God Speaks to a People at Ease

Studies in Jonah, Amos, and Hosea



Trinity Bible Church
Sunday School
Fall, 2016

God Speaks to a People at Ease

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My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Hosea 4:6

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Introduction: The Minor Prophets of Israel

It is unfortunate that any portion of God's Holy Word is called "minor," but it is a fact that the final twelve books of the Old Testament have carried this label since late in the fourth century A.D. The title was apparently invented to distinguish these books from the larger works of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, also known as the major prophets. However, the unintended result is that an impression is given that the ministry of these servants of the Lord God was of less importance than that of the major prophets. Nothing could be further from the truth, and we would have done well to adopt the organization of the Hebrew Bible which lumped all twelve of the minor prophets into one book and simply called them, "The Twelve."

Actually, any lumping of these books will be somewhat forced because they wrote in different ages, to different peoples, and with different messages. There is an organization of these books that is more logical and perhaps will aid us in getting to know them and their messages better. Three of the prophets ministered primarily to the Northern Kingdom of the divided people of God. Six ministered primarily in the Southern Kingdom, and then three ministered in the days following the return of the nation from their captivity in Babylon. The divisions are as follows:

Prophets to Israel: Jonah

Amos

Hosea

Prophets to Judah: Obadiah Nahum

Joel Zephaniah Micah Habakkuk

Prophets after the exile: Haggai

this people, the LORD of hosts sent Jonah, Amos and Hosea.

Zechariah Malachi

This fall, we will direct our attention to the messages of the three prophets to Israel. They are particularly relevant to our age because of the age to which these servants of God ministered. They all three appeared in the days of King Jeroboam II, who reigned from 793-753 B.C. It was a time of great prosperity and peace, but a time when there was no knowledge of God in the land. This was a nation at ease. They were at ease in their prosperity. They were at ease in their sin. They were at ease with the exclusion of the Lord God from national and personal life. To

(continued)

Introduction: The Minor Prophets of Israel (continued)

Jonah's ministry to the Northern Kingdom is briefly noted in 2 Kings 14:25 where we are told that he predicted the military successes of Jeroboam II. Nothing else is known of this prophet except that found in the little book which bears his name. Here we learn of his ministry to the Assyrian capital, Ninevah. That these were the enemies of Israel explains Jonah's resistance to the word of the LORD to go to them. The story tells of Jonah's ministry to Ninevah, a people also at ease, and the lessons the prophet learned.

Amos had a more typical prophetic ministry to Israel. He preached a series of sermons in which he began by announcing God's judgment upon Israel's pagan neighbors, and then upon Judah. This must have initially pleased his audience, but Amos quickly turned to Israel and preached the coming wrath of God upon the rebellious nation. Amos was given a series of visions which illustrated the urgent dilemma of this people. God had noted their sins and was soon to bring terrible judgment. He did not leave the people without hope, however, as he also spoke of a coming day when the LORD would rebuild the fallen tabernacle of David and bring His people back into the land to dwell in peace forever.

Hosea also spoke of the coming judgment of God upon the nation Israel. His ministry was quite unique because, at the outset, he was told by the LORD to do something very unusual which served to illustrate his subsequent ministry. He was to marry and bear children by a harlot. He did so, but before long, his wife returned to her harlotry. She defiled herself and violated her marriage in a most loathsome manner. Surprisingly, the LORD then instructed His prophet to take her back. He had to buy her in the market, but took her back as his wife. This was intended to illustrate the LORD's perspective of the nation Israel. They had violated their relationship with Him and had entered into an adulterous relationship with foreign gods. They were worthy of nothing but the wrath of God that was about to be poured out upon them. But the clear and powerful message of Hosea is that this just and holy God is pre-eminently a God of love. He called His wicked people to return, and graciously promised to heal their backsliding and take away their iniquity.

As already noted, these "minor" prophets bring a message of major importance to our own age of ease. We dwell in an age when people are not only at ease with the rejection of the Lord God, but actually take pleasure in iniquity and godless conduct. The prophets Jonah, Amos, and Hosea speak loudly and clearly to us in our age. We must hear their words. The God of Israel's ease is unchanging. If our generation fails to heed these prophets, we too will face the wrath of God, collectively and individually. But their message of hope is for us also. God remains a God of grace. He is still the God Who heals and the God Who restores. This major truth is badly needed in our day. Let us study these books with a real sense of expectation that God is speaking to us today through these ancient prophecies.

Schedule

September 4	Lesson 1:	Salvation is of the LORD Jonah 1-2
September 11	Lesson 2:	A Gracious and Merciful God Jonah 3-4
September 18	Lesson 3:	The LORD Roars from Zion Amos 1-2
September 25	Lesson 4:	Prepare to Meet Your God! Amos 3-4
October 2	Lesson 5:	Seek the LORD and live! Amos 5-6
October 9	Lesson 6:	The End Has Come! Amos 7-8
October 16	Lesson 7:	The LORD Will Restore His People Amos 9
October 23	Lesson 8:	Mercy is Shown Hosea 1-3
October 30	Lesson 9:	The LORD Brings a Charge Hosea 4
November 6	Lesson 10:	Let Us Return to the LORD Hosea 5:1-6:3
November 13	Lesson 11:	Faithfulness Like a Morning Cloud Hosea 6:4-7:16
November 20	Lesson 12:	Your Calf is Rejected Hosea 8
November 27	Lesson 13:	Cast Away by God Hosea 9
December 4	Lesson 14:	Eating the Fruit of Lies Hosea 10
December 11	Lesson 15:	A Beloved Child Hosea 11-12
December 18	Lesson 16:	No Savior but God Hosea 13
December 25	Lesson 17:	At Ease in the LORD Hosea 14

Scripture Memorization

Jonah 2:7-9

- 7. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.
- 8. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.
- But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving;
 I will pay that I have vowed.
 Salvation is of the LORD.

Amos 8:11-12

- 11. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:
- 12. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

Amos 9:11-12

- 11. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:
- 12. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

Scripture Memorization (continued)

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Hosea 6:1

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

Hosea 6:6

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Hosea 12:6

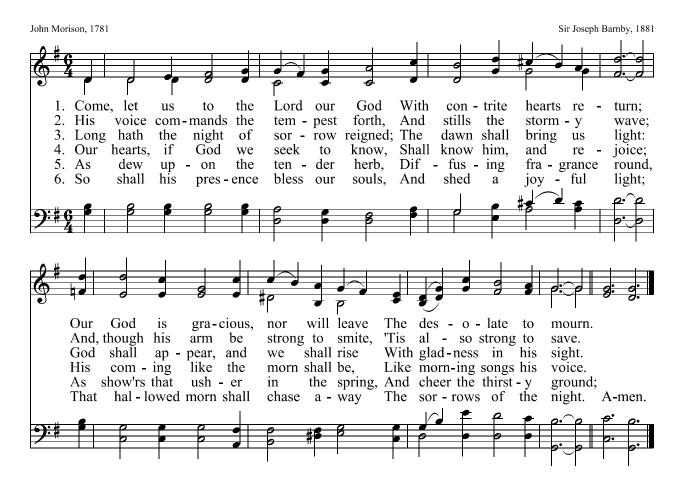
Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

Hosea 14:9

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God

O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God . . . Hosea 14:1



Lesson 1: Salvation is of the LORD Jonah 1-2

MEMORY: Jonah 2:7	Hymn:	"Come,	Let ((Is to	the	LORD	Our	God'
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SUMMARY: God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and prophesy against it. Instead, Jonah tried to flee from the presence of the LORD. He got onto a ship going the opposite direction, but the LORD sent a great storm. When the sailors discovered Jonah was running away from the LORD, they were afraid. At Jonah's insistence, they threw him overboard and the storm ceased. The LORD prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. After three days, Jonah prayed to the LORD from the belly of the fish. The LORD then caused the fish to vomit Jonah up on dry land.

1. What did the LORD tell Jonah to do, and what did Jonah do?
2. What happened on the way to Tarshish?
3. How did the sailors discover the cause of their situation?
4. How did the sailors react to what they learned?
5. What happened after the men threw Jonah into the sea?
6. What happened to Jonah?
7. What did Jonah do, and why did he do this?
8. What did Jonah learn about God?
9. What happened to Jonah?

Lesson 2: A Gracious and Merciful God Jonah 3-4

MEMORY: Jonah 2:8 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SCIMMARY: When Jonah was told to go to Nineveh the second time, he went. In response to his warning of God's judgment, all Nineveh repented, and God relented from judgment. In response to this, Jonah was angry. By a gourd, a worm, an east wind, and the sun, the LORD instructed the bitter prophet about His mercy.

1.	What did Jonah do when the LORD told him again to go to Nineveh?
2.	How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah's preaching?
3.	What did God do when he saw what the Ninevites were doing?
4.	How did Jonah respond to what the LORD did?
5.	How did Jonah explain his reaction to the LORD?
6.	What did the Lord God do for Jonah the first day he sat outside of the city?
7.	What happened to Jonah's shade the second day?
8.	Why did Jonah want to die?
9.	What did God teach Jonah about all this?

Lesson 3: The LORD Roars from Zion Amos 1-2

MEMORY: Jonah 2:9 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: Amos came from Judah to prophesy against Israel in the prosperous days of King Jeroboam II. He began by pronouncing judgment upon Israel's pagan neighbors in Damascus, the cities of Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. He then turned to address the transgressions of Judah. Finally, he pronounced judgment upon Israel itself. Despite God's marvelous goodness to them, their iniquity was great. The LORD was now wearied with them and would bring a judgment upon them from which there would be no deliverance.

1. What message did Amos bring concerning Israel's pagan neighbors?Damascus
Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon
• Tyre
• Edom
• Ammon
• Moab
2. What message did Amos have for Judah?
3. What sins of Israel did Amos mention?
4. How had God shown goodness to Israel?
5. What warning did Amos bring to Israel?

Lesson 4: Prepare to Meet Your God! Amos 3-4

MEMORY: Amos 8:11 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: It is a principle with God that He does nothing unless He first reveals it to His prophets. Therefore, Amos proclaimed a judgment upon Israel who knew not how to do right. God's wrath would be as complete as that inflicted by a lion upon a lamb. Particularly offensive to God was the fact that, in their prosperity, they had oppressed the poor and corrupted their spiritual service. Further, they had ignored God's repeated warnings to them. Now they must prepare to meet God in His wrath.

1. Why should the prophet speak, and why should he be heard?
2. What message did the LORD proclaim to Israel's neighbors?
3. How did the LORD illustrate the completeness of the coming judgment?
4. What particular things were identified for judgment?
5. Who were the cows of Bashan, and what was their sin?
6. What happened at Bethel and Gilgal?
7. What were the five ways that the LORD tried to get Israel to return to Him, but they did not?
8. What kind of a God must Israel prepare to meet?

Lesson 5: Seek the LORD and Live! Amos 5-6

MEMORY: Amos 8:12 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SCIMMARY: Although the coming judgment of Israel was certain, the LORD promised life to those who would return to Him. Those who turned from evil to do good would find that the Lord GOD of hosts is gracious. But Israel was falsely secure in her own strength and in her religious activities. However, these could not prevent the terror of the coming day of wrath. Rather, they were the reasons the Lord GOD of hosts intended to send Israel into captivity.

1. Why did Amos take up a lament against Israel?
2. What did the LORD tell Israel to do and not to do?
3. How did the LORD describe Himself to Israel?
4. What were some of the sins of Israel?
5. What did the LORD say about the Day of the LORD?
6. What did the LORD say about their religious activities?
7. How did the LORD describe those upon whom He pronounced "woe" in Amos 6?
8. What illustration did the LORD use to describe the coming judgment?
9. What judgment did the LORD say He was going to bring upon them?

Lesson 6: The End Has Come! Amos 7-8

MEMORY: Amos 9:11 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: In a series of four visions, Amos announced that the end had come upon Israel. Although the LORD relented from his early judgments with locusts and fire, the vision of the plum line taught that Israel had failed to measure up to the righteous God. The evil priest Amaziah spoke for the nation when he asked Amos to cease prophesying and leave Israel. They were like a basket of overripe fruit that was now rotting. The LORD would not relent from His judgment. The nation would fall and not rise again.

1. What did Amos see in the vision of locust swarms, and what was the result?
2. What did Amos see in the vision of the fire, and what was the result?
3. What did the LORD say about the plumb line?
4. What accusation did Amaziah make against Amos, and what did he tell Amos to do?
5. How did Amos answer Amaziah?
6. What was the meaning of the basket of summer fruit that Amos saw?
7. What sins of Israel did the prophet mention?
8. What will it be like in the day of the LORD'S judgment?
9. What did the LORD say about the famine He was going to send on the land?

Lesson 7: The LORD Will Restore His People Amos 9

MEMORY: Amos 9:12 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: In a final vision, Amos saw the LORD standing by the altar where He pronounced judgment upon Israel. There would be no escape from the LORD Who has determined harm against His people. He is determined to destroy the sinful kingdom from the earth. All the sinners of His people will surely die. But the prophecy has a surprise ending. The LORD announced His intention to restore the house of David, to bring back the captives of His people, and to plant them in the land, never to be removed again.

1. What vision of the LORD was given to Amos here?
2. What command did the LORD give?
3. How will people try to avoid the wrath of God, and what will the LORD do about it?
4. How will the LORD be looking at His people?
5. How did the LORD describe Himself here?
6. How did the LORD compare Israel with other nations?
7. What did the LORD say about this sinful kingdom?
8. What future plans does the LORD have for the house of David, the Gentiles, and Israel?
9. What will it be like in the land in the coming days?

Lesson 8: Mercy is Shown Hosea 1-3

MEMORY: Hosea 4:6 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: When Hosea began his prophetic ministry, the LORD told him to take a harlot named Gomer for his wife. He did and they had three children to whom God gave names that spoke of the coming judgment upon Israel. After this, Gomer returned to her harlotry. Later, the LORD told Hosea to take Gomer back as his wife. All this was done to illustrate the corruption of God's people Israel. God would judge them because they rejected Him and served idols. But like Hosea, God would one day be merciful and take his people back to Himself forever.

1. What did the LORD tell Hosea to do at the start of his ministry?
2. What names did Hosea give his children, and what did those names mean?
3. What message of hope did Hosea have for the children of Israel?
4. What charges were brought against the wife (Israel) in Hosea 2?
5. How had the LORD dealt with His wife (Israel) in her harlotries?
6. What did the LORD say He was going to do about the sin of His wife?
7. What message of hope did the LORD have for sinful Israel?
8. What did the LORD tell Hosea to do in Hosea 3?
9. What lesson did the LORD intend by His instruction to Hosea?

Lesson 9: The LORD Brings a Charge Hosea 4

MEMORY: Hosea 6:1 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SCIMMARY: The LORD'S assessment of Israel is brought out in the charge He brought against them. He found no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. Because they had rejected the Law of God, they had indulged in all kinds of evil. As if that were not enough, they had sought idols rather than their own Lord God. They were a stubborn and rebellious people.

1.	What charge did the LORD bring against the children of Israel?
2.	What consequence will the sin of Israel have upon the land?
3.	What consequences will come from neglect of God's Word?
4.	What were the priests like?
5.	What would happen to both the people and their priests?
6.	What happens when people indulge in harlotry and wine?
7.	How had the people "played the harlot" against their God?
8.	What are the consequences of idolatry?
9.	What message did the prophet have for Judah?

Lesson 10: Let Us Return to the LORD Hosea 5:1-6:3

MEMORY: Hosea 6:6 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: Hosea addressed his message to the priests, the people, and the king's house. God knew their rebellion and harlotry and therefore would withdraw from them. He would send affliction upon them, and Judah also would be included in this judgment. But there is hope. Hosea called upon the people to return to the LORD. When they did, God would receive them.

1.	To whom did Hosea address this message?
2.	What did Hosea say about God's knowledge and the people's knowledge?
3.	What will happen when Israel goes to seek the LORD, and why?
4.	Why did Hosea call for the blowing of the ram's horn and the trumpet?
5.	What message did Hosea have for Judah?
6.	What did Ephraim do when he saw his sickness, and with what result?
7.	What did the LORD say He would do to Ephraim, and for how long?
8.	What did the people say in their affliction?
9.	What hope did the people have?

Lesson 11: Faithfulness like a Morning Cloud Hosea 6:4-7:16

MEMORY: Hosea 12:6 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: Both Ephraim and Judah were unfaithful to the LORD. They had no knowledge of God, and therefore engaged in all manner of evil including murder, harlotry, and robbery. Their rulers actually enjoyed their wickedness. They rejected their unique relationship with the Redeemer-God and joined themselves to the pagan nations around them. They disregarded the chastening hand of the LORD. They did not return to Him, but fled from Him.

1. What had the LORD done to Ephraim and Judah, and why?
2. What evil had the LORD seen among the people of Ephraim?
3. What special word of warning was given to Judah?
4. What had the LORD discovered when He wanted to heal Israel?
5. Why did Hosea compare them to an oven?
6. What had Ephraim done instead of seeking the LORD?
7. Why did Hosea compare them to a silly dove?
8. How had they treated the LORD?
9. What judgment did Hosea warn about?

Lesson 12: Your Calf is Rejected Hosea 8

MEMORY: Hosea 14:9 and Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: A warning trumpet was sounded against Israel. They had transgressed the Covenant of God. They conducted their national and religious life according to their own desires. They made and served idols. They forgot their Maker. Therefore, the LORD would send fire and destruction on them.

1. Why was the trumpet blown?
2. How would Israel respond to the trumpet?
3. What had Israel done?
4. What did the LORD say about the calf of Samaria?
5. What would be the consequences of Israel's behavior?
6. What did the LORD say about Israel's position among the nations?
7. What did the LORD say about Ephraim's altars?
8. How had Ephraim treated the great things of God's Law?
9. What was the LORD going to do?

Lesson 13: Cast Away by God Hosea 9

MEMORY: Review	Hvmn:	"Come,	Let (Is to	the	LORD	Our	God'

SUMMARY: Israel was guilty of great iniquity and great enmity against God. They loved foreign gods and became abominable like the idols they served. Therefore, God would punish them. He would take away their fruitfulness and drive them out of the land. They would be wanderers among the nations.

1.	Why did the prophet tell Israel not to rejoice?
2.	Where would Israel dwell?
3.	What did Hosea say about the effect of their worship upon the LORD and upon themselves?
4.	What would it be like in the days of punishment?
5.	How were the prophet and spiritual man perceived and treated?
6.	How had the LORD found Israel, and how had they responded?
7.	What did the prophet say about their children?
8.	What prayer request did Hosea make for the people?
9.	What did the LORD say He would do to Ephraim because of their sin?

Lesson 14: Eating the Fruit of Lies Hosea 10

MEMORY: Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: Israel did not fear the LORD. It was a nation that was self-reliant. It was a nation that kept its prosperity for itself. It was a nation that was given over to idolatry. They would therefore now reap the fruit of this life of wickedness. God would bring a nation against Israel to cut off her king and plunder the people. They would eat the fruit of lies.

1.	What had Israel done with the fruit of the land?
2.	How will Israel react to the loss of her king?
3.	Why were the inhabitants of Samaria afraid?
4.	Why would the people call for the mountains and hills to cover them?
5.	How long had Israel sinned?
6.	What did the LORD plan to do, and when would He do it?
7.	What advice did the prophet give to the nation?
8.	Rather than take the advice of the prophet, what had the people done?
9.	What would be the consequences of their actions?

Lesson 15: A Beloved Child Hosea 11-12

MEMORY: Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SCIMMARY: The LORD reminded Israel of His loving care for them from the time He called them out of Egypt. But now Israel refused to exalt Him. Judah also had forgotten the day when he sought the favor of God with tears. Therefore, both nations would face the wrath of the Holy One, the LORD of hosts. However, because of His great love, God would not execute His fierce wrath in its fullness, but ultimately would bring His people back into their land.

1. What past experience had Israel had with the LORD?
2. What did the future hold for Israel, and why?
3. Why did the LORD resolve not to execute the fierceness of His anger?
4. What did the LORD say would happen to Israel?
5. How had Jacob found God?
6. What did God call His people to do, and how did Ephraim respond?
7. How did the LORD show His love for Ephraim?
8. What did Hosea remind them about Jacob?
9. What goodness did the LORD show Israel, and how did Ephraim respond?

Lesson 16: No Savior but God Hosea 13

MEMORY: Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: Ephraim prospered when he trembled before the LORD. But when he turned to idols, he died. As sin increased, so also did the suffering inflicted by God. Ephraim did not know that his only help could come from the Lord God. God alone can save from sin. Although Ephraim did not turn to the LORD, yet the LORD promised to ransom him from the power of death.

1. What was Ephraim's condition in Israel, and what happened?
2. How did Ephraim sin "more and more," and what would be the consequences?
3. What did the LORD tell them about Himself?
4. How would the LORD treat them, and why?
5. What did the LORD say about their king?
6. How is Ephraim like a woman in childbirth?
7. What did the LORD say He would do about the condition of Ephraim?
8. What would happen to the fruitfulness of Ephraim?
9. What was Samaria's crime, the verdict, and the penalty?

Lesson 17: At Ease in the LORD Hosea 14

MEMORY: Review Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the LORD Our God"

SUMMARY: Hosea called for Israel to return to the LORD their God They must no longer seek aid from the strength of the Assyrian or from their own strength. If they returned, they would find that the LORD is merciful. He would heal them, and they would find fruitfulness in Him.

1.	What did Hosea call upon Israel to do?
2.	What did Hosea tell them to ask the LORD to do?
3.	What did Hosea tell them to say that they would do?
4.	What did the LORD say He would do?
5.	What would be the condition of Israel after they returned to the LORD?
6.	What lesson will Ephraim learn about idols?
7.	What lessons will the wise and discerning learn?
8.	Review Questions: How does Hosea's experience with Gomer illustrate God's relationship with Israel?
9.	What would Jonah, Amos, and Hosea say to us today?

400 Silent Years 00t Malachi Restoration Returns Haggai Zechariah Ezra Nehemiah Esther History to the srae Land Babylonian **Captivity** 989 Ezekiel Daniel Captivity Driven Out 989 **Prophets** Jeremiah Nahum Zephaniah Habakkuk Kingdom) Assyrian Captivity (Surviving Southern Kingdom Israel Dwelling in the Land 722 Judah Isaiah Micah Northern Kingdom Kingdom) Jonah Amos Joshua to 2 Chronicles srae (Divided History Obadiah Joel **Old Testament History 126** Mingdom Saul David Solomon **Poetry United** 1000 Judges Moses Joshua 1200 to Canaan Bondage From Ur **Pentateuch** Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph 2000 Times srae Noah Pre-O.T. begins here Creation B'C

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