

A reading guide for

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE



Micah - Zephaniah

Reading Guide, Part 3

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Getting Started

The books of the twelve Minor Prophets (Hosea – Malachi) are sometimes overlooked compared to their longer and more well-known counterparts, but they contain some of the great themes of Scripture, such as God’s mercy and judgment, His covenant with Israel, the day of the Lord, and the coming of the Messiah.

How to Use This Guide

This booklet is divided into three main sections. The first section offers a brief overview of the prophets, their lives, and the historical occasion of their writing.

The next, and main section, contains reading guides for each of the prophets. These guides begin with the main themes and basic outline of the prophet being studied. Then, the study questions will aid readers in making observations of the text to better understand the historical situation and the message of the prophet, including how it relates to the larger story of the Twelve, the Old and New Testaments, Christian theology, and to the present day. It is recommended that each prophet be read in one sitting, in its entirety, to gain a full picture of the entire message, before engaging with the study questions. Finally, each prophet section will have a list of books and articles for further reading.

The final section of this booklet contains detailed discussions and overviews of how the prophets previously discussed fit into the larger story of the Twelve. This section includes cross-references and textual notes that connect the prophets one to another. The goal of this section is to aid in further study and give one the sense of how the Book of the Twelve was always considered a unified whole.

Thank you for using this guide, and may God bless your study of His Word!

Overview of the Prophets

Who were Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah?

The prophets Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah form a fascinating sub unit within the larger Book of the Twelve, which serves an important function in the overall story. Based on the historical data in the superscriptions of Micah and Zephaniah, we know that Micah ministered during the reign of Hezekiah, and Zephaniah ministered during the reign of Hezekiah's great-grandson Josiah. Given that Hezekiah's reign ended c. 687 BC and Josiah's reign began c. 640 BC, that leaves around 50 eventful years of Judah's history.

It is no accident, then, that Nahum and Habakkuk, though we are not given historical data in their superscriptions, are placed between Micah and Zephaniah. Nahum and Habakkuk fill in the chronological gap, given the readers important information about the destruction and downfall of Assyria (Nahum) and Babylon (Habakkuk), the two existential threats to God's people. Thus, the sequence of Micah-Zephaniah, give the readers of the Twelve an answer to the theodicy problem. Though God did use these wicked nations of Assyria and Babylon to bring judgment against the people of Israel and Judah, they will not escape God's judgment themselves. The Day of the LORD will be the day when God brings judgment and justice against all God's enemies.

That is not the only purpose these books serve. After the Amos-Obadiah-Jonah sequence introduced readers to the theological truth of the inclusion of Gentiles/all nations into the promise of the Messianic, Davidic kingdom (Hos 3:4-5; Amos 9:11-12), Micah returns the attention back to God's people, telling them what God requires (Micah 6:8). Habakkuk will continue this theme, by stating that it is the one who is made righteous by his faith that will live (Hab 2:4). Zephaniah, then, returns the theme back to the Day of the LORD (Zeph 1:7), the day when all this will happen. It is the righteous one by faith (Hab 2:4), who does what the Lord commands (Micah 6:8), who will inherit the promises of restoration (Zeph 3:14-20). This promise is not for the people of Israel, but for all, from every nation and tongue, who call upon the name of the Lord (Joel 2:32)

Micah

Theme and Outline

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

— Micah 6:8

- I. Accusations and Warnings Against Israel and Judah | 1:1-2:13
 - a. Destruction for Samaria and Judah | 1:1-16
 - b. Woe to Those Devising Wickedness | 2:1-11
 - c. Promise of God the Shepherd | 2:12-13
- II. Punishment for the Present, Promises for the Future | 3:1-5:15
 - a. Present Leaders Denounced | 3:1-12
 - b. Promise of a New Jerusalem | 4:1-7
 - c. Promise of a Restoration from Exile | 4:8-13
 - d. Promise of a Messianic Kingdom | 5:1-6
 - e. Promise of Deliverance for a Remnant | 5:7-15
- III. The Lord's Indictment and Future Restoration | 6:1-7:20
 - a. The Lord's Indictment | 6:1-7:7
 - b. Promise of God's Salvation | 7:8-20

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Micah? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve? Take a moment to review the book outline on the previous page.

Who are the kings listed in Micah 1:1? Where does this date his ministry in relation to the other prophets in the Twelve? With which of the three major prophets was Micah a contemporary?

What same word appears in 1:2; 3:1; and 6:1 that separate each of these units from one another?

Understanding the Text

Unlike the previous prophets of Obadiah and Jonah who prophesied against Edom and Nineveh respectively, to whom does Micah address his prophecy? (see Micah 1:5-6; 3:1). What are the accusations leveled against this group?

Each of the three sections of Micah begin with accusations and judgment (1:2-2:11; 3:1-12; 6:1-7:7), but then each section ends with promises of restoration (2:12-13; 4:1-5:15; 7:8-20). What does this structure demonstrate about the main theme of Micah? What does this tell us about God's nature, and what he will accomplish in the Day of the LORD?

Look at the description of the leaders that are denounced in 3:1-12. Then look again at Micah 6:8. How do the descriptions of the wicked leaders and the description of the Lord's requirement differ? How do these wicked leaders differ from the description of the Lord's headship in Micah 2:12-13?

The Lord calls for remembrance of his deliverance of his people in Micah 6:1-5. What major events in the history of Israel does Micah reference in this passage?

Jonah-Micah Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 34-37 for help on this section]

Read Exodus 34:6-7 and make a list of the attributes of God that you find. Then look at Jonah 4:2 and Micah 7:18-20. Which attributes do Jonah and Micah reference from Exodus 34:6-7? Which do they leave out? Use your answer to this question under the *Micah-Nahum Connection* section on page 13.

What time period is in view in Micah 4:1-5. How does that connect to Hosea 3:4-5? What similarities do you see between these two prophecies?

Biblical and Theological Connections

There are many locations and place names throughout Micah. Some of the most important are found in Micah 1:15 "I will again bring a conqueror to you, inhabitants of Mareshah; the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam." Read 1 Samuel 22:1 and 2 Sam 23:13-14. Which biblical character is associated with Adullam in those passages? What does that tell us about the identity of this "conqueror" who is the "glory of Israel" in Micah 1:15?

Read Jeremiah 26:1-24. Why is Jeremiah being threatened with death, and how does a reference to Micah help save him? (Compare Jeremiah 26:18 and Micah 3:12).

Reread Micah 4:1-5, and then read Isaiah 2:1-5? What similarities do you see between these two passages? What differences do you see? Then look at Joel 3:10. How does Joel 3:10 differ from Micah 4:3 and Isaiah 2:4?

Look again at Micah 4:4. This verse does not appear in Isaiah 2:1-5, but seems to be an addition that Micah makes. Read 1 Kings 4:25. What verbiage does Micah take from that verse and add in Micah 4:4? Which king is being referenced in 1 Kings 4:25, and what does that tell us about Micah's understanding of this prophecy? (Look ahead at Zechariah 3:8-10 for help with this question).

Matthew quotes from Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:6. What is Matthew trying to accomplish concerning his account of the birth of Jesus, by quoting from Micah? (Look also at 2 Sam 5:2; Daniel 7:9-14; Luke 2:1-7).

Jesus quotes from Micah 7:6 in Matthew 10:35-36. Who is Jesus talking to in this section (Matt 10:1, 5)? Who is doing the action in Micah 7:6? Who is doing the action in Matthew 10:35-36? What does this say about Jesus self-identification to his disciples?

Applying the Text

Read Micah 6:6-8 together with Deuteronomy 10:12-22. How does Micah's call to faithful obedience resemble Moses' call to the nation of Israel? How does Jesus include these words in Matthew 23:23? How does Paul's call to action in Romans 12:1-2 also help articulate the Christian's calling?

Based on your answer to the question above, what are some practical steps that you can take to apply the words of Micah 6:8 in your life? Consider the brief definitions of the three “requirements” in Micah 6:8 below:

- “Do Justice” – Based on the historic time period of Micah, and the description of the wicked leaders, this includes not showing favoritism, not taking bribes, giving justice to orphans and widows, and providing for the sojourner with food and clothing (Micah 3:9-11; cf. Deut 10:17-19). What are ways in which justice can be sought in our day?
- “Love Kindness” – This phrase could better be translated “devote oneself to covenant loyalty.” In this sense, what is required here is to love the Lord with all one’s faculties and committing oneself to the covenant stipulations that God requires.
- “Walk Humbly” – Walk in all of God’s ways (Deut 10:12), without presumption, but in submission and trust in God (Prov 11:2; Matt 23:23).

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Micah

- Alexander, T. Desmond; Baker, David W.; Waltke, Bruce K. *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. TOTC. InterVarsity Press, 1989.
- Allen, Leslie C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1976.
- Barker, Kenneth L.; Bailey, Waylon. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NAC. Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
- Phillips, Richard D., *Jonah & Micah*, Reformed Expository Commentary Series, P&R, 2010.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018.

Other Resources

- Holroyd, Kristofer, “Jonah, Micah, and Nahum: A 12-Week Study,” Crossway, 2016.
- The Bible Project, “Overview of Micah,” accessible online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/micah/>

Nahum

Theme and Outline

Nineveh is proof that God will answer the problem of evil, and will not allow wickedness to endure forever.

“The LORD will by no means clear the guilty...The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him.”

— Nahum 1:3b, 7

- I. A Poem of Wrath Against Nineveh | 1:1-15
 - a. An Acrostic Poem: The Nature of God | 1:1-8
 - b. Judgment on the Wicked | 1:9-14
 - c. The Remnant Delivered | 1:15
- II. The Fall of Nineveh | 2:1-13
- III. Assyria's Downfall | 3:1-19

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Nahum? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve? Take a moment to review the book outline on the previous page.

To whom is Nahum's oracle directed? (1:1). Which other prophet in the Book of the Twelve was also concerned primarily with this specific group?

Take a moment to look over the acrostic poem translation on page 31, and the notes below it. We will discuss this in class.

Understanding the Text

Before Nahum prophesies destruction against Nineveh, he begins with a poem about God's nature. Look back over the poem in 1:2-8, and list out the different attributes of God. What patterns emerge from your list?

Nineveh was a principal city the empire of Assyria, and was described as a great city (Jonah 1:2; 3:2). What place does the Assyrian empire have in the history of the Israelite people? Which is the nation that comes after them, which is depicted as the conquering army in Nahum 2:1-13?

Nahum ends with a rhetorical question? (3:19). Which is the only other prophet in the Book of the Twelve that also ends with a question? What connects these two prophets together? What message does Nahum wish to leave with his readers through this question?

Micah-Nahum Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 34-37 for help on this section]

Look back at your answer under the *Jonah-Micah Connection* on page 6. Jonah 4:2 and Micah 7:18-20 both quote from God's self-revelation in Exodus 34:6-7, but they do not quote the entire passage. What part of God's self-revelation do Jonah and Micah leave out? Where does this left-out language from Exodus 34:6-7 show up in Nahum 1:2-3, and how does that help us understand Nahum's message?

Biblical and Theological Connections

What connections are there in Nahum 1:15 and Isaiah 52:7, and subsequently Romans 10:15? What differences are there in Nahum compared to Isaiah? What is Paul's purpose in quoting this passage in Romans 10:15, and how does that impact our reading of Nahum's prophecy?

Look back over your notes from Jonah and compare the story of the Ninevites then to what is happening now. What could explain this drastic change of outcome for this city? How does the self-revelation of God, that he "will by no means clear the guilty" (Nahum 1:3; Exod 34:7) help us understand the message of Nahum?

Look back over your notes from Amos and Obadiah. Which nation was introduced at the end of Amos, which became the main focal point for Obadiah? What did this nation represent? How does the city of Nineveh function in a similar way in the stories of Jonah and Nahum? And how does this all help advance the broad, unified story of the Twelve (see Hos 3:4-5; Joel 2:30-32; Amos 9:11-12; Obad 15, 19-21; Jonah 4:1-4, 11; Micah 7:18-20; Nah 1:2-3; 19).

Applying the Text

We have talked in this class about the two primary purposes for the Book of the Twelve, both concerning the problem of evil, or *theodicy*. The first purpose was to give a historical rationale for the evil that God's people faced through the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and their exile. The second purpose was practical application for God's people in every age to help them as they inevitably deal with sin and evil in their own lives.

Look back at the theme verse for Nahum: "The LORD will by no means clear the guilty...The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him." (1:3b, 7). How does this verse help us wrestle with the problem of evil, and help us to trust in the Lord?

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Nahum

- Allen, Leslie C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1976.
- Barker, Kenneth L.; Bailey, Waylon. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NAC. Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- Bruckner, James. *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NIVAC. Zondervan, 2004.
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1990.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018.

Other Resources

- The Bible Project, “Overview of Nahum,” accessible online:<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/nahum/>
- Holroyd, Kristofer, “Jonah, Micah, and Nahum: A 12-Week Study,” Crossway, 2016.

Habakkuk

Theme and Outline

“...*but the righteous shall live by his faith.*”
— Habakkuk 2:4

- I. Back and Forth, Habakkuk and God | 1:1-2:5
 - a. First Complaint | 1:2-4
 - b. God’s Response | 1:5-11
 - c. Second Complaint | 1:12-2:1
 - d. God’s Response | 2:2-4
 - i. The Righteous Live by Faith | 2:4
- II. Five ‘Woes’ | 2:5-20
 - a. Introduction to the Woes | 2:5-6a
 - b. (1) Economic Theft | 2:6b-8
 - c. (2) Unjust Gain | 2:9-11
 - d. (3) Slave Labor | 2:12-14
 - e. (4) Drunk Leaders | 2:15-17
 - f. (5) Idolatry | 2:18-20
- III. Habakkuk’s Prayer | 3:1-19
 - a. Habakkuk Pleads that God Would Act | 3:1-2
 - b. A Mosaic of God’s Redemptive Power | 3:3-15
 - c. Hopeful Praise | 3:16-19

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Nahum? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve? Take a moment to review the book outline on the previous page.

To which nation(s) or people group(s) Habakkuk prophesying?

Habakkuk, like Nahum, does not have any historical data in its superscription. Given its position between Micah and Zephaniah, and the internal evidence from the text of Habakkuk, when was it most likely that this prophet ministered? Use the chart on page # for help.

Understanding the Text

How does God respond to each of Habakkuk's complaints? (1:5-11; 2:2-4). What does this teach us about God's nature?

How do the five “woes” in 2:5-20 connect with the verse that immediately precedes it (2:4), and chapter 3 that follows?

What connections to well-known biblical stories do you see in the Mosaic that Habakkuk paints in 3:3-15?

Nahum-Habakkuk Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 34-37 for help on this section]

What historical connection do the nations of Assyria and Babylon share, specifically with regard to the people of Israel and Judah? Given this connection, what do you think the significance is that Nahum and Habakkuk primarily deal the nations of Assyria and Babylon respectively?

Nahum begins with a poem (Nahum 1:2-8), Habakkuk ends with a poem (Habakkuk 3:1-19). Reread these two poems. Are either Assyria or Babylon mentioned by name in either poem? What does this suggest about the deeper meaning of these two passages, and the prophets as a whole?

Biblical and Theological Connections

Paul quotes from Habakkuk 1:5 in Acts 13:41. Where and to whom is Paul speaking in Acts 13? What is the main idea of his message? How does he interpret Habakkuk 1:5, and what is the “work” that God is doing in their days, which they “would not believe if told”?

Habakkuk 2:4 is one of the most profound and powerful statements in all of Scripture. Take some time to read through how the New Testament authors use this verse in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:37-38. How do the New Testament authors understand the nature of true righteousness, and how one acquires it?

Read Genesis 15:1-6 and then Romans 4:11-12. How does this story of Abraham, and Paul’s instruction on it, inform our understanding of Habakkuk 2:4, and the relationship between righteousness and faith?

Applying the Text

The life and story of Habakkuk offers the reader many opportunities for reflection. Read back through the five woes from 2:5-20. What are some areas where your life looks more like the people in 2:5-20, rather than looking like the righteous one who lives by faith (2:4)?

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 33 states: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." How does the statement in Habakkuk 2:4 agree with our confession? In what way is one made righteous?

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Habakkuk

- Barker, Kenneth L.; Bailey, Waylon. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NAC. Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- Bruckner, James. *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NIVAC. Zondervan, 2004.
- Chantry, Walter J., *Habakkuk: A Wrestler with God*, Banner of Truth, 2008.
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
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- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018.

Other Resources

- The Bible Project, “Overview of Habakkuk,” accessible online:<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/habakkuk/>
- Bucey, Camden, “Lamentations, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A 12-Week Study,” Crossway.

Zephaniah

Theme and Outline

“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

— Zephaniah 3:17

- I. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem | 1:1-6
- II. The Day of the Lord | 1:7-3:20
 - a. A Day of Sacrifice and Punishment | 1:7-9
 - b. A Day of Wrath | 1:10-18
 - c. A Day of Mercy through Repentance | 2:1-3
 - d. A Day of Judgment against All Nations | 2:4-3:8
 - i. Philistines | 2:4-7
 - ii. Moab and Ammon | 2:8-11
 - iii. Cush | 2:12
 - iv. Assyria | 2:13-15
 - v. Jerusalem | 3:1-7
 - vi. God’s Burning Indignation | 3:8
 - e. A Day of Joy and Restoration | 3:9-20
 - i. God’s Burning Indignation Purifies the People | 3:9-10
 - ii. God Restores and Rejoices over Judah | 3:11-20

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Zephaniah? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve? Take a moment to review the book outline on the previous page.

Which prominent theme from the Twelve shows up again in Zephaniah 1:7 and following?

Which nations are referenced in 2:4-3:8? Where have these nations showed up previously?

Understanding the Text

Look back over the outline above. How would you describe the Day of the Lord from 1:7-3:20 based on the subject headings for each section? How do the themes of Judgment and Mercy (Hosea 3:4-5) show up throughout this section?

Many nations are listed as the object of God's judgment in 2:4-3:7, but in 3:8 something changes. What is God's "decision" on that day in 3:8? And upon whom is he said to pour out his "burning indignation?" How does this connect back to the major theme that we saw in Amos-Obadiah? (See Amos 9:11-12; Obad 15).

What is the source of Israel and Jerusalem's joy in 3:14-15 and following? What does God promise to do for his people in 3:20?

Without exception, we are told the people will be "quiet" on the Day of the Lord. What is different, however, between the description of the Day of the Lord in 1:7-8 and in 3:17? How, or why, are the people made silent in both instances?

Habakkuk-Zephaniah Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 34-37 for help on this section]

Habakkuk and Zephaniah share connecting language and themes, a common pattern we have seen within the Twelve as it moves from book to book. What common words and language shows up in Habakkuk 2:20b and 3:16b that connects to Zephaniah 1:2-3, 7, and 15?

Zephaniah 1:7 reintroduces the great theme of the Day of the Lord into the Book of the Twelve, and will remain a major theme throughout the rest of the prophets. Go back and review Joel 1:15-2:32 and Obadiah 15-21. How do the descriptions of the Day of the Lord in these two previous prophets compare with Zephaniah's prophecy?

Which three books follow Zephaniah? Take a moment and look ahead to the superscriptions of these three prophets. Using this information, and the timeline of Kings and Prophets on page 30, what significant historical event is soon to happen after Zephaniah? How does the prophecy at the end of Zephaniah lead directly to this event? Do you think this prophecy in Zephaniah 3:11-20 has been fulfilled? Why or why not.

Biblical and Theological Connections

King Josiah was an important figure in the kingdom of Judah. What is he famous for doing (see 2 Kings 22-23)? How does Josiah's history and his reign help us understand Zephaniah's message?

Compare Zephaniah's description of God's judgment in 1:3 to his description of judgment in Genesis 6:7. How does Zephaniah's description of un-creation compare with the flood in Genesis 6:7 and following? How does this point forward to the promise of new creation? (Zeph 3:11-20; Isa 65:17-13; 2 Pet 3; Rev 21-22?)

How is the person seeking repentance described in Zephaniah 2:3? How is this similar to the description of the one who does God's commands in Micah 6:8, and the "righteous one" in Habakkuk 2:4 and 3:1-19?

Applying the Text

The amazing and incredible truth of Scripture is that no matter our background, our past, the present, or even the future, we are and ever will belong to Christ (1 Corinthians 3:22-23; 1 John 10:14-15; 17:8-10; Eph 1:5-6; Gal 4:6-7). And because of our union with Christ, we are the heirs and recipients of all the promises we find in Scripture. Take a moment to meditate on and pray back to God these promises from the end of Zephaniah:

"The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil" (Zeph 3:15).

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing" (Zeph 3:17).

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Zephaniah

- Barker, Kenneth L.; Bailey, Waylon. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NAC. Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- Bruckner, James. *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NIVAC. Zondervan, 2004.
- Harmon, Matthew P., *Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi*, Reformed Expository Commentary, P&R, 2018.
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
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Other Resources

- The Bible Project, “Overview of Zephaniah,” accessible online:<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/zephaniah/>
- Bucey, Camden, “Lamentations, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A 12-Week Study,” Crossway.

Resources

Map of the World of the Twelve



Timeline of Kings and Prophets

Year BC	Kings of Judah	Prophets	Kings of Israel
	<i>United Kingdom (1030-931)</i>		
1030	Saul (1031-1010)	Samuel	Saul (1031-1010)
1020			
1010	David (1010-971)	Nathan	David (1010-971)
1000			
990			
980			
970	Solomon (971-931)		Solomon (971-931)
960			
950			
940			
930	Rehoboam (931-914)		Jeroboam I (931-910)
920			
910	Abijah (914-911); Asa (911-870)		Nadab (910-909)
900			Baasha (909-886)
890			
880			Elah (886); Zimri (885); Omri (885-874)
870	Jehoshaphat (870-848)		Ahab (874-853)
860		Elijah	
850		Elisha	Ahaziah (853-852)
840	Jehoram (847-842); Ahaziah (842-841)		Jehoram (852-841)
830	Athaliah [Queen] (841-835)		Jehu (841-813)
820	Joash/Jehoash (835-796)		
810			Jehoahaz (813-797)
800			
790	Amaziah (796-767)	Joel (?)	Joash (797-781)
780		Hosea; Amos; Jonah	Jeroboam II (781-753)
770		Obadiah (?)	
760	Uzziah (767-740)		
750			Zachariah (753-752); Shallum (752)
740	Jotham (750-735)	Micah; Isaiah	Menahem (752-741); Pekahiah (741-739)
730	Ahaz (735-715)		Pekah (739-731)
720			Hoshea (731-722)
710	Hezekiah (715-687)		Assyrian Captivity (722)
700			
690			
680	Manasseh (686-642)		
670			
660		Nahum	
650			
640	Amon (642-640); Josiah (640-609)	Habakkuk; Zephaniah	
630			
620		Jeremiah	
610			
600	Jehoahaz (609); Jehoiakim (609-598)	Daniel	
590	Jehoiakin (598-597); Zedekiah (597-586)	Ezekiel	
580	The Babylonian Captivity (586-536)	Obadiah (?)	
570			
560			
550			
540			
530	1st Return; Zerubbabel, governer (536)		
520		Haggai; Zechariah	
510	Temple rebuilt (516)		
500			
490			
480			
470			
460			
450	2nd Return; Nehemiah, governer (458)	Malachi	
440	3rd Return (445)		

An English Translation of Nahum's Poem

- 1:2 [א] God is Yahweh, jealous and vengeful,
Yahweh is vengeful and a lord of wrath.
[ב] Yahweh takes vengeance on his adversaries,
And keeps wrath for his enemies.
- 1:3 [ג] Yahweh is slow to anger, but strong in power,
Yahweh will not leave the guilty unpunished.
[ד] In a storm-wind and tempest is his way,
The dust of his feet is a cloud.
- 1:4 [ה] Rebukes the sea and he makes it dry,
And all the rivers he dries up.
[ו] Languish is all Bashan and Carmel have left,
The sprout of Lebanon languishes too.
- 1:5 [ז] Mountains, they quake from before him,
And the hills, they melt away.
[ח] Ruined, the earth becomes before him,
The world and all its inhabitants therein.
- 1:6 [ט] Before his indignation who can stand?
And who can stand up against his anger?
[י] Wrath is poured out like fire,
Rocks are broken down before him
- 1:7 [יא] Good is Yahweh,
A stronghold in the day of distress.
[יב] Yahweh knows those who seek refuge in him.
- 1:8 [יג] Like a flood that passes through, he will make that place a
complete destruction,
His enemies he will pursue into darkness

Comparison of Isa 2:1-5 and Mic 4:1-5

Isaiah 2:1-5 (ESV)

1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains,

and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,

3 and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations,

and shall decide disputes for many peoples;

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Micah 4:1-5 (ESV)

1 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains,

and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and peoples shall flow to it,

2 and many nations shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob,

that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

3 He shall judge between many peoples,

and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;

4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,
and no one shall make them afraid,

for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

5 For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god,

but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

Unity of the Twelve

A Thematic Overview of the Twelve¹

Sin

Hosea	Israel's general spiritual adultery
Joel	Israel's sin, plus the nations' general wickedness
Amos	The specific sins of Israel and the nations
Obadiah	Edom's hatred of Assyria
Micah	The solution for sin

Punishment

Nahum	Assyria's punishment
Habakkuk	Israel and Babylon's punishment
Zephaniah	Punishment of all nations

Restoration

Haggai	Restoration of the temple
Zechariah	Restoration of Jerusalem and the nations
Malachi	Restoration of the Jewish people

¹ Based on the structure of the Twelve developed by Paul R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve*, Sheffield Academic Press, 1990, page 72.

An Overview of Literary and Thematic Connections in the Twelve²

Each prophet is connected to one another in three ways:

1. There is unique content at the “seams” between each book that stands out from what comes before and after
2. The language in these “seams” picks up on and develops the main message of judgment and future restoration from Hosea 3:4-5
3. There is a reference or connection to the prophet Jeremiah

The Main Theme of the Twelve — Hos 3:4-5

- A specific promise that looks ahead rather than to the present.
- There will be judgment (verse 4), but God will have mercy (verse 5), which will come with the salvation that the new Davidic king brings.
- Hos 3:5 connects to Jer 30:9.

Hosea-Joel Connection — Hos 14:9; Joel 1:2-3

- The end of Hosea and beginning of Joel contain wisdom language that is not typical for prophetic books, and different from what comes before and after.
- Implores the reader to seek wisdom and consider everything that God has done and is doing, in light of the promise of Hos 3:4-5. (Together with Mal 4:4, creates a bookend to the Twelve that also connects to Psalm 1).
- Hos 14:9 connects to Jer 9:12.

Joel-Amos Connection — Joel 3:16a; Amos 1:2a

- Only time in the Twelve that has “The LORD roars from Zion.”
- The Day of the LORD is the major theme in Joel. Amos picks up this theme in Amos 5:18-20. This great and mighty day of the LORD is when he will execute his judgment and mercy.
- Jer 25:30a uses the same language, which is part of his prophecy of the 70 years of captivity and judgment (see also Daniel 9).

² Adapted from Michael B. Shepherd, *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel Academic, 2018, pages 34-26.

Amos-Obadiah Connection — Amos 9:11-15; Obad 1-5; 17-21

- Amos ends with the prophecy of a restored booth of David that will one day possess Edom, a major theme in Obadiah.
- Because Edom is a symbol for all mankind (Adam), Obadiah's prophecy means that the booth of David will possess all the earth. The promise of Ho 3:4-5 now extends to all nations, not just Israel.
- Jer 49:7-22 connects to Obad 1-5. Specifically, Jer 49:9, 14-16

Obadiah-Jonah Connection

- The book of Obadiah, juxtaposed between Amos and Jonah, itself serves as a seam that connects Amos-Obadiah-Jonah together.
- What Edom was to Amos and Obadiah, Nineveh is to Jonah (Jonah 1:2; 3:2; 4:11).
- Jer 49:7-22 connects to Obad 1-5, does double duty.

Jonah-Micah Connection

- Jonah 4:2b and Micah 7:18-20 both quote Exod 34:6-7.
- The two themes of judgment and restoration (Hos 3:4-5) that are part of God's self-revelation to Moses (Exod 34:6-7) are quoted and then expanded upon by Jonah and Micah. Micah also deals with Assyria and other nations, that will be included in the future kingdom (Mic 4:1-5; 5:2-6).
- Mic 3:12 is quoted in Jer 26:18. Because Hezekiah did not put Micah to death, the people should not put Jeremiah to death (according to his temple gate speech in Jer 7:1-15).

Micah-Nahum Connection — Mic 7:18-20; Nah 1:2b-3a

- Like Jonah, both use Exod 34:6-7 language, but in the form of poetry.
- Micah ends highlighting the merciful and compassionate nature of God, but Nahum uses the vengeful and judgment language of Exod 34:6-7 to begin his prophecy. Thus, the language of judgment and mercy are both present.
- Jer 26:18 connects to Mic 3:12.

Nahum-Habakkuk Connection — Nahum 1:2-8; Hab 3:3-15

- Nahum begins with a poem and Habakkuk ends with a poem (see the superscriptions in Hab 3:1, 19b) that are unique within these books, and serve as bookends.
- They both share language of day of trouble/distress (Nah 1:7; Hab 3:16). Both are about the judgment of the wicked and the deliverance of the righteous in the last days.
- Hab 2:13-14 connects to Jer 51:58 and Isa 11:9.

Habakkuk-Zephaniah Connection — Hab 2:20b; 3:16b; Zeph 1:2-3, 7a, 15

- They both use distinct language (“Hush”; “Day of distress”).
- People are called to be quiet before God at The Day of the LORD, this day of trouble in which God will sweep away all that has been made (Zeph 1:2-3).
- Zeph 1:2-3 connects to Jer 7:20; 8:13; 15:3.

Zephaniah-Haggai Connection — Zeph 3:9-20

- This section of Zephaniah is a restoration section that is unique from everything preceding it.
- This section connects directly into Haggai, which begins with the temple project, the fulfillment of the prophesied restoration at the end of Zephaniah, and the ultimate restoration promised in Hos 3:4-5.
- Zeph 3:17b connects to Jer 32:41a.

Haggai-Zechariah Connection — Hag 2:20-23; Zech 1:2-6.

- Unique content:
 - Zerubbabel is chosen as a signet (Hab 2:20-23). This is a reversal of Jer 22:24, where Jehoiachin is removed as God’s signet-ring, but now Jehoiachin’s descendant Zerubbabel (1 Chr 3:17-19) is the chosen signet-ring.
 - Zechariah begins with an introduction to the visions (Zech 1:2-6), which is unique to what follows.
- Zerubbabel prefigures the Messiah (Zech 3:8; 6:12-13), the Davidic king that was promised in Hos 3:4-5.
- Jeremiah connections:
 - Hag 2:23 connects to Jer 22:24
 - Zech 1:4 connects to Jer 25:4-7

Zechariah-Malachi Connection — Zech 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1

- The only times the “Oracle of the word of the Lord” language is used in the entire Hebrew Bible.
- The focus of these sections is on eschatology and the coming Messiah (Zech 9:9-10, 12, 14; Mal 3:1).
- Matt 27:9-10 quotes Zech 11:13 but attributes it to Jeremiah. See also Zech 1:12; 7:5; Jer 25:11; 29:10.

Malachi-Psalms Connection — Mal 3:22-24; Psalm 1

- Unique content:
 - Mal 3:22-24 is not part of the six disputations in the book.
 - Psalm 1 and 2 form a separate introduction to the Psalter.
- The message of these two sections is similar: Remember the promises God has given in his Word and remain faithful until the Day of the LORD.
- Psalm 1 connects to Jer 17:5-8.

The Unified Purpose of the Twelve

In its canonical form, we can find two main purposes to the existence of the Twelve as one book. First, the Twelve is making a historical rationale for the post-exilic people of God, to help them understand the destruction of the temple and the exile of their ancestors.

Second, the Twelve is offering practical application and a call to faith, obedience, and holiness, for God's people of all ages, that they remain faithful until the coming of the Day of the LORD. God's Church in every age can benefit from a careful study of the Twelve, as it powerfully demonstrates the extent to which God's immense love for his people propels him to act in grace to redeem his people. In this sense, truly, every word these prophets spoke were ultimately concerned with Christ himself (Luke 24:27).

Lectures and Study Materials

This material was prepared by Rev. Levi Bakerink for a 12-week study on the Minor Prophets, All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church, Spring 2022.

A PDF of this booklet, as well as other handouts and lecture recordings, are available online:

https://www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=all saints reformed



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