MINOR PROPHETS

NAHUM, ZEPHANIAH & HABAKKUK

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Objectives:
1. Learn about God’s judgements on His people and other nations
2. Gain a better understanding of the Minor Prophets structure and message.
3. Learn about the last generation and days before exile
Lesson 1. The When & Where Nahum, Zephaniah & Habakkuk

This class is part of a series on the 12 Minor Prophets of the Old Testament and will cover the second three Minor Prophets, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah. Of course it is not the message of the prophets are of minor importance but rather the length is shorter than the Major Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

For each of the three books we will spend time developing an overview of the book by using bible study skills to understand the book by reading, looking at words or phrases that are repeated, that are peculiar, that make comparisons or contrasts, that are strange and that are prophetic.

The prophets went beyond simply explaining the crises being faced in their own time. They explained how this fit into God’s dealings with the nation and his eventual plan of redemption. Therefore, they present an overall view, or paradigm, which pervades their writings. There are eight basic points summed up in this interpretation of history;

1. God is Lord (“The Lord says”/”word of the Lord” etc)
2. Election of Israel
3. Rebellion of Israel
4. Judgment of God
5. Divine Compassion of God
6. Call to Repentance
7. Redemption & Restoration
8. Kingdom of God

B. ASSIGNMENTS FOR OVERVIEW OF EACH MINOR PROPHET

1. Completely read the book.
2. Reread the book
3. After reading go back through the book and look for six things:
   a. Repeated Words and Phrases.
   b. Peculiar Words and Phrases.
   c. Comparisons and Contrasts.
   d. Figurative Expressions.
   e. Anything Strange.
   f. Any prophetic statements
4. After reading the book look for passages of the book that fit into the "Prophetic Paradigm", Note this will be limited since Jonah is written as a narrative.

God revealed his standards for prophets. According to Deuteronomy 13:1–11, Israel’s prophets must never teach the people to serve any other god but Yahweh. Even if a prophet can perform signs and wonders, the people must not follow him if he advocates serving other gods. In Deuteronomy 18:9–22 Moses adds that other nations will have
prophets who tell the future and communicate with spirits (Deut. 18:9–14); in contrast, God will put his own words in his prophets’ mouths (Deut. 18:18). Further, a prophet can show that he has God’s authorization by speaking the truth about future events (Deut. 18:21–22). Israel must obey prophets who proclaim faithfulness to God’s covenant with Israel and whose predictions come true every time. Any prophet failing to meet these standards does not speak for God. It is important to recognize that the prophets were not the regular teachers of God’s word—that was the priests’ calling (Deut. 33:10). Rather, God raised up prophets for particular times in the OT story (which is why their “calls” were so important, as in Isaiah 6). The first written Prophetic Books originated in the eighth century B.C. These books came about during the decline of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the rise of Assyria as a world power.

2 Peter 1:19–21 (ESV)

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
Assyria and Judah’s Road to Ruin

663 B.C.

Assurbanipal was a munificent patron of learning, and the library of Nineveh owed most of its treasures to him and the king conducted his wars through his’ generals, while he himself remained at home. Egypt demanded his first attention. Tirhakah the Ethiopian who had headed its revolt was driven back to his own country, and for a time there was peace. Then under Tandamane, Tirhakah’s successor, Egypt revolted again. This time the Assyrian punishment was merciless. Thebes—“No-amon” (Nahum 3:8)—was destroyed, its booty carried away and two obelisks transported to Nineveh as trophies of victory.

652 B.C.

The most likely occasion for Manasseh’s insubordination would have been in conjunction with the Babylonian revolt in 652 bc.

630-625 B.C. Date cited for Minor Prophet Zephaniah

650 or 630-612 B.C. Date cited for Minor Prophet Nahum

626 B.C.

The death of Ashurbanipal in 631 B.C. leads to revolt by Nabopolassar that last a decade with Babylon gaining the upper hand and turns into a fight for survival for Assyria.

616 B.C.

Nabopolassar (ruled 627-623 BC) was as aggressive as any Assyrian king and by all accounts just as politically savvy. Nabopolassar mustered an army at Babylon in 616 BC and marched north to destroy the Assyrians and Nineveh. Ironically, the Assyrians were saved by their once rival the Egyptians, who led by their King Psamtek I (ruled 664-610 BC), were able to fight off the Neo-Babylonian attack.

615-614 B.C.

Nabopolassar strengthened himself by forming an offensive and defensive alliance with the Median king, whose daughter he had married to his son Nebuchadrezzar. In 615 BC, Cyaxares, king of the Medes attacked the Assyrian Empire and his forces defeated the Assyrians at Arrapha. The next year, the Medes decisively defeated the Assyrians at the devastating battle of Assur. This assault greatly affected the Assyrian morale.
612 B.C.

Assyrian Empire lasted almost 300 years until they were suddenly and utterly defeated by the power of God in 612 B.C. The Babylonians, the Medes, and the Scythians had laid a three-month siege against Assyria and were ready to give up, when suddenly a flood came and broke down her mighty walls. Ashuruballit II, the new king of Assyria, took Harran as his capital and tried to repel the invaders with the help of Egypt.

612-605 B.C. Date cited for Minor Prophet Habakkuk

609 B.C.

Pharaoh Necho II, leader of the mightiest power of the day, marches north to support the dying Assyrian Empire in its struggle against the rising star of Babylon. As the Egyptian forces pass through Megiddo, King Josiah of Judah attacks and is defeated. Josiah dies from a battle wound and is succeeded by his younger, anti-Egyptian son Jehoahaz. Necho swiftly deposes Jehoahaz and installs his elder, pro-Egyptian brother Jehoiakim as vassal king of Judah.

Egypt crosses the Euphrates in July and joins forces with the Assyrians. Egypt controls the region from the Euphrates to Egypt (2 Kings 24:7). Judah’s brief stretch of independence, between periods of Assyrian and Egyptian domination, comes to an end.

605 B.C.

The Battle of Carchemish was fought between the armies of Egypt allied with the remnants of the army of the former Assyrian Empire against the armies of Babylonia, allied with the Medes, Persians, and Scythians. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon takes the reins of power and routs Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish, on the Euphrates. Syria and Palestine fall to the Babylonians. Failing to recognize the enormity of this shift in power, Judah sympathizes with Egypt, thereby ensuring future conflict with Babylon.

603/604 B.C.

Judah surrenders to Babylon as Nebuchadnezzar sweeps through Syria-Palestine. Despite his pro-Egyptian sympathies, Jehoiakim submits to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1).

601/600 B.C.

Babylonia attacks, and is defeated by, Egypt in the eastern Delta. Nebuchadnezzar withdraws to Babylon for two years to rebuild his army. This allows Necho to campaign in southern Palestine. Jehoiakim, sensing shifts in the balance of power, switches his allegiance to Necho, who seeks to build a coalition against Babylon.

598 B.C.

Jehoiakim dies (possibly as a result of foul play) and is succeeded by his 18-year-old son Jehoiachin. Late in the year, Nebuchadnezzar strikes at Judah.
597 B.C.

Jerusalem surrenders to Babylon on March 16 (2 Adar). Appeased by Judah’s capitulation and Jehoiakim’s removal, Nebuchadnezzar orders that the city be spared. Nebuchadnezzar sends Jehoiachin and thousands of other Judahites into exile and installs Jehoiachin’s uncle Zedekiah as puppet king.

595 B.C.

Necho of Egypt dies and is succeeded by the ambitious pharaoh Psammetich II.

594/593 B.C.

Zedekiah, emboldened by news of an uprising in Babylon, hosts a mini-summit of neighboring petty states—probably to plan a revolt against Babylon, whose defeat in 601/600 B.C.E. was still green in memory. This conspiracy comes to an end, however, when Nebuchadnezzar enters Palestine and is assured of Judah’s continuing loyalty.

592 B.C.

Pharaoh Psammetich II marches into Palestine and Phoenicia with the aim of fomenting anti-Babylonian feeling in Judah, Philistia and Phoenicia.

590/589 B.C.

Zedekiah, possibly inspired by the new pharaoh Hophra, rebels against Babylon.

589/588 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar, in a delayed reaction to Pharaoh Hophra’s aggressive initiative, attacks Judah and places Jerusalem under siege. The territory of Benjamin (and other territories) may also succumb to Nebuchadnezzar.

586 B.C.

The Babylonian army breaches the walls of Jerusalem in July. Zedekiah is captured while trying to escape at night and is taken before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. He blinds Zedekiah and sends him into exile in Babylon. In August, the city and its Temple are razed, and more Jews are deported. The Davidic dynasty comes to an end.
Lesson 2. The Minor Prophets: Overview Study of Nahum

Purpose and Message

The purpose of the book was to pronounce the doom of Nineveh. This is an oracle of judgment similar to the oracles of judgment spoken against the nations as found most prominently in the major prophets. The message was that the days of Assyrian rule were coming to an end at the hands of the Lord. This was not just a case of the ebb and flow of history, but the action of the Lord’s punishment against Nineveh. He announced Nineveh’s doom, and he would accomplish it.

Although the Assyrian Empire did not actually expire until the last decade of the seventh century (600’s), its breaking point came mid-century. At that time the revolts in the empire began to take their toll, and by the 640s and 630s Assyrian control was first lagging and then crumbling as the empire disintegrated. Within a few years of Ashurbanipal’s death (627), the Babylonians had achieved their independence; over the next two decades they, along with the Medes, dismantled the mighty Assyrian state. The centerpiece of the Assyrian collapse was the fall of Nineveh in 612, as prophesied by Nahum. Nineveh had been fashioned into the gem of the Assyrian Empire by Sennacherib (704–681 BC). He had nearly tripled the size of the city and made it his capital, constructing a magnificent palace there and beautifying the city with parks, a botanical garden, and a zoo. Its splendor was probably surpassed in the ancient world only by Nebuchadrezzar’s Babylon. Yet, despite its splendor, Nineveh represented the brutal wickedness of the Assyrians that the Lord had determined to punish—prophesied, for example, in Isaiah 14:24–25 and Zephaniah 2:13–15.

The kings of Judah during most of the period under discussion were Manasseh (695–642 BC) and Josiah (640–609 BC). However, Manasseh did repent of his wickedness toward the end of his reign (2 Chron 33:12–16). This occurred after he had been taken captive to Assyria, which may have been the result of his joining a conspiracy against Ashurbanipal. The most likely occasion for Manasseh’s insubordination would have been in conjunction with the Babylonian revolt in 652 BC. This chronology also best fits the data on Thebes which was taken by the Assyrians in 664 BC, and accordingly the book of Nahum may tentatively be dated to 655–650 BC. However, some date it to Josiah which could place it around 630 to 612 BC.
THE MINOR PROPHETS

Nahum, Zephaniah & Haggai
Nahum 1:2 (ESV)

2 The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.

Nahum 1:7-8 (ESV)

7 The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. 8 But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.

Lesson 9 Nahum

The prophet predicts the fall of Nineveh

**Key Verses**

**Prophecy Against Nineveh**

Nahum 1:6—3:19

- Will be punished for idolatry, bloodshed, witchcraft 1:4, 2:12, 3:1-4
- Will be destroyed by flood 1:6
- No descendants will bear their name 1:14
- Will be invaded by warriors 2:1-4
- Will be like those who are drunk 3:11
- Fortresses will fall 3:12
- Soldiers will be weak 3:13
- Gates will be opened to the enemy 3:13
- Will be burned 3:13-15
- Will face siege by invading army 3:14
- Will be unable to defend itself 3:15
- Will be completely destroyed 3:15, 2:8-10, 15, 3:2-3, 19
- 3rd year or month of siege, the Khasor River, which ran through the city flooded 2:10
- Nineveh was so utterly devastated its location was lost to memory until rediscovered in 1853
- The king and his courtiers were surprised in the midst of their "carousings"
- The flood broke down the floodgates and part of the wall
- The city was destroyed by the Medes, Babylonians and Scythians in 612 BC
- When gates the best defended and the hardest to capture taken no way of escape
- City was destroyed so completely by the flood & enemies that when Alexander the Great fought the battle of Arbela nearby in 331 BC, he did not know a city had been there. Nineveh was never rebuilt.

3:12, 15-17

**Outline - Nahum**

I. God's wrath against Nineveh
II. The siege & fall of Nineveh
III. The sin which led to Nineveh's fall

**Key Person**

Manasseh of Judah 697-642 BC

- He did evil in the sight of the LORD
- He did despicable practices like nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.
- He rebuilt high places that Hezekiah had destroyed
- He erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah
- He worshiped all the host of heaven & served them.
- The Asherah he set in the house of which the LORD
- He burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of Hinnom. He used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and necromancers.
- He shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.
- Taken captive by Assyrians, repented and returned

Nahum preached during the reign of King Manasseh, one of the most evil kings in Judah's long history, a man who needed the pain of his own experience to teach him the lessons of being a good king. The book of Nahum mentions the recent fall of No-amon, or Thebes, which occurred in 663 BC (Nahum 3:8), as well as the coming destruction of Nineveh, which happened in 612 BC (1:1: 3:11-15). But when, during this more than fifty-year period, did Nahum preach? The Assyrian Empire, which had its capital at Nineveh, was at its most powerful in the first half of this period, having a stronghold on Judah during King Manasseh's reign (2 Chr33:10-13). Also, while the book of Nahum mentions the destruction of Thebes, it does not mention its reconstruction, which took place in 654 BC. This leads to date Nahum's prophecy between the years of 663 and 654 BC. Manasseh was probably taken as a captive under the reign of Ashurbanipal the last powerful king and who put down a revolt lasting from 652 to 648 BC.

Manasseh's great conversion took place late in his reign, ~648 BC, a mere half-dozen years before his death. That means Nahum preached during the darkest period in Judah's history to that point, a time filled with idolatry of all kinds in a nation that had fully turned its back on God.
For each of the three books we will spend time developing an overview of the book by using bible study skills to understand the book by reading, looking at words or phrases that are repeated, that are peculiar, that make comparisons or contrasts, that are strange and that are prophetic.

The prophets went beyond simply explaining the crises the Israelites were facing in their own time. They explained how this fit into God’s dealings with the nation and his eventual plan of redemption. Therefore, they present an overall view, or paradigm, which pervades their writings. There are eight basic points summed up in this interpretation of history;

1. God is Lord (“The Lord says”/“word of the Lord” etc)
2. Election of Israel
3. Rebellion of Israel
4. Judgment of God
5. Divine Compassion of God
6. Call to Repentance
7. Redemption & Restoration
8. Kingdom of God

A. DATE OF BOOK
   655-650 BC if in reign of Manasseh or 630 to 612 BC if in reign of Josiah

B. ASSIGNMENTS FOR OVERVIEW OF OBADIAH
   1. Completely read the book.
   2. Reread the book
   3. After reading go back through the book and look for six things:
      a. Repeated Words and Phrases.
      b. Peculiar Words and Phrases.
      c. Comparisons and Contrasts.
      d. Figurative Expressions.
      e. Anything Strange.
      f. Any prophetic statements
   4. After reading the book look for passages of the book that fit into the “Prophetic Paradigm”, Note this will be limited since Jonah is written as a narrative.
   5. Fill in the study worksheet for Obadiah.
### Study Skills for The Minor Prophets

#### ASSIGNMENTS FOR BOOK OF NAHUM

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Nahum

Nahum 1 God’s Wrath Against Nineveh

1 The burden against Nineveh.
The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

2 God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;
The LORD avenges and is furious.
The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves wrath for His enemies;

3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,
And will not at all acquit the wicked.
The LORD has His way
In the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds are the dust of His feet.

4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,
And dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither,
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.

5 The mountains quake before Him,
The hills melt,
And the earth heaves at His presence,
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

6 Who can stand before His indignation?
And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?
His fury is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.

7 The LORD is good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And He knows those who trust in Him.

8 But with an overflowing flood
He will make an utter end of its place,
And darkness will pursue His enemies.

9 What do you conspire against the LORD?
He will make an utter end of it.
Affliction will not rise up a second time.

10 For while tangled like thorns,
And while drunken like drunkards,
They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.

11 From you comes forth one
Who plots evil against the LORD,
A wicked counselor.

12 Thus says the LORD:
"Though they are safe, and likewise many,
Yet in this manner they will be cut down
When he passes through.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no more;

13 For now I will break off his yoke from you,
And burst your bonds apart."
14 The LORD has given a command concerning you:
   "Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.
   Out of the house of your gods I will cut off
   the carved image and the molded image.
   I will dig your grave,
   For you are vile."

15 Behold, on the mountains
   The feet of him who brings good tidings,
   Who proclaims peace!
   O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
   Perform your vows.
   For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;
   He is utterly cut off.

Nahum 2 Destruction of Nineveh

1 He who scatters has come up before your face.
   Man the fort!
   Watch the road!
   Strengthen your flanks!
   Fortify your power mightily.

2 For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob
   Like the excellence of Israel,
   For the emptiers have emptied them out
   And ruined their vine branches.

3 The shields of his mighty men are made red,
   The valiant men are in scarlet.
   The chariots come with flaming torches
   In the day of his preparation,
   And the spears are brandished.

4 The chariots rage in the streets,
   They jostle one another in the broad roads;
   They seem like torches,
   They run like lightning.

5 He remembers his nobles;
   They stumble in their walk;
   They make haste to her walls,
   And the defense is prepared.

6 The gates of the rivers are opened,
   And the palace is dissolved.

7 It is decreed:
   She shall be led away captive,
   She shall be brought up;
   And her maidservants shall lead her
   as with the voice of doves,
   Beating their breasts.
Nahum 2 Destruction of Nineveh

8 Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water,
   Now they flee away.
   "Halt! Halt!" they cry; But no one turns back.
9 Take spoil of silver!
   Take spoil of gold!
   There is no end of treasure,
   Or wealth of every desirable prize.
10 She is empty, desolate, and waste!
   The heart melts, and the knees shake;
   Much pain is in every side,
   And all their faces are drained of color.
11 Where is the dwelling of the lions,
   And the feeding place of the young lions,
   Where the lion walked, the lioness and lion’s cub,
   And no one made them afraid?
12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,
   Killed for his lionesses,
   Filled his caves with prey,
   And his dens with flesh.
13 "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of hosts,
   "I will burn your chariots in smoke,
   and the sword shall devour your young lions;
   I will cut off your prey from the earth, and
   the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."
Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

1 Woe to the bloody city!
   It is all full of lies and robbery.
   Its victim never departs.

2 The noise of a whip
   And the noise of rattling wheels,
   Of galloping horses,
   Of clattering chariots!

3 Horsem en charge with bright sword and glittering spear.
   There is a multitude of slain,
   A great number of bodies,
   Countless corpses—
   They stumble over the corpses—

4 Because of the multitude of harlotries
   of the seductive harlot,
   The mistress of sorceries,
   Who sells nations through her harlotries,
   And families through her sorceries.

5 "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of hosts;
   "I will lift your skirts over your face,
   I will show the nations your nakedness,
   And the kingdoms your shame.

6 I will cast abominable filth upon you,
   Make you vile,
   And make you a spectacle.

7 It shall come to pass that all who look upon you
   Will flee from you, and say,
   'Nineveh is laid waste!
   Who will bemoan her?'
   Where shall I seek comforters for you?"

8 Are you better than No Amon
   That was situated by the River,
   That had the waters around her,
   Whose rampart was the sea,
   Whose wall was the sea?

9 Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength,
   And it was boundless;
   Put and Lubim
   were your helpers.

10 Yet she was carried away,
    She went into captivity;
    Her young children also were dashed to pieces
    At the head of every street;
    They cast lots for her honorable men,
    And all her great men were bound in chains.
Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

You also will be drunk;
You will be hidden;
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.
All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs:
If they are shaken,
They fall into the mouth of the eater.
Surely, your people in your midst are women!
The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;
Fire shall devour the bars of your gates.

Draw your water for the siege!
Fortify your strongholds!
Go into the clay and tread the mortar!
Make strong the brick kiln!

There the fire will devour you,
The sword will cut you off;
It will eat you up like a locust.
Make yourself many--like the locust!
Make yourself many--like the swarming locusts!

You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.
The locust plunders and flies away.

Your commanders are like swarming locusts,
And your generals like great grasshoppers,
Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;
When the sun rises they flee away,
And the place where they are is not known.

Your shepherds slumber,
O king of Assyria;
Your nobles rest in the dust.
Your people are scattered on the mountains,
And no one gathers them.

Your injury has no healing,
Your wound is severe.
All who hear news of you
Will clap their hands over you,

For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?
Lesson 3. Nahum 1 God’s Wrath Against Nineveh

When Jonah preached repentance on the streets of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, the people responded and were spared. A century later, sometime between 663 and 612 B.C., Nahum preached in a time when Nineveh would not repent. Nineveh, which had destroyed Israel’s northern kingdom in 722, itself fell to Babylon in 612—just a few years after Nahum’s warning. The Assyrians were notorious for the brutality of their treatment of other nations. Nahum declared, however, that God is sovereign: he punishes whom he will, and they are powerless to stop him. Much of Nahum’s prophecy was directed to the people of Judah, who could rejoice at the good news (1:15) of Nineveh’s impending fall.

Questions:

1. To what city is Nahum’s prophecies directed (1:1)?

2. How is the Lord introduced in Nahum (1:2-8)?

3. How do the key verses 1:3,7 & 8 relate to Judah, Nahum to Us today?

The writer addresses Assyria directly as ‘you’ in opposition to Yahweh will come to nothing as a result of God’s actions (see v. 8). So complete is this end that Assyria will not be troubled again, nor will she cause further trouble, because she will be no more. Nahum Gives a message to both Judah and Nineveh.

4. Contrast the two messages between Judah and Nineveh 1:12-2:2

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The LORD has given a command concerning you:
"Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.
Out of the house of your gods I will cut off
the carved image and the molded image.
I will dig your grave,
For you are vile."
Behold, on the mountains
The feet of him who brings good tidings,
Who proclaims peace!
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
Perform your vows.
For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;
He is utterly cut off.

Nahum 2 Destruction of Nineveh
He who scatters has come up before your face.
Man the fort!
Watch the road!
Strengthen your flanks!
Fortify your power mightily.
For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob
Like the excellence of Israel,
For the emptiers have emptied them out
And ruined their vine branches.
Lesson 4. Nahum 2 The Destruction of Nineveh

Purpose and Message
The judgment of Nineveh and Assyria is expressed in clear, military terms with vivid battle description. Armies and war were part of Israel’s experience throughout most of her history, thus placing the imagery readily to hand.

1. Describe the attack on Nineveh (2:3–5)

2. Describe the defeat of Nineveh (2:6-10)

3. What happens to the Lion of Assyria (2:13)?
Nahum 2 Destruction of Nineveh

1 He who scatters has come up before your face.
   Man the fort!
   Watch the road!
   Strengthen your flanks!
   Fortify your power mightily.

2 For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob
   Like the excellence of Israel,
   For the emptiers have emptied them out
   And ruined their vine branches.

3 The shields of his mighty men are made red,
   The valiant men are in scarlet.
   The chariots come with flaming torches
   In the day of his preparation,
   And the spears are brandished.

4 The chariots rage in the streets,
   They jostle one another in the broad roads;
   They seem like torches,
   They run like lightning.

5 He remembers his nobles;
   They stumble in their walk;
   They make haste to her walls,
   And the defense is prepared.

6 The gates of the rivers are opened,
   And the palace is dissolved.

7 It is decreed:
   She shall be led away captive,
   She shall be brought up;
   And her maidservants shall lead her
   as with the voice of doves,
   Beating their breasts.

8 Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water,
   Now they flee away.
   "Halt! Halt!" they cry; But no one turns back.

9 Take spoil of silver!
   Take spoil of gold!
   There is no end of treasure,
   Or wealth of every desirable prize.

10 She is empty, desolate, and waste!
   The heart melts, and the knees shake;
   Much pain is in every side,
   And all their faces are drained of color.

11 Where is the dwelling of the lions,
   And the feeding place of the young lions,
   Where the lion walked, the lioness and lion's cub,
   And no one made them afraid?

12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,
   Killed for his lionesses,
   Filled his caves with prey,
   And his dens with flesh.

13 "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of hosts,
   "I will burn your chariots in smoke,
   and the sword shall devour your young lions;
   I will cut off your prey from the earth, and
   the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."
Lesson 5. Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

The downfall of Nineveh is pictured from several different points in time: looking ahead towards opposition (vv. 5–12), preparing for siege and battle (vv. 14–17), participating in an actual battle (vv. 2–4) and looking back on defeat (vv. 13, 18–19).

*Woe*, as an interjection used in lamenting the dead (1 Kgs 13:30; Jer. 34:5; cf. Amos 5:16), is used with an extended meaning in the prophetic literature to introduce a dire threat (Isa. 5; Hab. 2). Its force is that the punishment threatened is so certain that those addressed are as good as dead. The use of the form here is ironic, since the demise of the tyrant would be welcomed, not mourned. The ‘bloody city’, Nineveh, is lamented. She who was the place of *lies* (Hos. 7:3), *plunder* and ‘prey’ (the latter a recollection of the oracle in 2:11–13) will now find her position reversed, receiving the destruction she had previously dispensed.

1. What fills Nineveh (3:1)?

2. What shall never depart Nineveh (3:1)?

3. What does the horsemen stumble over (3:3)?

4. What will people say about Nineveh (3:7)?

5. How will Nineveh’s end compare to No Amon (Thebes) (3:8-10)?

6. What will happen to the commanders (3:17)?

7. What will happen to the people (3:18)?
Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

1 Woe to the bloody city!
   Its is all full of lies and robbery.
   Its victim never departs.

2 The noise of a whip
   And the noise of rattling wheels,
   Of galloping horses,
   Of clattering chariots!

3 Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear.
   There is a multitude of slain,
   A great number of bodies,
   Countless corpses—
   They stumble over the corpses--

4 Because of the multitude of harlotries
   of the seductive harlot,
   The mistress of sorceries,
   Who sells nations through her harlotries,
   And families through her sorceries.

5 "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of hosts;
   "I will lift your skirts over your face,
   I will show the nations your nakedness,
   And the kingdoms your shame.

6 I will cast abominable filth upon you,
   Make you vile,
   And make you a spectacle.

7 It shall come to pass that all who look upon you
   Will flee from you, and say,
   'Nineveh is laid waste!
   Who will bemoan her?'
   Where shall I seek comforters for you?"

8 Are you better than No Amon
   That was situated by the River,
   That had the waters around her,
   Whose rampart was the sea,
   Whose wall was the sea?

9 Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength,
   And it was boundless;
   Put and Lubim
   were your helpers.

10 Yet she was carried away,
    She went into captivity;
    Her young children also were dashed to pieces
    At the head of every street;
    They cast lots for her honorable men,
    And all her great men were bound in chains.

Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

11 You also will be drunk;
   You will be hidden;
   You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

12 All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs:
   If they are shaken,
   They fall into the mouth of the eater.

13 Surely, your people in your midst are women!
   The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;
   Fire shall devour the bars of your gates.

14 Draw your water for the siege!
   Fortify your strongholds!
   Go into the clay and tread the mortar!
   Make strong the brick kiln!

15 There the fire will devour you,
   The sword will cut you off;
   It will eat you up like a locust.
   Make yourself many--like the swarming locusts!
   Make yourself many--like the swarming locusts!

16 You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.
   The locust plunders and flies away.

17 Your commanders are like swarming locusts,
   And your generals like great grasshoppers,
   Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;
   When the sun rises they flee away,
   And the place where they are is not known.

18 Your shepherds slumber,
   O king of Assyria;
   Your nobles rest in the dust.
   Your people are scattered on the mountains,
   And no one gathers them.

19 Your injury has no healing,
   Your wound is severe.
   All who hear news of you
   Will clap their hands over you,
   For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?
Lesson 6. The Minor Prophets: Overview Study of Zephaniah

The Writing of the Book

In the superscription to the book (1:1), the prophecies of Zephaniah are dated to the reign of Josiah (640–609 BC). Of greater interest, however, is the question of whether the prophecies came before or after the reforms of Josiah (628 and 622 BC; see 2 Chron. 34:3, 8). In Zephaniah 1:4–6 the list of the people who were to be cut off is very similar to those targeted by Josiah’s reform (2 Kings 23:4–7). Unless Zephaniah was suggesting that Josiah’s reforms had not accomplished in practice what they set out to do in theory, this similarity would support a date prior to the reform of 622 BC. It is possible that because 1:4 refers to the remnant of Baal, the prophecy is best placed between the two reforms and was meant to encourage Josiah to finish the good work he had begun. A date about 627 or 626 BC would also fit well with events that were taking place in the political arena. Ashurbanipal, the last of the great Assyrian kings, died in 627, and the Babylonians declared their independence from Assyria the next year. These would serve as a fine setting for the pronouncement of the doom of Nineveh in 2:13–15. Tentatively, then, the date that seems most fitting for the prophecy of Zephaniah is 627/626, which is also when the prophetic career of Jeremiah was inaugurated.

The Background

The five decades of Manasseh’s apostasy (697–642 BC) exacted a heavy spiritual toll on Judah from which they never totally recovered. A whole generation knew no other king but Manasseh. His official sponsorship of religious syncretism saw Baalism and other Canaanite practices reinstated that had always been at least on the fringes of Israelite religion since the exodus from Egypt almost a millennium earlier.

Josiah’s reform measures were the most austere ever attempted. They succeeded in changing the Israelite religious practices and ridding Israelite worship of foreign elements, but they apparently failed to change the hearts of the people. As a result, freedom from bondage to the Assyrians did not usher in the heralded ideal Davidic king who would restore the boundaries of Israel and the prominence of Jerusalem. Instead, it merely marked a transition from Assyrian control of Israel to Babylonian control.

Purpose and Message

The purpose of the prophecies of Zephaniah was to initiate change in Judah by pronouncing God’s judgment on wickedness. Coupled with God’s intention to punish came the proclamation of his intention to restore Judah. The message of Zephaniah was focused on the day of the Lord which, he contended, was fast approaching. His indictment of Judah included denunciation of her corrupt officials and her continuing rebellion against the Lord.
The Minor Prophets

Nahum, Zephaniah & Habbakuk

Beware!
For the “Day of the Lord” is Coming!
(1:7, 8, 14\(^2\), 18; 2:2, 3)

This Day is a Day of:
Wrath
Trouble
Destruction
Darkness
Battle
(2:15)

For Judah
(1:2-11)

For Nations
(2:4-15)

The Purpose Of This Day Of Wrath:
To Bring About Punishment:
(Zeph. 3:8)
To Encourage Repentance:
(Zeph. 3:3; cf. 3:12)

“I will utterly consume” 1:2

“I will save” 3:19

KEY VERSES:
1:15 with 2:3

KEY WORDS:
desolation
day of the Lord
in the midst

2 KEY PASSAGES
JUDGMENT 1:14-16
RESTORATION 3:14-17
For each of the three books we will spend time developing an overview of the book by using bible study skills to understand the book by reading, looking at words or phrases that are repeated, that are peculiar, that make comparisons or contrasts, that are strange and that are prophetic.

The prophets went beyond simply explaining the crises the Israelites were facing in their own time. They explained how this fit into God’s dealings with the nation and his eventual plan of redemption. Therefore, they present an overall view, or paradigm, which pervades their writings. There are eight basic points summed up in this interpretation of history;

1. God is Lord (“The Lord says”/“word of the Lord” etc)
2. Election of Israel
3. Rebellion of Israel
4. Judgment of God
5. Divine Compassion of God
6. Call to Repentance
7. Redemption & Restoration
8. Kingdom of God

A. DATE OF BOOK
630-625 BC

B. ASSIGNMENTS FOR OVERVIEW OF OBADIAH

1. Completely read the book.
2. Reread the book
3. After reading go back through the book and look for six things:

   a. Repeated Words and Phrases.
   b. Peculiar Words and Phrases.
   c. Comparisons and Contrasts.
   d. Figurative Expressions.
   e. Anything Strange.
   f. Any prophetic statements

4. After reading the book look for passages of the book that fit into the “Prophetic Paradigm”, Note this will be limited since Jonah is written as a narrative.

5. Fill in the study worksheet for Obadiah.
### Study Skills for The Minor Prophets

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH**

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THE MINOR PROPHETS
Nahum, Zephaniah & Habbakuk

Key Verses

Judgment of Whole World

Zephaniah 1:3 (ESV)
3 “I will sweep away man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds of the heavens
and the fish of the sea,
and the rubble with the wicked.
I will cut off mankind
from the face of the earth,” declares the Lord.

Description of the Judgment

Zephaniah 1:14-15 (ESV)
14 The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter;
the mighty man cries aloud there.
15 A day of wrath is that day,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,

Call to Repentance

Zephaniah 2:3 (ESV)
2 Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land,
who do his just commands;
seek righteousness; seek humility;
perhaps you may be hidden
on the day of the anger of the Lord.

Salvation in Day of the Lord

Zephaniah 3:19 (ESV)
19 Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
“The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.” - Zephaniah 1:1

Zephaniah 1:2-4

I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the Lord. “I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the rubble with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth,” declares the Lord. “I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests.”

If you knew that your nation would perish regardless of your actions, what would your motivation be for continuing to show faith in God?

Though the Lord’s anger was great, He ultimately reminds the people of their coming rest in verses 12-20 of the final chapter. Since the remnant would be the only people to take heed the words of Zephaniah, this was a message of hope for those who would not be around to see God’s promises fulfilled.

“12 But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the Lord.”

Zephaniah 3:12

“15 The Lord has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more.”

Zephaniah 3:15

“20 At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together; indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the Lord.

Zephaniah 3:20
Zephaniah 1 The Coming Judgment on Judah

1 The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

The Great Day of the LORD

2 “I will utterly consume everything
   From the face of the land,”
   Says the LORD;

3 “I will consume man and beast;
   I will consume the birds of the heavens,
   The fish of the sea,
   And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked.
   I will cut off man from the face of the land,”
   Says the LORD.

4 “I will stretch out My hand against Judah,
   And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
   I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place,
   The names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests—

5 Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops;
   Those who worship and swear oaths by the LORD,
   But who also swear by Milcom;

6 Those who have turned back from following the LORD,
   And have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.”

7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD;
   For the day of the LORD is at hand,
   For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
   He has invited His guests.

8 “And it shall be,
   In the day of the LORD’s sacrifice,
   That I will punish the princes and the king’s children,
   And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.

9 In the same day I will punish
   All those who leap over the threshold,
   Who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit.

10 “And there shall be on that day,” says the LORD,
   “The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate,
   A wailing from the Second Quarter,
   And a loud crashing from the hills.

11 Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh!
   For all the merchant people are cut down;
   All those who handle money are cut off.
“And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men
Who are settled in complacency,
Who say in their heart,
‘The LORD will not do good,
Nor will He do evil.’
Therefore their goods shall become booty,
And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.”

The great day of the LORD is near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.

That day is a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
A day of trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.

“I will bring distress upon men,
And they shall walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against the LORD;
Their blood shall be poured out like dust,
And their flesh like refuse.”

Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to deliver them
In the day of the LORD’s wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance
Of all those who dwell in the land.”
2 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, 
O undesirable nation, 
Before the decree is issued, 
Or the day passes like chaff, 
Before the LORD’s fierce anger comes upon you, 
Before the day of the LORD’s anger comes upon you!

3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, 
Who have upheld His justice. 
Seek righteousness, seek humility. 
It may be that you will be hidden 
In the day of the LORD’s anger.

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken, 
And Ashkelon desolate; 
They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, 
And Ekron shall be uprooted.

5 Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, 
The nation of the Cherethites! 
The word of the LORD is against you, 
O Canaan, land of the Philistines: 
“I will destroy you; 
So there shall be no inhabitant.”

6 The seacoast shall be pastures, 
With shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks. 
7 The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; 
They shall feed their flocks there; 
In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. 
For the LORD their God will intervene for them, 
And return their captives.

8 “I have heard the reproach of Moab, 
And the insults of the people of Ammon, 
With which they have reproached My people, 
And made arrogant threats against their borders. 
Therefore, as I live,” 
Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 
“Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, 
And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah— 
Overrun with weeds and saltpits, 
And a perpetual desolation. 
The residue of My people shall plunder them, 
And the remnant of My people shall possess them.”

Judgment on Judah’s Enemies
10 This they shall have for their pride,
   Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats
Against the people of the LORD of hosts.

11 The LORD will be awesome to them,
   For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth;
   People shall worship Him,
   Each one from his place,
   Indeed all the shores of the nations.

12 “You Ethiopians also,
   You shall be slain by My sword.”

13 And He will stretch out His hand against the north,
   Destroy Assyria,
   And make Nineveh a desolation,
   As dry as the wilderness.

14 The herds shall lie down in her midst,
   Every beast of the nation.
   Both the pelican and the bittern
   Shall lodge on the capitals of her pillars;
   Their voice shall sing in the windows;
   Desolation shall be at the threshold;
   For He will lay bare the cedar work.

15 This is the rejoicing city
   That dwelt securely,
   That said in her heart,
   “I am it, and there is none besides me.”
   How has she become a desolation,
   A place for beasts to lie down!
   Everyone who passes by her
   Shall hiss and shake his fist.
The Wickedness of Jerusalem

3 Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted,
   To the oppressing city!
2 She has not obeyed His voice,
   She has not received correction;
   She has not trusted in the LORD,
   She has not drawn near to her God.

3 Her princes in her midst are roaring lions;
   Her judges are evening wolves
   That leave not a bone till morning.

4 Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people;
   Her priests have polluted the sanctuary,
   They have done violence to the law.

5 The LORD is righteous in her midst,
   He will do no unrighteousness.
   Every morning He brings His justice to light;
   He never fails,
   But the unjust knows no shame.

6 “I have cut off nations,
   Their fortresses are devastated;
   I have made their streets desolate,
   With none passing by.
   Their cities are destroyed;
   There is no one, no inhabitant.

7 I said, ‘Surely you will fear Me,
   You will receive instruction’—
   So that her dwelling would not be cut off,
   Despite everything for which I punished her.
   But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds.
A Faithful Remnant

8 Therefore wait for Me,” says the LORD,
   “Until the day I rise up for plunder;
   My determination is to gather the nations
   To My assembly of kingdoms,
   To pour on them My indignation,
   All My fierce anger;
   All the earth shall be devoured
   With the fire of My jealousy.

9 “For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language,
   That they all may call on the name of the LORD,
   To serve Him with one accord.

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
    My worshipers,
    The daughter of My dispersed ones,
    Shall bring My offering.

11 In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds
    In which you transgress against Me;
    For then I will take away from your midst
    Those who rejoice in your pride,
    And you shall no longer be haughty
    In My holy mountain.

12 I will leave in your midst
    A meek and humble people,
    And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness
    And speak no lies,
    Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth;
    For they shall feed their flocks and lie down,
    And no one shall make them afraid.”
Joy in God’s Faithfulness

Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

The LORD has taken away your judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
You shall see disaster no more.

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear;
Zion, let not your hands be weak.

The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.”

“I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly,
Who are among you,
To whom its reproach is a burden.

Behold, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you;
I will save the lame,
And gather those who were driven out;
I will appoint them for praise and fame
In every land where they were put to shame.

At that time I will bring you back,
Even at the time I gather you;
For I will give you fame and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I return your captives before your eyes,”
Says the LORD.
Lesson 7. Zephaniah 1: The Coming Judgement of Judah

Zephaniah prophesied during the reforms of King Josiah (640–609 B.C.), who brought spiritual revival to Judah after the long and disastrous reign of Manasseh. Josiah (640–609 BC) was the sixteenth king of Judah (2 Kgs 21:26–23:30; 2 Chr. 33:25–35:27), the southern kingdom which remained in the land after the exile of Israel in the north in 722 BC. The prophecies under the name of Zephaniah are placed in his reign (1:1). The prophet would thus have been a contemporary of Nahum, Habakkuk and Jeremiah.

Manasseh brought these forbidden practices back in a big way (2 Kgs 21:1–18) and Manasseh’s son, Amon (2 Kgs 21:19–26), did nothing to redress the situation. It was only in the course of Josiah’s reign (c. 621 BC) that proper worship was restored. The contemporaneity of this prophecy with at least the start of Jeremiah’s ministry is supported by the latter’s condemnation of some of the same pagan influences (Zeph. 1:4–5; cf. Jer. 2:8; 8:2; 19:5, 13; 32:35).

The center of Zephaniah’s prophecies—uniting the book not only structurally but theologically—is the concept of the Day of the Lord. While not the first (cf. Amos 5:18–20; 8:9–14; Isa. 2; 13; 34; Joel 2) nor the last (cf. Jer. 46–51; Ezek. 7) of the prophets to write on this subject, such devotion to a single theme is not found in any other. Zephaniah pronounced God’s judgment on corruption and wickedness but also his plan to restore Judah. He spoke of the coming “day of the Lord,” when sin would be punished, justice would prevail, and a “remnant” of the faithful would be saved. The term “day of the Lord” occurs throughout the Bible referring both to impending historical judgments from God and to his final judgment at the end of time. The fact that this day is like a two-sided coin, comprising two separate yet related facets, is more fully developed here than in other prophets. The two facets of the same Day of the Lord are judgment and blessing. The day is characterized by both; each affects the same people and occupies a similar timeframe, but each has a different cause.

1. What will the Lord consume (Zephaniah 1:2-3)?

2. Against whom is God going to stretch his hand (Zephaniah 1:4-6)?

3. What type of people will the Lord punish (Zephaniah 1:8-11)?

4. With what will the Lord search out Jerusalem (Zephaniah 1:12-13)?

5. What will the Day of the Lord bring (Zephaniah 1:14-16)?
### Zephaniah 1 The Coming Judgment on Judah

1 The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

### The Great Day of the LORD

2 “I will utterly consume everything
   From the face of the land,”
   Says the LORD;

3 “I will consume man and beast;
   I will consume the birds of the heavens,
   The fish of the sea,
   And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked.
   I will cut off man from the face of the land,”
   Says the LORD.

4 “I will stretch out My hand against Judah,
   And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
   I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place,
   The names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests—

5 Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops;
   Those who worship and swear oaths by the LORD,
   But who also swear by Milcom;

6 Those who have turned back from following the LORD,
   And have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.”

7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD;
   For the day of the LORD is at hand,
   For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
   He has invited His guests.

8 “And it shall be,
   In the day of the LORD’s sacrifice,
   That I will punish the princes and the king’s children,
   And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.

9 In the same day I will punish
   All those who leap over the threshold,
   Who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit.

10 “And there shall be on that day,” says the LORD,
   “The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate,
   A wailing from the Second Quarter,
   And a loud crashing from the hills.
   Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh!
   For all the merchant people are cut down;
   All those who handle money are cut off.”
“And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men
Who are settled in complacency,
Who say in their heart,
‘The LORD will not do good,
Nor will He do evil.’
Therefore their goods shall become booty,
And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.”

The great day of the LORD is near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.

That day is a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
A day of trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.

“I will bring distress upon men,
And they shall walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against the LORD;
Their blood shall be poured out like dust,
And their flesh like refuse.”

Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to deliver them
In the day of the LORD’s wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance
Of all those who dwell in the land.
Lesson 8. Zephaniah 2: Judgment on Judah’s Enemies

1. How is the gathering judgement on the nations described (Zephaniah 2:2)?

2. What should the nations seek before the Day of the Lord (Zephaniah 2:2-3)?

3. What four Philistines cities are going to be punished (Zephaniah 2:4-5)?

4. What will the remnant of the House of Judah do on the land of the Philistines (Zephaniah 2:6-7)?

5. What is God going to do to Moab and Ammon (Zephaniah 2:8-9)?

6. This punishment is due to what sin (Zephaniah 2:10-11)?

7. What will happen to Ethiopia (Zephaniah 2:12)?

8. What northern nation is God going to punish (Zephaniah 2:13)?

9. What is going to happen to her chief city (Zephaniah 2:14-15)?
Judgment on Judah’s Enemies

2 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together,
O undesirable nation,
Before the decree is issued,
Or the day passes like chaff.
Before the LORD’s fierce anger comes upon you,
Before the day of the LORD’s anger comes upon you!
3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth,
Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility.
It may be that you will be hidden
In the day of the LORD’s anger.

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken,
And Ashkelon desolate;
They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday,
And Ekron shall be uprooted.

5 Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast,
The nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the LORD is against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines:
“I will destroy you;
So there shall be no inhabitant.”

6 The seacoast shall be pastures,
With shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks.

7 The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah;
They shall feed their flocks there;
In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.
For the LORD their God will intervene for them,
And return their captives.

8 “I have heard the reproach of Moab,
And the insults of the people of Ammon,
With which they have reproached My people,
And made arrogant threats against their borders.

9 Therefore, as I live,”
Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,
“Surely Moab shall be like Sodom,
And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—
Overrun with weeds and saltpits,
And a perpetual desolation.
The residue of My people shall plunder them,
And the remnant of My people shall possess them.”
This they shall have for their pride,
Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats
Against the people of the LORD of hosts.

The LORD will be awesome to them,
For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth;
People shall worship Him,
Each one from his place,
Indeed all the shores of the nations.

“You Ethiopians also,
You shall be slain by My sword.”

And He will stretch out His hand against the north,
Destroy Assyria,
And make Nineveh a desolation,
As dry as the wilderness.

The herds shall lie down in her midst,
Every beast of the nation.
Both the pelican and the bittern
Shall lodge on the capitals of her pillars;
Their voice shall sing in the windows;
Desolation shall be at the threshold;
For He will lay bare the cedar work.

This is the rejoicing city
That dwelt securely,
That said in her heart,
“I am it, and there is none besides me.”
How has she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her
Shall hiss and shake his fist.

1. What has Jerusalem not done (Zephaniah 3:1-2)?

2. How are the leaders of Jerusalem described (Zephaniah 3:3-4)?

3. How is the Lord described (Zephaniah 3:5)?

4. What does the unjust not know (Zephaniah 3:5)?

5. What did the Lord done to the cities of the nations and how did Jerusalem respond (Zephaniah 3:6-7)?

6. What shall the faithful remnant do (Zephaniah 3:9-13)?

7. What Joy is to come to the faithful (Zephaniah 3:14-20)?
The Wickedness of Jerusalem

3 Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted,
   To the oppressing city!

2 She has not obeyed His voice,
   She has not received correction;
   She has not trusted in the LORD,
   She has not drawn near to her God.

3 Her princes in her midst are roaring lions;
   Her judges are evening wolves
   That leave not a bone till morning.

4 Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people;
   Her priests have polluted the sanctuary,
   They have done violence to the law.

5 The LORD is righteous in her midst,
   He will do no unrighteousness.
   Every morning He brings His justice to light;
   He never fails,
   But the unjust knows no shame.

6 “I have cut off nations,
   Their fortresses are devastated;
   I have made their streets desolate,
   With none passing by.
   Their cities are destroyed;
   There is no one, no inhabitant.

7 I said, ‘Surely you will fear Me,
   You will receive instruction’—
   So that her dwelling would not be cut off,
   Despite everything for which I punished her.
   But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds.
A Faithful Remnant

8 “Therefore wait for Me,” says the LORD, 
   “Until the day I rise up for plunder; 
   My determination is to gather the nations 
   To My assembly of kingdoms, 
   To pour on them My indignation, 
   All My fierce anger; 
   All the earth shall be devoured 
   With the fire of My jealousy.

9 “For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, 
   That they all may call on the name of the LORD, 
   To serve Him with one accord.

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
    My worshipers, 
    The daughter of My dispersed ones, 
    Shall bring My offering.

11 In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds 
    In which you transgress against Me; 
    For then I will take away from your midst 
    Those who rejoice in your pride, 
    And you shall no longer be haughty 
    In My holy mountain.

12 I will leave in your midst
    A meek and humble people, 
    And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness 
    And speak no lies, 
    Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; 
    For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, 
    And no one shall make them afraid.”
Joy in God’s Faithfulness

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

15 The LORD has taken away your judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
You shall see disaster no more.

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear;
Zion, let not your hands be weak.

17 The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.”

18 “I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed
assembly,
Who are among you,
*To whom* its reproach is a burden.

19 Behold, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you;
I will save the lame,
And gather those who were driven out;
I will appoint them for praise and fame
In every land where they were put to shame.

20 At that time I will bring you back,
Even at the time I gather you;
For I will give you fame and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I return your captives before your eyes,”
Says the LORD.
Lesson 10. The Minor Prophets: Overview of Habakkuk

Purpose and Message

Habakkuk loved God, but he was prepared, as few others would be, to engage him in a probing dialogue about the rightness of his actions. Few, however, as Job did, openly debate the issues. Even rarer is an individual who will stand before God and confront him with apparent anomalies in his actions towards mankind. This is what the prophet Habakkuk did, even going a step beyond this to challenging God on the response which he gives to Habakkuk’s initial question. Less is stated in the Bible concerning Habakkuk than almost any other prophet. Not even his father, tribe or hometown are mentioned. His name is apparently not Hebrew but comes from the Akkadian word for some plant or fruit tree.

The book’s purpose is to examine the issue of God’s justice on a national plane. The question at hand “How can a just God use a wicked nation like Babylon as his instrument for punishment?” Habakkuk did not suggest that the people of Judah were not deserving of punishment. Rather, if God gave the Babylonians victory over Judah, would that not show God’s approval of the Babylonians? In many ways the book of Habakkuk deals with the same basic issue as the book of Job. Job was concerned about the justice of God when a righteous individual was suffering; Habakkuk was concerned about the justice of God at a time when a wicked nation was prospering. The prophecy anticipates the Babylonian’s defeat, which finally took place before the combined power of the Indo-Aryan Medes and Persians who, under Cyrus, captured Babylon in 539 BC.

The time periods during which Habakkuk prophesied and during which the book was written have been a matter of debate. A suitable period is the reign of Jehoiakim (609–598 BC) or as late in the reign of Josiah, for it was during his reign that the Babylonian presence was increasingly felt. Habakkuk was thus a contemporary of Nahum, Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

Judah had witnessed the downfall and exile of her northern sister Israel slightly more than a century previously. She herself had not learnt, however, that repeated violation of the covenant with God on her own part would not be left unpunished forever. She would now, according to the prophet, be faced with a similar fate herself.
For each of the three books we will spend time developing an overview of the book by using bible study skills to understand the book by reading, looking at words or phrases that are repeated, that are peculiar, that make comparisons or contrasts, that are strange and that are prophetic.

The prophets went beyond simply explaining the crises the Israelites were facing in their own time. They explained how this fit into God’s dealings with the nation and his eventual plan of redemption. Therefore, they present an overall view, or paradigm, which pervades their writings. There are eight basic points summed up in this interpretation of history;

1. God is Lord (“The Lord says”/“word of the Lord” etc)
2. Election of Israel
3. Rebellion of Israel
4. Judgment of God
5. Divine Compassion of God
6. Call to Repentance
7. Redemption & Restoration
8. Kingdom of God

A. DATE OF BOOK
612-606 BC

B. ASSIGNMENTS FOR OVERVIEW OF HABBAKUK

1. Completely read the book.
2. Reread the book
3. After reading go back through the book and look for six things:
   a. Repeated Words and Phrases.
   b. Peculiar Words and Phrases.
   c. Comparisons and Contrasts.
   d. Figurative Expressions.
   e. Anything Strange.
   f. Any prophetic statements
4. After reading the book look for passages of the book that fit into the “Prophetic Paradigm”, Note this will be limited since Jonah is written as a narrative.
5. Fill in the study worksheet for Obadiah.
### Study Skills for The Minor Prophets

#### ASSIGNMENTS FOR BOOK OF HABAKKUK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Looking for - Repeated Words and Phrases</th>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Peculiar Words and Phrases</td>
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<td>Comparisons and Contrasts</td>
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<td>Anything Strange</td>
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<td>Any prophetic statements</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Election of Israel Relationship of Nineveh to God</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Rebellion of Israel Rebellion of Nineveh</td>
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<td>Call to Repentance</td>
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<td>Redemption &amp; Restoration</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Kingdom of God</td>
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Habakkuk asks a Question

Habakkuk 1:2 (ESV)
2  O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?

God Answers

Habakkuk 1:6 (ESV)
6  For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own.

Habakkuk Laments Wickedness

Habakkuk 1:13 (ESV)
13  You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and are silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?

Habakkuk waits & watches

Habakkuk 2:1 (ESV)
1  I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

God’s Response

Habakkuk 2:4 (ESV)
4  “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk’s Prayer

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (ESV)
17  Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herds in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.
1 The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

**The Prophet’s Question**

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<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>O LORD, how long shall I cry,</td>
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<td>And You will not hear?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Even cry out to You, “Violence!”</td>
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<td>And You will not save.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Why do You show me iniquity,</td>
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<td>And cause me to see trouble?</td>
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<td>For plundering and violence are before me;</td>
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<td>There is strife, and contention arises.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Therefore the law is powerless,</td>
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<td>And justice never goes forth.</td>
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<td>For the wicked surround the righteous;</td>
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<td>Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.</td>
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**The LORD’s Reply**

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<td>5</td>
<td>“Look among the nations and watch—</td>
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<td>Be utterly astounded!</td>
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<td>For I will work a work in your days</td>
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<td>Which you would not believe, though it were told you.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,</td>
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<td>A bitter and hasty nation</td>
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<td>Which marches through the breadth of the earth,</td>
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<td>To possess dwelling places that are not theirs.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>They are terrible and dreadful;</td>
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<td>Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Their horses also are swifter than leopards,</td>
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<td>And more fierce than evening wolves.</td>
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<td>Their chargers charge ahead;</td>
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<td>Their cavalry comes from afar;</td>
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<td>They fly as the eagle that hastens to eat.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>“They all come for violence;</td>
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<td>Their faces are set like the east wind.</td>
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<td>They gather captives like sand.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>They scoff at kings,</td>
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<td>And princes are scorned by them.</td>
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<td>They deride every stronghold,</td>
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<td>For they heap up earthen mounds and seize it.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Then his mind changes, and he transgresses;</td>
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<td>He commits offense,</td>
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<td>Ascribing this power to his god.”</td>
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</table>
The Prophet’s Second Question

12 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction.  
13 *You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, *And* hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he? 
14 *Why* do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things *that have* no ruler over them? 
15 They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. 
16 Therefore they sacrifice to their net, And burn incense to their dragnet; Because by them their share *is* sumptuous And their food plentiful. 
17 Shall they therefore empty their net, And continue to slay nations without pity? 

2 I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected.¹

The Just Live by Faith

² Then the LORD answered me and said:

“Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 
³ For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it taries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 
⁴ “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.
Woe to the Wicked

5 “Indeed, because he transgresses by wine,
   He is a proud man,
   And he does not stay at home.
   Because he enlarges his desire as hell,
   And he is like death, and cannot be satisfied,
   He gathers to himself all nations
   And heaps up for himself all peoples.

6 “Will not all these take up a proverb against him,
   And a taunting riddle against him, and say,
   ‘Woe to him who increases
   What is not his—how long?
   And to him who loads himself with many pledges’?

7 Will not your creditors rise up suddenly?
   Will they not awaken who oppress you?
   And you will become their booty.

8 Because you have plundered many nations,
   All the remnant of the people shall plunder you,
   Because of men’s blood
   And the violence of the land and the city,
   And of all who dwell in it.

9 “Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house,
   That he may set his nest on high,
   That he may be delivered from the power of disaster!
10 You give shameful counsel to your house,
    Cutting off many peoples,
    And sin against your soul.
11 For the stone will cry out from the wall,
   And the beam from the timbers will answer it.
“Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed,
Who establishes a city by iniquity!
Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts
That the peoples labor to feed the fire,
And nations weary themselves in vain?

For the earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.

“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor,
Pressing him to your bottle,
Even to make him drunk,
That you may look on his nakedness!

You are filled with shame instead of glory.
You also—drink!
And be exposed as uncircumcised!
The cup of the LORD’s right hand will be turned against you,
And utter shame will be on your glory.

For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you,
And the plunder of beasts which made them afraid,
Because of men’s blood
And the violence of the land and the city,
And of all who dwell in it.

“What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it,
The molded image, a teacher of lies,
That the maker of its mold should trust in it,
To make mute idols?

Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Awake!’
To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
Yet in it there is no breath at all.

“But the LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”
### The Prophet’s Prayer

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; 
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! 
In the midst of the years make it known; 
In wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman,  
The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

4 His brightness was like the light;  
He had rays flashing from His hand,  
And there His power was hidden.

5 Before Him went pestilence, 
And fever followed at His feet.

6 He stood and measured the earth;  
He looked and startled the nations.  
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,  
The perpetual hills bowed.  
His ways are everlasting.

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;  
The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

8 O LORD, were You displeased with the rivers,  
Was Your anger against the rivers,  
Was Your wrath against the sea,  
That You rode on Your horses,  
Your chariots of salvation?

9 Your bow was made quite ready;  
Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah

   You divided the earth with rivers.

10 The mountains saw You and trembled;  
The overflowing of the water passed by.  
The deep uttered its voice,  
And lifted its hands on high.

11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;  
At the light of Your arrows they went,  
At the shining of Your glittering spear.\

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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12 You marched through the land in indignation;
   You trampled the nations in anger.
13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
   For salvation with Your Anointed.
   You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
   By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah

14 You thrust through with his own arrows
   The head of his villages.
   They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
   Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.
15 You walked through the sea with Your horses,
   Through the heap of great waters.

16 When I heard, my body trembled;
   My lips quivered at the voice;
   Rottenness entered my bones;
   And I trembled in myself,
   That I might rest in the day of trouble.
   When he comes up to the people,
   He will invade them with his troops.

A Hymn of Faith

17 Though the fig tree may not blossom,
   Nor fruit be on the vines;
   Though the labor of the olive may fail,
   And the fields yield no food;
   Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
   And there be no herd in the stalls—
18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
   I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my strength;
   He will make my feet like deer’s feet,
   And He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.