



Discussion Guide

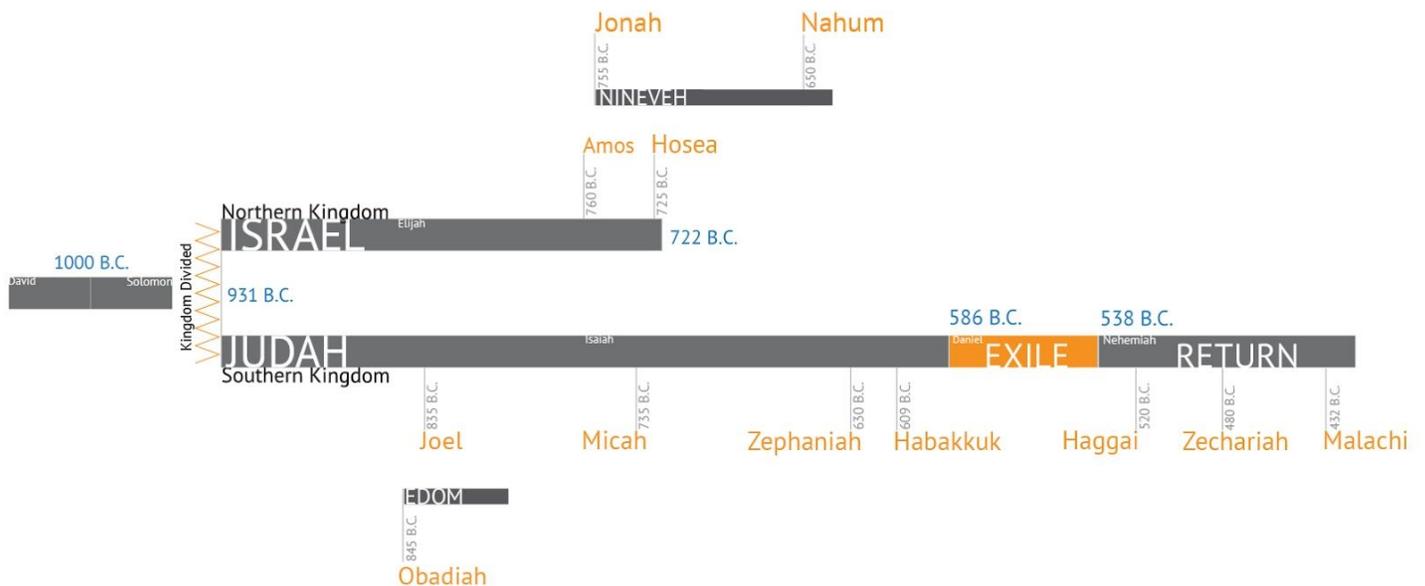


THE WELL
KINGSBURG

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Timeline (approximate dates)



Week 1 - The Minor Prophets

Series Introduction

The best way to benefit from this series will be to **engage the text**.

Read the book and the associated questions each week prior to our Sunday Worship Service. Then reread the book during the week following the Worship Service and answer the following questions either on your own, with your family, or in your life group.

- Have you ever tried reading some of the Minor Prophets? Which are you most familiar with? Which are you least familiar with?
- What do you think prevents people from reading through the more obscure portions of the Old Testament?
- Why is it important to view the prophets not only as fortune tellers, but primarily as truth tellers?
- Why do you think Christians often prioritize reading the New Testament over reading and studying the Old Testament?
- What can we learn about God from the Old Testament and his interactions with Israel and the other nations?
- What do you hope to learn about God in the coming weeks as we study the minor prophets?
- What do you hope to learn about yourself in the coming weeks as we study the minor prophets?

Week 2 - Jonah

God's Patient Endurance

- Jonah has a really bad attitude. What are the things he has a bad attitude about? What was bad about his attitudes?
- Many of us say we want to hear from God, but what if what we hear from God isn't what we want to hear? How did Jonah respond when he heard from God but didn't like the message? What have you heard from God (through his Word or in prayer) that has been difficult for you to hear and accept?
- Jonah seems to have forgotten what it was like to be lost and without hope. What can help us to remember what our lives were like or would be like apart from God's work in our lives?
- God never deserted Jonah even in his rebellion. What evidence have you seen of God's care in your life?
- Jonah 3:10 says that God "repented" or "relented." How does this fit in with God's sovereignty?
- Is there anyone toward whom you have a bad attitude like Jonah did? How does it affect you to think of God possibly using you for good in that person's life?
- What do we learn about God from the fact that he is willing to offer forgiveness to even the worst of people when they repent? What does this teach us about ourselves and our standing before God?

Week 3 - Amos

God's Heart for Justice

- What is your typical response when you hear people talking about the injustices in society today?
- What might have been the expected response from the six Gentile nations to whom Amos spoke? How do you think the people of Israel may have responded to Amos' messages to the Gentile nations?
- Why was Judah to be judged? How was their judgement different from those of the Gentile nations?
- What were Israel's three flagrant sins? Do you see any of these in today's culture? In today's church?
- What temptations to injustice, idolatry or immorality do you face in your life?
- Why did God call a prophet at this time? Why did he call Amos?
- Why is helping the poor and vulnerable an essential way of expressing our commitment to the Lord? How can you and your church show more care for widows, orphans, the poor and strangers?
- In what ways are you addicted to affluence? What influences are feeding this addiction? What can you do about it?

Week 4 - Joel

God's Unfailing Plan

- What are the three important events that for Joel were all “the day of the Lord?”
- Who are the people today most likely to accept someone issuing an urgent warning of impending calamity? Who are the most reluctant to believe? Which are you?
- What natural calamities or troubles have reminded you of your total dependence on God?
- How does knowing the character of God (Joel 2:13) affect your repentance (see also 1 John 1:9)?
- It seems that the New Testament apostles believed the end was very near in their lifetime. Were they wrong about their urgency? What is a proper attitude about the “when” of the end?
- How might theology about the end times differ for people living in areas which have for many years been places of violence, terror and unrest?
- Joel begins with tragedy but closes with triumph. How does this help you when you think of the things that are to come?

Week 5 - Hosea

God's Relentless Pursuit

- From what you know about the prophets, does being a prophet seem like a glamorous job to you? Explain.
- What might Hosea have been thinking or feeling through it all? What about Gomer?
- God disciplines us “so that we may share His holiness” (Hebrews 12:10). What were some aspects of God’s discipline in Hosea’s time? How does he discipline a contemporary believer in our country today?
- Why might the refusal to give thanks be one of the first steps to rebellion? How does this compare with forgetting to give thanks?
- If Hosea and Gomer were your neighbors, what advice would you give Hosea? How does “tough love” fit into the message of the book of Hosea? What is the real point of the marriage of Hosea and Gomer?
- How had the people of Israel failed to fulfill their promises to God?
- What was the result of Israel’s rejection of God’s covenant?
- What are some experiences you have had in your walk with the Lord where you wanted to be rescued from suffering but not necessarily cleansed from your sin?
- Hosea mentions an increase in lawsuits. Why would lawsuits be a sign of sin?
- God wanted to gather his people to himself, but they maintained their distance. Why are we often not willing to be drawn close to the Lord?
- Why are words so important in genuine repentance (14:2)? Why are words alone not enough? What else is important and why?

Week 6 - Micah

God's Promised Deliverance

- What images come to mind when you imagine a courtroom and a criminal trial?
- If you picture the opening passage of Micah as a courtroom, how is it like and how is it different from a contemporary courtroom?
- Why is Micah so sad that he must “lament and wail?” What does this say about him?
- In what way did covetousness especially show up with the Israelites? What are the definitions of *covetousness* and *materialism*?
- What was the shallow theology the false prophets of Israel espoused at this time? Where do you see shallow theology today?
- What in your church or your own spiritual life are you concerned may be “soft religion” that pampers your pride and makes it easy to sin?
- Give a description of people who hate the evil and do the good. What are they like? What sorts of things do they do and say?
- Who are the people today whose lies have made it easy for corrupt officials to carry on their evil deeds? What, if anything, can we do about it?
- How can we balance being lovingly sensitive to people but not trying too much to please them?
- When you read the prophets rebuking those who commit or tolerate injustice, do you feel that they are talking about somebody else, or also about you? Explain.
- Why is it easy to take for granted the great things God has done on our behalf centuries ago, or even years ago?
- Micah 6:8 does not mention belief or faith as a requirement of God. How can this fit together with John 6:28-29?
- Why is the word *remember* so important in our spiritual lives?
- When the future seems hopeless, how can our trust in God be strengthened?

Week 7 - Nahum

God's Holy Anger

- Give an example of good jealousy and an example of bad jealousy.
- How do you feel when you read that God is jealous? Why?
- How can God be jealous but not envious? What is the difference?
- What are danger signs of human anger?
- How can God's anger always be right when ours is so often wrong?
- How can our anger be transformed to be more like God's? What is our part in the process?
- How do you understand God's pity and compassion alongside his jealousy, anger and wrath?
- As you observe your neighbors or relatives, would you say they deserve God's judgment? Why or why not? How does God see them?
- What are the three reasons given in Nahum 3 why Nineveh deserves to be judged?
- Warren Wiersbe has written "people become like the god that they worship (Psalm 115:8), for what we believe determines how we behave." If you look at the behavior of non-Christians around you, what would you say they worship? What about the behavior of people who attend your church? What about you?

Week 8 - Habakkuk

God's Exalted Ways

- When you look around your country today, what feelings or questions do you have?
- What problems were solved when you became a believer? What new problems have you faced since you became a believer?
- What do you usually do when you are struggling with problems? What do you think you should do?
- God gives Habakkuk a revelation instead of an explanation. What is the difference?
- What answer did Habakkuk expect to hear as he waited on the Lord (1:5-11)? When have you cried to the Lord and he answered in a way you were not expecting?
- Have you ever wondered how a good and holy God could allow something? If so, when? What were the circumstances?
- In Habakkuk 1:13, we see a timeless question. What answer would you give to someone who was wrestling with this?
- What can hold us back from proclaiming a warning to those who are ignoring God?
- What does it mean to “live by faith” (2:4)?
- Which five sins does God pronounce woe on in 2:6-20? Which of those do you see most often in the world around you?
- What is the definition of an idol? What are some examples today? What are the similarities and differences between a carved wooden idol in a temple and the idol of materialism?
- What is a current challenge in your life that requires faith?
- How does God reveal his glory today? In your own experience?
- How can we rejoice when circumstances are difficult? How can we help others who don't seem to be able to rejoice?

Week 9 - Zephaniah

God's Promise of Restoration

- Why do you think the day of the Lord isn't something most Christians sing about in church or think about very often?
- What is our responsibility toward others concerning the day of the Lord? What should we say? In what situations should we say it?
- If God were to clear out the idols in our culture today, what would they be and what might he do?
- For what specific sins does Zephaniah announce judgement? Why does God hate those sins?
- How should a godly remnant live in a world that disregards God? For instance, should they try to isolate themselves from the negative influences? What aspects of culture should they be involved in? What should they not be involved in?
- What lesson can we learn from someone who has strayed from God's will?
- What are some current examples of the results of forgiven sin?
- Why do you think the prophets always end their messages with words of hope?

Week 10 - Obadiah

God's Judgement Against Violence

- What is at the root of bitter feuds? What is so powerful that the participants don't even desire to end the feud?
- What is the worst example of a feud that you know of?
- What is the answer to a long-standing, bitter feud? How might this affect your country's foreign policy?
- What was the purpose of Obadiah's vision?
- How do you see God's sovereignty at work in the world? What can we do to cooperate with his plans?
- How should it affect our actions to know that God reigns over all of history?
- Why does God especially hate prideful arrogance in people and nations?
- For which sins was God going to judge Edom? Why is this helpful for us to reflect on?
- When has application of the Golden Rule influenced your behavior?
- What can we hope for in the future? How can we nurture this hope and keep it fresh and alive?

Week 11 - Haggai

God's Abiding Presence

- Have you ever undertaken a task with great zeal for the Lord, only later to lose that zeal and grow apathetic? If so, when?
- Which of Haggai's four admonitions to the leaders and people do you need to hear the most? Why that one?
- When, if ever, have you questioned the dependability of God's Word? How would you help someone who was struggling with this?
- What guidelines might be useful in determining whether a person is putting too much money and effort into their own dwelling and comfort?
- How does consideration of priorities fit into your budgeting decisions?
- Have you ever seen a task that needed doing and felt like saying to God, "send somebody else?" Explain.
- Why do you think God's promise of provision was so important to the Jews? In what way does this promise also comfort you?
- Why is it important to address both the material and the spiritual needs of people? How can your church or community treat both of these concerns as important?
- What is essential in order to begin, sustain and encourage the work of God?

Week 12 - Zechariah

God's Imminent Arrival

- Zechariah's mission was to call the people to repent and to assure them of God's personal concern. Why is it important that the people receive both emphases?
- Why is it important to call people to repentance?
- In what way do you think the Lord is identifying himself with the distress of His people today?
- When your circumstances look hopeless, what do you need to be reminded of?
- What can you learn from Zechariah's night visions in chapters 1-2?
- When have you seen the work of Satan, the adversary and accuser, at work in your life or the life of someone you know?
- Of what use is it to go through the fire of trials?
- How are the priest, the branch and the stone all images of the coming Messiah? How do these images of the Messiah affect you?
- What small things have you seen God use to accomplish his plans?
- How can we tell the difference between good business practices and the worldly commercialism that Zechariah's vision condemns?
- How does the word *diligently* add substance to the requirement that the people "diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Zech. 6:15)? How can you diligently obey the Lord?
- Why aren't material blessings necessarily a sign of God's favor?
- When people don't look to the Shepherd, what other sources do they look to for guidance, comfort and peace?

Week 13 - Malachi

God's Requirement of Obedience

- Are the sins of Christians worse than the sins of non-Christians? Why or why not? What does God think?
- Why should we bring God our best? How can we make sure we bring God our best?
- What are some qualities of a great servant of God (2:6-7)?
- What sins were the men committing when they divorced their Jewish wives and married pagan women?
- How can we freely express our honest feelings to God without straying into the wrong of arguing with God? (Think about Habakkuk alongside Malachi).
- How might we personally be oppressing the poor and needy through either our actions or inactions?
- How is it robbery to fail to give generously to the work of God (3:6-12)?
- What are the most important things you have learned from your studies of the prophets over these past few weeks?