

# The Minor Prophets as a Unity Developing Theodicy

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## Abstract

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Addressing a perennial apologetic and pastoral demand, the twelve Minor Prophets undertake to assert and demonstrate the goodness of God in the face of apparent evidence to the contrary. I will argue that the Twelve were intended to be read together and have the purpose of encouraging the post-exilic reader to trust Yahweh's faithfulness to his salvation promises, even in the face of the many setbacks endured in the period from Israel's collapse in 722 B.C. through to Judah's disappointment in the post exilic era.

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## Introduction

This article seeks to adjust and build on Van Leeuwen's excellent and insightful work which argues that the 'Book of the Twelve' (hereafter, the Twelve) has a unity based on a clearly developed theodicy. Van Leeuwen contends that the Twelve urges the post-exilic reader not to presume on ethnic background but to live by the wisdom of knowing the righteous character of the Yahweh named and described in Exodus 34:6-7. The reader is called to recognise that Yahweh has been consistent with Exodus 34:6-7 in his dealings with Israel, Judah

and the nations in the period in which the Twelve is set.<sup>1</sup>

I will argue that Van Leeuwen is correct but that the exhortation to heed Exodus 34:6-7 is an important aspect of a more central theme of theodicy which unites the Twelve in its Masoretic Text (MT) sequence. That theme is the question of why there has been a delay in the fulfilment of Yahweh's promises of salvation which were introduced in the paradigmatic writings of Hosea-Joel. The primary wise response which the Twelve calls for is to trust in Yahweh's faithfulness to his salvation promises. Yahweh is the God of covenantal love and faithfulness who is named and described in Exodus 34:6-7 and knowing this God in this way is essential to trusting his promises.

Not every writing of the Twelve quotes or alludes to Exodus 34:6-7 and it would be an overstatement to claim that the call to heed Exodus 34:6-7 is itself the central strand of theodicy in the Twelve. However, linguistic and/or literary evidence from each of the individual writings will be presented to demonstrate that throughout the Twelve the delayed or doubtful fulfilment of the promises of Yahweh is a major concern and, importantly, that each writing progresses the plot of theodicy from the previous writing.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, I will test the theory for unity put forward in this article by examining the sequences of the Twelve found in the Septuagint (LXX) and at Qumran and bringing forward further evidence in favour of the view that the MT was purposely arranged in such a way as would constitute a response to the problem of the delay in

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom and Theodicy in the Book of the Twelve', in *Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*, ed. L.G. Perdue, B.B. Scott, and W.J. Wiseman (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 31-49. J. Wöhrle has also more recently argued for a unity in the Twelve through Exodus 34:6-7 in J. Wöhrle, 'A prophetic reflection on divine forgiveness: the integration of the Book of Jonah into the Book of the Twelve', *JHS* 9,7 (2009) [http://www.arts.valberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article\\_109.pdf](http://www.arts.valberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_109.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> I am particularly indebted to the two volume work of Nogalski, which, while not attempting to present a thematic unity in the Twelve, nevertheless contains many linguistic observations invaluable to this study: J.D. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1993) and Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1993).

Yahweh's restoration promises coming to pass.<sup>3</sup> Unless specified otherwise, references to the Twelve are to the Twelve in the MT sequence.

### Hosea

Hosea's placement at the beginning enables it to function as a paradigm for the rest of the Twelve.<sup>4</sup> Hosea introduces the salvation promises of the Twelve while preparing the reader for their delay with a prophecy of judgement before deliverance. Hosea makes a link between these promises and Exodus 34:6-7 and encourages the reader to read the rest of the Twelve trusting in Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 attributes, no matter how distant the consummation of Yahweh's pledges of blessing appear.

Theodicy is introduced early in Hosea and thus the Twelve. The wrath of Yahweh cannot be the basis of a charge of unfaithfulness against him given that the exercise of his wrath is a precursor to the bestowal of favour on his people. Hosea 1:6-9 states that the house of Israel will become **לֹא רַחֲמֵהוּ** ('No Mercy') and **לֹא עַמִּי** ('Not My People') but Hosea 2:25 (Eng. 2:23) uses **רַחֲמֵהוּ** ('have mercy') and **עַמִּי** ('my people') to demonstrate that Yahweh will reverse this judgement in a future blessing for his people.<sup>5</sup>

The connection between Yahweh's salvation promises and his Exodus 34:6-7 character is also seen early in the Twelve. Trusting Yahweh to keep his promises and trusting him as the God named and described in Exodus 34:6-7 are closely related as can be seen by verbal links and wider allusions. **רַחֲמֵהוּ** ('mercy') has the same root as the adjective **רַחֲוּם** ('merciful') found in Exodus 34:6.<sup>6</sup> **לֹא עַמִּי** ('Not

<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to Revd Dr Thomas Renz for this insight as well his excellent supervision during my work on an unpublished dissertation on the Twelve at Oak Hill Theological College.

<sup>4</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 35.

<sup>5</sup> The English translations in this article are either identical to, or very close to, the translation used by the English Standard Version, unless specified otherwise.

<sup>6</sup> F.I. Andersen, and D.N. Freedman, *Hosea* (AB 24. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 192; Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 35. Schultz questions Van Leeuwen's interpretation, because **רַחֲוּם** ('mercy') and **רַחֲמֵהוּ** ('have mercy') are so common

My People') and עַמִּי ('my people') in Hosea 1-2 probably link with the dialogue between Moses and Yahweh in Exodus 32-33, which provides the context for the declaration of Yahweh's attributes of grace and wrath in Exodus 34:6-7. In this dialogue, Yahweh shows his temporary rejection of the Israelites by referring to them as עַמְּךָ ('your people'), while Moses uses the same word when pleading with Yahweh to reverse this rejection.<sup>7</sup>

Besides Hosea's introduction of Yahweh's promises of judgement/restoration, Hosea also sets the scene for the developing theodicy of the Twelve through the use, in Hosea 14:10 (Eng. 14:9), of the 'two ways', a framework which readers will take with them as they continue through the Twelve. This<sup>8</sup> Van Leeuwen persuasively argues that there is an allusion in Hosea 14:10 (Eng. 14:9) to Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character, which means that the wise in Hosea 14:10 (Eng. 14:9) know Yahweh's ways by knowing his righteous Exodus 34:6-7 attributes. The rare combination of יָדַע ('know') and Yahweh's דְּרָכָי ('ways') in Hosea 14:10 (Eng. 14:9) is also used in Exodus 33:13 where Moses asks to know Yahweh's ways so that he may know Yahweh. This prayer is answered with the revelation of Yahweh's attributes in Exodus 34:6-7.<sup>9</sup>

The context of Hosea 14:10 (Eng.14:9) further supports this interpretation. Cooper helpfully observes that 14:3 (Eng. 14:2) uses

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that their occurrence does not prove influence from Exodus 34:6-7. However, Schultz does not address the strongest aspect of Van Leeuwen's argument: Hosea 1-2's allusion to Moses' dialogue with Yahweh in Exodus 32-33. See R.L.Schultz, 'The Ties that Bind: Intertextuality, the Identification of Verbal Parallels, and Reading Strategies in the Book of the Twelve', in *The Thematic Threads of the Book of the Twelve*, ed. P.L. Redditt and A. Scharf (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 27-45, 38.

<sup>7</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 35. See Exodus 32.7 and 33.13.

<sup>8</sup> G.T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct. A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 151, Berlin/ New York: de Gruyter 1980), 129-36; Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 36.

<sup>9</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 36-38. The combination of יָדַע ('know') and Yahweh's דְּרָכָי ('ways') only occurs outside Hosea 14:10 (Eng. 14:9) and Exodus 33:13 in Job 21:14, Psalm 25:4, 95:10 and 103:7.

עֲוֹן ('iniquity') with נָשָׂא ('take away'), the language of Exodus 34:7.<sup>10</sup> Hosea 14:4 (Eng. 14:3) uses the verbal form of רַחֲמֵי ('mercy') which appears in Exodus 34:6. Furthermore, Hosea 14:5-9 (Eng. 14:4-8) describes Yahweh's mercy to his people.

Thus 14.10 (Eng.14.9) urges the reader of the Twelve to see that the wise are those who know that Yahweh's actions are always in line with Exodus 34.6-7, thereby signalling that the salvation promises set out in Hosea 1-2 have only been delayed, not abandoned.<sup>11</sup> As the transgressors of 14:10 (Eng. 14:9) contrast to the wise, the transgressors are obviously those who do not know Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 ways, including his faithfulness to his promises.

## Joel

Positioned near the beginning of the Twelve and lacking details of historical particularity, Joel too serves to provide patterns and set trajectories for the Twelve as a whole.<sup>12</sup> As will be seen, Joel's function as 'a literary anchor' is seen in the volume of verbatim quotations and explicit allusions in the rest of the Twelve.

Joel combines with Hosea to lay the foundations for the development of theodicy in the Twelve by declaring that the judgement of the nations is essential to the fulfilment of Yahweh's restoration promises in Hosea, and that the glorification of Zion is an

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<sup>10</sup> A. Cooper, 'Praise of Divine Caprice: The Significance of the Book of Jonah', in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, ed. P.R. Davies and D.J. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 144-16, 160.

<sup>11</sup> Hubbard notes that the כִּי ('for') clause in 14:10 (Eng. 14:9) is explanatory, which means that the אֵלֵהּ ('these') which the wise know and understand is the LORD's righteous Exodus 34:6-7 ways. See D.L. Hubbard, *Hosea* (Leicester: IVP, 1989), 233.

<sup>12</sup> Examples of lack of historical specificity include the ambiguity in relation both to Joel's geographical setting and to the identity of the enemy. Scholars who believe that Joel is suited to a paradigmatic role include Nogalski, 'Joel as 'Literary Anchor' for the Book of the Twelve', in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, ed. Nogalski and M.A. Sweeney (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 91-109 and Sweeney, 'The Place and Function of Joel in the Book of the Twelve', in *Thematic Threads*, ed. Redditt and Schart, 133-154; Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 40, 45.

element of this salvation. Joel also makes a connection between this future for Zion and Exodus 34:6-7, encouraging the reader to express trust in Yahweh's promise regarding Zion by knowing his Exodus 34:6-7 attributes.

The connection between Hosea and Joel concerning salvation is seen with Joel's provision of proof for Yahweh's faithfulness to his declaration in Hosea 2:10-25 (Eng. 2:8-23) to use the withdrawal of agricultural blessing in order to bring about repentance and restoration.<sup>13</sup> In Hosea, Yahweh's salvation promises include agricultural fertility (Hosea 2:24 (Eng. 2:22) Israel's blessings include  $\text{דָּגָן}$  ('grain'),  $\text{תִּירוֹשׁ}$  ('new wine') and  $\text{יַצְהָר}$  ('oil'). These expressions of Yahweh's blessing are taken up in Joel. The removal of  $\text{דָּגָן}$  ('grain'),  $\text{תִּירוֹשׁ}$  ('new wine') and  $\text{יַצְהָר}$  ('oil') in Hosea 2:10-11 (Eng. 2:8-9) and in Joel 1:10 is a pre-requisite for repentance, and the return of these three blessings in Hosea 2:24 (Eng. 2:22) and Joel 2:19 accompanies Yahweh's restoration of his people.<sup>14</sup>  $\text{דָּגָן}$  ('grain'),  $\text{תִּירוֹשׁ}$  ('new wine') and  $\text{יַצְהָר}$  ('oil') is a rare combination in prophetic writings.<sup>15</sup>

Joel 2 gives more detail about Hosea's promised salvation. The bestowal of  $\text{דָּגָן}$  ('grain'),  $\text{תִּירוֹשׁ}$  ('new wine') and  $\text{יַצְהָר}$  ('oil') (the threefold gift mentioned by Hosea and described in Joel 2:19) goes with the judgement against the nations and the glorification of Zion (Joel 2:20-4.21 (Eng. 3:21)). The theme of agricultural prosperity is expanded in 2:25 by drawing parallels between the destructions of the army from the north and of the locusts which is significant since foreign nations take up the locusts' role later on in the Twelve.<sup>16</sup>

Joel develops the exhortation of Hosea to trust Yahweh's Exodus

<sup>13</sup> Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', in *Forming Prophetic Literature*, ed. J.W. Watts and P.R. House (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 102-124, 113.

<sup>14</sup> Wolff sees the lack of  $\text{דָּגָן}$  ('grain'),  $\text{תִּירוֹשׁ}$  ('new wine') and  $\text{יַצְהָר}$  ('oil') in Joel 1:10 as a fulfilment of Hosea 2:10-11 (Eng. 8-9) and 4:3. H.W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 32.

<sup>15</sup> The combination only appears seven times in the prophets, six of which are in the Minor Prophets, five of which are in Hosea and Joel: Jeremiah 31:12; Hosea 2:10 (Eng. 2:8), Hosea 2:24 (Eng. 2:22); Joel 1:10; 2:19; Haggai 1:11.

<sup>16</sup> Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', 107.

34:6-7 character and the certainty of eventual salvation for the wise. This is seen with the aversion of the Day of the LORD's vengeance against Yahweh's covenant people when they respond in faith to Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 attributes. In Joel 2:13, Exodus 34:6 is cited as the basis for repentance.<sup>17</sup> The consequence of this change of heart is that the terrors of the Day of the LORD's are now reserved only for the nations, as Joel 4:9-4.19 (Eng. 3:9-19) demonstrates. This is in stark contrast to Joel 1:15 and 2:1 where the Day of the LORD is near for Yahweh's covenant people before their turn-around.<sup>18</sup>

Joel therefore shows that the devastation of 722 B.C., itself described as the Day of the LORD, cannot be regarded as a sign of Yahweh's unfaithfulness. After all, the northern kingdom could have had a different fate had it turned to Yahweh with the kind of repentance presented in Joel 2. Joel's positioning between Hosea and Amos drives home this point, as Van Leeuwen notes.<sup>19</sup>

The close relationship between Yahweh's salvation promises and his Exodus 34:6-7 character is seen in Joel 3.5 (Eng. 2:32). The phrase **יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם יְקִרָּא** ('calls on the name of the LORD') is used in Exodus 34:5 to describe acknowledgement of Yahweh's attributes presented in Exodus 34:6-7. Given the likely relationship between Joel 2:13 and Exodus 34:6-7, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the use of **יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם יְקִרָּא** (calls on the name of the LORD) in Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) may have been prompted by its use in Exodus 34:5. As in Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) those who call on the name of the LORD participate in the promised glorification of Zion and this further establishes that trusting in Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character includes trusting in his faithfulness to bring about this salvation.

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<sup>17</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 40.

<sup>18</sup>As Joel does not specify whether it is set in Judah or the northern kingdom, I will avoid using specific terms to describe the people or land which restricts them to one of the two kingdoms. For relevant material about the Days of the LORD and their imminence, see Nogalski, 'The Day(s) of YHWH in the Book of the Twelve', in *Thematic Threads*, ed. Redditt and Schart, 192-213, 203.

<sup>19</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 43.

### Amos

Amos' main contribution to the development of theodicy in the Twelve is to demonstrate that the judgement of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. in no way undermines Yahweh's righteousness. Amos does this partly by restating Hosea and Joel's conviction that Yahweh is just to punish Israel. Additionally, Amos uses Joel to reassure the reader that Joel's promises still stand not least because the judgement of the northern kingdom is itself a partial fulfilment of these promises as the northern kingdom had become one of the wicked nations needing to be punished before Zion could and would be exalted.

Like Hosea, Amos urges the wise reader of the Twelve to see the punishment of the northern kingdom as an expression of Yahweh's justice rather than of unfaithfulness to his salvation promises. As Jeremias has found, Amos 7-8 combines the message of Hosea and Amos to summarise the sins of the northern kingdom.<sup>20</sup> Amos 7:9 echoes Hosea in castigating the northern kingdom for abuse of cultic worship and the kings' misrule, concerns of Hosea but not Amos outside chapter 7.<sup>21</sup> Amos 7:10-17 then explains that the northern kingdom's silencing of the prophet Amos has ended hope of repentance and mercy.<sup>22</sup> There is then a summary in 8:4-6 of the sins of social injustice which the rest of Amos emphasises.

Amos 4:9 shows that Yahweh has been faithful to his promise in Hosea 2:8-16 (Eng. 2:6-14) to use the affliction of agricultural infertility to attempt to bring the northern kingdom to repentance.<sup>23</sup> Yahweh cannot, therefore, be accused of unfaithfulness or impatience since the people are presented as completely culpable for their failure to respond to his discipline and to return to him.

Amos 4:9 does not contain a strong linguistic link to Hosea, but it does to Joel, with the use of the rare 𐤁𐤓𐤁 ('locust').<sup>24</sup> It seems that the

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<sup>20</sup> J. Jeremias, 'The Interrelationship between Amos and Hosea', in *Forming Prophetic Literature*, ed. Watts and House, 171-186, 180.

<sup>21</sup> Jeremias, 'Interrelationship', 172, 180.

<sup>22</sup> Jeremias, 'Interrelationship', 179.

<sup>23</sup> Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', 118.

<sup>24</sup> 𐤁𐤓𐤁 (locust) occurs in Joel 1:4 and 2:25, and only elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Ezra 2:48 and Nehemiah 7:51. Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', 118.



purpose of this is to contrast the repentant response to the **גַּזְזִים** (locust) in Joel 1:4 with the unrepentant response to the **גַּזְזִים** ('locust') in Amos, demonstrating again that the northern kingdom could have avoided judgement if they had been like the people in Joel and turned to Yahweh.

Similarly, Amos 5:18-20 alludes to Joel 2:2 to show the contrast between the destinies of the wise in Joel and the wicked northern kingdom in Amos. **חֹשֶׁךְ** ('darkness') is used in both passages to describe the Day of the LORD and Amos uses **אִפְלָה** ('gloomy'), the adjectival form of **אִפְלָה** ('gloom'), which appears in Joel 2:2, a rare combination in the Hebrew Bible, suggesting that there is a deliberate connection between the Day of the LORD in Joel and Amos.<sup>25</sup> The display of the possibility of salvation from the darkness and gloom of the Day of the LORD in Joel suggests that Yahweh would have spared the northern kingdom if only they had turned to Yahweh.

The theme of Joel's promises being partially confirmed rather than forsaken by the downfall of the northern kingdom is introduced early in Amos in 1:2, with **מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׁאַג וּמִירוּשָׁלַם יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ יְהוָה** ('The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem'). When it is considered that this quotation is repeated nowhere else in the Bible but Joel 4:16 (Eng. 3:16) and that Amos 1 is adjacent to Joel 4 in the canon it is natural to read Amos 1:2 with Joel 4:16 (Eng. 3:16) in mind.<sup>26</sup> Joel 4:16 (Eng. 3:16) has left the reader recognising that judgement against the nations will precede salvation for Yahweh's people. When the readers of the Twelve come to Amos 1:2 they will see that the northern kingdom is now itself among the enemy nations which Joel 4 (Eng. 3) says must be judged. While in Joel 4:16 (Eng. 3:16) Yahweh's roaring from Zion brings universal judgement which results in heaven and earth trembling, in Amos 1:2 the judgement is described as affecting the northern kingdom, as the local reference to Mount Carmel makes clear.

After its grim message of judgement Amos ends with a

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<sup>25</sup> The only other place in the Hebrew Bible where the Day of the LORD is described as a day of **חֹשֶׁךְ** ('darkness') is Zephaniah 1:15.

<sup>26</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 41. M

reassurance to the reader that Yahweh has not abandoned his promises in Joel to punish Edom and to bless his people. Amos 9:12 reiterates Joel 4:19's (Eng. 3:19) message of judgement against Edom. Amos 9:12 also sets the scene for a subject which will be comprehensively dealt with in Obadiah: Zion's possession of Edom and the nations.<sup>27</sup> Amos 9:11 makes it clear that the subject of יִירְשׁוּ (‘they may possess’) in 9:12 is a synonym for Zion, the ‘fallen booth of David’. This represents a thematic development from Joel, as Joel describes the judgement against the nations and the restoration of Zion but does not explicitly describe Zion's domination over the nations.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, Amos 9:13 reassures the reader of the Twelve that Yahweh's promises of agricultural blessing still stand with עֲסִים וְהָרִים יִהְיוּ טֹבִי (‘the mountains shall drip sweet wine’), which also occurs almost verbatim in Joel 4:18 (Eng. 3:18), except that Joel uses the qal יִטְפוּ (‘they shall drip’) as opposed to Amos' hiphil.<sup>29</sup> The intensive hiphil has the rhetorical effect of saying to the reader that the judgement of the northern kingdom should strengthen hope in Yahweh's promises in Joel. As Amos has shown that the northern kingdom has been judged as one of the enemy nations, this judgement brings Yahweh's promises nearer not further.

### Obadiah

After Amos has put the focus on the destruction of the northern kingdom, Obadiah offers comprehensive reassurance that the judgement of 722 B.C. does not threaten the fulfilment of the promises of the fall of the nations and the rise of Zion which had been given earlier in the Twelve. Obadiah also advances the plot of theodicy in the Twelve by expanding on the conditions which must be in place before the promises of Yahweh are finally fulfilled.

<sup>27</sup> Van Leeuwen, ‘Scribal Wisdom’, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 114.

<sup>29</sup> Andersen, and Freedman, *Amos* (AB 24A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1989), 922.

Obadiah 17-21 is a fuller explanation of the promise in Amos 9:12 of Zion's possession of the nations.<sup>30</sup> Obadiah as a whole also leaves the reader in no doubt that Yahweh will honour his promise in Amos 9:12 as well as Joel 4:19 (Eng. 3:19) to glorify Zion at the expense of Edom, a type for the wicked nations. Obadiah uses several phrases which occur in Joel to drive this point home, with all the phrases in both Joel and Obadiah describing Zion's glory at the expense of the nations. Obadiah 17, like Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32), uses **תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה** ('in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape').<sup>31</sup> There is a parallel between **וְהָיְתָה יְרוּשָׁלַם קֹדֶשׁ** ('and Jerusalem shall be holy') in Joel 4:17 (Eng. 3:17) and **וְהָיְתָה קֹדֶשׁ** ('and it shall be holy') in Obadiah 17.<sup>32</sup> The combination **בְּרֹאשׁ** ('on the head') + **שׁוּב** ('return') + **גְּמוּלָה** ('deed') only appears in the Hebrew Bible in Obadiah 15 and Joel 4:4 and 7 (Eng. 3:4 and 7).<sup>33</sup> The rare combination of **גּוֹרֵל** ('lot') with **יָדָר** ('to cast') describes Edom's crime against Jerusalem in Obadiah 11 as well as the nations' conspiracy against Jerusalem in Joel 4:3 (Eng. 3:3).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> J. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2001), 157; Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 43.

<sup>31</sup> There are commentators who say **כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה** ('as the LORD has said') in Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) is a reference back to Obadiah 17. Examples are: D.W. Baker, *Joel, Obadiah, Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2006), 104; G.S. Ogden and R.R. Deutsch, *Joel and Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987), 39; P.R. Raabe *Obadiah* (AB 24D, New York, Doubleday, 1996), 242; and B.K. Smith, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1982), 85. Barton helpfully notes that there is no need to assume that **כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה** ('as the LORD has said') means Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) is stating the fulfilment of Obadiah 17 (which would be odd if the Twelve is one book and Obadiah is meant to be read after Joel). As Barton notes, the phrase can mean 'as Yahweh says' and does not have to mean 'as Yahweh has said'. See Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 98.

<sup>32</sup> Raabe, *Obadiah*, 243.

<sup>33</sup> Raabe, *Obadiah*, 195.

<sup>34</sup> **גּוֹרֵל** ('lot') with **יָדָר** ('to cast') occurs in the Hebrew Bible only in the Twelve: Joel 4:3 (Eng. 3:3), Obadiah 1:11, Nahum 3:10. Barton states that there is no reason to see a connection in the casting of lots between Joel and Obadiah, though he does not explain why there is no reason. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 146.

Obadiah 15, like Joel, uses **קָרוֹב יוֹם־יְהוָה** ('the day of the LORD is near'). This phrase is rare, and the fact that Obadiah uses two other phrases from Joel to describe Yahweh's oncoming vengeance against the nations strongly suggests that this phrase in Obadiah is intended to remind the reader of its use in Joel.<sup>35</sup>

Obadiah prepares the reader for the delay in Yahweh's salvation by describing the conditions prior to Zion's future domination. Judgement will first fall on Jerusalem (vv.11-14), as well as Edom and the nations (vv. 15-16), culminating in Zion's salvation (v.17).<sup>36</sup>

In this way Obadiah softens the blow of the reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in Amos 2:5 and prepares the reader for the deeper treatment of this later in the Twelve. Furthermore, Obadiah's emphasis on Edom's destruction as a prerequisite for salvation will be a cause for hope in Yahweh at the end of the Twelve in Malachi.

### Jonah

Joel, Amos and Obadiah have presented the nations as wicked and their downfall as indispensable to Zion's future welfare.<sup>37</sup> This, however, is brought into question by the mercy Yahweh shows to Nineveh in Jonah. Jonah addresses this aspect of theodicy by showing that the nations are themselves wise if they acknowledge Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character. In showing mercy to a Nineveh which recognises that he is the God of Exodus 34:6-7, Yahweh in no way jeopardises Zion's glorious destiny prophesied in Joel. Quite the opposite.

Jonah uses Joel's language to suggest that even a wicked people like the Ninevites can make a truly wise response to Yahweh's

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<sup>35</sup> The phrase occurs in Isaiah 13:6; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 4:14 (Eng. 3:14); Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 47.

<sup>36</sup> I have modified Nogalski's observation slightly. He states that chronologically Edom is judged before the nations, but Esau (clearly Edom) is included in the same judgement as the other nations in Obadiah 15-21. Nogalski, 'The Day(s) of YHWH', 211.

<sup>37</sup> Amos 9.7 states that Yahweh does show grace to other nations, but there is no indication here or elsewhere in Amos that the nations are righteous. T. Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetic Books* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 71.

Exodus 34:6-7 attributes. Jonah 3:9 cites **מִי יוֹדֵעַ יִשׁוּב וְנָחַם** ('Who knows? God may turn and relent') which should surely be connected to Joel 2:14 given that the formula appears nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible, and is used similarly in the two passages.<sup>38</sup> Both passages use the phrase in the context of repentance, even accompanied by animals involved in fasting.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Jonah 4:2 uses **חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְנָחַם עַל־הָרָעָה**, ('gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster'), the abridgement of Exodus 34:6 and Exodus 32:12-14 which appears verbatim in Joel 2:13. This phrase only occurs in the Hebrew Bible in Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2, so there can be no doubt that the two passages are closely related.<sup>40</sup>

The reader of the Twelve should be able to see that the promises of Zion's exaltation in Joel still stand. Jonah 4:2's use of Joel 2:13 should direct the reader's attention to the context around Joel 2:13. Joel 2:18-4:21 (Eng. 3:21) promises blessing for Zion but cursing for wicked nations. Jonah's message is not that Yahweh has betrayed his assurance in Joel to destroy wicked nations and restore Zion, but that – consistent with Exodus 34:6-7 – nations who become wise are included among Yahweh's loved covenantal people.

### Micah

Micah addresses a difficulty raised by setting Joel-Amos-Obadiah over against Jonah. On the one hand, Joel-Amos-Obadiah have stated that the downfall of the nations will precede the rise of Zion. On the other hand, Jonah has described the extension of Yahweh's grace to Gentile Nineveh. Micah encourages the reader of the Twelve to rejoice in Jonah's message, while making clear that this message does not nullify Joel-Amos-Obadiah's predictions of Yahweh's wrath against ungodly nations, which is essential for Zion's future.

Zapf offers a persuasive case for Micah systematising the portrayal of the nations in the preceding writings of the Twelve. **עֵתָהּ**

<sup>38</sup> R.L.Schultz, 'The Ties that Bind', 39.

<sup>39</sup> The animals' participation in the fasting occurs in Joel 1:20 and Jonah 3:7-8. Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah*, 72.

<sup>40</sup> Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 81, Wöhrle, 'Prophetic Reflection', 7-8.

(‘now’) in Micah 4:11 shows that the punishment of the ungodly nations for attacking Zion is to happen soon, while the pilgrimage to Zion of godly nations in Micah 4:1-5 is according to Micah 4:1 much later, at the end of days.<sup>41</sup> So Micah presents an imminent judgement against the nations, consistent with Joel-Amos-Obadiah, and yet in line with Jonah, expands Joel-Amos-Obadiah with hope for the nations in the distant future.

With this systematisation Micah is able to explain that Joel's promise of Zion's glorification demands not only vengeance upon wicked nations but also blessing of righteous nations. Micah 4:3 explicitly reverses Joel 4:10 (Eng. 3:10) with the nations in Micah turning swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, rather than vice versa as in Joel.<sup>42</sup> The two passages concern Zion's salvation but describe contrasting essential conditions: Zion's glorious future relates to the judgement of the war-like wicked nations in Joel 4:10-19 (Eng. 3:10-19) and to Yahweh's favour coming upon the peace-loving righteous nations in Micah 4:1-5.

Micah also uses Joel to demonstrate that it is possible for Gentiles to receive this salvation through faith in Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 attributes, including his faithfulness to his promises. Given the close connection between the two passages, it is very likely that בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה (‘in the name of the LORD’) in Micah 4:5 is derived from Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32), a verse which underpins the message of salvation and judgement in Joel 4 (Eng. 3). Further evidence of a connection comes from the fact that the use of שֵׁם (‘name’) in Micah 4:5 is one of the most significant differences with the parallel passage Isaiah 2:1-5.<sup>43</sup> Micah's use of שֵׁם־יְהוָה (‘name of the LORD’) shows the reader of the Twelve that Joel's use of the phrase is not meant to be interpreted as excluding the nations from enjoying Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character.

As Joel uses שֵׁם־יְהוָה (‘name of the LORD’) to describe Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 blessings poured out on Zion, it is reasonable to

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<sup>41</sup> Zapf, ‘The Perspective’, 310.

<sup>42</sup> Zapf, ‘The Perspective’, 308.

<sup>43</sup> Isaiah 2:5 uses אֹר (‘light’) instead.

conclude that Micah uses בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה ('in the name of the LORD') with Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) and Exodus 34:5-7 in mind to show that those who walk in the name of the LORD and are blessed for doing so can include the nations.

The ending of Micah urges the reader to embrace fully the message of Jonah's message by rejoicing in Yahweh's readiness to bring salvation to those Gentiles who turn to him. By alluding so strongly to Jonah in Micah 7, Judah takes on the role of a type of repentant Jonah.<sup>44</sup> Zapf notices several similarities between Micah 7 and Jonah. Micah's confidence Yahweh will hear him (7:7) has a parallel in Jonah's declaration that Yahweh has heard him (2:2). Jonah confesses his dependence on Yahweh in his psalm of Jonah 2:2-9, and Zion confesses its dependence on Yahweh in Micah 7:8. Micah 7:9 and Jonah 2:6-7 appear analogous in that as Zion is confident that Yahweh will lead her into the light, so Jonah confesses that Yahweh has led him out of the grave. Jonah's confidence in Yahweh and his subsequent deliverance precedes the repentance and sparing of Nineveh.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, in Micah 7:8-9 Zion's confession of confidence in Yahweh's salvation ushers in the nations turning to Yahweh in 7:16-17. Zapf also notes that the remission of sins is found in Jonah 3-4 and Micah 7:18-20.<sup>46</sup>

The doxology of Micah 7:18-20 even uses vocabulary from Jonah, with וַתִּשְׁלֹךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת ('you will cast into the depths') in Micah 7:19b very similar to וַתִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִצְּלוֹהָ ('you cast into the depth') in Jonah 2:4a.<sup>47</sup> The occurrence of שָׁלַךְ ('cast') in the hiphil alongside מִצְּלוֹהָ ('depth') is very rare in the Hebrew Bible, so it is very likely that Micah uses the phrase to draw a parallel between the salvation of the congregation in 7:19b and the rescue of Jonah.<sup>48</sup>

In one sense, then, Micah 7 presents what a repentant Jonah

<sup>44</sup> J.M. Sasson, *Jonah* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 299; Zapf 'Perspective', 306-310.

<sup>45</sup> Zapf, 'Perspective', 306.

<sup>46</sup> Zapf, 'Perspective', 306-7.

<sup>47</sup> Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 159; Sasson, *Jonah*, 174.

<sup>48</sup> The only other occurrence in the Hebrew Bible of שָׁלַךְ ('cast') in the hiphil and מִצְּלוֹהָ ('depth') is Nehemiah 9.11. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 153.

would do: rejoice over Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character and covenantal love and faithfulness to repentant Gentiles. As Fishbane observes, there is strong evidence for an allusion to Exodus 34:6-7 in the doxology of Micah 7:18-20, with too many words in common for there to be a coincidence: נָשָׂא ('take away'), עוֹן ('iniquity'), פְּשָׁע ('transgression'), חֶסֶד ('steadfast love'), רַחֵם ('have mercy'), חַטָּאת ('sin') and אֱמֶת ('faithfulness').<sup>49</sup>

### Nahum

With Nahum-Habakkuk, the focus shifts to nations hostile to the covenant people. In Micah, wicked nations are cursed while godly nations are blessed. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Jonah-Micah place more emphasis on the blessing of the wise Gentiles. In contrast, Nahum demonstrates a greater emphasis on Yahweh's judgement against wicked nations, thus reaffirming Yahweh's commitment to his earlier promises.

After the reprieve of Nineveh celebrated in Jonah and Micah, Nahum emphasises the other side of Exodus 34:6-7: Yahweh does not acquit the guilty. He therefore will not acquit guilty Nineveh, whose repentance described in Jonah is only temporary. In describing Yahweh's vengeance against Nineveh, Nahum 1:3 explicitly cites Exodus 34:6-7. He is אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם ('slow to anger') and לֹא יִנְקֶה ('will by no means clear the guilty'). This complements the use of Exodus 34:6-7 in Micah 7, where it describes Yahweh's grace. The complementary occurrence of Exodus 34:6-7 at the seams of Nahum and Micah also provides strong evidence for a unity between the two writings.<sup>50</sup>

Nahum uses vocabulary from Joel and Obadiah to reassure the reader of Yahweh's faithfulness to his promises to bring salvation to his people and judgement upon their enemies.<sup>51</sup> The rare

<sup>49</sup> L. Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 402-3; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 349; J.L. Mays, *Micah* (London: SCM Press, 1976) 167; Wöhrle, 'prophetic reflection', 9.

<sup>50</sup> Van Leeuwen, 'Scribal Wisdom', 47, Wöhrle, 'prophetic reflection', 6.

<sup>51</sup> R.D. Patterson, *Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk* (Chicago, Moody Press 1991), 100.



combination of גֹּרֵל ('lot') with יָדָה ('cast'; Nah. 3:10) alludes to Joel 4:3 (Eng. 3:3) and Obadiah 11. Whereas in Joel and Obadiah the wicked nations are castigated for casting lots over Jerusalem, in Nahum 3:10 the wicked nations, represented by Nineveh, now have lots cast over them. This fitting punishment shows that Yahweh is faithful to his promise that the wicked nations' deeds will return on their heads (Obad. 15). Nahum signals to the reader that the Day of the LORD for the wicked nations is imminent, as Joel and Obadiah proposed.

Nahum also uses the locust imagery of Joel to demonstrate that the plot is developing towards the fulfilment of Joel's promises of salvation.<sup>52</sup> As we have seen in Joel, salvation includes agricultural bounty and results from the destruction of 'the northern army', symbolised as locusts. The rare combination of יִלֵּק ('locust') and אֲרֶבֶה ('grasshopper'; Nah. 3:15-17; cf. Joel 1:14; 2:25) is strong evidence of a deliberate connection between Joel and Nahum. Rescue from these locusts is seen as coming to fruition as the Ninevites are told that even if they multiply like יִלֵּק ('locust') and אֲרֶבֶה ('grasshopper') they still face inevitable destruction (Nah. 3:15-17).<sup>53</sup>

### Habakkuk

Habakkuk answers a question not yet addressed in the Twelve: how can Yahweh be righteous in punishing the southern and northern kingdoms with nations more wicked than they? Habakkuk's answer demonstrates that Yahweh is fulfilling his earlier promise to judge wicked nations, not only in the destruction of Nineveh and Babylon, but also in the exile of ungodly Jerusalem. The Twelve has already clarified that the destruction of the northern kingdom was faithful to the promises of Joel. Habakkuk establishes the same principle for Jerusalem's punishment in 587 B.C.

Habakkuk 2 promises that Yahweh will demonstrate his righteousness by punishing Babylon for her destruction of Jerusalem.

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<sup>52</sup> Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', 104.

<sup>53</sup> The only other occurrence of יִלֵּק ('locust') with אֲרֶבֶה ('grasshopper') is in Psalm 105:34.

It thus not only prepares the reader for Zephaniah's message of judgement against Jerusalem, but also explains a major subject of the writings in the first half of the Twelve: Yahweh's use of Assyria against the less wicked northern kingdom. This is done through a chiasm:<sup>54</sup>

- A Hymn of Theophany (Nah. 1)
- B Taunt song against Nineveh (Nah. 2-3)
- X The problem of Theodicy (Hab. 1:1-2.5)
- B' Taunt song against the 'wicked one' (Hab. 2:6-20)
- A' Hymn of theophany (Hab. 3)

The central placing of Habakkuk's problem of theodicy (X) shapes the interpretation of Nahum; when read in conjunction with Habakkuk, Nahum vindicates Yahweh's use of Assyria to exact retribution on the northern kingdom by describing the judgement against Nineveh.

Although Judah is not the most wicked of nations, Habakkuk's close relationship with Nahum has the rhetorical effect of demonstrating that, as Yahweh is righteous in judging Nineveh, so also he is righteous in punishing Judah. Habakkuk 1 has a close literary relationship with Nahum 3, describing Yahweh's judgement against nations including Judah in similar imagery to Nahum's description of Yahweh's vengeance against Nineveh.<sup>55</sup> Babylon is the instrument of judgement in both cases, which also strengthens the similarity. As Nogalski observes, horsemen attack Nineveh in Nahum 3:3, while Babylon attacks Jerusalem with horsemen in Habakkuk 1:8. Nineveh goes into captivity in Nahum 3:10 and Babylon collects captives in Habakkuk 1:9. Nineveh is mocked and its fortifications are ready to be destroyed (Nahum 3:12, 14) mirroring Babylon's laughter at fortified cities in Habakkuk 1:10. Nineveh's shepherds and nobles are defeated (Nahum 3:18) while Babylon mocks rulers and kings (Habakkuk 1:10).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Redditt, 'The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Review of Research'. In *The Thematic Threads*, ed. Redditt and Schart, 1-26, at 14.

<sup>55</sup> Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', 122.

<sup>56</sup> Nogalski, 'Intertextuality in the Twelve', 122.

Thematically, the reader of the Twelve should remember from Obadiah that the punishment of not only the nations but also Jerusalem makes Zion's glorification more imminent. Habakkuk now reinforces this as the difficult subject of 587 B.C. becomes central to the plot of theodicy in the Twelve. Nahum 3 presents the judgement of Nineveh as accomplishing the salvation promises of Joel and Obadiah. The literary tie between Nahum 3 and Habakkuk 1 suggests that Jerusalem's doom is also a fulfilment of these same salvation promises: Jerusalem is among the wicked nations that must fall for Zion to rise. The connection between Nahum 3 and Habakkuk 1 is through imagery rather than quotations or allusions, explaining the absence in Habakkuk of language from Nahum alluding to the promises in Joel and Obadiah, such as the pairing of גֹּרֵל (‘lot’) with יָרָה (‘cast’) and the combination of יִלֵּק (‘locust’) with אֶרְבֶּה (‘grasshopper’).

Given the very strong literary and thematic relationship between Nahum and Habakkuk, the lack of quotations and allusions in Habakkuk from earlier writings of the Twelve does not over-turn the argument for unity in the Twelve. The reader of the Twelve is able to see how Habakkuk progresses the plot of theodicy.

### Zephaniah

Zephaniah shifts the focus of the Twelve from preparation for Yahweh's punishment of the southern kingdom to the imminence of this event.<sup>57</sup> Habakkuk has established Yahweh's righteousness in punishing the southern kingdom. Thus, the Twelve has effectively established that ethnic membership of the southern and northern kingdoms is no guarantee of salvation. Rather, all who know Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character are recipients of his blessing, including Gentiles. Zephaniah uses the language of earlier parts of the Twelve to summarise this message, reassuring the reader that the

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<sup>57</sup> Wöhrle notes that Zephaniah's setting in the reign of Josiah fits well, chronologically, with the reigns of kings in which Hosea, Amos and Micah are set. See Wöhrle, 'No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones: The Exilic Book of the Four Prophets (Hos., Am., Mic., Zeph.) as a Concept Opposed to the Deuteronomistic History', VT 58 (2008) 608-627, at 609.

events of 587 B.C. bring Yahweh's salvation promises nearer.

יוֹם צָרָה ('a day of distress'; Zeph. 1:15) also occurs in Habakkuk 3:16. Its use in Zephaniah therefore reminds the reader of Habakkuk's encouragement to hold on to Yahweh's promises of salvation, softening the blow of Judah and Jerusalem's downfall.<sup>58</sup> The placing of the phrase near the seams of Habakkuk and Zephaniah makes it very likely that there is a connection between the two passages. The only examples in the Hebrew canon of this phrase at the end of a book and beginning of an adjacent book occur with Habakkuk-Zephaniah. The common theme unifying its use in these books is the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Since Habakkuk has already vindicated Yahweh for sending a day of distress, the reader already knows that the correct response is to wait patiently for Yahweh's salvation (Hab. 3:16-18).

Zephaniah uses language from Joel to demonstrate that wisdom comes not from ethnic background but from trusting in Yahweh's faithfulness to his promises and therefore sheltering in Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character. This is seen in Zephaniah 3:9 where the phrase לְקַרְאֵ כָּל־בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה ('that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD') describes nations turning to Yahweh. As we have seen, calling on the name of the LORD involves taking refuge in the blessings of Exodus 34:6-7. לְקַרְאֵ כָּל־בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה occurs rarely in prophetic writing. That Zephaniah 3:9 uses it in a similar context to Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32), is strong evidence for an allusion here to Joel.<sup>59</sup> The nations who call on the name of Yahweh in Zephaniah share the same destiny as those who call on the name of Yahweh in Joel: entry into restored Zion. Zephaniah 3:9-11 presents the righteous nations as worshipping in Zion.<sup>60</sup> There can be no doubt

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<sup>58</sup> Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 46-7.

<sup>59</sup> In prophetic writing the phrase only appears elsewhere in Zechariah 13:9. Zechariah 13:9 does not use the word

יְהוָה ('the LORD') but there is no doubt that the name of the LORD is in mind here. Rendtorff sees a connection between Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) and Zephaniah 3:9. See R. Rendtorff, 'Alas for the Day! The 'Day of the Lord' in the Book of the Twelve', in T. Linafelt – T. K. Beal (eds.), *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998) 186-197, at 196.

<sup>60</sup> The reference to the holy mountain must surely be Zion.

that these nations are included in Zion's salvation as described in 3:14-20.

This picture does not mean there will be no righteous remnant from Israel sharing in the blessings, as Zephaniah 3:13 clarifies. Like the righteous nations, they are wise by taking refuge in the covenantal blessings of Exodus 34:6-7. They do after all find haven in **שֵׁם יְהוָה** ('the name of the LORD'; 3:12).<sup>61</sup>

Zephaniah 3:19-20 draws on language from Joel and Micah to reaffirm the promise of Zion's salvation. **וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶת הַצִּלְעָה וְהִנָּחֵתָ אֶת אֶתְּ** ('and I will save the lame and gather the outcast'; Zeph. 3:9), is very similar to **אֶסְפֶּה הַצִּלְעָה וְהִנָּחֵתָ אֶת אֶתְּ** ('I will assemble the lame, and gather the outcast'; Mic. 4:6);<sup>62</sup> **הַצִּלְעָה** ('the lame') occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew canon.<sup>63</sup> Given this close linguistic link and the thematic affinity, with both passages describing Zion's restoration, there can be no doubt of a deliberate connection. Nogalski points out that Zephaniah 3:20 uses language from Joel 4:1 (Eng. 3:1).<sup>64</sup> **שׁוּב** ('restore') and **שְׁבוּת** ('fortune') is a relatively common phrase in prophetic writing, but these two verses are the only examples of **בְּעֵת** ('at that time') appearing with **שׁוּב** and **שְׁבוּת**. Yet again there is the thematic parallel of Zion's triumph with the two passages.

Zephaniah 1:15 also uses Joel to show the reader that the plot of theodicy has progressed to the point that the southern kingdom is included in the wicked nations who are heading for disaster on Day of the LORD. Given how closely tied the Day of the LORD is to Zion's

<sup>61</sup> Sweeney argues for influence from Deuteronomy, which is quite possible, but influence from Deuteronomy is not incompatible with influence from Exodus 34:6-7. See M.A.Sweeney, *Zephaniah* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 190.

<sup>62</sup> See Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 208. The translation of the phrase from Micah 4:6 is from the NASB.

<sup>63</sup> **הַצִּלְעָה** ('the lame') occurs in Micah 4:7 as well as Micah 4:6 and Zephaniah 3:9. As Waltke notes, the only other occurrence of the root **צָלַע** ('to limp') in the Old Testament is in Genesis 32:32 (B. Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah* [Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2007], 221).

<sup>64</sup> Nogalski, 'The Day(s) of YHWH', 202.

salvation, this is saying that Yahweh's wrath on Judah is faithful rather than unfaithful to his promises in Joel. Judah's punishment along with the wicked nations is a pre-requisite for the blessing of the righteous remnant and Gentiles in Zion. Nogalski observes that Zephaniah 1:15 includes a verbatim citation from Joel 2:2: **וְעָרְפַל וְעָנָן יוֹם חֹשֶׁךְ וַאֲפֵלָה יוֹם עָנָן** ('a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness').<sup>65</sup> The Day of the LORD in Zephaniah also has several similarities to the Day of the LORD in Joel. Zephaniah 1:16 has a trumpet blow and alarm to describe the Day, as does Joel 2:1, and Zephaniah 1:18 and Joel 2:1 both portray the Day as all encompassing.<sup>66</sup> The close parallels between the Day of the LORD in Zephaniah and Joel, and also in Obadiah, make a powerful case for concluding that the use of the comparatively rare **קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה** ('the day of the LORD is near') in Zephaniah 1:7 is meant to direct the reader back to the use of the phrase in Joel and Obadiah.<sup>67</sup>

### Haggai

Haggai moves the plot of theodicy in the Twelve in a new direction, by addressing the difficult question of why post-exilic Judah has still not experienced the restoration promised so long ago in earlier parts of the Twelve. Haggai shows that culpability for this delay lies with Judah rather than Yahweh.

Haggai 1 alludes to the 'time' of restoration promised in Joel and Zephaniah, and then goes on to explain that the reason for this delayed 'time' is post-exilic Judah's lack of faithfulness. This allusion

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<sup>65</sup> Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 195. See also: Patterson, *Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk*, 321; O. P. Robertson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990), 284, and M. A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 100. Patterson notes in great detail that besides the quotation of Joel 2:2, the description of the Day of the LORD in Zephaniah 1:15 has similarities to the Day of the LORD in Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Daniel. However, Joel 2:2 is certainly the most similar.

<sup>66</sup> Patterson, *Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk*, 321.

<sup>67</sup> **קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה** ('the day of the LORD is near') appears in Joel 1:15, 4:14 (Eng. 3:14), Obadiah 15, Isaiah 13:6 and words close to it in Ezekiel 30:3 and Joel 2:1. See Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 79.

to Joel and Zephaniah is through the catchword עֵת ('time') in Haggai 1:2, 4 which links back to the use of the word in Zephaniah 3:19-20.<sup>68</sup> עֵת is a very common word, so its occurrence alone in two adjacent passages cannot be taken as evidence for a catchword connection. However, its use is very similar in Zephaniah 3 and Haggai 1. Zephaniah 3:20 applies עֵת to describe when Yahweh's salvation is realised, when his people are restored, and Zion glorified.<sup>69</sup> Haggai 1:2 uses it for the description of the rebuilding of Yahweh's temple. This clearly has eschatological undertones. Haggai 2:7 explains that the temple's reconstruction will bring about the glorification of Zion. The portrayal of the glorified temple (which is undoubtedly associated with Zion), with nations coming on pilgrimage, is very similar imagery to Zephaniah 3:8-20.

By connecting to Zephaniah 3:19-20 through the use of עֵת, Haggai also connects to Joel 4:1 (Eng. 3:1), since Zephaniah 9:19-20 explicitly alludes to this passage. The rhetorical effect of this is to show that the 'time' of Haggai is precisely the 'time' referred to in Joel and Zephaniah: the time of triumph for Yahweh's people and Zion.

In describing דָגָן ('grain'), תִירוֹשׁ ('new wine') and יִצְהָר ('oil') as an aspect of Yahweh's blessings to his people, Haggai 1:11 alludes to Hosea 2:10-11 (Eng. 2:8-9) and Joel 1:10, and provides evidence of Yahweh's faithfulness to his promise in Hosea to use agricultural barrenness to bring about repentance and restoration. The loss of these things (Hag. 1:11) leads to Yahweh stirring up the spirits of his people to resume work on the temple (1:12).

There is overwhelming evidence of deliberate use of Amos to convey to the reader Yahweh's use of agricultural barrenness as loving discipline. Haggai 2:17 repeats verbatim בַּשָדֵדִפוֹן וּבִירֵקוֹן הִכִיתִי אֶתְכֶם ('I struck you with blight and with mildew') which only appears elsewhere in the Hebrew canon in Amos 4:9.<sup>70</sup> There is a

<sup>68</sup> Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 49.

<sup>69</sup> Zephaniah 3:14-20 is addressed to the daughter of Zion, so the 'time' of verses 19-20 is Zion's.

<sup>70</sup> Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 442; D. K. Berry, 'Malachi's Dual Design: The Close of the Canon and What Comes Afterward', in *Forming Prophetic Literature*, ed. Watts and House, 62; Nogalski, 'Joel as 'Literary Anchor'', in *Reading and*

thematic link with both passages stressing that famine did not bring about repentance, and showing the reader of the Twelve that Yahweh has been as righteous in his dealings with post-exilic Judah as he was with the northern kingdom.

### Zechariah

Zechariah complements Haggai by giving another reason for Yahweh's delay in fulfilling his promises earlier in the Twelve: there needs to be a purifying judgement of the wicked. This is seen very clearly with the use of Zechariah 13:9, which in the context of 13:1-8 describes Yahweh's purifying judgement against Jerusalem and its surrounding land. Zechariah 13:9 also explains that this refining judgement will lead to a fulfilment of Hosea's promise of a reversal from **לֹא עַמִּי** ('not my people') to **עַמִּי** ('my people'). This is obvious from the almost verbatim citation of the promise of Hosea 2:25 (Eng. 2:23):<sup>71</sup>

**עַמִּי-אַתָּה וְהוּא יֹאמֵר אֱלֹהֵי** ("You are my people"; and they shall say, "you are my God"; Hos. 2:25 [Eng. 2:23]).

**עַמִּי הוּא וְהוּא יֹאמֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי** ("They are my people"; and they will say, "The LORD is my God"; Zech. 13:9).

Zechariah uses language from earlier in the Twelve and associated with Exodus 34:6-7 to show the reader that those who take refuge in Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character will survive the purifying judgement. Zechariah 13:9 uses language of calling on the name of the LORD, with **בְּשִׁמִּי** ('on my name'), to connect back to Joel 3:5

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*Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, ed. Nogalski and Sweeney, 103 n.25. Andersen and Freedman argue that there is no dependence on Amos 4:9 in Haggai 2:17, because **שְׂדֵפָה** ('blight') with **יִרְקוֹן** ('mildew') is a stock phrase which also appears in Deuteronomy 28:22; 1 Kings 8:37; and 2 Chronicles 6:28. However, this does not take into consideration the fact that **הִכִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּשִׂדְפוֹן וּבִירְקוֹן** ('I struck you with blight and with mildew') as a combination only appears in Amos 4:9 and Haggai 2:17.

<sup>71</sup> C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14* (AB 25C. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 396.



(Eng. 2:32) and Zephaniah 3:9.

As Jordan notes, Zechariah 5 sets the scene for Malachi, the conclusion of the Twelve. Zechariah 5:3-4 states that the sins that will provoke the purifying judgement are theft and false oaths. Malachi addresses these sins in more depth.<sup>72</sup>

### Malachi

Malachi closes the Twelve by comprehensively addressing the problem of the delay in Yahweh's promises from earlier in the Twelve. Malachi does this in two major ways. First, by alluding to Obadiah it demonstrates that Yahweh's salvation promises still stand. Second, by drawing on several writings in the Twelve, Malachi makes the point that Yahweh must still punish the wicked of post-exilic Judah in order to consummate his promised salvation.

Affirmation of Yahweh's covenantal love is provided by the description of the ruined state of Edom (1:2-5).<sup>73</sup> A post-exilic-reader of the Twelve would have known from Obadiah that the desolation of geographical Edom was concrete proof of a glorious future for Yahweh's people.

Nogalski argues very convincingly that Malachi intends the reader to read Malachi 1:2-5 with Obadiah in mind. Both Malachi 1:4 and Obadiah 3-4 describe Edom's self deception and futile attempts to build long-term, whereas the depiction of Edom's low stature (Mal. 1:4) contrasts with the height of Edom's dwelling in Obadiah 3.<sup>74</sup> Malachi 1:4 and Obadiah 10 both describe Yahweh's permanent wrath on Edom.<sup>75</sup>

The linguistic connections between Malachi 1:2-5 and Obadiah further strengthens the evidence for this thematic link. עֵשָׂו ('Esau') is very rare in prophetic writings, only appearing in Malachi ,

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<sup>72</sup> J. B. Jordan, *The Book of the Twelve, Lecture Three* (The James B. Jordan Audio Library, 2004 Tape special), 8.58-17.35.

<sup>73</sup> A. E. Hill, *Malachi* (AB 25D, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 168.

<sup>74</sup> Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 192.

<sup>75</sup> Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 192 n. 37.

Obadiah, and Jeremiah.<sup>76</sup> **הַר** ('mount/mountain/hill') and **עֵשָׂו** ('Esau') only occur together in Obadiah 8, 9, 19, and 21, and Malachi 1:3, offering further evidence that Malachi 1:2-5 is related to Obadiah.<sup>77</sup>

Although Malachi comforts the reader with proof that Yahweh's salvation promises have not been nullified, Malachi 3:3 uses the language of Zechariah 13:9 to reiterate the message that Yahweh will bring about a purifying judgement before Hosea 2:25 (Eng. 2:23) is fulfilled. **זָהָב** ('gold'), **כֶּסֶף** ('silver') and forms of **צָרַף** ('refine') appear in both Zechariah 13:9 and Malachi 3:3. These verses are unique in the Hebrew Bible in using this combination to describe refining judgement, providing strong evidence for a deliberate connection between the two passages.<sup>78</sup>

Malachi develops the theodicy by expanding on the two sins of Zechariah 5:3-4 that justify Yahweh's purifying judgement. Theft appears in relation to faulty sacrifices (1:6-14), financial exploitation (3:5), and robbing Yahweh of tithes (3:6-9). False oaths feature with lies about Yahweh (1:2; 2:17-18; 3:13-15), violation of the Levitical covenant (2:8), breaching of marital vows (2:13-16), and perjury (3:5).<sup>79</sup>

Malachi also demonstrates that Yahweh's promises are delayed because post-exilic Judah is still like the wicked of Hosea. Hosea's imagery of Israel as Yahweh's adulterous wife is echoed in Malachi's denouncement of the post-exilic community's unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant (2:13-16).<sup>80</sup> This connection seems especially strong when it is considered that Malachi like Hosea calls for covenantal faithfulness from Israel.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Braaten notes that **אֶרֶץ** ('land') in Malachi 3:24 (Eng. 4:6) forms a very plausible inclusio with **אֶרֶץ** ('land') in Hosea 1:2. Significantly, in Hosea 1:2, the land

<sup>76</sup> Jeremiah 49:8-10; Obadiah 6, 8, 9, 18, 19, 21; Malachi 1:2, 3.; see Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 192.

<sup>77</sup> Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 192.

<sup>78</sup> Hill, *Malachi*, 277 and Meyers C.L. and Meyers E.M, *Zechariah 9-14* (AB 25C. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1993), 395. The combination also appears in Isaiah 40:19, 46:6, and Jeremiah 10:9.

<sup>79</sup> Jordan, *Book of the Twelve*, 23.58-38.44.

<sup>80</sup> Collins, *Mantle of Elijah*, 66.

<sup>81</sup> Sweeney, 'Sequence and Interpretation', 57.

is guilty of whoredom, explaining why Yahweh withdraws the blessings of Exodus 34:6-7.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, in Malachi 3:24 (Eng. 4:6), the land is in danger of destruction due to sin.

Malachi also identifies the evil-doers of Judah as an Esau, therefore belonging to typological Edom. This shows the reader of the Twelve that Yahweh's promises in Obadiah are delayed because Edom has not yet been fully judged. Therefore culpability lies with the 'Edomite' wicked of Judah rather than a lack of faithfulness in Yahweh's character.<sup>83</sup> The evidence for the presentation of the Jewish wicked as such an Esau comes from an inclusio between Malachi 1:2-5 and 3:15. There is an explicit wordplay between Malachi 1:2-4 and 3:15 with עֵשָׂו ('Esau') and רְשָׁעָה ('wickedness') appearing in the former passage, and עֲשֵׂי רְשָׁעָה ('doers') in the latter. Both also use the verb בָּנָה ('build') to describe their desire to be built up.<sup>84</sup>

Joel is used by Malachi 3:23 (Eng. 4:5) to demonstrate that the purifying judgement of the wicked in post-exilic Judah is necessary to fulfil Joel's salvation promises. בּוֹא יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא לְפָנָי ('before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes') uses words from Joel 2:11 and is a verbatim citation of Joel 3:4 (Eng. 2:31),<sup>85</sup> which deploys the phrase to describe the purifying judgement that Joel 3:5 (Eng. 2:32) tells us leaves survivors on Zion.

לְפָנָי בּוֹא יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא ('before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes'; Mal. 3:23 (Eng. 4:5) also has the effect of urging the reader to heed Joel and the Twelve by sheltering in Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character, including his faithfulness to his promises, in order to enter glorified Zion. The reader of the Twelve should know that Exodus 34:6 is the basis for Joel's exhortation to escape the great and terrible Day of the LORD by returning to Yahweh (Joel 2:11-13). In Joel 3:4-5 (Eng. 2:31-32) those who survive וְהַנּוֹרָא

<sup>82</sup> L.J. Braaten, 'God Sows: Hosea's Land Theme in the Book of the Twelve', in *Thematic Threads*, ed. by Redditt and Schart, 104-132, 105-107.

<sup>83</sup> This does not mean the distinction between Jew and Gentile is eroded. The nations are referred to as a separate ethnic group in Malachi 1:11.

<sup>84</sup> Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 193.

<sup>85</sup> Nogalski, *The Day(s) of YHWH*, 254.

יִּוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל ('the great and awesome day of the LORD') are those who call on the name of the Yahweh, which as we have seen is analogous to knowing Yahweh's Exodus 34:6-7 character.<sup>86</sup>

### The LXX and Qumran sequences

We are now in a position to evaluate the LXX and Qumran sequences.<sup>87</sup> Our argument for a unity through theodicy cannot be read for either the LXX or Qumran orders, which is what we would expect if the MT sequence were designed so that it could be read to explain the reason for the delay of Yahweh's promised salvation.

The positioning of Jonah in the LXX and the Qumran prevents reading them in the same way as the MT. In the Qumran, Jonah is the last in the Twelve, which means that the switch from a consistently negative portrayal of the nations in Joel-Amos-Obadiah changes in Micah without the explanation of Jonah. The Qumran's order also means that the important role Jonah plays in justifying the destruction of the northern kingdom is placed several writings after the northern kingdom has ceased to be a major theme. Furthermore

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<sup>86</sup> I have not argued for quotations of Exodus 34:6-7 in Malachi. Wöhrle argues that Malachi 1:9 quotes part of Exodus 34:6 with אֱלֹהִים ('God') and רַחֲמָנִים ('to be gracious'). His theory is that after the 'grace formula' of Exodus 34:6 is completely quoted in Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2, aspects of the formula are taken up step by step in Jonah 3:10, Micah 7:18-20, Nahum 1:2, 3, with the final step in Malachi 1:9. This argument is original and possible given the importance of Exodus 34:6-7 in the Twelve. However, Spronk raises a significant objection to Wöhrle's argument. The full quotation of the grace formula in Jonah 4:2 interrupts the flow of the step by step quotation of Exodus 34:6 if it starts in Jonah 3:10, which is hard to explain if Wöhrle is right. Without the 'step by step' theory, one common adjective from Exodus 34:6 appearing in Malachi 1:9 is not on its own enough evidence for a quotation from Exodus 34:6. See K. Spronk, 'Jonah, Nahum, and the Book of the Twelve: A response to Jakob Wöhrle', *JHS* 9.7 (2009) <[http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article\\_110.pdf](http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_110.pdf)>, 11 [last accessed August 21, 2010]; Wöhrle, 'Prophetic reflection', 11.

<sup>87</sup>The order of the LXX is: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. The order of the Qumran 4 QXIIa is: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah. See: B. A. Jones, *The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Study in Text and Canon*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

in both the Qumran and the LXX Micah's spur to learn the message of Jonah (chap. 7) does not make the same impact because Micah precedes Jonah.

Another obstacle for reading the LXX similarly to the MT is the placing of Joel, which follows Micah in the LXX. This means that Joel 4:10 (Eng. 3:10) reverses Micah 4:3, in contrast to the way in which the reversal operates in the MT. It is therefore difficult to see a theme of theodicy regarding the nations developing in the LXX order. In the LXX, Micah's systematising of the portrayal of the nations precedes Joel, leaving no need for Joel 4:10 (Eng. 3:10) to reverse Micah 4:3). Moreover, if the role of the nations in the writings after Joel is to be read together coherently there would need to be the same systematic approach as Micah's.

### **Conclusion**

In contrast to the LXX and Qumran sequences, the MT sequence of the Twelve can be read as a unity in vindicating Yahweh's delay in fulfilling his salvation promises introduced in Hosea-Joel. This is done with a thematic progression from one writing to the next. Thus, Twelve establishes Yahweh's goodness and faithfulness to his promises in judging the northern and southern kingdoms, showing mercy to righteous nations, and delaying the consummation of his pledged blessings even during the post-exilic period. Indeed, the Twelve presents ethnic Israel and Judah among the wicked nations, so the judgements of 722 B.C. and 587 B.C., as well as a prophesied judgement of 'Edomite' Judah, are shown by the Twelve as righteous and crucial to the implementation of Yahweh's salvation plan defined in Joel and Obadiah. The reader of the Twelve is left with no doubt that ethnic heritage is no factor in being a participant in glorified Zion. The only wise course of action is to acknowledge that Yahweh's character is as he declared it in Exodus 34:6-7. He is therefore faithful to his promised salvation, even when the fullness of this salvation looks distant.

The linguistic and literary evidence for unity through theodicy is considerable. Most writings in the Twelve develop the theodicy from their immediate predecessor through some or all of verbatim quotations, allusions, and literary devices. The only exception is

Jonah in relationship to Obadiah. However, this does not undermine the argument for unity given Jonah's utilisation of verbatim quotations from Joel to develop theodicy.

Joel is used particularly frequently in the Twelve, with quotations and allusions in every writing except Habakkuk. This is striking considering the relative shortness of Joel, but this is consistent with the theory that Joel is a paradigmatic writing for the Twelve. This makes the absence of direct quotations from and allusions to Exodus 34:6-7 in several writings of the Twelve unproblematic in arguing for unity because Exodus 34:6-7 is a sub-theme to the question of theodicy relating to Yahweh's faithfulness to his promises introduced in Hosea-Joel.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, this article has put forward evidence for the presence of references to Joel's promises of salvation in every writing in the Twelve after Joel, even in Habakkuk through the literary tie between Nahum 3 and Habakkuk 1. Jonah refers to Yahweh's pledges in Joel by using Joel's abridgement of Exodus 34:6 and Exodus 32:12-14, exemplifying how Exodus 34:6-7 serves a wider theme in the Twelve.

Hosea is not quoted or alluded to as often as Joel, but its importance in combining with Joel to be paradigmatic is seen with frequent and explicit use of language and themes from Hosea in Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi. This demonstrates the importance for the Twelve, as it comes to its conclusion, of exonerating Yahweh of any hint of the charge that he has abandoned the promises of Hosea 1-2.

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<sup>88</sup> This article has argued for clear quotations of and/or allusions to Exodus 34:6-7 (given how closely connected verse 6 is to verse 7, I treat Exodus 34:6-7 as one) in only five writings: Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah and Nahum. I have also referred to a connection to Exodus 34:5 with 'calling on the name of the LORD' language in Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah.