



What is It?

Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are the third and final quartet of minor prophet books of the Old Testament.

Who, What, When, Where and WHY

Who – Although there are some scholars who think otherwise, there is strong evidence that Zechariah wrote his book. The other three – Zephaniah, Haggai and Malachi – are generally accepted to have been written by the prophets whose names appears on the books. Zephaniah was written to the people of Judah prior to their fall. The other three were written to the remnant of the Jewish people after the calamities that led to exile. Of course, they have a message for us too.

What – Zephaniah is mostly a book of judgement, the Day of Yahweh, against Judah and the nations, even Assyria. Haggai and Zechariah are books calling for the returning remnant under Persian rule to rebuild the temple and restore the Davidic royal lineage. Malachi addresses the people's complaints and calls them to God's covenantal relationship.

When – These four books are in rough chronological order. Zephaniah was written in the seventh century, Haggai and Zechariah were written in the sixth century and Malachi was written in the fifth century.

Where – All four books were written in and about events in Israel and Judea – modern day Israel (Palestine) on the Eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. More specifically, it appears all four books were written in or near Jerusalem.

Why – Although Zephaniah follows the theme of most of the other prophets – coming judgement for disobedience, a call to return to God and His Covenant, prophecies of hope and salvation – Haggi and Zechariah call for doing God's work now, and Malachi emphasizes God's commitment to those who are obedient to Him.

Reading Advice

To read though Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malichi in one week you will need to read 3 to 4 chapters a day (23 combined chapters/6 days = 3.8 per day). We recommend 15 minutes a day, Monday through Saturday. If you include a Sunday reading, then you can reduce the chapters and/or minutes per day a little.