

# THE MINOR PROPHETS (Chronological Order)

## ZEPHANIAH

### LESSON SEVEN

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. The name, “Zephaniah” means “Jehovah hides,” “Jehovah hath guarded,” or “Jehovah’s watch-tower” (cf. 2:3).
2. Probably the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah (1:1), dwelling in Jerusalem – “this place” (1:4).
3. Contemporary with Jeremiah’s prophetic work – 625 B.C. during the reign of Josiah (639-608 B.C.) (1:1, Jer. 1:2)
4. The rise of the Babylonian Empire the occasion for Zephaniah’s prophecy.
  - a. Chaldean Nabopolassar established independent kingdom in Babylon – 625 B.C.
  - b. Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, will fall to Nabopolassar in 612 B.C.
  - c. Remnant of Assyrian army destroyed at Haran in 609 B.C.
  - d. Josiah loses life at Megiddo fighting against Pharaoh-necho who had come up to help Assyria’s remnant against the now “King of Assyria” – Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 23:29, 2 Chron. 35:20-27, cf. Ezra 6:22).
  - e. Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh-necho at Carchemish , west of Haran in 605 B.C.
5. Josiah – the last good king of Judah (2 Kings 22-23, 2 Chron. 34-35).
  - a. Begins religious reform in 8<sup>th</sup>. year of his reign (age 16) (2 Chron. 34:3).
  - b. Reform encouraged in 18<sup>th</sup>. year (age 26) when book of law found in Temple (2 Kings 22:11-13, 23:1-3).
  - c. Josiah did well, but people’s reform not of “whole-heart” (2 Kings 22:15-20, Jer. 3:6-10).

#### FEATURES OF THE BOOK:

1. Reform does not impress God and does not last when it does not originate in the godly heart.
  - a. Zephaniah does not acknowledge any of the reforms Josiah promoted from his godly heart.
  - b. Instead, amidst the leadership of a godly king, God is promising judgment upon those who are not serious about God. They are “*settled on their lees*” – not truly changed, indifferent toward God (Zeph. 1:12).
2. The “day of Jehovah” – coming judgment (Zeph. 1:7, 14)
  - a. God is universal bringing judgment upon all nations, including Judah and Jerusalem.
  - b. Day of God’s wrath (Zeph. 1:15).
  - c. The reason: “they have sinned against Jehovah” (Zech. 1:17)
  - d. The day hastens – only the obedient meek before Jehovah could be “hid in the day of Jehovah’s anger” (Zech. 2:3).
3. The movement of the Book: (J. Sidlow Baxter; Explore The Book, p. 220)
  - a. Look Within - Wrath coming on Judah (1:2-2:3)
  - b. Look Around – Wrath on all Nations (2:4-3:8)
  - c. Look Beyond – After Wrath, Healing (3:9-20)
4. “Through Judgment To Blessing”
  - a. A time for singing in Zion to come (3:14)
  - b. Once reproached, will have a name praiseworthy (3:19-20)

## OUTLINE

- I. CONSUMING JUDGE OF THE WHOLE WORLD READY TO JUDGE JUDAH (1:1-2:3).
  - A. Title and identification of author: Zephaniah (1:1)
  - B. God will utterly consume the whole world in judgment (1:1-3)
  - C. “*Day of Jehovah*” at hand upon Judah and Jerusalem because of idolatry and heathen sinful ways (1:4-18).
  - D. Call to Judah and Jerusalem for repentance – be hidden in the day of Jehovah (2:1-3).
  
- II. GOD WILL JUDGE NATIONS AROUND JUDAH (2:4-3:8).
  - A. West: Philistia (v. 4-7)
  - B. East: Moab and Amon (v. 8-10)
  - C. South: Ethiopia (v.12)
  - D. North: Assyria and Nineveh (v.13-15)
  - E. Therefore: Woe to Jerusalem (3:1-8)
  
- III. AFTER JUDGMENT COMES SALVATION AND GLORY FOR REMNANT (3:9-20)
  - A. Remnant from heathen (v. 9-10)
  - B. Restored Israel sanctified (v. 11-13)
  - C. Restored Israel rejoices and exalted (v. 14-20).

## QUESTIONS:

1. Of which king of Judah was Zephaniah probably a descendant?
  
2. Zephaniah prophesied in the days of King \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. To which kingdom (Israel or Judah) did Zephaniah prophesy?
  
4. In 1:2-3, who is included in God’s consuming judgment?
  
5. What kind of worshippers is God to cut off by stretching out His hand?
  
6. Why does the prophet say, “*Hold thy peace*” in 1:7?
  
7. Match the following phrases with their proper group in Judah:
  - (a) “clothed with foreign power” (1) violent thieves
  - (b) “leap over threshold” (2) men of indifference
  - (c) “settled on their lees” (3) rulers under heathen influence

8. Judah's wealth would soon become \_\_\_\_\_ for others.
9. The "*great day of Jehovah*" is a day of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Why is God about to bring distress upon His people?
11. What is the only way of escape from God's fierce anger for the people of Judah?
12. When God punishes Philistia, who would dwell in her borders?
13. Moab and Ammon will be punished for their \_\_\_\_\_.  
How was such attitude manifested?
14. When God says that "*my sword*" would slay the Ethiopians, in whose hands would God place His sword?
15. What divine principle does God's judgment upon Nineveh illustrate?
16. In 3:1, Jerusalem is described as a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ city.
17. How were the essential characteristics of "trust" and "obey" not being manifested in Jerusalem?
18. How had Judah's leaders for guidance failed God's people?
19. Is God unrighteous when he brings severe punishment upon man?
20. What does God call upon the few righteous in Jerusalem to do?
21. What contrasts do you see between Judah of Zephaniah's day and the remnant of Israel under the Messiah?
22. In "*that day*" why will the inhabitants of Zion "*let not*" their "*hands be slack*"?
23. What does God promise the pious few in 3:18-20?