

ZEPHANIAH OVERVIEW

Judah Will Be Judged (1:1 — 2:3)

- **1:1**, Zephaniah means “YHWY hides.”
- **1:2-3**, Continual occupancy of the land is tied to obedience. Land is a gift from God.
- **1:4-6**, God describes three categories of sinners:

- (1) **FAITHLESS**: those who have forsaken YHWH by worshipping idols (1:4).
 - (2) **CORRUPT**: those who worship both YHWH and idols (1:5).
 - (3) **INDIFFERENT**: those who have openly forsaken the Lord, wanting nothing from Him (1:6).
- **1:7-18**, The coming judgment is described as “The Day of the Lord”. The meaning is seen in 2 aspects:
 - ▣ **LOCAL Meaning**: God’s soon to come judgments on Israel and Judah
 - ▣ **PROPHETIC Meaning**: God’s future wrath poured out (Rv.6-19)

Here it has the local meaning with the Babylonian invasion in 605BC, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586BC.

The Day of the Lord will be seen as YHWH’s sacrifice (1:8). The noise (1:10) of God searching the city will begin at the fish gate (farthest), and will travel to the top of Mt Zion (1:10, “hills”). No foreign soldier will do the work. God will expose (1:12, “candles”) sin and punish wickedness. God uses eleven words to describe this coming day (1:14-16). Rich and poor, none will escape (1:17-18).
- **2:1-3**, Zephaniah pleads with Judah to seek YHWH and to repent. But they would not!

The Nations Will Be Judged (2:4 — 3:7)

- **2:4 — 3:7**, Zephaniah names surrounding Gentile nations that God will judge as well.

- » **GAZA (2:4-7)**. “Philistia” will become pastures for flocks.
 - » **MOAB and AMMON (2:8-11)**. These both came from backslidden Lot (Ge.19:33-38). They mistreated God’s people and were proud. God will humble them. Their idols will not help them.
 - » **EGYPT (2:12)**. War will slay their youths.
 - » **ASSYRIA (2:13-15)**. The capital city of Nineveh will be so completely destroyed that her land will become a wilderness where only wild birds and animals will dwell. This is an amazing prophecy, “dry like a wilderness” because of their famous irrigation system.
- **WOE UPON JERUSALEM**
- **3:1-7**, Zephaniah appeals to his people. If God will judge the sins of the heathen, how much more will He judge you. God calls Jerusalem “filthy and polluted” (3:1), even though Josiah had removed all the idols. God sees their hearts, and He does not see trust (3:2). The leaders were like roaring lions prowling to devour someone (3:3). The prophets were “light” not taking God and His Word seriously (3:4). They were “treacherous” because they lead the people astray. They polluted everything they touched including the sanctuary. They would not recognize God’s judgment in action upon other nations, and recognize it will soon happen to them (3:7). It will begin to happen to them when the Babylonians come in 605BC to destroy the nation.

God's People Will Be Restored (3:8-20)

- Zephaniah closes with a great promise. God will regather His people to the land, and punish the Gentile nations (3:8). This predicts the future Battle of Armageddon when all nations will gather against Jerusalem (Rv.19:11-21). The Messiah, Jesus Christ, will return and judge these nations. Then He will establish His righteous kingdom upon the earth (Zc.12-13). God will remember His remnant (2:7,9; 3:13). In Zephaniah’s day there was a believing remnant. It was a small group of faithful people. In the last days not every Jew will follow YHWH, but a remnant will. What are the faithful remnant to do? They are to wait and allow God to work out His purposes (3:8). Plus they can also sing and rejoice in the goodness of the LORD (3:14). Though the nation would go through this judgment trial, the LORD will be in their midst (3:17). Those nations that afflict the Jews will be afflicted (3:19). The LORD did restore them after the seventy years of Babylonian captivity. There will still be a future restoration of the nation of Israel (3:20). She will be the praise of the earth. This has not happened yet. They will be the source of joy in the earth because their Messiah will reign from Jerusalem.

DAY OF THE LORD BRIEF

A time when God will personally intervene in history, directly or indirectly, to accomplish His plan. God will punish evil, and fulfil all His promises.

JUDGMENT 1:1 — 3:7	BLESSING 3:8-20
» Near Fulfillment	» Far Fulfillment
» Local	» Prophetic
» Destruction	» Deliverance
» Warning	» Encouragement