

Zephaniah – The Day of Lord

Lesson One

Introduction:

Zephaniah is set during the reign of King Josiah: 640-609 BCE. It appears he was born near the end of King Manasseh's reign 686-642 BCE. Zephaniah's name means "Yahweh hides" or "Yahweh has hidden". The overwhelming theme is "The Day of the Lord" – a theme of judgment.

[1:1-13].....Who's Gonna Get It!?!?

Vs. 1 Zephaniah is King Hezekiah's great, great, grandson.

NOTE: There has not been a prophetic voice in Judah since Isaiah and Micah – since 701 BCE.

Vss.2-3 Quick/swift turn to the matter at hand – God is not pleased and is ready to cast judgment everywhere, on everything and everyone.

Here and in much of this book, God is presented as "Man of War" who's going "scorched earth"

We can guess as to why God is upset, but as usual, the earth and animals pay a price for human sinfulness.

Vss.4-6 Here we see who God is angry with – Judah and Jerusalem.

This is roughly two decades before Judah would be captured and exiled to Babylon. But this is more than 100 years after the fall of Israel to Assyria.

What "specifically" are the things God is angry about?

1. Idolatry
2. Syncretism [attempted reconciliation or union of differing or opposing practices or principles or parties in philosophy or religion]
3. Indifference towards God

NOTE: Are we guilty of this if we use Tarot cards, horoscopes, and visit mediums or physics for direction?

Vss. 7-11 The "Day of the Lord" traditionally in the Hebrew scriptures is seen as a day of judgment which carries God's wrath.

Most the days of the Old Testament believed it to be the day when Israel's enemies would be dealt with...and many times this was true.

But for Zephaniah, the "Day of the Lord" would also be judgment against the children of God for their sins/crimes against God.

vs.9 "On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold

vss. 10-11 These verses share that God's judgment will not begin in the temple, but in the commercial district.

vs.7 Silence was often the request priests made before animal offering/sacrifice. Many believe this verse is stating that Judah is the sacrifice.

vs.12 Apparently, Judah fell into believing God's presence did not warrant any action: "The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad."

[1:14-18].....It's "Great," right??

Vss.14-18 The greatness is not on par with fun and exuberance; but powerful destruction as means of judgment.

We cannot be idle or “Wheely-Neely” when it comes to God. Either we serve the Lord or we don’t.

And if we choose to serve the Lord, our lives should reflect it.

Conclusion: Verses 14-18 have traditionally been used by the church to connect with the death of Christ on the cross: “a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness”.