

## Zephaniah

- Follows the classic format of most of the minor prophets: warning of judgment, near and far, with promise of future millennial blessing for God's people
- Zephaniah: "The Lord hides."
- Preaches approx. 640-630 BC during Josiah's reign

### a. Outline

#### Future Global Judgment

1. Prophecies of Near & Far Judgment (1-2)
2. Prophecies of Future Blessing in the Millennial Kingdom (3)

### b. Major Themes

- 1) The Day of the Lord (1:7, 14; 2:2)

✠ 1:2-3. Judgment of entire world (far, 7-Year Trib.)

✠ 1:4. Judgment of Judah/Jerusalem (near, Babylonian exile)

---

<sup>1</sup> Notes prepared with help of The Master's Seminary BI 501 Bible Survey syllabus.

John Hannah: “Zephaniah saw Judah’s destruction and universal judgment as two parts of one grand event, ‘the great day of the Lord’ (1:14). The destruction of the prophet’s own people would be so terrible that it was envisioned as ushering in God’s day of wrath (v. 15; 2:2) on all the world’s wicked” (BKC, 1:1525).

1:9 – “I will punish on that day all who leap on the threshold”

1:6, 12 And those who have turned back from following the LORD, and those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him...It will come about at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are stagnant in spirit, who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good or evil!’

- God’s determination in judgment, searching “Jerusalem with lamps”
  - Josephus wrote about an invasion where the city’s aristocracy was dragged from the sewer system where they hid for fear of death. <sup>2</sup>
- “who are stagnant in spirit” – “who are like wine left on its dregs.”
- Peter Craigie: “Zephaniah’s words on indifference touch the conscience of multitudes, those who are not guilty of unbelief, but are equally never overwhelmed by belief...” (Patterson, 315).

1:13-14 “Moreover, their wealth will become plunder, and their houses desolate; Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit *them*, and plant vineyards but not drink their wine.” <sup>14</sup> Near is the great day of the LORD,

---

<sup>2</sup>BKC, 1:1527.

Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly.

1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

3:8 "Therefore wait for Me," declares the LORD, "for the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal."

- "waiting" – surrendered-trust in the Lord, during difficult circumstances & affliction, believing that he will sovereignly bring resolution in his timing, as he accomplishes his purposes in the waiting
- Even in the terror of judgment, God extends much mercy:

2:1-3 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, <sup>2</sup> Before the decree takes effect – The day passes like the chaff – Before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you. <sup>3</sup> Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger.

## 2) The Restoration of Israel (3:14-20)

- The Messiah will return at the end of the culmination of the Day of Yahweh – the 7-year global Tribulation – and the 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth will go down

3:9-10 “For then I will change them to peoples with purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of Yahweh, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.  
10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia..”

- “I will change them to peoples with purified lips”
- That must be a work of Yahweh; a spiritual re-creation; new birth; regeneration
- To prepare for the arrival of the Millennial King & his Kingdom, the Lord purifies a people for Himself
- The future arrival of the King & His Kingdom is not only about changing rulers & geography, it’s also about changing the hearts of the people.

3:14-17 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all *your* heart...<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away *His* judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. <sup>16</sup> In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: “Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. <sup>17</sup> “The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

- The God of the universe will exult over his people in the Millennial Kingdom
  - The word translated “exult”: to be pleased, be delighted; to have a feeling or attitude of fondness and enjoyment in an object, implying a love or relationship to the object (DBL)

3:20 “At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” Says the LORD.

- A strong case for a literal, future restoration of ethnic Israel in the Millennial Kingdom
  
- c. Purpose: The Lord will exercise sovereign judgment in near & far manifestations of the Day of the Yahweh, followed by glorious restoration in the Millennial Kingdom.
  
- d. Bibliography: see Nahum
  - Richard Patterson (premil), *Zephaniah*, Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
  
  - John MacArthur (premil), *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Joel, and Obadiah: God's Comfort for His People*
  
  - John Hannah (premil), *Zephaniah*, Bible Knowledge Commentary