

OUTLINE STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

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CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

ZEPHANIAH

This prophet is remarkable for giving us his genealogy to the fourth generation—a rare occurrence with the prophets. In no other case does the record of lineage extend beyond the grandfather of the prophet, Zechariah 1:1.

Zephaniah wished to distinguish himself from others of the same name, but mainly to point out his relationship to the great monarch Hezekiah, for the Hizkiah of 1:1, the fourth in the prophet's line, is identical with that king. He was, therefore, of royal descent.

He prophesied during the reign of Josiah, 1:1. Tregelles dates B. C. 625-610; Angus somewhat earlier. The internal evidence evinces the fact that Nineveh was in a state of peace and prosperity, while the notices of Jerusalem touch upon the same tendencies to idolatry and crime which are condemned by Jeremiah.

1. *The design of Zephaniah is two-fold:*

First, to announce God's judgment;

Second, to disclose the moral condition which necessitated it.

As to the first, it is to be remarked that the revelation of judgment is very full and explicit.

The prophet's name seems to indicate the character of his mission "**the watchman of the Lord.**" He is on the outlook for wrath and indignation to be poured out on the guilty and impenitent.

This appears in the description of the great and terrible day of the Lord, 1.

This is the prediction which formed the basis of the Latin hymn of the Middle Ages, the *Dies Irae*. The desolation of Israel is made the image of a far wider judgment still to come, viz., the judgment of the whole earth.

The sins that provoke the judgment are idolatry, 1:4-6; oppression, rapacity, cruelty and treachery, 3:1-5.

2. Contents.

(1) Denunciation of judgment, 1.

(2) The nations that are its objects, Judah, Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians and Assyrians, 2-3:1-6.

(3) Prediction of future restoration and blessing for Israel, 3, 7-20.

3. *The future according to Zephaniah.*

This brief prophecy is full, as are all the other prophets. After the frightful picture of wrath which he so vividly draws, he changes to a sweet and triumphant theme, a song of gladness and of victory in which the glory of Zion, favor to the Lord's people, God's delight in His redeemed, the holiness and devotedness of the restored Israel are set forth in rapturous strains. He closes with a vision of hope and joy and peace. And so Zephaniah is apocalyptic and telesmatic.

“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing,” 3:17.

Redeemer and Redeemed.

I. The Redeemer.

1. He is mighty to save.
2. He exults over His redeemed.
3. He is silent in His love—finds no fault with them.

II. The Redeemed.

1. They are finally and forever delivered.
2. They are exalted.
3. They are forgiven.
4. They are made perfect.
5. They are happy for ever.

~ end of chapter 38 ~

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