

Book 36: Zephaniah

“The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly...” – Zephaniah 1:14

Zephaniah: Introduction

- Zephaniah is the last of the prophets to write before the nation’s exile in Babylon.
- He foresees the nation’s fall and warns them what’s coming.
- He wrote at about the same time as the early prophecies of Jeremiah.
 - Unlike the weeping Jeremiah, Zephaniah shows little or no emotion.
 - Also unlike Jeremiah, this book is short.
- The first verse tells us that Zephaniah is the great great grandson of the good King Hezekiah.
- He wrote in the time of Josiah – another good king.
- Due to his lineage, he probably had access to the nation’s leaders. Maybe he helped influence King Josiah’s reforms and the brief, shallow revival that followed.

Preaching Fire and Brimstone

- Today many believe that talking about God’s judgment is wrong or unnecessary. Zephaniah vividly reminds us that God is going to judge both sin and sinners.
- The Gospel message is truly a message of love – a love that snatches sinners from eternal flames! Warnings of the judgment to come are a basic and indispensable part of the Good News.

Zephaniah: Comments

“Love seeks the best interests of the beloved. That is what this little book of Zephaniah is all about ... the Father is never closer to you, my friend, than when He is reaching in and taking out of your heart and life those things that offend.”

– J. Vernon McGee

“To all appearances it was a time of religious concern and concentration. But Zephaniah saw deeper ... and he knew that their religious zeal was not sincere. ...

“Even today, many believers lack discernment and think that every “religious movement” is a genuine work of the Lord. Sometimes mere outward reformation only prepares the way for a work of the devil.”

– Warren W. Wiersbe

“Perhaps no prophet gave a more definite declaration of the terrors of divine judgment against sin than did Zephaniah, and this is emphasized by his ignoring utterly the reforms which he saw and knew to be insincere on the part of the people.”

– G. Campbell Morgan

Zephaniah: Outline

- Chapter 1: Judgment Upon Judah
- Chapter 2: Judgment Upon the Nations
- Chapter 3: The Future of Jerusalem

Zephaniah: Key Passages

- 1:4-6 The Sin of Idolatry
- 1:12 The Sin of Complacency
- 1:18 The Futility of Trusting in Riches
- 2:1-3 Seek the Lord!
- 3:17-20 The Lord Your God in Your Midst

Zephaniah: Key Elements

Bible Prophets usually include the following four elements in their writing:

- 1: A Warning to That Generation
- 2: A Message of Future Judgment
- 3: An Invitation to Repentance
- 4: A Picture of the Far Future

Zephaniah includes them all, so look for them as we read through the book.

Book 36: Zephaniah

“The Lord your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.”

– Zephaniah 3:17