

The Minor Prophets - Zephaniah

- Introduction
 - Zephaniah (צְפַנְיָהּ tsə-phan-yah) means “YHWH has hidden”.
 - There are four men in the O.T. with this name.
 - The second priest in the reign of king Zedekiah of Judah [2 Kings 25:18].
 - Father of Josiah and Hen in the time of Zechariah [Zech 6:10, 14].
 - A Levite (descendant of Kohath) [1 Chron 6:36].
 - The minor prophet [Zeph 1:1].
 - Traced back to King Hezekiah [1:1].
 - Dating is 640-609 B.C. based upon the reign of Josiah, king of Judah.
 - The destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C. is still future [2:13].
 - The reforms of king Josiah are probably still future [2 Chr 34].
 - Zephaniah contains 47 of 53 predictive verses making it most predictive book of the Bible.
- Observations from the Text
 - Zephaniah prophesied a total global destruction [1:2-3].
 - Other prophets predicted similar destruction [Isa 24:1-6, 19-23; 2 Pet 3:10-12].
 - Before the world faced judgment, Jerusalem faced judgment [1:4-6].
 - Zephaniah built on Joel's Day of the Lord message [1:7-18].
 - When a nation faces judgment for apostasy, the only hope for the people is to gather themselves and seek the Lord [2:1-3].
 - The humble were urged to seek the Lord [2:3].
 - Seeking the Lord in the midst of destruction echoed Nahum's message [Nah 1:7].
 - Seeking refuge in the Lord is a tremendous blessing [Ps 17:8; 27:5; 31:20].
 - The Philistines, Moabites, Ethiopians and Assyrians were all under judgment for their affliction of Judah [2:4-15].
 - The rebellion of Judah was obvious [3:1-7].
 - The rebellion led to Jerusalem's tyranny [3:1].
 - The rebellion led to estrangement from God [3:2].
 - The shameless leadership opposed God [3:3-5].
 - Judah did not learn from the judgment of the surrounding nations [3:6-7].
 - The national apostasy delayed their eventual exaltation [3:8-11].
 - A humble remnant would function during the difficult times [3:12-13].
 - In the Millennial Kingdom, Israel will see their fortunes restored and their shame turned into praise and renown [3:14-20].

- Applications for Today
 - The end of the world should motivate people to godliness [1 John 2:17; 2 Pet 3:11, 14, 17; Ps 75:1-10].
 - Judgment begins with the household of God [1 Pt 4:17 cf. Ezek 9:6; Am 3:2; Luke 12:48].
 - When judgment is under way, the best place to hide is under God's arms [2 Sam 24:10-14; Ps 57:1; 63:6-8; 91:1, 4].
 - The swiftness or slowness of the unfolding of God's plan is only due to our limited temporal perspective [2 Pet 3:8-9, 12; Ps 90:4].
 - All things are established by the eternal, unchangeable purpose of God which can never be thwarted [Job 42:2; Isa 14:27; 46:10; Dan 4:25; Eph 1:11; 3:11].