

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

Lesson 2, Chapter 1 Continued

The last time we met, we had our introduction to Zephaniah to set the background and context for his prophetic oracle. In that introduction, we learned that he wrote during the late-third of the 7th century B.C., while Josiah was king over Judah. It is also that he was the first prophet to write in quite some time since the prophetic word seems to have gone silent since the 8th century B.C. prophets like Micah, Amos, and Isaiah wrote.

Without doubt, what brought God to utilize a prophet again was the terrible reigns of Manasseh and his son Amon over Judah. When Zephaniah writes, the northern kingdom of Ephraim/Israel had been gone for between 90 and 100 years. So, Judah was all that remained of the formerly larger and unified kingdom of Israel during the reigns of David and then Solomon. King Manasseh thoroughly corrupted the Hebrew faith by adopting pagan gods, pagan worship rites, and forgetting God's commandments and His appointed times. Although late in

his life he repented and began to reform his own idolatrous policies, his son Amon returned Judah to the earliest ways of his father. When Amon was killed after only a couple of years in office, Josiah followed and was installed as king when he was only 8 years old.

Some years later, when he was old enough to actually formulate policy, Josiah began to reform Judah's worship practices. But it was not until a hidden Torah scroll was found in the Temple, and then read to him, that sweeping reforms to return Judah to the ways of the Torah and the end of pagan practices, began. Very probably it was around the time that Torah scroll discovery was made that Zephaniah received God's calling and then began writing his prophecy.

It's important to remember that Zephaniah, as with all prophets, didn't received the entire divine oracle all at once, and so he didn't write about it all at once. It came in sections and was written down over time. Prophets might add new messages to their prophecies in as little as a few months, other times it over several years. So, it seems

that the first writings of Zephaniah probably began around 630 B.C., and the final parts a few years later... but all under the reign of King Josiah.

What God did through Zephaniah was to tell Judah about not only themselves, but also the fate of the Gentile nations that He was going to punish by His angry wrath. So much of what was said certainly applied to coming events of the ancient world but equally applies to the End Times. And, what Zephaniah spoke had clear connections to the Book of Genesis, some of the Psalms, and to other unnamed Wisdom literature (of course including thoughts, if not direct quotes, from earlier prophets as was typical of prophets).

Although there is some element of Hebrew poetry in Zephaniah, it is not of the ultra-complex kind like Nahum used. In fact, it is done in a unique style. Nevertheless, we must always keep in the mind that, to one level or another, words spoken and written in poetic style are chosen for effect, expressing emotion, and for rhythmic, rhyming, or word count reasons, and not so much for

precision. That said, Zephaniah is not particularly difficult reading except in spots.

In the end, Zephaniah is about God's judgment on the world and on Judah, but also about differentiating Judah from the world. This happens by means of a promise for a later restoration for Judah, but also a promise of a more complete and permanent destruction for the world.

We opened chapter 1, but didn't get too far, completing our previous lesson at verse 3. Open your Bibles to Zephaniah chapter 1.

RE-READ ZEPHANIAH CHAPTER 1 all

The first 3 verses of chapter 1 tell us that those who belong to the Kingdom of God will not be spared from the results of God's worldwide, wrathful destruction. God's worshippers will have a measure of collateral damage as they, and now we, are caught up in it. So, in the End Times, Believers are **not** immune to the consequences of the coming universal tribulation. Happily, it is that way

only up to the point that God takes control of human events at the beginning of His wrath. I made the point that tribulation and wrath are 2 different things, even though the Church makes no distinction (the Evangelical branches, especially, make the lack of differentiation as a kind of core doctrine). To briefly review: when the New Testament speaks of tribulation, it is a common noun. That is, it is speaking of severe hardship in general. The Church, however, has added the definite article t-h-e (the) before the word "tribulation" to turn it into a proper noun. That is, it creates a formal name for a particular named event.

In the Greek manuscripts all New Testament translations are drawn from, interpreters have added in the word "**ton**" in Greek, which is the equivalent to the English "the". I'll say again: that word **ton** is NOT THERE in the ancient Greek manuscripts; doctrinal-minded Christian interpreters added it in much later, thus corrupting the truth. Thus, it was the Church that invented the concept of an event in the last days called The Tribulation, to be

followed by another event called "The Great Tribulation".
Biblically, this doesn't exist.

Further, the Church describes both of these tribulation "events" as part of God's wrath. Again, untrue. Tribulation is the result of humankind's nature. It is the consequence of actions of evil people upon other people. So, for instance, what Hitler did in WWII was tribulation; it was not God's wrath. God's wrath, on the other hand, is God directed. Sometimes wrath can be God causing a nation to use their evil instincts to oppress another nation, or at a higher level it could be by means of God-commanded supernatural or cosmic happenings that are other worldly (as in what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah). Thus, in the End Times, there will be a progression of troubles from ever-increasing tribulations of man's inhumanity and evil, and then God urging nations and their leaders to do destructive things to other nations (for His purposes), and then finally devastations upon nations of a cosmic nature. This progression is what are reading about thus far in Zephaniah.

Before we continue, I want to make a couple of comments about my sources... because I am regularly asked such things. I rely on the Masoretic Texts as my Hebrew source for the Old Testament. The reason is that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls validates that what we read in the Masoretic Texts is aligned with what the bulk of the Hebrews as far back as the 2nd century B.C. relied on. This is not to say that earlier than that, it was something else. It's only that this is as far back as we can **prove** what the Hebrews were using as their Hebrew Bible. I wanted to make this clear, because there is a competing Old Testament interpretive text that was written in Old Greek. That is called the Septuagint or in shortened written form, the LXX. It was a translation of the Tanakh created in Alexandria, Egypt sometime during the 3rd century B.C. While the LXX and the MT align with each other reasonably well, there are definite differences. Different English Bible versions chose between using the MT or the LXX as their source for translating the Old Testament. I use the MT (Hebrew) texts because they use the original, source-language... Hebrew... without the need for

translation. By its very nature, all translations are edited redactions.

The other matter I want to share with you is this: dating with much precision about when a Prophet wrote (or when most any other Bible book author wrote) is problematic and there is no reasonable way to present incontrovertible proof. So, there can be a wide range of academic opinions. I have no idea how anyone's opinion will ever be proved to a high level of certainty. As regards our current study, it is no different. The good news is that the variations of opinions about Zephaniah are within a narrow range. So, the greater question we should be asking is not WHEN was it written, but rather what did it *mean* to the audience of Judeans that Zephaniah was speaking to? So, a good thing to do is to figure out the meaning and then hold it up against the time period we think it was written to see if it fits. In Zephaniah's prophecy, assuming he wasn't writing a fantasy, he tells us that he at least wrote the Superscription to his prophecy (verse 1) during King Josiah's reign. It seems clear that other and later parts of his prophecy occurred

later in this same king's reign. This, to me, might not be absolute proof, but no other theory of authorship or date works when compared to the text and to its meaning.

When we ended last time, I said that we needed to read chapter 1, verses 4, 5, and 6 together to get the intended meaning and impact of its message. Here is how that sounds.

^{CJB} Zephaniah 1:4-6 ⁴ "I will stretch out my hand over Y'hudah and all those living in Yerushalayim. I will wipe every remnant of Ba'al from this place, the idol-serving priests and even their names, ⁵ those worshipping heaven's army on the roofs, also those who worship and swear by Yehoveh but swear by Malkam as well, ⁶ those who turned away from following Yehoveh, and those who haven't sought Yehoveh or consulted him at all."

In this passage, and throughout Zephaniah (and most prophets, as well), we're going to see what almost seems like overboard usage of God's formal name Yehoveh. It

has bothered me so very much that English Bibles will eliminate almost entirely the use of God's name. There is no reason for doing this, except agenda. In doing this I see a violation of the 3rd commandment to not take God's name in vain. That is, like all of God's laws, there is an omission as well as a commission side to it. It is one thing to misuse His name; it is another to substitute some other word or name for it. But both cases involve trespassing against that 3rd commandment.

There are probably a number of reasons why we find God's name used so frequently (roughly 6000 times) in the Old Testament. Perhaps the outstanding reason is due to the cultures of the ancient times that surrounded Israel, all of which had pagan god systems. Each of these gods had names, and pronouncing their names explained what areas of life each god was given credit for addressing and/or controlling. I said long ago that one can only know who God is in two ways: His formal name and His attributes. Thus, by knowing the God of the Bible's name (Yehoveh), then no other god (by means of their name) can be given credit for our God's attributes, nature,

and commands. And, by knowing what Yehoveh commands, and what He describes as His own nature, we can differentiate Him from all other "god" claimants. For instance, in our modern era, many Church people have been trained to think that the Muslim god called Allah is really just another name (in Arabic) for Yehoveh (or even Yeshua). This is easily detectable as a false association, because Allah is His formal name, and when in their Quran Allah describes his nature and lays out his commands, they are very nearly the opposite of Yehoveh's.

In more ancient biblical times, identifying one's god or god, and declaring allegiance to certain of them, was everything. The Israelites spent more time than not adding in worship of pagan gods to their worship of Yehoveh (this is called syncretism). So, when in English Bibles Yehoveh's name is virtually exiled and instead replaced with the word "Lord" (a generic word), it makes fuzzy just which lord it is talking about. After all, the Canaanite word *baal* also means lord in English.

The further back in time we go, the more critical it is to identify gods by their names. The Prophets, and all the Bible writers, used God's formal name for the purpose of identification; and this purpose hasn't ended because we're in the 21st century. This passage we just read highlights why God's name cannot be casually eliminated or replaced with something else; it is essential for our proper understanding. In our current passage, there is an issue of Yehoveh versus Malkam, also sometimes call Milcom, and other times it might be in reference to Molech. Names matter.

When God says in verse 4 that He will stretch out his hand (or it could be translated as arm) it means to take action over whatever He has stretched out His authority over. More typically it is a matter of God working for liberation and protection of His people; but not always. First, it is being made clear that the threatened actions (which have been decided and so, will happen) are to be credited to Yehoveh and not to some other god. Second, this time His target is Judah and her capital city, Jerusalem. When we look closer, we see that it is the ungodly that are His

target. Yet, because this is to be a national judgment, then even those who are righteous shall be afflicted by association. The intent is to wipe-out every vestige of Baal worship from Judah.

To get a little more nuanced understanding of what is being said, we need to slightly amend the more popular readings of verse 4 to the literal Hebrew meaning. Where we read "I will wipe out every remnant of Baal", what is really said is "I will wipe out every remnant of **the** Baal". This widens the scope in that this is now referring to the objects or practices associated with Baal worship. Further, in reference to this remnant God speaks of, the Hebrew word "**shem**" precedes it and essentially goes untranslated in our Bible as though it isn't there. **Shem** usually means name. However, it also has wider range of meanings. It can refer to memory of something, or any reference to something, or as a manifestation of something, or as the essence of something. So, what is really being said is "I will wipe out every memory, object, reference, even the basic essence of Baal worship from Judah. It will be as though it had never existed.

Then, God will also wipe out those who perpetrated Baal worship on the people of Judah: their priests. Yes, these are the **Levite** priests who have integrated aspects of Baal worship and pagan gods into their practices and rituals and consequently they teach the people of Judah to believe, to think, and to do as they do. God's Word is replaced with whatever these priests conjure up, and then they tell the people that what they teach is righteous and comes from Yehoveh. The common people are none the wiser. And, the truth is, there weren't alternative sources for the common people to go to, in order to challenge the priests. There weren't Torah scrolls available to the people. There weren't alternative teachers. The people only knew what the priests taught to them. People in our day have no such excuse. Everyone has access to the truth. So, the common folks of today bear far more responsibility for what they think, believe, and do than for the ancients.

Verse 4 continues the thought that these idolatrous priests' "names" will be eliminated. Their names are

generally referring to their family blood-lines... their offspring... meaning their individual families in general.

These idolatrous priests will come to the end of their family line. In this era, that threat may be the most terrifying of all threats since it was believed that one's ongoing afterlife was manifested in one's offspring. So, this is essentially the equivalent of eternal death.

Therefore, from a spiritual aspect, those idolatrous priests versus the more faithful Levite priests will be separated and differentiated for spiritual elimination versus spiritual restoration, but that doesn't mean that their earthly/physical fates will also be completely separated and dealt with. Those priests will be dealt with as a single-group due to their ongoing association to the priest-cult on the one hand, but on a higher level they will be dealt with individually depending on whether they are idolaters in their individual hearts or not. All the priests are going to suffer very negative consequences of one kind or another.

Verse 5 begins with addressing those who bow down to the host of heavens on their rooftops. This host of

heavens does not mean God's angels. This is referring to the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. All astrological bodies. This ancient practice of worshipping the bodies in the sky goes back centuries, millennia really, with its birthplace in Mesopotamia. It wasn't just the ancient priests representing the various gods that this is speaking of, but rather ordinary people.

The typical Middle Eastern house had, for so many centuries, flat roofs with access from the outside. They were used as household space for any number of reasons. On hot summer afternoons it was a place of rest in the shade shelter that was built atop it. And on those hot summer nights, it was cooler to be elevated and outside of those mud-brick or stone houses that held so much heat in their walls. Sometimes it was used as guest quarters. Here, this is speaking people using those rooftops as places to see the skies so that they could worship what they saw in them. Moses warned against this.

CJB Deuteronomy 4:19 *For the same reason, do not look up at the sky, at the sun, moon, stars and everything in the sky, and be drawn away to worship and serve them; Yehoveh your God has allotted these to all the peoples under the entire sky.*

The Prophet Jeremiah spoke of the same thing Zephaniah did, and he put it this way.

CJB Jeremiah 8:1-2 *"At that time," says Yehoveh, "[these enemies] will remove the bones of the kings of Y'hudah, the bones of his princes, the bones of the cohanim, the bones of the prophets and the bones of the inhabitants of Yerushalayim from their graves. ² They will spread them out, exposed to the sun, the moon and the entire army of heaven, whom they loved, served, walked after, sought after and worshipped. The bones will not be collected or reburied but will be left lying on the ground like dung.*

So, it will be Israel's enemies that will desecrate the graves of kings, priests, and commoners of Judah, and expose their skeletons to the elements. These are the dead that had idolatrously worshipped the objects of the skies. So, ironically, their grave desecration will wind up having their bones lay exposed to what they worshipped before they died, as if they were doing this on their rooftops. This worship was (in the Middle East) called Sabeanism. It was nearly ubiquitous throughout the near and far east in Asia, and Israel simply could not resist it.

The final half of verse 5 is: "and those who worship and swear by Yehoveh but swear by Malcom as well". To swear by a god, is to swear loyalty *to* that god. So, it is a divided loyalty to swear to both Yehoveh and Malcom. However, the CJB mistranslates when it says, "worshipping and swearing". It is not worshipping but "bowing". The Hebrew is ***shachah***, and it does not mean worshipping. More correctly it is "bowing and swearing", with both being standard actions of demonstrating loyalty.

So, there are 2 classes of worshippers this passage has addressed. First, the star-worshippers, and second, those who insisted on creating a hybrid worship of Yehoveh as well as bowing down to idols and other gods. Now, in verse 6, a third class of worshippers is added.

^{CJB} Zephaniah 1:6 *and those who turned away from following Yehoveh, and those who haven't sought Yehoveh or consulted him at all.*

This verse is not difficult or tricky to make sense of. God will destroy those of any and every social status who used to worship Yehoveh, but they stopped, as well as those who never had sought after God or consulted Him (in prayer) at all. Here's what we need to understand to bring it into the 21st century: Christianity says that upon Yeshua's advent, all this changed. First, there they say there is no such thing as a Christian who at one time worshipped and followed Christ but later renounced Him. And second, even if a person might do that, it doesn't matter. If only for a moment that person declared loyalty to God and His Son, it simply didn't matter what

happened from that point forward in that person's life. Loss of belief, behavior that is contrary to all that God teaches, has become irrelevant. This mindset/doctrine goes by a few different doctrinal names, but it best known as once-saved-always-saved. Clearly throughout the Old Testament, it was common for people to accept God and then later to turn away from Him or so pollute their worship of Him that their belief counted for nothing.

Turning away from God means a couple of things. It can mean renouncing Him completely and devoting oneself instead to another and different God. It can also mean (and more often, did mean) disobeying God... not obeying the terms of His covenants with Israel. There is perhaps no more eternally dangerous Church doctrine than once-saved-always-saved that is the exact opposite of what this passage explains. Nowhere in the Bible, Old or New Testaments is such a thing claimed that belief turning to non-belief has nothing to do with our relationship with God or our eternal future. In fact, where examples are given of accepting Christ and then renouncing Him, or refusing to follow His ways, or adding other gods to the

mix are found in the New Testament, the Church response is that this is either an impossible hypothetical, or the person who did this was a pretender and never did trust on any level. So, once again, the Church has Yeshua usurping His Father's authority and changing a principle that underlies the entire Word of God.

The next statement about those who haven't sought after God, or consult Him at all, is speaking of 2 different circumstances. To seek after God means to learn His ways and do them. So, if someone doesn't do that, it doesn't mean they are an atheist. It means a person who claims allegiance to God outwardly, but inwardly never bothers to seek Him by prayer or by study of His Word. To "follow His ways" is but another way of saying "to walk in His ways". It has to do with knowing His commandments and doing them. It goes beyond claiming allegiance. The next circumstance is speaking of those who don't accept Yehoveh at all and never have. Pagans. And, although there was no such thing as an atheist in Bible times, it naturally includes them today because atheism is rampant in the Western world.

Those first 6 verses of Zephaniah chapter 1 lead us to the sobering, if not terrifying, statement that is verse 7. So, listen and let it sink in.

^{CJB} Zephaniah 1:7 *Keep silent before Yehoveh ELOHIM, for the Day of Yehoveh is near. Yehoveh has prepared a sacrifice; he has set apart those he invited.*

What we read here is a sort of outburst of praise from Zephaniah. These are his words, and his thoughts, after hearing what God has told him thus far. Before describing what the Day of Yehoveh is about (usually incorrectly stated in Bibles as the Day of the Lord), he calls for silence from those who worship Him. A few different prophets have told their hearers to be silent before God, as a sign of respect and awe, along with humble submission. This is generally spoken of in the context of a theophany... an appearance of God on earth. And, of the several places in the Bible where a theophany does occur, the people do NOT have to be told to be silent. They fall

silent because they don't know how to react; they can't take in the incredible awe and glory that is God. Their mouths go quiet, and they fall to the ground because their knees buckle beneath them.

Zephaniah knows the Scriptures, and basically is saying "you know all that history about what happened to us when God appeared? Well get ready, for He's going to appear again... soon... and you are going to react the same way your fathers did." Words cannot form in your mouths. In my opinion, that is exactly what will happen when Our Messiah returns. Other than gasps, what is there to say? In both cases I would also add that just as the ancients knew without being told, so we will all know without being told, to be silent for there will be no answer to our prayers and pleadings for God's wrath to be withheld a little longer. The die is cast. It's now on autopilot. Nothing that any human, Believer or not, can say to God will affect anything. And how could one ever express with mere words what they are experiencing when God shows up? To speak at all is not even appropriate. Silence. Only silence is the right response.

Even though it is the 7th century B.C., a prophet speaking that the Day of Yehoveh is imminent isn't new. 9th century B.C. prophets and 8th century B.C. prophets spoke of the same thing. And they were all speaking of the End Times. It's only that they couldn't see it.

To be clear: The Day of Yehoveh is identical to the Day of Judgment or Judgment Day. There have been earlier Judgment days in the Bible; but those were but shadows of what the final judgment will be and will entail. Those earlier Days of Yehoveh were narrow in scope, both geographically and the extent of the devastation. The final one in the End Times will have no boundaries of scope or extent of catastrophe. It will be universal; none will escape. Yeshua, Himself, prophesied about this day.

CJB Matthew 24:15-22 ¹⁵ *"So when you see the abomination that causes devastation spoken about through the prophet Dani'el standing in the Holy Place" (let the reader understand the allusion), ¹⁶ "that will be the time for those in Y'hudah to escape*

to the hills. ¹⁷ If someone is on the roof, he must not go down to gather his belongings from his house; ¹⁸ if someone is in the field, he must not turn back to get his coat. ¹⁹ What a terrible time it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that you will not have to escape in winter or on Shabbat. ²¹ For there will be trouble then worse than there has ever been from the beginning of the world until now, and there will be nothing like it again! ²² Indeed, if the length of this time had not been limited, no one would survive; but for the sake of those who have been chosen, its length will be limited.

Now we get an unexpected statement (in the last half of verse 7) that makes a word play on the word sacrifice. The sacrifice Yehoveh has prepared is Judah... His own people. They are the sacrifice, and the nations are invited to come and partake. This is how God will gather the nations for war against Israel. The word used in this verse for sacrifice is ***zebach***. It means it in the way Isaiah used it in chapter 34.

CJB Isaiah 34:6 *There is a sword that belongs to Yehoveh. It is filled with blood, gorged with fat, filled with the blood of lambs and goats, gorged with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For Yehoveh has a sacrifice in Botzrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom.*

It is also in the same light as when God sent the plagues upon Egypt; they were a sacrifice for the sake of Israel. So, we have to understand the word sacrifice in Zephaniah as meaning it this way, as opposed to a ritual burnt offering. Israel will be sacrificed in order that the nations will come and be slaughtered. But most of Israel will also be slaughtered. And, ironically, from the surviving remnant of Israel will come a purified people of God. And from those survivors there will be restoration for Israel.

Verse 8 begins a 4-verse unit that explains that every rank of citizen and status of officials in Judah will have to deal with the judgment that is going to fall on Judah; and

with equal severity. None will fare better than another, and none will escape it.

^{CJB} **Zephaniah 1:8** *When the time comes for Yehoveh's sacrifice- "I will punish the leaders and the sons of the king, also those who dress in foreign clothes.*

So, at least here in Zephaniah, a new term for the Day of Yehoveh is introduced as "the time of Yehoveh's sacrifice". That sacrifice is Judah. So, the leaders and sons of the king that are being punished are sons of Judean kings and the leaders of Israel, meaning both those with authority and the elite and wealthy aristocrats (often they were one and the same). Some scholars have doubts about this verse because they think this must be talking about the current king of Judah, and since that was Josiah, he was a bit too young to have sons or that his sons were too young to bear any accountability. I find that to be a red herring because no one is suggesting that this judgment was going to be quite *that* immediate. There is also the

possibility that Josiah wasn't mentioned because he is a good king and walked in the ways of Yehoveh.

We know that, historically, Josiah's sons were more like Manasseh. They were all bad kings, and each one of his sons seemed to be worse than the one before. So, this is likely who is being spoken about as those who will feel God's judgment. The point of the verse, in the end, is to speak of an entire rank of people that will face judgment: kings, princes, and leaders.

What is meant about being dressed in foreign clothes is not entirely clear. Those who dress in foreign clothes are likely to mean the elite and wealthy who love to wear the very best garments, of the very best material, and unique designs that show-off their wealth. The fact that it is foreign clothes (which is a correct translation) to my mind means they imported the garments from pagan enemies, because those leaders admired how those foreign elite dressed. No doubt this was in lock-step with the idolatrous behavior of these same leaders who preferred foreign

ways to God's ways and so dressing like those foreigners went along with worshipping their foreign gods.

^{CJB} **Zephaniah 1:9** ***On the same day I will also punish all who jump over the threshold to fill the house of their master with violence and deceit***

"On the same day" isn't fully literal. In fact, this is probably better translated as "in that day". That is, this isn't speaking a single day. The Day of Yehoveh is not just one 24-hour period. How long it is, exactly, I can't say; but it will be weeks (how few or many I don't know) that amounts to a process of judgment, and not an all-at-once deluge of catastrophe. But what is this about jumping over the threshold? A few different solutions have been offered, but I think Kiel and Delitzsch are the likely winners. They see it as meaning those who rob and steal and break into homes of their fellow Judeans. Some were hired thieves to plunder and bring back certain items to their masters. After all, some expensive item in the hands of a common person would have brought on suspicion. But, in the hands of a wealthier person, it might have

gone undetectable. So, this verse is addressing another and different rank of Judean society, than the previous verse that was about kings, princes, and leaders. It is addressing the criminally lawless.

^{CJB} **Zephaniah 1:10** *Also on that day," says Yehoveh, "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, wailing from the city's Second Quarter and a loud crash from the hills.*

The Fish Gate is a well-known entry gate into the walled city of Jerusalem and was where the fishermen met with the fish merchants and/or the customers. This verse is meant to depict the idea that all parts of Jerusalem will be affected. The Fish Gate is placed in the northern part of Jerusalem and in our time is called Damascus Gate (which, interestingly, is the entry into the Muslim quarter of the city). What is called the second quarter is the area where the Huldah Gate is located, today. The hills are the areas of Ophel, possibly of Zion's Gate, and may even include the oldest part of the city, the City of David that descends down to the bottom part of Moriah to the Pool of

Siloam. So, this is speaking of the regular everyday residents of Jerusalem, as yet another rank of Judah that will feel God's wrath.

^{CJB} **Zephaniah 1:11** *Wail, you who live down in the hollow, because all the merchants are destroyed, all who trade with silver are ruined.*

Finally, the last rank highlighted are those that live in the **Makhtesh**, likely what in New Testament times and a bit earlier was called the Tyropoeon Valley. This was an area just below the Temple, but before one reached the lower part of city. **Makhtesh** means hollow or depression. This is where merchants lived and liked to conduct their business, so that's what this is speaking about... the merchant class of Judeans and where much buying and selling occurred. A great deal of cheating was the norm. Money exchanging was the focus. So, these, too, were involved in idolatry and will be ruined and killed according to God's judgment.

We'll pause here and begin with verse 12 next time.