

3/17/17

Intro To Zephaniah

Zephaniah is the eighth minor prophet in chronological order that spoke prior to the Babylonian captivity.

Remember there are twelve Minor Prophets, nine pre-exilic and three post-exilic, being Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi.

Zephaniah deals with the judgment of Judah under the phrase “The day of the Lord”, this theme is also common with Obediah, Joel, Amos and Malachi to mention of few.

Zephaniah has only three chapter or fifty-three verses in his book, yet it is a stern message of God’s ultimate judgment of sin.

I. The prophet Zephaniah.

A. Zephaniah is among the twelve Minor Prophets of the Old Testament.

1. There are six Minor Prophets prior to the captivity of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria in 722 B.C.
 - a. Obadiah 845 B.C.
 - b. Joel 835 B.C.
 - c. Jonah 765 B.C.
 - d. Amos 760 B.C.
 - e. Hosea 740 B.C.

- f. Micah 735 B.C.
2. There are three contemporary Minor Prophets prior to the captivity of the Southern Kingdom by Babylon from 606-586 B.C.
 - a. Nahum. 660-650 B.C. (some have placed him from 616-613 B.C.)
 - b. Zephaniah 625 B.C.
 - c. Habakkuk 608 B.C.
3. There are three Minor Prophets after the return from captivity of Babylon from 536-425 B.C.
 - a. Haggai 520 B.C.
 - b. Zechariah 520 B.C.
 - c. Malachi 430 B.C.

- B.** Zephaniah is the only Minor Prophet that is identified with the royal family, the house of David.
1. His father was Cushi.
 2. His grandfather Gedaliah.
 3. His great grandfather Amariah.
 4. His great, great grandfather King Hezekiah.
 - * He presents to us one of the fullest genealogies of the Minor Prophets. Zeph. 1:1
 5. His first hand knowledge of the corruption and moral standard both in public and private life was vivid.
 6. His name Zephaniah means “Yahweh hides” or “Yahweh has hidden”.
 - a. Perhaps indicative of one who would be hidden from the wrath to come.

- b. Prophetically for those who were righteous and in the long-term as a type of all who will be hidden from “the day of the Lord’s anger” because they are living for God. Zeph. 2:3
 - c. The name appears nine other times in the Old Testament.
 - 1) For a priest, the son of Maaseiah. Jer. 21:1; 29:25
 - 2) For a Kohathite, son of Tahath. 1Chron. 6:36
 - 3) For another priest, father of Josiah or hen. Zech. 6:10, 14
- B. Zephaniah affirms he was a prophet of God.**
- 1. The opening of his book declared that the word of the Lord came to him. Zeph. 1:1a
 - 2. The term “Says the Lord” is frequent.
 - a. Chapter one, verse three.
 - b. Chapter one, verse ten.
 - c. Chapter two, verse nine.
 - d. Chapter three, verse eight.
 - e. Chapter three, verse twenty.
 - 3. The prophecy of Zephaniah includes the destruction of Nineveh. Zeph. 2:13
 - 4. The prophesy is said to be in the days of Josiah, king of Judah. Zeph. 1:1e-f
 - * Without doubt the days were those between the evil days of Manasseh and the reform of Josiah!
- C. Zephaniah was from Judah.**

- 1. He addresses Judah and Jerusalem. Zeph. 1:4
- 2. He addressed the princes. Zeph. 1:8
- 3. He addressed a district of Jerusalem. Zeph. 1:11a
- 4. He says God would search out Jerusalem. Zeph. 1:12
- 5. He addresses the princes, judges, prophets, the priests and their sins. Zeph. 3:3-4
- 6. He has told us that he was a prince of Judah and prophesied during the reign of Josiah. 638-608 B.C.

D. Zephaniah had four contemporary prophets.

- 1. Jeremiah the prophet. Jer. 1:2
- 2. Nahum the prophet.
- 3. Habakkuk the prophet.
- 4. Ezekiel in Babylon.

This was the prophet Zephaniah!

II. The times of Zephaniah.

A. Spiritual Apostasy marked the nation.

- 1. King Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign and did so for 55 years, 697-642 B.C. and Amon 642-640 B.C both had led as well as polluted the city and the people with gross idolatry accompanied with abominable practices. 2Kings 21-23
 - a. Social injustices.
 - b. Moral corruption.
 - c. Oppressing of the poor.

- d. Syncretism.
 - 2. Manasseh practiced human sacrifice to Molech, offering his own children, called Milcom, the god Ammon. 2Kings 21:10, 13
 - 3. Manasseh was taken by Assyria to Babylon and he repented and God restored him to his Jerusalem and cleanse the land, but it was too late. 2Chron. 33:11-13
 - 4. There was gross idolatry. Zeph. 1:4
 - 5. The sin of Jerusalem was syncretism. Zeph. 1:5
 - 6. The leader were the guilty ones. Zeph. 1:8-9; 3:1-4
 - 7. The people had become complacent. Zeph. 1:12
- B.** King Josiah began to reign at eight years old and in his eighteenth he commanded the temple to be restored and the book of the law was found by Hilkiah the high priest. 2Kings 22-23; 2Chron. 34-35
- 1. Josiah was 26 years old at, 621-22 B.C. he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem, from 640-609 B.C. 2Chron. 34:1b
 - a. He commanded to seek God tearing his clothes, recognizing their failure of keeping the law and that God's wrath was due to the sin of Manasseh.
 - b. Huldah the prophetess told Josiah that God would still judge Judah, but because he had humbled himself before God, it would not take place in his lifetime.

- c. Josiah set out to clean the city of idolatry, but for the most part it was superficial and in lip service.
- 2. Jeremiah the prophet spoke up against the superficiality of the reform.
 - a. He proclaimed this hypocrisy and insincerity which was clothed with religious formalities. Jer. 7; 26
 - b. Just about 100 years before the Northern Kingdom had gone into captivity for the very same thing. 722 B.C.
 - c. Assyria was a power and Babylon was soon to be a rising power who would be the chastening instrument of God. Hab. 1:6-11; 2:5-8
- 3. Josiah listened with a deaf ear. 2Chron. 35:20-22; 2Kings 23:28-30
 - a. He finished preparing all the temple, when Pharaoh Neco of Egypt came up to fight at Carchemish by the Euphrates and he went out against him. 2Chron. 35:20
* Neco came up against Assyria not Jerusalem.
 - b. He was sent a message from Neco that he meant no harm to him and warned him not to meddle with him lest he destroy him. 2Chron. 35:21
 - c. He did not pay heed to the warning from the mouth of God it says and disguising himself proceeded to the Valley of Megiddo. 2Chron. 35:22
 - d. Josiah lost his life being struck by an archers he requested his servants to take

him away for he was severely wounded and die in Jerusalem. 2Chron. 35:23-24; 2Kings 23:28-30

- e. Josiah was lamented by all of Judah and Jerusalem as well as Jeremiah the prophet, 609 B. C. 2Chron. 35:24d-25

C. The political world powers were shifting.

1. Assyria was on her way out as a world power, Babylon was a rising power having obtained their independence from Assyria in 625 B. C. under Nabopolassar.
2. The Sythians were non-Semitic race of barbarians, blood thirsty caucasian people from the north that swept down in great hordes over western Asia during the seventh century 630-635 B. C. and they joined joined with Babylon to destroy Nineveh, as we noted in Habakkuk. Herodotus
 - * They were considered to be animals in conduct, decapitating their victims and boiling their skulls, then using them for drinking vessels. Col. 3:11
3. Nahum had prophesied that Nineveh would be destroyed by Babylon and it took place in 612 B.C.
 - * As we have noted Zepheniah indicated Ninevah had not been destoryed, but was yet to be destroyed. Zeph. 2:13
4. In 605 B. C. Babylon defeated Egypt at Carchemish.
5. Babylon then led the first three sieges against Jerusalem in 606, 596 and 586 B. C.

E. Zephaniah focuses on the day of the Lord.

1. The phrase appears in Joel, Obediah, as well as many other Old Testament Prophets.
2. The day of the Lord is the central theme mentioned seven times. Zeph. 1:7, 8, 10, 14, 18; 2:2; 3:8
3. The period of history has a two-fold fulfillment.
 - a. Short term in view of immediate judgment, Scythians and later Babylon.
 - b. Long term in view of future judgment of the Tribulation and Great Tribulation.
3. The reason is that God's love is pure and jealous therefore He cannot compromise with sin.
 - a. Two times the fire of His jealousy is mentioned. Zeph. 1:18; 3:8
 - b. He is in the midst and sees all. Zeph. 3:5, 15, 17
 - c. The day of the Lord will climax in restoration of the remnant and kingdom.
 - 1) The remnant. Zeph. 2:3, 7; 3:12-13
 - 2) The return of their captivity. Zeph. 2:7e, 3:20
4. The prophet Zephaniah is very specific.
 - a. The day is at hand and is the Lord's sacrifice. Zeph. 1:7
 - b. The day will be punishment to the leaders. Zeph. 1:8
 - c. The day will be a sound of mourning and wailing. Zeph. 1:10-11
 - d. The day will be a time of revealing all things. Zeph. 1:12

- e. The day is a bitter one where the mighty men shall cry out. Zeph. 1:14
 - f. The day is a day of wrath, trouble, distress, devastation, darkness and gloom. Zeph. 1:15
 - g. The day will allow no one to be delivered. Zeph. 1:18
 - h. The day will hide only the righteous. Zeph. 2:3
 - i. The day will be the judgment of the nations. Zeph. 2:4-15
 - J. The day will culminate in the restoration of Israel. Zeph. 3:14-20
 - g. The prophet calls for repentance. Zeph. 2:1-2
5. The day of the Lord will begin at the same time the rapture takes place.
- a. It will come as a thief in the night.
 - b. It will remove the church by catching her up in the air, “harpozo”. 1Thess. 4:17
 - c. It will allow the Anti-Christ to appear. Rev. 6
 - d. It will allow Israel to make a one week covenant with the Anti-Christ. Dan. 9:27
 - e. It will be divided into two halves of three and a half years or forty-two months, one-hundred-sixty days. Rev. , Dan. , Matt.
 - f. It will result in the worship of the Anti-Christ. 2Thess. 2; Rev. 13

These were the times of Zephaniah!

III. The book of Zephaniah.

- A. The date of the book of Zephaniah.
 1. He mentions Ninevah yet to be destroyed in the future, so we know he spoke before 612 B.C. Zeph. 2:13
 2. He does not mention Josiah’s spiritual reform around 621 B.C. when they found the Penteteuch in the temple.
 3. Josiah also turned to Hulda the prophetess when the book was found in the temple, not yo Zepheniah in 621 B.C. 2Kings 22:8-20
 4. Therefore some say he prophecied in the early years of Josiah or the last of his riegnt?
 5. Weather Zepheniah was an adviser to Josiah or had any dealing with the reform is pure speculation, he is silent about these events.
 6. Yet most scholars place Zepheniah ministry about 630-21 B.C. , since the riegnt of Josiah was 638-608 B.C.
- B. The natural division of the book of Zephaniah fall into three.
 1. The announcement of the great day of judgment. Zeph. 1:1-2:3
 2. The call to repent in view of judgment. Zeph. 2:4-3:8
 3. The promise of restoration after judgement. Zeph. 3:9-20
- C. The key verses and words in the book of Zephaniah.
 1. The key verses.

- a. The promise of judgment. Zeph. 1:2
 - b. The call to repentance of the undesirable nation. Zeph. 2:1
 - c. The promise of refuge for righteous. Zeph. 2:3
 - d. The woe of judgment to Jerusalem. Zeph. 3:1
 - e. The promise of restoration. Zeph. 3:20
* The reason is His holiness. Zeph. 1:18d; 3:8h
 - f. The restoration of Israel and the promise of Messiah to destroy the nations and be in the midst of Israel in the Kingdom Age. Zeph 3:8, 14, 15, 16, 17
2. The key words in the book of Zephaniah.
 - a. Consume, three times. Zeph. 1:2-3
 - b. Cut off, four times. Zeph. 1:3, 4; 3:6, 7
 - c. Complacency. Zeph. 1:12
 - d. Wrath, trouble, distress, devastation, desolation, darkness. Zeph. 1:15
 3. Key phrases.
 - a. "I will" 14 times.
 - b. "Says the LORD", six times.
 - c. "The day of the LORD" or "the day", seven times. Zeph. 1:7, 8, 10, 14, 18; 2:2; 3:8

This is the book of Zephaniah!

IV. The message of Zephaniah.

- A. The judgment of the world and Judah. Zeph. 1:1-2:3

1. The day of the Lord would be all consuming. Zeph. 1:1-13
 - a. It was revealed to Zephaniah in the days of King Josiah. vs. 1
 - b. It is universal speaking of the ultimate fulfillment. Zeph. 1:2-3
 - 1) It is total, "I will cut off man from the face of the land", Judah. Zeph. 1:2
 - 2) Man and beast. Zeph. 1:3
 - c. It is due to the fact that Judah and Jerusalem had defiled and also polluted themselves. Zeph. 1:4-6
 - 1) With the Baals were the Canaanite fertility gods and pagan priests. Zeph. 1:4
 - 2) With worshipping nature and Zodiac and ascribing it to God and Milcom or Molech, who they sacrificed their children, syncretism. Zeph. 1:5
 - a) They worshipped the host of heaven on their housetops. Jer. 19:13, 32:29
 - b) They would be judged by God, the phrase "I will" appears six times guaranteeing the certainty. Zeph. 1:2-4
 - 3) It was addressed to those who had turned from God. Zeph. 1:6
* Ezekiel says, God would answer according to the multitudes of their idols. Ezk. 14:4
- d. It will be a day of being speechless. Zeph. 1:7-13

- 1) The day will call for all to be silent in the presence of the Lord, due to their unknown holiness of God. Zeph. 1:7a
 - 2) The day is imminent. Zeph. 1:7b
 - 3) The day will be God's sacrifice for His guests. Zeph. 1:7c-d; Rev 19:17-21
 - 4) The day will judge the leaders for embracing the pagan influence in dress and worship. Zeph. 1:8-9
 - * Those who leaped over the threshold did so to provoke the gods who guarded the house and also to rob it. 1Sam 5:5
2. The day of the Lord would bring sorrow and wailing. Zeph. 1:10-13
 - a. All throughout the city, from the Fish Gate to the 2nd quarter of city. Zeph. 1:10
 - b. All throughout the market district. Zeph. 1:11
 - * Maktesh refers to the market district, around the Cheese Maker Valley.
 - c. All will be unhidden and punished in Jerusalem, men who are complacent, settled in their ease or dregs like wine. Zeph. 1:12; Jer 48:11
 - d. All they have gained will not be enjoyed by them. Zeph. 1:13
 3. The day of the Lord and its nature. Zeph. 1:14-18
 - a. A day of impending judgment. Zeph. 1:14

- b. A day of wrath, trouble, distress, devastation, desolation, darkness and gloom. Zeph. 1:15
 - c. A day of war against their fortified city. Zeph. 1:16
 - * All the adjectives are negative and found throughout Old Testament and New Testament. Amos 5:18, 20; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31-32; 3:14; Obed. 15; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:2; 1Thess. 4:17-5:2; 2Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:17
 - d. All will walk as blind men because of their sin against the Lord. Zeph. 1:17
 - * 2Thess. 2:8-12; Rev. 9:20-21
 - e. All the money will not deliver them in the day of wrath against God's speedy holy jealousy. Zeph. 1:18
4. The day of the Lord and repentance for Israel. Zeph. 2:1-3
 - a. The invitation to the undesirable or shameless nation. Zeph. 2:1
 - b. The urgency is marked by the limited time. Zeph. 2:2
 - * The word before it repeated three times in verse two.
 - c. The benefit to the righteous who seek God will be hidden from His wrath. Zeph. 2:3
 - 1) Some in the Babylonian captivity.
 - 2) Others were left in the land. 2Kings 25:12
 - 3) Still others were preserved in captivity.

- 4) During the Great Tribulation God will do the same for Israel in the city of Petra. Is 16:1; Rev. 12
 * We are hidden with Christ in God. Col. 3:3

B. The judgment of the nations. Zeph. 2:4-3:8

1. The Philistine cities. Zeph. 2:4-7
 - a. The major cities are named. Zeph. 2:4
 - b. The Cherethites were related to Philistine as they migrated from Crete. Zeph. 2:5
 * 1Sam. 30:14; Ezk. 25:16
 - c. The coast would be given over to the remnant of Israel after the captivity. Zeph. 2:8-7
2. The cities of Moab and Ammon. Zeph. 2:8-11
 * The descendants of Lot and his daughters by incest. Gen. 19
 - a. The Lord had heard the arrogant threats against His people. Zeph. 1:8
 - b. The Lord of Host promises their extinction as Sodom and Gomorrah. Zeph. 1:9
 - c. The Lord says it was because of their pride and arrogance against His people. Zeph. 1:10-11
3. The Ethiopians. Zeph. 2:12
 * They will be slain by God's sword!
4. The nation of Assyria. Zeph. 2:13-15
 - a. The capital city of Ninevah would be destroyed in 612 B. C. Zeph. 2:13
 - b. The city will not expect it. Zeph. 2:14

- * Nah. 1:2, 10; 3:15
- c. The city contrary to her boastful pride shall be hissed at. Zeph. 2:15
 - 1) Babylon also. Is. 47:8-9
 - 2) The last days. Rev. 17-18
 5. The city of Jerusalem. Zeph. 3:1-8
 - a. The city is ranked with the nations of the world, due to the fact she was view as being in the same condition. Zeph. 3:1
 - 1) She was rebellious.
 - 2) She was polluted.
 - 3) She was oppressive.
 * Woe to Scribes. Matt. 23
 - b. The city sins were an affront to God. Zeph. 3:2
 - 1) Not obeyed His voice.
 - 2) Not received correction.
 - 3) Not trusted in the Lord.
 - 4) Not drawn near to her God.
 - c. The leaders of the city were corrupt. Zeph. 3:3-4
 - 1) The princes were abusive as lions.
 - 2) The judges were vicious as wolves.
 - 3) The prophets had no integrity.
 - 4) The priest were profaning the sanctuary and violated the law.
 - d. Their Lord God is altogether different. Zeph. 3:5-8
 - 1) The Lord is righteous and delays not in His judgments in her midst, in contrast to the unrighteous who have no shame. Zeph. 3:5

- 2) The Lord their God had destroyed nation in hope that Israel would learn to fear Him, but didn't, instead they were eager to rise and corrupt themselves. Zeph. 3:6-7
 * Amos addressed this issue also, ending up with no other alternative but judgment. Amos 4:6-13
- 3) Their Lord God tells them to wait for Him until He judges the nations. Zeph. 3:8
 * This is the judgment at His second coming. Matt. 25

C. The restoration of Israel. Zeph. 3:9-20

1. God will gather all people into the millennial Kingdom. Zeph. 3:9-13
 - a. The kingdom will involve all the peoples of the nations, it is in the plural. Zeph. 3:9a
 - b. The kingdom will be know for purity of lips literally. Zeph. 3:9a
 * The language refers to holiness apart from profanity not so much to one common language.
 - c. The kingdom will be characterized by calling on the name of the Lord to serve Him. Zeph. 3:9b-c
 - d. The kingdom will center on the covenant people. Zeph. 3:10
 - e. The kingdom will be the time of removing Israel's sin, she will walk in

- humility and righteousness. Zeph. 3:11-13
2. God will be the center of attention in the restored kingdom. Zeph. 3:14-20
 - a. Israel will sing and shout for their restoration and the presence of their Messiah, Jesus. Zeph. 3:14-15
 - b. Jerusalem will not fear and trust in the Lord Jesus for strength, comfort and approval. Zeph. 3:16-17
 - c. God's people will no longer experience affliction any longer but be admired of all nations. Zeph. 3:18-20

Illustration

The message to Samson was to quit living like a pagan after the flesh or you will be judge reaping the consequences but God restored him to Himself at the end and strengthened him once again by His Spirit, so it was to be with Israel!

This was the message of Zephaniah!