism and exploitation of the poor by wealthy Israelites made their religious activity a sham in God’s eyes. (This is illustrated in the graphic of the feasters with the suffering poor outside.) God’s rejection of their rituals is not because he has given up on the very system he created. Rather, he will not be insulted by those who patronize him with a façade of ritual that covers their hypocrisy. The covenant can’t stay in place with flagrant expressions of disregard for the terms God laid out—including treating other community members as God’s image-bearers. ([📖 A Symbol for Amos](#), [📖 Classism in Amos](#), [📖 Hollow Ritual](#), [📖 Amos & the Pentateuch](#), [📖 Faithfulness to God & Neighbor \[Bonus\]](#))

Q. Explain “insurance.” What do all four “I” words have in common?

A. Alliances with other nations is a direct affront to the sovereignty of YHWH. Israel will go into exile to prove that their faith in these relationships was fruitless. Another word for “alliance” is “insurance.” All the “I” words (idolatry, immorality, injustice and insurance) are basically trading YHWH for some other source of security or success. They fail to “keep faith” with their covenant partner. They lack fidelity and loyalty. ([📖 Alliances as “Insurance”](#), [📖 The 4 I’s](#), [📖 Keeping Faith, Covenant Loyalty](#), [📖 Amos & the Pentateuch](#))

 **Behind the Text**

Q. How might Amos’ profession have given him access to information about life in the North?

A. He was a shepherd and fig-pricker. Farmers welcomed shepherds into their orchards to help ripen the figs. In the process, many would have shared news. ([📖 Onsite: Amos, Shepherd & Fig-Pricker—Ronit Maoz](#), [📖 iMap: Places in Amos](#))



In Front of the Text

Q. What evidence is there for each of the four “I” words in our world today?

A. Discuss each: Idolatry (money, fame, job, anything or anyone we can't live without); Immorality (deviance from God's sexual norms); Injustice (obvious forms like sex trafficking and subtle forms like racism that we participate in and contribute to by doing nothing); Insurance/Alliances (any insurance that we trust more than God: health, life, auto, home, etc; also anything that we trust rather than God). ([☐ Idolatry Today](#), [☐ Immorality Today](#), [☐ Injustice Today](#), [☐ Alliances Today \[Bonus\]](#))

Challenge Questions

Workbook Question on the “I” words (revised):

- We've discussed how the 4 I's—idolatry, immorality, injustice—show up in contemporary society. Reflect on your own life and record observations of how you deal with dynamics of the 4 I's.
- What steps do you want to take to address one or more of these specific issues?

A. ([☒ Reflecting on the 3 I's](#))

Guiding Questions

([☒ Guiding Questions](#))

Q1. What has this book revealed about God? Include metaphors, characteristics and the mission of God as it unfolds.

Q2. What has this book revealed about God's people, their relationship with God and each other and their role and mission in the world? Include metaphors, mission, ethics, worship, “living by faith,” etc.

Q3. How does this Old Testament book anticipate the New Testament? Include typology, promises, predictions and the overall history of redemption.

Q4. How would you describe the uniqueness of this book in its ancient Near Eastern literary and cultural context? Take into account the genres of Scripture and comparisons with extra-biblical parallels. Consider the divine and human dimensions of God's Word. (This essay will take some time over the three Old Testament courses to fully understand.)

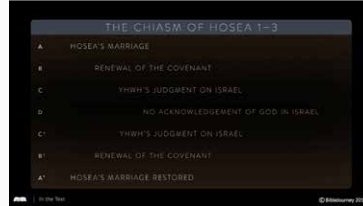
Q5. In what ways has God spoken to you in your journey through this book?

Resource Pack: Graphics/Images

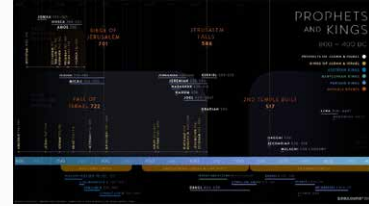
Whirlwind



Chiasm



Prophets & Kings



Ivory



Asherah



Hosea

 **In the Text**

Q. Describe the graphic of the whirlwind with wilting and flourishing flowers. How does this map Israel's journey into judgment and restoration?

A. Although Israel appears to be flourishing, they are spiritually wilting. God will destroy them with a whirlwind but then graciously make them fruitful again. ([📖 A Symbol for Hosea](#), [📖 Consequences of Wandering from God & His Law pt 2](#), [📖 Swallowed by the Nations](#), [📖 Mercy & Restoration](#))

Q. What is Israel guilty of and how does Hosea address it by his behavior and the names of his children and God's people?

A. They have been unfaithful to the covenant through their idolatry, described as spiritual adultery. To illustrate this, Hosea is called to marry and remarry a prostitute; God's love for Israel involves re-marrying her after divorcing her. This graphic reenactment reinforces the biblical idea of retribution and reckoning, giving people "what they want" (what their behavior says they want). They will reap what they have sown. BUT THEN God will do the unthinkable by loving them again.

Hosea's children are Jezreel (God scatters), Lo-Ruhamah (not love) and Lo-Ammi (not my people). But God's people will eventually be called "Sons of the Living God," "My people," and "My loved one."

([□◀ Idolatry & Marital Infidelity](#), [□◀ Judgment](#), [📖 "Not Loved" Becomes "Loved"](#), [□◀ JThe Chiasm in Hosea](#))

Q. How do the similes of Hosea reinforce its message? (See the Workbook questions.)

A. God is like a husband, father, physician, fowler, lion, leopard, she-bear, dew, rain, cypress, moth, and dry rot. Israel is like a wife, sick person, silly dove, trained heifer, luxuriant grapevine, grapes, early fig, lily, olive tree, woman in labor, unborn son, oven, cake of bread, bow, morning mist, early dew that disappears, chaff from the threshing floor and smoke through a window.

In these, God is powerful and pro-active, a force that can nurture or destroy. Israel is dependent and fragile, not faithful in a covenant. ([📖 Simile in Hosea pt 1](#), [📖 Simile in Hosea pt 2](#))



Behind the Text

Q. Describe the historical and religious background for Hosea.

A. Hosea, like Amos, is a Southern prophet preaching in the North while the Assyrians are on the rise. The affluence blinds people to the emerging threat. The prophet says the threat is really coming because of religious infidelity. There was both literal prostitution in their worship and metaphorical prostitution in their worship of pagan deities. ([□◀ The Northern Kingdom](#))



In Front of the Text

Q. Bonus: How are phrases from Hosea used in the New Testament?

A. Jesus echoes OT prophecy by saying God doesn't want sacrifices but rather mercy. The Gentiles are those who were "not my people" but now called "my people" (Rom 9:25-26). Phrases about death and resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 are from Hosea. These are various forms of "fulfillment." ([□◀ Prediction & Fulfillment \[Bonus\]](#), [□◀ Hosea & Romans 9 \[Bonus\]](#), [□◀ Death & the Afterlife \[Bonus\]](#))

Q. How do we often rationalize behavior by saying God's love wants us to be happy and satisfied? Comment also on how urges and feelings lead us to think this way.

A. ([God's Love & Rationalization \[Bonus\]](#), [Religious Infidelity \[Bonus\]](#))

Challenge Questions

- What are some ways you can regulate your thought life to watch out for desires and thoughts that might lead you to disobey God and his will for your life?

A. ([Remaining Faithful](#))

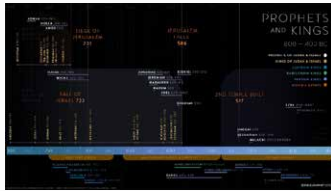
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Resource Pack: Graphics/Images

Prophets and Kings



Symbol for Jonah



Jonah's travels



Nineveh



Jonah relief: cast into the sea



Jonah relief: in the sea



Jonah relief: sea monster



Jonah relief: sea monster



Jonah relief: under the vine



Jonah

 In the Text

- Q.** Jonah had “patriotic” and religious reasons not to like the Assyrians. What does God reveal to Jonah about this pagan enemy? How is this related to the “point” of the story?
- A.** He loves them too. The God of salvation is for all people. Jonah turns out to be as rebellious as the Assyrians; they both need God’s mercy and loving-kindness. Israel learned at Mt Sinai and confessed in their liturgy that this was essential to his character. In the end, Jonah’s heart is in question: will he release his anger and ethno-centrism to accept God’s global mercy. ([📖 Steadfast Love of YHWH](#), [📖 What’s the Point of Jonah?](#), [📖 Jonah & Exodus](#))

 Behind the Text

Q. What was the significance of offering repentance to Nineveh and of running away to Tarshish?

A. Nineveh was the capital of the most oppressive empire the world had seen. Tarshish was the farthest city to the West, the opposite direction of Nineveh.

During the reign of Jeroboam 2, Jonah had prophesied prosperity in spite of the apostasy of the North. Their syncretism mixed patriotism and religion and enjoyed affluence. It was hard to think that YHWH would want to help their enemies even though they were corrupt themselves.

([□◀ Living in the Shadow of a Superpower](#), [□◀ Tarshish & Nineveh](#), [□◀ Jonah & Jeroboam II \[Bonus\]](#))

 In Front of the Text

Q. Bonus: How does Jonah anticipate Jesus?

A. The three days and nights Jonah spent in the boat prefigure the days Jesus was in the grave. ([☑ Jonah & Jesus \[Bonus\]](#))

Q. How can Jonah's 4th chapter help us understand what happens to us when we are following God's calling?

A. God wants to do something *in* us when he is doing something through us. He wants us to experience the message he asks us to bear, to feel the passion that moves his heart. We start ministry thinking about the need we are called to meet, but over time we realize that God wants to reshape our hearts in the process. Service is a venue for sanctification. ([□◀ The Message of Jonah's Fourth Chapter \[Bonus\]](#), [□◀ God's Mission to Missionaries \[Bonus\]](#))

Challenge Questions

- Can you identify any people or individuals that, if you're really honest with yourself, you think should be beyond God's mercy? (It could be individuals close to you or a group or class of people.)
- Why do you think you have that desire for them not to receive God's mercy?

A. ([☑ People Who Should Be Beyond God's Mercy](#))

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( [Guiding Questions](#))

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