

# ZEPHANIAH THEMES, PATTERNS, & APPLICATIONS

**BACKGROUND**

## General Notes:

- Zephaniah wrote between 622-612 BC.
- The primary message of judgment is for Judah which had fallen into grievous sin under the reign of king Manasseh (697-642 BC), and his son Amon (642-640 BC).

## Zephaniah Growing Up Circumstances:

- Child sacrifices (**2Ch.33:1-10**)
- Unjust killings (**1Ki.21:16; 2Ki.21:16**)
- They built their own places of worship (“high places”).
- They begun to desecrate the Temple (**Zp.1:9**).
- The Law of God had been lost. In king Josiah’s 18th year, Hilkiah the priest discovered the Law of Moses in the Temple (**2Ch.34:3-7**).
- In 622BC Josiah read the Law of Moses and instituted reforms throughout Judah (**2Ki.22:4-25; 2Ch.34:3-35:19**). Josiah died prematurely, and so the reform was short lived (**2Ch.35:20-27**).

**THEME**

## Hope of the Remnant:

- They will be delivered through (from) divine judgment (**2:1-3**)
- They eventually will be rescued from oppressors (**2:4; 3:15**)
- Their hope is of future blessing (**2:6-9**)
- Their sins are forgiven and cleansed (**3:9,11,13**)
- They will enjoy peace and security (**3:13**)
- They will enjoy God’s presence as His objects of love (**3:15-17**)
- They will be given fame and honor (**3:19-20**)
- In the last days, not every Jew will follow the Lord, but the remnant will.

**PATTERN**

## Yahweh's Relationship to Jerusalem:

- “I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem...” (**Zp.1:4**)
- “And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem...” (**Zp.1:12**)
- “...and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.” (**Zp.3:11**)
- “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem” (**Zp.3:14**)
- “In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.” (**Zp.3:16**)
- The marriage of Israel to Jehovah is seen in promises of God concerning the city Zion (**Is.62:1, 3-5; Ek.16:1,8**). It is in the sense of God as husband to Jerusalem, that the New Jerusalem also is said to be the Lamb’s wife (**Rv.21:2ff,9ff**). The New Jerusalem extends into the Millennial kingdom, and the eternal state.
- The New Jerusalem, like the new heavens and new earth, will expand to include the church, and all the redeemed of all the ages, as it becomes the bridal city (**Rv.21:1-2**).

**APPLICATION**

## Our Response (application) to Zephaniah:

- (1) Be silent (**1:7**)
  - (2) Seek the Lord (**2:1-3**)
  - (3) Righteous remnant are instructed to wait for the Lord (**3:8**)
  - (4) Righteous to joyfully worship God in light of the coming Day of the Lord (**3:14-20**)
- We also make a mockery of worship when we live in open sin.
  - Do we come before the Lord with a false face, looking the part but not acting it?
  - Zephaniah reminds us how seriously God takes our life and relationship with Him.
  - If we have failed, Zephaniah’s message is that God will restore our hope by our repenting and trusting Him.

**THEME**

## Purpose of Writing: Judgment & Encouragement

### 3 Major Doctrines:

- (1) God is sovereign over all the nations;
- (2) The wicked will be punished and the righteous will be vindicated on the day of judgment;
- (3) God blesses those who repent and trust Him.
- (4) Shows that God raises up a messenger to proclaim a warning of coming judgment, and to encourage repentance.

**PATTERN**

## Divine Blessing and Judgment Inter-Related:

The dual themes of judgment and blessing appear in every prophetic book. God always balances His justice with His mercy! If we can grasp these two concepts, then we will have a better understanding of the Old Testament.

- (1) God’s judgment is the means where He delivers us (**2:4; 3:15,19**).
  - (2) God’s judgment purifies the righteous (**3:9**)
  - (3) God’s judgment is the means He uses to bring blessings
    - (a) When God removes the wicked, it is so He may dwell with us
    - (b) When God removes the wicked, He gives possession to His faithful remnant (**2:5-7, 9-10**).
- The recurring theme from many of the prophets is a pattern of judgment on all people for their sin followed by the restoration of God’s chosen people.
  - Judgment of the Wicked – Hope for the Faithful.
  - Punishment of the wicked gives comfort in a time when it seems that evil is unbridled.