

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. George Adam Smith, in *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* (Vol. 2, p. 48), has summarized the spirit of this prophecy --- "No hotter book lies in all the Old Testament. Neither dew nor grass nor tree nor any blossom lives in it, but it is everywhere fire, smoke and darkness, drifting chaff, ruins, nettles, salt pits, and owls and raven looking from the windows of desolate palaces."
1. This may be a little strong, as the last seven verses of the last chapter are a promise of restoration.
- B. Zephaniah was written during the reign of King Josiah, and before the destruction of Nineveh (612 BC) as seen in Zeph 1:1 and 2:13.
1. "It would be safe to suggest 630 to 625 BC as the probable date of his work. If 626 BC is accepted, then the ministries of Jeremiah and Zephaniah began in the same year" (Homer Hailey).
  2. This was about 20 years before the first captivity of Judah.
- C. If there is one thing that Zephaniah says, it is that Judah will be horribly and quickly judged for its sin. (Zeph 1:2-7).
1. The phrase, "day of the LORD" appears 29 times in the Bible, most frequently in Zephaniah (6 times).
  2. Joel is 2<sup>nd</sup> with 5 mentions of "the day of the LORD."
- D. Zephaniah is the only prophetic book which includes a lengthy genealogy of the writer. (Zeph 1:1).
1. Zephaniah was possibly of royal lineage.
  2. He was probably living in Jerusalem (Zeph 1:4)
- E. During the days of Jeremiah, there was a priest named Zephaniah, but he is a different man from the writer of this minor prophecy.

### THE KINGS OF ISRAEL IN JEREMIAH'S DAY

**Josiah** 639 - 608 BC: good king  
**Jehoahaz** 608 BC (3 mos): carried to Egypt  
**Jehoiakim** 608 - 597 BC: idolatrous, enemy of Jeremiah  
**Jehoiachin** 597 BC (3 mos): carried to Babylon  
**Zedekiah** 597 - 586 BC: friendly towards Jeremiah; weak

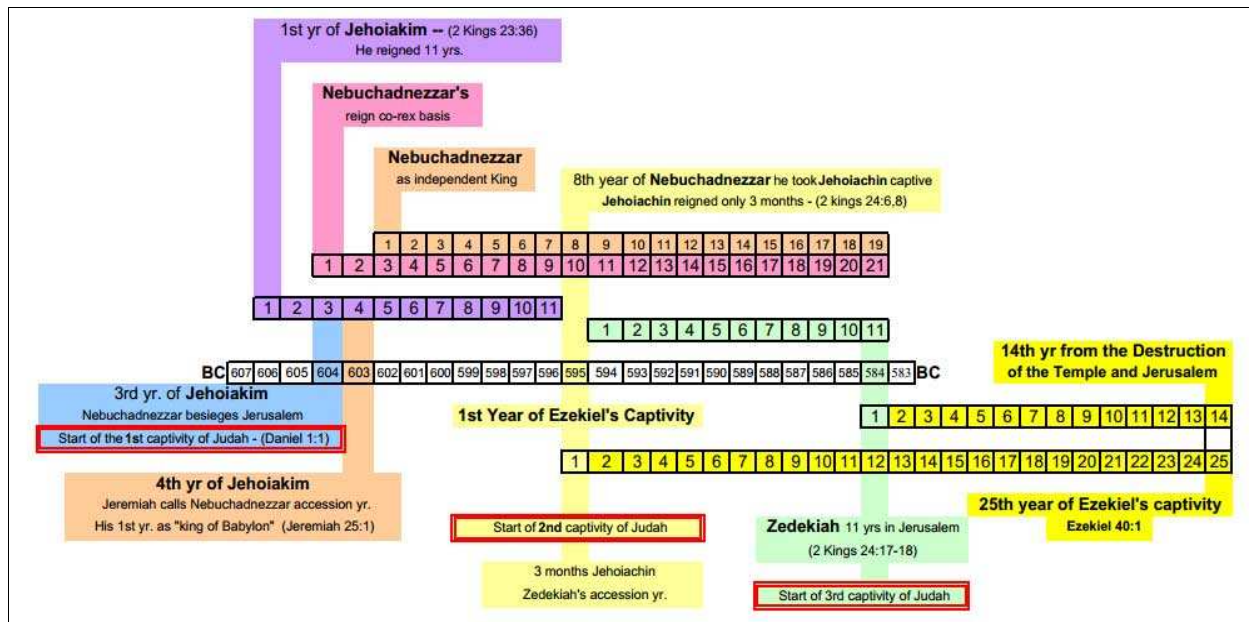
## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- A. By 640 B.C., Judah had stooped to new lows of idolatry and wickedness, unchecked by wicked kings Manasseh and Amon (Josiah's father).
- B. Amon was assassinated by his servants at age 24, and his eight year old son Josiah became king. (See II Kings 21:24)
- C. Josiah was a godly king (II Kings 22:1-2). He was the best (II Kings 23:25). But, the LORD's anger was not requited by Josiah's deeds (II Ki 23:26). It was too late.
- D. Josiah led a destruction of idolatry and a renovation of the temple.
- E. Josiah died in battle, fighting Pharaoh Necho (II Chron 35:21-24).
1. God had sent Pharaoh Necho, and Josiah ignored the warning from Necho and was killed by archers.
  2. He died in Jerusalem as a result of his wounds.

F. Zedekiah wrote in Josiah's day.

### III. OUTLINE OF THE PROPHECY OF ZEPHENIAH

- A. Introduction (Zeph 1:1)
- B. Declaration that Judah will be totally consumed (1:2-6)
- C. Description of the day of the LORD (1:7-18)
- D. Condemnation of Judah with a Call for Righteousness and Meekness (2:1-3)
  - 1. The day of the LORD was certain, but those who would exercise righteousness and meekness would be "hid" (2:3)
  - 2. In 70 A.D. the Lord spared the believers who separated from the "untoward generation" (Acts 2:40)
    - a. Eusebius records that the Christians in Jerusalem departed across Jordan to a city called Pella before the Romans destroyed the city and its inhabitants.
    - b. Pella is located near the Jordan between Galilee and the Dead Sea
  - 3. In our day, judgment is coming but we are "in Christ" and are safe from that judgment.
- E. The destruction of the surrounding nations and regions (2:4-15)
  - 1. Gaza (2:4)
  - 2. The Philistines by the sea (2:5)
    - a. Cherethites are Philistines
  - 3. Moab (2:8) and Ammon (9-10)
  - 4. Ethiopia (2:12)
  - 5. Assyria and Nineveh (2:13)
- F. The cause for the day of the LORD (3:1-7)
- G. Instructions to those who have been judged (3:8-13)
- H. Vision of a restored Israel (3:14-20)



#### **IV. ZEPHANIAH'S VISION OF RESTORED ISRAEL**

- A. It is a result of removal of judgment (Israel will no longer be judged - her judgment was temporary). (3:15)
- B. The enemy will be cast out (Israel will be occupied by Israelites) (3:15)
- C. The Lord Jesus Christ will reign as king in Israel (3:15)
- D. There will be no subsequent evil (i.e. destruction ) (3:15)
- E. God will speak to Jerusalem to comfort (3:16) and direct.
- F. God will be Israel's strength and joy (3:17)
- G. The afflicting nations will be undone (3:19)
- H. Israel will be re-gathered from every land (3:19-20)
- I. The captivity will end, and the whole earth will praise Israel (3:20)

#### **V. FOOTNOTES AND EXPLANATIONS**

- A. Chemarims are priests of Baal (1:4)
- B. Malcham is Moloch, a god of the Ammonites to whom children were sacrificed by fire. (1:5)
- C. "The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil." – the opinion of the people was that God was not a factor in their lives. They lived as if God did not do anything at all. (1:12)
- D. The people's trust was in their money (just like today). (1:18)
  - 1. The "official motto of the U.S." appears in our national anthem, and is printed on our coins (since the 1860's), and our currency (since 1957)? It says, "In God we Trust."
  - 2. Certainly, religious men chose this motto to teach men to trust God, not dollars.
- E. God was so unhappy with Judah that he called them a nation that He did not desire. This is like saying that you no longer want your children. (2:1)
- F. Even though judgment was irrevocable, there was still a way of escape – meekness and righteousness before God. (2:3). Today, men can still find this escape. Compare with Micah 6:8 "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
- G. Those nations surrounding Judah, who thought that the judgment of Judah was an exciting prospect, needed to be aware that they would also be judged for their sins. (2:5, etc.). (see 2:8 - Moab and Ammon would be judged as well).
- H. Israel/Judah were still God's people, even in judgment (2:10)
- I. Judah's sins are documented in chapter 3
  - 1. They are filthy and polluted
  - 2. They oppress
  - 3. They are disobedient
  - 4. They refuse correction (won't listen)
  - 5. They trust not and do not draw near to God
  - 6. Her civil and religious leaders are worth nothing (3-4)
- J. "Pure language" – a people who speak and do the same right towards God (3:9). In other words they say the same thing all of the time, they are not one way and

then another.

- K. “Suppliants” – worshipers (3:10), in this case they worship the LORD.



9. What are Chemarims?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What are suppliant?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. According to Zeph 1:18, what did they people trust in to deliver them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What “official motto of the U.S.” which appears in our national anthem, is printed on our coins (since the 1860's), and our currency (since 1957)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. List three aspects of Zephaniah’s vision of a restored Israel that portray that it IS NOT the church, but rather that it is the actual descendants of Jacob.
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  - b.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. What was meant when the people said the LORD would do neither good or evil.