

The Book of Zephaniah

9

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

Today we read the book of **Zephaniah**, the ninth book of "The Minor Prophets."

Zephaniah introduces himself in **1:1** as "the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah." Zephaniah was therefore a fourth generation descendant of King Hezekiah, making him a person of high standing within Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. This would also mean that Zephaniah prophesied during the ministries of Jeremiah, Nahum and possibly Habakkuk.

This book probably dates from the first seventeen years of the reign of Josiah, before he started his reforms (**2 Kings 22:3-23:25**). The book of **Zephaniah** prophesies of God's impending judgment not only upon Judah (note **2 Kings 23:25-26**), whom he calls "O shameful nation" (**2:1**), but also upon the surrounding nations – Philistia (**2:4-7**), Moab (**2:8-11**), Ammon (**2:8-11**), Cush (**2:12**) and Assyria (**2:13-15**).

But Jerusalem is singled out for particular mention. This is because she had become "the city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled" (**3:1**). Here is a list of God's grievances against the city:

- ☞ "She obeys no one, she accepts no correction" (**3:2**).
- ☞ "She does not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God" (**3:2**).
- ☞ "Her officials are roaring lions...who leave nothing for the morning" (**3:3**).
- ☞ "Her prophets are arrogant; they are treacherous men" (**3:4**).
- ☞ "Her priests profane the sanctuary and do violence to the law" (**3:4**).

Zephaniah graphically portrays the coming judgment of God, called the Day of the Lord, but he also reveals that God is a God of mercy, and that this mercy is available for those who would reach out for it. For although **chapter 3** begins with God's grievances against Jerusalem, it ends with the hope of full restoration.

Let's now sit back and read the book of **Zephaniah** in one sitting.

Memory Verse

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 1:12

Your Fishing Kit

This is the twenty-first verse in your fishing kit. **John 1:12** describes the result of faith in Christ. By believing on Jesus, a person is immediately adopted into God's family with the full rights of a child of God. What an amazing change of status! From an enemy of God (**Colossians 1:21**) to a child of God (**Romans 8:15-16**) in a split second!

Here are the other verses in your "fishing kit":

John 3:16	Isaiah 55:6-7	John 1:12	2 Corinthians 5:17
John 3:18	Romans 5:8	John 3:3	2 Corinthians 5:21
John 3:36	1 John 4:10	John 5:24	Matthew 10:32-33
Ephesians 1:7-8	Acts 2:38	John 6:37	Romans 2:4-5
Romans 3:23	Acts 3:19	John 8:32	Acts 17:30
Romans 6:23	Acts 4:12	John 8:36	1 John 5:10
Isaiah 53:5	John 14:6	John 10:10	1 John 5:11-12
Isaiah 53:6	1 John 1:8	John 10:28	John 14:1-3
Isaiah 59:1-2	1 John 1:9	Romans 10:9	John 16:33
Isaiah 64:6	1 John 1:10	Romans 10:13	Revelation 3:20

Store these verses in your heart. Memorize them until they have an "on the tip of your tongue" familiarity. You will find them of immeasurable value as you cooperate with the Lord in his mission of bringing the Gospel to this lost world.