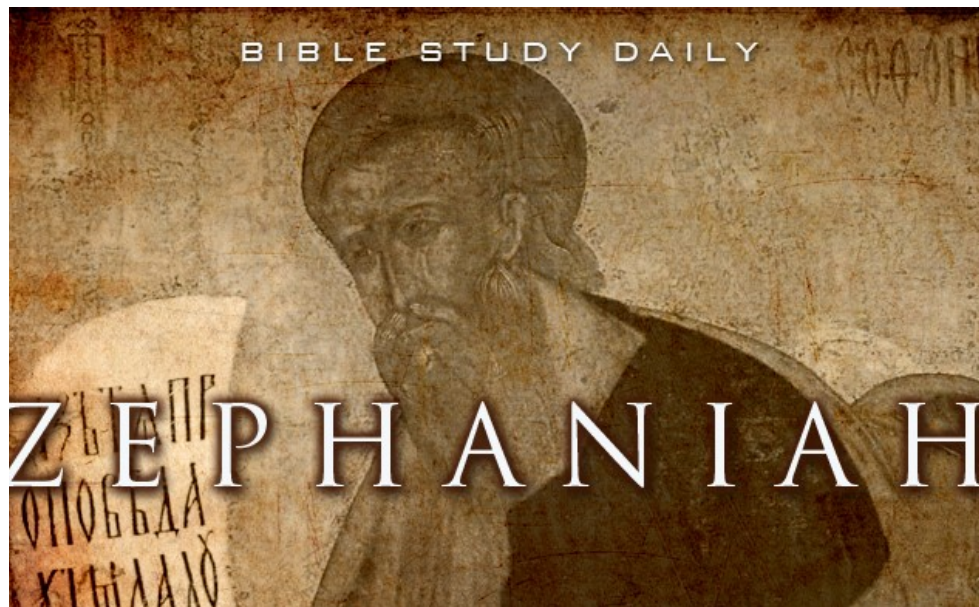




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Zephaniah as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The book of Zephaniah is named for its author, Zephaniah, son of Cushi. Zephaniah means “Jehovah hides,” or “Jehovah protects, or “Jehovah treasures.”

Author

Zephaniah, son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah received the word of the Lord (v. 1). Zephaniah was the only prophet to mention four generations back to Hezekiah which indicates his royal lineage.

Genre

Prophecy (ninth of twelve books commonly referred to as the “Minor Prophets”).

Literary Form

Poetic prophecy except for a prose introduction in verse 1.

Time Frame

Zephaniah’s prophecy came during the days of Josiah king of Judah (640-609 B.C.). The most probable date for the book is between 621-612 B.C. Because [Zephaniah 2:13](#) says Nineveh is still standing it had to have been written before the city’s fall in 612 B.C.

Emphasis

The emphasis of the book of Zephaniah was to warn the people of Judah of God’s imminent judgement in the Day of the Lord (used seven times in the book), the preservation of a remnant of God’s people, and His promise to restore the remnant to their land.

Outline

- 1) Zephaniah’s prophecy of God’s judgement (1:1-1:18)
- 2) Zephaniah’s call to Judah to repent (2:1-3)
- 3) God’s judgement upon the Gentile nations (2:4-2:15)
- 4) God’s judgement upon Jerusalem (3:1-7)
- 5) God’s promised blessings: salvation and deliverance (3:8-3:20)

What I Noticed Today (Zephaniah 1)

Zephaniah 1

The focus of Zephaniah 1 is on the impending judgment to Judah and the coming Day of the Lord.

In verse 1 Zephaniah receives the word of the Lord and traces his lineage back four generations to King Hezekiah.

In verses 2-6 Zephaniah jumps right in proclaiming judgment upon all the earth; man and beast, birds, and fish will all be swept away and destroyed. Jerusalem in Judah, the Baal worshippers, and those who worship other false idols will all be swept away.

Zephaniah specifically calls out false priests, those who worship Molech along with God (syncretism), and those who are indifferent to God

Note: Zephaniah clarifies in Zephaniah 3:9-13 as does Jeremiah 25:31-33 that there will be a righteous remnant who survives.

In verses 7-13 Zephaniah calls on these three classes of idol worshippers to be silent before the Lord because the Day of the Lord is near (impending judgment).

Note: Zephaniah mentions the Day of the Lord or a variation 19 times!

In addition to the idol worshippers, the princes and leaders who practice violence and fraud would face judgment. People in Jerusalem will be judged, especially the traders (the business people).

The Lord will search the city to find all those who are complacent who think the Lord does not care and bring judgment upon them.

In verses 14-18 Zephaniah describes the extent of the devastation from the Day of the Lord's judgment. It will be a bitter day, a day of distress and anguish, of ruin and devastation, of darkness and gloom, of trumpet blasts and battle cries. The Lord will bring devastation and all their money will not be able to save them. The devastation will be sudden and complete.

Zephaniah 2

In Zephaniah 2, Zephaniah's focus shifts from the judgment on Judah in the Day of the Lord to the Lord's judgment on Judah's enemies.

In verses 1-3 Zephaniah calls on the people of Judah to gather together, 1) before the decree takes place, 2) before the day passes away, and before the burning anger of the Lord comes (last "before" is repeated for emphasis). He tells them to, 1) seek the Lord, 2) seek righteousness, and 3) seek humility

and perhaps you will be saved on the Day of the Lord.

In verses 4-7 Zephaniah announces the destruction of four of the major cities in Philistia: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron. He pronounces a woe on the Cherethites (also “Kerethites”) and the inhabitants of Canaan (Philistia). The entire area will become a possession of the remnant of Judah because the Lord will restore them to their land.

Note: Verses 4-7 describes an area of the coastal plains along the Mediterranean Sea. None of this would be left after the judgment.

In verses 8-11 Zephaniah turns his attention eastward to the tribes of Moab and Ammon (descendants of Lot’s daughters). They had been openly hostile to Judah, taunting them and boasting against them. Because of this, the Lord will make Moab and Ammon like Sodom and Gomorrah. The remnant of Judah will plunder the land and possess it.

In verse 12 the Cushites will be slain with the sword.

Note: Cushites were descendants of Cush (Genesis 10:6) living in what is southern Egypt/northern Ethiopia today.

In verses 13-15 Zephaniah announces the judgment to come against Assyria (northeast of Judah). Nineveh will be a desolation. The Ninevites proudly thought they were secure but they will become a desolation. Everyone who passes by will shake their fists and hiss at the city.

Zephaniah 3

In verses 1-5 Zephaniah pronounces a woe upon Jerusalem. The people do not listen or draw near to God. Her officials are like roaring lions (hungry), her judges are like wolves, her prophets are fickle and treacherous, and the priests profane what is holy. The Lord, however, is righteous. In Him there is no injustice and He is consistent every day.


In verses 6-7 the Lord warns the people of Jerusalem by reminding them what had happened to other nations who He had judged and were in ruins. The intent was the people of Jerusalem would see the Lord’s judgment on other nations and realize their need to repent and return to Him. But they did not. Instead, they increased their corruption.

In verse 8 Because of this (therefore), the Lord determined to gather all the nations together for judgment.

In verses 9-13 Zephaniah says at that time (the day of the Lord’s judgment), the Lord will change the speech of all nations so they may call on the name of the Lord.

Note: This does not necessarily mean a new language but a change in people’s hearts so they will speak purely (see Isaiah 6:5-7).

In verses 11-13 on that day (the beginning of the Millennium), the people will have no shame because of their past sins. The proud arrogant people will be removed leaving behind a remnant of the meek and the humble. This



remnant will do no injustice, speak no lies, will not be deceitful, and will be secure.

In verses 14-20 In that day (when the Millennium begins), the people of Judah and Israel sing, shout, and rejoice because the Lord had taken away His judgment. Their enemies will be gone. They will be safe and secure from evil. The Lord will dwell with them. This remnant will have no shame but only praise for the Lord. They will be gathered together, their fortunes restored, and they will be praised among all the people of the earth.

Note: Zephaniah ends the book with “says the Lord” a phrase that connotes the Lord’s authority and the certainty that what He has promised will be fulfilled.