



The Message of the Bible

Week 22: The Twelve

The Teaching of the Twelve (book by book)

Hosea

1. The Lord's steadfast love will prevail even though His people were unfaithful
2. Hosea 14:9 provides the proper context for reading and applying the prophets, specifically the book of the Twelve—wisdom. Only the wise will understand them, and reading them will make one wise. “Reflection and meditation are required to penetrate their meaning. The prophet's words are seen to lead the reader into right and wise actions” (Childs, *IOTS*, 382).

Joel

1. Like Hosea, Joel has a message of wisdom that was to be passed down through their generations (1:2–3).
2. Joel's message is about the “Day of the Lord” (the Day of Yahweh), which will be a period of divine judgment upon Judah and the nations.
3. On the one hand, the Lord appears as one who “roars from Zion” in judgment (3:16); on the other hand, God's original purposes for creation will be accomplished on the earth because he “dwells in Zion” (3:21).

Amos

1. Amos continues the picture of judgment from Joel with similar language: “The Lord roars from Zion” (1:2).
2. Amos gives a fuller picture of the Day of the Lord (see 5:18).
3. Over and over, Amos speaks of judgment upon the nations, but Judah and Israel also appear in his list. They are no better than the other nations.
4. Like Hosea, Joel, and other prophetic books, Amos promises restoration and blessing (9:11–15). Hope was based upon God's promises to David (2Sam 7), who would one day possess the remnant of Edom (see Acts 15:17).

Obadiah

1. Building upon the future relationship of Edom to the Lord, the vision of Obadiah is directed specifically at Edom.
2. Because of her lack of brotherly love for Israel, Edom will be judged.
3. Edom becomes the paradigm of God's dealing with the nation in the Day of the Lord (v. 15). In that day, Edom (and all the nations) would become a part of God's kingdom (v. 21).

Jonah

1. Although Obadiah focuses upon the judgment of the Lord upon the nations, Jonah deals with the question of God's response to a nation that repents and believes.
2. Jonah 1–3 gives three examples of Gentile faith over against Jonah's selfishness: 1:14; 2:8; 3:5.
3. God's mercy and salvation extend to all nations, which is a fact with which Jonah had difficulty coming to terms (4:2).

Micah

1. Just like Jonah, Israel and Judah consistently rebelled against the Lord (1:5).
2. Micah's message, like others, is clear: Righteous Yahweh must judge His unrighteous people.
3. At the same time, Micah also contains a message of hope of a coming ruler (2:12–13; 5:2–6; 7:14).
4. The proper response of the reader is to watch and to wait patiently for salvation (7:7).

Nahum

1. What Micah speaks of generally in Mic 7:16–17, Nahum applies specifically in God's judgment of Nineveh. The general theme of God's judgment of the nations is particularized in Nineveh.
2. Nineveh would be judged for her cruel acts and immoral deeds.

Habakkuk

1. Lest Judah take solace in God's judgment of Nineveh, Habakkuk demonstrates that Yahweh will also judge His own people for their sin.
2. Habakkuk answers the question of what one should do while waiting for their ultimate salvation—have faith (2:4).
3. The work spoken of in 1:5 becomes the hope of the prophet in 3:2, namely, divine deliverance (salvation).
4. Thus, the message of the book is for the godly to wait. As they see the work of God around them, they must wait for God's timing and rejoice in His salvation.

Zephaniah

1. Building upon the destruction of the earth spoken of in Hab 3:17, Zephaniah also describes the Day of the Lord as a time of utter destruction (1:2–3).
2. Despite the fact that Zephaniah contains a graphic view of the judgment of Judah and the nations in the Day of the Lord, it also promises salvation both to the nations (3:8–13) and Israel (3:14–20).

Haggai

1. The promise of Zephaniah that the Lord will "gather" them together (3:20) is ironically picked up by Haggai in describing the state of the nation after their return from exile (1:6).
2. The exile of the nation had come and gone, but the people remained the same—selfish.

3. However, a few (Zerubbabel and Jehozadak) served as models of the faithfulness that brought divine blessing.
4. Neither the temple nor the Davidic ruler was what had been promised before the exile. However, they were signs of the future temple and ruler.
5. The reason the promises remained unfulfilled was because the people had not changed. However, the book ends with the possibility that Zerubbabel may be the promised son of David; Zechariah gives the full picture.

Zechariah

1. Not only were Haggai and Zechariah contemporaries (1:1), but like Haggai, Zechariah is concerned with the temple (Hag 2:7; Zech 1:15–16).
2. Among Zechariah's vision and acts, two give important information about the Messiah.
3. On the one hand, 6:9–15 shows that the future king will also be a priest who would perfectly obey the will of God (see Ps 110; 1Kgs 6:12). See also 3:8–10.
4. On the other hand, the future king would come to Jerusalem in victory of Israel's enemies (9:9–10; cf. Gn 49:8–12; Is 63:1–6; Pss 2, 72).

Malachi

1. Just as Zech 12:8 had spoken of the "angel" (or messenger) of the Lord, so Malachi speaks of the Lord's messenger (3:1). By the way, Malachi means, "My messenger."
2. Malachi calls readers to respond with repentance and covenant faithfulness as they await the coming of the Lord.

The Purposes of the Twelve

1. To confirm that Israel's restoration will come after the Day of the Lord, the Lord's Day of Judgment.
2. To show that Israel's restoration would include a messianic hope.

How should I respond?