

A reading guide for

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE



Amos - Obadiah - Jonah

Reading Guide, Part 2

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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 Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah?

Amos is described as a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town in Judah just south of Jerusalem. He prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel, making him a contemporary to Hosea. Though he is from the southern kingdom, his prophecy is largely directed toward Israel. Amos' harsh accusations and fierce judgment against Israel for her decadence and oppression of the poor are seen throughout this book, culminating in the cry to "let justice roll down like waters" (5:24). The major theme of the Book of the Twelve: Judgment and Mercy on the Day of the LORD, is expanded upon in Amos. In 5:18, Amos pronounces woes upon all who desire this coming day, because it will be a day of judgment for all unrighteousness. But, in keeping with the developing story of the Twelve, this day will also be a day of mercy and hope when God raises up the "booth of David that is fallen" (9:11), directly connecting Amos back to the previous prophets in the Twelve, Hosea (specifically Hos 3:4-5) and Joel. Amos adds to the realities of this coming Messiah by prophesying that this restored and repaired booth of David will also possess the remnant of Edom (9:12), an important theme that connects Amos to the next book, Obadiah.

Obadiah and Jonah are two of the most unique books in the Twelve, and within the prophetic corpus of Scripture as a whole. Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, only containing 21 verses. Yet it serves an invaluable purpose within the larger story of the Twelve. Amos ends with a promise that the new Davidic king would also possess the remnant of Edom. Obadiah, then, receives a vision "concerning Edom" (Obad 1). This judgment against Edom is a result of Edom's pride and their exploitation of their brother and neighboring nation of Israel, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon (Obad 10-14). Therefore, the Day of the LORD would also be against them, but also against "all nations" (Obad 15). This shift from the singular (Edom) to the plural (all nations) beginning in verse 15, displays the author's intent to use the nation of Edom as a representative for all mankind. Not much else is known about the man, Obadiah,

though because he speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem, many date his ministry sometime on or after 586 BC.

Whereas Edom was the representative Gentile nation in Amos and Obadiah, Nineveh, the great city of Assyria, is the representative in the story of Jonah. The book of Jonah contains no biographical information other than this prophet was the son of Amittai (but see 2 Kings 14:23-29). Yet, in this fast paced story, we learn a lot about this prophet. Jonah reads like a a thrilling short story, with many twists and turns, that ultimately ends with a satisfying and thought-provoking conclusion. If God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, as Jonah claims (4:2; cf. Exod 34:6-7), then why can he not decide to show mercy to any city or nation or people that he chooses (4:11)? This, then, is the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-32), that God will be gracious and merciful even to the Gentiles, even to Israel's fiercest and most wicked enemies.

At the beginning of the Book of the Twelve, Israel was awaiting their future Davidic king (Hos 3:4-5). Together, Amos-Obadiah-Jonah expand upon that promise, that this future kingdom will not be exclusive for the people of Israel, but all nations, all mankind, all peoples who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:32; cf. Acts 15:16-17; Rom 10:13).

For more information on these prophets, their time period, and how they fit into the larger story of the Twelve, look at the *Resources* on page 25 and the *Unity of the Twelve* on page 27 of this booklet.

Amos

Theme and Outline

God confronts sin with judgment, but restores his people with mercy.

In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, declares the LORD who does this

— Amos 9:11-12

- I. The Message to the Nations and Israel | 1:1-2:16
 - a. Accusations Against the Nations | 1:1-2:3
 - b. Accusation Against Judah | 2:4-5
 - c. Accusation Against Israel | 2:6-16
- II. Words and Woes to Israel and its Leaders | 3:1-6:14
 - a. A Word of Warning | 3:1-15
 - b. A Word of Doom | 4:1-13
 - c. A Word of Entreaty | 5:1-17
 - d. Woes | 5:18-6:14
 - i. Woe to those who desire the Day of the LORD | 5:18-25
 - ii. Woe to those who are at ease in Zion | 6:1-14
- III. Amos' Visions | 7:1-9:10
 - a. Visions of Inescapable Judgment | 7:1-17
 - b. Vision of a Day of Bitter Mourning | 8:1-14
 - c. Vision of the Destruction of Israel | 9:1-10
- IV. The Restoration of Israel | 9:11-15

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Amos? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve?

Who was Amos? Where was he from, and what was his profession? (Amos 1:1; 7:14-15; use the *Map of the World of the Twelve* on page 24 for reference)

Based on the kings referenced in Amos 1:1, in what time period did Amos prophesy? Who were some of his contemporaries? (See the *Timeline of Kings and Prophets* on page 25 for reference)

The phrase “says the LORD” or “declares the LORD” appears in some variation over 40 times in Amos. Skim through these phrases, and then look at the last occurrence in Amos 9:15. What is different about this phrase than all the others, and what message does the author want to impart on the reader?

Understanding the Text

The first two chapters of Amos focus on accusations and judgment against many different nations? Take a moment to list them out here. How do these accusations compare to the accusation against Israel, and what does this say about the theme and focus this book? (for more information on the different nations listed in Amos, see *The Nations in Amos 1-2* on page 26)

How do the references to the other nations heighten the suspense and make the judgment against Israel even more severe? (Look at the locations of the nations on the *Map of the World of the Twelve* on page 24 for help with this question).

What language in Amos 5:18 and following connects this book to what has come before in Hosea and Joel? How does Amos expand upon the central theme of Judgment and Mercy in the Twelve? (See Hosea 3:4-5 and Joel 2:27, 28-32).

Amos-Obadiah Connection

[Use the resource on pages 28-31 for help on these questions]

Amos ends with a prophecy of a restored “booth of David” (9:11-15). Which nation is said to be possessed by this restored Davidic kingdom? How does that connect with the following prophet, Obadiah?

How does the inclusion of this nation in the restored booth of David expand upon the promise of the future Davidic messiah in Hosea 3:4-5?

Biblical and Theological Connections

God tells Israel “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). What is significant and unique about Israel’s relationship to God? Why does that lead to a harsher punishment for them? (See Exod 19:5; 33:16; Deut 7:7-11).

What is God's judgment upon those who desire the day of the LORD? (Amos 5:18-24). How does God describe their lives and their worship, and because of that what will the Day of the LORD be like for them? What does this say about proper worship? (see Hos 6:6; Matt 9:13; 12:7; Psalm 51:16-17).

In Acts 7:42-43, Stephen quotes from Amos 5:25-27. What is the broader context of Stephen's speech, and to whom is he speaking, in Acts 7? Why do you think Stephen quoted from Amos, and what point was he making in the immediate context of this quote? What similarities and dissimilarities exist between the text of Amos 5:25-27 and the quote in Acts 7:42-43?

At the Jerusalem council, James quotes from Amos 9:11-12 (Acts 15:16-17). Read Acts 15:1-21. What was the controversy that required this council to be held? What point does James desire to get across to the other members of the council, and how does Amos 9:11-12 help him make this point? How does the change from the nation "Edom" (Amos 9:12) to the term "mankind" (Acts 15:17) further help to prove his point?

Applying the Text

Amos continually condemns the oppression of the poor and needy by those with power and wealth. Those who do such things, even though they might maintain proper ritual, sacrifices, and feasts, the Day of the LORD will be a fierce judgment against them (Amos 5:18-23). Rather, the Lord desires justice to roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (5:24). In what ways can the church promote justice and righteousness today?

The author of Hebrews says “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). This is certainly the fear the Israelites felt when they heard Amos tell them to “prepare to meet your God, O Israel!” (Amos 4:12). Read Hebrews 10:26-31. What would the result be of a sinner coming into the presence of the living God? What remedy for this problem is given to sinners in Hebrews 10:19-25? Why is this remedy so important for us to remember, especially as we “see the Day drawing near” (Heb 10:25)?

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Amos

- Beely, Ray, *Roaring of the Lion*, Banner of Truth, 1970.
- Carroll R., M. Daniel, *Amos*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Eerdmans, 2020.
- Harman, Allan H., *Amos: the Shepherd Prophet*, Banner of Truth, 2021.
- House, Paul R., "The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve)," in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
- Mother, J. A., *The Message of Amos*, The Bible Speaks Today, IVP, 1974.
- Smith, Gary V., *Hosea, Amos, Micah*, NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan, 2001.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018, pages 149-205.
- Stuart, Douglas, *Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary, Thomas Nelson, 1987.

Other Resources

- The Bible Project, "Overview of Amos," accessible online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/amos/>
- Holroyd, Kristofer D., "Joel, Amos, and Obadiah: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible)," Crossway, 2018
- Sproul, R. C., "Amos, Parts 1 and 2," in the *Great Men to Live By Series*, accessible online: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/great-men-to-live-by/amos-part-1>
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Obadiah

Theme and Outline

Edom's pride and wickedness is an example of the human condition, demonstrating mankind's need of a savior, apart from whom there is no hope in the coming judgment on the Day of the LORD.

*For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations.
As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds
shall return on your own head.*

— Obadiah 15

I. Accusations Against Edom | vv1-14

II. The Day of the LORD | vv15-21

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Obadiah? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve?

To whom is this specific prophecy addressed (Obad 1)? How many times is this person/nation referenced in this short book?

Understanding the Text

Based on the accusations in verses 10 and 11, what reasons does God state for Edom's coming destruction? Why is Jacob referred to as Edom's brother in verse 10? What biblical and historical connection is being made here? (See the questions in ***Biblical and Theological Connections*** below, and the entry for "Edom" in *The Nations in Amos 1-2* on page 26 for more information).

Verses 12-14 instruct Edom to not gloat or rejoice over the day of misfortune and destruction of Jacob and Judah. What historical event(s) are in view here?

Verse 15 of Obadiah serves as a hinge, connecting the previous verses with every that follows. What common theme within the Twelve shows up in this verse, and who is the recipient of this event?

What is the ultimate fate of Edom that Obadiah prophesies concerning them? Try and put into your own words the prophecy in verses 19-21.

Obadiah-Jonah Connection

Look at the questions under the *Amos-Obadiah-Jonah Connection* on page 20 for more information on the connections between these books.

Biblical and Theological Connections

Obadiah refers to the nation of Edom by its ancestor and figurehead Esau (similar to how Israel is sometimes referred to as Jacob in Scripture). Take some time to read about the history of these two brothers, Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:19-34; 36:1 and following). What does Gen 25:25, 30; and 36:1 tell us about Esau's name?

Reread the prophecy against Edom in Amos 1:6-9. How do the accusations and judgments in Amos give insight into the judgment against Edom in Obadiah? Where do Amos and Obadiah agree in their assessment of the wickedness of Edom?

In Hebrew, the word Edom (עֲדוֹם) “*edom*” is spelled with the exact same letters as the word for mankind (אָדָם) “*adam*” (from where we get the name Adam). This is no accident, but an intentional way of using Edom as a parable for all humanity. Look again at verses 15 and 16. Who is the recipient of the judgment on the Day of the LORD? How does this explain Obadiah’s shift in focus from one nation (Obad 1) to “all nations” (Obad 15-16)?

If Edom is being used as a parable for all mankind, how does that help explain James’ quotation of Amos 9:11-12 in Acts 15:16-17? (Look back at the question on page 8). How is this good news for the Gentile Christians?

Applying the Text

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, but one of the most important. It tells the story of how God's judgment and mercy are not exclusive only to the people of Israel, but will be extended to all nations. How is the good news for the Gentile Christians in Acts 15 good news for us today?

Obadiah warned the people of Edom to not gloat or be prideful over the destruction of their brother Israel. This account serves as a warning to all to abandon pride and seek the Lord. What areas or relationships in your life are you prone toward pride and unhealthy comparison to others? What warnings does Obadiah give to those who are prideful? How does the life and obedience of Christ provide us with a better way? (see the parables in Matthew 20:1-16 and Luke 18:9-14; see also Matthew 20:25-28).

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Obadiah

- Allen, Leslie, C., *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT, Eerdmans, 1976.
- Baker, David W., *Joel, Obadiah, Malachi*, NIV Application Commentary, 2006.
- Block, Daniel, I., *Obadiah*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament, Zondervan, 2015
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018, pages 207-216.
- Stuart, Douglas, *Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary, Thomas Nelson, 1987.

Other Resources

- The Bible Project, “Overview of Obadiah,” accessible online:<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/obadiah/>
- Holroyd, Kristofer D., “Joel, Amos, and Obadiah: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible),” Crossway, 2018

Jonah

Theme and Outline

God is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love to *all* who call upon his name.

— *And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city...*
— Jonah 4:11

- A. Jonah's Commissioning and Flight | 1:1-3
 - B. Jonah and the Pagan Sailors | 1:4-16
 - C. Jonah's Grateful Prayer | 1:17-2:10
- A'. Jonah's Recommissioning and Compliance | 3:1-3a
 - B'. Jonah and the Pagan Ninevites | 3:b-10
 - C'. Jonah's Angry Prayer | 4:1-4
- D. Jonah's Lesson about Compassion | 4:5-11

Study Questions

Observing the Text

What is the main structure and outline of Jonah? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve?

How does the style of Jonah compare to the other prophets in the Twelve you have read so far? How would you classify the genre of literature found in Jonah?

Jonah is described as the son of Amittai, but no other historical information is given. Read 2 Kings 14:23-29. What additional information is found in that passage? Is the Jonah in 2 Kings the same as the Jonah in our story? Based on the kings mentioned in 2 Kings 14, in what time period does this story take place (use the *Timeline of Kings and Prophets* on page 25 for help).

Understanding the Text

The book of Jonah reads like a thrilling short story. Take some time to look over the outline provided above and follow the logic of how sections A B and C connect to and parallel sections A' B' and C'.

We are not sure the precise location of the port city of Tarshish, though many speculate it was located off the southern coast of Spain. Regardless of its precise location, the point remains that Jonah was trying to flee as far away from the Lord as possible. How did this attempt work out for Jonah, and what lesson does this story leave the readers about the presence of God?

Compare the response of Jonah, the sailors, and the Ninevites in this book. Which person or group had the strongest faith? Who had the weakest? How does this comparison help drive home the larger theme in this story?

How do verses 4:5-11 differ from everything that comes before? How does the story end? Do you think this is a satisfying conclusion to Jonah's story? Why or why not?

Why does God mention that the people of Nineveh do not know “their right hand from their left?” (Jonah 4:11). What does this phrase seem to convey?

Why is the Ninevites’ cattle mentioned in 4:11? Was it mentioned previously in the story? What purpose might this reference serve to the overall point of the story?

Amos-Obadiah-Jonah Connection

[Use the resource on pages 28-31 for help on this question]

The books of Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah all work together to make an important contribution to the overall story of the Book of the Twelve. Just as Edom was representative of the Gentile nations in Amos-Obadiah, now Nineveh will represent the Gentile nations in Jonah (and Nahum). Based on previous class discussions and other workbook answers, how does this fit into the larger story of the Twelve, and the major theme of Judgment and Mercy? (see Hos 3:4-5; Joel 2:30-32; Amos 9:11-12; Jonah 4:1-4, 10-11).

Biblical and Theological Connections

Reread the story of Jonah and the sailors in 1:4-16. Then read Matthew 8:23-27. What similarities do you see in these two stories?

Read Matthew 12:38-42 and Luke 11:29-32. Based on these two passages, what is the “sign of Jonah?” In what way does Matthew’s gospel differ from Luke’s on this point, and what purpose does that difference serve in both instances? How does the inclusion of the story of the Queen of Sheba (of the South; see 1 Kings 10:1 and following) help define the “sign of Jonah?”

In Jonah’s angry prayer (4:1-4) he quotes from God’s self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7. What major event in the life of the nation of Israel occurs directly before this self-revelation (see Exod 32)? What is significant about this order of events in Exodus, and how does that apply to the story of Jonah?

Applying the Text

Twice God poses the question to Jonah, regarding his decision to spare Nineveh, "Are you right to be angry?" These questions are posed to every reader of this story, as the reader is invited to put himself into Jonah's shoes (sandals?). Do you think Jonah had a right to be angry? Can you sympathize with his concerns and frustrations?

Considering how much destruction Assyria, and its capitol Nineveh, has already caused, and will cause, to Jonah's home country of Israel, it can be easy to understand why he would be upset that God would spare them. The story of Jonah invites us to consider God's compassion in our day. Are there people in your life that you are angry or upset with (and even rightly so!), upon whom you do not wish God's favor? How does the story of Jonah compel us to pray for our enemies, and seek the good of all?

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Jonah

- Allen, Leslie, C., *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT, Eerdmans, 1976.
- Bruckner, James, *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan, 2004.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B., *Man Overboard!*, Banner of Truth, 1981.
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
- Martin, Hugh, *Jonah*, Geneva Series of Commentaries, Banner of Truth, 1978 (original pub date, 1870).
- Phillips, Richard D., *Jonah & Micah*, Reformed Expository Commentary, P&R, 2010.
- Robertson, O. Palmer, *Jonah: A Study in Compassion*, Banner of Truth, 1990.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018, pages 217-236.
- Stuart, Douglas, *Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary, Thomas Nelson, 1987.

Other Resources

- The Bible Project, “Overview of Jonah,” accessible online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/jonah/>
- Holroyd, Kristofer D., “Jonah, Micah, and Nahum: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible),” Crossway, 2018
- Sproul, R. C., “Jonah,” from a teaching series on the Prophets, accessible online: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/jonah>

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) | | |

The Nations in Amos 1-2

| Nation | Accusation | Biblical Reference |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Damascus | Capital city of Syria. King Hazael (842-805 BC) waged a violent war against Israel and takes over a portion of the northern kingdom. He is succeeded by his son, Ben-hadad. The people of Syria are exiled to Kir (exact location unknown) by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, c. 730 BC. | 1 Kings 19:15; 2 Kings 8:7-15; 13:24; 16:9 |
| Gaza | Exiling an entire population into exile to Edom. This group of exiles is unknown. Because of this, the five major Philistine cities (Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and presumably Gath) will be destroyed. | 1 Sam 6:17 |
| Tyre | Similar to Gaza. The "covenant of brotherhood" could refer to the relationship between Hiram, king of Tyre, and David and Solomon. Hiram is said to have always loved David, and wished to extend that support to his son. | 1 Kings 5:1, 12 |
| Edom | The brothers Esau and Jacob had a tenuous relationship, and the nations descended from them continued in their fathers' footsteps. When Babylon invaded and destroyed Jerusalem, Edom took advantage of their plight and plundered Israelite cities and abused refugees. | Gen 25-27; Num 20:14-20; 2 Kings 25; Psalm 137:7; Ezek 35 |
| Ammon (Ammonites) | The descendants of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his youngest daughter. Shared a border with Gilead, and a constant enemy with Israel since the days of the judges. Because of their history of atrocious war crimes against Israel and Gilead, they and their only major city, Rabbah, will be destroyed. | Gen 19:30-38; Judg 3:12-14; 10:7-9, 17; 11:4-33; 1 Sam 11:1-11; 14:47; 2 Sam 8:12; 10:1-11:1; 2 Chr 20:1-30; 24:26 |
| Moab | The descendants of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his oldest daughter. Located directly south of its brother nation Ammon. The burning of bones was a symbolic way of making resurrection impossible for that person. This accusation presumes some past military clash between Moab and Edom where Edom's king was captured, killed, and his remains burned to ash. | Gen 19:30-38 |

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 (Hag 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).

Notes

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=allsaintsreformed



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