Bible Synthesis IV

OVERVIEW OF ZEPHANIAH

This little book has been called "The Compendium of All Prophecy." Though it is addressed to Judah and Jerusalem, it is yet a survey of God's universal government. "The whole earth is the theatre where the Judge of all displays the grandeur of Law and the glory of Love. From every quarter, nations are chosen as examples of His just judgment (2:4–15)." (Lockyer in *All the Books and Chapters of the Bible*, Zondervan, 1966.

Zephaniah means "hidden of the LORD" Someone has suggested that it may be that he was hidden during the 55 bloody years of the reign of Manasseh. Though, it would seem that the dates do not add up, especially if Zephaniah was a young man when he prophesied. Manasseh repented and restored during perhaps the last 5 or 6 years of his reign. That would have been about 648 B.C., and with Zephaniah having written about 630 B.C., it would have been an interval of around 18 years.

OVERVIEW

1. The Judgment of the Day of the LORD —Zeph. 1 — 2

(1) The Day of Judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem —1:1 — 2:3

• *Zephaniah 1:*

1. Judah is Searched —Zeph. 1

(1) Introduction to Zephaniah —1:1

- Who was Zephaniah?
- When did he prophesy?
- Who was Josiah? (See II Kings 22:1—23:30; II Chron. 34:1—35–27)
- What Josiah did at age 8 (II Chron. 34:1)
- What he did at age 16 (II Chron. 34:3)
- What he did in the 18th year of his reign (II Ki. 22:3–ff.; II Chron. 34:8–ff.)
- What they discovered and what it did (II Chron. 34:14–33).

(2) The LORD's purpose to judge —1:2–3

- Zephaniah shows God to be both loving and severe, or better, a God who is severe in His love, who judges and chastens because He loves. This book begins with sorrow, but ends with singing.

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Zephaniah 1:1–6 — Here, God purposes to judge sin. Who specifically is identified for this judgment?

How does this apply to us today?

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Zephaniah 1:7–18 — What specific detail does God give us here concerning the Day of the LORD?

- What He will consume and cut off —1:2–3

(3) The rulers denounced (all classes of sinner) —1:4–6

- Notice the classes of sinner who will be judged:

(1. Baal (idol) worshipers —1:4

- His judgment is against Judah and Jerusalem — Baal and the priests of Baal will be cut off —1:4
  - Baal, the Canaanite fertility god, worshiped through licentiousness
  - Chemarim, the word simply refers to a priest of an idol.

(2. Those who worship the host of heaven —1:5a

- Worship sun, moon, and stars
  - II Kings 23:11 —Josiah stopped sun worship.
  - Jer. 19:13 —Still existing in Jeremiah's day
  - Ezek. 8:16 —Done *in* the Temple …
- Astrologers also

(3. Those who swear by the LORD and Malcham (Molech) —Trying to serve both —1:5b

(4. Those who turned back from the LORD —1:6a

(5. Those who have not sought the LORD —1:6b

(4) The Day of the LORD described —1:7–18

(1. It is *imminent* —1:7–14

- "Hold thy peace at the presence of the LORD" — Why? —1:7
- The Day of the LORD is "at hand" —1:7
- The LORD's sacrifice —1:7c–8
  - Strange apparel —See Num. 15:38–39.
- Woe to the spoilers —1:9
  - They avoided the threshold to keep from provoking the gods who "protected" the house. —See *Ryrie Study Bible*
- Description of Jerusalem's destruction —1:10–13
- That Day is near – it "hasteth greatly" —1:14

(2. It is *dreadful* —1:15—16

- A day of wrath
- A day of trouble and distress
- A day of wasteness and desolation
  - Waste — the *tempest* (destroying storm)
  - Desolation – the resulting *ruin*
- A day of darkness and gloominess
  - The light is withheld, the sun is set, night is upon them (Amos 5:18, 20). Or, darkness from the clouds (below)
- A day of clouds and thick darkness
  - The thunder clouds obscuring the sun.
- A day of the trumpet and alarm
  - The trumpet announced the battle,.

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(3. It is *distressful* —1:17

- He will bring distress upon men that they shall walk like blind men — Why?
- Death —

(4. It is *unavoidable* —1:18

- They cannot *buy* their escape from this terrible day. Silver and gold will not deliver them.
- It is the day of the LORD's wrath.
- The whole land shall be devoured.
- It will be a speedy riddance.

• *Zephaniah 2:*

2. The Nations are Searched —Zeph. 2

(1) Judah called to seek God —2:1–3

- Invitation to Repentance to Judah —2:1
  - "nation not desired" speaking of Judah —2:1b
  - "the decree" (described in chap. 1) —2:2a
  - "the day" (the Day of the LORD) —2:2b
  - Notice how the Day of the LORD is described —2:2
- Is there a hiding place from the LORD? —2:3
  - Seek the LORD, ye *meek*
  - Seek righteousness and meekness
  - "… ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger." Zephaniah = "the LORD hides" —*Compare with the thought of this verse*.
    - Jer. 23:24 —No one can hide from God.
    - "… hide me under the shadow of thy wings" —Ps. 17:8
      —See Ps. 27:5; 31:20; and Col. 3:3 [Where He hides His own.]

(2) The Day of Judgment upon the Nations —2:4–15

(1. Philistia —2:4–7

- Gaza, Ash´kelon, Ashdod, Ekron are 4 of the 5 cities of the Philistines. —2:4
- Cherethites were inhabitants of the southwest of Canaan—Philistia. Here it is used as a synonym for Philistines. —2:5
- Their land shall be for the remnant of Judah —2:6–7

(2. Moab and Ammon —2:8–11

- Moab, a descendant of Lot's firstborn daughter —Gen. 19:36–37
- Ammon, a descendant of his younger daughter —Gen. 19:36, 38
- Their sin: "reproached my people" and "magnified themselves against their border" —2:8, 10
- Their end —2:9, 11

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Zephaniah 2 — What specific instruction does God give here to the different nations concerning His coming judgment?

How can we apply this to our nation?

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Zephaniah 3:1–7 - How does God contrast Jerusalem's sinfulness with His righteousness in these verses?

Zephaniah 3:8–20 - What is God's purpose for Jerusalem's judgment in these verses?

(3. Ethiopians —2:12

- Their end —

(4. Assyria —Nineveh —2:13–15

- Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. It was laid waste, its monuments destroyed, and its inhabitants scattered or carried into captivity. It never rose again from its ruins. Nineveh was totally hidden until 1845 A.D. when Layard found it.
- Notice Nineveh's sin (pride) —2:15

2. The Salvation of the Day of the LORD —Zeph. 3

- *Zephaniah 3:*

3. Israel Restored —Zeph. 3

(1) The Sinfulness of Jerusalem and the LORD's Righteousness Contrasted —3:1–7

- Jerusalem is destroyed (*denunciation*) —3:1–7
  - Filthy, polluted Judah —3:1
  - Their sins:
    (1. Judah's sin —3:2
    (2. Sin of her princes —3:3
    (3. Sin of her prophets —3:4a
    (4. Sin of her priests —3:4b
- The LORD (3:5):
  - In the midst (in judgment) … Contr. 3:15.
  - His perfections …
- The LORD addresses them (His judgments) —3:6–7
  - He punished them to bring them to repentance, but they did not repent.

(2) The Purpose of Judgment — Salvation and Restoration —3:8–20

- The nations are destroyed (*Armageddon*) —3:8
  - The nations are judged. See Psalm 2; Rev. 16:14–16; 19:17–19.
- Restoration of Gentiles and Jews —3:9–13
  (1. The nations (Millennial) —3:9–10
  - A pure language (no more blasphemy) to call upon the Name of the LORD.
  - They will bring His offering from distant places —3:10
  (2. Israel —3:11–13
  - They will be regathered and purified —3:11–12
  - The remnant shall not do iniquity —3:13

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- Zephaniah's song of rejoicing —3:14–20
  - He calls on Israel to sing —3:14
    Notice the names used: "daughter of Zion," "Israel," "daughter of Jerusalem."
    (1. The King of Israel —3:15
      - This King is the LORD.
      - He is in the midst (in blessing). Contr. 3:5.
    (2. The challenge to the people —3:16
      - To Jerusalem: "Fear not …"
      - To Zion: "Let not thine hands be slack."

        "Mine are the hands to do Thy work,
        My feet shall run for Thee;
        My lips shall sound the glorious news —
        Lord, here am I, send me." —Anonymous

    (3. The nature of the LORD —3:17
      - His presence — "in the midst of thee"
      - His power — "is mighty" — "He will save"
      - His pleasure — "He will rejoice over thee with joy"
      - His possession — "He will rest in His love"
      - His proclamation — "he will joy over thee with singing"

        Eric W. Hayden: "God did not sing when He finished creating the world. He only pronounced it 'good.' But at the recreation of the soul once dead He sings! Gethsemane, Calvary—these must have brought sorrow to the heart of God; but when Calvary's sacrifice is appropriated by a convicted sinner, all sorrow is turned to rejoicing. God sings when a sinner becomes a saint." —*Preaching Through the Bible*, Hayden, Zondervan, 1964.

    (4. The regathering —3:18–20
      - Notice whom He will regather and save:
        - The sorrowful —3:18
        - They will observe the "solemn assembly." They were prohibited from celebrating it —3:18
        - The halt will be saved —3:19b
        - Those who were driven out (exiled), will be gathered —3:19c
        - Those who were put to shame in exile —3:19d
      - Their enemies will be undone —3:19a
      - Israel will be gathered —3:20
      - Notice what He will do for them:
        - They will be saved and gathered —3:19
        - He will get them praise —3:19
        - He will make them a name —3:20
        - He will turn back their captivity —3:20

END OF ZEPHANIAH

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