

Zephaniah

Impending Judgment
& Distant Hope

- This small book gives us much info on the End Times
- Zephaniah prophesied after Manasseh and during the time of the reform-king Josiah
- 2Kings 21:16 2Chronicles 33:11 – 15
- Manasseh burned up his own sons as sacrifices, murdered Isaiah, but later repented

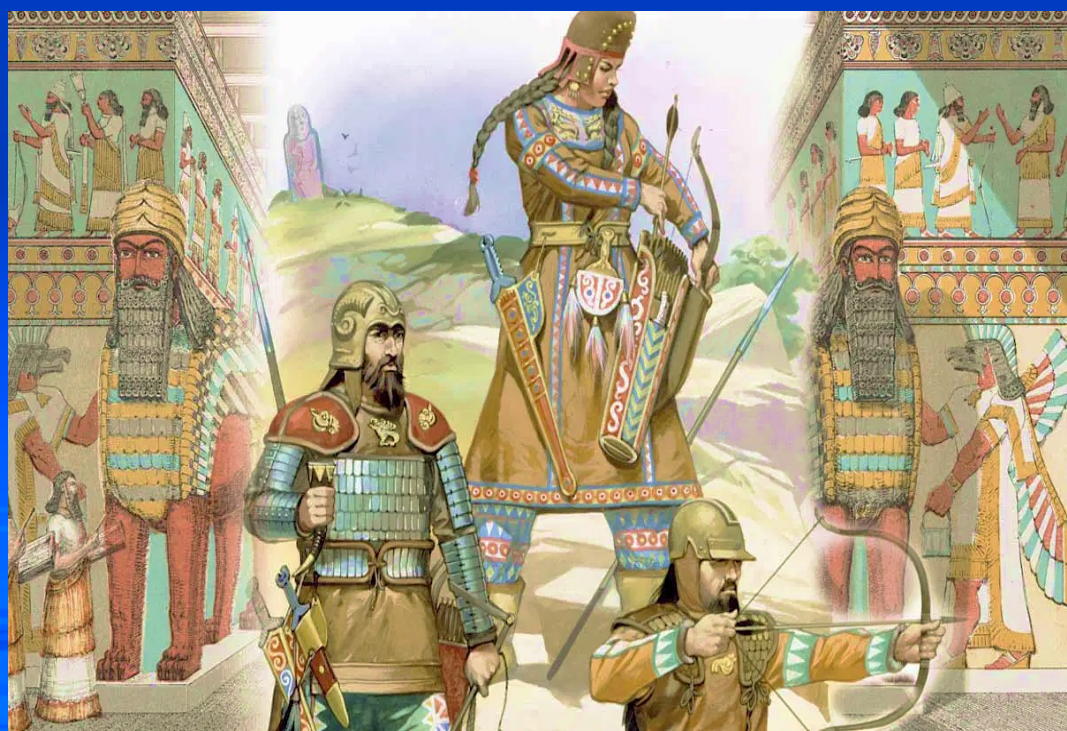


- Manasseh repented, received forgiveness, but his son Amon took over and reversed Manasseh's reforms
- Manasseh's grandson Josiah followed Amon and became King of Judah at only 8 years old
- 2Kings 22:8 – 13 Josiah, a good king
- Zephaniah witnessed Manasseh's life, but prophesied during Josiah's reign

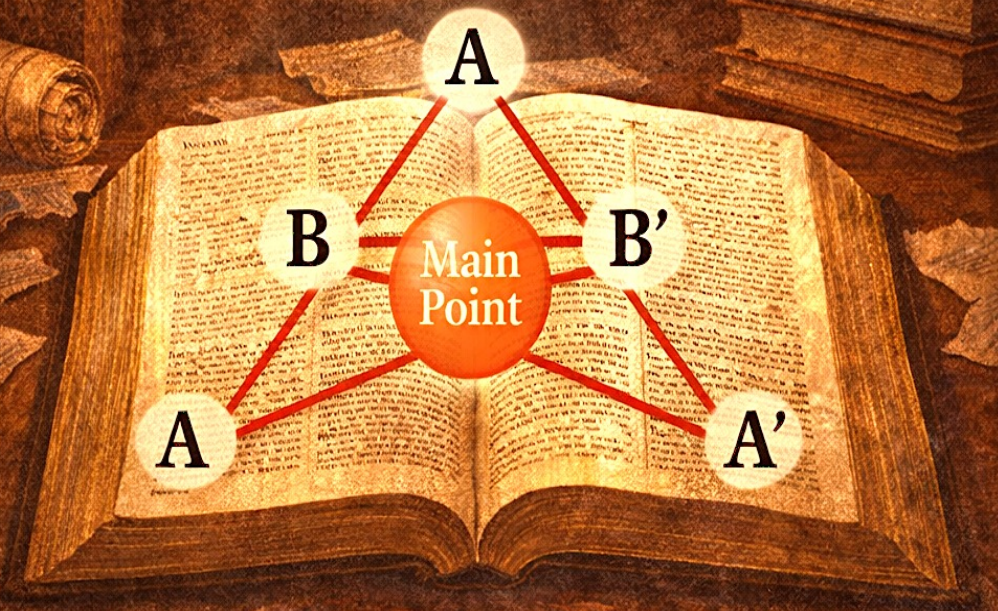


- Zephaniah's name = He whom YHWH has hidden
- Genealogically connected to King Hezekiah
- Josiah ruled 31 years, Zephaniah probably prophesied after the Torah scroll was found in the temple 630 B.C.
- Ephraim/Israel conquered by Assyria 90 years earlier
- Egypt in the midst of a cultural/political resurgence
- Europe in the midst of change and expansion

- Judah's main threat was the Scythians with their enormous empire
- Pagan worship practices easily slipped into the Hebrew faith
- Christianity suffers from the same issue of syncretism, but no notice is taken
- It usually takes a calamity to get the religious leaders' attention to repent
- A long, painful process



Literary Structure in the Bible



How structure shapes meaning
and prevents misreading

- Max Margolis, how prophets write
- Zephaniah typically structured
- All prophets revolve around a 3-part thought, and accept the Circle of Sin concept
- Some Hebrew poetry, but in his own way
- Vividness was his goal
- Demonstrates a high literacy
- Links to Genesis

LINKS WITH TORAH



- An extreme reversal of Creation
- Minor Prophets make clear links with the Law of Moses
- Paraphrasing of Psalms and wisdom literature are also used
- A Prophet's style, life experiences and worldview become the background for what and how he writes
- Nothing different about Zephaniah, in that sense



Zephaniah

Chapter 1

- Verse 1 is a superscription
- Suspicions that Zephaniah is a fictional character have no basis. He was considered real before Yeshua's day
- The superscription claims that: 1) this is God's oracle
2) Given by inspiration to Zephaniah 3) He was the son of Kushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of King Hezekiah
4) Oracle received during Josiah's reign,
5) Josiah son of Amon 6) Josiah a king over Judah

- Zephaniah 1:2 – 3
- Vss. 2 & 3 meant to be read as one connected thought
- Both verses begin with “I will sweep away”
- A “whiff” of Hebrew poetry
- These words echo Hosea’s prophecy in 4:3
- Both reveal a widespread devastation of all living creatures
- Likely better reads: “I will **AGAIN** sweep away”

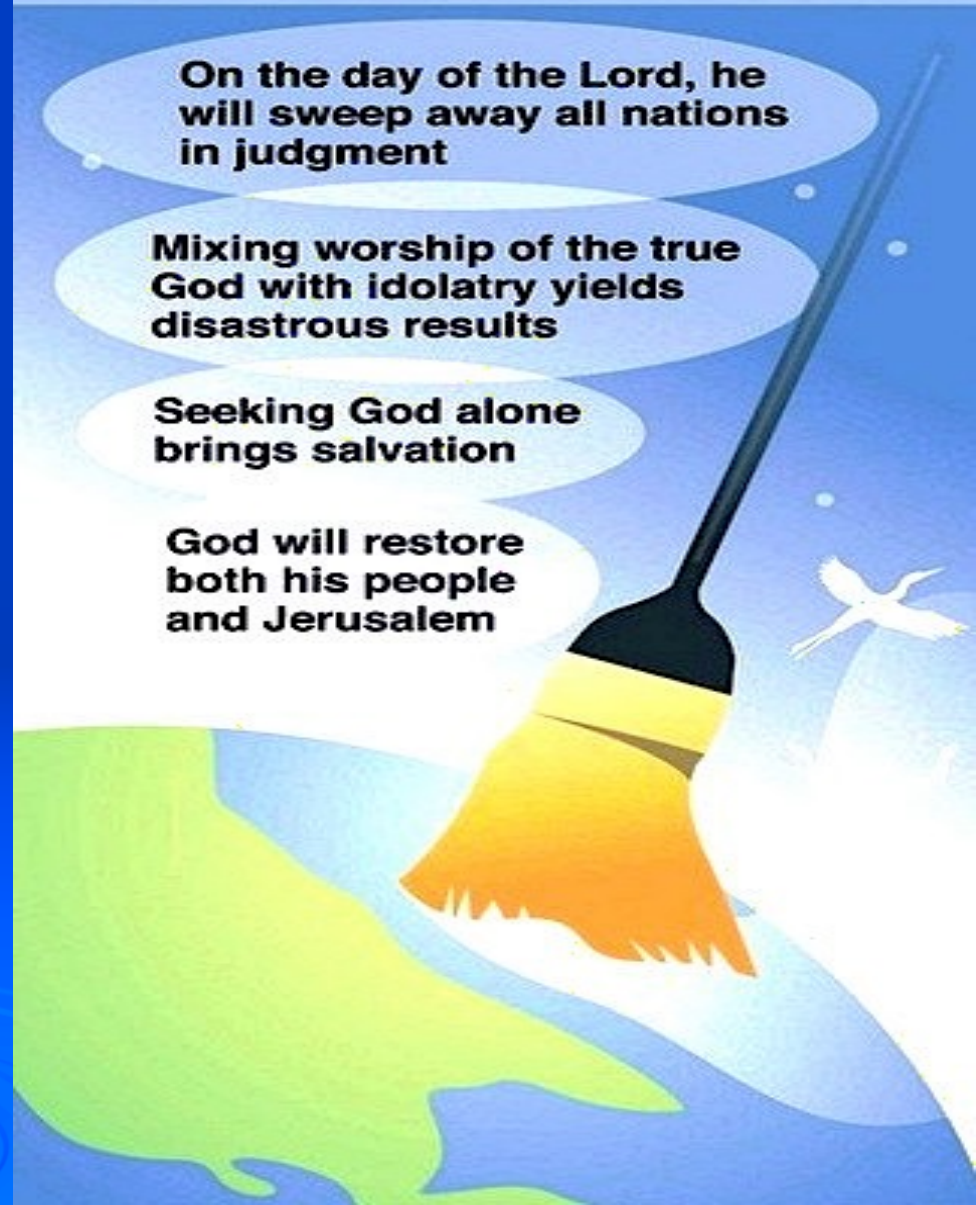
Big Ideas in ZEPHANIAH

On the day of the Lord, he will sweep away all nations in judgment

Mixing worship of the true God with idolatry yields disastrous results

Seeking God alone brings salvation

God will restore both his people and Jerusalem



No idols of any living creatures!



- ***Ha'eret*** = the land of Israel, or the entire earth
- Stumbling blocks make the righteous stumble; not the wicked
- ***Hammakselot*** = Feminine gender.
Feminine objects usually connected to idolatry
- Deuteronomy 4:15 – 18
- Stumbling blocks an idiom for all kinds of idolatrous worship objects



PURIFICATION

AND

DESTRUCTION

- Ezekiel 14:3 – 6
- The coming destruction has no boundaries
- Fire will destroy those who are not God's people, but purify those who are
- Tribulation and God's wrath are 2 different things
- The good news is that true Believers will not experience the fullest of God's wrath