



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Zephaniah

Day 272 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	☒
Day 272	Zephaniah 1-3	☐

Welcome to the Book of Zephaniah!

Zephaniah is a prince of Judah, a descendant of Hezekiah according to the first verse of the book. His message is one of judgment against Jerusalem and Judah. His focus is the terrible “Day of the Lord” and the restoration beyond it. The judgment he sees is both the coming judgment when Babylon conquers Judah in 586 B.C. and the future judgment at the close of the Tribulation period.

A few quick facts about

- The author is Zephaniah (“God has concealed”)
- This book was written around 628 B.C.
- The key verse is 2:3 - “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.”
- A brief outline:
 - Future Judgment – 1:1-3:8
 - Restoration of Israel – 3:9-20

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter judgment is declared against Judah to purge it from sin.

vs. 1-3 – The coming judgment is described. It leaves the land desolate.

vs. 4-13 – God is working through judgment to purge Judah of its sin. The primary target is their idolatry. He specifies worshippers of Baal, pagan priests, astrologers, and worshippers of Malcham (Molech). The “day of the Lord” appears in vs. 7, which is often used to denote judgments in the End Times. The “sacrifice” of vs. 8 is the slaughter of the Lord’s enemies. The fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians is described in detail in vs. 10-12. Nothing could stop the coming judgment.

vs. 14-18 – A vivid description of the terror of the “day of the Lord” upon sinful men.

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter judgments against surrounding nations are announced.

vs. 1-3 – Judah is called to repent before the judgment comes.

vs. 4-7 – The destruction of Philistia is foretold. The image is here is of sudden and complete removal. Nebuchadnezzar would accomplish this in 586 B.C.

vs. 8-10 – The destruction of Moab and Ammon is foretold. Nebuchadnezzar conquered and destroyed them in 582 B.C.

vs. 11-15 – The destruction of Ethiopia (Cush) and Assyria is foretold. Assyria was the mightiest world power at the time, but they were fading. Nahum prophesied about this same time about the coming fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. to the Babylonians. Perhaps Judah hoped they could trust in the current power to maintain the status quo. Ethiopia (Cush) was a powerful African kingdom south of Egypt and sometimes including it. Perhaps they are included as showing God's judgment from the far south to the far north, or perhaps because Judah thought them a powerful ally that could deliver them. God's "sword" used in these judgments is Babylon.

Chapter 3 Notes

In this chapter judgment and restoration are announced for the Jews.

vs. 1-8 – We return our focus back on Jerusalem and the Jews. God makes a four-fold accusation against His people: they did not obey, repent, trust, or seek Him. The leadership of the nation had failed it. They knew better. They saw what happened to other nations that God judged. Yet still they rebelled against God. Therefore, judgment would come.

vs. 9-20 - This looks beyond the judgment and captivity to the glorious restoration of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. This is the hope of the Jews. The Gentiles are converted and the nation of Israel regathered. Even after the foretold judgments we saw before, the hope ahead for the Jews is reason for them to still rejoice in song at the goodness and greatness of God that will be displayed after judgment.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 272

God does judge to simply destroy. He has purpose in His plans for the future. Sometimes an old building is too far gone for repairs must be demolished in order for a new, sturdy one to take its place. Yes, God judges His own, but look at the wonderful future that replaces our sin when it is removed!

Hymn for Day 272

Our hymn today is “Day of Wrath! O Day of Mourning!”. It is attributed to both Thomas of Celano and William J. Irons. It is in part based on Zephaniah 1:14-16.

*Day of wrath! oh, day of mourning!
See fulfill'd the prophet's warning,
Heaven and earth in ashes burning!*

*O what fear man's bosom rendeth,
When from heaven the Judge descendeth,
On whose sentence all dependeth.*

*Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth;
Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth;
All before the throne it bringeth.*

*Death is struck, and nature quaking,
All creation is awaking,
To its Judge an answer making.*

*Lo! the book exactly worded,
Wherein all hath been recorded:
Thence shall judgment be awarded.*

*Whence the Judge His seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth,
Nothing unavenged remaineth.*

*What shall I, frail man, be pleading?
Who for me be interceding,
When the just are mercy needing?*

*King of Majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity! then befriend us!*

*Think, kind Jesu, my salvation
Cost Thy wondrous incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation!*

*Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,
On the Cross of suffering bought me.
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?*

*Righteous Judge! for sin's pollution
Grant Thy gift of absolution,
Ere that day of retribution.*

*Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
All my shame with anguish owning;
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning!*

*Thou the sinful woman saved'st;
Thou the dying thief forgavest,
And to me a hope vouchsafest.*

*Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
Yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
Rescue me from fires undying!*

*With Thy favored sheep O place me!
Nor among the goats abase me;
But to Thy right hand upraise me.*

*While the wicked are confounded,
Doomed to flames of woe unbounded,
Call me, with Thy saints surrounded.*

*Low I kneel with heart submission,
See, like ashes, my contrition;
Help me in my last condition.*

*Ah, that day of tears and mourning!
From the dust of earth returning
Man for judgment must prepare him.*

*Spare, O God, in mercy, spare him!
Lord, all pitying, Jesu blest,
Grant us Thine eternal rest.*