

**This book contains the account
of Zephaniah foretelling about
God punishing the Israeli people
and then restoring them. We call
this book
Zephaniah**

¹ *I am* Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, the grandson of Gedaliah, and the great-grandson of Amariah, whose father was *King* Hezekiah. Yahweh gave this message to me during the time when *King* Amon's son Josiah was the King of Judah.

The future destruction

² Yahweh says,

“I will ◀sweep away/destroy▶ everything [HYP] that is on the earth.

³ I will sweep away people and animals.

I will sweep away birds and fish.

I will get rid of wicked people;

there will be no more *wicked* [HYP] people on the earth.”

Yahweh will punish Judah

⁴ “*These are some of the things that I will do:*

I will punish the people who live in Jerusalem and *other places* in Judah.

I will destroy everything that has been used in the worship of Baal.

I will cause *people* to no longer remember the names of the pagan priests or the *other* priests *who have turned away from me*.

⁵ I will get rid of those who go up on the roofs of their houses and worship the sun and moon and stars, those who claim that they worship me but *also* worship *their god* Molech.

⁶ I will get rid of all those who previously worshiped me but no longer do, those who no longer seek my *help* or *ask me to tell them what they should do*.”

⁷ Be silent in front of Yahweh the Lord, because it will soon be the time/day when Yahweh *will judge and punish people*.

Yahweh has prepared to get rid of *the people of Judah*;
they will be like [MET] animals that are slaughtered for sacrifices,
and he has chosen *their enemies* to be the ones who will get rid of them.

⁸ Yahweh says, “On that day when I will get rid of *the people of Judah*,
I will punish their officials and the king’s sons,
and *I will punish* all those who worship foreign gods [MTY].

⁹ I will punish those who *show that they revere their god Dagan* by avoiding stepping on the threshold of *his temple*,

and those who do violent things and tell lies
in the temples of their gods.”

¹⁰ Yahweh *also* says,

“On that day, people will cry out at the Fish
Gate of Jerusalem.

People will wail in the newer part of the city,
and *people will hear* a loud crash of buildings
collapsing in the hills.

¹¹ So, *all you* people who live in the market area
of Jerusalem should wail,
because all those who sell goods and weigh
out silver will be slaughtered.

¹² *It will be as though* I will light lanterns to
search in *dark places* in Jerusalem
for those who have become very satisfied
with their behavior and complacent *about*
their sins.

They think that *I*, Yahweh, will do nothing to
them,
neither good things nor bad things.

¹³ *But I say that* their valuable possessions will
be plundered/stolen *by their enemies*,
and their houses will be destroyed.

They will build *new* homes,
but they will not live in them;
they will plant vineyards,
but they will never drink *any* wine *made*
from grapes that grow there.”

The day of punishment

¹⁴ It will soon be the day/time when Yahweh *will*
punish people.

- It will be here quickly.
 It will be a time *when people cry* bitterly,
 a time when *even* brave soldiers will cry
 loudly.
- 15 It will be a time when *God shows that he is*
 very angry,
 a time when *people experience much* distress/
 suffering and trouble.
It will be a time *when many things are* ruined and
 destroyed [DOU].
 It will be a time when it is very gloomy and
 dark [DOU],
 when the clouds are very black.
- 16 It will be a time when *soldiers* will blow
 trumpets *to call other soldiers* to battle.
Your enemies will tear down the walls
 around your cities
 and the high towers *at the corners of those*
 walls.
- 17 Because you sinned against Yahweh,
 he will cause you to experience great dis-
 tress;
 you will walk *around groping* like [SIM] blind
 people do.
 Your blood will flow *from your bodies* like [SIM]
 water,
 and your corpses will lie on the ground and
 rot [SIM].
- 18 At the time that *Yahweh shows that he* is very
 angry *with you*,
 you will not be able to save yourselves
 by *giving* silver or gold *to your enemies*.
 Because Yahweh ◀is very jealous/does not want
 people to worship any other god▶,

he will send a fire to burn up the entire world,
and he will suddenly get rid of all the *wicked* people who live on the earth.

2

A call to repentance

- ¹ You people *of Judah* who ought to be ashamed, gather together [DOU].
- ² Yahweh is extremely angry with you,
so gather together now,
before it is time for him to punish [MTY] you
and blow you away like [SIM] *the wind blows away chaff.*
- ³ All you people in Judah who are humble,
worship Yahweh, and obey what he has commanded.
Try to do what is right
and to be humble.
If you do that, perhaps Yahweh will protect/spare you
on the day when he punishes [MTY] people.

Yahweh will punish Philistia

- ⁴ *When Yahweh punishes Philistia,*
Gaza and Ashkelon *cities* will be deserted/
abandoned.
Ashdod *city* will be attacked and the people
expelled at noon *when people are resting;*
the *people of Ekron city* will also be driven out.
- ⁵ And terrible things will happen to you people
of Philistia who live near the sea,

because Yahweh has decided [MTY] that he will punish [MTY] you, *also*.

He will get rid of all of you;
not one person will ◀survive/remain alive▶.

⁶ The land of *Philistia* near the sea will become a pasture,
a place for shepherds and their sheep pens.

⁷ The people of Judah who ◀survive/are still alive▶ will possess that land.

At night they will sleep in the *deserted* houses in Ashkelon.

Yahweh will take care of them;
he will enable them to prosper again.

Yahweh will punish Moab and Ammon

⁸ The Commander of the armies of angels, the God to whom *we* Israeli people *belong*, says *this*:
“I have heard the people of Moab and Ammon when they insulted [DOU] my people,
and when they said that they would conquer my people’s country.

⁹ So now, *as surely as I live, I will destroy Moab and Ammon*
like [SIM] *I destroyed Gomorrah city*.

Their land will be a place where there are nettles and salt pits;
it will be ruined forever.

My Israeli people who survive will take away all their valuable possessions
and *also* occupy their land.”

¹⁰ The people of Moab and Ammon will get what they deserve for being proud,

because they made fun of the people who belong to the Commander of the armies of angels.

11 Yahweh will cause them to be terrified *when* he destroys all the gods of their countries.

Then *even the people who live on* islands throughout the world will worship Yahweh, each in their own countries.

Yahweh will punish Ethiopia

12 *Yahweh says that* he will also slaughter the people of Ethiopia.

Yahweh will punish Assyria

13 Yahweh will punish [IDM] and destroy Assyria, *that land* northeast of us.

He will cause *its capital* Nineveh to become ruined and deserted, a place that will be as dry as the desert.

14 *Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle* and many kinds of wild animals will lie down there. Owls and crows will sit on the columns/pillars *of the destroyed buildings*, and they will ◀hoot/cry out▶ through the windows.

There will be rubble in the doorways, and the *valuable* cedar boards will be taken *from the ruined houses*.

15 *The people of* Nineveh were *previously* happy and proud, thinking that they were very safe.

They were *always* saying,
 “Our city is the greatest city;
 there is no city as great as ours!”

But now it will become a ruins,
 a place where wild animals make their dens.
 And everyone who passes by there will hiss *and*
scorn/ridicule that city,
 and shake their fists *to show that they detest*
that city very much.

3

Yahweh will some day restore Jerusalem,
whose people have rebelled against him

¹ Terrible things will *also* happen *to Jerusalem,*
 that city whose people have rebelled *against*
Yahweh
 and who have become unacceptable to him *be-*
cause of the sins that they have committed.
They act violently toward others and they
 ◀oppress/treat cruelly▶ *other people.*

² *The people there* do not pay attention to people
 who tell them *the wrong things that they*
are doing
 and *try to* ◀correct them/cause them to quit
 doing those things▶.

The people in Jerusalem do not trust in Yahweh
 or draw near to ask help from their God.

³ Their leaders are *like* [MET] roaring lions;
 they are *like* [MET] wolves that *attack other*
animals during the evening,
and eat everything that they kill,
 with the result that the next morning there
 is nothing left *of those animals to eat.*

⁴ The prophets in Jerusalem are proud,

and they give messages that are not to be trusted.

Their priests cause the temple to be unholy
by doing things that are opposed to the laws
of Moses.

⁵ But Yahweh is *also* in the city;
and he never does what is wrong.
He treats people justly/fairly;
he does that every day,
but wicked people are never ashamed *about*
their doing what is wrong.

⁶ *Yahweh says this:*

“I have destroyed *many* nations;
I have destroyed their strong/high city walls
and towers.
Now I have caused the streets in those cities to
be completely deserted [DOU];
the cities are ruined.
There are no people *still alive* in the cities;
they are all dead [LIT].

⁷ So I thought *to myself,*
‘Because of what I have done to those other
nations,
surely the people *of Jerusalem* will revere me
now,
and they will accept ◀*my correcting them/*
my telling them to quit doing what is
wrong▶.

If they do that, I will not destroy their houses;
I will not punish them like I said that I would
do.’
But *in spite of knowing how I punished those other*
nations,

they were still eager to get up early each morning
and continue to do evil things.

⁸ Therefore I, Yahweh, say,
'Wait for the day in which I will testify *in court about your evil things.*'

I have decided to gather the people of the kingdoms *of the earth* [DOU]
and cause them to know that I am very angry with them.

All *over* the earth I will punish and destroy people;
my being angry with them because I ◀am jealous/want people to worship no other god▶ is *like* [MET] a ◀raging/very hot▶ fire.

⁹ When that happens, I will cause *all* people [MTY] to be changed
and enable them to speak *only* what is ◀pure/pleasing to me▶,
in order that everyone can worship me [MTY]
and unitedly/together serve me [MTY].

¹⁰ *Then* my people who *were forced to go to other countries*, those who live along the upper part of the Nile River in Ethiopia
will come to me and bring offerings to me.

¹¹ At that time, you *people in Jerusalem* will no longer be ashamed *about what has happened to you*,
because you no longer will be rebelling against me.

I will get rid of all the people among you who are very proud [DOU].

No one on *Zion*, my holy hill, will strut around proudly.

12 Those who are still alive in Israel will be poor and humble;
they will be people who trust in me [MTY].

13 Those people who are still alive *there* in Israel will not do *things that are* wrong;
they will not tell lies or deceive [MTY] people.

They will eat and sleep *safely*,
because no one will cause them to be afraid.”

14 You people who live in Jerusalem [DOU] and *other places in* Israel,
sing and shout loudly!

Be glad, and rejoice [DOU] greatly,

15 *because* Yahweh will stop punishing [MTY] you,
and he will send away from you *the armies of* your enemies!

And Yahweh *himself*, the king of *us* Israeli people,
will live among us,
and never again will we be afraid that *others* will harm us.

16 At that time, *other people* will say to us people of Jerusalem,
“*You people of* [APO] Jerusalem, do not be afraid;
do not become afraid or discouraged,

17 *because* Yahweh your God is *living* among you.
He is mighty, and he will rescue/save you.

He will be very happy with you;
 because he loves you, he will cause you to
 not be afraid;
 he will sing loudly to rejoice over you.”

18 *Yahweh* says, “You people were sad and
 ashamed
 because *you were unable to attend your*
 religious festivals;
 but I will cause you to no longer be dis-
 graced.

19 Truly, I will *severely* punish all those who
 ◀oppressed you/caused you to suffer▶.
 I will rescue those who are helpless
 and those who were forced to go to other
 countries.
 I will enable them to be praised and honored in
 every country to which they were ◀exiled/
 forced to go▶,
 places where they were disgraced.

20 At that time, I will gather you together
 and bring you *back home to Israel*.
 I will cause you to ◀have a good reputation/be
 honored▶ and be *greatly* praised
 among all the nations of the earth.
 You [MTY] will see me causing you to prosper
 again.
That will surely happen because I, Yahweh,
 have said it.”

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