

Union Chapel M.B. Church

Dr. O. Wendell Davis, Pastor/Teacher/Servant Leader

November 20, 2024

“ZEPHANIAH”

(Study Material from The Bible Exposition Commentary Old Testament Prophets)

The least discussed, often forgotten Bible book, is the book of Zephaniah. Zephaniah (*Yahweh has hidden*) prophesies doom and gloom on Judah and surrounding nations. No one can hide from the Day of the LORD! The Day of the LORD in Scripture is a ‘near’ term and a ‘far’ term. It is ‘near’ because God sent judgment on Israel and Judah. It is ‘far’ because Jesus shall return to set up His Kingdom. Zephaniah, like the other prophets, closes his prophecy with hope. Hope is a great motivation for obedience to submit to God’s will because He will not only defeat His enemies but reign in righteousness with the remnant who remain faithful to Him.

I. The Day of the LORD and the Jews

- a. Picture 1: A Devasting flood, 1:2-3
 - i. A reference to Noah’s flood, Gen 6:7.
- b. Picture 2: A Pursuit after earthly things. Sins of commission (worshiping idols); sins of omission (ignoring the LORD), 1:4-6
 - i. Idols are stumbling blocks, Eze 14:12-14.
- c. Picture 3: A Great sacrifice, 1:7-13
 - i. Honored guests are the Babylonians, and the sacrifice were the people of Judah!
- d. Picture 4: A Great battle, 1:14-18
 - i. God is jealous, Ex 34:14; Psa 78:58, 79:5; there will be no place to hide, Amos 5:18.
- e. Picture 5: Turning to Jesus will save you, 2:1-3
 - i. Even when the majority follows false gods, God will still protect His remnant in the Day of Judgment, Gen 18:32; Mal 3:16-18.

II. The Day of the LORD and the Gentiles

- a. Philistia (West), 2:4-7
 - i. The Philistines were ancient enemies of the Jews, Amos 1:6-8.
- b. Moab and Ammon (East), 2:8-11
 - i. Originated from Lot’s incestuous relationship with his daughters (Gen 19:30-38) and were hateful enemies of the Jews, 1 Sam 11:1-5.
- c. Cush (South), 2:12

- i. The Babylonians conquered this nation, Eze 30:4-5.
- d. Assyria (North), 2:13-15
 - i. A century or so earlier, God sent Jonah to Nineveh to warn them of God's judgment – they repented; however, they went back to their pagan ways (How? ignorance and complacency). They were ruthless people, notorious for their pride and their cruelty toward their enemies. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. Zephaniah saw it coming!

III. **The Day of the LORD and the Kingdom**

- a. Jerusalem: God's jealous anger, 3:1-8
 - i. A sinning people; remedy – James 4:8.
 - ii. A godless leadership, Lev 26:23-24, Matt 23:25-28.
 - iii. A righteous God, 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kings 5:5; Neh 1:9; compare with Gen 22:15-17. Judgment comes for His own name's sake.
- b. Gentiles: God's gracious forgiveness, 3:9-10
 - i. Gentiles cleansed, Isa 1:7-8; Eph 2:11-18.
 - ii. Gentiles will serve the LORD shoulder to shoulder.
- c. Remnant: God's bounteous blessing, 3:11-20
 - i. Sin will be removed; a time of deep repentance, Zech 12:10-13:1.
 - ii. God's people will rejoice in the motherhood of God, Isa 49:14-16; 66:13.
 - iii. The nation will be restored.

IV. **Application**

- a. God judges His people when they deliberately disobey His law. Be different, Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.
- b. God's promise to Abraham still stands, Gen 12:1-3. The nations that have sinned against God by mistreating the Jews can expect Him to judge them. Be intentional with God's love, Rom 12:18; James 2:8-9.
- c. God's word is true and will be fulfilled in His time. God is faithful to His word, Matt 5:18, Heb 10:31. Be committed to Christ, Prov 16:3-4.
- d. God gave the people of Judah fair warning of His judgment, just as He has done with us. For the church, the coming 'Day of the LORD' carries no fear. Be encouraged, Psa 37:7-11; 1 Thess 4:16-18.

Notes: