

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

ZEPHANIAH

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INTRODUCTION:

The prophet is Zephaniah, whose name means "*Jehovah Hides.*" Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah who ascended his throne in 639 BC., at the age of eight years-old (2 Chronicles 34-35). The book of Zephaniah was written before 629 BC when Josiah found and eagerly read the Holy Scriptures discovered in the temple. Zephaniah lived about 600 years B.C. (*B.C. means years Before Christ came to the earth*). He lived in the country called Judah. ¹Zephaniah is no ordinary preacher. He is the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah, one of Judah's most famous rulers. He has royal blood in his veins, but more important, he has the message of God on his lips. Strange to say, Zephaniah preached during the reign of godly King Josiah, and it was a time of religious "*revival*" (II Kings 22-23). To all appearances, it was a time of religious concern and consecration. In the first two chapters of his book, the prophet Zephaniah will relate the day of the Lord to both the Jews and the Gentiles. The people had pursued other deities, but, for Judah, Yahweh was to have been the only God and thus the only deity on which they could swear by. They had many other sins which brought them to this point. Zephaniah describes three special days, two of which are grievous, while the third is glorious.

1. **THE FIRST GRIEVOUS DAY** includes Judah and her surrounding neighbors where judgment is brought and is fulfilled by the king of Babylon (1:1-13; 2:1-15; 3:1-5).
2. **THE SECOND GRIEVOUS DAY** will include all nations and is yet to be fulfilled by the King of heaven (1:14-18; 3:6-8).
3. And lastly, **THE GLORIOUS DAY** Zephaniah proclaims justice (3:9-20).

1:1 The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. Zephaniah is not living the life of ease, but, God's Word comes to him which would be a dangerous calling for what God was about to tell him. The names listed above are Cushi, Gedaliah, Amariah, and Hizkiah. The purpose of giving this ancestry is to link the prophet with the house and line of royalty that he would subsequently condemn. Zephaniah was the last prophet God sent to Judah prior to its being carried off captive into Babylon.

1:2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. Jehovah warns that He will destroy everything in the land, air, and sea. The destruction will be universal, and it will be complete. Nothing will be left!

1:3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked: and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord. God created everything on the earth and He is willing to not only destroy His creation, but He will also destroy the idols

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/exhortation-to-submit/http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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that the people worshipped—the "stumbling blocks" that offended the Lord. God was very specific! He will consume it all from off the face of the earth.

1:4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;— When God stretches out His hand, it means that judgment is coming! Judah as well as the neighboring inhabitants of Jerusalem will not get away. He calls the name of the idol god they had been worshipping (Baal) to let them know that *"He will cut off the remnant of Baal from that place and destroy any trace of it."* "Baal" was the Canaanite storm god whose worship had infected Israel since the generation following Joshua, under whom the people failed to drive the Canaanites out of the land. So, therefore, *"The remnant of Baal"* (the remains of Baal worship), *"and the name of the Chemarims with the priests"* will be cut off. The temple of God was located in Jerusalem. "Chemarims" ²means *"black-robed,"* and is applied to the idolatrous priests whom the king had appointed to conduct worship in high places. These priests wore black robes while together with the legitimate priests (Jewish priests wearing white robes) corrupted the worship of Jehovah. This shows that even the priests were involved. They were like an unfaithful wife. They had committed spiritual adultery.

1:5 And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham;— Altars were often erected upon the housetops, for they could see a clear sky. They burned incense on the housetop and the drink offerings were poured out. So, those that worshipped the host of heaven upon the housetops would also be cut off. They ³worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, rather than God who created the sun, moon, and stars. *"Malcham"* was the national idol of the Ammonites. *"Malcham"* was the same as Molech. God's people had stopped looking to God and started worshipping the false gods of the people around them. The sad thing was that some of them still went through the formality of worshipping God while they swore allegiance to *"Malcham."* They included God, as if He was a part of the many gods. God will not be God to anyone who has other gods. He will be the only One, or He will not be your God.

1:6 And them that are turned back from the Lord; and those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for him. The list just goes on. There were *"those that formerly worshipped God, but now no longer do, and there were those who never loved God and never wanted to."* They will also be cut off and destroyed. They were guilty of sins of commission (worshipping idols) and omission (ignoring the Lord).

1:14 The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. The day of the Lord is described as the great day because of the major effect that it will have upon the land and its habitants. Its nearness is emphasized by the repetition of the word *"near"*, and the speed with which it is approaching is indicated by the words *"hasteth greatly."* All of this is to show the urgency of the matter. And when the day of the Lord arrives, the mighty man (the strong soldier) will do something that one does not ordinarily do—he shall cry bitterly.

² <http://biblehub.com/zephaniah/1-5.htm>

³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/zephaniah/01.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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1:15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,— Verses 14-16 describe the Day of the Lord in great detail. It will be an awful day, for it will be characterized by wrath. It will be...

- *a day of wrath*: is a day when the LORD is angry; a pouring out of God's wrath coming upon Jerusalem.
- *a day of trouble and distress*: a day when people are not happy and they have much pain; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they being taken and led captive, their houses plundered and demolished, and the whole city and temple lay in ruins.
- *a day of wasteness and desolation*: a day when there are storms that destroy everything; the whole country of Judea, and the metropolis of it; of their houses, fields, and vineyards.
- *a day of darkness and gloominess*: a day that is dark because there is no light; the displeasure of God being shown in the very heavens, by the darkness and gloominess of them,
- *a day of clouds and thick darkness*: a day that the clouds make very dark; the thick clouds with which they were covered.

1:16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

- *a day of the trumpet and alarm*: a day when the trumpet makes a noise in the war against strong cities and corner towers. It will be sounded; for a death blow is going to be delivered against the fenced cities, and against the high towers which were considered impregnable. They will be attacked and nothing will protect them from the onslaught of the invaders.

SUMMARY:

Judgment was coming to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. God would destroy and put an end to every remnant of those who worshipped Baal; the idolatrous priests, so that even the memory of them will disappear. And those who worship the host of heaven on their housetops, bowing to the sun, moon, and stars; who prostrate themselves before Yahweh but swear by Malcham too will be destroyed. Those who turned back from following the Lord and those who had not sought the Lord nor wanted Him will also be destroyed (**1:4-6**).

The great day of the Lord was near and speeding fast—a day when strong men will weep bitterly—judgment was near. It's a day of the wrath of God poured out; a day of terrible distress and anguish, a day of ruin and desolation, a day of clouds and thick. A trumpet alarm will blow against the walled cities and high towers (**1:14-16**).

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2:3 Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Once the day of the Lord has arrived, it will be too late; but before it arrives, there is a time to seek the Lord's face. The meek of the earth are those who have not strayed away from God. They implored them to seek the Lord (Jehovah); seek his righteousness, and seek meekness—putting everything at His disposal. There was hope for those who did what God commanded. When they seek the Lord; seek righteousness; seek meekness, they may be able to hide in the day of the Lord's anger.

SYNOPSIS:

Chapter 2:4-15 Not only will God's anger be vented against His people for their sins, but it will also overflow and overcome.

- Judah's first enemies are on the west (Philistia 2:4-7). Four of the five major cities of Philistia (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron) are singled out for judgment. Gaza will be forsaken, and Ashkelon desolation; they will drive out Ashdod at noon, and Ekron will be rooted up. The sea coast shall be the remnant of the house of Judah. This desolation would be temporary, for God ultimately would give the land to His people following their restoration from the Babylonian captivity. This would be accomplished for Judah because God shall visit them. The visitation would be a visitation of deliverance, for He would turn away their captivity.
- The second enemy upon whom judgment is pronounced is to the east (Moab and Ammon 2:8-11). These nations stemming from the incestuous relationship of Lot with his daughters would share the same fate as the cities in which Lot dwelt—utter destruction. Their land will become the possession of Judah after the remnant return from the Babylonian captivity. The reason is given in verse 10. Moab and Ammon are exceedingly proud and in their pride they have moved against God's people and, thus against God Himself. With the destruction of the heathen goes the destruction of the gods that they worship which, in reality, are only products of their own minds. This will result in a universal worshipping the only God, Jehovah!
- The third enemy upon whom judgment is pronounced is in the south (Ethiopia 2:12). They will be no match for the sword of Jehovah. It will utterly slay them.
- The fourth enemy upon whom judgment is pronounced is in the north (Assyria /Ninevah 2:13-15). It would be soon to come that God would stretch out His hand against the north and destroy Assyria and make Ninevah a desolation. It is amplified in detail by the prophecy of Nahum. And it would become a barren waste. Their voices will begin to say "*This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in!*" Then: "*every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.*"

Thus all points of the compass are covered, indicating the universality of God's judgment. He is truly no respecter of persons. Both Jew and Gentile have sinned, and both will feel the judgment of God. God is wiping the slate clean because He is in the process of establishing a new phase of His program. **TOP**

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

ZEPHANIAH 3:1-15, 20[HOME](#)

3:1 Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! This is speaking to Jerusalem. The prophet Zephaniah pronounces "*Woe*" to her! This city is now described as defiled (*corrupted*) and polluted (*adulterated*) with idol worship and becoming like a harlot. The poor, the widow, and the fatherless were oppressed by the oppressing (*harassing*) city. Rather than being holy, and rather than showing care, the city had become filthy and polluted. They no longer cared about the consequences of turning away from God.

3:2 She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God. Jerusalem had not received correction but she would soon learn that to reject God's correction would lead to destruction. She disobeyed the voice of God by not listening. She refused all correction. She went against the Lord by not trusting in Him. And she didn't even seek for God by drawing near to Him. Those who are proud often refuse to listen to anything that contradicts their initiated self-esteem. That's how God's people had become.

3:3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. Zephaniah singles out four classes of leadership for condemnation within her. The political leaders:

1. Her princes—her leaders were like roaring lions looking for their next victims; out for everything they could get, rather than guarding them.
2. Her judges—were like ravenous wolves at evening time, who at dawn have left no trace of their prey.

3:4 Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The spiritual leaders are also singled out:

3. Her prophets— rather than being speakers of God's truth, they were reckless and treacherous false prophets which came in sheep's clothing giving messages that were not of God, but something they dreamed up themselves, for their own advantage.
4. Her priests—have profaned the holy and done violence to the law, instead of helping purify sinners through presenting the people's offerings before God, they made them profane and unsuitable to be in God's holy presence. They were to teach life under the law, instead they did violence, leading others to do the same.

Through Zephaniah, God had rebuked all types of leadership in Jerusalem because of the callous disobedience, their irresponsibility, and outright sin against the Lord.

3:5 The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he falleth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. Unlike the human leaders, God perpetually shows that He is righteous in not breaking the Law. Even though the people didn't follow Him, He was there within the city. Every morning He did no iniquity, but He was at work, His justice was evident, but they still didn't heed. He didn't fail them. The wicked still knew no shame. All received fair treatment. He is no respecter of persons.

3:6 I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. This speaks to Judah

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about Judah's enemies. God describes how He has executed judgment. He lets us know just how powerful He is. He's cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; their streets were made waste, that none could pass through. Why? - Because their cities were destroyed, and no habitation could live there. It describes the judgment that Jehovah executed upon other nations; a warning so that Judah's would not have to go through this, so that they could dwell in peace and come to repentance. He is reminding them that His testimony is true!

3:7 I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings. By God doing the above, surely He thought the people would fear Him (*reverence Him*) and follow His instructions. It was to serve as warnings to Judah, and was meant to turn His people back to Him. However, Judah rose early, and continued in all their corrupt deeds. They conducted business as usual thinking punishment wouldn't happen to them. God had no choice. I'm reminded of Luke 11:23 " *He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.*" They had out rightly rejected God!

3:8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. We can sin all we want and think there will not be punishment, but there will come a day... if you haven't felt any remorse or shame, just wait! So God admonishes the faithful remnant to stand and wait for Him to be Judge; to carry out His judgment because He's determined to gather the nations, assemble the kingdoms. For this process to work, He will pour out His indignation, even His fierce anger, for God is not pleased! They will see that all the earth will be devoured with the fire of His jealousy! The fire is a symbol of purification. ⁴The prophet transitions from the historical invasion of Judah by Babylon to the future Day of the Lord. He speaks of the Great Tribulation, when the Lord will gather all the nations for judgment. Those, who are to wait, are the saved. They are admonished to wait for this day. The nations gathered, here, are speaking of that time of the great battle of Armageddon. There has never really been a time in past history, when all of mankind was caught up in battle like this. The earth will be destroyed by God's fire, and a new heaven and a new earth will come forth from God. Revelation 16:16 " *And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*" In that day He will rise up against the intended prey.

3:9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. After the people have waited upon God's judgment, there is a great blessing. The people in view are a remnant of the Gentiles who survived God's judgment because of their conversion. Jehovah will turn to the people and will give them a pure language. Why? - Because He wants them to call upon the Name of the Lord in oneness; to serve Him with one consent. All will be unified in their worship of Jehovah, and all will address Him in pure praise and supplication with their language purified of all heathen terminology. In that day God will alter the speech (or lips) of His people.

3:10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. The purification of the Gentiles will affect what they do. Those from the south (Ethiopia) will gather together " *even the daughter of my scattered*" (*the Jews that were dispersed— alienated from God*) will return to Judah with an offering unto Jehovah. The " *suppliants*" are the Gentile Ethiopians, not the Jews

⁴ <http://www.bible-studys.org/Bible%20Books/Zephaniah/Zephaniah%20Chapter%203.html>
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who are dispersed among them. God says "*bring mine offering*" which is His requirement for worship. Thus, the conversion of the Ethiopians is demonstrated by their deeds because their hearts were right with God. In conclusion they will receive the blessing of a pure language and call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent along with the dispersed Jews.

3:11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain. What do you know? God says His people will not even be ashamed. In that day the punishment will cease. There will no cause for shame for Jehovah will have dealt in judgment with every ungodly prideful person. He will remove all residue of sinful pride from the nation. The pride which was characteristic of the false priests and the false prophets will be removed and will no longer infect the worship of the Lord or the surroundings or environments in which that worship was conducted. The cleansing of Israel will take place!

3:12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. In the place of the proud, Jehovah will leave those who are truly the opposite of prideful, but those who are meek and humble and trust in Him completely.

3:13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. The remnant of Israel will be purified of their sin, whether in work or word, and they will be at peace and in fellowship with God and with one another. Iniquity shall not be found among them, neither any deceit in their tongues be spoken from their mouths. They will be like sheep that eat and lie down in peace. When a nation is spiritually right, it will be physically secure. Jehovah will provide for and protect His people, and they will dwell in perfect peace and security.

3:14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. In terms of endearment God calls them "*O daughter*," meaning "*beloved*." O daughter of Zion means O daughter of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem's inhabitants are called "Israel." He's still speaking to the nation of Israel. Israel can confidently rejoice and praise Jehovah in view of such restoration, peace, and security. The nation is exhorted to give heartfelt expressions to sing, to shout, to be glad, and to rejoice. Why? Because God has blessed them to where they will no longer be the same:

- They will no longer be ashamed.
- They will not be prideful nor have haughtiness within them.
- They will trust in the name of the Lord.
- They shall not do iniquity, speak lies, neither any deceit in their tongues be spoken from their mouths.

But God! In spite of what they had done, being called His beloved truly will cause them to rejoice!

3:20 At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord. The message of doom in the beginning of the book becomes a message of hope by the end.

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Ultimately, at that time, Jehovah will restore His people, and all wrongs wrought against them will be righted. Their restoration will mean blessings, not only for them, but for the redeemed of all nations of the earth. This prophecy was only partially fulfilled in the restoration that followed the Babylonian captivity, but it will ultimately and fully be fulfilled in the restoration following the Great Tribulation when Jehovah returns to the earth, puts down every enemy, regathers His people, and reigns over them for a thousand years!

SUMMARY:

The sins that infect the surrounding nations also infected Jerusalem, and thus she was filthy and polluted, ripe for judgment, upon such a city "woe" was pronounced. She didn't obey and was rebellious to the voice of God and didn't want to receive correction. Jerusalem's princes and her judges were condemned. And Judah's prophets and her priests were also condemned. In spite of the nation's sins, God had been in the midst of them, not bringing any harm to them, but other nations have caught the brunt of God's wrath. Still Judah had not repented. They kept doing sinful things. God lets us know there will be a day He comes with His indignation and fierce anger devouring all the earth with the fire of His jealousy (**3:1-8**).

A pure language will be given to the Gentiles, even the dispersed Jews, so they may call upon the Name of the Lord in oneness; and serve Him with one consent. Those from the south (Ethiopia) will gather together the Jews as they bring an offering unto Jehovah for worship (**3:9-10**).

In that day they will no longer be ashamed for they will no longer be rebels against God. He will remove all pride and arrogant people among them. Those left will be poor and humble and they will trust in the name of the Lord. They will not do iniquity, but will be at peace and fellowship with God and with one another. Such restoration of peace and security will cause Israel to confidently rejoice with all their heart (**3:11-14, 20**).

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