

Commemoration of the 12 Minor Prophets – Sts. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi

In addition to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (the four major prophets of the Old Testament), the Armenian Church commemorates the following twelve minor prophets. The Prophets were those persons through which God spoke his will to the people of the world. They were the voice of God on earth, and gave advice to the people of Israel, warning them against dangers, and trying to keep them from the temptations of sin. Each prophet clearly comprehended that God spoke by means of his person. To that end, in the Holy Bible, we find expressions of “God told me”, “This is what God is saying”, etc. Often, God gave them power to work miracles, proving to people that they were chosen by Him. In the Nicene Creed, we proclaim that the Holy Spirit “Spoke in the Law, in the Prophets and in the Gospel”, once more affirming that God has spoken to us by means of the prophets.

The prophets received their revelations through visions, proverbs, and symbols. They were the connecting link in the God-man relationship. The prophets’ purpose was to purify and instill in the human mind the conscience that God is their leader, as well as to strengthen the faith in the coming of the Messiah and His Kingdom. All prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah came true in the New Testament, by means of Jesus Christ. The twelve prophets lived and worked over a broad range of time:

Hosea: the Prophet Hosea was the preacher of the Word of God following Amos, in 750 BC. He continued his mission until Samaria was conquered in 722-721 BC, and the Kingdom of Israel was eliminated. As the Israeli state disintegrated, Assyria became increasingly powerful. In his prophecies, Hosea condemned the significant moral decay of Israel, and the elimination of social justice. He made declarations concerning the responsibility of the elite. God speaks of His Love through Hosea. That love demands us to struggle against all forms of injustice, and to beware of false idols.

Joel: Little is known about the period when the Prophet Joel lived and when his prophecies were compiled in a separate book. He spoke of the “Day of the Lord”, and exhorted people to turn to God. He has foretold that the day would come when God would “pour out His Spirit” over

all people. This prophecy came true during Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended to earth in the form of tongues of flame.

Amos: the Prophet Amos is the oldest prophet. He was a shepherd, who lived in the village of Thecua, not far from Bethlehem. He lived and worked in the 8th century BC. In his prophecies, he spoke of the greatness of God, authority and justice, the demands of the law, and especially of the rights of the poor and the needy. He appealed to the rich, the powerful, the judges and the priests with great firmness.

Obadiah: the Prophet Obadiah's book is the shortest of the Minor Prophets. It was most likely compiled in approximately 587 BC. The prophet told that descendents of Esau – the people of Edom – would be punished and defeated as would all other nations that were the enemies of Israel. This was to make the people of Israel understand that the last word is God's Word, and that He alone would come be the final judge all peoples and nations.

Jonah: Unlike the other prophetic books, the Book of Jonah is a narrative describing the adventures of a prophet who tried, in every way, to disobey God's command. However, in the end his attempts were in vain. By the Lord's command, a large fish swallowed Jonah, where he remained for three days and three nights. Only after Jonah's prayer and redemption did the Lord allow the fish to free Jonah. In the Gospels, Christ repeatedly refers to this story.

Micah: the Prophet Micah was from the village of Moresheth, which many identify with the present-day Tel-Al-Jadidah. Micah lived in the 8th century BC. He warned of the fall of Jerusalem, which was the consequence of the sins of man. He called on them to repent and remain obedient to the Will of God.

Nahum: the name of the prophet means "consoler" or "comforter". The Book of Nahum was written in the period between the conquering of Thebes by the Assyrians in 663 BC and the fall of Nineveh to the Babylonians in 612 BC. Nahum taught of the Lord's jealousy and vengeance, including a forceful description of the fright that seized all creation when faced with the judgment of the Lord. The book continues, however, and in contrast with this harsh picture of God, Nahum describes the comforting assurance of God's loving kindness towards His true servants.

Habakkuk: there is little information available on this prophet. Habakkuk shared in the misfortunes and sufferings of others, while strongly condemning evil. The book was most likely written towards the end of the 5th century BC to the beginning of the 6th century BC. The book reads as a dramatic dialogue between God and His prophet, and presents the Lord as the eternal and righteous ruler of the world.

Zephaniah: the Prophet Zephaniah preached in the latter part of the 7th century BC, prior to Habakkuk. Zephaniah answered questions concerning the level of God's interest in mankind, and whether God has predetermined the course of history. He also preached very forcefully against idolatry in all its forms.

Haggai: the Prophet Haggai preached to encourage the Israelites to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. He advanced the idea that the poverty of the people and the poor condition of the harvest was due to the Temple remaining in a state of ruins. This book was likely written in 520 BC.

Zechariah: the Prophet Zechariah lived and prophesized during the same period as Haggai. The urging of the two prophets brought about the eventual rebuilding of the Temple. The book consists of two parts. The first part contains prophecies dating back to 520-518 BC, the second part may have been written many years later.

Malachi: the prophet is the last of the minor prophets. The Book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, was written in the first half of the 5th century BC. Malachi, as a witness to the degradation of society, exhorted people and priests to change their behavior. The prophet also preached of God's unending love, and the impending day of final judgment.

When is celebrated

15.07.2008
04.08.2009
27.07.2010
08.02.2011
31.07.2012
23.07.2013
04.02.2014
28.07.2015
19.07.2016

31.01.2017
24.07.2018
05.02.2019
04.08.2020
29.07.2021
01.02.2022
01.08.2023
23.07.2024
04.02.2025
30.07.2026
20.07.2027
01.02.2028
24.07.2029
05.02.2030