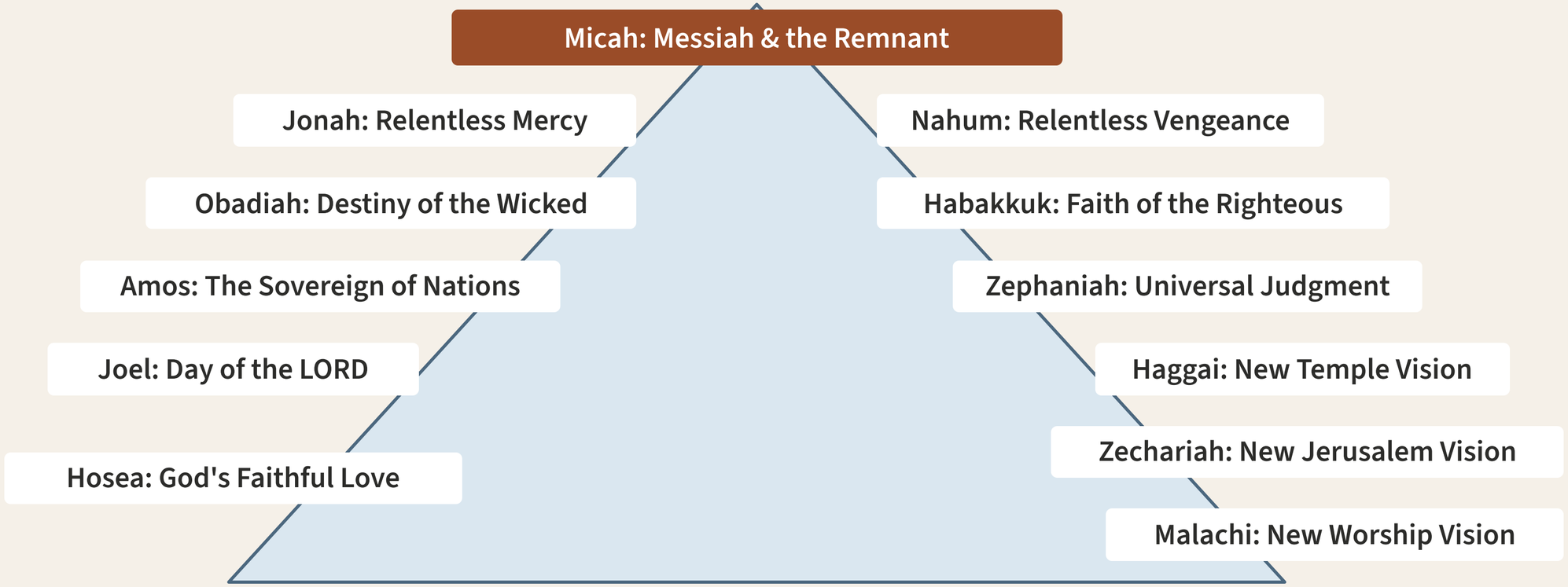
Themes of the Minor Prophets

The twelve Minor Prophets form thematic pairs culminating in Micah's central vision of the Messiah and the remnant.



Northern Israel's Exile by Assyria

In 722 BC, Assyria deported the northern Israelites across its empire and resettled foreign peoples into Samaria.

- Neo-Assyrian Empire
- Kingdom of Judah
- Capital city
- City or town
- Israelites are sent into exile
- Foreign peoples are resettled in Israel



Borders c. 722 B.C., as standard Bible atlases show them; ancient borders are approximate. Places: OpenBible.info (CC BY 4.0). Coastlines, lakes, and rivers: Natural Earth.

The City of Nineveh

Nineveh’s fortress walls and water defenses ironically became the means of its destruction when floodwaters swallowed the city.

PROPHECY OF NAHUM · SEVENTH CENTURY BC

The City of Nineveh

Nineveh was an ancient fortress protected by 7.5 miles of massive walls, 15 gates, and deep moat channels. It relied on the Tigris and Khosr rivers for security.

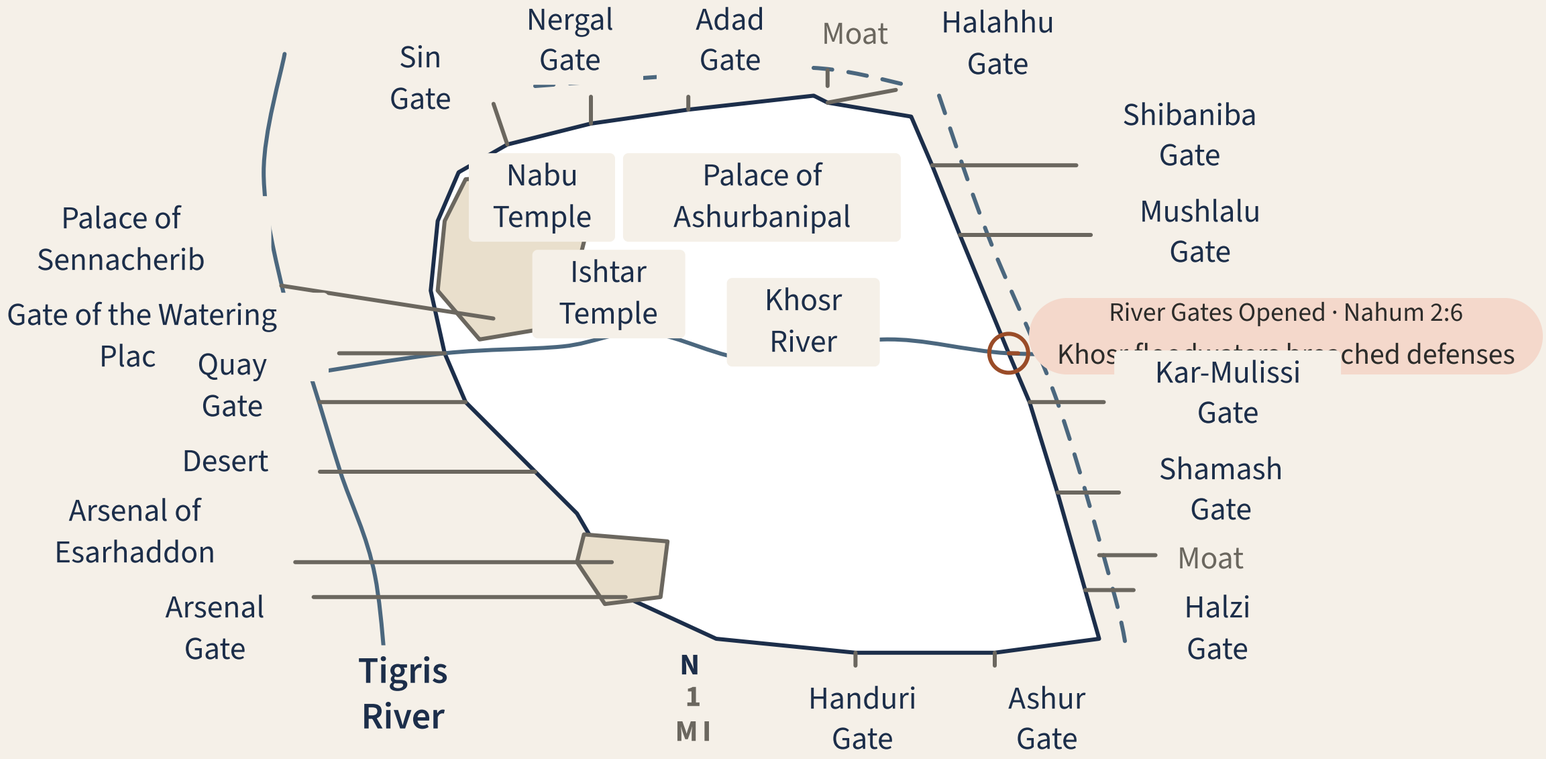
“The river gates are opened, and the palace melts away.”

Nahum 2:6

“With an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place.”

Nahum 1:8 · Sluice gates breached by floodwaters

Pastor Kim: The defense mechanism Assyria trusted ironically became the instrument of God’s avenging judgment.



The LORD is a jealous and avenging God;
the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with
wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his
foes and vents his wrath against his enemies.

Nahum 1:2 · NIV

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of distress; He cares for those who trust in Him.

Nahum 1:7 · BSB

MINOR PROPHETS

Prayers and Divine Judgment

Believers' prayers for justice ascend to God's throne and return to earth as divine judgment against oppressors.



Nahum 1:2 · Nahum 1:7 · Revelation 6:9–11 · Revelation 8:3–5

Jonah and Nahum Compared

Across one century, God reveals two consistent aspects of His character: relentless mercy in Jonah and righteous justice in Nahum.

Jonah (c. 760 BC)	Nahum (c. 660 BC)
Nineveh receives a warning	Nineveh receives a sure judgment
Call to repentance	Verdict of destruction
God's mercy to Jonah (water)	God's justice to Nineveh (water)
Israel humiliated	Israel vindicated
Nineveh repents from evil	Nineveh returns to evil
Judgment is withheld	Judgment is executed
God is compassionate	God is avenging
Ending with a question: Grace	Ending with a question: Justice

Jonah 4:11 · Nahum 1:2 · Nahum 1:7 · Nahum 3:19

MINOR PROPHETS

Questions of Grace and Justice

Jonah ends with a question of grace and Nahum with a question of justice, balancing God’s relentless mercy and righteous vengeance.

Jonah

A QUESTION OF GRACE

- Prophesied 100 years earlier
- Nineveh repented from the king down
- Righteous judgment was postponed
- Reveals God's relentless mercy

4:11 Question of grace: should God not care for Nineveh?

Nahum

A QUESTION OF JUSTICE

- Prophesied 100 years later
- Nineveh returned to endless cruelty
- Righteous judgment was executed
- Reveals God's covenant justice

3:19 Question of justice: who has not felt endless cruelty?

Seventh-Century Prophets

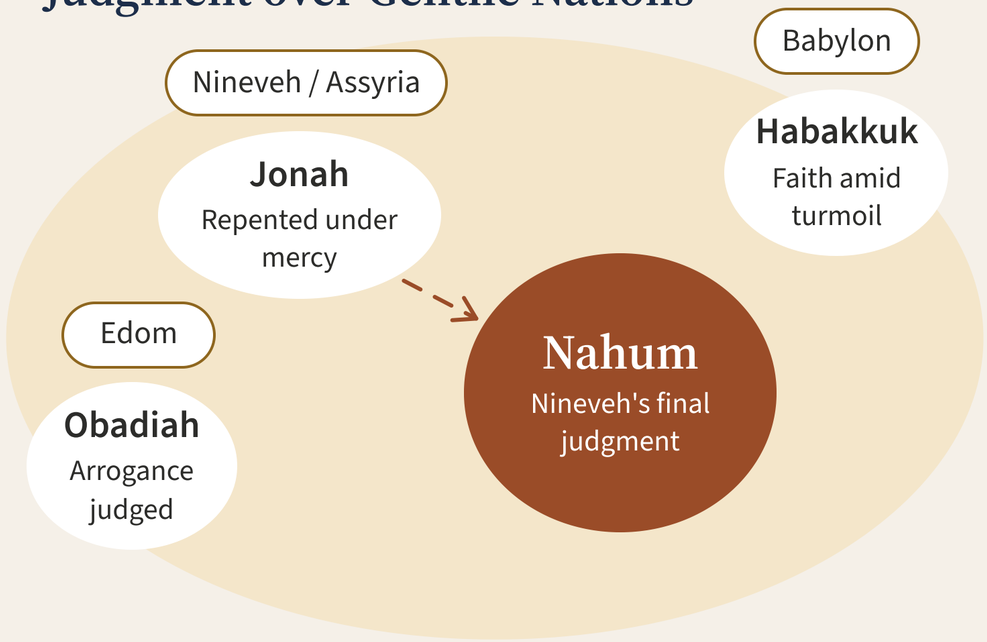
Amid shifting world powers, the seventh-century prophets call the remnant to seek God's refuge and trust His sovereign justice.

Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah
Before Assyria’s fall (c. 670 BC)	Before Jerusalem’s fall	Before Jerusalem’s fall
Vengeance of God	Providence of God	Greatness of God
Against Nineveh	Against Babylon	Against the whole world
Those who seek God as refuge (1:7)	Those who trust in God, be still (2:20)	Those who wait on God (3:8), be still (1:7)
The oppressed remnant	The righteous remnant (2:4)	The meek remnant (2:3)
God will avenge	God will march forward	God will rejoice over them (3:17)

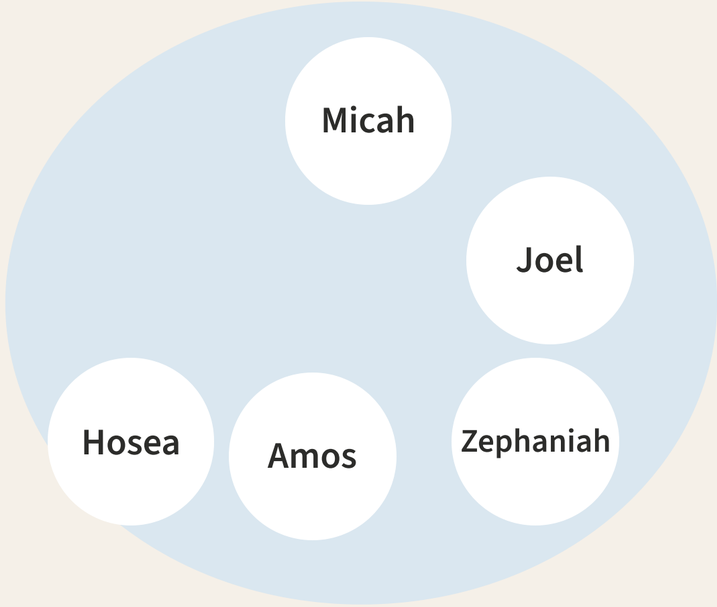
Nahum and the Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets focus either primarily on judgment over Gentile nations or on judgment beginning with Israel and reaching the nations.

Judgment over Gentile Nations



Judgment from Israel to the Nations



Remnant → The Church
The faithful church shares Israel's covenant destiny

Covenant People First
God purges His household before judging foreign powers

Sovereignty over History
Worldly empires rise and fall under God's righteous rule

MINOR PROPHETS

The Good News of Peace

A herald announces the oppressor's defeat, proclaiming a new era of victory and peace for God's oppressed people.

Imperial Heralds

ANCIENT NEAR EAST & ROME

A decisive military victory overturns the world order

Imperial couriers carry the official proclamation (euangelion) across the empire

A new Caesar is acclaimed as victorious and called the son of god

Announces a new era of imperial rule and Roman peace

Nahum's Gospel

NAHUM 1:15

The Lord executes righteous covenant vengeance upon the oppressor

The feet of a herald appear on the mountains bringing good news

Nineveh the brutal oppressor is shattered and will never invade again

Judah celebrates sacred feasts, fulfills vows, and receives divine peace

Mark's Gospel

MARK 1:1

God decisively defeats sin and demonic oppression at the cross of Christ

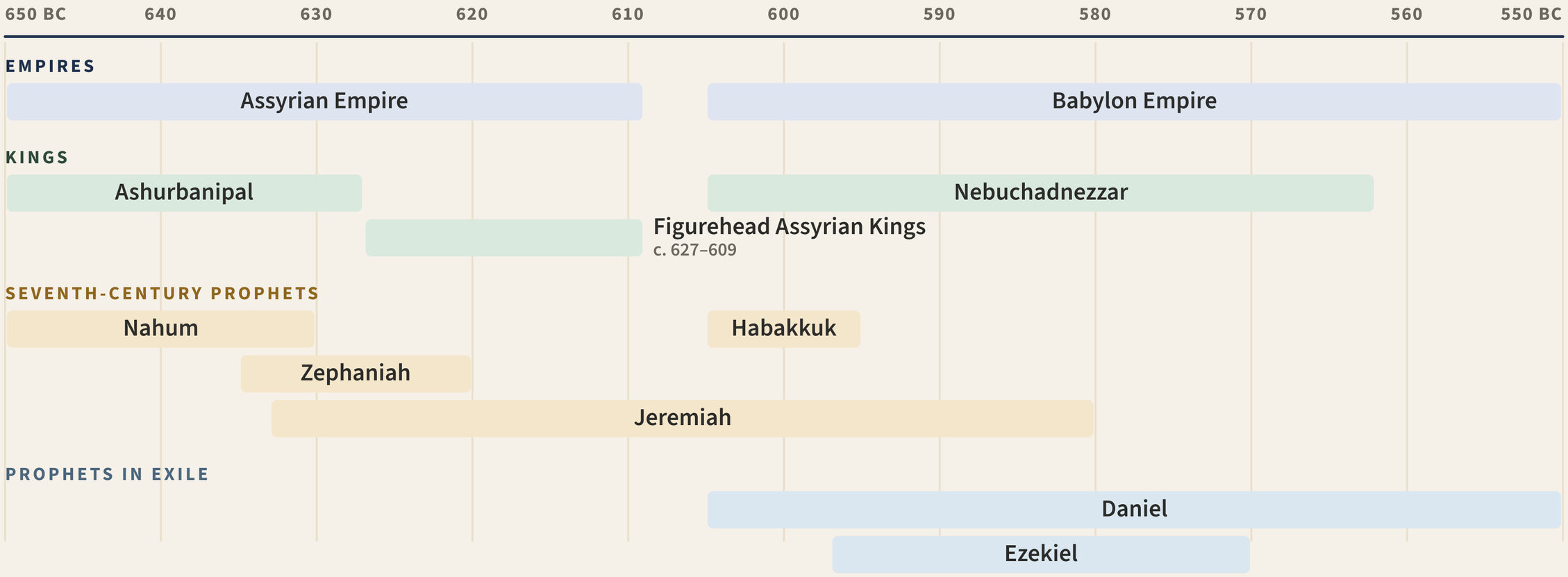
Apostles proclaim the good news (euangelion) of salvation to all nations

Jesus Christ, not Caesar, is revealed as the true Son of God and King

The faithful remnant enters the eternal kingdom of liberation and peace

Seventh-Century Prophets

Seventh-century prophets ministered as imperial power shifted from Assyria to Babylon before the fall of Jerusalem.



Nahum 1:7 · Habakkuk 1:1–4 · Habakkuk 1:13 · Zephaniah 1:7 · Zephaniah 3:8

Nahum and Revelation

Nahum's theme of righteous judgment unfolds in Revelation from the cry for justice to final restoration.



Expansion of the Persian Empire

In the sixth century BC, the Persian Empire expanded across the ancient world, taking over the Babylonian Empire.

- **Median Empire (taken by Cyrus, 550 B.C.)**
- **Lydian Empire (taken by Cyrus, 546 B.C.)**
- **Neo-Babylonian Empire (taken by Cyrus, 539 B.C.)**
- **Egyptian Territory (taken by Cambyses II, 525 B.C.)**
- **Capital city**
- **City or town**



Borders c. 550–521 B.C., as standard Bible atlases show them; ancient borders are approximate. Places: OpenBible.info (CC BY 4.0). Coastlines, lakes, and rivers: Natural Earth.

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