



THE
MINOR
PROPHETS

**THE
MINOR
PROPHETS**

**A 9-WEEK SERMON SERIES
STUDY GUIDE**



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THE MINOR PROPHETS

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INTRODUCTION

The Minor Prophets, or "The Twelve" as they've been traditionally called, is the collective term for the twelve books that conclude the Old Testament: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Probably for most Christians, the Minor Prophets are the least read section of our Bibles. Whether it's an assumption that the books have little to say to our modern world, or simply the barrier of culture and language that we feel when we come to them, our neglect of the Minor Prophets has been a net loss for the church.

Context

The Minor Prophets ministered over a 300-year period of Israel's history. After the reigns of David and Solomon, the kingdom eventually divided under the rule of Solomon's son Rehoboam (1 Ki 12). During this divided kingdom, Israel and Judah went through a succession of kings. Spiritual renewal was followed by spiritual decline. Both kingdoms slid into idolatry and failed to walk in obedience to God's covenant with them. God's mercy and compassion weren't lived out in their community. Care for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the immigrant were consistently neglected. It is during this period that the ministry of the prophets began.

Eventually, in 722 BC the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and taken into exile. Judah lasted for another 130 years, but in 586 was conquered by Babylon and exiled.

After this period in exile, in 539 the Persian king Cyrus wrote an edict directing the Jewish people to return to their homeland and begin rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. In many ways, the Jerusalem they returned to was not the one they left. The temple had to be rebuilt along with their own lives. This period of restoration is when the prophets spoke some of the last words of the Old Testament.

Message

The Minor Prophets stand in the middle of our Bibles and the middle of redemptive history. It's from that vantage point they point both backward and forward.

A significant part of these prophets' ministry was to call God's people back to faithfulness to the covenant God had made with them. The books from Hosea to Malachi record God speaking to his people during some of the lowest points of their history. Israel had neglected the very heart of the covenant - a love for God and commitment to glorify him in all of life. The prophets announce God's displeasure with the state of affairs and his determined commitment to oppose Israel's unfaithfulness through judgment.

However, the prophets don't just look back to the covenant and call God's people out on their unfaithfulness. They also look forward with hope to the promise of God's salvation. God is so committed to his covenant with his people that he will one day redeem and restore them. He will fulfill all the promises he made in the Garden (Gen. 3:15), to Abraham (Gen. 12:2) and to David (2 Sam. 7:1-17) through sending a Messiah to bring his salvation.

The message of the prophets then often repeats the following progression:

SIN - JUDGMENT - FORGIVENESS - RESTORATION

Key Themes¹

Divine Judgment

Reading the prophets isn't always pleasant. The prophets don't offer us docile and pleasant platitudes; they speak often of divine judgment. These announcements of judgment often take the form of oracles or speeches proclaiming "woe" upon a nation or people. Though proclamations of divine judgment can sound harsh to modern ears, we need to remember that they are a crucial part of the message of salvation. God's salvation is salvation from judgment. And if God is holy and good and righteous, his judgment is necessary in order for evil to be eliminated from the world. When reading the prophets we must remember the "time signature" of their words; though the immediate message for God's people is judgment, the hope of salvation always lies in the background.

Covenant Blessing & Cursing

The language of blessing and cursing may sound strange to modern ears, but it's foundational to covenant relationship. Through Moses, God promised to bless his people if they were faithful to him. On the other hand, if they rebelled against him, he promised they would experience painful consequences (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28).

The Minor Prophets apply the logic of blessing and cursing. Why are God's people experiencing exile and oppression? Because God is cursing them, in faithfulness to his covenant promises. Why should they return to the Lord? Because he promises blessing if they do.

The language of covenant is crucial to us understanding the logic of the cross. On the cross, Jesus experienced the cursing of the covenant by becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). The cross was Jesus' own experience of "exile". In turn, we experience the blessings of the covenant that only he deserved through his faithful obedience to the covenant. This exchange of cursing for blessing is at the very heart of the gospel.

¹ Thune, Bob. "An Introduction to the Minor Prophets" Available online at http://randomfiles.s3.amazonaws.com/revised_MinorProphets_Booklet_digital.pdf

The Day of the Lord

The prophets consistently announce a coming "Day of the Lord" using strong imagery. The Day of the Lord is always looked to as a coming day when God will judge his enemies and redeem his people.

When we trace this theme through the rest of Scripture we find that the Day of the Lord is not limited to a single day, but has short-term, medium-term, and long-term fulfillment. Events like the fall of Jerusalem are understood as a manifestation of the Day of the Lord, as is the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:17-21 quoting from Joel 2:28-29). Jesus' arrival and the event of the cross itself are also spoken of in Day of the Lord language (Jn. 8:56; Matt. 27:51).

Ultimately, the final Day of the Lord will be when God cataclysmically enters history at the end of time in Jesus' return. Then he will fully and finally judge his enemies, redeem his people, and dwell with them forever in a new creation.

The Promised Messiah

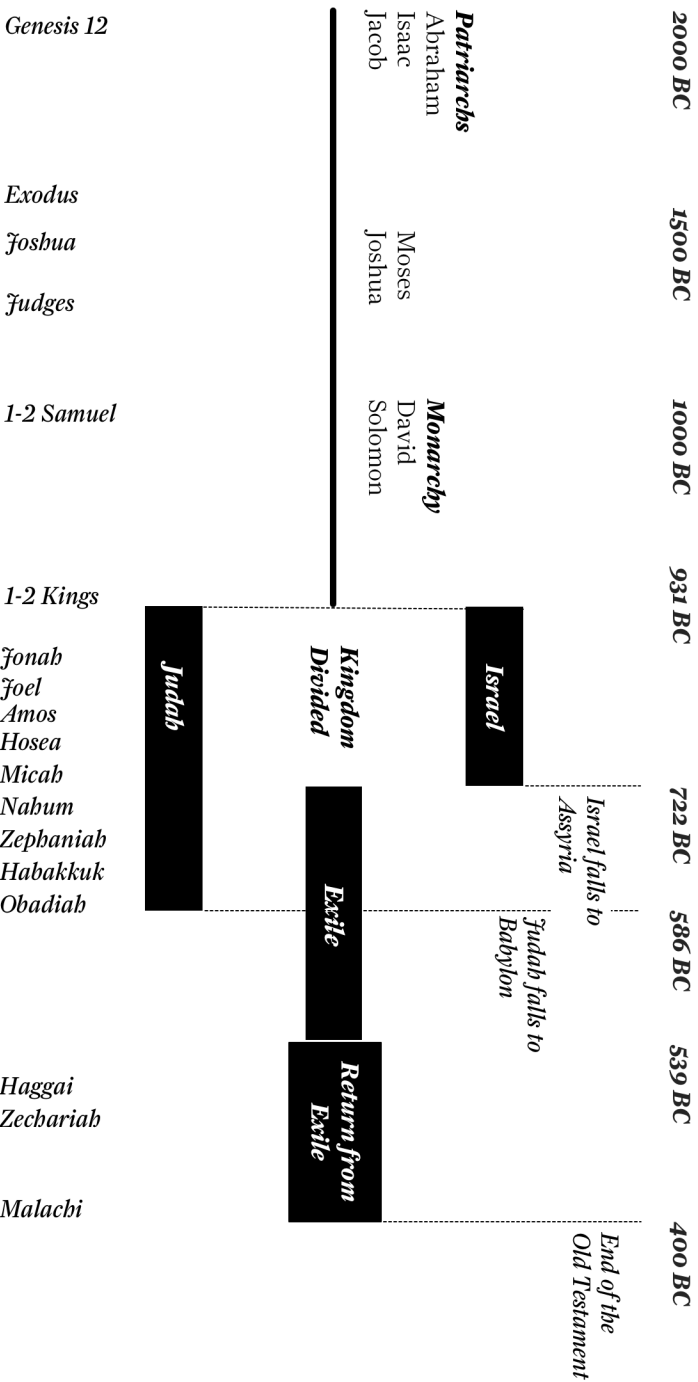
As you read the Minor prophets you'll encounter passages that sound strangely familiar. That's because the Minor Prophets are quoted frequently by the New Testament authors. For instance, in Matthew's account of the magi's visit to King Herod, he quotes Micah 5:2:

And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judaea, for so it is written by the prophet:

*'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah;
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'"* (Matthew 2:4-6)

Because the Minor Prophets fall at the end of the Old Testament canon - and because by that time, the failures of Israel's kings, rulers, and judges are quite clear - the Minor Prophets are saturated with Messianic hope.

TIMELINE



HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

This summer we will be studying through nine of the twelve Minor Prophets. Our schedule is below.

STUDY

Each week make an effort to study ahead. Read the book introduction and watch the Bible Project video at thebibleproject.com or on YouTube. The more familiar you are with a book before it is preached on, the more you will be able to follow the message of the prophet.

This journal is filled with note pages to keep your thoughts in one place throughout this series. Jot down what you're thinking? What does this book teach you about God? What do you learn about humanity? What did you discover about salvation?

ASK

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask your community group leader or one of the pastors when something is confusing. Find a Bible that has helpful study notes like the ESV Study Bible or Gospel Transformation Bible. These can be great resources to answer basic questions you might have about the text.

GROW

God's Word is meant to transform us. Though the prophets have less immediate, tangible application than a book like James, soak in the message of these prophets. Ask God and your community how you should respond in your own life to the message of these biblical authors.

June 30 -- Joel

July 7 -- Amos

July 15 -- Obadiah

July 22 -- Micah

July 29 -- Nahum

August 3 -- Habakkuk

August 10 -- Zephaniah

August 17 -- Haggai

August 24 -- Malachi

the DAY of the LORD

1 A PAST DAY OF THE LORD

THESE EVENTS WHEN GOD SAVED HIS PEOPLE & CONFRONTED EVIL

FUTURE THE DAY WHEN GOD WILL DEFEAT EVIL & SAVE THE WORLD

ISRAEL'S SIN LED TO DISASTER

1 A PAST DAY OF THE LORD

A RECENT LOOTY SNAKE IN ISRAEL

REMEMBER THE PARABLES (LQ 10:16-17)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISASTER

AN IMPROBABLE DISASTER FOR ISRAEL

2 A FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS DECEASING - BUT YOU CAN FINISH IT!

HOW: YOU MUST REPENT - BRING CHANGE

WHY: GOD IS GRACIOUS & COMPASSIONATE. SO YOU CAN GET TO LIVE. - GODS MERCY IS GREATER THAN HIS WRATH

CONTRITION OF HEARTS

CALL TO REPENTANCE

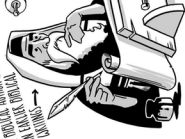
ACTS OF REPENTANCE

TO YOU, O LORD, I CALL!

STAKE YOUR PEOPLE, O LORD!

JOEL

A PASTORAL BOOK, WRITTEN BY A LEVITIC PRIEST, CALLED JOEL.



UNIQUE THINGS ABOUT JOEL:

- 1) NOT CLEAR WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN - BUT THE PERIOD OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH
- 2) JOEL IS A LEVITIC PRIEST, BUT MANY OTHER SCRIBES WROTE
- 3) JOEL DOESN'T ASK FOR ISRAEL IN ANY ONE - HE ASSUMES YOU'VE READ THE OTHER PROPHETS

BUT GOD'S MERCY CREATES HOPE

THE PAST BECOMES AN IMAGE OF THE FUTURE

12b GOD'S RESPONSE

30 GOD WAS FLEET AND PASSION FOR HIS LAND AND HAD FIT ON HIS PEOPLE.

12c DEFEAT OF THE INVADERS

12d RESTORATION OF THE NEWEASTERN LAND

13 DIVINE PRESENCE AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

14 GOD'S MERCY

2e-3 THE FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD

31-32 GOD CALLS CONFRONT EVIL AMONG ALL NATIONS

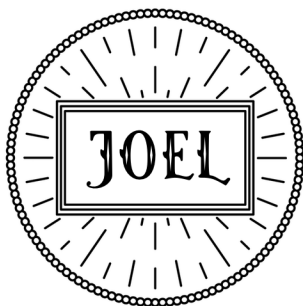
33-34 A NEW EDEN

35-37 A NEW EDEN

38-39 GOD'S MERCY

40-41 GOD'S MERCY

42-43 GOD'S MERCY



In typical prophetic form, Joel gives his readers both the bad news of God’s judgment and the good news of his promised deliverance. The book contains a description of a dramatic judgment on God’s people through a devastating plague of locusts. This serves as a warning of the great “day of the Lord” at the end of time. Joel also includes one of the Old Testament’s most significant promises regarding the future coming of the Holy Spirit.

The promise of the Spirit reminds us that the help we need is nothing less than supernatural.

Both the judgment and the promise remind us of our desperate need for God’s help. The judgment that our sins deserve is far worse than a plague of locusts. The promise of the Spirit reminds us that the help we need is nothing less than supernatural. Through the ministry of Jesus Christ, the requirements of judgment and of supernatural provision have both been met. Jesus took upon himself the plague of judgment for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24) and then promised (John 14:16) and provided (Acts 2) the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Preaching at Pentecost, the apostle Peter explains that in Jesus the “day of the Lord” prophesied by Joel has taken place—not at the end of history but in the middle of history (Acts 2:16–21). For believers, the end-time judgment has been carried out already—at the cross of Christ. The Spirit not only enables us to believe and receive this free gift but also empowers us to live a new, gospel-shaped life (Rom. 8:11).

This article is adapted from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD'S JUSTICE & MERCY

THE MOST CONFRONT EVIL AMONG ISRAEL & THE NATIONS HIS LONG-TERM PURPOSES ARE FOR RESTORATION & A NEW FAMILY

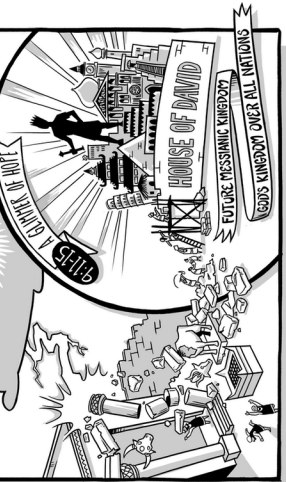


7-9 AMOS VISIONS

SYMBOLIC DIRECTIONS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD



GOD

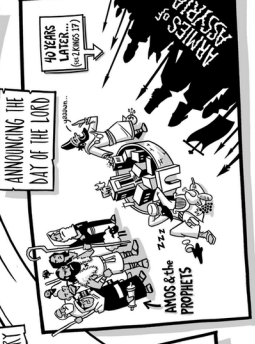
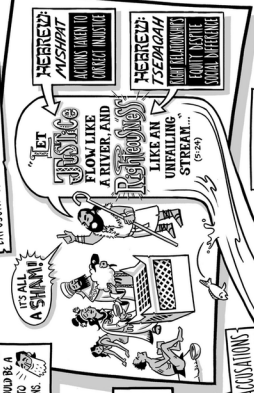


Amos

TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD
Love God, love neighbor, love justice, rightness, & loving our neighbor

3-6 MESSAGE TO ISRAEL & ITS LEADERS

EXPOSURE OF RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY



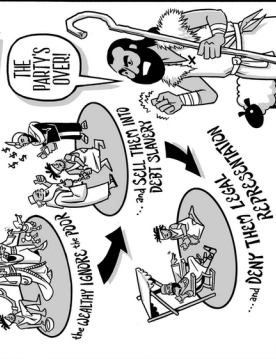
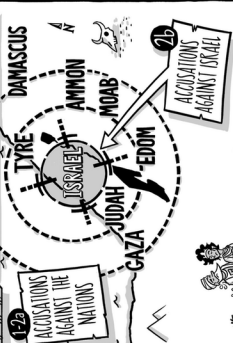
IT'S ALL A SHAM!

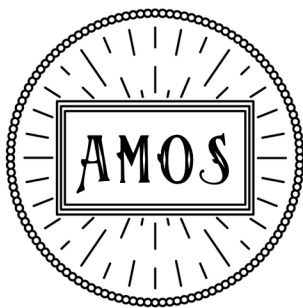
ALL NATIONS & GENTILES SHOULD BE ABLE TO BELONG TO ALL NATIONS.

GREAT CALLING - GREAT RESPONSIBILITY = GREAT CONSEQUENCES



1-2 MESSAGE TO THE NATIONS & ISRAEL





In four ways, the Old Testament book of Amos is essential for a robust understanding of the gospel. First, Amos was written with God's people in mind. While Amos 1:2–2:3 includes judgments against the nations surrounding Israel, the bulk of the book is directed at Israel (with Judah, the southern kingdom, included). Importantly, the restoration of all the nations called by God's name in Amos 9:11–15 brings the book full circle, as those once judged are ultimately blessed under a new affiliation. As such, the audience is both particular and universal. New Testament quotations from Amos refer to both of these groups. When quoted by Stephen in Acts 7, the words of Amos anticipate the covenant family of Israel as the audience. Yet eight chapters later (Acts 15:16–17), James will reference the book of Amos in terms of what God is saying to all the families of the earth (i.e., the Gentiles). Thus, Amos has something to say to ancient Israel as well as to the whole world—even to us.

Second, Amos was written with practicality in view. Christians often quote Amos for its emphasis on social justice, and rightly so. Yet we must learn to handle this emphasis properly. Amos's condemnation of Israel's life of luxury and laziness at the expense of the poor should not be treated in a way that reduces the heart of Christianity merely to social ethics. The heart of Christianity is the gospel. The necessary societal implications of the gospel must not be confused with the gospel itself. Both are crucial; our challenge is to understand how mercy is integral to the Christian's identity without reducing the entirety of the Christian message to doing acts of mercy. To see the gospel as a call merely to extend mercy to others without rooting this in the gospel's call to receive God's mercy toward us as sinners is to lose the gospel itself.

To see the gospel as a call merely to extend mercy to others without rooting this in the gospel's call to receive God's mercy toward us as sinners is to lose the gospel itself.

Third, the apostles' use of the concept of place in Amos reveals God's mission to the world. Place signifies more than mere geography. Amos uses a variety of terms for place (e.g., house, tent, city) to represent the people's relational proximity to or distance from God. For Amos, place becomes a way of addressing the people's orientation toward God as well as God's orientation toward them. From the opening verses to the book's closing, God announces and executes a ministry of justice and mercy from particular places: from Zion and Jerusalem (Amos 1:2), and from the altar (Amos 9:1). Once we grasp its importance in Amos, the concept of place will help us better understand the book's message and our mission in the world. Both times that Amos is directly quoted in the New Testament, the concept of place relating to God's family is in play. In Acts 7, Stephen uses Amos to vindicate God's judgment of his household when its members put their own well-being above his kingdom and rule. Later, in Acts 15, James references Amos, and place is again significant. This time, however, the message of Amos is used to validate God's plan for rebuilding his household from among all the nations of the earth.

Fourth, Amos's use of poetry reveals the intensity of God's relationship with the world. The book is largely a blistering declaration of God's impending judgment on Israel and the world. In fact, Amos uses a phrase for eschatological (end-time) judgment—"the day of the Lord" (Amos 5:18-20)—that the New Testament repeatedly echoes. That this judgment is expressed in poetry surprises many readers. And this raises the question: why did God give us Amos in poetic verse rather than in legal arguments? After all, in our day, poetry is often the language of love and not lawsuit. Yet poetic language can also express anger, disdain, or lament. As such, it is the genre best suited to convey the idea of God as a divine warrior, driven on by an emotive sense of justice that is at the same time grounded in love.

This article is adapted from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

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THE BACKSTORY:

ISAAC & REBEKAH

JACOB & ESAU
LENA & REBEKAH

JACOB

ESAU

ISRAEL

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

—SHORTEST BOOK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
—POETS OF DAVIDE
—JUDGMENT AGAINST ANCIENT EDOM
—BUT LAMENT THESE THING TO IT!

SEE GENESIS 25-27

SEE NUMBERS 20:14-20

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

EDOM

OBADIAH

THE PRIDE & FALL OF ALL NATIONS
HEBREW: **עֲבָדִי אָדָמָה = HUMANITY**

IS AN IMAGE OF

EDOM'S PRIDE & FALL
HEBREW: **עֲבָדִי אָדָמָה**

EDOM'S DOWNFALL
AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE COMING OF GOD'S KINGDOM OVER ALL NATIONS

inspired by The Bible Project

vv1-14 ACCUSATIONS AGAINST EDOM

“GET UP IN THE HEIGHTS, AT HOME WITH THE STARS; CAN YOU BRING US DOWN?” (1:3-7)

EDOM'S PRIDE & SELF-EXALCATION

AS YOU HAVE DONE TO ISRAEL, IT CAN BE DONE TO YOU!

vv16-21 THE DAY OF THE LORD FOR ALL NATIONS

JUDGMENT OF ALL PEOPLES NATIONS

RESTORATION OF GOD'S KINGDOM OVER JERUSALEM & ALL NATIONS

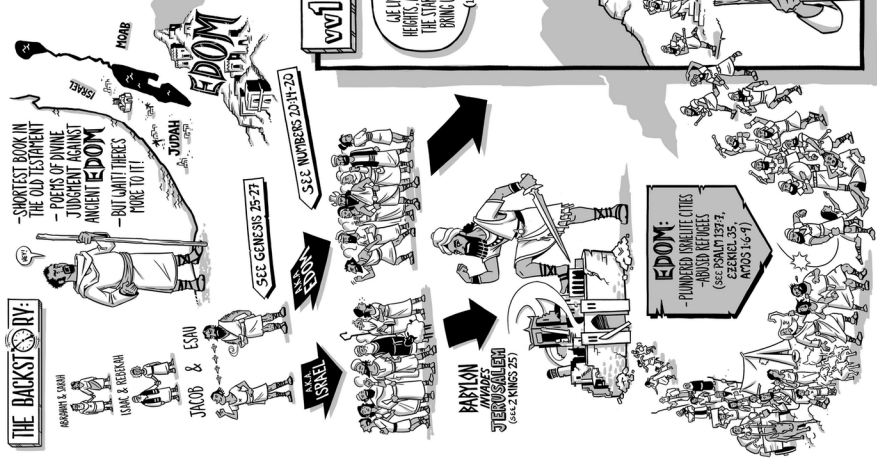
NEW JERUSALEM

ALL NATIONS

AFTER THE DAY OF THE LORD:

JOEL 2:3: GOD WILL SWEE JERUSALEM & ALL WHO CALL ON HIS NAME

AMOS 9:11-15: GOD WILL RESTORE DAVID'S LINE & INCLUDE EDOM & ALL NATIONS IN HIS KINGDOM.





As an oracle of judgment, Obadiah presents unique challenges for gospel application. Nahum, along with Obadiah, consists entirely of an oracle—though Obadiah makes more explicit mention of salvation and hope (Obad. 17–21). Furthermore, there are indications that a remnant of Edom will be saved and ruled over by God as part of his people.

This hope is reflected in various ways. First, Obadiah may be an extended elaboration on Amos 9:11–12, the passage immediately preceding Obadiah in the Bible. The restoration of David’s kingship through Israel’s Messiah would not only restore the fortunes of Judah but would include a remnant of Edom (Deut. 28:9–10; Amos 9:11–12). The similarity between the two passages would implicitly remind the reader that a remnant of Edom will be among those from all nations who will worship the Lord in his consummated kingdom.

Second, Obadiah underscores God’s grace from a redemptive-historical perspective. For the Judah-Edom relationship must be read against its origins in the Jacob-Esau relationship. The two strove against each other even before birth, but God sovereignly chose the younger to be served by the older (Gen. 25:22 ff.). This sovereign act of God came to epitomize his electing grace in both the Old Testament (Mal. 1:2–3) and the New Testament (Rom. 9:13).

Jacob was designated heir of the covenant God made with Abraham— that God would bless him and, through him, bless the nations (Gen. 12:2–3; Ex. 2:24; Lev. 26:42). Nevertheless Jacob strove to obtain those promises unethically and self-reliantly—and his receiving them despite his conniving is a vivid demonstration of God’s grace. For his part Esau, rather than living by faith in the promises God made to and through Jacob, lived by his appetites and chose rivalry with his brother instead. This pattern of antipathy repeatedly characterized the historic relations between the descendants of the two brothers (e.g., Num. 20:14–21; 2 Kings 16:6; Ezek. 25:12–13) and established the trajectory of the Judah-Edom relationship seen in Obadiah. But even though the “house” (nation and kingship) of Esau will be no more (Obad. 18), God will also graciously save a remnant of Edom for his kingdom (see above). For both the house of Jacob and the house of Esau, the blessings experienced are due only to the grace of God.

There are two general ways in which the New Testament takes up the Jacob-Edom dynamic. First, the descendants of Abraham, and therefore the rightful heirs to the promises to Abraham, are those who do the works of Abraham by believing in Jesus Christ (John 8:39–47). As such, followers of Jesus inherit the promises continued through Jacob/Israel (Gal. 3:7; Rom. 2:28; 9:6–18; cf. Heb. 12:15–17). Second, and foundational to the first, is that Jesus Christ himself is the promised Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). Through him every divine promise has been, is being, and will be fulfilled (2 Cor. 1:20). The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant come to believers in Christ (Gal. 3:14). Even though he was harassed by his brothers (Mark 3:21), he has led free a host of captives (Eph. 4:8) and restored the fortunes of Judah.

This article is adapted from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

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MICAH

LESSONS TO GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES TO ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12, 15, 17)

ALL NATIONS WILL FIND RESTING IN HIS ARMS

JUDGMENT

CONTRACT COVENANT OF JUSTICE EVIDENCE

3-20

BE FEARFUL, THE LORD IS WITH YOU

GOD'S JUSTICE WILL NOT LET YOU OFFSCOUR

PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

1-2

LAY FELLOWSHIP WITH THE STRENGTH OF GOD'S COVENANT TO MAKE HIS GEAR REBELLED

ASSYRIA

PHARAOH

BABYLON

SYRIA

ISRAEL

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

PHARAOH

ISRAEL

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

1-2

GOD APPEARS TO JUDGE HIS PEOPLE (LIKE AT SINAI - SEE EXODUS 19:20)

BUT WHY...?

ACCUSATIONS & WARNINGS

ISRAEL

SYRIA

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

PHARAOH

ISRAEL

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

LEADERS & PROPHETS

WEALTHY THROUGH THEFT & GRIED

HOPE & RESTORATION

21-25

GOD WILL SHEPHERD THE REMNANT OF HIS PEOPLE

3-4a

INJUSTICE OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS

SEEK FOR OUR LAND

TORAH VIOLATION! (Exodus 23:2, Deuteronomy 27:1)

DISASTER IS COMING.

NO VOICE

BUT IT'S NOT PERMANENT

6-7

REMAINING REMNANT RESTORED

PEACE ON EARTH

NEW JERUSALEM

4b-5

ASSYRIA - BABYLONIAN EXILE - RESTORATION

ISRAEL

SYRIA

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

PHARAOH

ISRAEL

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

7b-10

GOD'S KINGDOM CONQUERS EVIL & BLESSES THE NATIONS

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

NEW JERUSALEM

6-7

ISRAEL'S INJUST ECONOMIC PRACTICES

HE HAS TOLD YOU O HUMAN, WHAT IS GOD, AND WHAT THE LEAD REQUIRES OF YOU: TO JUSTICE, TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD.

RESTORING AMOUNT

NEW JERUSALEM

BETHLEHEM

ISRAEL

SYRIA

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

PHARAOH

ISRAEL

PHILISTINES

EGYPT

10-12

ISRAEL RECONQUERED AS A SUFFERING, DEFEATED INDIVIDUAL

2 REASONS FOR FUTURE HOPE:

1 GOD'S CHARACTER

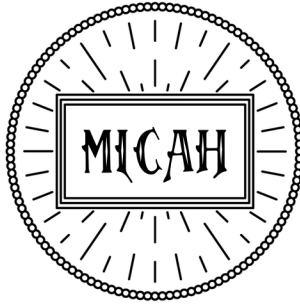
YOU WILL SAY LIKE TO JACOB & SHIMON GOVERNANT LOVE TO ABRAHAM AS YOU SAKE, LINK 1607.

2 GOD'S PROMISES

LET'S PARTICIPATE FOR THE FUTURE...

YOU WILL SAY LIKE TO JACOB & SHIMON GOVERNANT LOVE TO ABRAHAM AS YOU SAKE, LINK 1607.

1607



God deals with sinners in one of two ways: deserved justice, or undeserved grace. In Micah's day, both Samaria and Judah clearly deserved God's judgment for their oppression, idolatry, and corruption. They lived out this wickedness right alongside the motions of offering sacrifice, expecting that because they had the covenant promises and the temple in their midst, God would accept and protect them.

In his great grace, however, God sent the prophet Micah to confront their sin, warn them of judgment, and call them to repentance. Micah prophesied of the coming judgment, when God would abandon them (for a time) to the invading enemies of Assyria and Babylon, who would trample their cities and carry their people off to exile.

Ultimately, Jesus himself is the long-anticipated Shepherd-King who has made peace with God.

But while God is a righteous Judge who carries out deserved judgment, he is also a merciful Savior who gives undeserved grace and full forgiveness to those who turn to him in repentance. The specific hope Micah presented was the promise of a Shepherd-King who would gather his faithful remnant back in the land, tenderly care for them, and defeat their great enemy. The result would be that people from many nations would come to worship Israel's God. To God's people who had suffered under a line of failed kings and oppressive foreign regimes, Micah announced the coming of a Shepherd-King who would arise from Bethlehem, saying, "He shall be their peace" (Mic. 5:2-5).

Ultimately, Jesus himself is the long-anticipated Shepherd-King who has made peace with God. He has done it, however, not through the raw power of military deliverance but through “the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). He did not come to destroy but to be destroyed, laying down his life for his sheep (John 10:15). He now rules over his people in perfect justice and abundant mercy, empowering his people, by his Spirit, to walk humbly in his just and merciful ways (1 John 2:6)—the very life Israel in Micah’s day had abandoned.

Because of this Shepherd-King, all those who look to Christ in trusting faith experience his kindness instead of his anger. They can expect that God will “pass over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance” (Mic. 7:18) because the prophet who confesses, “I have sinned against him [the Lord],” also proclaims, “he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication” (Mic. 9). Ultimately the transgression of all such persons has been put upon God’s firstborn, Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24–26). Christ will “bear the indignation of the Lord” on their behalf (Mic. 7:9). Though we may suffer and fall in our life’s battle with evil, we shall rise, as the prophet believed he himself would, due to the Lord’s vindication (Mic. 8–9)—and, as indeed will all those who are united to Christ by faith (Rom. 6:5). This is the wonder of the gospel in Micah.

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A COLLECTION OF STORIES ANNOUNCING THE DOWNFALL OF ASSYRIA & BABYLON
 (ISAIAH 13:1-14:23)
 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL
 AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL *
 #612 BC

BABYLON

NAHUM IS FORETELLING NINEVEH'S FALL AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW GOD JUDGES VIOLENT PEOPLES TO ENDURE. (SEE DANIEL)



THE POINT:

1 THE LORD GOD APPEARS TO JUDGE EVIL AMONG THE NATIONS

14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

SIMILAR TO NINVAH ch.1 & HADRACHUK ch.3

THE LORD IS COMING TO ANGER & GREAT IN RAGE, & HE JUDGES TO LEAVE EVIL UNPUNISHED. (1:3) (QUOTING EXODUS 34:6-7)

14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

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14:1-3 THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

2 THE FALL OF NINEVEH

THE OVERTHROW OF THE CITY

THE LORD IS COMING TO DESTROY NINEVEH AND FALL AS SYRIA'S RISE ... AND FALL * #612 BC

3 ASSYRIA'S DOWNFALL

ASSYRIA

ASSYRIA'S DOWNFALL

ASSYRIA'S DOWNFALL

ASSYRIA'S DOWNFALL

ADDRESSES THE TRAGEDY OF VIOLENT OPPRESSION & HUMAN SUFFERING IN HISTORY

GOD IS GRIEVED BY THE DEATH OF THE INNOCENT

GOD'S GOODNESS & JUSTICE COMPEL HIM TO ORCHESTRATE THE DOWNFALL OF OPPRESSIVE NATIONS



In a variety of ways, the prophecy of Nahum brings home the gospel and carries along the redemptive story that culminates in Jesus Christ.

First, there are explicit gospel promises in Nahum—promises of good news and peace (Nah. 1:15) and an end to the Lord’s discipline (Nah. 12) and to the power of the oppressors (Nah. 13). God is a stronghold and refuge for those in trouble (Nah. 7). God’s saving character is made clear at numerous points.

Second, as God’s excellencies are proclaimed in judgment (Nah. 1:2–7), the repentant hear and receive grace. Even though Nahum does not explicitly call Nineveh to repent, repentance is always in order even if hope is not explicit (cf. Jer. 18:7–10). An oracle of judgment is a means of grace to the listening believer (Heb. 4:11; 6:1–8), and of gospel proclamation. Truth is being spoken. This is one manifestation of God’s goodness to humanity.

Third, we are comforted in knowing that judgment upon wickedness will inevitably come. All will be set right. We can be hopeful and patient. The gospel frees us not only from God’s just claims against us but from the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In saving, God overthrows and destroys dominions that are opposed to his rule and oppress his people. This is why Jesus Christ would lift up some and overthrow others (Luke 2:34), feed some and send others away (Luke 1:53). The good news is not good news for all. In his death and resurrection, Jesus brings an end to empires and puts to shame the powers who oppress (Psalm 2; Luke 20:43; John 12:31; Col. 2:14–15; Heb. 10:13).

Fourth, and supremely, our focus is drawn to the severity of judgment that Jesus Christ bore for us in his suffering in our place. The taunts deserved by evil (Nah. 3:5–7) were ultimately borne by him (Ps. 22:7; Luke 23:37). But for his extravagant act of mercy, our fate would be the same as Nineveh. Instead, we now stand in God’s presence blameless, with great joy (Jude 24).

The whole Bible is about the grace of God ultimately revealed in Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46). The whole Bible is about the gospel (Rom. 1:1–2; 1 Pet. 1:10–12). That includes Nahum. Reading Nahum, we see the judgment to fall on the wicked, and the trajectory that culminates in Jesus continues—a trajectory that clarifies how any wicked person can be fully and freely forgiven.

This article is adapted from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

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• MOST ACCURATE LABEL
• ADDRESS GOD WITH HIS
STRUGLES IS GOD-GOD
WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH
PAIN IN THE WORLD?

LAMENT:
BRINGING GOD'S
ATTENTION TO
INJUSTICE

INJUSTICE & IDOLATRY
FINAL DECADENCE OF
ISRAEL'S SOUTHERN KINGDOM

HABAKKUK

NOT UNIQUE! MOST NATIONS EVENTUALLY BECOME BABYLONIAN...

A
FIRST
EXODUS

BECOMES AN
ALLIANCE OF

A
FUTURE
EXODUS

WHEN GOD WILL:

- DEFEAT EVIL
- BRING JUSTICE TO ALL
- RESCUE THE OPPRESSED

GOD'S ANSWER TO
Habakkuk → 2 Later Generations

1-2a HABAKKUK & GOD

1-2a COMPLAINT #1

PROVING I AM NOT
CROOKY? WHY DON'T
YOU LISTEN?

TORAH NEGLECTED

INJUSTICE & IDOLATRY

INJUSTICE & IDOLATRY

1-3a RESPONSE #1

LOOK!
I'M PASSING BY THE
UNDOING!

UNJUST ECONOMY

BLAME LABOR

UNJUST LEADERS

IRRESPONSIBLE LEADERS

5/ IDOLATRY

2b FIVE MOS

THE OPPRESSIVE
INJUSTICE OF BABYLON

UNJUST ECONOMY

BLAME LABOR

UNJUST LEADERS

IRRESPONSIBLE LEADERS

5/ IDOLATRY

3 HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

3-7 HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

APPEARS IN POWER!
THINK TO MIGHT & MIGHT... & TO THE HEAVS! (3:1-7)

ARCHETYPE OF
EVIL WITNESS

3-7 HABAKKUK
TRENDS TOWARD GOD
"REACH YOUR LOOK
IN OUR DIRT!" (3:1)

3-7 YOU SAVE
YOUR PEOPLE
AND YOUR
ANNOYED
ONE! (3:1)

3-7 YOU CRUSH
THE HEAD
OF THE
EVIL
HOUSE. (3:7)

3-7 EVEN IF THE FIELDS
PRODUCE NO FOOD,
I WILL NOT JOIN IN
GOD BY SWORN (3:17-18)

3-7 SHINING EXAMPLE OF THE
IRRIGHTEOUS
LIVING BY FAITH

3-7 A FUTURE EXODUS

1-2b COMPLAINT #2

WHAT?
BABYLON IS EVEN
WORSE THAN ISRAEL!

THEY SAY THEY THINK POWER
THEY TREAT HUMANS LIKE ANIMALS
THEY TREAT NATIONS LIKE ANIMALS

THEY STAND LAZCH
& WAIT FOR GOD TO
RESPOND TO THEM (2:1)

2-5 RESPONSE #2

GOD WILL BRING BABYLON DOWN
GOD MAY USE CORRUPT KINGDOMS
BUT DOESN'T INDULGE THEM.
ALL NATIONS ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD'S JUSTICE.

VISION ABOUT AN
APPOINTED TIME

IRRIGHTEOUS WILL
LIVE BY THEIR FAITH



Like the book of Job, this book presents important gospel truths for people who encounter difficulties that seem incomprehensible. Like many of us today, the prophet Habakkuk asked God two fundamental questions amid God's apparent absence and the world's growing animosity toward God's people: (1) Where are you? (2) Why are you doing this? As this man of God observed the chaos of idolatry and immorality that was consuming those who ought to know better, he cried out in two complaints, beseeching God to act with justice against evildoers and to provide mercy for those who were faithful to God.

God responds to both of these complaints in ways that shock and surprise the prophet. First, God declares he will use an enemy nation (Babylon) to bring justice to the evildoers in Judah. Second, God will reveal to Israel his unsearchable wisdom and providence by judging not just Judah but all his enemies. This message finally instills in the prophet a deepened, resilient faith amid perplexing bewilderment.

At the cross, Jesus secures the mercy of forgiveness to all who trust in his substitutionary work.

The gospel shines forth in these themes of justice, mercy, wisdom, and providential provision. Whereas God seemed absent and inactive amid Habakkuk's doubt and distress, this book fits within the context of the Bible's larger story that, in the fullness of time, God himself, through the person and work of Jesus Christ, would come in the flesh to bring justice and mercy for all (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). At the cross, Jesus receives justice for our sins of idolatry and immorality. Moreover, at the cross, Jesus secures the mercy of forgiveness to all who trust in his substitutionary work. Thus it is on the cross at Calvary that justice and mercy meet.

This gospel shines forth in Habakkuk, as the prophet recounts God's faithful deliverance of Israel during the wilderness wanderings and calls God's people to renewed faith in his provision. As Israel experienced deliverance from Egypt and establishment in the Promised Land, so also Christ's followers today experience a much greater deliverance, a deliverance toward which every earthly Old Testament deliverance pointed—deliverance from sin, with the promise of a heavenly home. The New Testament proclaims the good news that in God's wise and purposeful providence, God himself has come in Jesus Christ to deliver his people from the bondage of sin through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son.

The gospel response that the prophet finally realized and that every generation must discover afresh is this: the righteous live by faith (Hab. 2:4). Habakkuk helps get us there.

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FINAL DECADS of the SOUTHERN KINGDOM (SEE 24 MINIS 22-23)



1-2:3 JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM



ZEPHANIAH DOESN'T SAY WHO, BECAUSE HE WANTS TO HIGHLIGHT GOD'S ROLE.



ZEPHANIAH

ZEPHANIAH CONTAINS VERY INTENSE IMAGES OF GOD'S



2:4-3:8 JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS & JERUSALEM



3:9-20 HOPE FOR THE NATIONS & JERUSALEM





The prophetic books of the Old Testament are in the Bible to say the same thing to us over and over: people are rebellious, even God's people, but God himself insists on doing his people eternal good anyway. That is what one prophet after another is trying to drive into our heads and hearts. And because rebellious people are unable to work their way out of their waywardness, God will take matters into his own hand to secure their deliverance.

Zephaniah follows this familiar pattern. The book begins with a declaration of the judgment that is coming on God's people and on God's enemies, but by the end of the book we see assurances of God's saving love that might seem to contradict his earlier declarations of judgment. How can God treat his people mercifully when justice calls for requisite judgment?

God's justice and mercy resolve only in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ.

The final answer to this dilemma is not fully given in the Old Testament, though the entire Old Testament is a snowballing anticipation of the answer. God's justice and mercy resolve only in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ. On the cross, God's perfect justice is satisfied; but at the same time, his infinite mercy is displayed. Christ died not for his own sins but for the sins of his people, for all who trust in him. But that plan is not fully revealed at every point in the Old Testament prophecies. The book of Zephaniah joins other Old Testament prophetic books in heightening our suspense and causing us to sit on the edge of our seats, wondering how God will be gracious to his people when they deserve to be forsaken. Yet what is shadowy in the Old Testament comes into the clear light of day in the New Testament: God's own Son was forsaken so that we never will be.

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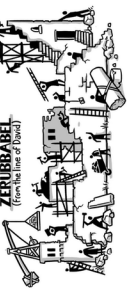
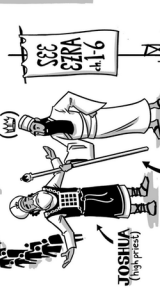
580 B.C. (see ZAKARIAH 2:3)



520 B.C. (see ZAKARIAH 1:1)



520 B.C. (see ZAKARIAH 1:1)



THE FUTURE SEEMS BRIGHT... BUT NOT FROM HAGGAIA'S POINT OF VIEW!

HAGGAIA

THE CHALLENGE of HAGGAIA

- OUR CHOICES MATTER.
- THE Obedience of GOD'S PEOPLE IS PART OF HOW GOD WORKS IN THE WORLD.
- THIS SHOULD MOTIVATE HUMILITY & ACTION.

created by the Bible Project

1:1-15 ACCUSATION & RESPONSE



2:1-9 ADDRESSING SHATTERED EXPECTATIONS



2:10-19 CALL TO COVENANT FAITHFULNESS



2:20-23 FUTURE HOPE OF GOD'S KINGDOM





With its focus on rebuilding the house of the Lord, the book of Haggai would be easy to apply moralistically, especially in the midst of a church-building program. The key to applying the book in a gospel-centered way is to see that the temple, like the tabernacle before it, was the visible symbol of God dwelling in the midst of his people, and therefore it foreshadows Christ, the one in whom the Word became flesh and “tabernacled” in our midst (see John 1:14).

Christ himself is the new temple in the New Testament (John 2:19). As his body, the church is also the new temple (Eph. 2:16–22). The message of this book for Christians is thus not primarily about restoring a building in Jerusalem, or about constructing a contemporary building: Haggai is all about the ongoing work of building up the people of God, a work that is primarily God’s (Matt. 16:18), but a work in which he, by his Spirit, invites us to participate (1 Cor. 3:10–17).

The key to applying the book in a gospel-centered way is to see that the temple, like the tabernacle before it, was the visible symbol of God dwelling in the midst of his people.

The other prominent link to the gospel is through Zerubbabel, the faithful descendant of David who leads the people in restoring the temple. Though Zerubbabel’s grandfather, Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah), was earlier discarded by the Lord like an unwanted signet ring, in Zerubbabel the chosen status of the Davidic line was restored (Hag. 2:19–23). Zerubbabel was one of the ancestors of Christ (Matt. 1:12) and foreshadowed his faithful zeal to build God’s house (John 2:17).

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4:4-6 CONCLUDING APPENDIX THE TORAH & PROPHETS

TORAH AND PROPHETS

"CHECK THE TORAH OF MY SERVANT MOSES. I WILL SEND THE PROPHET CLASH BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD, AND WILL RESTORE THE HEARTS OF GODS PEOPLE"

- SUMMARIZES THE TORAH & PROPHETS AS A UNIFIED STORY THAT POINTS TO THE FUTURE...
 - WHEN GOD WILL SEND A NEW MOSES & ELIJAH TO RESTORE GODS PEOPLE & HEAL THEIR HEARTS. (GENESIS 3:9, JEREMIAH 31, ZECHARIAH 3:6)

4:1-3 CONCLUSION

FOR THOSE WHO REVERE MY NAME, THE SON OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL RISE, WITH HEALING IN ITS CLOINGS. (4:2)

THE FUTURE OF THE REMNANT

MALACHI

A SERIES OF DISPUTES CLAIM DISAGREEMENT RESPONSE



3 CONFRONTING ISRAEL'S CORRUPTION & DAY OF THE LORD

1-7-35 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-36 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-37 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-38 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-39 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-40 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-41 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-42 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-43 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-44 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-45 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-46 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-47 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-48 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-49 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-50 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

1-7-51 YOU'VE NEGLECTED US WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUSTICE? (LEAD)

1-7-52 I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME... AND I WILL COME TO BRING JUSTICE. (CROSS)

100 YEARS AFTER RETURN FROM EXILE

PROPHETIC HOPE: (SEE ZECARIAH)

CONCORPTION VS. INJUSTICE

POVERTY

1-2 EXPOSING ISRAEL'S CORRUPTION

1-2-1 I STILL LOVE YOU. (CROSS)

1-2-2 HOW HAVE YOU DESPISING YOUR? (CROSS)

1-2-3 BUT NOT YOURS FAMILY. ESAU'S FAMILY. (CROSS)

1-2-4 BUT NOT YOURS FAMILY. ESAU'S FAMILY. (CROSS)

1-2-5 HOW HAVE YOU DESPISING YOUR? (CROSS)

1-2-6 YOU DESISE ME & DEFILE MY TEMPLE. (CROSS)

1-2-7 HOW ARE WE DESPISING YOU? (CROSS)

1-2-8 WHAT? HOW? (CROSS)

1-2-9 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-10 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-11 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-12 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-13 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-14 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-1 I STILL LOVE YOU. (CROSS)

1-2-2 HOW HAVE YOU DESPISING YOUR? (CROSS)

1-2-3 BUT NOT YOURS FAMILY. ESAU'S FAMILY. (CROSS)

1-2-4 BUT NOT YOURS FAMILY. ESAU'S FAMILY. (CROSS)

1-2-5 HOW HAVE YOU DESPISING YOUR? (CROSS)

1-2-6 YOU DESISE ME & DEFILE MY TEMPLE. (CROSS)

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1-2-19 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

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1-2-23 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

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1-2-25 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-26 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-27 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-28 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-29 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-30 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-31 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-32 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-33 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-34 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-35 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-36 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

1-2-37 YOU'VE TURNED AGAINST ME & YOUR WIVES. (CROSS)

1-2-38 IDOLATRY & DIVORCE (CROSS)

→ THE FAITHFUL READ THE SCRIPLES TO REMEMBER GODS CHARACTER & PROMISES

→ THE DIVINE GIFT OF SCRIPTURES: THEY POINT US TO THE PAST TO INSPIRE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

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The book of Malachi contains six oracles (or disputations) that each begin with a saying of the people, to which the Lord responds through his prophet. Most of these oracles are searching rebukes. It is striking, however, that before the Lord rebukes the people, he begins by affirming his electing love for them, which is the reason they continue to exist after the judgment of the exile (1:2). He didn't choose their forefather Jacob to be the ancestor of his people because of his good works but in spite of his sin. So too, their sin cannot make God cease loving them. The non-elect, however, will be judged for their sin without hope, as the fate of the descendants of Esau (Edom) makes clear.

We too were chosen to belong to God, not based on our works but simply out of God's electing grace in Christ (Eph. 1:4–6). We therefore cannot sin our way out of God's love. Yet at the same time, we were chosen to be holy and blameless (Eph. 1:4), not only positionally but also practically. So God rebukes our sin through his Word, and calls us to repent sincerely and turn to him for forgiveness.

The ultimate remedy for our sin is not our repentant obedience, but the Lord's coming to his temple.

And yet the ultimate remedy for our sin is not our repentant obedience, but the Lord's coming to his temple (Mal. 3:1). Our own righteousness cannot stand the exposure that that day will bring any more than dross could survive the refiner's fire or dirt could endure the launderer's soap (Mal. 3:2). We need the righteousness of another, if we are going to stand on that day— which is precisely what God gives us in the gospel. As a result, the day of the Lord's coming for believers is not a fiery, destructive furnace that we need to fear but rather a warming sun of righteousness that rises on us for our healing (Mal. 4:1–2). For in Jesus, God does come to his temple—not the temple building, but the temple of Christ's own body—which we are. There, humans can once more meet with God.

This article is adapted from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

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