

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
ZEPHANIAH
I WILL BRING YOU HOME**

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AUTHOR

Zephaniah served as a prophet during the reign of Josiah.

His lineage is traced back to Hezekiah.

Although Zephaniah's royal descendency is debated, the evidence seems to support this view.

It is opposed because of the failure to add "the king" to Hezekiah's name and because he would be the only prophet of royal lineage.

Those who favor this view argue that it is even more unusual for a prophet to include his ancestry in such detail.

The only satisfactory explanation for doing so is to show his relationship to the royal line.

DATE

It was written during the early part of Josiah's reign (640-609 B.C.), probably before the great reforms.

BACKGROUND

It appears that Zephaniah may have been instrumental in causing Josiah's reforms.

The conditions at the time the book was written show low morals and religious apostasy.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Purpose: To call God's people to repentance.

The message of the book: In spite of appearances to the contrary, God is in control of the world.

He will demonstrate His control by bringing immediate judgment on the wicked and eventual restoration of His people.

Similar to Joel, the announcement of judgment is presented through references to the day of the Lord.

There is a dramatic contrast between the immediate judgment and the eventual restoration.

As in all the warnings of judgment previous to the captivity, the purpose is to call God's people to return to Him and thus avoid judgment.

ORGANIZATION

The book is divided into four main sections:

Announcement of judgment 1:1-18

Exhortation to repent 2:1-3

Description of the judgment of the nations 2:4-15

Overview of the entire plan of God for Israel in the day of the Lord 3:1-20

ARGUMENT

The declaration of judgment extends through most of Zephaniah's message (1-3:8)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT IN THE DAY OF YAHWEH 1

He begins with the announcement of judgment demonstrating that the day of the Lord is near.

Historical introduction 1:1

Summary of judgment 1:2-3

God makes a sweeping statement of judgment
Ultimate judgment--describes God's final judgment on the world.
Immediate judgment--describes His judgment of the land (Judah).

Causes of judgment 1:4-13

The cause for the judgment is presented through the individuals described as recipients.
Idolatry and apostasy
Theft, fraud and deceit
They are thinking "God will never intervene!" (12)

Description of judgment 1:14-18

Allows for both a near and far fulfillments.

INVITATION TO REPENTANCE BEFORE THE DAY OF YAHWEH 2:1-3

An exhortation is given for individuals to repent before the day of the Lord comes.

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS IN THE DAY OF YAHWEH 2:4-15

Judgments are pronounced against the other nations around them who will be affected by the day of the Lord.

Coastal regions 2:4-7
Moab and Ammon 2:8-11
Ethiopia 2:12
Assyria 2:13-15

DIVINE PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL IN THE DAY OF YAHWEH 3

The concluding summary presents the program of God for Israel in the day of the Lord.

Judgment on Israel 3:1-7

The judgment of Judah is once again announced.

Cause of judgment 3:1-4

He summarizes the cause and contrasts God's character with the evil of the people.

Response of Judge 3:5-7

Judgment on nations 3:8

The prophet announces the tribulation and God's final judgment of the nations in preparation for the restoration of Israel.

Restoration of Israel 3:9-20

The remainder of the book foretells God's future dealing with Israel.

Israel's repentance 3:9

He will cause them, and others with them, to repent, so that He may restore them.

Israel's regathering 3:10

He will then regather them from all the nations and remove their evil ones.

Israel's conversion 3:11-12

Those who remain will be converted and receive peace and prosperity

They will place their trust in Yahweh

Israel's just conduct 3:13a

Israel's prosperity 3:13b God's provision

Israel's millennial celebration 3:14-19

They will rejoice in Yahweh and He will be in their midst as their king 3:14-17

He has taken away their judgment

He has driven out their enemies

He is present in their midst as King over His people

=> They will no longer see evil among them

He will save them

He will rejoice over them

They will be reunited with and have fellowship with Him who has been seeking them throughout these many generations. 3:18-20

Regathering of the people

Recompense for the oppressing nations

Healing of the weak

He will convert their shame into praise and renown throughout the whole earth

Israel's restoration summarized 3:20

WHAT LESSONS DO WE LEARN FOR OUR LIVES TODAY FROM THIS MESSAGE?