



Zephaniah

The Day of the Lord

The Minor Prophets

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28. Hosea

29. Joel

30. Amos

31. Obadiah

32. Jonah

33. Micah

34. Nahum

35. Habakkuk

36. Zephaniah

37. Haggai

38. Zechariah

39. Malachi

The Day of the Lord

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A biblical phrase prevalent among OT prophets who pointed to a future event or era (not necessarily a single twenty-four-hour day) during which God would visit judgment on Israel or the world. The NT authors interpreted the phrase in a futuristic sense but saw in Jesus Christ the beginning of the fulfillment of the Day of the Lord. For believers in Christ the Day of the Lord is an anticipation of hope; for unbelievers it holds only judgment leading to damnation.

*– Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling in
the Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*

The Day of the Lord

- 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.

The Day of the Lord

- He wrote at a time overlapping with **Jeremiah**.
- Unlike Jeremiah the weeping prophet, **Zephaniah** shows us little emotion or personality.
- Also unlike Jeremiah, this book is short.

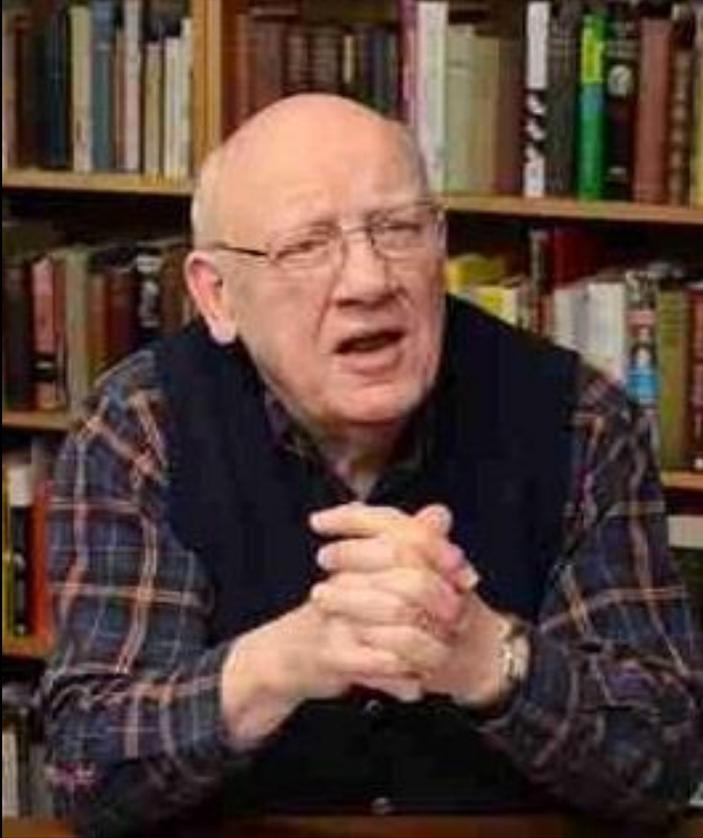
The Day of the Lord

- **Zephaniah 1:1** tells us that he is the great great grandson of the good **King Hezekiah**.
- He wrote in the time of **Josiah** – another good king – and a **great grandson** of Hezekiah as well.
- Zephaniah probably knew the nation's leaders personally.

The Day of the Lord

- It was during the days of King Josiah that **Book of the Law** was rediscovered and the worship of Yahweh was restored.
- See **2 Kings 22** for that story.
- Perhaps Zephaniah helped influence King Josiah's reforms and the revival that followed.

The Day of the Lord



To all appearances it was a time of religious concern ... 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

The Day of the Lord

- Zephaniah's message is difficult, what we might call preaching *fire and brimstone*.
- Today many in the church believe that talking about God's judgment is wrong or unnecessary.
- Zephaniah vividly reminds us that God is going to bring rebellion against him to a final judgment.

The Day of the Lord

- It is true that the gospel message is mainly a message of love – but it is a love that snatches sinners from eternal flames!
- Warnings of the judgment to come provide the Bible's necessary background for the Good News.

The Day of the Lord

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



Key Elements of Prophecy

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- 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.

An Outline of Zephaniah

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

A Unique Verse

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- According to the medieval Masoretic scholars, **Zephaniah 3:8** is unique in the Old Testament.
- It contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet – even the special forms of letters used only at the end of words.
- If you want to check that fact, you are welcome to do so.

A Fulfilled Prophecy?

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- **3:10** Charles Feinberg, in his 1951 commentary, suggested a better translation here and tied it to verses in **Isaiah**.
- He believed it pointed to **Ethiopian Jews, Falashas** or “emigrants” returning to Palestine.
- This actually happened during the 1970’s.

Key Verses in Zephaniah

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- 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 Is God in Your Midst

Key Verses in Zephaniah

- **1:4-6** The Sin of Idolatry
- **Syncretism** is always a danger to the church.
- We want to be relevant to the culture around us, so we have to adapt our presentation of the truth.
- In so doing, we can depart from the biblical gospel and combine it with contrary beliefs and practices.
- In Revelation, when Jesus addresses the 7 churches in Asia, impure doctrine and practice is a common theme.

Key Verses in Zephaniah

- **1:12** The Sin of Complacency
- Complacent religion becomes merely formal or outward practice – and not a vibrant, life-changing thing.
- We may adhere to a certain creed or statement of faith, but no longer trust in a God who is active in human affairs.

Key Verses in Zephaniah

- **1:18** The Futility of Trusting in Riches
- To the church of Laodicea (**Rev 3:15-17**), Jesus said,
¹⁵ I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Key Verses in Zephaniah

- **2:1-3** Seek the Lord!
- Zephaniah is calling the people to deep repentance, authentic worship and fervent prayer.
- Again, looking to the 7 churches in Revelation, Jesus commands **5 of the 7 churches** to repent.

Key Verses in Zephaniah

- **3:17-20** The Lord Your God Is in Your Midst
- God is real. God is here.
- God acts in human affairs and is going to do even more.
- God has promised (**Hebrews 13:5**), “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
- Jesus tells the church (**Matthew 28:20**), “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The righteous shall live by his faith.



Dr. Charles Feinberg

We cannot stress too strongly that God's ultimate object and purpose are not to punish and destroy but to overrule evil for good and to bring peace out of hopeless chaos.

*– Charles L. Feinberg (1909 – 1995),
professor of Semitics, Talbot Seminary,
convert from Orthodox Judaism*

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- Seek the Lord! Go out of your way to daily connect with him.
- God is real. God is here. And our God is mighty to save.