

Zephaniah (“Yahweh has treasured/hidden”)

Introduction: Zephaniah was connected to the royal family of Judah. He writes before the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC. His description of the corrupt religious leadership seems to come before Josiah’s reforms in 622-621 BC. He demonstrates that the only hope for this sinning nation is to repent of their sin and return to the True God. Thanks to David Dorsey.

- 1) Coming judgment upon the wicked of Jerusalem—1:2-6
 - a) They are idolatrous (follow Baal, swear by Molech) do not seek Yahweh
- 2) Coming judgment of corrupt leaders and the rich of Jerusalem—1:7-13
 - a) Their sins of greed, violence, and corruption
 - b) Their view of God: He will do no good, or ill
- 3) Yahweh’s judgment of all nations: the great and terrible day of Yahweh—1:14-18
 - a) Against all the inhabitants of the earth
- 4) **Focus: the call to repentance at the end of the Tribulation—2:1-3**
 - a) **Part 1:** the **negative** call to assemble—2:1-2 (note the dry fuel for the Fire)
 - i) What are they to do?
 - (1) *Gather yourselves together and gather* (bunch together like kindling/stubble/straw), *O shameless nation* (goy!)
 - (a) This emphasizes their **flammability/vulnerability** to Yahweh’s burning wrath.
 - (b) This emphasizes their **hardened insensitivity** to their sin.
 - (2) They have reason to be ashamed but fail to show shame. God’s people are acting like and have the same attitude as the unbelieving nations.
 - ii) When are they to do this?
 - (1) **Before** you are driven away like chaff
 - (a) *Before the decree is issued or the day passes like chaff.*
 - (i) In other words, the opportunity to repent is brief.
 - (2) **Before** Yahweh’s fierce anger comes upon you
 - (3) **Before** the day of Yahweh’s anger comes upon you
 - b) **Part 2:** the **positive** call to seek—2:3 (cf. Matt. 5:3-6)
 - i) What are they to do?
 - (1) **Seek** Yahweh,
 - (a) *all you humble of the land,*
 - (b) *who obey His commands/requirements/justice* [*mishpat*]
 - ii) What does seeking Yahweh look like?
 - (1) **Seek** righteousness (conformity to God’s standard)
 - (2) **and seek** humility (the appropriate attitude toward one’s sin)
 - iii) A disturbing hope
 - (1) *Perhaps you will be hidden/sheltered on the day of Yahweh’s anger.*

- (2) No one can claim salvation as a right. Sometimes believers experience the effects of judgment to some extent because they live in a community of sinners. (Chisolm)
- 5) Yahweh's judgment of all nations: oracles against the nations—2:4-15
- a) Against all the gods and inhabitants of the earth
- 6) Coming judgement of corrupt political leaders and religious leaders of Jerusalem—3:1-7
- a) Their sins of greed, violence, and corruption
 - b) But Yahweh is righteous, He does no wrong
- 7) Coming restoration of Jerusalem and its fortunes—3:8-20
- a) They seek refuge in Yahweh and call upon His name. They serve Him with one accord.
 - b) Yahweh will purify the idolatrous speech of His people.
- 8) **Things we need to remember: (think, feel, do)**
- a) God **is** a God of mercy and a God of wrath.
 - b) The door of repentance **is** open, for now. That door will eventually be closed.
 - i) The promise of pardon is found in the pocket of judgment.
 - c) Seek the One who will bring His righteous wrath. Plead for His grace and mercy.
 - What does seeking God involve? (Walter Kaiser, *Quest for Renewal*)
 - i) A voluntary and wholehearted turning to God.
 - ii) An inner attitude of devotion to serve God.
 - iii) A decision to turn away from all evil.
 - iv) A decision to fulfill God's will.
 - v) A commitment to go to God in fervent prayer.