

Major Lessons from the Minor Prophets

Zephaniah: God of Every Nation

Overview:

There are **two predominant themes** in Zephaniah:

_____:

Even though current circumstances may indicate to the contrary, all sin will be brought to justice. Rebellious human hearts and the actions that such hearts produce will not escape the punishment of God. Specifically, actions against God's own people will not escape God's punishment. The Lord has bound himself to his people. He will bring every wrong against them to justice.

_____:

Alongside the whole-earth dimensions of God's judgment stands the whole-earth extension of his mercy. Those who humble themselves enough to trust him will escape his punishment despite their sin. For God has taken them into covenant with himself and has dealt with their sin through the atoning work of his Son. "At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord" (Zeph. 3:9).

If one of these two themes rises to the surface, however, it is the theme of **global salvation**.

"From beyond the rivers of Cush"—that is, from beyond the known ends of the earth in the time of Zephaniah—"my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering" (Zeph. 3:10). After beginning by denouncing first Judah herself (ch. 1) and then Judah's oppressors (ch. 2), the book of Zephaniah ends on a note of triumphant restoration for God's people because of his love, restoration that includes in its sweep peoples from the ends of the earth (3:16–18).

(From the *ESV Study Bible*)

Most of all, **we benefit from studying Zephaniah** because of what it reveals about

_____.

God is a _____ who is offended by sin and wickedness. His 'anger' in Zephaniah is a necessary outflowing of His _____. His wrath is "love in action" against sin.

J.I. Packer: "God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is, instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil"

(*Knowing God*, 151).

Remember: God's wrath is never _____. It is _____!

Zephaniah 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ "Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...

Romans 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

²³ ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...

Romans 5:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ ... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

God is a _____ who controls the fates of nations and the course of history and holds them all _____.

God is a not a territorial god, but a _____ God that desires all men to _____ Him. He is both _____ of all men and _____ of all who come to Him.

God is a _____ who makes a Way for those who are in _____ against Him to be _____ before Him.

While there is no explicit mention of "Messiah" in this prophecy, the salvation of men in Zephaniah clearly is the work of God alone and is the result of His _____ as both cause and effect of our _____.

God is a _____, _____, who makes a Way for those who are in _____ against Him to be _____ before Him.

Our worshipful _____ is always the result of His clarity in _____. We cannot worship a God we don't _____! The worst sort of "worship" is a response without (biblical) revelation!

Zephaniah 3:14-18 (ESV)

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak." ¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. ¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

A few **conclusions** and **implications** for us from Zephaniah:

1) We should evaluate the _____ of our relationship with God.

Have I _____? (3:9)

Have I come _____ to Him? (3:11-12)

Am I living a life that _____? (3:13) cf. 1 John 2:3

2) We should live with _____.

Certain that God will judge the _____ in righteousness and ...

Confident God will _____ His creation and _____ a
righteous _____

These realities should _____!

3) We should make it our priority to truly _____ for that is the key to
real worship, enduring faith, and untouchable joy.

Next week: Haggai Part 1 – Kingdom Priorities