

# ZEPHANIAH

## INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – The name Zephaniah means, "the Lord hides or protects." He was a member of the royal family of King Hezekiah (1:1).
2. DATE – He prophesied during the reign of King Josiah which was 640-608 BC but probably before the reforms of Josiah in 621 BC. This would place him just prior to Jeremiah's ministry and the fall of Jerusalem in 613 BC.
3. READERS – The book would be written primarily to the nation of Judah but also tells the future of the nations surrounding Judah.
4. THEME – The day of the Lord will mean the destruction of Judah and her neighbors but a remnant will be preserved and blessed.
5. KEY VERSES – 1:4, 2:1-3, and 3:8-9, 17.

## OUTLINE

1. THE INTRODUCTION AND PROLOGUE TO THE BOOK. CH 1:1
2. THE DAY OF THE LORD MEANS DESTRUCTION FOR JUDAH FOR HER SINS. CH 1:2-2:3
  - A. The causes of destruction are Judah's sins. Ch1:2-13
  - B. The Day of the Lord will be swift. Ch1:14-18
  - C. Last call for repentance. Ch2:1-3
3. JUDAH'S NEIGHBORS WILL ALSO BE DESTROYED. CH 2:4-15
  - West – Philistia (V4-7)
  - South – Ethiopia (V12)
  - East – Moab and Ammon (V8-11)
  - North – Assyria (V13-15)
4. JUDAH IS CONDEMNED FOR HER WICKEDNESS. CH 3:1-8
5. THE LORD WILL RESTORE A REMNANT OF ISRAEL. CH 3:9-20
  - A. Her enemies will be destroyed. V8
  - B. Her remnant will be purified. V9-13
  - C. Her kingdom will be blessed. V14-20

## IMPORTANCE OF ZEPHANIAH

1. It seems we never learn. Zephaniah is the last in a long list of prophets warning God's people of His judgment if they don't shape up. They never did and God destroyed their nation.
2. The Day of the Lord is a preview or type of the final Day of the Lord when God judges all the earth. It will be sudden and complete.
3. God is over all the nations around His people too. What a responsibility we have to our neighbors to tell them of His judgment and salvation.
4. The remnant shines through like a light at the end of the tunnel. God preserves His own even through the worst of His judgment.

## ZEPHANIAH

1 – In chapter one God announced that he would send a day of destruction through judgment on the nation of Judah. It would be complete. The purpose was to erase all evidence and memory of the Baal and worship of him. V12 "At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and I will punish the men who are complacent, who say in their hearts, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill.'" This day was coming soon, a day of wrath, distress, anguish, darkness, gloom, clouds and blackness. It was all because they sinned against the Lord. V14 "The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there." V17 "I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung."

2 – Chapter two begins with a call to those who would hear to turn to the Lord in humility to avoid judgment or to take advantage of the offer of the mercy of the Lord in the time of the upcoming judgment. V3 "Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord." Then the mood changed as the Lord announced that Judah would be restored even though the nations surrounding her would be destroyed. These include Moab, Ammon, Cush and Assyria. Nineveh the capitol of Assyria, once a thriving center of world government would be laid waste and inhabited only by wild animals. V10-11 "This shall be their lot in return for their pride, because they taunted and boasted against the people of the Lord of hosts. The Lord will be awesome against them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth, and to him shall bow down, each in its place, all the lands of the nations."

3 – The Lord will rule Jerusalem in righteousness. V5 "The Lord within her is righteous; he does no injustice; every morning he shows forth his justice; each dawn he does not fail; but the unjust knows no shame." The people were so wicked that even when God threatened to cut them off in their corruption, they were still eager to act corruptly. God would cut off those who were haughty in their pride. V12 "But I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel." This chapter went on to sound like there would be a complete restoration of the city of Jerusalem and Judah but it is in a right way. The passage also talks about the conversion of the nations so that they will seek the Lord. V9 "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord." The book concludes with great promises of restoration and blessing. V20 "At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord."