Reading the Minor Prophets with the Early Church – Epiphany Study

How It Works

- **To prepare: Read the scripture, Read the Bible Project Summary of the book, and read the Early Christian Interpretation of the book.**
- **If you aren't able to prepare please join us anyway. All are welcome.**
- Each week in January we will look at one of the books of the Minor Prophets in its entirety.
- Please try to read the whole book before each session. However, if you can't that is completely fine and you are still very welcome to join us.
- Included in this document is a link to the Bible Project summary of each book, and a quick summary of the writings of early Christian writers about each book.
- Please bring your Bible to our conversations as we won't be able to share the entire text on screen.
- Take a look at the discussion questions for each section, but please also come with your own questions and comments.
- Questions? Email reverendmcintosh@gmail.com

Introductory Material

Major and Minor Prophets (Overview)

Using the terms **Major Prophets** and **Minor Prophets** is simply a way to divide the Old Testament prophetic books. There are five Major Prophets: the books of **Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel**. There are twelve Minor Prophets: the books of **Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi**. The Minor Prophets are also sometimes called **The Twelve**.

The Twelve Minor Prophets: Background and Canonical Context

The collection commonly known as the *Twelve Minor Prophets* occupies a distinctive place within the biblical canon. In the Jewish Scriptures (the *Tanakh*), these writings are not treated as twelve separate books but as a single unified work called *The Twelve*, which concludes the section known as the *Nevi'im* (Prophets). This unified presentation reflects an ancient tradition in which shorter prophetic writings were preserved together on a single scroll, helping to ensure their transmission and authority alongside longer prophetic works.

The designation *"Minor Prophets"* does not suggest lesser importance but instead refers to the relative length of these books when compared to the so-called *Major Prophets* such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. This terminology was popularized in Christian usage by **Augustine of Hippo**, who distinguished the twelve shorter prophetic writings as *prophetae minores*. Despite their brevity,

these prophets address themes central to biblical theology, including covenant faithfulness, social justice, repentance, divine judgment, and future hope.

Scholars generally agree that the books of the Twelve were composed over several centuries, roughly between the eighth and fifth centuries BCE. While each book retains its own prophetic voice and historical setting, many scholars suggest that they were intentionally gathered and arranged to convey a coherent theological message. The sequence of the books appears to reflect both chronological considerations and thematic development, moving from warnings of judgment to promises of restoration.

In Christian Bibles, the Twelve appear as individual books rather than a single scroll, though their order varies slightly among Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox traditions. Understanding the Twelve as both individual voices and a unified collection helps readers appreciate their depth and continuity within the broader story of Scripture. (

The Twelve Minor Prophets: Historical Overview

Bible Order	Ortho Order	Book (Alternate Name)	Approximate Date	Brief Description
1	1	Hosea (Osee)	8th century BCE (before the fall of the Northern Kingdom)	Uses marriage imagery to portray Israel's unfaithfulness and God's persistent covenant love and desire for restoration.
2	4	Joel	Uncertain	Calls the people to repentance in the wake of disaster, emphasizing the Day of the Lord and future outpouring of God's Spirit.
3	2	Amos	8th century BCE (before the fall of the Northern Kingdom)	Condemns social injustice and empty worship, insisting that true devotion to God requires righteousness and justice.
4	5	Obadiah (Abdias)	Uncertain (9th century or 6th century BCE)	Pronounces judgment on Edom for pride and violence, affirming God's justice among the nations.
5	6	Jonah (Jonas)	Uncertain (8th century BCE or post-exilic period)	A narrative prophet highlighting God's mercy, compassion, and concern for all nations, even enemies.
6	3	Micah (Micheas)	8th century BCE (before the fall of the Northern Kingdom)	Balances judgment and hope, calling for justice, humility, and faithfulness while promising future restoration.
7	7	Nahum (Naum)	7th century BCE (before the fall of the Southern Kingdom)	Announces God's judgment against Nineveh, emphasizing divine justice against oppression.

Bible Order	Ortho Order	Book (Alternate Name)	Approximate Date	Brief Description
8	8	Habakkuk (Habacuc)	7th century BCE (before the fall of the Southern Kingdom)	Dialogues with God about injustice and suffering, concluding with a declaration of trust and faith.
9	9	Zephaniah (Sophanias)	7th century BCE (before the fall of the Southern Kingdom)	Warns of the Day of the Lord while offering hope for a humble, restored remnant.
10	10	Haggai (Aggeus)	6th century BCE (after return from exile)	Urges the returned exiles to rebuild the Temple and renew their commitment to God.
11	11	Zechariah (Zacharias)	6th century BCE (after return from exile)	Uses visions and prophecy to encourage restoration, highlighting messianic hope and God's presence with His people.
12	12	Malachi (Malachias)	5th century BCE (after return from exile)	Addresses spiritual complacency and calls for covenant faithfulness in anticipation of God's coming messenger.

Week 1 – Hosea (8th century BCE) — Tuesday, January 6

Link to Online Scripture:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+1&version=NRSVUE

Summary

BibleProject Guide: https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-hosea
(This page includes a short explanatory article and an overview video you are encouraged to watch.)

Hosea presents God's covenant relationship with Israel through the metaphor of marriage. Israel's idolatry is portrayed as unfaithfulness, yet God's response is persistent love and a call to repentance and restoration.

Early Christian Interpretation of the Book of Hosea

The Book of Hosea occupied a central place in early Christian reflection because of its intense portrayal of covenant love, human unfaithfulness, judgment, and restoration. Early Church writers consistently understood Hosea as revealing not only Israel's historical relationship with God but the deeper spiritual drama of the human soul and the Church's life before God. Hosea's marriage imagery, though troubling on the surface, was received as a profound disclosure of divine mercy and steadfast love.

Origen of Alexandria offered one of the earliest and most influential interpretations of Hosea. Reading the book allegorically, Origen argued that Hosea's marriage discloses the mystery of God's love for souls that continually stray. He wrote, "God does not cease to love those who fall away, but seeks them all the more, that He may heal them" (*Homilies on Hosea*). For Origen, Hosea taught that divine judgment is medicinal rather than destructive. God's rebukes are intended to restore the soul to wholeness, not to abandon it. The prophet's words thus became a guide for repentance and spiritual renewal within the Church.

Jerome, attentive to the Hebrew text and historical context, emphasized that Hosea addressed a real crisis of idolatry, political instability, and moral decay in the Northern Kingdom. Yet Jerome insisted that the prophet's message extended far beyond its original setting. Commenting on Hosea's marriage, Jerome observed that God's command reveals "not a change in God, but the greatness of His mercy." Hosea demonstrated, for Jerome, that God binds Himself to a sinful people not because they are worthy, but in order to make them so.

Augustine of Hippo drew deeply on Hosea in articulating his theology of grace. He interpreted Israel's unfaithfulness as an expression of disordered love, famously noting, "The soul becomes adulterous when it seeks satisfaction apart from God" (*Confessions*). Augustine emphasized that Hosea shows repentance itself to be God's gift. Reflecting on God's promise, "I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely" (Hos 14:4), Augustine argued that divine love precedes human repentance and makes conversion possible. The restored marriage in Hosea foreshadowed, for Augustine, the reconciliation of the Church through Christ.

John Chrysostom approached Hosea from a pastoral and ethical perspective. In his preaching, Chrysostom used Hosea's critique of false worship to warn Christian communities against religious observance divorced from faithfulness of life. He argued that Hosea exposes the danger of honoring God with words while betraying Him through injustice and pride. For Chrysostom, the prophet called believers to integrity, urging that repentance be visible in conduct, not merely confessed in prayer.

Reflections aligned with Hosea's theology of restoration also appear in the spiritual teaching of **Macrina the Younger**, whose theology is preserved through the writings of Gregory of Nyssa. Macrina emphasized the soul's healing through divine love and discipline, insisting that God does not abandon those who fall but patiently restores them. Her vision of transformation through suffering closely mirrors Hosea's portrayal of God leading His people into the wilderness in order to speak tenderly to them.

The sayings of **Syncletica of Alexandria** echo Hosea's warnings against divided loyalty. She cautioned that devotion without humility leads to spiritual ruin, teaching that repentance requires sustained attentiveness to God rather than momentary regret. Syncletica's insistence on inner fidelity resonates strongly with Hosea's condemnation of outward religion unsupported by covenant faithfulness.

Early Christians also read Hosea ecclesiologically. The promise, "I will say to Not-My-People, 'You are my people,'" was frequently interpreted as anticipating the inclusion of the Gentiles into the

people of God. Hosea thus shaped early Christian understanding of the Church as a community formed not by merit but by mercy.

Across the early Church, Hosea was read as a book of hope born out of painful truth. It taught that sin is fundamentally relational, that judgment serves restoration, and that God's love remains steadfast even in the face of rejection. For early Christians, Hosea did not merely recount Israel's past; it illuminated the ongoing life of the Church, continually called back to fidelity by the relentless mercy of God.

Discussion Questions

1. What's happening in the text? How does it begin, what happens in the middle, how does it end? What's the central conflict?
2. What was your favourite part of this book? Was there a specific verse that spoke to you?
3. Hosea is one a several places through the Hebrew Bible in which the text uses language and metaphors we find deeply hurtful or problematic. What is your experience in dealing with these kinds of books or passages?
4. It is deeply disturbing to read Hosea and see God as abuser. What is your reaction to this image? How does it make you feel?
5. How do we engage with ancient literature in a way that acknowledges how different the historical context is from our own, without excusing or condoning the behaviour and content it promotes?
6. What connections do you see between this book and the life of the Church today?

Week 2 – Amos (8th century BCE) — Tuesday, January 13

Link to online Scripture:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Amos+1&version=NRSVUE

Summary

BibleProject Guide: https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-amos
(This page includes a short explanatory article and an overview video you are encouraged to watch.)

Amos confronts social injustice and empty religious practice, insisting that true worship of God must be accompanied by righteousness, justice, and care for the poor.

Early Christian Interpretation of the Book of Amos

The Book of Amos exercised a profound influence on early Christian moral teaching because of its uncompromising critique of injustice, exploitation, and empty worship. Early Church writers consistently read Amos as a prophet who exposed the incompatibility of genuine devotion to God with

oppression of the poor. For them, Amos revealed that faithfulness to God must be expressed in justice, mercy, and righteousness.

John Chrysostom drew extensively on Amos in his preaching, especially when addressing wealth and social responsibility. He frequently echoed Amos's denunciation of those who "lie on beds of ivory" while ignoring the suffering of others. Chrysostom warned that generosity without justice was insufficient, insisting that wealth gained through exploitation could not be redeemed by charitable acts alone. He argued, "God does not accept sacrifices offered by hands stained with injustice" (*Homilies on Matthew*), a conviction deeply shaped by Amos's theology.

Jerome emphasized Amos's identity as a shepherd called to confront elites. He noted that Amos's authority derived not from social status or religious office but from divine calling. Jerome saw this as a warning to Christian leaders against complacency and pride, stressing that God often speaks through unexpected voices. Amos, he argued, revealed that religious ritual becomes offensive to God when severed from ethical integrity.

Augustine of Hippo read Amos within the broader framework of love rightly ordered. He interpreted social injustice as the fruit of disordered desire, where love of self eclipses love of neighbor. Augustine frequently cited Amos's insistence on justice to argue that worship must reshape the heart and the community. "Let justice flow like water," Augustine observed, not merely in words but in deeds (*City of God*).

The ethical urgency of Amos also appears in the lived witness of **Melania the Younger**, whose radical renunciation of wealth embodied prophetic critique. Her life illustrated the conviction, shared by early Christians, that detachment from excess was necessary for faithful discipleship. Similarly, **Syncletica of Alexandria** warned that fasting and prayer without compassion harden rather than heal the soul, echoing Amos's condemnation of religious practice divorced from mercy.

Early Christians thus received Amos as a prophetic conscience for the Church. The book taught that worship, justice, and love of neighbor are inseparable, shaping Christian teaching on charity, leadership, and communal responsibility.

Discussion Questions

1. What's happening in the text? How does it begin, what happens in the middle, how does it end? What's the central conflict?
2. As you read through Amos, what is your first impression of the book? What motifs, imagery, or words stand out to you?
3. Amos speaks often about the rote observation of faith, and how "correct" actions are nothing without justice. How does this resonate, or not, with you? Have you ever felt as though you were going through the motions, without seeing and caring for those around you
4. Like many prophetic books, Amos relies a lot on upending expectations to challenge the status-quo. How does the message of Amos challenge you?
5. How does this book portray God's character?

6. What connections do you see between this book and the life of the Church today? Amos is especially concerned with the oppression of the poor by the wealthy and elite. Do you see any resonance of his message in our modern context? Why or why not?

Week 3 – Jonah (8th century BCE / post-exilic composition) — Tuesday, January 20

Link to online Scripture:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+1&version=NRSVUE

Summary

BibleProject Guide: https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-jonah
(This page includes a short explanatory article and an overview video you are encouraged to watch.)

Jonah is a prophetic narrative that explores God's mercy, compassion, and concern for all nations, challenging narrow understandings of justice and obedience.

Early Christian Interpretation of the Book of Jonah

The Book of Jonah held a prominent place in early Christian imagination because of its narrative form, theological depth, and strong typological connection to Christ's death and resurrection. Early Church writers consistently read Jonah as a sign of divine mercy that transcends human boundaries and expectations.

Justin Martyr appealed to Jonah as evidence that the Hebrew Scriptures anticipated Christ. Jonah's three days in the belly of the fish were interpreted as a foreshadowing of Christ's burial and resurrection. Justin argued that Jonah revealed God's power to bring life from apparent defeat (*Dialogue with Trypho*).

Tertullian developed this reading further, using Jonah as a defense of bodily resurrection. He insisted that Jonah's deliverance demonstrated God's sovereignty over death itself. "What was preserved in the deep," he wrote, "proclaims the hope of resurrection" (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh*).

Cyril of Jerusalem used Jonah extensively in baptismal catechesis. Jonah's descent and return symbolized dying and rising with Christ, reinforcing baptism as participation in Christ's victory over death. For Cyril, Jonah revealed that repentance leads not to humiliation but to renewal.

Augustine of Hippo focused on Jonah's resistance to God's mercy. He argued that Jonah exposes humanity's tendency to resent grace extended to others. Nineveh's repentance demonstrated that God desires conversion rather than punishment. Augustine wrote that Jonah teaches believers to rejoice in mercy, even when it disrupts human expectations of justice.

Reflections aligned with Jonah's themes also appear in the witness of **Perpetua**, whose prison diary reveals trust in God amid suffering. Her confidence in resurrection and divine deliverance echoes the hope embodied in Jonah's story. Across the early Church, Jonah became a symbol of repentance, resurrection, and God's boundless compassion.

Discussion Questions

1. What's happening in the text? How does it begin, what happens in the middle, how does it end? What's the central conflict?
2. What was your favourite part of this book?
3. How does Jonah differ from the other books of Prophets you have studied so far? How does that make you feel about this text?
4. How does Jonah differ depending on what kind of genre we read it as? Is there a difference in reading Jonah as a serious text, versus a satirical one? Why or why not?
5. Jonah is perhaps one of the most well-known prophets from the Hebrew Bible. What has been your experience with this book and its imagery prior to this study?
6. How does this book portray God's character?
7. What connections do you see between this book and the life of the Church today?

Week 4 – Habakkuk (7th century BCE) — Tuesday, January 27 (8th century BCE / post-exilic composition)

Link to online scripture:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+1&version=NRSVUE

Summary

BibleProject Guide: https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-jonah
(This page includes a short explanatory article and an overview video you are encouraged to watch.)

Jonah is a prophetic narrative that explores God's mercy, compassion, and concern for all nations, challenging narrow understandings of justice and obedience.

Early Christian Interpretation of the Book of Habakkuk

The Book of Habakkuk held a distinctive and deeply pastoral place in early Christian interpretation because of its honest confrontation with injustice, suffering, and divine silence. Early Christians, many

of whom lived under persecution or social marginalization, found in Habakkuk a faithful companion for wrestling with unanswered questions while remaining anchored in trust in God.

Origen of Alexandria interpreted Habakkuk as a model of faithful dialogue with God. Unlike prophets who speak primarily to the people, Habakkuk speaks directly to God, voicing confusion and protest. Origen argued that such questioning is not irreverent but spiritually formative. “The prophet does not accuse God,” Origen wrote, “but seeks understanding, trusting that God’s justice will be revealed” (*Commentary on Habakkuk*). For Origen, Habakkuk taught believers how to pray amid uncertainty—honestly, persistently, and faithfully.

The line “the righteous shall live by faith” (Hab 2:4) became central to early Christian theology. **Augustine of Hippo** frequently cited this verse when reflecting on the Christian life as one lived between promise and fulfillment. Augustine argued that Habakkuk reveals faith not as intellectual certainty but as persevering trust. “Faith,” Augustine wrote, “is to believe what you do not see; the reward of faith is to see what you believe” (*Sermons*). Habakkuk’s journey from complaint to praise illustrated, for Augustine, how faith matures through endurance.

Theodoret of Cyrus, writing from the Antiochene tradition, emphasized the historical and political dimensions of Habakkuk. He interpreted God’s response to the prophet as affirming divine sovereignty over empires and events that appear chaotic from a human perspective. Theodoret argued that Habakkuk teaches patience, reminding believers that God’s justice unfolds over time rather than according to human urgency.

Habakkuk’s final hymn of trust deeply shaped early Christian spirituality. **John Chrysostom** emphasized that Habakkuk’s joy does not depend on circumstances but on confidence in God’s character. He noted that the prophet rejoices even when material security collapses, demonstrating a faith rooted in God alone. Chrysostom used Habakkuk to encourage Christians facing hardship to ground their hope not in stability but in God’s faithfulness.

This theology of endurance resonates with the teaching of **Macrina the Younger**, whose reflections on suffering and resurrection are preserved by Gregory of Nyssa. Macrina insisted that suffering, when borne with faith, becomes a means of transformation rather than despair. Her conviction that hope rests in God’s ultimate justice echoes Habakkuk’s declaration that God remains trustworthy even when His ways are hidden.

Early Christians thus read Habakkuk as a guide for faithful perseverance. The book taught that lament is not opposed to faith, that doubt can coexist with trust, and that joy rooted in God transcends circumstance. For the early Church, Habakkuk offered a language of hope forged in struggle, shaping Christian prayer, theology, and endurance.

Discussion Questions

1. What’s happening in the text? How does it begin, what happens in the middle, how does it end? What’s the central conflict?
2. What was your favourite part of this book?

3. What is Habakkuk's complaint? Why does he complaint to the LORD? How does God respond?
4. Habakkuk does not ask God to suspend his judgment, but to remember mercy. What does this look like? How has God done this for you in Christ?
5. How does Habakkuk challenge assumptions about justice and mercy?
6. What does this book reveal about God's character?

Week 5 – Zechariah (6th century BCE) — Tuesday, February 3

Link to online Scripture:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah+1&version=NRSVUE

Summary

BibleProject Guide: https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-zechariah
(This page includes a short explanatory article and an overview video you are encouraged to watch.)

Zechariah combines visionary imagery and prophetic exhortation to encourage a discouraged post-exilic community, emphasizing restoration, messianic hope, and God's enduring presence.

Early Church Reflections (Extended Patristic Summary)

Early Christian Interpretation of the Book of Zechariah

The Book of Zechariah occupied a central place in early Christian interpretation because of its vivid imagery, apocalyptic visions, and strong messianic themes. Early Christians turned frequently to Zechariah to articulate how Christ fulfilled Israel's hopes and how God remained present with His people amid uncertainty and delay.

Justin Martyr cited Zechariah extensively in his dialogues with Jewish interlocutors. He argued that Zechariah's visions pointed unmistakably to Christ, particularly passages concerning the humble king, the pierced one, and the shepherd. Justin maintained that these prophecies revealed Jesus as the promised Messiah whose suffering and kingship were foretold in Scripture (*Dialogue with Trypho*).

Irenaeus of Lyons read Zechariah as a witness to the unity of salvation history. He insisted that the same God who spoke through the prophets acted definitively in Christ. Zechariah's visions, for Irenaeus, demonstrated continuity rather than rupture between Israel and the Church. "The prophets announced what the Lord fulfilled," he wrote (*Against Heresies*).

Jerome, deeply attentive to Zechariah's complexity, emphasized disciplined interpretation. He warned that prophetic visions require patience and humility, resisting overly speculative readings. Jerome believed Zechariah trained Christians to read Scripture attentively, holding together historical

context and spiritual meaning. He argued that Zechariah's encouragement to a discouraged post-exilic community mirrored the Church's experience of waiting for final redemption.

Cyril of Alexandria interpreted Zechariah christologically, emphasizing Christ as both priest and king. He saw Zechariah's imagery of cleansing and restoration as fulfilled in Christ's redemptive work. For Cyril, Zechariah revealed that God remains present with His people even when fulfillment seems delayed.

The devotional engagement of **Egeria**, whose pilgrimage writings reflect deep immersion in Scripture, resonates with Zechariah's themes. Her attention to sacred places and prophetic texts demonstrates how early Christians experienced Zechariah not merely as prediction but as living Scripture shaping worship and hope.

For the early Church, Zechariah was a book of encouragement and expectation. It affirmed that God dwells among His people, that suffering does not negate promise, and that history moves toward redemption. Zechariah shaped early Christian eschatology, worship, and confidence in God's faithfulness.

Discussion Questions

1. What's happening in the text? How does it begin, what happens in the middle, how does it end? What's the central conflict?
2. What was your favourite part of this book?
3. Why did early Christians read Zechariah as messianic?
4. What differences do you notice between reading prophetic books like Amos and Hosea, to reading books like Haggai and Zechariah? Does anything in particular stand out to you?
5. As history progresses, we see a shift in these prophetic texts from visions of a mundane, political reordering to a cosmic, apocalyptic, eschatological reordering of all creation. Why do you think this is the case? What is the difference?
6. How does Zechariah sustain hope after crisis?

Week 6 – Malachi (5th century BCE) — Tuesday, February 10

Link to Online Scripture:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+1&version=NRSVUE

Summary

BibleProject Guide: https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-malachi
(This page includes a short explanatory article and an overview video you are encouraged to watch.)

Malachi addresses spiritual complacency in the post-exilic community, calling God's people back to covenant faithfulness and pointing toward a coming messenger.

Early Christian Interpretation of the Book of Malachi

Malachi was received by early Christians as the final voice of the prophetic tradition and a theological bridge to the New Testament. Its critique of complacent worship and promise of a coming messenger resonated deeply with communities seeking renewal and vigilance.

Jerome emphasized Malachi's warning against routine religion. He argued that careless worship reflects a hardened heart, writing that God rejects offerings brought without reverence. Jerome connected Malachi's critique of priesthood to the Church's responsibility to approach God with integrity and humility.

Origen interpreted Malachi with strong moral and spiritual emphasis. He viewed the prophet's imagery of refining fire as symbolic of God's purifying work in the soul. Origen taught that Malachi calls believers to allow God to cleanse not only external actions but inner motivations.

Augustine of Hippo read Malachi within the framework of salvation history. He interpreted the promise of a coming messenger as fulfilled in **John the Baptist**, whose role was to prepare hearts for Christ. Augustine emphasized that Malachi teaches repentance as preparation for divine encounter. "Preparation of the heart," he wrote, "precedes the coming of the Lord" (*Sermons*).

Cyril of Alexandria read Malachi christologically, emphasizing covenant faithfulness and moral responsibility. He argued that Malachi warns against presuming upon divine favor while neglecting obedience and justice.

The promise that hearts would be turned toward one another shaped early Christian understanding of reconciliation. The restoration of relationships—between generations, communities, and God—was read as a sign of redemption accomplished in Christ.

For the early Church, Malachi cultivated watchfulness, repentance, and hope. As the final prophetic voice before the gospel, it called believers to live attentively, awaiting God's redemptive work with faithfulness and reverence.

Discussion Questions

1. What's happening in the text? How does it begin, what happens in the middle, how does it end? What's the central conflict?
2. What was your favourite part of this book?
3. How would you determine the difference between pure worship and defiled worship?
4. What does Malachi reveal about spiritual complacency?
5. What doubts and fears might the people of Israel have had in the wake of their restoration to Jerusalem after the exile? What does the text imply the people are complaining about (1:2-3)? What in Israel's past or present might lead them to question God's love for them?
6. How did early Christians connect Malachi to the New Testament?
7. What does it mean to prepare for the Lord's coming?