

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the 12, Session 4, Overview of the Book of the 12, Part 2

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This is Dr. Gary Yates in his lecture series on the Minor Prophets. This is lecture 4, An Overview of the Book of the 12, Part 2.

I'd like to follow up and continue our last discussion by giving us an orientation to the message of the book of the 12 as a whole and how these books are related to each other.

Again, I see it very likely that at the end of this process, after these 12 different prophets have preached in Israel, that there is an inspired editor or prophet who helps to pull these books together. It doesn't necessarily change the message of the prophets themselves, but it shows us those interrelations and interrelationships and interconnections. We were looking last time at the fact that there's basically a chronological arrangement of these books, but there's also thematic unity.

There are catchwords that often connect the individual books. There's a focus and a confession on Exodus chapter 34, verses 6 and 7, talking about both God's mercy and God's judgment. Interestingly, that sort of stops after the book of Nahum.

It may convey the idea that the people ultimately exhaust God's patience. They exhaust his compassion and he must bring judgment. Then we also saw at the end of the last lesson that the book of Hosea, as the opening book, raises an issue that I think works itself throughout this entire collection.

It's the issue of how will people respond to the word of God and how will they respond to the prophetic calls for repentance? Again, a good book and a good source if you want to reference this further, Jason LeCureux's book, *The Thematic Unity of the Book of the Twelve*. He focuses on the word *shub* and how it is highlighted in the message of the prophets. But there's this idea that the prophets are calling the people back to repent, the Assyrian crisis, the Babylonian crisis, and even in the post-exilic period.

There are only limited examples of repentance. In the opening book of the Book of the Twelve, the book of Hosea, we have calls to repent in chapter 6, chapter 12, and chapter 14. But we also have this dilemma that the prophet says there's a spirit of whoredom in the hearts of the people.

They love other things, their idols, their gods, personal indulgence, pleasure, trust in other nations, trust in their military power, whatever. And that's keeping them from fully returning to God. In a sense, they're unable to repent.

So, ultimately, how does this get resolved? Well, remember that in the prophet Jeremiah, there are constant calls to repent. Eventually, there's a closing down of that offer to repent. God says, Jeremiah, don't even waste your time praying for these people.

I'm not going to save them. I'm not going to answer your prayers. Jeremiah chapter 17, verse 1, their sin is inscribed on their heart with a diamond-pointed pen.

The heart is deceitful and wicked above all things. Who can know it? Just look at my people. Their hearts keep them from coming back to God.

What does Jeremiah say? Jeremiah says, God is going to make a new covenant with Israel. He's going to erase the sins of the past. He's going to write the law on the hearts of his people.

And so, in the place of that heart that's inscribed with sin and it's etched into their character, God is going to etch the desire to follow and obey God. And then Ezekiel, we match that. We lay it alongside Jeremiah chapter 31.

The idea is God is going to do that by pouring out a spirit. And the hope of the prophets for Israel's future is that there is going to be a pouring out of the spirit that's even greater than the things that he did for his people in the Old Testament. Hosea is going to introduce to us as well the fact that God is ultimately going to have to act.

He calls the people to repent. The prophets preach their message, but the people can't do it. So, God is ultimately going to have to be the one that heals their apostasy.

So, in Hosea chapter 14, again, this idea of shub, the need to turn around, the need to repent. If there's no repentance, judgment is going to come. That's here at the end of Hosea 14.

And not just part of his message, but really raising what we're going to be reading about in the other 11 books as well. And that passage says this: Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take your words and return to the Lord.

Say to him, take away all iniquity except what is good. We will pay with our bull, the vow of our lips. And they renounce their trust in these false gods and the other nations.

We're going to trust in God. Okay, how will they ever come to a place of repentance? Well, verse 4 gives us the answer to this. And the Lord says I will heal their apostasy.

Okay, I will heal their turning away. And so, as a result of this, then they're going to be able to shub. They're going to be able to return.

I'm going to heal their shubing in the wrong direction. And I'm going to make it possible to return in the right way. And then the Lord says, I will love them freely for my anger has turned from them.

So again, it's going to be the love of God that is ultimately going to transform the hearts of his people. They can't love him. But it's going to be the love of God that will ultimately do something in their hearts.

Again, as we're preaching the prophets, make sure as you teach them and as you preach them, don't just use these books to castigate people for their sins. Don't just use these books to condemn people for the idols that are in their hearts. Give them something in place of that.

And the thing that I think comes in place of that is the love of God, the power of God's love. God healing the apostasy of his people. That's ultimately what's going to transform them.

So, at the end of Hosea, first book in the Minor Prophets, the call to heal, the promise that God or the call to return, the promise that God is ultimately going to heal them. This is going to work its way throughout the Minor Prophets. And again, one of the commonly recurring genres in the book of the 12 is going to be the call of repentance.

And so we go to the next book, and I think it dovetails very nicely off of what we've had in the book of Hosea. And there's this call to repentance in Joel chapter 2, verses 12 to 14. Now, I'm going to read the whole text.

We've looked at it a couple of times. God says, return to me with all your heart. Don't just rend your garments.

Make this something real. Rend your heart. Turn to God because he's gracious, he's merciful, he's slow to anger, he's abounding in steadfast love, and he relents from disaster.

Okay. We don't have a specific statement that says they repented at this time. But in verse 18 of Joel chapter 2, it says this.

Then the Lord became jealous for his land, had pity on his people, and the Lord said to them, I am sending you the grain, the wine, the oil, and you will be satisfied, and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. God turns this message of judgment into a promise of salvation. What happened? I think when Joel called on the people to have a sacred assembly, get the priests together, and call the people to repent.

The people actually repented at this time. They prayed for God to deliver them. We have the answer to that prayer in verses 18 and 19.

God says in verse 20, I will remove the northerner far from you, and I will drive him into a parched and desolate land. So, I'm going to deliver you from this judgment. Why? Because they responded to God.

So, Hosea raises the issue. God is calling his people back to repentance. That carries over into the book of Joel.

At the beginning of the Minor Prophets, even though Joel himself ministers in the post-exilic period, at the end of this, this book is put at the front to say, look, God is calling his people to repentance. And when they respond, God blesses them. God says I'm going to give back to you the years that the locusts have destroyed.

And so Joel and Hosea, I think, are very fitting introductions for the Book of the Twelve in the sense they're calling the people to repent. Joel says they can't do it. God has to heal them.

But Joel, the other side of this, the positive opportunities that are there for the people to repent. The problem is throughout the rest of the Book of the Twelve, there are a number of calls to repentance, but only minor or really kind of temporary or partial acts of repentance. And I think we are also going to see in all of this a pattern where we will have repentance, and then there is relapse.

There is repentance and relapse. And I've kind of traced that through. So in Joel, we have an example of repentance.

But then you kind of forget the chronology of all of this. When we look at Amos, when we look at Micah, when we look at Zephaniah, when we look at Habakkuk and the books that are going to follow, there's a relapse. Because the northern kingdom of Israel does not listen to the preaching of Amos.

The southern kingdom does not listen to the warnings that are going to come. And so, there's a relapse. Israel relapses into their sin.

That brings the judgment. For the northern kingdom, it was the judgment of the Assyrians in 722 BC. For the southern kingdom, it was the judgment of the Babylonians in 586.

Joel, repentance, the books that follow, there's relapse. And so, we go to the book of Amos. And Amos also is going to have a number of calls to repentance.

Again, I've highlighted them in my Bible because I think they're central to the message of the Book of the Twelve. But Amos says this in Amos chapter 5, verses 4 and 5: Don't just come to your sanctuaries and offer a bunch of sacrifices, or go through a ritual or pray a prayer. Truly seek God.

Verse 6: seek the Lord and live lest he breaks out like a fire in the house of Joseph, and it devours with none to quench it. For Bethel. And so, in the prophets, when you have a call to repentance, there's a call to turn to seek God, to pursue righteousness, those kinds of things.

But then the prophet will also give us the negative consequences if they don't obey and the positive consequences if they do. And that's why Amos says, seek the Lord, or he's going to break out like a fire, verse 14, same chapter.

Seek good and not evil that you may live. Same call put in front of these people. You can choose life or death that Moses originally had put before the people of Israel.

And so that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you as you have said, hate evil and love good. Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Amos does exactly the same thing that Joel did. Perhaps, you know, there's always the possibility that maybe God will respond and show mercy. In Joel's day, that really happened.

In Amos' day, that's an opportunity that they turn away from. In chapter 5, Amos is going to say this. Take away from me the noise of your songs.

To the melody of your harps, I will not listen. I'm tired of your empty worship. I'm tired of your rituals.

I don't even like your singing. But here's why. Verse 24: let justice roll down like the waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Okay? So, there's a call to repentance. And so we ask the question, well, how did the people respond to the preaching of Amos? Did they respond like in the days of Joel?

The model is repentance, where they turn to God, and God sends a blessing in the place of judgment. The answer is they don't listen.

When Amos comes up from Judah and he preaches in the north, there's a priest that ultimately comes to Amos. In Amos chapter 7, his name is Amaziah. And here's what he says.

Amos chapter 7, verse 12. O seer, go away. Flee to the land of Judah. Go back home. We're tired of you. Eat bread there. Prophecy there. But never prophecy again at Bethel. For it is the king's sanctuary and it's a temple of the kingdom.

Alright, you're messing with our civil religion. And this priest has forgotten about the fact that the word Bethel means house of God. This is not just the king's sanctuary.

This is the house of God. But the rejection of this indicates, here's the relapse. And so, the northern kingdom is going to go into judgment.

The prophet Micah is going to come along. And Micah is going to call upon the leaders of Judah. Now, the judgment is down in the southern kingdom.

And in chapter 6, verse 8. Reminder: here's what God expects from his people. He has told you, old man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly before your God.

Fulfill those covenant responsibilities. You will be spared from the judgment. Well, again, how did they respond? Did they listen to the preaching of the prophet Micah? The answer is, at least here, no, they didn't listen.

Chapter 2, verse 6. Do not preach, they say. One should not preach of such things. Disgrace will not overtake us.

Should this be said of the house of Jacob? Has the Lord grown impatient? Are these his deeds? Micah, why are you preaching God's judgment? We're the people of God. You should not be preaching that disgrace will overtake us. Although we know from the book of Jeremiah that Hezekiah did repent because of the preaching of Micah, the judgment of Jerusalem was temporarily postponed; in the book of Micah, generally, the response that we have is that they didn't listen.

And so, there's a repentance, Joel. There's a relapse in the northern and in the southern kingdom. And then, as we kind of work our way through Habakkuk and Zephaniah and these books, listen to what the prophet Zephaniah is going to say.

Chapter 2, verse 1. Gather together, yes gather, O shameless nation, before the decree takes effect, before the day passes away like the chaff, before there comes

upon you the burning anger of the Lord before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the Lord. Okay? God's anger is about to break out against you. You have an opportunity to avoid that if you'll listen.

Verse 3. Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do His just commands. Seek righteousness and humility. Perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord.

You hear the word, perhaps. Again, same thing. Joel says, Rend your hearts, not just your garments.

Perhaps the Lord will send a judgment in the place of, or a blessing in the place of judgment. Amos, perhaps there's the possibility that if we will seek good and do what God has commanded, perhaps God will spare us from judgment. But by the time we get to Zephaniah, he says, seek righteousness and humility.

Perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Now it seems like there's not really an opportunity for the judgment to be averted. It's only those who are humble and responsive they may be hidden.

The day of anger is going to come. It's almost like they've crossed the line at this point. We're at the place where the prophet would have said to Zephaniah the same thing that God said to Jeremiah, don't pray for these people, judgment is coming.

But for those that listen, they may be protected, and they may be spared from the anger of the Lord. And so now it's only a remnant who repent. They are going to be spared from this.

And so, what we're seeing is this pattern of repentance and relapse. Joel, there's repentance, but in the pre-exilic prophets as a whole, Israel and Judah don't respond. All right.

Let me mention a second place where we have the pattern of repentance and relapse. And that ends up happening in the Book of the 12 in God's dealings with the Assyrians, with the city of Nineveh. In Jonah chapter 3, Jonah says, 40 days and Nineveh will be overturned.

In Hebrew, that's five words. Okay. So, I'm thinking he may have expanded on that message a little bit, but five words.

There is no offer of repentance. Jonah doesn't say, perhaps on the day of God's wrath, you might be spared. He doesn't even give them that opportunity.

But there was always the reality, even with absolute messages of judgment in the prophets, that if the people would respond in the right way, there was the chance that God would relent from sending the judgment. And the amazing thing is, is that here's this prophet who doesn't even want to be there, that God has to put in the belly of a fish before he'll ultimately go there. He doesn't want to be there.

He preaches a five-word message. All right, God, I did my job. I told these people that judgment was coming.

And they respond, and they repent. And the surprising element is, what if the people of God, what if the Israelites had just responded in that way? God had sent them the prophets for hundreds of years. God sent a prophet to them on a three-day journey, and they listened to a five-word message and repent.

It tells us that as a result, in Jonah chapter 3, they repented of their evil. And so, in Jonah chapter 3, verse 10, when God saw what they had done and how they turned from their evil ways, God relented from the disaster that he said he would do to them. So, they repented of their evil.

It's the Hebrew word ra'ah. They repented of that. God relented of the calamity.

It is the same Hebrew word, ra'ah. Of the disaster. And so, there's repentance.

But remember, Jonah preaches in the 8th century, and Nahum is going to come along in the 7th century. And he's going to say, you know what? These people that God had spared from judgment turn right back to their sinful ways. And Nahum says this.

Nahum says in chapter 1, verse 11, From you who has come one, talking about the Ninevites, who plotted evil against the Lord, a worthless counselor. So back in the 8th century, in the days of Jonah, they repented of their evil. Here we are in the 7th century, 150 years later, and they have returned to their evil.

Chapter 3, the last verse of the book of Nahum, says, here's the judgment that God's going to bring on Nineveh. There is no easing your hurt, and your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you.

For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil. Okay? So, the last thing that the prophet Nahum is going to say is that You are a people who do unceasing evil. So, as a result of that, God is going to bring judgment on Nineveh and the Assyrians.

There is a pattern again in the Book of the 12, of repentance and relapse. There's a living example of what we saw in Jeremiah chapter 18. If a people, if God announces

disaster, and the people take that seriously, they get right with God, and God will relent and send a blessing.

We've seen that in Joel and Jonah. But if the people do not listen to God, or if they take a promise and turn it into an excuse to behave in a way that does not please God, God can relent from sending good and bring evil. That repentance and relapse will occur in the minor prophets.

Okay? That's what these books are about. Alright, there is a third example of repentance and relapse in the Book of the 12. And this takes us into the time of the post-exilic period.

Zechariah and Haggai are going to call the people to repentance. Okay? Listen to what Zechariah says in chapter 1, verse 3. Therefore, say to them, thus declares the Lord. This is God's word.

Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you. We have our word, shub. If the people will shub toward God, then God will return to you.

There is a reciprocal relationship between this. God interacts with people. God has entered into real give-and-take relationships.

Where if they respond to God in the right way, it will ultimately cause God to respond in a certain way to them. He will turn from judgment and bring blessing. Verse 4. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, return from your evil ways and your evil deeds. We know that from looking at the other books in the Minor Prophets. But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.

Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants to prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? Look. Look at the example. And we can go back and work all the way through the Minor Prophets up until the time that we get to Zechariah.

Look at the history. In the Assyrian period, they did not fully return, and judgment came. In the Babylonian period, they did not fully repent, and judgment came.

So, look at what happened to your fathers. Then we have this statement in verse 6. So, they repented and said, As the Lord of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so he has dealt with us. Okay.

We admit it. We recognize. God has dealt with us according to our sins.

They repent at this point, and they ultimately get right with God. In the days of Haggai and Zechariah, what this repentance specifically looked like was that they committed themselves to rebuilding the temple and doing what God had commanded them. They had started that when they first came into the land.

They were prevented from doing that. Then, they lost their impetus to do that. They repented by obeying God's commands to rebuild the temple.

And so again, just like in the book of Joel, just like in the book of Jonah, with post-exilic Israel, we have an example of repentance. They did repent. But there is also an indication in the rest of the book of Zechariah that they did not fully repent in all of the ways that were necessary if they fully wanted to experience God's blessing and all of the things that God had promised for them in the restoration.

We go to chapter 3, verse 7. Thus says the Lord of hosts, If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. A word was spoken to the priest. You're going to have to return to God if you want to fully represent me.

Chapter 6. Those who are far will come and help us to build the temple of the Lord, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you, and this shall come to pass if you will diligently listen and obey the voice of the Lord your God. So there was a repentance in the days of Haggai and Zechariah, but it was an incomplete repentance: chapter 8, verse 16 and 17.

These are the things that you shall do. Speak the truth to one another. Render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace.

Do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath. For all of these things I hate, declares the Lord. Yeah, it's great that you've responded, you've listened to the call of the prophets to obey by building the temple, but the architectural structure alone is not going to save you.

Just having a temple, just having a place where you can worship, just having a place where you can offer sacrifices, that's not enough. Ultimately, you're going to have to live the life and carry out the kind of justice that God called you to do. You're going to have to love God with all your heart.

You're also going to have to love your neighbor as yourself, and that's going to be reflected in the way that you obey the Mosaic Covenant. So again, there is an example of repentance, but a limited form of it. And as a result of that, we have relapsed in the other books in the Minor Prophets.

And we can go to Malachi as the final book, and that book basically turns into an argument and a dispute between God and his people. Where are they at spiritually? Well, they're arguing with God. They're complaining that God has not been fair to them.

They're raising the issue, you know, does it even pay to serve God? Because God's treated us in this way. At the beginning of the book of Malachi, Malachi says, I have loved you, says the Lord. And the people respond back to him, Well, how have you loved us? And so, you have repentant people in the book of Zechariah who are willing to do what it takes to build the house of God.

You have an unrepentant and relapsed people in the book of Malachi who are saying, how have you loved us? Okay? Chapter 3. And again, we see just how far the people have drifted from God in this last book in the Minor Prophets. Chapter 3, verse 13 says this, Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. And you say, how have we spoken against you? Again, this is part of the dispute.

God says you've spoken against me. And they say, well, what have we said about you? The Lord says, you have said it is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or walking in as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? What good does it do for us to obey God? God doesn't pay attention to that.

And now, we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper, but they put God to the test, and they escape. God doesn't care.

God doesn't do justice. God even blesses those who do evil. And that's where the people were at.

But then it tells us that there is one final example in the Minor Prophets of a positive response to the call for them to change their ways. In chapter 3, verse 16 says this, Then those who feared the Lord. And ultimately, that's going to be what leads the people to have a response.

Is that they revere, they respect, they even have a fear of the judgment that God is going to bring. Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. And the Lord paid attention and heard them.

And a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. And so, there were a group of people who responded to the prophets. These accusations that we've brought against God.

We are saying that God doesn't care about our behavior, that it's vain to serve God, or that God prospers evil doers. That's evil. We fear God.

We want to live the way that God wants us to live. They commit themselves to that. And actually, it tells us that the prophet writes their names in a book.

There's a limited response. But there is a genuine response here. Verse 17 says this: They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession.

And I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then, once more, you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him. You think that there's no distinction.

You think that God doesn't observe. You think that God prospers the righteous. Well, God is going to keep a list of these names.

God has taken names. He's written them down. The people that have feared Him and respected Him, the Lord is going to bless them.

The Lord is going to preserve them from judgment. But the point of all of this is that we come to the very end of the minor prophets and the issue still here is limited response to the Word of God. Limited repentance.

And only those who have truly repented, only those who are living the kind of life that truly pleases God, those are the ones who are ultimately going to be spared from the judgment. And so we come to the end of this. The time of the post-exilic period, as God was bringing the people back to the land, was to be the time when the judgment was over.

I mean, it was no longer necessary. They have received double for their sins, is what Isaiah 40. The time of their hard service is over, says the prophet, Isaiah.

But in the minor prophets, even that return to the land is not the final restoration because there has not been a complete turning to the Lord. And as we talked about in the last video, this pattern of judgment and salvation is going to continue. It's going to carry over.

It's going to repeat itself in the ministry of Jesus. It's going to repeat itself in the last days. And ultimately, this pattern is going to continue until finally God does a work where he heals Israel's apostasy.

Remember, that's the solution in Hosea chapter 14. I think there are a number of other ways that the minor prophets are going to say, look, we're aware of this situation. We're aware in history of how God's people have not responded to his word.

Ultimately, God acts to reverse that. The Lord had done a great act of salvation for Israel by bringing them out of Egypt. He had delivered them from bondage.

That is the classic example of redemption in the Old Testament. But the Lord is ultimately going to have to do an even greater work of salvation to ultimately capture the hearts of all the people. And the salvation that comes through Christ, the deliverance that Christ is going to bring, ultimately, God giving himself as that sacrifice for their sins, that's ultimately going to be the thing that will draw his people back to them.

So the Lord is going to... this pattern is going to continue. This pattern is going to recur until God ultimately heals his people. Joel says the Lord is going to pour out his spirit on all flesh.

The prophet Zechariah says the Lord is going to pour out a spirit of repentance on his people. The Lord demands that they repent. But the Lord is ultimately going to have to pour out a spirit of repentance on them.

The book of Acts says that the death of Jesus brought the gift of repentance. But in Acts chapter 3, Peter is still going to have to stand in front of the people and say, repent, so that the times of refreshing might come. So, we can see how God's saving initiatives and, ultimately, the human responses to that interplay are going to continue.

It's going on in our world today. It's going to continue until the last days. In the prophets, it often sounds like God is going to do a work of enforced repentance.

I'm going to give them a new heart. I'm going to write the law on their hearts. Ezekiel says I'm going to give them a new heart and pour my spirit out on them.

But even when God performs these saving initiatives, ultimately, the people are going to have to respond to that. And I think these promises in the prophets, God is ultimately going to win. God is ultimately going to purge a people for himself.

God is ultimately going to form a new covenant people where all of them are obedient to God. That reminds us of where this is all heading. But the way that we get there, or the timing of all of this, or the process by which all of this happens, is ultimately going to be determined by how the people respond to God and to God's word.

And so this drama that's there in the minor prophets is going to continue working itself out throughout the continued history, even into the New Testament era. I also want to emphasize and notice something else. The minor prophets, as they're talking

about this and how God ultimately is going to heal his people. We can imagine the relationship between God and Israel as being like a marriage.

At the very beginning of the book of the Twelve, we have a broken marriage. We have the relationship of the prophet Hosea and his wife Gomer that reflects the fractured relationship between Israel and the Lord. Israel has been unfaithful to God and to Yahweh as their husband in the same way that Gomer is unfaithful to Hosea.

So, this idea of a broken marriage and a broken love relationship, and a fractured covenant is part of the overriding message of the book of the Twelve. It's introduced in Hosea 1-3 at the very beginning of this. It's interesting in the book of Hosea that there are several places that speak of God's love for Israel.

But every time where that book talks about the object of Israel's love, it is always something other than God. And particularly, they love their lovers, these other gods that they believe can fulfill them, meet their needs, and satisfy their souls in a way that they don't believe that God can. The object of Israel's love is always something other than God.

Well, the word love, or the word to love, is used in the book of the Twelve 28 times. The only place where God's love for Israel is addressed, or Israel's love for God is addressed in the Book of Twelve, is in Hosea and in Malachi. And remember at the beginning of Malachi, we still have a fractured relationship.

We still have a fractured marriage because the Lord says, I have loved you. And the people think about where we've been through the Assyrian crisis, we've been through the Babylonian crisis, we're here in the middle of the post-exilic period, and it's not all that great even though we're back in the land. How have you loved us? And so, at the end of the Minor Prophets, we have the same issue that's there at the beginning.

God still has to transform the hearts of his people. God still has to bring about that repentance. God still has to help them to shove and to come back to him.

In the closing verses of Malachi and the closing section of Malachi, God reminds the people of his love. He says in chapter 3, verse 6, For I the Lord do not change, therefore, O children of Jacob, you are not consumed. From the days of your fathers, you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them.

Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord. Do you want evidence that I love you? How have I loved you? Well, look at the fact that in all the judgments that I've sent against you, I have not completely destroyed you. I am still giving you the opportunity to come back to me and yet they haven't done that.

Finally, God says, I am going to send my prophet Elijah. I'm going to send an eschatological messenger. And the goal of that prophet, the goal of that Elijah as he comes in the future will be to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

Israel is no longer going to be a divided people because they're not going to be made up of wicked people and righteous people. The hearts of the fathers and generations are going to be united together because God is going to change their hearts so that they can obey him and follow him. That's the story of the minor prophets.

Throughout history, God has given the people the opportunity to return, the chance to shub, the chance to repent. There have been limited examples of that but for the most part they did not listen to the prophets. God will ultimately send his messenger to bring this about.

So, the whole idea of returning to the Lord, the thematic unity of the minor prophets, I hope I've helped you to understand that a little better. I want to talk about one last thing, one last unifying theme and motif. The prophets, as a whole, are going to talk about the day of Yahweh.

The day of Yahweh, and why do we call it a day and why do they refer to it? This is the time that ancient Israel, when they talked about the day of the Lord, they believed that that was the time that God directly intervened to either save or to judge. He would intervene in a dramatic way to save his people. He would intervene in a dramatic way as well to judge his enemies.

I think they referred to this as the day of the Lord because God was so powerful that he would defeat his enemies as if it were in a single day. Often, when kings would go out into battle in the ancient Near East and they would recount their accomplishments, even if a military campaign might have taken months for them to accomplish, they would say, in a single day, I defeated my enemy. Mesha, when he wins a victory over Israel, even though we know it was a pretty intense battle, says, from the break of the day until noontime, I fought against my enemies, and I defeated Israel, and I completely consumed them.

The prophets are going to say, God is a warrior who is able to defeat his enemies in a single day, in a single moment, although we know that the day of the Lord is actually an extended period of time. One of the unifying motifs in the Minor Prophets is the idea that the day of the Lord is fast approaching. Again, one of the places we see this is in the book of Joel.

And so Joel, even though it is at, chronologically at the end of the period of the prophets, I believe, and we'll talk about that when we get to the book, it's been placed at the front because thematically it is introducing to us this idea of the day of

the Lord. And Joel says in chapter 1, verse 5, Awake you drunkards and weep, and wail all of you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against my land, powerful and without number.

And this judgment that God is bringing on his people is the day of the Lord. Chapter 1, verse 15, Ask for the day. The day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty, it comes.

Chapter 2, verse 1, Blow a trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm on my holy mountain. Let all of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is near.

And there are all these repetitions of the word day. Verse 2: It will be a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, and there's never been a time like this. The judgment of God is coming and it is a day that is very close.

And so, this idea of God's judgment as the day of the Lord is a recurring theme in the book of the 12. And the day of the Lord, we, as Christians, think about that. We may think about the events associated with the second coming.

This is the time of Jacob's trouble. This is the great tribulation. This is the time when God is going to judge the earth because of the sin that's there in preparation for his eternal kingdom.

But in the prophets, they are going to speak of the day of the Lord as something that is near and something that is distant and far in the future when God judges the whole earth. The day of the Lord that Joel says is near in chapter 2 is not the rapture. It's not the second coming of Christ.

It's not the time of Jacob's trouble in the end times that we read about in Matthew 24. It is the coming invasion of an enemy army that is going to attack Israel. That's the day of the Lord.

Get ready. And remember that we talked about in one of the first videos that most of the predictions that the prophets make, only about 1% of them are still dealing with future events. When these prophets are talking about the day of the Lord, primarily they are talking about something that is about to happen.

And so, Joel, in the post-exilic period, the people had been through this terrible locust invasion. Their crops had been wiped out. Joel is saying, look, a further judgment is coming.

An army is about to invade Israel, just like a swarm of locusts. And that is going to be the day of the Lord if you do not repent and change your ways. Amos chapter 5. The prophet Amos, remember, ministers during the time of the Assyrian crisis.

And Amos says this: Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord. Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light. Amos confronts the people of Israel, and he says, You are longing for the day of the Lord.

You want the day of the Lord to get here. You believe that the day of the Lord is going to be the time when God judges all of your enemies. What you have failed to understand is that the day of the Lord is when God is going to judge you.

You are right about the fact that the day of the Lord is the time when God judges his enemies, but what you are wrong about is you do not understand Israel is God's enemy. And so, I imagine the people of Israel are looking forward to the day of the Lord. God is going to get rid of these Assyrians.

God is going to get rid of these Babylonians, and that is going to be a day of light and deliverance. They were looking forward to the day of the Lord the way that my children looked forward to Christmas when they were little kids.

But Amos says, Look, the day of the Lord is not going to be a day of light. It is going to be a day of God's judgment. You are the enemy of God.

You are the ones that are going to experience his devastation. He goes on to say, and he says for Israel, the day of the Lord is going to be like a man running away from a lion. And they get away from the lion, they take a deep breath, and then they run into a bear.

And then somehow they escape from the bear and they're breathing hard and heavy after all the running they've been doing. They come into their house, they lean their hand against the wall, and they're bitten by a snake. You are not going to be able to evade or avoid the judgment of God.

Verse 20: Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it. Okay? So, the prophets are warning them about a coming day. He's not talking about the tribulation period.

He's talking about the Assyrian invasion. And then another example of this, if we look at the prophet Zephaniah, Zephaniah is another prophet in the book of the Twelve. The major theme of this book is that the day of the Lord is approaching.

And it's not thousands of years down the road. The day of the Lord is coming, and it's right around the corner. Zephaniah chapter 1 verse 7: Be silent before the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is near. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.

And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice, I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire. This day of the Lord is going to affect the people of Judah in the near future. Verse 10: On that day, declares the Lord, a cry will be heard and a wail from the various places in Jerusalem.

Verse 12: At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, who say in their hearts, the Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill. And so this is not, again, something long and future and distant down the road. It's something that is about to happen.

Now, the other side of the prophetic day of the Lord is that if you go to passages like Joel 3 or Zephaniah 3, the day of the Lord that is near is a pattern for the day of the Lord that is future. And in that day of the Lord God is going to judge all nations. In that day God is going to purge Israel again.

But the prophetic idea of the day of the Lord is both near and far. And that also is one of the unifying motifs in the book of the 12. What we have looked at in this lesson are some ways that as we're working our way through the individual books, the big picture, the big story, and we need to keep that in mind as we go through this.

God's word is a matter of life and death and the people will either be judged or blessed based upon their response to that. But ultimately, there is the hope that God will, one day he will heal Israel's apostasy, and he will create for himself a people that are committed to following him and doing his will. And that's the hope of the prophetic message that emerges out of this message of this just terrible judgment that's going to come.

The day of the Lord in the Assyrian crisis, in the Babylonian crisis, and even in the post-exilic period. There's hope for Israel's future because God is going to heal their apostasy and their turning away. This is Dr. Gary Yates in his lecture series on the minor prophets.

This is Dr. Gary Yates in his lecture series on the Minor Prophets. This is lecture 4, An Overview of the Book of the 12, Part 2.