

Commentary Notes - Zephaniah

by Walter Beuttler

The Book of Zephaniah warns of God's judgment and calls for repentance, but also promises salvation and restoration for those who turn to God.

Scripture: 2 Kings 22:1

Topics: "Judgment And Restoration", "Gods Jealousy"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the book of Zephaniah, highlighting the prophecy that supplements Habakkuk's, emphasizing the judgment that will affect not only the Jews but also Gentile nations and the entire earth. The book portrays a mix of gloom and sweetness, with a key theme of God's jealousy. Zephaniah, the prophet of 'the day of the Lord,' ministered during Josiah's reign and played a role in the reformation. His name signifies being hidden or sheltered by Jehovah.

Transcript

A. THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

1. The prophecy of Zephaniah is in some respects supplementary to that of Habakkuk
2. Zephaniah shows that the judgment announced by Habakkuk will affect not only the Jews, but also Gentile nations, and even the whole earth
3. The early part of the book is full of gloom and sadness, the last part contains one of the sweetest love songs of the Old Testament
4. The key word of the book is "jealousy," 1:18

B. THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH

1. He exercised his ministry during the reign of Josiah and undoubtedly played his part in the reformation under Josiah, 2 Kings 22:1-23:30
2. Zephaniah's name is said to mean "Hidden of Jehovah," or "He whom Jehovah shelters"
3. He was the prophet of "the day of the Lord"

C. THE MESSAGE OF ZEPHANIAH

1. God's jealous love for his people
2. Chastisement God's "graver countenance of love"
3. The coming day of the Lord

JUDGMENT, 1:1-3:8

A. THE DAY OF GOD'S WRATH, 1:1-18

1. What does Zephaniah do in:

- (1) 1:2-3? He announces judgment upon the whole world in a brief prelude
- (2) 1:4-6? He singles out especially Judah and Jerusalem for judgment because of idolatry

2. List with comment the objects of worship in:

- (1) 1:4 - Baal, the chief male divinity of the Phoenicians
- (2) 1:4 - The Chemarims, the black-robed idolatrous priests who conducted idol worship
- (3) 1:5- The host of heaven, the worship of the sun, moon and stars
- (4) 1:5- Malcham, probably Molech, the national god of the Ammonites

3. Specifically, God's hand is stretched out against whom in 1:6?

- (1) "Them that are turned back from the Lord"
- (2) "Those that have not sought the Lord"
- (3) Those that have not "enquired for him"

4. What, in general, is described in:

- (1) 1:7-13? The judgment of God respecting those it will affect
- (2) 1:14-18? The imminence of the judgment of God and its terrible nature

5. Explain the Lord's sacrifice in 1:7:

- (1) Sinful Judah is God's sacrifice
- (2) Their punishment is regarded as a satisfaction offered to divine justice
- (3) The nations whom God summons to execute his vengeance are the guests

6. Specifically, who is singled out in:

- (1) 1:8? The princes who have adopted the clothing and customs of the heathen nations
- (2) 1:9? The servants who pillaged houses to bring gain to the masters who sent them

(3) 1;10-13? The traders who will lose their wares in Maktesh (the place of the bazaars)

7. Point out the people's attitude in 1:12: They denied the moral government of God and attributed the acts of divine providence to mere chance

B. THE DAY OF REPENTANCE, 2:1-3:8

1. Comment on:

(1) 2:1-2 - The "shameless nation" of Israel is called upon to examine her ways in view of the approaching day of the Lord

(2) 2:3 - The godly among them are exhorted to seek the Lord accompanied by true godliness in hope of their preservation

2. Give the general content of 2:4-15: God's judgment on various foreign nations

3. Note God's fourfold complaint against Israel in 3:2:

(1) "She obeyed not the voice" (of God)

(2) "She received not correction"

(3) "She trusted not in the Lord"

(4) "She drew not near to God"

4. Note the four groups denounced in:

(1) 3:3 - The princes for devouring the people

(2) 3:3 - The judges for greediness

(3) 3:4 - The prophets with no mission from God

(4) 3:4 - The priests for profaning the sacred things

5. Israel refused to amend her ways in:

(1) 3:5 - Even though God manifested his presence, his righteous judgments, and the light of his word

(2) 3:6-7 - Even though the fate of other nations constituted an eloquent object lesson

(3) 3:8 - God asks the remnant to await the day of his witness against the nations in judgment

SALVATION, 3:9-20

A. THE DAY OF REPENTANCE, 3:9-20

1. What is predicted in:

(1) 3:9? When God's judgments have accomplished their work, God will bring the heathen to the knowledge of himself

(2) 3:10-13? Israel's restoration to God's favor after her cleansing and sanctification

(3) 3:14-20? Israel's joyfulness over her national restoration from her long exile

2. Comment on 3:17: At long last, God is able to sing in joyful love over his restored people, v. 13

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