

ZEPHANIAH

THE DAY OF THE LORD



1-2

HISTORICAL BOOKS RELATIONSHIP

Samuel Saul David Solomon
UNITED KINGDOM

Israel (Northern Kingdom)

931BC

PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

ELIJAH 874 846 ELISHA 848 ??? AMOS 760 753 HOSEA 755 725 JONAH 785 750

(Assyrian Exile)

722BC

Judah (Southern Kingdom)

931BC

PROPHETS OF JUDAH

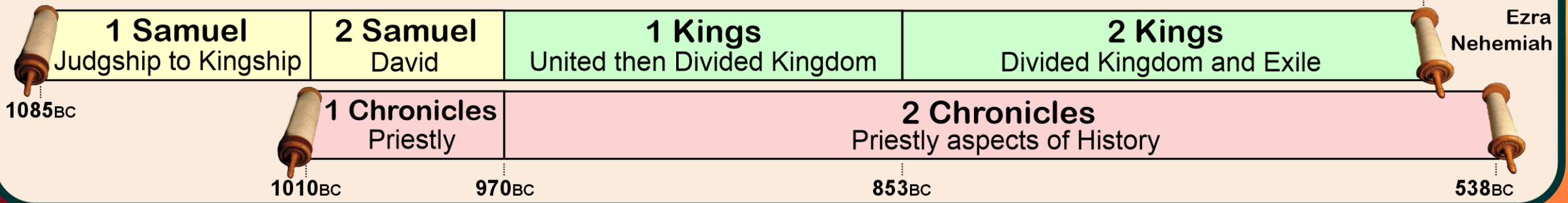
OBADIAH 850 840 ISAIAH 740 680 JEREMIAH 627 585 JOEL 841 834 MICAH 735 700 ZEPHANIAH 640 620 DANIEL 605 536 NAHUM 650 620 HABAKKUK 609 606

(Babylonian Exile)

605BC

EZEKIEL 592 570


POST EXILE
MALACHI HAGGAI ZECHARIAH



ZEPHANIAH OUTLINE

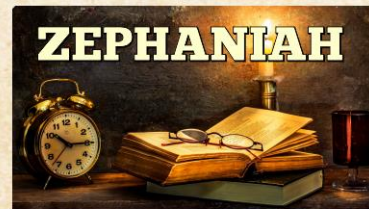
THE DAY OF JUDGMENT — 1:1-3:8

THE DAY OF HOPE — 3:9-20

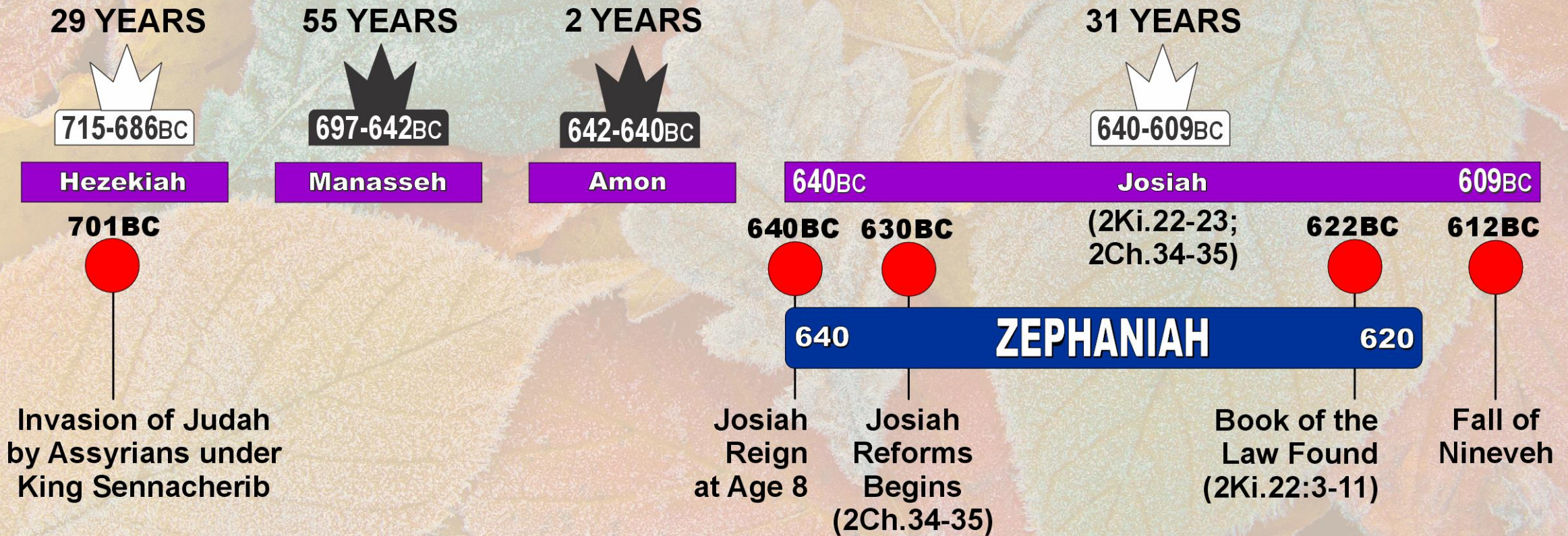
Judgment on All the Earth (1:2-3)	Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (1:4-2:3)	Judgment on the Surrounding Nations (2:4-15)	Judgment on Jerusalem (3:1-7)	Judgment on All the Earth (3:8)	Restoration of the Nations (3:9-10)	Restoration of Israel (3:11-20)
	Idolaters (1:4-7) Princes (1:8) Oppressors (1:9) Merchants (1:10-11) Indifferent (1:12-13) Nearness (1:14a) Horror (1:14b-18)	On Philistia (2:4-7) On Moab and Ammon (2:8-11) On Ethiopia (2:12) On Assyria (2:13-15)	The Prophet's Indictment (3:1-5) The Lord's Judgment (3:6-7)	"All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy" (3:8)	"9That they all may call on the name of the LORD... 10The daughter of My dispersed ones, Shall bring My offering" (3:9-10)	The Redemption of the Nation (3:11-13) The Joy of the Nation (3:14) The Ruler of the Nation (3:15-17) The Reward of the Nation (3:18-20)

ZEPHANIAH INTRODUCTION

- **Zephaniah traces his genealogy back four generations to King Hezekiah (c. 715-686 B.C.).**
- **He stands alone among the prophets descended from royal blood.**
- **The prophet himself dates his message during the reign of Josiah (640-609 B.C.).**
- **The moral and spiritual conditions detailed in the book (1:4-6; 3:1-7) seem to place the prophecy prior to Josiah's reforms, when Judah was still in idolatry and wickedness.**



ZEPHANIAH HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



LEGEND



KING

= Basically Bad



KING

= Basically Good

KING JOSIAH OF JUDAH

- Josiah was a godly king and known as one of the world's youngest kings.

- Josiah began his reign at the age of 8 after his father was assassinated.

- A highlight of Josiah's reign was his rediscovery of the Law of the Lord.



640-609BC

- In the eighteenth year of his reign, he raised money to repair the Temple.
- During the repairs the high priest Hilkiyah found the Book of the Law.
- When Shapan the secretary read it to Josiah, the king tore his clothes, which is a sign of mourning and repentance (2Ki.22:10-11).

A scenic landscape featuring a calm body of water in the foreground, a line of trees in the middle ground, and a dramatic sky with a sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright orange and red glow on the horizon. The water reflects the sky and the trees. Large, bold, green text with a black outline is overlaid on the image.

ZEPHANIAH



THE

MAN

(Zephaniah 1:1)

The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.



ZEPHANIAH 1:1



**“The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.”
(Zp.1:1)**

- Zephaniah tells us both his time of ministry and his roots.**
- Zephaniah was an unusual prophet, in that he was of royal lineage, descending from the godly King Hezekiah.**
- The name Zephaniah means “Yahweh Hides” or “Yahweh Has Hidden.”**
- Zephaniah was almost certainly born during the long, wicked reign of Manasseh.**





**“The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.”
(Zp.1:1)**

- Zephaniah was probably hidden for his own protection.**
- Josiah was a godly, young king who brought great revival and reform to Judah but Josiah reigned for 10 years before he led his great revival.**
- Many believe Zephaniah was written in the years before the revival. Thus, God likely used this prophecy to bring further revival.**



THE PROMISE OF JUDGMENT

(Zephaniah 1:2-3)

**"I will utterly consume
everything From the
face of the land," Says
the LORD;**

ZEPHANIAH 1:2







“I will utterly consume everything From the face of the land,” Says the LORD;” (Zp.1:2)

- Zephaniah doesn't waste any time getting to the point.**
- Delivering the message of the LORD, he warns of harsh and complete judgment that consumes everything before the LORD.**
- The phraseology is reminiscent of the Noahic flood (Ge.6:7).**
- Judah refused to listen, either because they doubted God's prophet, or because they doubted God himself and thus did not believe that he would do what he said.**



"I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, The fish of the sea, And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land," Says the LORD.

ZEPHANIAH 1:3



“I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, The fish of the sea, And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land,” Says the LORD.” (Zp.1:3)

- Whatever alienates man from God will be removed (“stumbling blocks”).**
- History has shown that Israel did not commit idolatry after the return from the Babylonian captivity.**







JUDGMENT PROMISED TO IDOLATERS

(Zephaniah 1:4-6)

I will stretch out My hand against Judah, And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, The names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests—

ZEPHANIAH 1:4



“I will stretch out My hand against Judah, And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, The names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests—” (Zp.1:4)



- Verses 2-3 are broad enough to include the whole earth. So this appears to refer to their descendants and not the original hearers.**
- Now God zeros in on His people in the LAND of Judah.**
- The nation was almost wholly given over to idolatry (2Ki.21:3-7).**
- But during the days of Josiah this gross idolatry was put away (2Ki.23:4-15).**



**Those who worship the host of
heaven on the housetops; Those
who worship and swear oaths by
the LORD, But who also swear by
Milcom;**

ZEPHANIAH 1:5







“Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; Those who worship and swear oaths by the LORD, But who also swear by Milcom;” (Zp.1:5)

- Astrology was a prominent part of Israel's idolatrous practices (Du.4:19; Am.5:25-26; Ac.7:40-43).**
- Altars were often erected on housetop roofs to provide a clear view of the sky (Je.8:2; 19:13; 32:29).**
- Judah mixed worship of the Lord alongside of idol worship.**
- They would swear by the Lord and at the same time by “Milcom.”**





“Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; Those who worship and swear oaths by the LORD, But who also swear by Milcom;” (Zp.1:5)

- Milcom was the name of the national god of the Ammonites also called Molech (1Ki.11:5, 33).**
- Molech worship included child sacrifice, astrology, and temple prostitution (Lv.18:21; 2Ki.17:16-17; Ek.23:37; Am.5:25-26; Ac.7:40-43).**
- Their housetops were flat. It is the place where the family gathered in the evening. It became a place of worship, so every home was a little heathen temple where idolatry was practiced.**



**Those who have turned back
from following the LORD, And
have not sought the LORD, nor
inquired of Him.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:6



“Those who have turned back from following the LORD, And have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.” (Zp.1:6)

- The people have turned completely from God. Two classes are mentioned: backsliders and those who were never saved.**
- Those who have “turned back” from the Lord have proved to be unfaithful by following idols.**
- These persons did not seek information from the Lord nor even make any inquiry after Him.**





JUDGMENT PROMISED TO ROYALTY

(Zephaniah 1:7-9)

**Be silent in the presence of the
Lord GOD; For the day of the
LORD is at hand, For the LORD
has prepared a sacrifice; He has
invited His guests.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:7



“Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; For the day of the LORD is at hand, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.” (Zp.1:7)

- God addresses the royalty of Judah in a way they aren't used to hearing. He tells them to “shut up” and listen to His pronouncement of judgment. It is a “sacrifice” of judgment.**
- This warning came to a godly king (Josiah) during a time of reform.**
- God warns Josiah and the whole royal community what will happen if they don't follow through on their turning to God.**



**And it shall be, In the day of the
LORD's sacrifice, That I will
punish the princes and the king's
children, And all such as are
clothed with foreign apparel.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:8





“And it shall be, In the day of the LORD's sacrifice, That I will punish the princes and the king's children, And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.” (Zp.1:8)

- The priests and leaders of Judah were ashamed of their national identity, so they loved to dress in foreign apparel.**
- They wanted to be as much like the worldly nations around them as they could possibly be.**



**In the same day I will punish All
those who leap over the
threshold, Who fill their masters'
houses with violence and deceit.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:9





“In the same day I will punish All those who leap over the threshold, Who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.” (Zp.1:9)

- This appears to refer to bringing pagan customs and superstitions into the house of God.**
- The worshipers of Dagon in a similar way honored silly and offensive superstitions (1Sm.5:5).**



Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day. (1Sm.5:5)

- Because the head and hands of Dagon fell on the threshold, superstition developed that it was cursed; therefore, the Philistines would not tread on it.**





JUDGMENT PROMISED TO MERCHANTS

(Zephaniah 1:10-11)

**"And there shall be on that day,"
says the LORD, "The sound of a
mournful cry from the Fish Gate,**

**A wailing from the Second
Quarter, And a loud crashing
from the hills.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:10





“"And there shall be on that day," says the LORD, "The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate, A wailing from the Second Quarter, And a loud crashing from the hills.” (Zp.1:10)

- The Second Quarter was a district within the city walls built by Hezekiah around the western hills (2Ch.32:5).**
- The merchants, made wealthy from dishonest gain (Zp.1:9), were singled out to depict the anguish at the coming judgment.**
- The “Fish Gate,” known today as the Damascus Gate, is located on the north side, just to the west of the Tower of Hananel (Ne.12:38-39). It was the gate through which they brought the fish from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River.**



**Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh!
For all the merchant people are
cut down; All those who handle
money are cut off.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:11





“Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh! For all the merchant people are cut down; All those who handle money are cut off.” (Zp.1:11)

- **Merchants and those with money trusted in their riches, and now God promises to cut down those steeped in that kind of idolatry.**



⁵Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience (Cl.3:5-6)

- **Maktesh, meaning 'mortar' was a district in the Siloam Valley where merchants carried on business.**







JUDGMENT PROMISED TO THE COMPLACENT

(Zephaniah 1:12-13)

**And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with
lamps, And punish the men Who are
settled in complacency, Who say in
their heart, 'The LORD will not do
good, Nor will He do evil.'**

ZEPHANIAH 1:12





**“And it shall come to pass at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And punish the men Who are settled in complacency, Who say in their heart, 'The LORD will not do good, Nor will He do evil.'”
(Zp.1:12)**

- No one will be able to hide against the judgment of God (“lamps”).**
- God will seek unrighteousness to punish and eradicate sin.**
- Some people believe in God as a great “clockmaker” who created the universe, wound it up and is no longer providing any intervention.**





Edward Gibbon
(1737–1794)

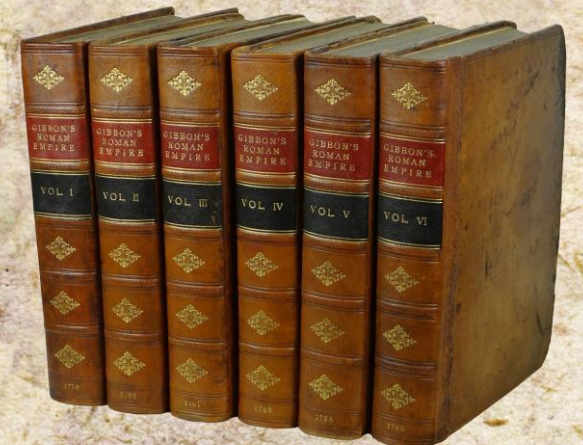
Edward Gibbon described the attitude towards religion in the last days of the Roman Empire:

■ **The PEOPLE** regarded all religions as equally true

■ **The PHILOSOPHERS** regarded all religions as equally false

■ **The POLITICIANS** regarded all religions as equally useful

**The Decline and Fall
of the Roman Empire**



**Therefore their goods shall become
booty, And their houses a
desolation; They shall build houses,
but not inhabit them; They shall
plant vineyards, but not drink their
wine.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:13





“Therefore their goods shall become booty, And their houses a desolation; They shall build houses, but not inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.” (Zp.1:13)

- God is saying that they are going to plant vineyards, but they are not going to drink the wine of them because they have sinned.**
- God had given a law to these people that when a man planted a vineyard, he was not to go to war until he had eaten the fruit of that vineyard (Du.20:6).**
- They won't be able to take time off from warfare. The enemy is going to come in like a flood.**





INTENSITY OF THE JUDGMENT

(Zephaniah 1:14-16)

**The great day of the LORD is near;
It is near and hastens quickly. The
noise of the day of the LORD is
bitter; There the mighty men shall
cry out.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:14





“The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.” (Zp.1:14)

- When people are indifferent toward God, they tend to think that he is indifferent toward them and their sin.**
- The term day of the LORD, does not necessarily refer to one specific day; it speaks of “God’s time.”**
- The idea is that now is the day of man, but the day of man will not last forever.**
- One day, the Messiah will end the day of man and bring forth the day of the LORD.**



**That day is a day of wrath, A day
of trouble and distress, A day of
devastation and desolation, A day
of darkness and gloominess, A
day of clouds and thick darkness,**

ZEPHANIAH 1:15





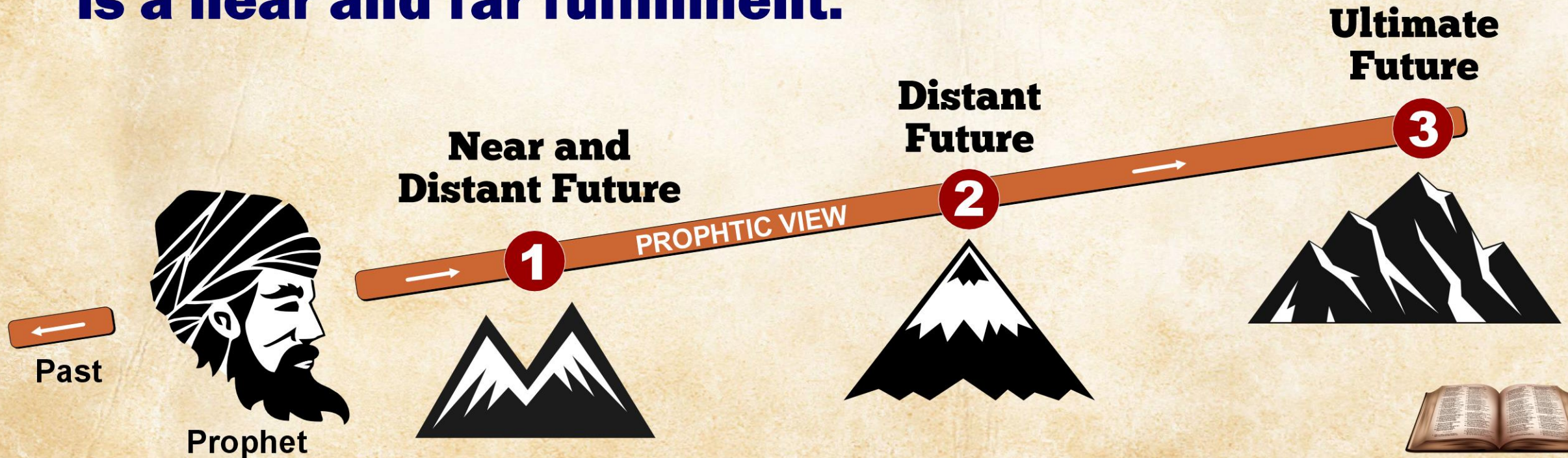
“That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,” (Zp.1:15)

- Zephaniah is speaking here of the harshness and intensity of the judgment that is coming.**
- It is a “day of wrath” because man will not give up without a fight, and because mankind will receive the just penalty for his rebellion against the LORD.**
- Zephaniah paints the picture powerfully with the repeated description, “a day of . . .” 5 times.**



“That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,” (Zp.1:15)

- The day of the Lord was near; the Babylonians would soon come and destroy Jerusalem (2Ki.24-25). But it is also a future time of judgment (Rv.6:17). So, there is a near and far fulfillment.**



**A day of trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:16





“A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.” (Zp.1:16)

- The trumpet was sounded in a time of war and this is a prediction of such an occasion.**
- The two silver trumpets would blow and the Lord would save them from their enemies (Nu.10:9).**
- Zephaniah says here that it is “a day of the trumpet”; they are going to blow the alarm, but God does not intend to deliver them. Why? He intends to judge them.**
- Fortified cities will prove to be insufficient.**





CERTAINTY OF THE JUDGMENT

(Zephaniah 1:17-18)

**"I will bring distress upon men, And
they shall walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against
the LORD; Their blood shall be
poured out like dust, And their flesh
like refuse."**

ZEPHANIAH 1:17





“I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse.” (Zp.1:17)

- **God wants to make it plain and certain that He will judge a rebellious Judah (“I will”).**
- **Like blind men, they would grope unsuccessfully for escape routes (Du.28:29).**
- **The reason for all this terrible judgment is expressed by the words because “they have sinned against the LORD.”**



**Neither their silver nor their gold Shall
be able to deliver them In the day of
the LORD's wrath; But the whole land
shall be devoured By the fire of His
jealousy, For He will make speedy
riddance Of all those who dwell in
the land.**

ZEPHANIAH 1:18





“Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.” (Zp.1:18)

- Men trust in silver and gold, but it will do them no good on the day of God's wrath. Sometimes a victorious army can be induced to make peace by the offer of money.**
- The Lord, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar's army, was resolved to devour the land speedily.**
- God will cut away the cancer of sin that was destroying the nation.**



A scenic landscape featuring a calm body of water in the foreground, reflecting the sky and surrounding trees. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The trees are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

**REPENT WHILE
THERE IS
STILL TIME**

(Zephaniah 2:1-2)

**Gather yourselves together,
yes, gather together, O
undesirable nation,**



ZEPHANIAH 2:1






“Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation,” (Zp.2:1)

- The idea is gathering together in a solemn demonstration of national mourning and repentance.**
- Here the prophet pleads with the nation to repent before it is too late.**
- They were insensible to the shame of their sinful condition.**
- You and I do not know how repulsive our sin is to God. We spend very little time weeping over our sins.**



**Before the decree is issued, Or
the day passes like chaff, Before
the LORD's fierce anger comes
upon you, Before the day of the
LORD's anger comes upon you!**

ZEPHANIAH 2:2



“Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you!” (Zp.2:2)

- If anything is to be done to avert the impending doom (“before the decree”) it must be done soon for the time of the invasion is near. There still was time to repent.**
- The “chaff” denotes that the nation was to be threshed and the worthless parts blown away.**
- The often-unwritten theme behind most every prophecy of judgment is, This is what will happen if you DO NOT REPENT.**
- It seems the most powerful lie is that there is no hurry. Nevertheless, today is the day of salvation (2Co.6:2).**







LAST CHANCE TO REPENT

(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.**

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.” (Zp.2:3)

- **The only means of escape is to turn from sin and walk with God (Mi.6:8, do justly, love mercy, walk humbly).**
- **Even the meek, those who had followed the law of the Lord, were encouraged to continue to show fruits of repentance so they would be “hidden” in the day of His judgment (Is.26:20).**



Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. (Is.26:20)

- **It is a wonderful thing to be hidden in the cleft of the rock (Ex.33:22) and to be covered by His wings of protection (Ps.91:4).**





ZEPHANIAH 1-2