

# ***Zephaniah***

***Judgment of***

***Judah, Jerusalem***

***and the Nations***

By Timothy Sparks  
TimothySparks.com

See also: Zephaniah Briefing by Tod Kennedy

# *Theme*

- God tells Judah he will judge the earth
- Judgment will be on Judah, Jerusalem and Gentile nations
- Following “the day of the Lord” (judgment), God will gather Israel, rule as king, bless Israel and return the captives

# ***The Name “Zephaniah”***

- Means “Yahweh has concealed” or “Yahweh has hidden” or “Yahweh lies in wait”
  - 2:3; 3:8

# ***Date and Setting***

- During the reign of Josiah (r. 640-609 BC)
- Zephaniah traces his lineage to King Hezekiah (r. 715-686 BC)
- Zephaniah wrote his prophecy sometime during Josiah's reign but before the destruction of Nineveh (612 BC)
- At the time of Zephaniah's prophecy, the destruction of Nineveh was still future (2:13)

# ***Key Words & Phrases***

- **Day of the Lord** (7 times)
  - 1:7-8, 14, 18; 2:2-3
- **Anger/wrath/indignation** (7 times)
  - 1:5, 18; 2:2-3; 3:8

# *Verses to Remember*

- 1:7
  - Hab. 2:20; Joel 1:15; Is. 34:6
- 1:14-16
- 1:18
- 2:1-3
- 3:1-2
- 3:4, 7, 12, 20

# ***Baal & Milcom***

- Baal was a Canaanite god (1:4)
  - The word means lord or master
  - The name came to be associated with the god of fertility and weather
  - Baal worship infiltrated Israel and Judah and was prevalent during Solomon's reign
- Milcom was the Ammonite god Molech (1:5)
  - Solomon brought Milcom worship to Israel (1 Kings 11:5, 33)
  - Josiah tore down the altars (2 Kings 23:13)

# ***Outline by Chapter***

Ch. 1: Day of the Lord

Ch. 2: Seek the Lord

Ch. 3: Wait for the Lord and be restored by  
the Lord



# ***Chapter 1***

- Judgment on all the earth (1:2-3)
- Judgment will begin with Judah, Jerusalem, idols, idolatrous priests, idol worshipers, and those who have turned away from the Lord (1:4-13)
- The great day of the Lord is near and terrible—it will eventually engulf all the inhabitants of the earth (1:14-18)

# *Chapter 2*

- A call to the Hebrew people for repentance
- Judgment against the nations around Judah
  - To the west: Gaza, Ashdod, Ekron (2:4)
  - Canaan, land of the Philistines (2:5)
  - To the east: Moab and Ammon (2:8-11)
  - To the south: Ethiopia (2:12)
  - To the north: Assyria (2:13-15)

# ***Chapter 3***

- Woe to the Hebrew people (3:1-7)
  - Rebellious, defiled and oppressive (v. 1)
  - Refuse to listen to the Lord or trust him (v. 2)
  - The princes, judges, prophets, and priests are evil (vv. 3-4)
  - God is righteous and brings justice (v. 5)
  - The purpose of God's judgment was to recall his people but they were so zealous for doing evil they even got up early (v. 7)

# ***Chapter 3***

- God will gather nations, assemble kingdoms, and pour out his indignation and burning anger on all the earth (3:8)
- People will come to know God and therefore worship him (3:9-10)
- Their attitudes and purposes will have changed from rebellion to humility and will trust in the name of the LORD (3:11-12)
- Judgment will end, God's people will rejoice, God will be in their midst and bring his people out of captivity (3:13-20)

# ***Lessons We Can Learn***

- Apathy ruins one's spiritual life and can have serious physical, economic, family, and social consequences
- Idolatry will bring disaster (1 Jn. 5:21)
- Seek the Lord—nations and individuals have fallen when they didn't
- Beware of sin in our lives
- Leaders—national and spiritual—have a great responsibility for those they lead

# *Trivia*

Can you fill in the blanks?

Neither their \_\_\_\_\_ nor their \_\_\_\_\_

Shall be able to \_\_\_\_\_ them

In the day of the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_

1:18

# ***Memory Verse Review (Obadiah—Habakkuk)***

- Obad. 3a—“The pride...”
- Jonah 3:2b—“Preach to it...”
- Micah 7:18a—“Who is...”
- Nahum 1:3a—“The Lord is...”
- Hab. 2:4b—“The just...”

# *Memory Verse for Zephaniah*

2:3

“Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth,  
who have upheld His justice.

Seek righteousness, seek humility.

It may be that you will be hidden  
in the day of the Lord’s anger”