

Zephaniah's Zeal

Zephaniah – God's judgment is coming!

Zephaniah: Israel is not only sinful nation

- 2:4-7 – **Philistia**
 - Noon (4): when least expected...
 - God's word "against you" (fierce storm)
 - No survivors (5)
- **WEST**

Zephaniah – God's judgment is coming!

- 2:8-11 – **Moab / Ammon**
 - Surely (8): a sure thing...as Sodom/Gomorrah
 - Perpetual desolation (9)
 - Reduced to nothing (11)
 - Archaeology: hundreds of ruins of cities
- **EAST**

Zephaniah – God's judgment is coming!

- 2:12 – Ethiopia
 - Egypt: wages for Nebuchadnezzar, Ezk.29:17-30:5
 - SOUTH

Zephaniah – God's judgment is coming!

- 2:13-15 – Assyria
 - Most powerful nation as Zephaniah wrote.
 - NORTH

God punished foreign sinners



God punished Jerusalem too, 3:1-7.

[Ezk.9]

1: sounds like continuation of Assyria

2: four charges: rebellious; stubborn; faithless; distant

3-4: the four guides . . . full of sin

- Princes – civil leaders are uncivil; devour prey
- Judges – dirty dogs
- Prophets – religious guides: insolent; faithless
- Priests – religious pollution (profanity); violently oppose the Law

God punished Jerusalem too, 3:1-7

5: LORD is righteous. So what?

- Righteous God cannot overlook sins [Gn.18]
- He will do NO unrighteousness [Gn.18]
- Every morning He brings justice to light (fair)
- He never fails (no one overthrows His plans)
- The unjust knows no shame (= Jer.6:15)

Huldah, 2 Kings 22:...15-20
Zephaniah does not mention
these outward reforms...

God punished Jerusalem too, 3:1-7

6: object lesson

- Cut off nations . . . Desolate streets...
- Lv.26; Dt.28

7: “Surely you will fear me...receive instruction” –

- They rose early (eager!)
- They corrupted all their deeds. Gn.6
 - God does not bring universal judgment (as Flood) until the end, but on nations.
 - Ps.9:17; Pr.14:34
 - If God does not judge our sins...

I. Timing of Judgment:

1:1, days of Josiah

Sin is accepted

Evil dominates

Timid folks jump on bandwagon

BUT...it's not all bad

Ruth – Judges

I. Timing of Judgment:
1:1, days of Josiah

II. Terror of Judgment:
1:2-4, reversal of creation

Judah

- 2, Judah must be totaled.
 - Creator becomes Destroyer
 - Cosmos becomes chaos
 - 3:6, sound of silence
 - Lamentations 1:1, 3, 4, 5; 4:4, 6, 9-10

Judah

- 3-4, God's outstretched *hand* (as Egypt, Ex.3:20 – 122x of God, Moses, Aaron, Joshua) ...
 - Ex.6:6 [God's outstretched *arm*: 16x]
 - No power in universe could draw it back.
 - His hand saved Israel from Egypt; now it cuts off man (1:3) and baal (1:4).
 - No idol, no ally could rescue them.

I. Timing of Judgment:
1:1, days of Josiah

II. Terror of Judgment:
1:2-4, reversal of creation

III. **Targets of Judgment:**
1:5-3:7, main focus: God's people

God's power once protected Judah

- Now His power will pulverize them. Ro.8:31
- Blessings impose great responsibilities (Mt.25).
 - Family
 - Church
 - Word of God

Indictment against Judah (God's people)

“Welcome to Jerusalem”

- 3:1-2, rebels, stubborn, faithless, spiritually aloof
 - 2: Judged for what she has not done (4x)
- 3:7, favorite pastime: sin

I. Timing of Judgment:
1:1, days of Josiah

II. Terror of Judgment:
1:2-4, reversal of creation

III. Targets of Judgment:
1:2-4, reversal of creation

IV. Termination of Judgment:
Only refuge is in God

Plea:

- 2:1-3, ray of hope: *"It may be..."* (2:3)
- 3:6-7, either learn from history or be doomed to repeat it
 - We face same choices – Lk.13:1-5

Judgment forces us to face our mortality,
in hope that we will prepare for immortality,
by repenting of immorality

Plan:

- 3:8-9, doomsday . . . BUT 3:9, His supreme purpose: salvation. No more idol talk
- 3:10-11, after judgment, meek are '*in My holy mountain*' (Isa.2, 11).
- 3:12-15, faithful few rejoice in God: King.
- 3:16-17, Father rejoices over prodigal's return (Lk.15). [He will quiet you with His love.] V.17
- 3:18-20, "I will" (6x) – ct. 1:3-4

Lesson: U.S.

- We are autonomous / independent. We need no one.
- We no longer need God. We have science.
- Our greatest hope lies in living the 'good life' here and now.
- Truth is relative. [Is this 'truth' relative?]
- There is no sin or judgment, so relax and enjoy life.

[Mistake God's longsuffering for leniency.]