English: Habakkuk, Micah, Obadiah, Zephaniah

Formatted for Translators

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## Obadiah

### Chapter 1

**1** The vision of Obadiah. The Lord Yahweh says this concerning Edom: We have heard a report from Yahweh and an ambassador has been sent among the nations, saying, "Rise up! Let us rise up against her for battle!"

**2** Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you will be greatly despised. **3** The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty home; who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" **4** Though you soar high like the eagle and though your nest is set among the stars, I will bring you down from there—this is Yahweh's declaration.

**5** If thieves came to you, if robbers came by night—how you will be ruined!—would they not steal only as much as they needed? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave the gleanings? **6** How Esau will be ransacked, his hidden treasures looted! **7** All the men of your alliance will send you on your way to the border. The men who were at peace with you will deceive you and prevail against you. They who eat your bread will set a trap under you. There is no understanding in him.

**8** "Will I not on that day"—this is Yahweh's declaration—"destroy the wise men from Edom and understanding out of the mountain of Esau? **9** Your mighty men will be dismayed, Teman, so that every man may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter.

**10** Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame, and you will be cut off forever. **11** On the day you stood aloof, on the day strangers carried away his wealth, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. **12** But do not gloat over your brother's day, in the day of his misfortune, and do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction; do not boast in the day of their distress. **13** Do not enter my people's gate in the day of their calamity; do not gloat over their affliction in the day of their disaster, do not loot their wealth in the day of their ruin. **14** Do not stand at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives, and do not deliver up his survivors in the day of distress.

**15** For the day of Yahweh is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return on your own head. **16** For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so will all the nations drink continually. They will drink and swallow and it will be as though they had never existed.

**17** But in Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will take possession of their possessions. **18** The house of Jacob will be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will burn them, and consume them. There will be no survivors to the house of Esau, for Yahweh has spoken it."

**19** People from the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau and the people of the lowlands will possess the land of the Philistines. They will possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. **20** The exiles of this army of the people of Israel will possess the land of Canaan as far as Zarephath. The exiles of Jerusalem, who are in Sepharad, will possess the cities of the Negev. **21** Deliverers will go up to Mount Zion to rule over the hill country of Esau, and the kingdom will belong to Yahweh.

#### Obadiah 1:1

##### The vision of Obadiah

This is the title of the book. Here "vision" is used in the general sense of a message from Yahweh, rather than to indicate how Obadiah received the message. Alternate translation: "The message of Obadiah" or "The prophesy of Obadiah"

##### The Lord Yahweh says this concerning Edom

This tells the reader that the entire book is a message about Edom.

##### Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

##### an ambassador has been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has sent an ambassador"

##### Rise up

"Stand up." This phrase is used to tell people to get ready.

##### rise up against her

Here "her" refers to Edom. This is a metonym for the people of Edom, so it could also be translated as "them."

#### Obadiah 1:2

##### Behold, I will make you

Beginning in verse 2, Obadiah records the words that Yahweh speaks directly to Edom.

##### Behold

This alerts the reader to pay special attention to what follows. Alternate translation: "Look" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

##### I will make you small among the nations; you will be greatly despised

These two phrases mean similar things and are used to emphasize that Edom will lose its important status.

##### I will make you small among the nations

Something that is insignificant is spoken of as if it is of small size, and can easily be overlooked. Alternate translation: "I will make you insignificant among the nations"

##### you will be greatly despised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of other nations will hate you"

#### Obadiah 1:3

##### General Information:

Obadiah's vision concerning Edom continues.

##### The pride of your heart has deceived you

The "heart" was associated with emotions. The Edomites' pride caused them to be deceived about their security. Alternate translation: "Your pride has deceived you" or "Your pride causes you think you are safe"

##### in the clefts of the rock

"in the cracks in the rock." This here has the sense of a place that is protected because it is surrounded by rocks.

##### in your lofty home

"in your home that was built in a high place"

##### say in your heart

Here "in your heart" is an idiom that means "to yourself." Alternate translation: "say to yourselves" or "think"

##### Who will bring me down to the ground?

This question expresses that the Edomites were proud and felt safe. Alternate translation: "No one can bring me down to the ground." or "I am safe from all attackers."

#### Obadiah 1:4

##### Though you soar high like the eagle and though your nest is set among the stars

Both of these exaggerations say that Edom is built in a very high place by saying it is built much higher than possible. Alternate translation: "And I tell you that even if you had wings and could fly higher than eagles fly, and if you could make your homes among the stars"

##### I will bring you down from there

Pride is associated with height while humility is associated with being low. To "bring down" is an idiom that means to humble someone. Alternate translation: "I will humble you"

#### Obadiah 1:5

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues giving Obadiah his message to Edom.

##### If thieves came to you ... would they not steal only as much as they needed?

This question is used to imply that Yahweh's punishment of Edom would be worse than what thieves would do when they steal. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "If thieves came to you ... they would only steal as much as they needed, but I will take everything from you!"

##### If thieves came to you, if robbers came by night

These two phrases mean the same thing and are used to emphasize people who steal. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "When thieves break into someone's house during the night"

##### if robbers came by night

"or if robbers came during the night"

##### robbers

people who steal things from other people

##### how you will be ruined!

Yahweh adds this phrase in the middle of another sentence to express that the punishment of Edom is shocking. Alternate translation: "you are completely destroyed!"

##### If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave the gleanings?

This question is used to imply that Yahweh's punishment of Edom would be more thorough than what grape gatherers would do when they harvest grapes. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "If grape gatherers came to you, they would leave some grapes, but I will take everything from you!"

#### Obadiah 1:6

##### How Esau will be ransacked, his hidden treasures looted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Ah, enemies will ransack Esau; they will loot his hidden treasures"

##### Esau

The people of Edom were the descendants of Esau. Therefore, in this book "Edom" and "Esau" refer to the same group of people.

##### will be ransacked

This means the enemies will search through Esau's things, take everything valuable, and leave everything else in a mess or damaged.

#### Obadiah 1:7

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues giving Obadiah his message to Edom.

##### All the men of your alliance ... The men who were at peace with you ... They who eat your bread

All three of these phrases refer to Edom's allies.

##### your alliance

The word "your" refers to the nation of Edom.

##### will send you on your way to the border

"will send you out of their land." The people of Edom will try to take refuge in the land of their allies, but their allies will not let the people of Edom stay in their land.

##### There is no understanding in him.

Possible meanings are 1) the allies say this about Edom. Alternate translation: "They say, 'Edom does not understand anything.'" or 2) this is a statement about the betrayal of the allies. Alternate translation: "No one can understand why they did this."

#### Obadiah 1:8

##### Will I not on that day"—this is Yahweh's declaration—"destroy ... mountain of Esau?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize the certainty of the destruction of Edom. Alternate translation: "'On that day,'"—this is Yahweh's declaration—'I surely will destroy ... mountain of Esau."

##### the mountain of Esau

Most of the land of Esau was mountains, so this is one way of referring to the land of Edom.

#### Obadiah 1:9

##### Your mighty men will be dismayed

"Your strong warriors will be afraid"

##### Teman

This is the name of a region in the land of Edom.

##### so that every man may be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that there will be no more people in the mountains of Esau because enemies killed them" or "so that they will slaughter every person in the mountain of Esau"

##### be cut off

"be destroyed"

#### Obadiah 1:10

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues giving Obadiah his message to Edom.

##### your brother Jacob

Here "Jacob" represents his descendants. Because Jacob was the brother of Esau, the people of Edom are spoken of as if they were the brothers of the descendants of Jacob. Alternate translation: "your relatives who are the descendants of Jacob"

##### you will be covered with shame

To be covered with something is an idiom for fully experiencing it. Alternate translation: "you will be completely ashamed"

##### will be cut off forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will never exist again"

#### Obadiah 1:11

##### stood aloof

"watched and did nothing to help"

##### strangers

people from other nations

##### his wealth

The word "his" refers to "Jacob," which is another way of referring to the people of Israel.

##### cast lots for Jerusalem

This phrase means "they cast lots to decide who would get the valuable things that they took from Jerusalem."

##### you were like one of them

"it was as though you were one of these strangers and foreigners." This implies that they did not help the Israelites. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "you were like one of the enemies and did not help Israel"

#### Obadiah 1:12

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues giving Obadiah his message to Edom. Verses 12-14 consist of a series of negative commands that Yahweh gives to tell the people of Edom how not to treat the Israelites.

##### do not gloat over

"do not be happy because of" or "do not take pleasure in"

##### your brother's day

Here "your brother" refers to the people of Israel because Jacob and Esau were brothers.

##### the day of his misfortune

"the time at which bad things happen to him"

##### the day

Each of the several occurrences of "day" refer to the time when Babylon attacked and destroyed Jerusalem.

##### in the day of their destruction

"at the time when their enemies destroy them"

##### in the day of their distress

"at the time when they suffer"

#### Obadiah 1:13

##### calamity ... disaster ... ruin

These are all different translations of the same word. If your language has one word that can translate all three of these ideas, you could use it here.

##### over their affliction

"because of the bad things that happen to them"

##### do not loot their wealth

"do not take their wealth" "or "do not steal their wealth"

#### Obadiah 1:14

##### crossroads

a place where two roads come together

##### to cut down his fugitives

"to kill the people of Israel who are trying to escape" or "to catch those who were trying to escape"

##### do not deliver up his survivors

"do not capture those who are still alive and give them to their enemies"

#### Obadiah 1:15

##### General Information:

Yahweh concludes his message to Edom in verse 15. In verses 16-21, Yahweh speaks through Obadiah to tell the people of Judah that they will possess the land of Edom.

##### For the day of Yahweh is near ... will return on your own head

Bible experts are not certain whether verse 15 goes with verse 14 as the end of the previous section, or goes with verse 16 as the beginning of the new section.

##### For the day of Yahweh is near upon all the nations

"Soon the time will come when Yahweh will show all the nations that he is Lord"

##### As you have done, it will be done to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will do to you the same things that you did to others"

##### your deeds will return on your own head

Here "return on your own head" means they will be punished for those things. Alternate translation: "you will suffer the consequences for the things you have done"

#### Obadiah 1:16

##### For as you

The word "you" is plural and probably refers to the people of Judah.

##### as you have drunk

The punishment that Judah received from the enemy nations is spoken of as if a bitter liquid that they drank. Alternate translation: "as you have drunk suffering" or "as I have punished you"

##### my holy mountain

This was a way of referring to Jerusalem.

##### so will all the nations drink continually

Yahweh's punishment of the other nations is spoken of as if it was a bitter liquid that he will cause them to drink continually. Alternate translation: "so all the nations will drink in suffering continually" or "so I will punish all of the nations without stopping"

##### They will drink and swallow and it will be as though they had never existed

Yahweh continues the metaphor of drinking punishment. Here "swallow" expresses that they will fully experience the punishment, with the result that it will destroy them completely. Alternate translation: "They will drink in my punishment fully until they cease to exist" or "I will continue to punish them fully until I completely destroy them"

#### Obadiah 1:17

##### General Information:

In verses 16-21, Yahweh speaks through Obadiah to tell the people of Judah that they will possess the land of Edom.

##### those who escape

These are the people of Jerusalem that are still alive after Yahweh has finished punishing the city. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "some of the Israelites who escape the punishment of Yahweh"

##### it will be holy

The word "it" refers to "mount Zion."

##### the house of Jacob

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Jacob's descendants. Alternate translation: "descendants of Jacob"

#### Obadiah 1:18

##### The house of Jacob will be a fire ... Joseph a flame

Yahweh speaks of the descendantsof Jacob and Joseph as if they were fire because they will destroy the descendants of Esau like a fire that quickly and completely burns up straw.

##### The house of Jacob ... the house of Joseph

Often "the house of Jacob" represents Israel, but here it represents only the people in the southern part of Israel. Joseph was one of Jacob's sons. Here "the house of Joseph" represents the people in the northern part of Israel.

##### stubble

The dry pieces of plants that are left in the ground after the stalks have been cut.

##### and they

The word "they" refers to the house of Jacob and the house of Joseph.

##### will burn them

The word "them" refers to the descendants of Esau, who are the nation of Edom.

##### There will be no survivors to the house of Esau

"Not one person of the house of Esau will survive"

##### the house of Esau

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Esau's descendants. Alternate translation: "descendants of Esau"

##### for Yahweh has spoken it

This is an oath formula that means it will certainly happen because Yahweh said it.

#### Obadiah 1:19

##### General Information:

In verses 16-21, Yahweh speaks through Obadiah to tell the people of Judah that they will possess the land of Edom.

##### People from the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau

"The Israelites in the Negev will take the land of the Edomites"

##### the people of the lowlands

This refers to Israelites in the western foothills of Israel who will capture the land of the Philistines in battle.

##### They will possess

Here "They" appears to refer to the people of Israel in general.

##### Benjamin will possess

"the tribe of Benjamin will possess" or "the descendants of Benjamin will possess"

#### Obadiah 1:20

##### General Information:

In verses 16-21, Yahweh speaks through Obadiah to tell the people of Judah that they will possess the land of Edom.

##### The exiles of this army of the people of Israel

THe word "exiles" is a metonym for the descendants of those who had been taken into exile. These words could refer to 1) the descendants of the exiles who were taken to Assyria from the northern kingdom of Israel or 2) the descendants of the people of Judah who lived outside of Jerusalem and were taken into exile in Babylon.

##### The exiles of this army of the people of Israel

Possible meanings are 1) "this army" refers to a real army. Alternate translation: "The descendants of the exiles, who are the army of the people of Israel" or 2) "this army" is a metaphor for a multitude. Alternate translation: "The descendants of the multitude of the people of Israel who were taken into exile"

##### as far as Zarephath

Zarephath was a Phoenician city north of Israel on the coast of the Mediterranean between Tyre and Sidon. Alternate translation: "as far north as Zarephath"

##### The exiles of Jerusalem

This group is contrasted with either the descendants of the Israelites from the northern kingdom, or with the descendants of the people of Judah who lived outside of Jerusalem.

##### Sepharad

This is the name of a place whose location is unknown. Some experts suggest it refers to the city of Sardis in the region of Lydia.

#### Obadiah 1:21

##### Deliverers will go up to Mount Zion to rule over the hill country of Esau

"Deliverers will go up to Jerusalem and rule over Edom from there"

##### Deliverers

It is possible that 1) this refers to various Israelite military leaders whom God will use to defeat the nation of Edom or 2) the text should read "Those who will be delivered" and refers to the returning Jewish exiles.

##### the kingdom will belong to Yahweh

This phrase emphasizes that Yahweh will personally rule over the kingdom. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will be their king"

## Micah

### Chapter 1

**1** This is the word of Yahweh that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

**2** Listen, all you peoples.

Listen, earth, and all that is in you.

Let the Lord Yahweh be a witness against you,

the Lord from his holy temple.

**3** Look, Yahweh comes out of his place;

he will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.

**4** The mountains will melt under him;

the valleys will break apart,

like wax before fire,

like waters that are poured down a steep place.

**5** All this is because of Jacob's transgression,

and because of the sins of the house of Israel.

What is Jacob's transgression?

Is it not Samaria?

What is Judah's high place?

Is it not Jerusalem?

**6** "I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field,

a place for planting vineyards,

and I will pour her stones down into the valley

and I will uncover her foundations.

**7** All her carved figures will be broken to pieces,

and all her gifts that she received will be burned with fire,

and I will make all her idols desolate.

Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes,

they will become the wages of prostitutes again."

**8** For this reason I will lament and wail;

I will go barefoot and naked;

I will wail like the jackals

and mourn like owls.

**9** For her wound is incurable,

for it has come to Judah.

It has reached the gate of my people,

to Jerusalem.

**10** Do not tell about it in Gath;

do not weep at all.

At Beth Leaphrah

I roll myself in the dust.

**11** Pass by, inhabitants of Shaphir,

in nakedness and shame.

The inhabitants of Zaanan

do not come out.

Beth Ezel mourns,

for their protection is taken away.

**12** For the inhabitants of Maroth

wait anxiously for good news,

because disaster has come down from Yahweh

to the gates of Jerusalem.

**13** Harness the chariot to the team of horses,

inhabitants of Lachish.

You, Lachish, were the beginning of sin for the daughter of Zion,

for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.

**14** So you will give parting gifts

to Moresheth Gath;

the houses of Akzib will disappoint

the kings of Israel.

**15** I will again bring a conqueror to you,

inhabitants of Mareshah;

the splendor of Israel

will come to Adullam.

**16** Shave your head and cut off your hair

for the children in whom you delight.

Make yourself as bald as eagles,

for your children will go into exile from you.

### Micah 1 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Micah is written mainly in a poetic form. Most of the prophets wrote to either the Northern Kingdom or the Southern Kingdom. Micah wrote to both of them at times without clear distinction, as he did in this chapter.

#### Important figures of speech in this chapter

##### City Names

This passage sounds unusual in English because of its construction in Hebrew. It contains several "puns" or "plays on words." The names of the cities are used to describe their destruction. "Lachish will be lashed" is an example of this type of construction. This poetic element might metaphors describing the actual way they will be punished.

#### Micah 1:1

##### General Information:

God speaks through Micah to the people of Israel using poetry.

##### the word of Yahweh that came

This idiom is used to explain that a God gave a message to someone. Alternate translation: "the message that Yahweh spoke"

##### Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

##### Moresheth

This is a town in Judah.

##### in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah

"when Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah"

##### which he saw

"which he heard in a vision"

#### Micah 1:2

##### General Information:

Micah 1:2-7 is about God's judgment on Samaria.

##### Listen, all you peoples. Listen, earth, and all that is in you

This begins Micah's prophecy. Micah speaks to the people of Samaria as if all the people of the earth and even the earth itself were able to hear him.

#### Micah 1:3

##### he will come down and tread on the high places of the earth

Micah speaks as if Yahweh were a mighty soldier coming down from heaven and beginning to march on top of the mountains.

##### he will ... tread

"he will ... march"

##### the high places of the earth

"the high mountains"

#### Micah 1:4

##### The mountains will melt under him; the valleys will break apart, like wax before fire, like waters that are poured down a steep place

Micah speaks as if Yahweh were a hot, solid object that melted the earth as it moved. Alternate translation: "He will crush the mountains and the valleys as he marches over them; he will destroy them, and they will completely disappear"

#### Micah 1:5

##### because of the sins of the house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house, in this case the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "because the people of Israel have sinned against me"

##### All this is

"The Lord will come and judge"

##### What is Jacob's transgression?

The name "Jacob" is a metonym for those of his descendants who live in the northern kingdom of Israel.

##### Is it not Samaria?

Here "Samaria" is a metonym for the evil activities that take place there. Micah uses a question to emphasize that the people know what the truth is. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that it is Samaria."

##### What is Judah's high place?

Here "high place" is a synecdoche for the entire system of idol worship. "Judah" is a metonym for the people who live there. Alternate translation: "Where do the people of Judah go to worship idols?"

##### Is it not Jerusalem?

Here "Jerusalem" is a metonym for the evil activities that take place there. Micah uses a question to emphasize that the people know what the truth is. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that it is Jerusalem."

#### Micah 1:6

##### I will make

Here "I" refers to Yahweh.

##### Samaria ... her stones ... her foundations

Yahweh speaks of Samaria as if the city were a woman. Alternate translation: "Samaria ... its stones ... the foundations of the buildings in the city"

##### I will pour her stones

Here "her" refers to the city of Samaria.

#### Micah 1:7

##### her carved figures ... her gifts that she received ... her idols

Yahweh speaks of Samaria as if the city were a woman. Alternate translation: "the carved figures in the city ... the gifts that people gave to the temple in the city ... the idols in the city"

##### All her carved figures will be broken to pieces

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will break all her carved figures to pieces"

##### all her gifts ... will be burned with fire

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will burn with fire all the gifts that she received"

##### she received

"people gave her"

##### I will make all her idols desolate

Making desolate is a metaphor for destroying. Alternate translation: "I will destroy all her idols"

##### Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes, they will become the wages of prostitutes again

Yahweh speaks of the people giving gifts to idols as if the people were hiring prostitutes. When the Assyrians destroy Samaria, they will take to Assyria the gifts the people of Samaria gave to their idols and give them as gifts to their own idols.

#### Micah 1:8

##### General Information:

Micah 1:8-16 is about God's judgment on Judah.

##### I will lament

Here "I" refers to Micah.

##### I will lament and wail

"Lament" refers to the inner feeling of sadness, and "wail" refers to the activity of making a loud, sad sound.

##### I will go barefoot and naked

This is a sign of extreme mourning and distress. Another possible meaning is "I will look like someone has taken off my clothes; I will be naked"

##### naked

probably wearing only a loincloth

##### like the jackals ... like owls

Jackals and owls live in wastelands, and their loud cries sound like people wailing or weeping.

#### Micah 1:9

##### For her wound is incurable

Here "her" refers to the city of Samaria. This means nothing can stop the enemy army from destroying the people who live there.

##### for it has come to Judah

Micah uses contagious disease as a metaphor for the army that Yahweh has sent to judge Samaria. Here "it" refers to the "wound," that is, to the army that God will use to punish Samaria.

#### Micah 1:10

##### Beth Leaphrah

You may want to make a footnote saying, "The name of this city means 'house of dust.'"

##### I roll myself in the dust

People under God's judgment are expressing their grief in a strong way. Alternate translation: "I roll myself on the ground" or "I roll myself in the mud"

#### Micah 1:11

##### General Information:

The meanings of the names of the villages is important to Micah here. You may want to include the meanings of the names of the places in a footnote.

##### Shaphir

The name of this city sounds like one meaning "beautiful." It contrasts with "nakedness and shame."

##### in nakedness and shame

This idiom makes explicit that the people will be totally naked. Alternate translation: "totally naked and ashamed"

##### Zaanan

The name of this city means "go out." They are too afraid to go out and help.

##### Beth Ezel

The name of this city means "house of taking away."

##### for their protection is taken away

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "for I have taken away everything that might protect them"

#### Micah 1:12

##### Maroth

The name of this city means "bitterness."

##### disaster has come down from Yahweh

The abstract noun "disaster" is spoken of here as a solid object rolling down a hill. It can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has caused bad things to happen"

#### Micah 1:13

##### Lachish

The name "Lachish" sounds like "to the chariots" in Hebrew. The people are hitching their chariots to flee, not fight. Lachish was the most important city after Jerusalem in Judah.

##### the daughter of Zion

The word "daughter" is a metonym for the people of the city. Alternate translation: "the people of Zion" or "the people who live in Zion"

##### for the transgressions of Israel were found in you

This idiom can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "for you disobeyed like the people of Israel did"

#### Micah 1:14

##### Moresheth Gath

You may want to add a footnote saying "The name 'Moresheth' means 'to depart.' It is also similar in sound to the word for 'fiancée.'" In this metaphor, Moresheth is the bride that Assyria takes, and the "parting gift" is the dowry, the gift her family gives for her to take into the marriage.

##### houses of Akzib

The word "houses" here is a metonym for the people who live in the houses. Alternate translation: "people of Akzib" or "town of Akzib"

##### Akzib

You may want to add a footnote saying "This name sounds almost the same as the Hebrew expression for 'deceitful thing.'"

#### Micah 1:15

##### I will again bring

Here "I" refers to Yahweh.

##### Mareshah

You may want to make a footnote saying, "The name of this village sounds like the Hebrew word for 'conqueror.'"

##### Adullam

This is the name of a royal city in Philistia.

#### Micah 1:16

##### Shave your head and cut off your hair

Israelites who were mourning would shave bald spots on their heads. Possible meanings are 1) "Shave larger spots than usual on your heads" or 2) "Cut off all your hair and shave your heads," stating the events in the order in which they were to occur.

##### eagles

This word can also be translated "vultures."

### Chapter 2

**1** Woe to those who plan iniquity,

to those who plan on their beds to do evil.

In the morning light they do it

because they have power.

**2** They desire fields and seize them;

they desire houses and take them.

They oppress a man and his house,

a man and his inheritance.

**3** Therefore Yahweh says this,

"Look, I am planning to bring disaster against this clan,

from which you will not remove your necks.

You will not walk arrogantly,

for it will be an evil time.

**4** In that day men will sing a taunting song about you,

and lament with a wailing lamentation.

They will sing, 'We Israelites are completely ruined;

Yahweh changes the portion of my people.

How can he remove it from me?

He portions out our fields to traitors!'"

**5** Therefore, you rich people will have no descendants

to divide up the territory by lot in the assembly of Yahweh.

**6** "Do not prophesy," their prophets say.

"They must not prophesy these things;

disgrace will not overtake us."

**7** Should it really be said, house of Jacob,

"Is the Spirit of Yahweh impatient?

Are these really his deeds?"

Do not my words do good

to anyone who walks uprightly?

**8** Lately my people have risen up

like an enemy.

You strip the robe, the garment,

from those who pass by unsuspectingly,

as soldiers return from war to what they think is safety.

**9** You drive the women belonging to my people

from their pleasant houses;

you take my splendor

from their young children forever.

**10** Get up and leave,

for this is not a place where you can rest,

because of its uncleanness;

it is destroyed with complete destruction.

**11** If someone comes to you in a spirit of falsehood and lies and says,

"I will prophesy to you about wine and strong drink,"

he would be considered to be a prophet for this people.

**12** I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob.

I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.

I will bring them together like sheep in a fold,

like a flock in the midst of their pasture.

There will be a loud noise

because of the multitude of people.

**13** Someone who breaks open their way for them

will go ahead of them.

They break through the gate and go out;

their king will pass on before them.

Yahweh will be at their head.

### Micah 2 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

This chapter continues using poetic forms in communicating that people who take advantage of others are guilty of sin and injustice. (See: guilt and sin and justice)

#### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### Context

Micah does not frequently explain the historical context of his prophecies. This may result in the translator failing to understand implicit information. Additional research may be needed regarding the time period of Micah's ministry. Therefore, translators have a good understanding of the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

#### Micah 2:1

##### General Information:

Micah speaks against the leaders in Israel who are taking advantage of the poor and not following God's commands.

#### Micah 2:2

##### They oppress a man

"They oppress any man they choose to oppress." This is a generalization. Micah is not speaking of one individual man here.

#### Micah 2:3

##### General Information:

Micah begins to quote a long speech by Yahweh.

##### Look

"Listen carefully" or "Pay attention"

##### disaster

See how you translated this in Micah 1:12.

##### this clan

This "clan" refers to the entire community of Israel, whose rich people are oppressing the poor. The sins of the leaders are coming back on the whole nation.

##### from which you will not remove your necks

Yahweh speaks of punishing the people as if he were putting a yoke around their necks. Alternate translation: "from which you will not be able to escape"

#### Micah 2:4

##### General Information:

Micah continues quoting Yahweh's speech to the people.

##### sing a taunting song about you

"sing a song to make fun of you"

##### lament with a wailing lamentation

"they will cry loudly." They are pretending to mourn, as if those they love have died.

##### We Israelites ... to traitors

This is the song that the enemies will sing to make fun of the Israelites and laugh as the Israelites suffer.

##### Yahweh changes the portion of my people

This is probably a euphemism that means that Yahweh has given the land to other people. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gives away the land that belongs to my people"

##### How can he remove it from me?

The enemy mocks the surprise the rich leaders of Israel feel because God has taken their land and given it to someone else just as they had taken the land from the poor. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "How wrong he is to take it from me!"

#### Micah 2:5

##### General Information:

Micah continues quoting Yahweh's speech to the people.

##### Therefore, you rich people will have no descendants to divide up the territory by lot in the assembly of Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) Micah looks forward to a time after the exile when those who return will divide up the land or 2) he is speaking of a custom of his time when the tribe or clan would divide up their land and give it to individuals.

#### Micah 2:6

##### General Information:

Micah continues quoting Yahweh's speech to the people. Here Yahweh speaks to false prophets, as well as to the rich who have abused their power.

##### Do not prophesy

The speakers are speaking to Micah and others, so this is plural.

##### They must not prophesy

"The prophets must not prophesy"

##### disgrace will not overtake us

Disgrace is spoken of as if it were a robber chasing a person. It can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "we will not be disgraced"

#### Micah 2:7

##### General Information:

Micah continues quoting Yahweh's speech to the people, specifically to false prophets, as well as to the rich who have abused their power.

##### Should it really be said, ... "Is the Spirit of Yahweh impatient? Are these really his deeds?"

Micah is using a rhetorical question to scold the Israelites, who themselves are asking rhetorical questions to deny that Yahweh is angry with them. This can be translated as a series of statements, and Micah's question can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Should you really ask, ... 'Is the Spirit of Yahweh impatient? Are these really his deeds?'" or "You should not say, ... 'The Spirit of Yahweh is not impatient. These are not really his deeds'"

##### house of Jacob

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Jacob's descendants. Alternate translation: "descendants of Jacob"

##### "Is the Spirit of Yahweh impatient? Are these really his deeds?"

Possible meanings are 1) these are real questions and the people really do not know if they are seeing Yahweh act, or 2) these are rhetorical questions and the people do not believe that Yahweh is really punishing them.

##### Do not my words do good to anyone who walks uprightly?

Micah uses a question to teach the people. It can bee translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "My message does good to those who walk uprightly."

#### Micah 2:8

##### General Information:

Micah continues quoting Yahweh's speech to the people, specifically to false prophets, as well as to the rich who have abused their power.

##### my people

This refers to either 1) Micah's people or 2) Yahweh's people.

##### You strip the robe, the garment, from those who pass by unsuspectingly

Possible meanings are 1) the wicked rich people are literally stealing robes from the poor or 2) creditors are keeping the outer garments of the poor who come to borrow money and give the garment as assurance they will repay.

#### Micah 2:9

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the wicked rich people in Israel.

##### you take my splendor from their young children forever

The word "splendor" refers, in general, to blessings God has given to his people. It might refer to 1) being landowners in Israel, 2) a promising future or 3) to the children's fathers, farmers who worked hard to establish the nation.

#### Micah 2:10

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the wicked rich people in Israel.

##### it is destroyed with complete destruction

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will completely destroy it"

#### Micah 2:11

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the wicked rich people in Israel.

##### comes to you ... will prophesy to you

Micah is speaking to the people of Judah, so both instances of "you" are plural.

##### he would be considered

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people would consider him" or "you would consider him"

#### Micah 2:12

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking. At the end of this chapter, Yahweh shows himself to be a shepherd who protects his people. He may especially be addressing those in Jerusalem who have returned from Assyria.

##### all of you, Jacob

Micah is speaking to some of the descendants of Jacob, so the word "you" is plural.

#### Micah 2:13

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking. At the end of this chapter, Yahweh shows himself to be a shepherd who protects his people. He may especially be addressing those in Jerusalem who have returned from Assyria.

##### Someone who breaks open their way ... Yahweh will be at their head.

This is a picture of a king leading his people out of an enclosed city.

### Chapter 3

**1** I said,

"Now listen, you leaders of Jacob

and rulers of the house of Israel:

Is it not right for you to understand justice?

**2** You who hate good and love evil,

you who tear off their skin,

their flesh from their bones—

**3** you who also eat the flesh of my people,

and tear off their skin,

break their bones,

and chop them in pieces,

just like meat for a pot,

just like meat in a cauldron.

**4** Then you rulers will cry out to Yahweh,

but he will not answer you.

He will hide his face from you at that time,

because you have done evil deeds."

**5** Yahweh says this,

"As for the prophets

who lead my people astray,

if one gives them something to eat,

they proclaim, 'Peace.'

But if he puts nothing in their mouths,

they dedicate themselves to wage war on him.

**6** Therefore, it will be night for you with no vision for you;

it will be dark so that you will do no divination.

The sun will go down on the prophets,

and the day will be dark on them.

**7** The seers will be put to shame,

and the diviners will be embarrassed.

All of them will cover their lips,

for there is no answer from God."

**8** But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Yahweh,

and am full of justice and might,

to declare to Jacob his transgression,

and to Israel his sin.

**9** Now listen to this,

you leaders of the house of Jacob,

and rulers of the house of Israel,

you who detest justice,

and pervert everything that is right.

**10** You build Zion with blood

and Jerusalem with iniquity.

**11** Your leaders judge for a bribe,

your priests teach for a price,

and your prophets do divination for money.

Yet you rely on Yahweh and say,

"Is not Yahweh with us?

No evil will come on us."

**12** Therefore, because of you,

Zion will become a plowed field,

Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,

and the hill of the temple

will become high places of a thicket.

### Micah 3 General Notes

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Justice

An unjust society was considered sinful. It was considered to be against the law of Moses. If these kingdoms did not have justice, they were not obedient to Yahweh. (See: justice and sin and lawofmoses)

#### Important figures of speech in this chapter

##### Metaphors

There are vivid pictures used in this chapter which show how the leaders of the people were treating the Israelites. These situations are absurd unless taken as a metaphor.

#### Micah 3:1

##### General Information:

Chapter 3 focuses on the corrupt leaders in Israel.

##### I said

Here "I" refers to Micah.

##### Is it not right for you to understand justice?

Micah is scolding the leaders. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You act as though you think it is wrong for you to understand justice."

#### Micah 3:2

##### Connecting Statement:

Micah begins to compare the leaders of Israel to butchers.

##### hate good and love evil

These nominal adjectives can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "hate everything that is good and love everything that is evil"

##### you who tear off their skin, their flesh from their bones

A butcher cutting up animals into meat is a metaphor for the leaders being cruel to the poor.

#### Micah 3:3

##### Connecting Statement:

Micah finishes comparing the leaders of Israel to butchers.

##### just like meat in a cauldron

A butcher cutting up animals into meat is a metaphor for the leaders being cruel to the poor.

#### Micah 3:4

##### General Information:

Micah continues speaking.

##### cry out to Yahweh

"shout to Yahweh for help"

##### he will not answer you

"he will not do what you ask him to do"

##### He will hide his face from you

Hiding the face is a metaphor for refusing to listen. Alternate translation: "He will turn his face away from you and cover it" or "You will see that he has no desire to help you"

#### Micah 3:5

##### General Information:

Micah continues to speak judgment against false prophets.

##### who lead my people astray

Walking on a good path is a metaphor for obeying God. Going astray from the path is a metaphor for disobeying God, in this case perhaps without knowing it. Alternate translation: "who lead my people to disobey me"

##### if one gives them something to eat, they proclaim, 'Peace.'

Micah is using a metaphor to describe a situation that actually happens. The phrase "something to eat" is an ironic way of speaking of a small payment. Alternate translation: "they tell people who pay them even a small amount that things will go well for those people."

##### if he puts nothing in their mouths, they dedicate themselves to wage war on him

Micah is using a metaphor to describe a situation that actually happens. The phrase "puts nothing in their mouths" is an ironic exaggeration for not giving what they want. Alternate translation: "they do all they can to destroy people who pay them too little"

#### Micah 3:6

##### it will be night for you ... the day will be dark on them

Darkness is a metaphor for Yahweh not speaking to the prophets.

##### no vision for you

"you will no longer see visions"

#### Micah 3:7

##### The seers will be put to shame, and the diviners will be embarrassed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will cause the seers to be ashamed, and I will embarrass the diviners"

##### All of them will cover their lips

Here "lips" represents speaking. Alternate translation: "They shall no longer speak"

##### there is no answer from God

"God will be silent"

#### Micah 3:8

##### But as for me

Here "me" refers to Micah, a true prophet, setting himself apart from the false prophets.

##### I am full of power by the Spirit of Yahweh, and am full of justice and might

Micah speaks of himself as if he were a container into which Yahweh were pouring a liquid. Alternate translation: "the Spirit of Yahweh has given me power, justice, and might" or "the Spirit of Yahweh has enabled me to be strong, to declare what justice is, and to be mighty"

##### to declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin

Here "Jacob" and "Israel" are metonyms for Jacob's descendants. Micah uses both names to emphasize that all of his descendants are guilty of sin. The abstract nouns "transgression" and "sin" can be translated using verbs. Alternate translation: "to declare to Jacob's descendants that they have broken Yahweh's law; I am telling the people of Israel that they have all sinned"

#### Micah 3:9

##### house of Jacob

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Jacob's descendants. Alternate translation: "descendants of Jacob"

##### the house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Israel's descendants, who had become the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "descendants of Israel" or "you Israelites"

##### detest

strongly dislike

#### Micah 3:10

##### You build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity

"Blood" here is a metonym for murder, and "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are spoken of as if they were buildings. Micah speaks of the rich murdering people and sinning in other ways as if those activities were the bricks and wood with which people use to build houses. Alternate translation: "You commit murder and other horrible sins as you work to make Zion and Jerusalem great" or "You commit murder as you worship in Zion, and you commit other sins as you get rich in Jerusalem"

#### Micah 3:11

##### Is not Yahweh with us?

The leaders strongly believe that Yahweh is with them. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We know that Yahweh is with us!" or "We know that Yahweh will help us do what we want to do!"

##### evil

See how you translated "disaster" in Micah 1:12.

#### Micah 3:12

##### because of you

Here "you" refers to the priests, prophets, and leaders (Micah 3:11).

##### Zion ... Jerusalem ... hill of the temple

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh is speaking, respectively, of the royal palace, the places where the people of Jerusalem lived and did business, and the area where the temple was located or 2) he is referring to Jerusalem as a whole three times by synecdoche.

##### Zion will become a plowed field

When a farmer plows a field, he turns over all the dirt, uproots and removes all the plants growing there, and leaves it clear so he can plant it. Yahweh will allow the invaders to completely destroy Zion. Alternate translation: "Zion will become like a field that a farmer has cleared so he can plant it" or "Zion will no longer have buildings on it"

##### Zion

the royal palace in Jerusalem

##### high places of a thicket

Here the word "thicket" describes the phrase "high place." A thicket is a place with so many bushes that no one can use it for anything. The phrase "high place" is often used for a place for false worship. The hill of the temple had been the most important land in Jerusalem, but now it would become useless even for false worship.

### Chapter 4

**1** But in the last days it will come about

that the mountain of the house of Yahweh

will be established as the chief over the other mountains.

It will be exalted above the hills,

and peoples will stream to it.

**2** Many nations will go and say,

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh,

to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us his ways,

and we will walk in his paths."

For from Zion the law will go out,

and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.

**3** He will judge among many peoples

and will decide concerning numerous nations far away.

They will beat their swords into plowshares

and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not lift up sword against nation,

nor will they train for war any longer.

**4** Instead, they will sit every person under his vine

and under his fig tree.

No one will make them afraid,

for the mouth of Yahweh of hosts has spoken.

**5** For all the peoples walk,

each one, in the name of their god.

But we will walk in the name of Yahweh our God

forever and ever.

**6** "On that day"—this is Yahweh's declaration—

"I will assemble the lame

and gather the outcast,

those whom I have afflicted.

**7** I will turn the lame into a remnant,

and the ones driven away into a strong nation,

and I, Yahweh, will reign over them on Mount Zion,

now and forever.

**8** As for you, watchtower for the flock,

hill of the daughter of Zion—

to you it will come, your former dominion will be restored,

the kingdom that belongs to the daughter of Jerusalem.

**9** Now, why do you shout so loudly?

Is there no king among you?

Has your counselor died?

Is this why pain like a woman in labor seizes you?

**10** Be in pain

and labor to give birth, daughter of Zion,

like a woman in labor.

For now you will go out of the city,

live in the field,

and go to Babylon.

There you will be rescued.

There Yahweh will redeem you

from the hand of your enemies.

**11** Now many nations

are assembled against you;

they say, 'Let her be defiled;

let our eyes gloat over Zion.'

**12** They do not know Yahweh's thoughts,

neither do they understand his plans,

for he has gathered them like bundles of grain

prepared for the threshing floor.

**13** Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion,

for I will make your horn to be iron,

and I will make your hooves to be bronze.

You will crush many peoples

and you will devote their unjust gain to Yahweh,

their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth."

### Micah 4 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the poetic form to communicate that God will one day restore Israel. (See: restore)

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Remanant

Micah speaks about a future hope and a remnant who will return to their homeland. Verses 1-8 are a vision of the future when God will restore Israel to its former glory. These verses will give hope to those about to be removed from their homeland. (See: remnant)

#### Micah 4:1

##### the mountain ... other mountains

Yahweh making the temple mount higher than all other mountains and hills is a metaphor for making his temple the most important place on earth.

##### the mountain of the house of Yahweh will be established

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will establish the mountain on which his temple is built" or "Yahweh will make the mountain on which his temple is built great"

##### over the other mountains

Mount Zion will be the most important of all the mountains. It might also mean that this mountain will become the highest in the world, and not only in the region where it is located.

##### It will be exalted above the hills

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will exalt it above the hills" or "Yahweh will make it higher than the hills"

##### peoples will stream to it

A stream flows continually to one place from many directions. Many people come to the temple mount from different directions. Alternate translation: "the people of the nations will flow like a stream to it" or "the people of the nations will go to it"

#### Micah 4:2

##### Many nations

The word "nations" is a metonym for the people of the nations. Alternate translation: "The people from many nations"

##### Come

This is plural.

##### He will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths

Here "his ways" and "his paths" refer to what God wants the people to do. "Walk" means they will obey what he says.

##### from Zion the law will go out, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem

The law and the word going out is a metaphor for people hearing it and then being messengers to tell other people about it in other places. Alternate translation: "people will listen to the law in Zion and go out and tell others; they will listen to the word of Yahweh in Jerusalem and go out and tell others"

##### and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem

The words "will go out" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "and the word of Yahweh will go out from Jerusalem"

#### Micah 4:3

##### plowshares

a blade that people use to dig into soil so they can plant seeds

##### pruning hooks

a metal tool that people use to cut off branches or stems from plants

##### will not lift up sword

will not threaten to start a war

#### Micah 4:4

##### General Information:

Micah continues describing the "last days" when people learn and obey Yahweh's law.

##### they will sit every person under his vine and under his fig tree

Both the "vine" and the "fig tree" are symbols of prosperity. This phrase describes actions in which people live prosperously and in peace. If grapevines or fig trees are unknown you can translate this more generally. Alternate translation: "they will sit peacefully in their own gardens and fields"

##### for the mouth of Yahweh of hosts has spoken

The mouth is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "for Yahweh of hosts has spoken"

#### Micah 4:5

##### the peoples walk ... in the name of their god ... we will walk in the name of Yahweh

Walking on a path is a metaphor for living one's life. Walking in the name of someone is a metaphor for worshiping and obeying. Alternate translation: "the peoples ... worship and obey their god ... we will worship and obey Yahweh"

#### Micah 4:6

##### the lame

This refers to those who cannot walk well. Being lame is a synecdoche for having any form of disability.

##### gather the outcast

"gather those whom I drove out of Jerusalem"

#### Micah 4:7

##### the ones driven away into a strong nation

The words "I will turn" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated. The phrase "the ones driven away" can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "I will turn the ones I drove away into a strong nation" or "I will make the ones I forcefully sent away into a strong nation"

#### Micah 4:8

##### As for you, watchtower for the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion—to you it will come, your former dominion

Micah speaks to the people of Jerusalem by speaking to the temple mount as if it could hear him. You may need to make explicit that Micah is giving his message to the people. Alternate translation: "As for the temple mount, the place from which Yahweh watches over you, his sheep, the place that Jerusalem's people are most proud of—its former dominion will return"

##### watchtower for the flock

The people of Jerusalem protecting the other people in surrounding areas is spoken of as if they were a shepherd in a watchtower watching over his flock.

##### daughter of Zion ... daughter of Jerusalem

The people who live in a place are spoken of as if the place is a mother and they are the daughter. Alternate translation: "people who live in Zion ... people who live in Jerusalem"

##### hill

Some modern versions understand this Hebrew word to mean "fortress" or "stronghold" here.

##### to you it will come, your former dominion

The abstract noun "dominion" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "you will rule over the nations as you did before" or "I will make you rule over the nations as you did before"

#### Micah 4:9

##### Now, why do you shout so loudly?

Micah is mocking the people, trying to make them think about why God is dealing with them in this way. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Look at how you are shouting loudly." or "Think carefully about why you are shouting loudly."

##### Is there no king among you? Has your counselor died? Is this why pain like a woman in labor seizes you?

Micah continues to mock the people. These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You have a king, but he is useless to you. All your wise people are still alive, but they have nothing wise to say to you. This is why you are weeping loudly like a woman who is giving birth to a baby."

##### pain like a woman in labor seizes you

Possible meanings of this simile are 1) Micah is describing the pain itself, that it is as strong as the pain a woman in labor feels or 2) he is describing the manner in which the pain seizes the people, that it seizes them totally and uncontrollably, the way a woman in labor can think only about her pain and delivering her baby.

#### Micah 4:10

##### Be in pain ... like a woman in labor

Micah compares the suffering the people will experience when enemies force them away from their cities to the pain a woman experiences when giving birth to a baby.

##### There you will be rescued

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "There Yahweh will rescue you"

##### the hand of your enemies

Possible meanings for the word "hand" are 1) it could be a metonym for the power that the hand exercises, Alternate translation: "the power of your enemies" or 2) it could be a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "your enemies"

#### Micah 4:11

##### General Information:

Jerusalem will defeat her enemies.

##### Let her be defiled

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let us defile her"

##### let our eyes gloat over Zion

The eye is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "let us gloat over Zion" or "let us enjoy watching the invaders destroy Zion"

#### Micah 4:12

##### for he has gathered them like bundles of grain prepared for the threshing floor

The writer speaks of Yahweh being ready to destroy the nations as if Yahweh were a farmer who has put his bundles of grain on his threshing floor and is now ready to thresh them.

#### Micah 4:13

##### General Information:

Yahweh presents the imagery of the threshing floor (Micah 4:12).

##### Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion ... your horn ... your hooves ... You will crush

All instances of "your" and "you," as well as the commands, refer to the "daughter of Zion" and so are singular and feminine.

##### Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn to be iron, and I will make your hooves to be bronze

Yahweh speaks of the people of Zion as if they were strong oxen about to thresh wheat and their enemies were the wheat.

##### I will make your horn to be iron, and I will make your hooves to be bronze

If your reader is not familiar with oxen or iron or bronze, you can remove the metaphor. Alternate translation: "for I will make you able to defeat and destroy every enemy"

##### their unjust gain

"the wealth they got by acting unjustly" or "the things they stole from other people"

##### their wealth

The abstract noun "wealth" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "the things that they own"

### Chapter 5

**1** Now come together in battle ranks, daughter of soldiers!

A siege has been set up against us!

With a rod they strike the judge of Israel

on the cheek. *[*[1](#fn-033-005-001-1)*]*

**2** But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,

even though you are small among the clans of Judah,

out of you one will come to me

to rule in Israel,

whose beginning is from ancient times,

from everlasting.

**3** Therefore God will give them up,

until the time when she who is in labor bears a child,

and the rest of his brothers return

to the people of Israel.

**4** He will stand and shepherd his flock

in the strength of Yahweh,

in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God.

They will remain,

for then he will be great to the ends of the earth.

**5** He will give us peace.

When the Assyrians come into our land,

and when they march against our fortresses,

then we will raise against them seven shepherds

and eight leaders over men.

**6** They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,

and the land of Nimrod in its entrances. *[*[2](#fn-033-005-006-2)*]*

He will rescue us from the Assyrians,

when they come into our land,

when they march inside our borders.

**7** The remnant of Jacob will be

in the midst of many peoples,

like dew from Yahweh,

like showers on the grass,

that do not wait for a man,

and they do not wait for the children of mankind.

**8** The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations,

among many peoples,

like a lion among the animals of the forest,

like a young lion among the flocks of sheep.

When he goes through them,

he will trample over them and tear them to pieces,

and there will be no one to save them.

**9** Your hand will be lifted against your enemies,

and it will destroy them.

**10** "It will happen in that day"—this is Yahweh's declaration—

"that I will destroy your horses from among you

and will demolish your chariots.

**11** I will destroy the cities in your land

and throw down all your strongholds.

**12** I will destroy the witchcraft in your hand,

and you will no longer have any diviners.

**13** I will destroy your carved figures

and your stone pillars from among you.

You will no longer worship

the workmanship of your hands.

**14** I will uproot your Asherah poles from among you,

and I will destroy your cities.

**15** I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath

on the nations that have not listened."

#### Footnotes

5:1 *[*[1](#ref-fn-033-005-001-1)*]*Instead of 5:6 *[*[2](#ref-fn-033-005-006-2)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text have the phrase:

### Micah 5 General Notes

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Messiah

This chapter contains a prophecy explaining that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. This meaning is made clear in the New Testament. (See: [Micah 5:2](../../mic/05/02.md), prophet and christ)

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### Change in Personal Pronouns

Extra care must be taken in translating pronouns in this chapter. Sometimes "I" is a reference to the author and other times it is a reference to Yahweh. There is also a noticable shift where the author stops speaking about the people as "you" and begins speaking about them as "we" or "us."

#### Micah 5:1

##### daughter of soldiers

The people of a city are spoken of as if they were a woman. The soldiers are attacking the city. Alternate translation: "people of the city, whom soldiers are attacking"

##### With a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek

The rod is a metonym for a greater man punishing a lesser man with a rod. To strike a man on the cheek was to insult him more than to harm him. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will punish the judge of Israel by having the invaders insult the judge of Israel"

##### the judge of Israel

This irony describes the king as having lost so much of his power and authority that he is really only a judge.

#### Micah 5:2

##### But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah

Yahweh speaks to the people of Judah, and especially to the people of Bethlehem, as if he were speaking to the town of Bethlehem itself.

##### Ephrathah

This is either the name of the area in which Bethlehem was situated or it is just another name for Bethlehem or it distinguishes this Bethlehem from another. Bethlehem is about six miles south of Jerusalem. It was the hometown of King David. Translators may add this footnote: "The name 'Ephrathah' means 'to be fruitful.'"

##### even though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you one will come

"even though other clans in Judah have more people in them, it is one of your people who will come"

##### will come to me

Here "me" refers to Yahweh.

##### whose beginning is from ancient times, from everlasting

This refers to the ruler descending from the ancient family of King David. The phrases "from ancient times" and "from everlasting" mean basically the same thing and emphasize how old this family line is.

#### Micah 5:3

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true" or "Because this ruler will come later"

##### will give them up

will abandon the people of Israel

##### until the time when she who is in labor bears a child

This refers to the time when the ruler is born, a limited time.

##### the rest of his brothers

"the rest of the ruler's fellow Israelites," who are in exile

#### Micah 5:4

##### General Information:

These verses continue describing the ruler from Bethlehem.

##### He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of Yahweh

A shepherd, who feeds and protects his sheep, is a metaphor for the ruler, who will provide for and protect the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will give him the strength to lead his people"

##### in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God

The person's name is a metonym for person's authority. Alternate translation: "and people will honor him because Yahweh his God has given him the authority to rule"

##### They will remain

the people of Israel will remain

##### remain

"live in safety"

##### he will be great to the ends of the earth

All people from every nation will give honor to Israel's ruler.

#### Micah 5:5

##### seven shepherds and eight leaders over men

Here "shepherds" is a metonym for "rulers," another way of saying "leaders over men." The phrase "seven ... and eight" is an idiom for "more than enough." Alternate translation: "enough, even more than enough, rulers" or "more than enough shepherds and leaders over men"

#### Micah 5:6

##### They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in its entrances

The sword is a metonym for killing in war. Here the Israelites ruling over the Assyrians is spoken of ironically as if they were killing sheep instead of herding them. The land of Assyria is a metonym for the people who live there. The entrances to cities were where official business took place. Alternate translation: "They will make war against the people of Assyria, and they will rule the cities of the land of Nimrod"

##### and the land of Nimrod

The words "they will shepherd" are understood from the beginning of the sentence. They can be repeated. Alternate translation: "and they will shepherd the land of Nimrod"

##### land of Nimrod

This is another name for the land of Assyria. Nimrod was a hunter and early ruler. Translators may add this footnote: "The name 'Nimrod' means 'rebellion.'"

##### He will rescue

The ruler will rescue

#### Micah 5:7

##### like dew from Yahweh, like showers on the grass

Dew and rain showers refresh the land and cause things to grow. The Israelites will cause the people among whom they live to live will.

##### grass, that do not wait for a man, and they do not wait for the children

"grass. It is not for a man that they wait, nor is it for the children." It is Yahweh alone who causes dew and rain showers.

#### Micah 5:8

##### General Information:

Yahweh promises that the Israelites who are alive after Yahweh has punished his people with war will completely defeat and rule over their enemies.

##### remnant of Jacob

descendants of Jacob who survive the war

##### among the nations, among many peoples

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the "remnant of Jacob" will live in many different nations.

##### like a lion among the animals of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep

Lions are able to kill and eat any wild animal of the forest, and they easily kill sheep. Alternate translation: "like the fiercest of wild animals, like a wild animal that kills helpless livestock"

##### When he goes through them

when the young lion goes through the flocks of sheep

##### will trample over them and tear

"will jump on them so they fall down, and then he will tear"

#### Micah 5:9

##### Your hand ... your enemies

The writer is speaking to Yahweh, so both instances of "your" are masculine singular.

##### Your hand will be lifted against your enemies

The hand is a metonym for the power that the hand exercises or a synecdoche for the whole person. To lift the hand is to exercise power. Alternate translation: "You will completely defeat your enemies"

##### it will destroy them

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "you will destroy them"

#### Micah 5:10

##### I will destroy your horses from among you and will demolish your chariots

The people of Israel used horses and chariots only in battle, and they may have traded for them with the godless nations around them. God did not want the people to trust in their weapons of war to protect them more than they trusted in him.

##### your horses ... among you ... your chariots

Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel as if they were one man.

#### Micah 5:11

##### your land ... your strongholds

Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel as if they were one man.

#### Micah 5:12

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

##### the witchcraft in your hand

Being in the "hand" represents the actions that the person does. Alternate translation: "the witchcraft that you do"

##### your hand ... you will

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man.

#### Micah 5:13

##### your carved ... your stone ... among you. You will ... your hands

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man.

##### the workmanship of your hands

The abstract noun "workmanship" can be translated using the verb "make." Alternate translation: "what your hands have made"

#### Micah 5:14

##### your Asherah ... among you ... your cities

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man.

##### will uproot your Asherah poles

Yahweh speaks of Asherah poles as if they were trees that he would pull out of the ground. Alternate translation: "will pull your Asherah poles out of the ground"

#### Micah 5:15

##### General Information:

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### Chapter 6

**1** Now listen to what Yahweh says,

"Arise and state your case before the mountains;

let the hills hear your voice.

**2** Hear, you mountains, Yahweh's accusation,

you enduring foundations of the earth.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,

and he will fight in court against Israel.

**3** My people, what have I done to you?

How have I wearied you? Answer me!

**4** For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt

and rescued you out of the house of bondage.

I sent Moses, Aaron,

and Miriam to you.

**5** My people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised,

and how Balaam son of Beor answered him

as you went from Shittim to Gilgal,

so you may know the righteous acts of Yahweh."

**6** What should I bring to Yahweh,

as I bow down to God on high?

Should I come to him with burnt offerings,

with calves a year old?

**7** Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams,

or with ten thousand rivers of oil?

Should I give my firstborn for my transgression,

the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

**8** He has told you, man, what is good,

and what Yahweh requires from you:

Act justly, love kindness,

and walk humbly with your God.

**9** The voice of Yahweh is making a proclamation to the city—

even now wisdom fears your name:

"Listen to the rod, and to the one who has put it in place. *[*[1](#fn-033-006-009-1)*]*

**10** There is wealth in the houses of the wicked that is dishonest,

and false measures that are abominable.

**11** Should I consider a person to be innocent

if he uses fraudulent scales,

with a bag of deceptive weights?

**12** The rich men are full of violence,

the inhabitants have spoken lies,

and their tongue in their mouth is deceitful.

**13** Therefore I will make you sick, striking you down,

making you desolate because of your sins.

**14** You will eat but not be satisfied;

your emptiness will remain inside you.

You will store goods away but not save,

and what you do save I will give to the sword. *[*[2](#fn-033-006-014-2)*]*

**15** You will sow but not reap;

you will tread the olives but not anoint yourselves with oil;

you will press grapes but drink no wine.

**16** You have observed the statutes of Omri,

and all the works of the house of Ahab.

You have walked in their counsels,

Therefore I will give you over to ruin

and your inhabitants to derision,

and you will bear the scorn of my people." *[*[3](#fn-033-006-016-3)*]*

#### Footnotes

6:9 *[*[1](#ref-fn-033-006-009-1)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text which were translated here read, 6:14 *[*[2](#ref-fn-033-006-014-2)*]*Parts of this verse are difficult to understand, because in the copies of the ancient Hebrew text there are two Hebrew words in it whose meanings are not known. As a result, various other readings have been proposed by scholars and some modern translations follow those suggestions. 6:16 *[*[3](#ref-fn-033-006-016-3)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text have

### Micah 6 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

This chapter is written as a court case or lawsuit by Yahweh against his people. (See: peopleofgod)

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### Names in Lawsuit

Moses, Aaron and Miriam are mentioned as witnesses for Yahweh and against Israel. Ahab and Omri are mentioned as kings who were evil and did not follow Yahweh. Obedience to the law of Moses is contrasted with disobedience to the law. (See: testimony and evil and lawofmoses)

#### Micah 6:1

##### General Information

It is not clear who is speaking in verses 1 and 2. In verse 1, two possibilities are that Yahweh tells the people of Israel to arise and state their case, or that Micah tells Yahweh to arise and state his case. In verse 2, two possibilities are that Yahweh is speaking to the mountains or that Micah is speaking to the mountains. The ULB has arranged the quote marks in a way that indicates that in verse 1, Yahweh tells his people to state their case, and in verse 2 Yahweh speaks to the mountains.

##### Now listen

God is speaking to his people.

##### Arise and state your case before the mountains; let the hills hear your voice

Yahweh says this to the people of Israel. He speaks as if he, his people, and the mountains and the hills were in court and as if the mountains and hills could hear what his people would say.

##### state your case

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh is telling his people to say what they think he has done wrong to them, or 2) Yahweh is telling his people to answer the accusation he will make against them.

#### Micah 6:2

##### Hear, you mountains, Yahweh's accusation

Yahweh continues to speak as if he is in court and the mountains would hear his accusation against his people.

##### you mountains ... you enduring foundations of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) these two phrases both refer to the mountains, or 2) the mountains and the foundations of the earth are two different parts of the world.

#### Micah 6:3

##### General Information:

Yahweh begins his to accuse the people of Israel as he said he would in ([Micah 6:2](./02.md)).

##### My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!

God uses questions to emphasize that he is good and has done nothing to cause the people to stop worshiping him. Alternate translation: "My people, I have been good to you. I have done nothing to make you tired of me. If you think I have done anything wrong, tell me, now."

##### to you ... wearied you? Answer

Yahweh speaks to the people as if they were one man, so all instances of "you" and all the commands are masculine singular.

#### Micah 6:4

##### brought you ... rescued you ... Miriam to you

Yahweh speaks to the people as if they were one man, so all instances of "you" and all the commands are masculine singular.

##### house of bondage

A house is a metaphor for a place in which one lives for a long time. The abstract noun "bondage" can be translated as "to be slaves." Alternate translation: "the place where you were slaves for a long time"

#### Micah 6:5

##### remember ... you went ... you may know

Yahweh speaks to the people as if they were one man, so all instances of "you" and all the commands are masculine singular.

##### what Balak ... devised

"the plans Balak ... made to harm you"

##### how Balaam ... answered him

Balak had told Balaam to curse Israel, but instead, Balaam blessed Israel. Alternate translation: "how Balaam ... responded" or "how Balaam ... said that he would bless you"

##### Beor

This is the name of Balaam's father.

##### as you went from Shittim to Gilgal

Shittim was the last place the Israelites camped in before they miraculously crossed the Jordan river. Gilgal was the first place they camped in after they crossed the river. God wanted them to remember what happened there. Alternate translation: "Remember what happened as you went from Shittim to Gilgal"

##### Shittim

The Hebrew word "shittim" means "acacias." An accacia is a kind of tree, and there was a grove of acacias there. Alternate translation: "Acacia" or "Acacia grove"

##### so you may know the righteous acts of Yahweh

Yahweh refers to himself by his own name. Alternate translation: "so that you may remember the righteous things that I, Yahweh, have done for you"

#### Micah 6:6

##### What should I bring to Yahweh ... God on high? Should I come ... old?

Micah speaks as if he were a person who truly wanted to know what God expects him to do. Possible meanings are 1) he asks questions and then in verse 8 answers the questions he has asked or 2) he is using questions to teach the people. Alternate translation: "I know that I do not need to bring to Yahweh ... God on high or to come ... old."

#### Micah 6:7

##### Will Yahweh be pleased ... oil? Should I give ... sin of my soul?

Micah continues to speaks as if he were a person who truly wanted to know what God expects him to do. Possible meanings are 1) he asks questions and then in verse 8 answers the questions he has asked or 2) he is using questions to teach the people. Alternate translation: "I know that Yahweh will not be pleased ... oil or if I give ... sin of my soul."

##### thousands of rams ... ten thousand rivers of oil

"rams in groups of 1,000 ... 10,000 rivers of oil"

##### the sin of my soul

The soul is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: "my sin"

#### Micah 6:8

##### He has told you

"Yahweh has told you"

##### good, and what Yahweh requires from you: Act ... God

Many modern translations read, "good. And what does Yahweh require from you? He wants you to act ... God." or "good. And what does Yahweh require from you but to act ... God?"

##### love kindness

The abstract noun "kindness" can be translated using the adjective "kind." Alternate translation: "love being kind to people"

#### Micah 6:9

##### even now wisdom fears your name

Wisdom is spoken of as a person and is a metonym for the wise person. The word "name" here is a metonym for the person himself, what people think of him, and his authority. Alternate translation: "and the wise person will fear you" or "and the wise person will acknowledge that you are good and will obey you"

##### Listen to the rod, and to the one who has put it in place

Here "rod" refers to the enemy army with which Yahweh, who "has put it in place," will discipline his people.

#### Micah 6:10

##### There is wealth in the houses of the wicked that is dishonest

Dishonest wealth is a metonym for wealth that people have gained by acting dishonestly. The words "the wicked" refer to wicked people. Houses are a synecdoche for everything a person possesses. Alternate translation: "Wicked people have acted dishonestly to gain wealth"

##### false measures

incorrect weights that people use with scales to increase their wealth by deceiving those with whom they trade

#### Micah 6:11

##### Should I consider a person to be innocent ... weights?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I certainly will not consider a person innocent ... weights."

##### deceptive weights

weights with which sellers deceive buyers

#### Micah 6:12

##### The rich men are full of violence

Rich men are spoken of as if they were containers, and people treating each other violently is spoken of as if it were a liquid that could be put into a container. Alternate translation: "The rich men act violently toward everyone" or "The rich men act violently all the time"

##### their tongue in their mouth is deceitful

The tongue is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "Everything they say is a lie"

#### Micah 6:13

##### striking you down, making you desolate

"killing all of you until there is no one left"

#### Micah 6:14

##### your emptiness will remain inside you

A person or thing being hungry is spoken of as if it were something that could be put in a container, and the people are spoken of as if they were containers. Alternate translation: "You will be hungry, and you will not be able to eat enough to satisfy yourself"

#### Micah 6:15

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Micah 6:16

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

##### You have observed the statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab.

"You have done what Omri commanded and everything that the house of Ahab did.

##### Omri ... Ahab

Both of these men were kings over the northern kingdom of Israel. God considered both of them to be very wicked.

##### house of Ahab

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Ahab"

##### You have walked in their counsels

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "You do what Omri and Ahab told the people to do"

##### I will give you over to ruin and your inhabitants to derision

Micah speaks to the people of the city, who can hear him, as if he were speaking to the city itself, which cannot hear him. You may need to make explicit the words that the ellipsis omits. Alternate translation: "I will make your city a ruin, and I will make you inhabitants an object derision" or "I will make you a ruin, and people will despise your inhabitants"

##### you will bear the scorn of my people

"you will suffer because my people will insult you"

### Chapter 7

**1** Woe is me!

I have become like the gathering of summer fruit,

and like the grapes that have been gleaned;

there is no grape cluster to eat,

no ripe early fig that my soul desires.

**2** The faithful ones have vanished from the land;

there is no upright person in all mankind.

They all lie in wait to shed blood;

each one hunts his own brother with a net.

**3** Their hands are very good at doing harm:

the ruler asks for money,

the judge is ready for bribes,

and the powerful man is telling others of the desire of his soul.

Thus they plot together.

**4** The best of them is like a brier,

the most upright is worse than a thorn hedge.

It is the day foretold by your watchmen,

the day of your punishment.

Now is the time of their confusion.

**5** Do not trust any neighbor;

do not put confidence in any friend.

From even the woman who lies in your embrace

guard the entrance to your mouth.

**6** For a son dishonors his father,

a daughter rises up against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

A man's enemies are the people of his own house.

**7** But as for me, I will look to Yahweh.

I will wait for the God of my salvation;

my God will hear me.

**8** Do not rejoice over me, my enemy.

After I fall, I will rise.

When I sit in darkness,

Yahweh will be a light for me.

**9** Because I sinned against Yahweh,

I will bear his rage

until he pleads my case

and executes judgment for me.

He will bring me to the light,

and I will see his righteousness.

**10** Then my enemy will see it,

and shame will cover the one who said to me,

"Where is Yahweh your God?"

My eyes will look at her;

she will be trampled down like the mud in the streets.

**11** A day to build your walls will come;

on that day the boundaries will be extended very far.

**12** On that day your people will come to you,

from Assyria and the cities in Egypt,

from Egypt to the River,

from sea to sea,

and from mountain to mountain.

**13** But the land will be desolate

because of the people who are living there,

because of the fruit of their actions.

**14** Shepherd your people with your rod,

the flock of your inheritance.

They dwell alone in a thicket,

in the midst of a pastureland.

Let them graze in Bashan and Gilead

as in the old days.

**15** As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,

I will show them wonders.

**16** The nations will see and be ashamed

of all their power.

They will put their hands on their mouths;

their ears will be deaf.

**17** They will lick the dust like a snake,

like creatures that crawl on the earth.

They will come out of their fortresses with fear;

they will come with fear to you, Yahweh our God,

and they will be afraid because of you.

**18** Who is a God like you—

who takes away iniquity, who passes over the transgression

of the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not keep his anger forever

because he delights in his covenant faithfulness.

**19** You will again have compassion on us;

you will trample our iniquities under your feet.

You will throw all our sins into the depths of the sea.

**20** You will give truth to Jacob

and covenant faithfulness to Abraham,

as you swore to our ancestors in ancient days.

### Micah 7 General Notes

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Last days

This chapter looks forward to the hope of the coming savior for the faithful remnant. This is the future restoration of Israel when true peace will come. (See: savior, faithful and remnant and restore)

##### Prophet

The prophet was able to speak to God on behalf of the people. Often in this chapter, the prophet speaks in Israel's place and offers repentance to Yahweh. (See: prophet and repent)

#### Micah 7:1

##### I have become like the gathering of summer fruit, and like the grapes that have been gleaned

Micah speaks of looking for faithful people but being unable to find any as if he were a person looking for food after the harvesters have taken it all. The idea of a person wanting to gather fruit can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I have become like someone looking for fruit after the gathering of summer fruit, like a gleaner after the grapes have been gleaned"

##### no grape cluster ... no ripe early fig

Micah speaks of faithful, upright people as if they were fruit that is good to eat.

#### Micah 7:2

##### The faithful ones have vanished ... land; there is no upright person ... They all lie in wait ... blood; each one hunts

These are exaggerations. Alternate translation: "I feel as though faithful people have vanished ... land and there is no upright person ... I feel as though they all lie in wait ... blood, and each one hunts"

##### to shed blood

Blood is a metaphor for the death of innocent people. Alternate translation: "to kill innocent people"

#### Micah 7:3

##### General Information:

Micah continues speaking about the people of Israel.

##### Their hands are very good

The hand is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "The people are very good"

##### telling others of the desire of his soul

The word "soul" here is a metonym for the whole person, and the abstract noun "desire" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "speaking to others about what he desires"

#### Micah 7:4

##### The best of them is like a brier, the most upright is worse than a thorn hedge

Briers and thorns are good for nothing and harm those who touch them. The Israelite rulers and judges did nothing good and harmed people.

##### the most upright

"those of them who try hardest to do what is good"

##### It is the day foretold by your watchmen, the day of your punishment

Micah speaks to the people of Israel, so both instances of "your" are plural. The word "watchmen" is a metaphor for prophets. Alternate translation: "Their prophets have told them that Yahweh would punish them"

##### Now is the time of their confusion

The abstract noun "confusion" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Now is when they do not understand what is happening"

#### Micah 7:5

##### General Information:

Micah continues speaking to the people of Israel.

##### Do not trust any neighbor ... any friend ... even the woman who lies in your embrace

Micah continues to show that there is no longer anyone good, honest, and loyal to God among God's people. Here he emphasizes that they cannot even trust friends or family. These phrases are listed in the order of increasing closeness to the hearers.

##### the woman who lies in your embrace

"your wife"

##### guard the entrance to your mouth

"guard your lips" or "do not say anything" or "do not let any words escape"

#### Micah 7:6

##### people of his own house

Micah continues to show that there is no longer anyone good, honest, and loyal to God among God's people. Here he emphasizes that they cannot even trust friends or family.

##### a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law

The words "rises up" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "a daughter-in-law rises up against her mother-in-law"

##### his own house

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. Alternate translation: "his own family"

#### Micah 7:7

##### General Information:

In verse 8 Micah begins speaking as if he were one woman speaking to her enemy, another woman. This is perhaps the daughter of Zion

##### But as for me

Here "me" refers to Micah.

##### I will wait for the God of my salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "I will wait for the God who saves me" or "I will wait for God, who saves me"

##### will hear me

The word "hear" represents hearing and acting. Alternate translation: "will act to help me"

#### Micah 7:8

##### fall ... rise

These words are metaphors for suffering from disaster and then recovering.

##### sit in darkness

These words are a metaphor for suffering from disaster.

#### Micah 7:9

##### General Information:

Micah continues the poem that began in [Micah 7:8]

##### I will bear his rage

Rage is spoken of as if it were a solid object that Yahweh was forcing Micah to carry. Alternate translation: "I will suffer because he is angry with me"

##### until he pleads my case and executes judgment for me

Yahweh will punish the people of the other nations who harmed the people of Israel.

##### he pleads my case

Yahweh is spoken of as if he were defending Micah in court. Alternate translation: "he defends me against those who harm me"

##### executes judgment for me

"brings about justice for me"

##### He will bring me to the light

Bringing Micah from darkness (Micah 7:8) to light is a metaphor for ending the suffering from disaster and enabling him to live well.

#### Micah 7:10

##### General Information:

Micah continues and ends the poem that began in [Micah 7:8]

##### my enemy ... the one who said ... your God ... My eyes

The words "enemy," "one," "your," and "my" here refer to the women in the poem and so are feminine singular.

##### Where is Yahweh your God?

The enemy uses a question to mock the people of Israel. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh your God cannot help you"

##### My eyes

This phrase here refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "I" or "We"

##### she will be trampled down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "her enemies will trample her down"

##### like the mud in the streets

People who walk on mud without thinking they are doing anything bad are compared with those who will destroy Israel's enemies without thinking they are doing anything evil.

#### Micah 7:11

##### General Information:

Micah speaks to the people of Israel as if he were speaking to one man.

##### A day to build your walls will come

Here "walls" refers to the walls around their cities, which provided safety and security from their enemies.

##### the boundaries will be extended very far

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will greatly extend the boundaries of your land" or "Yahweh will greatly increase the size of your kingdom"

#### Micah 7:12

##### the River

You may need to make explicit the name of river. Alternate translation: "the Euphrates River"

##### from sea to sea

You may need to make explicit the names of the seas. "from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Dead Sea in the east"

##### from mountain to mountain

"from one mountain to another." Micah does not speak of any particular mountain.

#### Micah 7:13

##### the land will be desolate

"the land will be empty" or "no one will live in the land"

##### because of the fruit of their actions

Fruit is a metaphor for the results of an earlier action. Alternate translation: "because of the results of what they have done"

#### Micah 7:14

##### Shepherd your people with your rod, the flock of your inheritance

Micah is praying to Yahweh, asking him to protect his people of Israel again. Here "rod" refers to God's leadership and guidance, as a shepherd uses a stick to guide and protect his sheep.

##### They dwell alone in a thicket, in the midst of a pastureland

Micah speaks of his people as if they were sheep hiding in bushes instead of grazing in fields with much grass to eat.

##### a thicket

a place where many small woody plants grow

##### a pastureland

Some modern translations read, "Carmel," referring to Mount Carmel.

##### Bashan and Gilead

These regions are known as rich land for growing food.

##### as in the old days

Bashan and Gilead had been part of Israel long ago, when David was king.

#### Micah 7:15

##### As in the days ... them wonders

Yahweh speaks to the people.

#### Micah 7:16

##### The nations

The word "nations" is a metonym for the people who live in many nations. Alternate translation: "The people of the nations nearby"

##### They will put their hands on their mouths

They do this to show that they are ashamed of what they have done.

##### their ears will be deaf

This is an idiom. Nothing anyone says will have any effect on them.

#### Micah 7:17

##### They will lick the dust like a snake

Snakes slither on the ground where dust gets on them, and here the people are being compared to snakes, though it is probably an exaggeration that they will lick the dust. Possible meanings are that these people 1) will literally lie on the ground in shame or 2) will be so ashamed and humbled that it will be as if they were lying on the ground.

##### their fortresses

Some modern translations read, "their dens," continuing the simile of the nations

#### Micah 7:18

##### Who is a God like you—who takes ... inheritance?

Micah is emphasizing that there is no God like Yahweh. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I know that there is no God like you, who takes ... inheritance."

##### takes away iniquity

The phrase "takes away" is a metaphor for "forgives," as if iniquity were a heavy burden that God takes off a person. Alternate translation: "forgives iniquity"

##### the remnant of his inheritance

"those of his chosen people who have survived his punishment"

##### you ... of the remnant of his inheritance? He does not keep his anger forever because he delights in his covenant faithfulness.

Here the words "his" and "he" can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: "you ... of the remnant of your inheritance, who do not keep your anger forever because you delight in your covenant faithfulness?" or "you ... of the remnant of your inheritance? You do not keep your anger forever because you delights in your covenant faithfulness."

##### he delights in his covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as "faithful." Alternate translation: "he delights in being faithful to his covenant" or "he delights in being faithful to his people"

##### passes over

ignores

##### does not keep his anger

"does not stay angry"

#### Micah 7:19

##### You will

Here "you" refers to Yahweh.

##### on us

Here "us" refers to Micah and the people, but not to Yahweh.

##### you will trample our iniquities under your feet. You will throw all our sins into the depths of the sea

Iniquity and sin are spoken of as if they were solid objects. Alternate translation: "You will treat our iniquities and sins as if they were not important"

#### Micah 7:20

##### You will give truth to Jacob and covenant faithfulness to Abraham

Here the names of Jacob and Abraham are metonyms for their descendants, the people of Israel to whom Micah was speaking. The abstract nouns "truth" and "faithfulness" can be stated as "trustworthy" and "faithful." Alternate translation: "You will show the descendants of Jacob and Abraham that your are trustworthy and faithful to your covenant"

## Habakkuk

### Chapter 1

**1** The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

**2** "Yahweh, how long will I cry for help,

and you will not hear?

I cry out to you, 'Violence!'

but you will not save.

**3** Why do you make me see iniquity

and cause me to look upon wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me;

there is strife, and contention rises up.

**4** Therefore the law is weakened,

and justice does not last for any time.

For the wicked surround the righteous;

therefore twisted justice goes out."

**5** "Look at the nations and observe them;

be amazed and astonished!

For I am surely about to do something in your days

that you will not believe when it is reported to you.

**6** For look! I am about to raise up the Chaldeans—

that fierce and impetuous nation—

they are marching throughout the breadth of the land

to seize homes that were not their own.

**7** They are terrifying and fearsome;

their judgment and splendor proceed from themselves.

**8** Their horses also are swifter than leopards,

quicker than the evening wolves.

So their horses stamp,

and their horsemen come from a great distance—

they fly like an eagle hurrying to eat.

**9** They all come for violence;

their multitudes go like the desert wind

and they gather captives like sand. *[*[1](#fn-035-001-009-1)*]*

**10** So they mock kings,

and rulers are only a mockery for them.

They laugh at every stronghold,

for they heap up earth and seize it.

**11** Then the wind will rush on;

it will move past—

guilty men, those whose might is their god."

**12** "Are you not from ancient times,

Yahweh my God, my Holy One?

We will not die.

Yahweh has ordained them for judgment,

and you, Rock, have established them for correction.

**13** Your eyes are too pure to gaze upon evil,

and you are not able to look on wrongdoing with favor.

Why then have you looked favorably on those who betray?

Why are you silent while the wicked devour

those more righteous than they are?

**14** You make men like fish in the sea,

like creeping things without a ruler over them.

**15** He brings all of them up with a fishhook;

he drags men away in his fishnet;

he gathers them together in his dragnet;

so he rejoices and he is glad.

**16** Therefore he sacrifices to his net

and burns incense to his dragnet,

for by his net he lives in luxury,

and his food is the richest kind.

**17** Will he therefore keep emptying his net,

and will he continually slaughter the nations without mercy?"

#### Footnotes

1:9 *[*[1](#ref-fn-035-001-009-1)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text are translated here,

### Habakkuk 1 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:1-17.

This chapter is arranged in a series of questions and answers between Yahweh and Habakkuk.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Injustice

Habakkuk sees great injustice, especially in the defeat of Israel by the Assyrians. He cries out to Yahweh to ask him to put an end to it. He is questioning Yahweh, but he trusts in him. (See: justice and trust)

##### Chaldeans

Yahweh will raise up the Chaldeans to bring justice to the Hebrew people. They will defeat the Assyrians. At this time, the Chaldeans were an insignificant city and people group. This was probably intended to show the power of Yahweh.

#### Habakkuk 1:1

##### The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet saw

This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "This is the prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet saw."

#### Habakkuk 1:2

##### Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

##### how long will I cry for help, and you will not hear?

The reader should understand that Habakkuk has been crying to Yahweh for help for a long time. He asks this question because he is frustrated and wants to know how much longer it will be before Yahweh responds. Alternate translation: "how much longer shall I cry for help before you will respond?"

#### Habakkuk 1:3

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues his prayer to God.

##### Destruction and violence are before me

The words "destruction" and "violence" can be translated with a verbal phrase. The idiom "before me" means that Habakkuk witnesses these things happening. Alternate translation: "I witness people destroying things and acting violently"

##### contention rises up

The word "contention" refers to conflict between people and can be translated with a verbal phrase. Habakkuk speaks of there being more contention between people as if contention rises up. Alternate translation: "there is more conflict between people"

#### Habakkuk 1:4

##### the law is weakened

Habakkuk speaks of people not obeying or enforcing the law as if they had made the law weak and unable to act. Alternate translation: "no one enforces the law"

##### the wicked surround the righteous

Habakkuk speaks of wicked people causing righteous people to suffer injustice as if the wicked people surrounded the righteous people.

##### twisted justice goes out

Habakkuk speaks of judges giving decisions that they say are just but that are not as if "twisted justice" were going out to the people. Alternate translation: "judges make decisions that are not just"

##### twisted justice

Justice that is "twisted" is injustice, the opposite of "straight justice," which is truly just.

#### Habakkuk 1:5

##### General Information:

In 1:5-11 Yahweh responds to Habakkuk.

##### be amazed and astonished

The words "amazed" and "astonished" share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the strength of the emotion. Alternate translation: "be very amazed"

##### in your days

This idiom refers to Habakkuk's lifetime. Alternate translation: "during your lifetime"

##### when it is reported to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone reports it to you" or "when you hear about it"

#### Habakkuk 1:6

##### look!

The word "look!" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

##### impetuous

Possible meanings are 1) "violent" or 2) "hasty."

##### the breadth of the land

This can mean 1) everywhere in Judah or 2) everywhere in the world. This would be an exaggeration to emphasize how powerful the Chaldean army is.

#### Habakkuk 1:7

##### They are terrifying and fearsome

The words "terrifying" and "fearsome" share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the fear that the Chaldeans instilled in other people. Alternate translation: "They cause others to be greatly terrified"

##### their judgment and splendor proceed from themselves

The word "splendor" represents their pride in how they view themselves. Yahweh speaks of their opinion of themselves as if the qualities of judgment and splendor came from them. Alternate translation: "because they are prideful, they decide for themselves what judgment looks like"

#### Habakkuk 1:8

##### Their horses ... their horses

the horses of the Chaldean soldiers

##### leopards

large, swift cats

##### the evening wolves

This refers to wolves that hunt their prey at night.

##### their horsemen

the Chaldean soldiers who ride the horses

##### they fly like an eagle hurrying to eat

Yahweh speaks of how quickly the Chaldeans move in order to conquer their enemies as if they were flying, like an eagle flies swiftly to capture its prey.

#### Habakkuk 1:9

##### They all come for violence

"They are coming because they want to do violence"

##### their multitudes go like the desert wind

Yahweh speaks of how quickly the Chaldeans move as if they were a strong wind that blows in the desert.

##### they gather captives like sand

Possible meanings are 1) the Chaldeans take people captive as easily as one would scoop up sand with his hand. Alternate translation: "they gather captives as one gathers sand" or 2) the Chaldeans take a great number of people captive, as if those people were as many as the grains of sand in the desert. Alternate translation: "they capture as many people as there are grains of sand"

#### Habakkuk 1:10

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to describe the Chaldean soldiers.

##### So they mock kings, and rulers are only a mockery for them

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The word "mockery" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "So they mock kings, and rulers are only something for them to mock" or "So all they do is mock kings and rulers"

#### Habakkuk 1:11

##### the wind will rush on

Yahweh speaks of how swiftly the Chaldean army moves from one city to the next as it conquers each one as if it were a wind that blows swiftly along.

##### guilty men, those whose might is their god

This refers to the Chaldean soldiers.

#### Habakkuk 1:12

##### General Information:

Habakkuk speaks to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.

##### Are you not from ancient times, Yahweh my God, my Holy One?

Habakkuk asks this rhetorical question to emphasize the positive answer. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You surely are from ancient times, Yahweh my God, my Holy One."

##### from ancient times

"eternal"

##### has ordained them for judgment, and you, Rock, have established them for correction

The word "them" refers to the Chaldeans. The words "judgment" and "correction" can be translated with verbs. The reader should understand that the Chaldeans will judge and correct Yahweh's people. Alternate translation: "has ordained them to judge his people, and you, Rock, have established them to correct your people"

##### Rock

Habakkuk speaks of Yahweh being the one who protects him and keeps him safe as if he were a rock upon which Habakkuk could stand in order to be out of his enemies' reach.

#### Habakkuk 1:13

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues speaking to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.

##### Your eyes are too pure

Here the word "eyes" represents Yahweh who sees. Alternate translation: "You are too pure"

##### those who betray

This refers to the Chaldeans. The word "betray" refers to people who have been disloyal or have broken agreements that they have made.

##### Why are you silent while the wicked devour those more righteous than they are?

Habakkuk speaks of wicked people destroying others as if the wicked were swallowing them. Alternate translation: "Why are you silent while the wicked destroy those more righteous than they are?"

##### those more righteous than they are

This refers to the Israelites, about whom Habakkuk had been complaining. The reader should understand that these are wicked people, but they are "more righteous than" or not as wicked as the Chaldeans.

#### Habakkuk 1:14

##### You make men like fish in the sea

Habakkuk compares the way in which the Chaldeans will kill people without remorse with the way in which people will kill fish without remorse. Alternate translation: "You cause men to become no more important than fish"

##### like creeping things without a ruler over them

The words "creeping things" refer to insects and other bugs that crawl about. Just as insects have no ruler to organize and defend them, the people are defenseless before the Chaldean army. The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "you make men like creeping things without a ruler over them" or "you make men as defenseless as insects that have no ruler"

#### Habakkuk 1:15

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues speaking to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.

##### He brings ... he drags ... his fishnet ... he gathers ... his dragnet ... he rejoices ... he is glad

The words "he" and "his" refer to a Babylonian solider who represents all of the Babylonian soldiers. These pronouns can be stated as plural. Alternate translation: "They bring ... they drag ... their fishnets ... they gather ... their dragnet ... they rejoice ... they are glad"

##### all of them ... drags men away ... gathers them

Here "them" and "men" refer to people in general. This can be stated in first person to include Habakkuk as one of the people. Alternate translation: "all of us ... drags us away ... gathers us"

##### He brings all of them up with a fishhook ... in his dragnet

Habakkuk speaks of the Chaldeans conquering people easily as if the people were fish that the Chaldeans catch with fishhooks and fishnets.

##### fishhook ... fishnet ... dragnet

tools used to catch fish

#### Habakkuk 1:16

##### he sacrifices ... his net ... his dragnet ... he lives ... his food

Habakkuk speaks of the weapons that the Chaldeans use to conquer people and nations as if the weapons were fishing nets that they use to catch fish. The words "he" and "his" refer to a Babylonian solider who represents all of the Babylonian soldiers. These pronouns can be stated as plural. Alternate translation: "they sacrifice ... their nets ... their dragnets ... they live ... their food"

#### Habakkuk 1:17

##### Will he therefore keep emptying his net, and will he continually slaughter the nations without mercy?

Habakkuk asks this question because he is frustrated and wants to know how long Yahweh will allow the Chaldeans to continue to destroy people and nations. Alternate translation: "Will you therefore let them empty their fishing nets and continue to slaughter the nations while they feel no compassion?"

##### Will he ... keep emptying his net ... will he continually slaughter

In 1:15-17 the singular pronoun "he" and "his" refer to a Babylonian solider who represents all of the Babylonian soldiers. These pronouns can be stated as plural. Alternate translation: "Will they ... keep emptying their net ... will they continually slaughter"

##### keep emptying his net

Habakkuk speaks of the Chaldeans preparing to conquer more nations as if they were fishermen who empty their nets so that they can use them to catch more fish.

### Chapter 2

**1** I will stand at my guard post

and station myself on the watchtower,

and I will watch carefully to see what he will say to me

and how I should turn from my complaint. *[*[1](#fn-035-002-001-1)*]*

**2** Yahweh answered me and said,

"Record this vision,

and write plainly on the tablets

so that the one reading them might run.

**3** For the vision is yet for the appointed time

and will testify and not fail.

Though it delays, wait for it.

For it will surely come and will not tarry.

**4** Look! The one whose desires are not right within him

is puffed up.

But the righteous will live by his faith.

**5** Indeed, as wine is treacherous,

even so an arrogant man does not stay at home.

He has made his throat as wide as Sheol;

and like death, he is never satisfied.

He has gathered together all the nations,

and he has assembled to himself all the people.

**6** Will all these not take up a proverb and mockery, riddles about him, saying,

'Woe to the one increasing

what is not his!

For how long will you increase

the weight of the pledges you have taken?'

**7** Will the ones biting at you not rise up suddenly,

and the ones terrifying you awaken?

You will become a victim for them.

**8** Because you have plundered many peoples,

all the remnant of the peoples will plunder you.

For you have shed human blood

and acted with violence against the land,

the cities, and all who live in them.

**9** 'Woe to the one who gets evil gains for his house,

so he can set his nest on high

to deliver himself from the hand of evil.'

**10** You have devised shame for your house

by cutting off many people,

and have sinned against your life.

**11** For the stones will cry out from the wall,

and the rafters of timber will answer them,

**12** 'Woe to the one who builds a city with blood,

and who establishes a town in iniquity.'

**13** Is it not from Yahweh of hosts

that peoples labor for fire,

and nations weary themselves in vain?

**14** Yet the land will be filled

with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh

as the waters cover the sea.

**15** 'Woe to the one who forces his neighbors to drink—

you express your anger *[*[2](#fn-035-002-015-2)*]* and you make them drunk

in order to look at their nakedness.'

**16** You will be filled with shame instead of glory.

Now it is your turn!

Drink, and you will expose your uncircumcised foreskin!

The cup in Yahweh's right hand is coming around to you,

and disgrace will cover your glory.

**17** The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you

and the devastation of animals will terrify you.

For you have shed the blood of man

and you have acted with violence

against the land, the cities, and all who live in them.

**18** What profit is there in a carved image?

For a carver has carved it!

Or a cast metal figure, a teacher of lies?

For the maker trusts in what he has made

when he makes these worthless idols.

**19** Woe to the one saying to the wood, 'Wake up!

or to the silent stone, 'Arise!'

Do these things teach?

See, it is overlaid with gold and silver,

but there is no breath at all within it.

**20** But Yahweh is in his holy temple!

Be silent before him, all the land."

#### Footnotes

2:1 *[*[1](#ref-fn-035-002-001-1)*]*Instead of 2:15 *[*[2](#ref-fn-035-002-015-2)*]*There is some question about whether the Hebrew should be translated as

### Habakkuk 2 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:1-20.

This chapter is arranged in a series of questions and answers between Yahweh and Habakkuk.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### "The righteous will live by his faith"

This is an important phrase in Scripture. Paul also uses it to explain that man is justified by his faith. (See: righteous and justice and faith)

#### Habakkuk 2:1

##### I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the watchtower

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Possible meanings are 1) Habakkuk went to an actual post in the watchtower or 2) this is a metaphor in which Habakkuk speaks of waiting eagerly for Yahweh's response as if he were a watchman waiting at his post for the arrival of a messenger.

##### to see what he will say to me

"to see what Yahweh will say to me" or "to hear what Yahweh will say to me"

##### how I should turn from my complaint

Here the word "turn" refers to returning an answer. Habakkuk considers what answer he will give concerning the things that he has said.

#### Habakkuk 2:2

##### General Information:

Yahweh answers Habakkuk.

##### Record this vision, and write plainly on the tablets

Both of these phrases are saying the same thing in two different ways. Alternate translation: "Write this vision clearly on the tablets"

##### tablets

These are flat pieces of stone or clay that were used for writing.

##### so that the one reading them might run

Possible meanings are 1) that the message is easy enough to read that a messenger can read it as he runs from place to place proclaiming the message. Alternate translation: "so that the one reading the tablets might be able to run as he reads" or 2) this is a metaphor in which Yahweh speaks of reading something very quickly as if the person who reads it is running. Alternate translation: "so that the one reading the tablets might be able to read quickly"

#### Habakkuk 2:3

##### the vision ... will testify

Yahweh speaks of the events in the vision happening as if the vision were a person who speaks. Alternate translation: "the vision ... will finally happen" or "the vision ... will finally come true"

##### will testify

Some translations read, "will reach its goal," and others read, "will finally speak."

##### Though it delays, wait for it. For it will surely come and will not tarry

Yahweh speaks of the events of the vision taking a long time to happen as if the vision were a person who does not arrive soon at his destination.

##### will not tarry

Possible meanings are 1) "will not be late" or 2) "will not come slowly"

#### Habakkuk 2:4

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk. Here he speaks of the Chaldeans as if they were one prideful, drunken man who can never have enough.

##### Look!

The word "Look!" here adds emphasis to what follows.

##### is puffed up

Yahweh speaks of the person who is prideful as if the person were "puffed up." Alternate translation: "is very prideful"

#### Habakkuk 2:5

##### as wine is treacherous, even so an arrogant man does not stay at home

Yahweh speaks of how drinking too much wine impairs a person's judgment as if the wine itself were a person who is treacherous and deceives the one who drinks it. Yahweh compares the treachery of an arrogant man to the treachery of wine. Alternate translation: "Just as wine harms people, the arrogant man also goes out to harm people"

##### wine

Some modern translations read, "wealth."

##### He has made his throat as wide as Sheol; and like death, he is never satisfied

God speaks of the arrogant person being greedy as if the person made his throat extremely wide so he could eat far more than he needed. Because no one can escape death and Sheol, people thought of Sheol and death as being like a hungry person who is never satisfied. Yahweh used this images to show how extremly greedy the the arrogant person is.

##### He has gathered together all the nations, and he has assembled to himself all the people

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh speaks of the arrogant man conquering nations and capturing the people as if he were gathering nations and peoples to himself. Alternate translation: "He conquers for himself the people of every nation"

#### Habakkuk 2:6

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk and to speak of the Chaldeans as if they were one man.

##### Will all these not take up ... saying, 'Woe ... taken?'

The words "all these" refer to the nations and peoples from [Habakkuk 2:5]

##### take up a proverb and mockery, riddles

They will use the words later in the verse to mock him.

##### riddles

This is a question to which the one who asks knows the answer but hides it with figures of speech so that the other person needs to work hard to think of it.

##### Woe to the one increasing what is not his

It is implicit that he is increasing his possession of things that do not belong to him. Alternate translation: "Woe to the one who claims for himself more and more things that do not belong to him"

##### For how long will you increase the weight of the pledges you have taken?

The word "pledges" refers to objects that people give to others from whom they have borrowed money as a guarantee that they will repay their debt. As the man collects more and more pledges, the total weight of the pledges that he carries increases.

##### For how long will you increase the weight of the pledges you have taken?

The Chaldeans robbing the people of the nations of their wealth is spoken of as if the Chaldeans were a person who forces others to give him pledges and to pay him what they do not owe. Alternate translation: "For how long will you make yourself rich by extorting others?"

#### Habakkuk 2:7

##### Will the ones biting at you not rise up suddenly, and the ones terrifying you awaken?

This negative rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The ones biting at you will certainly rise up suddenly, and the ones terrifying you will awaken."

##### the ones biting at you

The Hebrew word translated here as "the ones biting" can also mean "the ones paying interest" or "debtors." In this context, the word probably has both meanings. The phrase is a metaphor in which those whom the man has oppressed and made debtors by forcing them to give him pledges will now oppress him, which is spoken of as if they were biting him.

##### the ones terrifying you

This refers to the same debtors. They will terrify the Chaldeans by attacking them in revenge for the pledges that they were forced to give.

##### rise up ... awaken

The people of the nations beginning to act against the Chaldeans is spoken of as if they were to "rise up" and to "awaken" from sleep.

#### Habakkuk 2:8

##### plunder

to rob or take things by force

##### you have shed human blood

The idiom "to shed blood" means "to murder." Alternate translation: "you have murdered people"

#### Habakkuk 2:9

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk and to speak of the Chaldeans as if they were one man.

##### the one who gets evil gains for his house

Possible meanings are 1) the word "house" is a metaphor in which the Babylonian empire is spoken of as if it were a house that the man builds by means of profits that he gained through violence. Alternate translation: "the one who builds his house with riches that he gained through violence" or 2) the word "house" is a metonym for "family" and the man has made his family rich through violence. Alternate translation: "the one who makes his family rich by violent means"

##### so he can set his nest on high to deliver himself from the hand of evil

The person who builds his house is spoken of as if he were a bird that builds its nest in a high place. The man thinks that his house is secure and free from danger, just as predators are unable to reach the nest.

##### from the hand of evil

Here the word "hand" is a metonym for power, and the word "evil" is a metonym for people who do evil things. Alternate translation: "from the power of evil" or "from people who will harm him"

#### Habakkuk 2:10

##### You have devised shame for your house

Here to "devise shame" means that the plans that the man devised have resulted in shame. One possible meaning is that the word "house" is a metaphor in which the Babylonian empire is spoken of as if it were a house that the man has built. Alternate translation: "By your plans, you have brought shame on the house that you have built" Another possibility is that the word "house" is a metonym for "family." Alternate translation: "By your plans, you have brought shame on your family"

##### cutting off many people

Killing many people is spoken of as if it were cutting those people off, like one would cut a branch from a tree. Alternate translation: "killing many people"

##### have sinned against your life

This idiom means that the person has done things that will result in his own death or destruction. Alternate translation: "have caused your own ruin" or "have brought about your own death"

#### Habakkuk 2:11

##### For the stones will cry out from the wall, and the rafters of timber will answer them

Here the materials with which the man has built his house are personified as witnesses of the crimes that he has committed. If your culture uses different materials to build houses, you can consider using those materials here.

##### cry out

"cry out against you" or "cry out to accuse you"

##### will answer them

"will agree with the stones"

#### Habakkuk 2:12

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk and to speak of the Chaldeans as if they were one man.

##### Woe to the one who builds a city with blood, and who establishes a town in iniquity

These two phrases are saying the same thing in different ways. Alternate translation: "A warning to the Chaldeans who built their cities with what they have stolen from the people they have killed"

##### the one who builds a city with blood

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for murder. It is implicit that the person builds a city by means of the goods that he stole from those whom he has killed. Alternate translation: "the one who kills people and steals their goods in order to build a city"

##### who establishes a town in iniquity

It is implicit that the person builds a city by means of the goods that he stole from those whom he has killed. Here the word "establishes" means "to begin." Alternate translation: "who starts a town by means of the profit that he has acquired through evil behavior"

#### Habakkuk 2:13

##### Is it not from Yahweh of hosts that peoples labor for fire, and nations weary themselves in vain?

This negative rhetorical question emphasizes the positive answer that it anticipates. The two clauses share similar meanings that the work that people do will not last. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is the one who has determined that the things that people work hard to build will be destroyed by fire and result in nothing."

##### peoples labor for fire

This means that the people labor to build things that will go into the fire before the people can use them. Alternate translation: "peoples labor to build things that the fire will burn up"

#### Habakkuk 2:14

##### the land will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea

This simile compares the way in which people everywhere will know of Yahweh's glory with how water fills every part of the sea.

##### the land will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh

The word "knowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people throughout the land will know the glory of Yahweh"

#### Habakkuk 2:15

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk and to speak of the Chaldeans as if they were one man.

##### the one who forces his neighbors to drink ... you make them drunk

The way that the Chaldeans cruelly treated other nations is spoken of as if they were a man who forces his neighbors to become drunk so that he can humiliate them.

##### the one who forces his neighbors to drink

It is implied that he makes his neighbor drink wine. Alternate translation: "the one who forces his neighbors to drink wine"

##### in order to look at their nakedness

"so you can look at them when they are naked." This refers to the practice of publicly humiliating people by stripping them naked in front of others. Alternate translation: "so that you can humiliate them publicly by stripping them naked"

#### Habakkuk 2:16

##### You will be filled with shame instead of glory

The Chaldeans passionately pursuing their own glory is spoken of as if they were eating or drinking it greedily and excessively. Instead of attaining glory, they will find only shame. Alternate translation: "You will bring shame upon yourself instead of the glory that you seek"

##### Drink

Others treating the Chaldeans the way that the Chaldeans had treated others is spoken of as if the Chaldeans were to drink the wine that they had forced others to drink. Alternate translation: "Drink from the cup" or "Drink the wine"

##### you will expose your uncircumcised foreskin

This phrase is similar to the Chaldeans forcing others to strip naked so that they could look at their nakedness. Here the words "uncircumcised foreskin" indicate that they will be humiliated not just by being naked, but because their uncircumcision proves that they do not belong to Yahweh's people.

##### The cup in Yahweh's right hand is coming around to you

Yahweh punishing the Chaldeans is spoken of as if he were forcing them to drink wine from a cup that he holds in his hand. Yahweh's right hand represents his power.

##### The cup in Yahweh's right hand

"The cup that Yahweh holds in his right hand" or "The cup that Yahweh is holding"

##### is coming around to you

"will come to you as it did to others" or "will pass along to you"

##### disgrace will cover your glory

The Chaldeans experiencing disgrace instead of glory is spoken of as if disgrace were an object that covers the glory that they thought they had. Alternate translation: "disgrace will replace your glory" or "people will disgrace you instead of honor you"

#### Habakkuk 2:17

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk and to speak of the Chaldeans as if they were one man.

##### The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you

The Chaldeans being punished for the violence done to Lebanon is spoken of as if their violent actions were a person who will overpower them.

##### The violence done to Lebanon

Possible meanings for the word "Lebanon" are 1) it represents the forest of Lebanon. Alternate translation: "The violence done to the trees of Lebanon" or 2) it represents the people of Lebanon. Alternate translation: "The violence done to the people of Lebanon"

##### the devastation of animals will terrify you

The Chaldeans being punished for destroying the animals in Lebanon is spoken of as if what they had done were a person who will terrify them.

##### For you have shed the blood of man ... all who live in them

See how you translated this sentence in Habakkuk 2:8.

##### you have shed the blood of man

The idiom "to shed blood" means "to murder." Alternate translation: "you have murdered people"

#### Habakkuk 2:18

##### General Information:

Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk and to speak of the Chaldeans as if they were one man.

##### What profit is there in a carved image?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the negative answer that it anticipates. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The carved figure does no one any good!"

##### Or a cast metal figure, a teacher of lies?

This rhetorical question continues the idea in the first two sentences. You may need to add the ideas omitted in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "Or what good is a cast metal figure? It is a teacher of lies" or "And a cast metal figure can does no one any good because it is a teacher of lies"

##### a teacher of lies

This phrase personifies the cast metal figure as a teacher. People who look at a skillfully made idol falsely believe that it has power. Alternate translation: "a thing about which people believe lies"

##### worthless idols

or "idols who cannot speak"

#### Habakkuk 2:19

##### Or to the silent stone

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "Woe to the one saying to the silent stone"

##### Do these things teach?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the negative answer that it anticipates. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "These things cannot teach." or "Wood and stone cannot teach."

##### See, it is overlaid

"Look at it. You can see for yourself that it is overlaid"

##### it is overlaid with gold and silver

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a person overlays the wood or stone with gold and silver"

##### there is no breath at all within it

The idiom "no breath ... within it" means that it is not alive, but dead. Alternate translation: "it is not alive" or "it is dead"

#### Habakkuk 2:20

##### all the land

Here the word "land" is a metonym for the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: "everyone in the land" or "everyone on earth"

### Chapter 3

**1** The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet: *[*[1](#fn-035-003-001-1)*]*

**2** Yahweh, I have heard your report,

and I am afraid.

Yahweh, revive your work in the midst of these times;

in the midst of these years make it known;

remember to have compassion in your wrath.

**3** God came from Teman,

and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens,

and the earth was full of his praise.

**4** With brightness like the light,

two-pronged rays flash from his hand;

and there he hid his power.

**5** Deadly disease went before him,

and the plague came out at his feet.

**6** He stood and measured the earth;

he looked and shook the nations.

Even the eternal mountains were shattered,

and the everlasting hills bowed down.

His path is everlasting.

**7** I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction,

and the fabric of the tents in the land of Midian trembling.

**8** Was Yahweh angry at the rivers?

Was your wrath against the rivers,

or your fury against the sea,

when you rode upon your horses

and your victorious chariots?

**9** You have brought out your bow without a cover;

you put arrows to your bow! Selah

You divided the earth with rivers.

**10** The mountains saw you and twisted in pain.

Downpours of water passed over them;

the deep sea raised a shout.

It lifted up its hands.

**11** The sun and moon stood still in their high places

at the flash of your arrows as they fly,

at the lightning of your flashing spear.

**12** You have marched over the earth with indignation.

In wrath you have threshed the nations.

**13** You went out for the salvation of your people,

for the salvation of your anointed one.

You shatter the head of the house of the wicked

to lay bare from the base up to the neck. Selah

**14** You have pierced the head of his warriors

with his own spears since they came

like a storm to scatter us;

their gloating was like one

who devours the poor in a hiding place.

**15** You have trampled on the sea with your horses,

and heaped up the great waters.

**16** I heard, and my inner parts trembled!

My lips quivered at the sound.

Decay comes into my bones,

and under myself I tremble

as I wait quietly for the day of distress

to come upon the people who invade us.

**17** Though the fig tree does not bud

and there is no produce from the vines;

and though the produce of the olive tree disappoints

and the fields produce no food;

and though the flock is cut off from the fold

and there are no cattle in the stalls,

this is what I will do.

**18** Still, I will rejoice in Yahweh.

I will be joyful because of the God of my salvation.

**19** The Lord Yahweh is my strength

and he makes my feet like the deer's.

He makes me go forward on my high places.

—To the music director, on my stringed instruments.

#### Footnotes

3:1 *[*[1](#ref-fn-035-003-001-1)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text add the expression

### Habakkuk 3 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 3:1-19.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Poetry

Although this is a prayer, it is in the form of poetry. Habakkuk uses startling imagery to show his fear of Yahweh. (See: and fear)

#### Habakkuk 3:1

##### The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet:

These words introduce the third chapter of this book. This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "This is the prayer that Habakkuk the prophet prayed to Yahweh."

#### Habakkuk 3:2

##### I have heard your report

Possible meanings are 1) "I have heard people talk about what you have done in the past" or 2) "I have heard what you just said."

##### revive your work

Habakkuk speaks of Yahweh doing again the things that he has done in the past as if Yahweh were to cause his work to live again. Alternate translation: "bring your work back to life" or "what you did before, do again"

##### in the midst of these years

This idiom refers to the time at which Habakkuk prayed this prayer, as opposed to times when Yahweh had acted in the past to rescue his people. Alternate translation: "in our own times"

##### make it known

"make your work known" or "cause people to know your work"

#### Habakkuk 3:3

##### General Information:

Habakkuk begins to describe his vision of Yahweh coming to judge his enemies and to save his people. The vision continues through Habakkuk 3:15. It is full of metaphorical language and uses different kinds of parallelism.

##### God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran

Teman and Mount Paran were both located south of Judah. Habakkuk speaks of God coming to Judah from the direction of Mount Sinai.

##### His glory covered the heavens

"His splendor covered the sky." Here the word "glory" refers to the bright light that biblical writers often associate with God's presence.

##### covered

Possible meanings are 1) concealed, hid to keep people from seeing, or 2) clothed gloriously, as beautiful clothes add glory to the person who wears them.

##### the earth was full of his praise

Here the word "praise" is a metonym for God's qualities that cause people to praise him. Alternate translation: "the earth was full of his glory"

#### Habakkuk 3:4

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

##### With brightness like the light

Here the word "brightness" likely refers to the brightness that is often associated with Yahweh's glory. Possible meanings are 1) the brightness of Yahweh's glory was like flashes of lightning or 2) the brightness of Yahweh's glory was like the rising of the sun.

##### two-pronged rays flash from his hand

Habakkuk speaks of flashes of lightning as if they were two-pronged weapons that Yahweh holds in his hand.

##### there he hid his power

The word "there" refers to Yahweh's hand. Possible meanings are 1) the lightning bolts that Habakkuk can see are only a small representation of the full power that he cannot see hidden in Yahweh's hand or 2) Yahweh hides his power in his hand until he is ready to use it.

#### Habakkuk 3:5

##### Deadly disease went before him

The writer describes God making people ill with diseases as if that disease were a person who walked in front of God and told them that God was coming. Alternate translation: "God caused people to die from diseases"

##### the plague came out at his feet

The writer describes God making people ill with the plague as if the plague were a small animal following close behind God's feet. Alternate translation: "he brought a plague on the people" or "God made the people ill with the plague"

#### Habakkuk 3:6

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

##### He stood

This means that Yahweh stopped walking and stood still, not that he stood up from a seated position.

##### measured the earth

Possible meanings are 1) the word translated as "measured" can be "shook" or 2) he surveyed the earth the way a conqueror would before assigning portions to his governors.

##### he looked and shook the nations

The nations shook with fear because he looked at them. This is the fear a guilty person has when he is afraid that the person looking at him will punish him.

##### eternal mountains ... everlasting hills

"mountains that have existed since the beginning of time ... hills that will exist until the end of time." If your language has no different words for "eternal" and "everlasting," you can combine them as the UDB has done.

##### Even the eternal mountains were shattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Even the eternal mountains crumbled" or "He shattered even the eternal mountains"

##### the everlasting hills bowed down

The hills being flattened like level ground is spoken of as if they were people who bow down before Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the everlasting hills collapsed"

##### His path is everlasting

Possible meanings are 1) the words "His path" may be a metaphor that speaks of Yahweh and his actions as a path on which he walks. Alternate translation: "He is everlasting" or 2) Habakkuk speaks of the path upon which Yahweh walks in the vision as being everlasting, indicating that this is the same path that Yahweh had taken in ancient times. Alternate translation: "He walks along an ancient path"

#### Habakkuk 3:7

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

##### I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, and the fabric of the tents in the land of Midian trembling

Possible meanings are 1) the words "the tents" and "the fabric of the tents" are metonyms for the people who live in those tents. Alternate translation: "I saw the people who live in tents in the land of Cushan in affliction, and the people who live in tents in the land of Midian trembling" or 2) this is a metaphor in which Habakkuk speaks of the tents in Cushan and Midian being blown about by a storm as if the tents were people who were trembling in affliction. Alternate translation: "I saw the tents of Cushan blown about like people in affliction, and the fabric of the tents in the land of Midian trembling as if they were people"

##### Cushan

This can be 1) the name of a people group otherwise unknown or 2) the same as Cush.

#### Habakkuk 3:8

##### you rode upon your horses and your victorious chariots

The phrases "your horses" and "your victorious chariots" both refer to the same thing. This speaks of Yahweh as if he were a warrior riding a horse-drawn chariot into battle. Alternate translation: "you rode your horse-drawn chariots to victory"

#### Habakkuk 3:9

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

##### You have brought out your bow without a cover

This means that Yahweh has removed his bow from its protective case and is prepared to shoot. Alternate translation: "You have prepared to shoot your bow"

##### You divided the earth with rivers

Possible meanings are 1) "You created rivers that divide the lands through which they run" or 2) "You split open the earth and rivers flowed forth."

#### Habakkuk 3:10

##### The mountains saw you and twisted in pain

The effects that Yahweh's presence has on the mountains is spoken of as if the mountains were people who writhe in pain. This may refer either to the mountains shaking from an earthquake or to the water from the storm eroding the sides of the mountains as the streams flow down.

##### Downpours of water passed over them

Possible meanings are 1) torrential rains fell on the mountains or 2) the rain caused raging streams to flow down the mountains.

##### the deep sea raised a shout

The loud noises that the sea makes as the wind and storm pass over it are spoken of as if the sea were a person who begins to shout loudly. Alternate translation: "the deep sea became loud"

##### It lifted up its hands

The waves of the sea are spoken of as if the sea were a person who lifts his hands in praise to God. Alternate translation: "Waves began to form in the sea"

#### Habakkuk 3:11

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

##### The sun and moon stood still

The sun and moon not moving in the sky is spoken of as if they were people who stopped walking and stood still. Alternate translation: "The sun and moon stopped moving"

##### in their high places

"in the sky"

##### at the flash of your arrows ... at the lightning of your flashing spear

These two phrases share similar meanings and tell why the sun and moon have stood still. The lightning flashes in the sky are spoken of as if they were arrows that Yahweh shoots from his bow or a shining spear that he throws through the sky.

##### the flash of your arrows as they fly

"the flash of your flying arrows"

#### Habakkuk 3:12

##### indignation

anger of a person who has suffered injustice

##### you have threshed the nations

Yahweh punishing the people of the nations is spoken of as if he threshed the nations. Threshing refers to the practice of having an ox or some other animal trample upon grain stalks in order to crush them and remove the grain.

#### Habakkuk 3:13

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh. The last sentence in this verse is difficult to translate. Read each of the Translation Notes on that sentence below to see different ways to translate it.

##### You went out for the salvation of your people

The word "salvation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "You went out to save your people"

##### your anointed one

"the one whom you have anointed." Here this phrase refers to one whom Yahweh has chosen. Possible meanings are 1) "the people you have chosen" or "the nation you have chosen" or 2) "the king you have chosen."

##### You shatter the head of the house of the wicked to lay bare from the base up to the neck

Possible meanings are 1) killing the leader and destroying the people is spoken of as if someone were destroying a house. Here the leader is the head, that is, the roof of the house; and "base" and "neck" represent other parts of the house. Alternate translation: "You destroy the roof of the wicked house and demolish the rest of the building" or "You kill the leader of the wicked nation and completely destroy the nation" or 2) Killing the leader and removing honor and power from the people is spoken of as if someone were shattering a person's head and stripping off all of his clothes. Here the leader is the "head," and "house" represents the people who are the body. Alternate translation: "The wicked people and their leader are like a man whose head you crush and whose body you strip naked from foot to neck" or "You kill the leader of the wicked people and completely remove all of the people's power"

#### Habakkuk 3:14

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

##### You have pierced the head of his warriors with his own spears

The word "his" refers to the leader of the Chaldeans. Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor in which the warriors are spoken of as if they were a body and the leader were the head. Alternate translation: "You have killed with his own spear the one who leads the warriors" or 2) the word "head" refers to the heads of each of the warriors. Alternate translation: "With the leader's own spear, you have pierced the heads of each of his warriors"

##### spears

Some modern translations read, "arrows."

##### they came like a storm

The power and quickness of the Chaldeans as they attacked the people of Israel is compared to the coming of a sudden storm. Alternate translation: "they came quickly like a storm"

##### their gloating was like one who devours the poor in a hiding place

The word "gloating" here means to rejoice for bad reasons and can be translated with a verb. The warriors treating people cruelly or killing them is spoken of as if the warriors were wild beasts who carry their prey to their hiding places in order to eat it. Alternate translation: "they gloated like a person who secretly abuses poor people" or "they rejoiced when they oppressed the poor, acting as if they would eat them like a beast eats its prey in its den"

#### Habakkuk 3:15

##### heaped up the great waters

Yahweh causing the waters to surge is spoken of as if he heaped the water up into piles. Alternate translation: "caused the great waters to surge"

#### Habakkuk 3:16

##### General Information:

Habakkuk describes his reaction to his vision of Yahweh.

##### I heard

You may indicate what it is that Habakkuk heard. Possible meanings are 1) "I heard everything in that vision" or 2) "I heard Yahweh approach like a great storm"

##### my inner parts trembled

The word translated here as "inner parts" is literally "belly." If your language has a specific internal organ that it uses to express the feeling of great fear, you can consider using it here. Alternate translation: "my heart beat rapidly" or "my stomach turned"

##### My lips quivered at the sound

Quivering lips is another spontaneous response that comes with great fear.

##### Decay comes into my bones

Habakkuk speaks of having no strength in his body as if his bones began to decay. You may consider using an idiom from your own language here. Alternate translation: "My body goes limp, as if my bones were rotting"

##### under myself I tremble

The words "under myself" refer to what is below him. Possible meanings for the idiom are 1) "my legs tremble" or 2) "I tremble where I stand."

#### Habakkuk 3:17

##### General Information:

Habakkuk describes his reaction to his vision of Yahweh.

##### though the produce of the olive tree disappoints

"though the produce of the olive tree fails" or "though the olive tree fails to produce olives"

##### though the flock is cut off from the fold

The word "flock" may refer to sheep or goats, or both. The word "fold" refers to the fenced-in area where shepherds keep their flock. Habakkuk speaks of the flock dying as if someone were to cut off the flock, as a person would cut a branch from a tree. Alternate translation: "though all the flock dies and the folds are empty"

#### Habakkuk 3:18

##### General Information:

Habakkuk continues to describe his reaction to his vision of Yahweh and determines to praise him.

##### the God of my salvation

The word "salvation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "the God who saves me"

#### Habakkuk 3:19

##### he makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me go forward on my high places

Habakkuk speaks of Yahweh keeping him safe and enabling him to survive during difficult times as if Yahweh were to make him as sure-footed as a deer that can climb easily on rugged and dangerous mountain sides.

## Zephaniah

### Chapter 1

**1** This is the word of Yahweh that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.

**2** "I will utterly destroy everything

from off the surface of the earth—

this is Yahweh's declaration.

**3** I will destroy men and animals;

I will destroy the birds of the heavens

and the fish of the sea,

the ruins along with the wicked.

For I will cut off man

from the surface of the earth—

this is Yahweh's declaration.

**4** I will reach out with my hand over Judah

and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

I will cut off every remnant of Baal from this place

and the names of the idolatrous people among the priests,

**5** the people who on the housetops

worship the heavenly bodies,

and the people who worship and swear to Yahweh

but who also swear by their king. *[*[1](#fn-036-001-005-1)*]*

**6** I will also cut off those who have turned away from following Yahweh,

those who neither seek Yahweh nor ask for his guidance."

**7** Be silent before the Lord Yahweh!

For the day of Yahweh is near;

Yahweh has prepared the sacrifice

and set apart his guests.

**8** "It will come about on the day of Yahweh's sacrifice,

that I will punish the princes

and the king's sons,

and everyone dressed

in foreign clothes.

**9** On that day I will punish

all those who leap over the threshold,

those who fill their master's house

with violence and deceit.

**10** So it will be on that day—

this is Yahweh's declaration—

that a cry of distress will come from the Fish Gate,

wailing from the Second District,

and a great crashing sound from the hills.

**11** Wail, inhabitants of the Market District,

for all the people of Canaan will be ruined;

all those who weigh out silver will be cut off.

**12** It will come about at that time

that I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish the men

who have settled into their wine and say in their heart,

'Yahweh will not do anything,

either good or evil.'

**13** Their wealth will become plunder,

and their houses will be an abandoned devastation!

They will build houses but not live in them,

and plant vineyards but not drink their wine.

**14** The great day of Yahweh is near,

near and hurrying quickly!

The sound of the day of Yahweh

will be that of a warrior crying bitterly!

**15** That day will be a day of fury,

a day of distress and anguish,

a day of storm and devastation,

a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds

and thick darkness.

**16** It will be a day of rams' horns and alarms

against the fortified cities

and the high battlements.

**17** For I will bring distress upon mankind,

so that they will walk about like blind men

since they have sinned against Yahweh.

Their blood will be poured out like dust,

and their inner parts like dung.

**18** Neither their silver nor their gold

will be able to deliver them

on the day of Yahweh's fury.

In the fire of his jealousy

the whole earth will be consumed,

for he will bring a complete,

a terrible end of all the inhabitants of the earth."

#### Footnotes

1:5 *[*[1](#ref-fn-036-001-005-1)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text have

### Zephaniah 1 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetic song in 1:2-18.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Prophecy

In this chapter, it is unclear whether these prophecies concern the fall of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah or the day of the Lord. It is possible that the prophecies reference more than one period of time. (See: prophet and christ and dayofthelord)

#### Zephaniah 1:1

##### General Information:

Verses 1:2-18 refer to Yahweh's judgment. Verses 1:2-3 describe Yahweh's final judgment of every sinner in the future.

##### the word of Yahweh that came

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave a message" or "Yahweh spoke this message"

##### Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

##### son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah

This is a list of Zephaniah's ancestors. These usages of "son of" are the broader sense of "descendant of." Here "Hezekiah" refers to King Hezekiah. These things can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the grandson of Gedaliah, and the great-grandson of Amariah, whose father was King Hezekiah"

#### Zephaniah 1:2

##### General Information:

Zephaniah writes in poetry from this verse until the end of the book. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry.

##### I will utterly destroy everything from off the surface of the earth

The words "everything" and "will cut off man" are deliberate exaggerations by Yahweh to express his anger at the people's sin. Yahweh will destroy neither sinners who repent nor all living things.

##### destroy everything from off the surface of the earth

"destroy everything that is on the entire earth"

##### this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared"

#### Zephaniah 1:3

##### I will cut off man from the surface of the earth

"I will kill all people." This is a hyperbole, as in [Zephaniah 1:2](./02.md).

##### men and animals

"people and animals"

##### the ruins

Possible meanings are 1) the piles of rubble that will remain after the judgment or 2) the idols that Yahweh destroyed.

##### cut off

Destroying is spoken of as if it were cutting something off from what it was a part of. Alternate translation: "destroy"

#### Zephaniah 1:4

##### General Information:

Verses 1:2-18 refer to Yahweh's judgment. Verses 1:4-16 describe Yahweh's judgment on the people of Judah.

##### I will reach out with my hand over Judah

This is an idiom that means God will punish. Alternate translation: "I will punish Judah"

##### I will cut off every remnant ... the names of the idolatrous people among the priests

The verb "cut off" applies to each of these phrases, but has been used only once to avoid repetition. Alternate translation: "I will cut off every remnant ... I will cut off the names of the idolatrous people among the priests"

##### cut off

Destroying is spoken of as if it were cutting something off from what it was a part of. See how you translated this in [Zephaniah 1:3]

##### cut off ... the names of the idolatrous people among the priests

Here "cut off ... the names" is an idiom that means to cause people to forget them. Alternate translation: "cause everyone ... to forget the priests who are idolatrous"

#### Zephaniah 1:5

##### the people who on the housetops ... the people who worship and swear

The verb "cut off"

##### by their king

See the footnote about the possible rendering of this as "by Milcom."

##### worship the heavenly bodies

"worship the sun, moon, and stars"

#### Zephaniah 1:6

##### following Yahweh

"obeying Yahweh"

##### neither seek Yahweh nor ask for his guidance

Seeking Yahweh represents either 1) asking God for help or 2) thinking about God and obeying him. Alternate translation: "do not think about Yahweh or ask him to guide them"

#### Zephaniah 1:7

##### General Information:

Verses 1:2-18 refer to Yahweh's judgment. Verses 1:4-16 describe Yahweh's judgment on the people of Judah.

##### Be silent

This is an idiom. Here silence is meant to signal shock and amazement. Alternate translation: "Be shocked"

##### Yahweh has prepared the sacrifice and set apart his guests

The people of Judah are spoken of as Yahweh's sacrifice, and the enemy nations are spoken of as his guests who would eat the sacrifice. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has prepared the people of Judah as a sacrifice, and invited the enemy nations as his guests"

##### set apart his guests

Here "set apart" is an idiom that means he has invited them.

#### Zephaniah 1:8

##### General Information:

In verses 1:8-13, Yahweh is speaking. He alternates between using first person and speaking about himself in the third person.

##### It will come about

This phrase is used to mark the point at which Yahweh's judgment of Judah will begin.

##### everyone dressed in foreign clothes

This phrase suggests that the Israelites wore clothes similar to the foreigners to show sympathy to their customs and to the worship of their foreign gods. Alternate translation: "everyone who worships foreign gods"

#### Zephaniah 1:9

##### On that day

"On the day of Yahweh"

##### all those who leap over the threshold

Possible meanings are 1) this is a reference to people who did not step on thresholds as part of their worship of a god called Dagan or 2) people who leapt up onto platforms to worship pagan idols or 3) royal officials who climbed the steps to the throne.

##### fill their master's house with violence and deceit

The abstract nouns "violence" and "deceit" can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: "those who do violent things and tell lies in the temples of their gods"

#### Zephaniah 1:10

##### General Information:

Zephaniah 1:2-18 refers to Yahweh's judgment. Zephaniah 1:4-16 describes Yahweh's judgment on the people of Judah. In Zephaniah 1:8-13, Yahweh is speaking. He alternates between using first person and speaking about himself in the third person.

##### Fish Gate

The Fish Gate was one of the gates in the Jerusalem city wall.

##### wailing from the Second District

"Mourn loudly from the Second District." The Second District was a newer part of Jerusalem.

##### a great crashing sound

This refers to the sound of buildings collapsing. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "a loud sound of buildings collapsing"

##### from the hills

This refers to the hills surrounding Jerusalem.

#### Zephaniah 1:11

##### people of Canaan

Because the Canaanites were merchants and the next line speaks of "those who weigh out silver," many modern translations read, "merchants."

##### those who weigh out silver

This refers to merchants. Before coins were used, people weighed out silver or gold as payment for things they bought.

##### cut off

Destroying is spoken of as if it were cutting something off from what it was a part of. See how you translated this in [Zephaniah 1:3]

#### Zephaniah 1:12

##### General Information:

Verses 1:2-18 refer to Yahweh's judgment. Verses 1:4-16 describe Yahweh's judgment on the people of Judah.

##### It will come about at that time

This phrase is used to mark the time when Jerusalem has been destroyed by the enemies.

##### I will search Jerusalem with lamps

Yahweh speaks of knowing about all people of Jerusalem as if he had searched for them with lamps.

##### settled into their wine

They feel safe from trouble.

##### say in their heart, 'Yahweh will not do anything, either good or evil.'

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "say in their heart that Yahweh will not do anything, either good or evil.

##### say in their heart

This idiom means they think to themselves.

##### Yahweh will not do anything, either good or evil

Here "good and evil" is a merism that includes everything in between. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will not do anything at all"

#### Zephaniah 1:13

##### an abandoned devastation

"destroyed and abandoned"

#### Zephaniah 1:14

##### General Information:

Verses 1:2-18 refer to Yahweh's judgment. Verses 1:4-16 describe Yahweh's judgment on the people of Judah.

##### near, near and hurrying quickly

The repetition of the word "near," along with the phrase "hurrying quickly," emphasize that the day when Yahweh judges the people will soon happen. Alternate translation: "close and will be here soon"

##### the day of Yahweh

See how you translated this phrase in Zephaniah 1:7.

##### a warrior crying bitterly

Possible meanings are 1) a soldier crying in despair or 2) a soldier's battle cry.

#### Zephaniah 1:15

##### That day ... a day

These phrases refer back to the "day of Yahweh" in Zephaniah 1:14.

##### a day of distress and anguish

The words "distress" and "anguish" mean about the same thing and emphasize the intensity of the people's distress. Alternate translation: "a day when people feel terrible distress"

##### a day of storm and devastation

Here the word "storm" refers to divine judgment. The word "devastation" describes the effects of that judgment. Alternate translation: "a day of devastating storms" or "a day of devastating judgment"

##### a day of darkness and gloom

The words "darkness" and "gloom" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of darkness. Both words refer to a time of disaster or divine judgment. Alternate translation: "a day that is full of darkness" or "a day of terrible judgment"

##### a day of clouds and thick darkness

This phrase means the same thing as, and intensifies, the idea of the previous phrase. Like that phrase, both "clouds" and "thick darkness" refer to divine judgment. Alternate translation: "a day full of dark storm clouds"

#### Zephaniah 1:16

##### a day of rams' horns and alarms

The words "rams' horns" and "alarms" mean basically the same thing here. Both are means to call soldiers to prepare for battle. Alternate translation: "a day when people sound the alarm for battle"

##### fortified cities and the high battlements

These two phrases both refer to military strongholds. Alternate translation: "well fortified cities"

#### Zephaniah 1:17

##### General Information:

Verses 1:2-18 refer to Yahweh's judgment. Verses 1:17-18 describe Yahweh's final judgment of every sinner in the future.

##### they will walk about like blind men

The result of Yahweh's judgment is that people will be so confused and dazed when they walk about that people will think they are blind. Alternate translation: "they will walk around as confused and dazed as blind men"

##### Their blood will be poured out like dust

Their blood that is shed will be as worthless as dust. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Their enemies will pour out their blood and consider it to be worthless"

##### their inner parts like dung

The verb "poured out" is understood here. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their enemies will cut open their bodies and leave them to rot like dung"

#### Zephaniah 1:18

##### the fire of his jealousy

Here "fire" refers to the intensity of Yahweh's anger. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "his jealousy is as intense as a fire"

##### all the inhabitants of the earth

It is understood that this refers to the wicked people. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "all the wicked people who live on the earth"

### Chapter 2

**1** Rally yourselves together and gather,

unashamed nation—

**2** before the decree takes effect

and that day passes like the chaff,

before the fierce anger of Yahweh's wrath

comes upon you,

before the day of Yahweh's wrath

comes upon you.

**3** Seek Yahweh, all you humble people on earth

who obey his ordinances!

Seek righteousness. Seek humility,

and perhaps you will be protected

in the day of Yahweh's wrath.

**4** For Gaza will be abandoned,

and Ashkelon will turn into a devastation.

They will drive out Ashdod at noon,

and they will uproot Ekron!

**5** Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast,

the nation of the Kerethites!

Yahweh has spoken against you,

Canaan, land of the Philistines.

I will destroy you

until no inhabitant remains.

**6** So the seacoast will become pastures

for shepherds

and for sheep pens.

**7** The coastal region will belong

to the remnant of the house of Judah,

who will shepherd their flocks there.

Their people will lie down in the evening

in the houses of Ashkelon,

for Yahweh their God will care for them

and reverse their captivity.

**8** "I have heard the taunts of Moab

and the insults of the people of Ammon

when they taunted my people

and violated their borders.

**9** Therefore, as I live—

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts,

God of Israel—

Moab will become like Sodom,

and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah;

a place of nettles and a salt pit,

deserted forever.

But the remnant of my people will plunder them,

and the remainder of my nation will take possession of them."

**10** This will happen to Moab and Ammon because of their pride,

since they taunted and became arrogant

against the people of Yahweh of hosts.

**11** Then Yahweh will be terrifying to them,

for he will destroy all the gods of the earth.

Everyone will bow down to him,

each from his own place,

from the coastlands of all nations.

**12** You Cushites also

will be pierced by my sword,

**13** and God's hand will attack the north

and destroy Assyria,

so that Nineveh will become an abandoned devastation,

as dry as the desert.

**14** Then herds will lie down there,

every animal of the nations;

both the desert owl and the screech owl

will rest in the top of her columns.

A call will sing out from the windows;

rubble will be in the doorways;

her carved cedar beams will be exposed.

**15** This is the joyful city

that lived without fear,

that said in her heart,

"I am, and nothing is my equal."

How she has become a horror,

a place for beasts to lie down in.

Everyone that passes by her

will hiss and shake his fist at her.

### Zephaniah 2 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetic song in 2:1-9, 12-15.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Prophecy

In this chapter, because the prophesied destruction is so complete, it is unclear whether these prophecies concern the time near the fall of Jerusalem or the day of the Lord. It is possible that the prophecies reference more than one period of time. (See: prophet and christ and dayofthelord)

#### Zephaniah 2:1

##### General Information:

In 2:1-3, Yahweh continues to speak to Judah, and tells them to repent.

##### Rally yourselves together and gather

These two phrases mean the same thing. Together they intensify the command for the people to gather together in order to repent of their sins. Alternate translation: "Gather yourselves together"

#### Zephaniah 2:2

##### before the decree takes effect

This phrase refers to the punishment that will happen as a result of Yahweh's decree. Alternate translation: "before Yahweh punishes you"

##### that day

This phrase relates to the "day of Yahweh." Translate as you did similar phrases in Zephaniah 1:9.

##### that day passes like the chaff

The chaff is the insignificant part of the plant that the wind blows away. In a similar way, the day of judgment will pass quickly. Alternate translation: "that day passes as quickly as chaff blown by the wind"

##### before the fierce anger of Yahweh's wrath comes upon you, before the day of Yahweh's wrath comes upon you

The prophet repeats the same phrase almost exactly in order to emphasize how terrible Yahweh's judgment will be and the urgency with which the people must repent.

##### Yahweh's wrath

This stands for God's intent to punish. Alternate translation: "Yahweh's punishment"

#### Zephaniah 2:3

##### Seek Yahweh

Seeking Yahweh represents either 1) asking God for help or 2) thinking about God and obeying him.

##### Seek righteousness. Seek humility

The abstract nouns "righteousness" and "humility" can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: "Try to do what is right and to be humble"

##### you will be protected in the day of Yahweh's wrath

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will protect you in the day of his wrath"

#### Zephaniah 2:4

##### General Information:

In 2:4-15, Yahweh announces his judgment on the nations that surround Judah.

##### Gaza ... Ashkelon ... Ashdod ... Ekron

These were the four major Philistine cities of that day.

##### will be abandoned ... will turn into a devastation

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize the complete destruction of these cities.

##### They will drive out Ashdod at noon

Here "They" refers to the enemies of the Philistines. Possible meanings for "at noon" are 1) the enemies will defeat Ashdod before noon or 2) the enemies will attack Ashdod at noon while the people are resting and unaware.

##### they will uproot Ekron

The defeat of Ekron is spoken of as if it was a tree that was pulled from the ground and thrown away. Alternate translation: "they will take the people of Ekron away as if uprooting a tree"

#### Zephaniah 2:5

##### the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Kerethites

The first phrase explains where the Kerethites lived.

##### the seacoast

the coast of the Mediterranean Sea

##### Canaan, land of the Philistines

The Philistines were one of several people groups who lived in Canaan.

##### until no inhabitant remains

"until no one is left." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "until every inhabitant is dead"

#### Zephaniah 2:6

##### General Information:

In 2:4-15, Yahweh announces his judgment on the nations that surround Judah.

##### So the seacoast will become pastures for shepherds and for sheep pens

This probably means that the Philistine cities are gone, and only open fields remain. However, the Hebrew meaning is unclear and is sometimes translated differently by modern versions.

##### the seacoast

the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. See how you translated this in [Zephaniah 2:5](./05.md).

##### sheep pens

A sheep pen is a small area surrounded by a fence to keep the sheep together.

#### Zephaniah 2:7

##### The coastal region

the land near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. See how you translated this in [Zephaniah 2:5](./05.md).

##### Their people

"The people of Judah"

##### lie down

"lie down to sleep"

##### reverse their captivity

This idiom means that Yahweh will give them back what they had before they went into captivity. Alternate translation: "cause them to live well again" or "restore their fortunes"

#### Zephaniah 2:8

##### General Information:

In 2:4-15, Yahweh announces his judgment on the nations that surround Judah.

##### violated their borders

This refers to crossing over into Judah's territory in order to attack them.

#### Zephaniah 2:9

##### as I live

"as surely as I am alive." Yahweh uses this expression to show that what he says next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. Alternate translation: "I solemnly swear"

##### this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, have declared"

##### like Sodom ... like Gomorrah

These two cities were so wicked that God completely destroyed them with fire from heaven. These similes therefore refer to complete destruction. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "completely destroyed like Sodom ... like Gomorrah"

##### a place of nettles and a salt pit

"a place with thorns and a salt pit." This describes a barren, useless land.

##### the remnant of my people ... the remainder of my nation

These two phrases mean the same thing and refer to the Israelites that survived Yahweh's punishment.

#### Zephaniah 2:10

##### General Information:

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#### Zephaniah 2:11

##### General Information:

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#### Zephaniah 2:12

##### General Information:

In 2:4-15, Yahweh announces his judgment on the nations that surround Judah.

##### You Cushites also will be pierced by my sword

Here "pieced by my sword" is a metonym for being killed in battle. Alternate translation: "I will kill you people of Cush in battle"

#### Zephaniah 2:13

##### God's hand

Here "hand" refers to power. Alternate translation: "God's power"

##### an abandoned devastation

The abstract noun "devastation" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "ruined and deserted"

##### as dry as the desert

This means it will be so dry that nothing will grow there.

#### Zephaniah 2:14

##### every animal of the nations

"every kind of animal"

##### the screech owl

This term is uncertain. Some versions translate it as "hedgehog."

##### in the top of her columns

When buildings were destroyed and fell down, the columns used for decoration and support would often remain standing.

##### A call will sing out from the windows

"A call will be heard from the windows"

##### beams

Beams are long and thick pieces of wood that are used to keep a building stable.

#### Zephaniah 2:15

##### General Information:

In 2:4-15, Yahweh announces his judgment on the nations that surround Judah.

##### said in her heart

This idiom means "said to herself" or "she thought." The city is spoken of as if it were a person that could speak. It represents the people who live in that city.

##### I am, and nothing is my equal

It may be necessary to supply an object for "I am." Alternate translation: "I am the greatest city, and no other city is equal to me"

##### a horror

"a horrible place to see"

##### hiss and shake his fist

A hiss is an angry sound. This phrase indicates extreme anger of the people toward Nineveh.

### Chapter 3

**1** Woe to the rebellious city!

The violent city is defiled.

**2** She has not listened to the voice of God,

nor accepted correction from Yahweh.

She does not trust in Yahweh

and will not approach her God.

**3** Her princes are roaring lions

in her midst.

Her judges are evening wolves

who leave nothing to be gnawed upon in the morning.

**4** Her prophets are insolent

and treasonous men.

Her priests have profaned what is holy

and have done violence to the law.

**5** Yahweh is righteous in her midst.

He can do no wrong.

Morning by morning he will dispense his justice!

It will not be hidden in the light,

yet the unjust knows no shame.

**6** "I have destroyed nations;

their fortresses are ruined.

I have made their streets ruins,

so that no one passes over them.

Their cities are destroyed

so that there is no man inhabiting them.

**7** I said, 'Surely you will fear me.

Accept correction

and do not be cut off from your homes

by all that I have planned to do to you.'

But they were eager to begin each morning

by corrupting all their deeds.

**8** Therefore wait for me—

this is Yahweh's declaration—

until the day that I rise up to seize the prey.

For my decision is to assemble the nations,

to gather the kingdoms,

to pour out on them my anger—

all of my burning wrath;

for in the fire of my jealousy

all the earth will be consumed. *[*[1](#fn-036-003-008-1)*]*

**9** But then I will purify the lips of the peoples,

that all of them may call upon the name of Yahweh

to serve him shoulder to shoulder.

**10** From beyond the river of Cush

my worshipers—my scattered people—

will bring offerings due me.

**11** In that day you will not be put to shame

for all your deeds by which you rebelled against me,

since at that time I will remove from among you

those who boasted in your pride,

and because you will no longer act arrogantly

on my holy mountain.

**12** But I will leave among you

a lowly and poor people,

and they will find refuge

in the name of Yahweh.

**13** The remnant of Israel will no longer

commit injustice or speak lies,

and no deceitful tongue

will be found in their mouth;

so they will graze and lie down,

and no one will make them afraid."

**14** Sing, daughter of Zion!

Shout, Israel.

Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,

daughter of Jerusalem.

**15** Yahweh has taken away your punishment;

he has turned away your enemies!

Yahweh is the king of Israel among you.

You will never again fear evil!

**16** In that day

they will say to Jerusalem,

"Do not fear, Zion.

Do not let your hands become weak.

**17** Yahweh your God is among you,

a mighty one to save you.

He will celebrate over you with joy;

he will be silent over you in his love;

he will be glad over you with a shout for joy.

**18** I will gather those who grieve,

those who cannot attend the appointed feasts,

so you will no longer

bear any shame for it. *[*[2](#fn-036-003-018-2)*]*

**19** Behold, I am about to deal

with all your oppressors.

At that time, I will rescue the lame

and gather up the outcast.

I will make them as praise,

and I will change their shame into renown

in all the earth.

**20** At that time I will lead you;

at that time I will gather you together.

I will give you renown and praise

among all the peoples of the earth

when I reverse your captivity before your eyes,"

says Yahweh.

#### Footnotes

3:8 *[*[1](#ref-fn-036-003-008-1)*]*The copies of the ancient Hebrew text have, 3:18 *[*[2](#ref-fn-036-003-018-2)*]*This verse is very difficult to understand, and modern translations translate it in many different ways.

### Zephaniah 3 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetic song in 3:1-20.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Prophecy

In this chapter, because the prophesied destruction is so complete, it is unclear whether these prophecies concern the time near the fall of Jerusalem or the day of the Lord. It is possible that the prophecies reference more than one period of time. (See: prophet and dayofthelord)

#### Zephaniah 3:1

##### General Information:

In verses 3:1-5, Zephaniah speaks Yahweh's message of judgment to the sinful people of Jerusalem. The city represents the people who live within it. To make this clear, it may be helpful to replace the singular "she" and "her" with the plural "they" and "their."

##### the rebellious city

The nature of their rebellion can be stated. Alternate translation: "the people of the city who have rebelled against God"

##### The violent city is defiled

"The people of the city have committed violence and so I consider them unclean"

#### Zephaniah 3:2

##### She has not listened to the voice of God

The voice is a metonym for what the speaker says with the voice, and listening is a metonym for obeying. Alternate translation: "She has not obeyed what God has said to her"

#### Zephaniah 3:3

##### General Information:

In verses 3:1-5, Zephaniah speaks Yahweh's message of judgment to the sinful people of Jerusalem. The city represents the people who live within it. To make this clear, it may be helpful to replace the singular "she" and "her" with the plural "they" and "their."

##### Her princes are roaring lions in her midst

Lions roar to chase other animals away from the prey they have caught. The princes of Jerusalem are spoken of as if they were roaring lions who were keeping the prey for themselves. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem's royalty are as greedy as roaring lions"

##### roaring lions

"Roaring" here is a metonym for "mighty."

##### Her judges are evening wolves who leave nothing to be gnawed upon in the morning

Wolves are especially hungry before they hunt at night. The judges are spoken of as if they were hungry wolves. Alternate translation: "Her judges are as greedy as hungry wolves that leave nothing for anyone else"

#### Zephaniah 3:4

##### Her prophets are insolent and treasonous men

"Her prophets do not listen to anyone and cannot be trusted"

##### have profaned what is holy

"have treated holy things with disrespect"

##### have done violence to the law

"have broken the law"

#### Zephaniah 3:5

##### General Information:

In verses 3:1-5, Zephaniah speaks Yahweh's message of judgment to the sinful people of Jerusalem.

##### Yahweh is righteous ... He can do no wrong

These two phrases mean the same thing, and emphasize Yahweh's righteousness even among the wicked people in Jerusalem.

##### in her midst

"among them"

##### Morning by morning

This idiom means "Every day" or "Day after day."

##### he will dispense his justice

Yahweh's just treatment of every person is spoken of as if he was handing out a commodity. Alternate translation: "he will treat people justly"

##### It will not be hidden in the light

This uses a negative statement to emphasize the positive truth that Yahweh's justice is always visible. Alternate translation: "His justice is clearly shown to all"

##### the unjust knows no shame

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "unjust people know no shame"

##### knows no shame

"is not ashamed"

#### Zephaniah 3:6

##### General Information:

In verses 3:6-7, Yahweh rebukes the people of Jerusalem because they did not learn from how he judged other sinful cities. It may be helpful to add "Yahweh says this:" to the beginning of verse 6 to make this explicit.

##### I have made their streets ruins, so that no one passes over them. Their cities are destroyed so that there is no man inhabiting them

These two sentences express the same idea in two different ways in order to emphasize the complete destruction of the cities.

##### no one passes over them

"no one walks on them"

##### there is no man inhabiting them

"no one lives there." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "all the people are dead"

#### Zephaniah 3:7

##### I said, 'Surely you will fear me ... I have planned to do to you.'

This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "I thought they would surely fear me and accept correction so that they would not be cut off from their homes by all that I have planned to do to them."

##### and do not be cut off from your homes

Here "cut off" is an idiom that means to be removed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that I will not remove you from your homes"

##### by corrupting all their deeds

"by doing deeds that were corrupt"

#### Zephaniah 3:8

##### General Information:

In verse 3:8, Yahweh warns that he will judge all nations.

##### wait for me ... until the day

This phrase implies that they are waiting for judgment.

##### this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared"

##### I rise up to seize the prey

Yahweh's judgment on the nations is spoken of as if he was an hungry animal that attacked a smaller animal. Alternate translation: "I will rise up and destroy them as an animal seizes its prey"

##### to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh will judge all of the nations.

##### my anger—all of my burning wrath

The words "anger" and "burning wrath" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of Yahweh's anger. Alternate translation: "my very fierce wrath"

##### in the fire of my jealousy all the earth will be consumed

This phrase can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the fire of my jealousy will devour all the land"

##### in the fire of my jealousy ... consumed

Yahweh's jealousy is here spoken of as if it were fire that could consume something. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "my jealousy will consume all the earth as a fire"

#### Zephaniah 3:9

##### General Information:

In verses 3:9-10, Yahweh says that he will renew the Gentiles after the judgment.

##### I will purify the lips of the peoples

Here "lips" refers to the ability to speak. Alternate translation: "I will cause the peoples to speak what is right"

##### call upon the name of Yahweh

This is an idiom that means they worship Yahweh. Alternate translation: "worship Yahweh"

##### serve him shoulder to shoulder

Here "shoulder to shoulder" is an idiom that means "side by side."

#### Zephaniah 3:10

##### beyond the river of Cush

This may refer to the area where Sudan is located today.

#### Zephaniah 3:11

##### General Information:

In verses 3:11-13, Yahweh encourages the remnant of Israel who survive the judgment.

##### In that day ... at that time

"When that happens ... at that time." These phrases here refer to the time of peace and restoration that immediately follows the day of Yahweh.

##### will not be put to shame for all your deeds

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will no longer be ashamed of all your deeds"

##### those who boasted in your pride

"all the people who celebrated the things you were proud of"

#### Zephaniah 3:12

##### General Information:

In verses 3:11-13, Yahweh encourages the remnant of Israel who survive the judgment.

##### they will find refuge in the name of Yahweh

Yahweh's protection of this remnant is spoke of as if he was a refuge or a fortress. Here "name of Yahweh" refers to his person. Alternate translation: "they will come to Yahweh and he will help them"

#### Zephaniah 3:13

##### The remnant of Israel

This refers to the "lowly and poor people" of Zephaniah 3:12.

##### commit injustice

"do unjust things"

##### no deceitful tongue will be found in their mouth

Here "tongue ... in their mouth" represents the things that the tongue enables the mouth to speak. They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "none of them will speak deceitful things" or "they will not say deceitful things"

##### they will graze and lie down

Yahweh speaks of his provision for the people of Israel as if they are a flock of sheep that grazes and rests in safety.

#### Zephaniah 3:14

##### General Information:

In verses 3:14-20, Zephaniah tells the remnant of Israel who survived the judgment that they should rejoice.

##### daughter of Zion ... daughter of Jerusalem

Here "daughter" refers to all the people who lived in the city.

##### Be glad and rejoice

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize how happy they should be. Alternate translation: "Be very happy"

##### with all your heart

Here "heart" refers to the inner being of a person. Alternate translation: "with all your inner being"

#### Zephaniah 3:15

##### Yahweh has taken away your punishment

Here to "take away" punishment is an idiom that means to stop doing it. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has stopped punishing you"

##### You will never again fear evil

The abstract noun "evil" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "You will no longer be afraid that people will harm you"

#### Zephaniah 3:16

##### In that day

"At that time" or "When this happens." This phrase here refers to the time of peace and restoration that immediately follows the day of Yahweh.

##### say to Jerusalem ... Zion

The names of these cities here refer to the people who live in them. Alternate translation: "say to the people of Jerusalem ... people of Zion"

##### Do not let your hands become weak

Here the "hands" are a metonym for the whole person and being physically weak is a metaphor for being discouraged. Alternate translation: "Do not allow yourself become weak" or "Do not become discouraged and so stop working"

#### Zephaniah 3:17

##### General Information:

In verses 3:14-20, Zephaniah tells the remnant of Israel who survived the judgment that they should rejoice.

##### a mighty one to save you

"he is mighty and will save you." Yahweh is spoken of as a mighty warrior. Alternate translation: "he is a mighty warrior and will give you victory"

##### He will celebrate over you with joy ... he will be glad over you with a shout for joy

These two phrases mean the same thing and are repeated to emphasize Yahweh's joy that the remnant is restored to him.

##### he will be silent over you in his love

Possible meanings are 1) "he will quiet you by his love for you" or 2) "he will renew you because he loves you."

##### a shout for joy

Some modern translations read, "a song of joy" or "joyful singing."

#### Zephaniah 3:18

##### no longer bear any shame for it

Here shame is spoken of as if it was a heavy thing that a person had to carry. Alternate translation: "no longer be ashamed because of it"

#### Zephaniah 3:19

##### General Information:

In verses 3:19-20, Yahweh speaks directly to the remnant of Israel who survived the judgment and tells them that they should rejoice.

##### Behold

This tells the reader to pay special attention to what follows. Alternate translation: "Look" or "Pay attention"

##### I am about to deal with all your oppressors

It is understood that "deal with" means to punish the oppressors. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "I will severely punish all those who oppressed you"

##### I will rescue the lame and gather up the outcast

Here the Israelites who suffered in exile are spoken of as if they were lame and outcast sheep. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "I will rescue and bring together the remnant of Israel who are like lame and outcast sheep"

##### the lame

This refers to people or animals that cannot walk.

##### I will make them as praise

The full thought here is, "I will make them to be objects of praise," that is, "I will make them to be praised by others."

##### I will change their shame into renown

The abstract nouns "shame" and "renown" can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: "I will cause them to no longer be ashamed, but for people to respect them"

#### Zephaniah 3:20

##### At that time I will lead you; at that time I will gather you together

These two lines mean basically the same thing and imply that Yahweh will bring the exiled people back to their homeland. Alternate translation: "At that time I will gather you together and lead you home"

##### reverse your captivity

This idiom means that Yahweh will give them back what they had before they went into captivity. See how you translated similar words in [Zephaniah 2:7]