

ZEPHANIAH

GOD IN THE RUINS | ZEPHANIAH 1-3 | MARCH 22, 2020 | PASTOR FEMI IBITOYE

*"The Lord your God is with You, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing."
(Zephaniah 3:17)*

Introducing Zephaniah

- Prophesized during the reign of King Josiah (640 – 609 BC) (Zephaniah 1:1)
- Descendant of King Hezekiah (Zephaniah 1:1)
- Preached in the Southern Kingdom (Judah)
- Prophets Nahum, Habakkuk and Jeremiah are his contemporaries
- Prophesized before the fall of Assyria (Nineveh) in 612 BC (Zephaniah 2:13)
- Many Theologians believe that Zephaniah prophesized before the reformation that happened during King Josiah's reign. He was instrumental to the revival that happened the 18th year of the reign of King Josiah and his people. (2 King 22-23)

The Lord is a God of Justice and will He will bring judgment on the world, Judah, Jerusalem and the Nations (Zephaniah 1:1-4; 1:12-2:1)

- On the whole world (Zephaniah 1: 2-3, 14-18, 3:8)
- On Judah and Jerusalem (Zephaniah 1:4-13, 3: 1-4)
- On the surrounding Nations (Philistia "Zephaniah 2:4-6", Moab and Ammon "Zephaniah 2:8-11", Cush "Zephaniah 2:12", Assyria "Zephaniah 2:15")

The Day of the Lord (Zephaniah 1:7-11, 14-18; 2:1-3)

- It involves God's intervention
- It is a day of judgment
- It is a day of salvation

The Lord is Mighty to Save (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

- God is with us (Zephaniah 3:17)
- The Lord is a mighty warrior (Zephaniah 3:17, Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 24:7-10)
- He will quiet us with his love (Zephaniah 3:17, Romans 5:8, 8:38-39)
- He sings and rejoices over us (Zephaniah 3:17)

Our Response

- Seek the Lord
- Be humble
- Sing-rejoice (Zephaniah 3:14) sing to the Lord and rejoice in the Lord as he sings and rejoice over you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This week, we continue our series, "God in the Ruins: The Message of the Minor Prophets," by looking at the prophet Zephaniah. Begin your study by praying that God would speak to you through His Word.
2. Background: Zephaniah was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah before the fall of Nineveh (612 BC) and the fall of Jerusalem (587 BC). Zephaniah ministered in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah (640 - 609 BC) 2 Kings 22-23. The prophets Jeremiah, Nahum and Habakkuk were his contemporaries. He is a descendant of King Hezekiah (Zephaniah 1:1)
3. The major themes of the book of Zephaniah include the judgement of God on the whole world (Zephaniah 1:2-3, 14-18 and 3:8; Judah and Jerusalem (Zephaniah 1:4-13, 3: 1-4, and the Surrounding nations. There is a warning of the coming day of the Lord (Zephaniah 1:15-11, 2:2-20) and the deliverance and blessing of the remnant of Israel (Zephaniah 3:14-20).
4. Read Zephaniah 1:2-3. Summarize the prophet's prophesy about the destruction of the whole world in your own words. How this is prophesy similar to the pronouncement of the destruction of the world by God in Genesis 6: 5-7? Notice the de-creation that happens here. God will sweep away Man, animals, birds and fishes in that order as opposed to the creation story in Genesis 1 which goes in the opposite order fishes, birds, animals, then man.
5. Read Zephaniah 1: 4-13. Summarize the judgment on Judah and Jerusalem. Why is God going to judge/punish Judah and Jerusalem? He will because of their many sins against him. These include idolatry Zephaniah 1:4-6, Violence-Zephaniah 1:9 trusting in money Zephaniah 1:18. Name some more. Check Zephaniah 1:6, 3:2, 3:3-4, 3:7, 3:11, 3:1 for more answers.
6. Judah is judged for putting their trust in things other than God. What are two things they put their trust in, but will not save them? (Zephaniah 1:16, 1:18). Are you putting your trust in things other than God? Repent and ask him to forgive you and give you the strength to trust him more.
7. The "Day of the Lord" is one of the major themes of Zephaniah. Read Zephaniah 1:7-11 and 14-18. Explain it in your own words. How does this compare to the "day of the Lord" mentioned by Prophet Joel in Joel 2:1-2.11?
8. In the face of coming Judgment, what does Prophet Zephaniah ask the people to do? (Zephaniah 2:3) How about us today? Don't you think we also need to do what Zephaniah is asking in this verse?
9. The last major theme of the book of Zephaniah is the deliverance and blessing promised to the people of God who remain. Read Zephaniah 3: 9-20. What are some of the blessings mentioned?
10. How did Zephaniah ask the people to respond to God's restoration, deliverance and blessings? Zephaniah 3:14. How have you responded to God's deliverance in your life? If you have not trusted him for your salvation, what are you waiting for? We want you to join us in this wonderful celebration.
11. One of the most powerful verses in all of the Minor Prophets is this declaration about the nature and character of our Lord in Zephaniah 3:17. Read it and discuss, ponder what this verse tells us about our great God.
12. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this study of the prophet Zephaniah? If you are on your own, write that down. If you are in a small group, discuss your answers with one another. Close in prayer. Choose one person in your life with whom you will share something you have learned about God this week.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

This week, allow God's message through Zephaniah to sink into your life with this verse: *"The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."* (Zephaniah 3:17)