
DAILY SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Monday:

Zephaniah 1:2-6
Hosea 4:3
Jeremiah 4:24-25

Tuesday:

Zephaniah 3:12-13
Romans 11:5-6

Wednesday:

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Deuteronomy 3:1-3

Thursday:

Habakkuk 2:4-5
Job 38:1-5
Romans 1:17

Friday:

Habakkuk 3:17-19

SUMMARY

Zephaniah and Habakkuk follow a similar structure of other prophets we've discussed: warnings, description of judgment, and a glimmer of hope for the remnant who follow God. The prophets are not easy to read; they are full of dire warnings, violent images, and true statements about God's wrath against injustice, idolatry, and so many other things. But the prophets are not without hope. At every turn, we see glimpses of promised glory, of our inheritance as sons and daughters of God.

Zephaniah prophesied to Judah, the southern kingdom that had broken off from Israel but still belonged to God. Major themes in Zephaniah include acknowledging the sovereignty of God over all people and creation, and reminding the people that a day of judgment would come. But this "day of the Lord," a phrase used throughout the prophets, in Zephaniah is described as a curse for those who strayed from God and a blessing for those committed to him. Zephaniah's tension of judgment and hope helps us while we live in the same tension: we feel the world's brokenness, the cost of our sin, and of corporate and institutional sin. And yet, we have hope that because God has chosen us, we will be restored.

Habakkuk was a contemporary prophet to Zephaniah, and uniquely, Habakkuk prophesies by speaking to God. Habakkuk gives us permission and a reminder that dialogue with God, especially about big issues like wrath and judgment, is invited. Habakkuk and Zephaniah both ask us to confront things in ourselves. Zephaniah asks us if we will obey, if we will live clothed in righteousness. Habakkuk asks hard questions of God, if he really is good, trustworthy, and will restore us the way he promised. The Bible offers us ample opportunity to ask, to wonder, and to live by faith.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION

What have you found difficult or uncomfortable about reading and studying the prophets so far? What has been encouraging?

Zephaniah speaks of the tension of living in a broken world with hope of total redemption. What are some ways you feel that tension in your life?

How do the words and questions of Habakkuk encourage you? Do you find them uncomfortable or comforting? Think about the posture you often take before the Lord and jot down some descriptive words.