

The Minor Prophets

Lesson 6

Zephaniah – The Day of the Lord

Zephaniah was a great-great grandson of King Hezekiah (700 BC), and thus a relative of King Josiah in Jerusalem in 622 BC. At that time, the world power of Assyria was waning and the prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah were both encouraging good King Josiah to remove all the idolatry and Assyrian religious practices from Judah. Before Josiah was king, the wicked King Manasseh and his son Amon had polluted Jerusalem for 60 years with idolatry and evil of every kind including infant sacrifice (see Kings 21:1-9). About 628 BC, King Josiah started a reform movement to remove the idolatry, and in 622, he found a copy of the first five books of the Bible (the Torah) which had been neglected for 60-70 years. This began a short lived revival under Josiah in which the prophecies of Zephaniah played a major part.

Read Zephaniah 1-3

1. Although Zephaniah recorded it for us, whose words were they in reality (Zeph 1:1-2), and who was the prophet quoting?
2. Although God was addressing Zephaniah's audience and situation about 620 BC, who all would eventually receive God's righteous wrathful judgment (Zeph 1:2-3)?
3. What nation and people did his predictions turn to in Zeph 1:4? What evil religious practices did he address in Zeph 1:5-7?
4. Who would God punish first among the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zeph 1:8)? Do you think the aristocracy evidenced their disobedience by wearing the latest "foreign garments" from idolatrous Nineveh and Babylon?
5. How soon was Jerusalem's judgment (Zeph 1:14) which historically began in 605 BC? How bad would it be (Zeph 1:15-18, 2 Kings 25:1-11)?

6. What was Zephaniah's purpose in warning Judah of the coming destruction (Zeph 2:1-3)? What did his contemporary Jeremiah say about seeking the Lord (Jeremiah 29:12-13)?

7. What were the judgments announced on the surrounding nations of Israel in Zephaniah 2:4-15?

8. How defiled was Jerusalem after the reign of Manasseh in the seventh century before Christ (Jeremiah 19:3-7; 23:14-15; Zeph 3:1-2)?

9. What did Zephaniah compare the leaders of Jerusalem to in Zeph 3:3-4? What is true about God that made Jerusalem incompatible (Zeph 3:5-7)?

10. There is a major shift and pivot in Zephaniah 3:9 that takes us to the end times. What will the restored Israel be like at the end just before the coming of Messiah the King (Zeph 3:11-13)? Is it clear that he is talking to the Jews in Zephaniah 3:16? What will Messiah do at that time (Zeph 3:17-20)?