

Zephaniah – The Day of the Lord

Lesson Two

[2:1-3].....All Together Now

Vss.1-3 Like Joshua at Shechem and Moses before entering the Promised Land, Zephaniah calls God's people together in the hopes of saving them all from the Day of the Lord.

Before is seen three times in this section to prove the urgency to act appropriately to avoid or withstand the Day of the Lord.

vs.3 "Seek the Lord" does not mean to search for God but to follow God's commands and obey God's ways.

Doing this will yield three results:

1. It will instill humility
2. It will cause obedience to God
3. Righteousness will be bestowed on them

NOTE: Sin has reached universal proportions and the judgment will be just as great.

[2:4-15].....And For Those Who've Hurt You

Vss.4-7 **The Philistines:** *possible date of prophecy fulfillment – 604BCE with Babylonian rule*

Philistia's sin is not really mentioned, but the nation's proud arrogance and blasphemes against God were legendary in Judah and Ephraim.

God's judgment begins on the southern coastal plain and moves north striking the four major cities left of the five-tribe league of Philistia.

Kerethites were the name of the Philistines who lived on the Mediterranean coast south of Judah.

Their destruction will allow Judah to graze their animals over the former land of the Philistines.

Vss.8-11 **Moab and Ammon:** *No perceived date of this prophecy is known. The territory is now (mainly) Jordan.*

The Moabites and Ammonites had fought with Israel since the days of Moses.

They were actual cousins to Israel for they were descendants of Abraham's nephew, Lot.

Their sin against God was their pride and belief in their own power which kept them confident in their taunts of God's children.

Moab and Ammon were to be destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah; not literally but their destruction would give them a horrible reputation.

Their land would become a wasteland – sterile. Judah's remnant would later gain this territory.

Zephaniah looks forward to a time when idolatry and paganism will soon be replaced by authentic worship and devotion to God.

- Vs. 12 **Cush (Ethiopia, Egypt, and north Africa):** *possible date of prophecy fulfillment was 605 BCE when Egypt is conquered by Babylon.*
 Cushite's sin against God is not mentioned. One unproven thought is that
 Cush was a place where some Judean exiles were held under
 Babylonian rule.
 The prophecy is the sword of God is against them.
- Vss. 13-15 **Assyria (Nineveh):** *possible date of prophecy fulfillment was 612 BCE
 when Babylon rose up and conquered Assyria – about 10 years after
 this prophecy was given by Zephaniah*
- vs. 15 Assyria's sin which brought God's judgment, "I am, and there is none
 besides me." is too close to "I am the Lord, and there is no other;
 apart from me there is no God." as shared in Isaiah 45:5.
 Nineveh falls because of its pride.
*"Nineveh's is a boast common to those who wield power in the world:
 Hitler claimed a thousand year Reich; many were sure there would
 'always be an England and its colonies beyond the seas;' the petty tyrant
 Haile Selassie named himself 'the king of kings, elect of God, lion of
 Judah, his most puissant majesty;' and we in the United States are fond
 of saying that we are the greatest nation on earth and that we can do
 anything because after all we put a man on the moon." Elizabeth
 Achtemeier, Interpretation... pg. 78*

NOTE: God knows us, and whether or not we are prideful in our endeavors and pursuits.
 Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

Conclusion: The reverse effect that Jesus declares begins here, perhaps.