

A reading guide for

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE



Haggai - Zechariah - Malachi

Reading Guide, Part 4

Table of Contents

<i>Getting Started</i>	1
<i>How to Use This Guide</i>	1
<i>Overview of the Prophets</i>	2
<i>Who were Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi?</i>	2
<i>Haggai</i>	3
<i>Theme and Outline</i>	3
<i>Study Questions</i>	4
<i>Further Reading</i>	8
<i>Zechariah</i>	9
<i>Theme and Outline</i>	9
<i>Study Questions</i>	10
<i>Further Reading</i>	16
<i>Malachi</i>	17
<i>Theme and Outline</i>	17
<i>Study Questions</i>	18
<i>Further Reading</i>	23
<i>Resources</i>	24
<i>Map of the World of the Twelve</i>	24
<i>Timeline of Kings and Prophets</i>	25
<i>Timeline of Post-Exilic Prophets</i>	26
<i>Unity of the Twelve</i>	28
<i>A Thematic Overview of the Twelve</i>	28
<i>An Overview of Literary and Thematic Connections in the Twelve</i>	29
<i>The Unified Purpose of the Twelve</i>	33

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 Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi?

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are commonly referred to as the post-exilic prophets because these three ministered to the people of Israel after they began to return from exile in 536 BC. Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries of one another and of Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest, and Ezra the scribe (see Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1; Ezra 5:1-2). Haggai and Zechariah hold a significant place within the Twelve. In the eyes of their original audience, many thought they were experiencing the restoration that was prophesied by Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zephaniah (see the Study Guide questions on Zeph 3:9-20 specifically). This was not, however, the ultimate restoration of which these earlier prophets spoke; Haggai and Zechariah make that explicit to them, and to us. Haggai encouraged the post-exilic community to not neglect the rebuilding of the temple, while simultaneously managing their expectations that this rebuilt temple was *not* the final, eschatological temple in which Yahweh would dwell forever. Similarly, Zechariah, through several vivid visions and prophecies, paints a portrait of the coming Messiah/Priest/Shepherd/King, but he is not here yet. Joshua, Zerubbabel, the present return from exile; these only prefigure the Priest-King who is coming to lead his people out of the exile of their sin and iniquity, back to perfect relationship with their God, forever.

Malachi, who ministered several decades later, offers a satisfying conclusion to the Book of the Twelve, to the larger corpus of the prophets, and to the Hebrew Bible itself. Haggai and Zechariah offer powerful visions and hopeful promises of a greater restoration and a better future still to come. What, then, are God's people to do in the meantime? Remember, and be faithful; that is Malachi's message. The Day of the LORD, the perennial theme of the Twelve, is coming. Thus, Malachi leaves God's people with the plea to remember and be faithful to do what God's word commands (Mal 4:4), and be on the lookout for Elijah (Mal 4:5-6), who is going to usher in the next era of redemptive history...

Haggai

Theme and Outline

A challenge to covenant faithfulness and humble reliance on God

Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth...The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.

— Haggai 2:6, 9

- I. Accusation & Response | 1:1-15
- II. Addressing Shattered Expectations (1 Month Later) | 2:1-9
- III. Call to Covenant Faithfulness (2 Months Later) | 2:10-19
- IV. Future Hope of God's Kingdom (That Same Day) 2:20-23

Study Questions

Observing the Text

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

Use the dates and biblical references on page 25 of this handout to familiarize yourself with the post-exilic time period of ancient Israel. We will discuss this time period and the rebuilding of the temple in class.

Understanding the Text

Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, is declared to be God's chosen signet ring. Using the genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17, of which major king and lineage is Zerubbabel a direct descendant?

Which king is said to be the Lord's "signet ring" in Jeremiah 22:24? What happens to this king? How is the promise that Zerubbabel will be God's chosen signet ring in Haggai 2:20-23 a hopeful reversal of Jeremiah 22:24? (Hint: Coniah is a shortened form of Jeconiah, another name for Jehoiachin. Jehoiachin was the son of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah)

Zephaniah-Haggai Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 29-32 for help with this section]

Reread the prophecy of restoration in Zephaniah 3:9-20. What connections do you see with Zephaniah's prophecy and Haggai's prophecy to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the temple rebuilding project?

How is the book of Haggai both a fulfillment of Zephaniah 3:9-20, and also a foreshadowing of the ultimate restoration promised in Hosea 3:4-5? (Hint: How is Zerubbabel related to king David, based on the answers to the questions from *Understanding the Text* above).

Biblical and Theological Connections

The author of Hebrews quotes from Haggai 2:6 (see also 2:21) in Hebrews 12:26. Read the larger section of Hebrews 12:18-29. What is the overall argument that the author of Hebrews is making here, and how does this quote from Haggai help support his argument?

The temple is a major theme throughout Scripture. The tabernacle/temple was God's dwelling place with his people, which explains Haggai's insistence that Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people not neglect the rebuilding project. Yet, the physical temple also served as a symbol pointing to the end-time reality that God's presence, formerly limited to the physical confines of the temple, would expand into the whole cosmos. Briefly trace the biblical theology of "temple" using the questions and passages below:

- How does John describe the Word becoming flesh in John 1:14? Compare this with the description of God's indwelling the tabernacle in Exodus 40:34-35.
- Who or what is the temple according to John 2:21? (See also Mark 14:58)
- Who is the temple according to Paul in Ephesians 2:18-22? Who is the foundation? Who is the cornerstone?
- According to John, where will the temple be located in the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1-3, 22)?

Applying the Text

Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the returnees from exile were not only urged by Haggai to take up the work of rebuilding the temple (1:1-15), but more so to remain faithful to God's covenant (Hag 2:10-19) as they waited on God's provision (Hag 2:20-23). In other words, they not only had physical work to do, but "heart" work as well. With this in mind, read 1 Peter 2:1-12. What are believers being "built" into in 1 Peter 2:5? What is the work that they are to do in light of this reality?

Understanding the present reality, that believers are currently being built up into the temple of God, how then are we to live today? How do Peter (1 Peter 2:1-12) and Paul (1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) describe the responsibilities of believers who are the "temple of the living God?"

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Haggai

- Baldwin, Joyce, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, TOTC, InterVarsity Press, 1981.
- Duguid, Iain M.; 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.
- Jacobs, Mignon R., *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT, Eerdmans, 2018.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018.
- Taylor, Richard A.; Clendenen, E. Ray, *Haggai and Malachi*, NAC, Broadman & Holman, 2004.

Other Resources

- Coleman, Stephen M., "Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible)," Crossway, 2016.
- The Bible Project, "Overview of Haggai," accessible online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/haggai/>

Zechariah

Theme and Outline

Glorious visions and promises of the Messiah and His kingdom

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

— Zechariah 4:6

Zechariah's outline is unique. The visions in 1:7-6:15 form a chiasmic structure: visions one and eight connect together, as do visions two and seven, and so on. Each of these pairs share a specific theme, designated with (a), (b), (c), and (d) below.

Nighttime Vision Themes:

- (a) - Depiction of the Coming Kingdom
- (b) - Reflection on Israel's Exile
- (c) - Depiction of the New Jerusalem
- (d) - Depiction of the Messiah, also Zech 6:9-15 (d')

I. Introduction: Return to Me | 1:1-6

II. Zechariah's Nighttime Visions | 1:7-6:15

- a. One: Four Horsemen on Patrol (a) | 1:7-17
- b. Two: Four Horns, Four Blacksmiths (b) | 1:18-21
- c. Three: Jerusalem is Measured (c) | 2:1-13
- d. Four: Joshua Reclothed (d) | 3:1-10
- e. Five: Joshua and Zerubbabel, the Olive Trees (d) | 4:1-14
- f. Six: The Flying Scroll (c) | 5:1-4
- g. Seven: Woman in a Basket (b) | 5:5-11
- h. Eight: Four Horsemen Again (a) | 6:1-8
- i. Final Vision: Joshua Crown (d') | 6:9-15

III. Conclusion of the Dreams | 7:1-8:23

IV. Images of the Messianic Kingdom (1) | 9:1-11:17

- a. The Coming King | 9:1-10:12
- b. The Shepherd-King is Rejected | 11:1-17

V. Images of the Messianic Kingdom (2) | 12:1-14:21

- a. God Provides Salvation | 12:1-14
- b. The Shepherd Struck and the Flock Scattered | 13:1-9
- c. The Final Battle on the Day of the LORD | 14:1-21

Study Questions

The meaning of each of the individual visions in Zechariah is difficult to discern at times, and too in depth of a study guide of this size. We will discuss these visions in more detail during the class time, and you are encouraged to go back and listen to the class lectures available online (see back page for more info). For the purposes of this study guide, these questions will remain focused on the high-level meaning of Zechariah and how it connects to the broader story of the Twelve.

Observing the Text

Take some time to review the outline above. What is the main structure and outline of Zechariah? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve?

What connections do the eight nighttime visions (1:7-6:8) share between each other? How do they connect to the ninth and final vision (6:9-15)?

Understanding the Text

In Zech 6:9-15, who is the one that is crowned? How does this connect back to the fourth and fifth visions (3:1-10 and 4:1-14)?

Zechariah divides easily into two sections. The second half of the prophet (chapters 9-14) contain detailed depictions the Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the content in these chapters, and write down thoughts and questions you have from these chapters in the space below. These chapters will be looked at in detail in the *Biblical and Theological Connections* section beginning on the next page.

Haggai -Zechariah Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 29-32 for help with this section]

Zerubbabel was chosen as the Lord's signet at the end of Haggai (Hag 2:20-23), and now shows up again in Zechariah. How does Zechariah understand this designation as the Lord's signet? Who does Zerubbabel prefigure? (See Zech 3:8; 6:12-13. Use the questions from *Understanding the Text* under Haggai for help).

What does the God declare through Zechariah that the people should do in Zech 1:3? How does this connect to the promise of restoration in Hos 3:4-5 and salvation in Joel 2:30-32?

What sort of obedience does God require of his people in Zech 7:7-14? How is this similar to the kind of obedience that is preferable to empty religious gestures, seen previously in Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:8; and Hab 2:4?

Biblical and Theological Connections

What similar language and themes from Jeremiah 23:1-8 and Jeremiah 33:14-18 show up in Zechariah 6:9-15? How do these connections help us understand the Messianic figure depicted by both prophets?

As noted earlier, Joshua the high priest is crowned in Zech 6:9-15, instead of Zerubabbel, a direct descendant of king David, and a presumably “obvious” choice. How is it that a priest can be crowned king? What is this “counsel of peace” that exists between the priest and the king? (See Zech 6:13; See Gen 14; Psalm 110; Matt 22:41-44; Heb 1:13; 5:6-7).

Zechariah 9:9-10 connects back to Zeph 3:14-15 and Zech 2:10, and is cited in Matthew 21:5 (see also John 12:15). Why does Matthew (and John) quote this section in Zechariah? What does this tell us about the gospel writers understanding of Jesus, and the office(s) that he holds?

In Zechariah 11:11-13, the prophet is paid 30 pieces of silver for his wages as a shepherd. In his gospel, Matthew alludes to this amount in Matt 26:15, and then quotes specifically from Zechariah in Matthew 27:9-10. What significance, if any, is there between Judas' betrayal of Jesus, and Zechariah's symbolic shepherding of the "flock doomed to be slaughtered" (Zech 11:7)? Why do you think Matthew says this prophecy is from Jeremiah (Matt 27:9) even though he quotes from Zechariah?

John quotes from Zechariah 12:10 in his account of the crucifixion. Look at John 19:31-37. What other passage(s) of scripture does he quote from to describe the significance of Jesus' pierced side? (See Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; Psalm 34:20).

Specific people and houses are named in Zechariah 12:12-14. What significance do these people/houses play in the story of the Twelve, and in the broader, biblical story of redemption? (Look back at the visions in Zech 3:1-10; 4:1-14; and 6:9-15).

Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7-9 to tell his disciples that they will abandon him (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27). What is the context of Zechariah 13:7-9, and why was this a fitting prophecy for Jesus to quote from at that time? What does Jesus promise to his disciples, immediately after he quotes Zechariah (Matt 27:32; Mark 14:28)? How does that promise connect back to Zechariah 13:9? Where else has that promise shown up in the Twelve?

Applying the Text

In the final chapter of Zechariah, the prophet offers an image of what the final battle on the great and powerful Day of the LORD will look like. Part of this vision is the abundance of living water that will flow out of Jerusalem (Zech 14:8). Take a moment to explore this theme of living water, that both refers backwards to Eden (Gen 2:10-14), presently to the person and work of Christ (Jer 2:13; Psalm 36:9; John 4:7-15; 7:37-39), and forward to His return (Rev 22:1-5). Why is this image of living water so powerful? How is it a comfort for you to know that in Christ you have living water that wells up to eternal life?

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Zechariah

- Baldwin, Joyce, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, TOTC, InterVarsity Press, 1981.
- House, Paul R., “The God Who Keeps Promises (The Book of the Twelve),” in *Old Testament Theology*, IVP Academic, 2018.
- Phillips, Richard D., *Zechariah*, Reformed Expository Commentary, P&R, 2007.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018.
- Smith, Ralph L., *Micah–Malachi*, WBC, Thomas Nelson, 1984.

Other Resources

- Coleman, Stephen M., “Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible),” Crossway, 2016.
- The Bible Project, “Overview of Zechariah,” accessible online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/zechariah/>

Malachi

Theme and Outline

A final plea for covenant faithfulness while waiting for the Day of the Lord.

For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

— Malachi 4:1-2.

- I. Exposing Israel's Corruption | 1:1-2:16
 - a. Dispute One: God Doesn't Love Us | 1:2-5
 - b. Dispute Two: Defiling the Temple | 1:6-2:9
 - c. Dispute Three: Idolatry & Divorce | 2:10-16
- II. Confronting Israel's Corruption | 2:17-4:5
 - a. Dispute Four: God Has Neglected Us | 2:17-3:5
 - b. Dispute Five: Tithing | 3:6-12
 - c. Dispute Six: Pointless to Serve God | 3:13-4:3
- III. Appendix | 4:4-6
 - a. Remember the Torah | 4:4
 - b. God Will Send Elijah | 4:5-6

Study Questions

Observing the Text

Take some time to review the outline above. What is the main structure and outline of Malachi? Who are the main characters, and what is the plot? Where else do these plot points and characters show up in the Twelve?

Who are the two parties against each other in each of the disputes? Who is doing the talking and who is making accusations against the other?

How does the language change in Malachi 4:4. How does this shift set the last three verses of Malachi apart from everything that came before?

Understanding the Text

Though we don't have historical information in the superscription of Malachi, we can make an educated guess when he ministered. Based on its placement in the Twelve, and the content of his message, when is it likely that Malachi ministered (use chart on page 27 for help)?

What were the some of the issues that God's people faced after the exile? (Consider what we looked at previously with Haggai and Zechariah, as well as the context of the books of Ezra-Nehemiah). Given the devastation their ancestors faced with the exile, and now the trouble they are currently facing after returning from exile, is it possible to sympathize with some of their disputes with God?

Zechariah - Malachi Connection, Relationship to the Twelve

[Use the resource on pages 29-32 for help with this section]

There are only three times that the phrase "the oracle of the word of the LORD" is used in the Hebrew Bible: Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; and Malachi 1:1. What does this demonstrate about the natural sequence of Zechariah-Malachi, and the overall unity of the Twelve?

In the Hebrew Bible, Malachi is followed by the Psalms. This is the seam between the end of the Prophets (the second section of the Hebrew Bible) and the beginning of the Writings (the third and final section). How does Malachi 4:4 connect to Psalm 1? Do you think there is a connection?

Biblical and Theological Connections

Malachi does not only connect to the Psalms, but also offers a direct connection to the ministry of John the Baptist. How does Mark use Mal 3:1 to begin his gospel? (Mark 1:2-3).

How do the gospel authors interpret Malachi 4:5-6? Who do they identify as the prophet Elijah who is to come? (See Matt 11:10; 17:10-13; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 7:27).

Paul quotes from Mal 1:2-3 in Romans 9:13. This is not the first time Paul quotes from the Twelve in this section of Romans chapters 9-11. How does Mal 1:2-3 serve Paul's argument here, and how is Paul's argument for Gentile inclusion in God's covenant community a consistent theme of the Twelve? (Cf. Rom 9:25-26 + Hos 2:23; 1:10; Rom 10:13 + Joel 2:32; Rom 10:15 + Nah 1:15).

Malachi ends with an interesting description of the Day of the LORD (Mal 4:6). How do the gospel authors interpret this language? (Luke 1:17; see also Matt 17:10-13; Mark 9:9-13)

Applying the Text

As we bring our study of the Book of the Twelve to a close, what have been some key takeaways from your time with these twelve "minor" prophets?

What aspects of Jesus' life and ministry become clearer to you in your study of the Twelve? How have his offices of prophet, priest, and king been highlighted and illuminated throughout this study?

How has the story of God's faithfulness and restoration of an unfaithful people been comforting and encouraging to you personally? How can this story serve as a "book of remembrance" for you personally, as you seek to glorify God and enjoy him forever?

Further Reading

Books and Commentaries on Malachi

- Baldwin, Joyce, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, TOTC, InterVarsity Press, 1981.
- Duguid, Iain M.; 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.
- Jacobs, Mignon R., *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT, Eerdmans, 2018.
- Shepherd, Michael B., *A Commentary on the Book of the Twelve*, Kregel, 2018.
- Taylor, Richard A.; Clendenen, E. Ray, *Haggai and Malachi*, NAC, Broadman & Holman, 2004.

Other Resources

- Coleman, Stephen M., “Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible),” Crossway, 2016.
- The Bible Project, “Overview of Malachi,” accessible online: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/malachi/>

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, governor (536)		
520		Haggai; Zechariah	
510	Temple rebuilt (516)		
500			
490			
480			
470			
460			
450	2nd Return; Nehemiah, governor (458)	Malachi	
440	3rd Return (445)		

Timeline of Post-Exilic Prophets

Year of King	Month	Day	Approx. Date	Haggai	Zechariah	Ezra	Event
1st Year - Cyrus			538-537 BC			Ezra 1:1-4	Return from Exile
1st Year - Cyrus	7th (Tishrei)		Sept-Oct 537 BC			Ezra 3:1-2	Altar rebuilt
2nd Year - Darius	2nd (Nisan)		April-May 536 BC			Ezra 3:8	Temple rebuilding begins
"all the days of Cyrus"			536-520 BC			Ezra 4:1-5, 24	Temple rebuilding stalls
2nd Year - Darius	6th (Elul)	1st	August 29, 520 BC	Hag 1:1			Haggai begins to stir the people
2nd Year - Darius	6th (Elul)	24th	Sept 21, 520 BC	Hag 1:15a			Temple rebuilding resumes
2nd Year - Darius	7th (Tishrei)	21st	Oct 17, 520 BC	Hag 1:15b-2:1			Haggai addresses concerns about the temple progress
2nd Year - Darius	8th (Cheshvan)		Oct-Nov 520 BC		Zech 1:1		Zechariah begins ministry
2nd Year - Darius	9th (Kislev)	24th	Dec 18, 520 BC	Hag 2:10			Haggai calls the people to covenant faithfulness
2nd Year - Darius	9th (Kislev)	24th	Dec 18, 520 BC	Hag 2:20			Zerubbabel chosen as Signet Ring
2nd Year - Darius	11th (Shebat)	24th	Feb 15, 519 BC		Zech 1:7		Zechariah's Nighttime Visions
4th Year - Darius	9th (Kislev)	4th	Dec 7, 518 BC		Zech 7:1		Zechariah calls for covenant faithfulness
6th Year - Darius	12th (Adar)	3rd	Feb-March 516 BC			Ezra 6:13-16	Temple Finished

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=allsaintsreformed

