

ZEPHANIAH

Conversational Version

1:¹A Message from the LORD to Zephaniah Son of Cushi
 (Son of Gedaliah Son of Amariah) Son of Hezekiah
at the Time of Josiah Son of Amon, King of Judah

The Coming Judgment on Judah

²*"I'll remove everything
 from the earth," the LORD says,*
³*"people and animals,
 birds in the sky,
 fish in the sea.
 I'll destroy sinful people.*
⁴*"I'll reach out against Judah
 and those who live in Jerusalem.
 I'll remove the remnant of Baal from this place
 and the idolatrous priests,
⁵the ones that bow down on housetops to the host in the sky,
 that swear to the LORD and swear by Milcom too,
⁶the ones that quit following the LORD,
 that haven't sought him or inquired from him."* **Zeph 1:1-6**

The Near Day of the LORD

⁷Be silent in front of the Lord GOD!
 His day is near;
 he's prepared a sacrifice
 and consecrated his guests.
⁸*"On the day of my sacrifice,
 I'll punish the officials, the king's sons in Judah,
 everyone that dresses in foreign clothes,
⁹that breaks into houses,
 and fills their masters' homes with violence and deceit.*
¹⁰*On that day," the LORD says,
 "there'll be cries from the Fish Gate,
 wails from the Second Quarter,
 loud crashes from the hills.* **Zeph 1:7-10**
¹¹*Wail, people in the marketplace,*

- because your merchants will be wiped out;
every tradesman that weighs out silver will be gone.*
- ¹²*I'll search Jerusalem with lanterns
and punish people that are complacent about their sin,
who tell themselves
that the LORD won't do anything to them good or bad.*
- ¹³*Their wealth will become plunder,
and their houses demolished.
They'll build houses, but not live in them;
they'll plant vineyards, but not drink their wine."* **Zeph 1:11-13**
- ¹⁴*That great day of the LORD is near and coming fast,
a bitter day: even soldiers will cry out bitterly,
¹⁵a day of anger,
a day of distress and anguish,
destruction and desolation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
clouds and dense blackness,
¹⁶a day of bugle blasts and battle cries
against fortified towns and high battle towers.* **Zeph 1:14-16**
- ¹⁷*He'll bring such a distress on you
that you'll stumble around like you're blind,
because you've sinned against him.
Your blood will pour out and become like dust,
and your flesh will be like manure on the ground.*
- ¹⁸*Your silver and gold won't save you
at the time of the LORD's wrath;
he'll consume the whole region with his burning anger
and make a complete, terrifying end
for people living in the land.* **Zeph 1:17-18**

A Call for Repentance

- ^{2:1}*Get together,
go ahead, assemble, shameless nation,
²before the decree takes effect—
before that day of repentance passes by like chaff—
before the LORD's burning anger comes down on you.*
- ³*Look to him,*

you humble in the land
 who've followed his commands.
 Aspire to goodness and humility;
 maybe the LORD will protect you when his anger comes. **Zeph 2:1-3**

Judgment Against Philistia

⁴Gaza will be abandoned;
Ashkelon, desolate.
Ashdod will be driven out at midday;
Ekron, uprooted.
⁵Misfortune awaits people along the coast,
 nation of Cherethites!
 The LORD's message speaks against you,
Canaan, land of the Philistines;
 I'll destroy you till there's no one left.
⁶The seacoast will be open range
 with camps for shepherds and folds for flocks.
⁷It will serve as pasture
 for the remnant from Judah.
 In the evening they'll lie down in the houses in Ashkelon,
 because the LORD will take care of them
 and restore their fortune. **Zeph 2:4-7**

Judgment Against Moab and Ammon

⁸*"I've heard Moab taunting my people and Ammon insulting them;
 they've become arrogant about my people's territory.*
⁹*"So, as I live," the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel says,
 "Moab will be like Sodom,
 the Ammonites like Gomorrah—
 a place full of nettles and salt pits,
 a permanent wasteland.
 The remnant of my people will plunder them;
 the remainder of my nation will take their land." **Zeph 2:8-9***
¹⁰That's what they'll get for their arrogance because they've taunted the people of the LORD of Hosts. ¹¹He'll terrify them and starve all the gods everywhere. Nations the world over will bow to him, each in their own land.

Judgment Against Nubia and Assyria

¹²*"I'll slay the Nubians with my sword," the LORD says.*

¹³“I’ll reach out to the north to destroy Assyria
and make Nineveh a ruins, arid like a desert.

¹⁴Herds of wild animals will lie down in it;
buzzards and desert owls will roost on its columns.
Birds will chirp in its vacant windows;
rubble will block its doorways;
its cedar paneling will be exposed to the elements—

¹⁵the jubilant city that lived securely
and said to itself, ‘Nobody compares with me.’
What a wasteland it will become,
a haven for wild animals!
Anyone that goes by will gasp
and gesture in contempt.”

Zeph 2:10-15

The Future of Jerusalem

³¹Misfortune awaits the rebellious, defiled, tyrannical city, *Jerusalem*,
²that wouldn’t take advice or accept instruction,
that didn’t trust in the LORD or come near to its God.

³Its officials are roaring lions;
its judges are ravaging wolves at dusk
that leave nothing over till morning.

⁴Its prophets are reckless, devious men;
its priests profane the sanctuary and violate the Law.

⁵The LORD is good within it;
he still doesn’t do anything unjust.
Every morning he hands down justice without fail,
but they’re never ashamed of their unjust verdicts.

Zeph 3:1-5

⁶“I’ve destroyed nations;
their towers lie in ruins.
I’ve made their streets deserted;
no one goes by there anymore.
Their towns have been laid waste;
nobody lives in them.

⁷I said, ‘Surely, they’ll respect me now
and accept my instruction
so their homes won’t get destroyed
along with everything else I’d appointed for them.’

But they were eager to corrupt everything they did. **Zeph 3:6-7**

⁸*“So wait for me to attack my prey,” the LORD says.
I’ve decided to gather nations and kingdoms,
to pour out my indignation on them, my burning anger;
I’ll consume them with fiery zeal.*

⁹*Then I’ll purify the people’s lips
so they can call on me
and serve me together.*

¹⁰*From beyond the rivers in Nubia,
those who worship me—
descendants of my scattered people—
will bring me offerings.*

¹¹*At that time, you won’t need to be ashamed
of all the things you did when you rebelled against me;
I’ll have removed arrogant, celebrating people from you
so you’ll never again be haughty on my holy mountain.*

¹²*But among you I’ll leave humble, common people
who will take refuge in me.*

¹³*The ones remaining in Israel will do no wrong,
tell no lies,
or have deceit among them;
They’ll graze and bed down in safety;
nobody will make them afraid.”*

Zeph 3:8-13

¹⁴*Shout for joy, Jerusalem!
Cry out in triumph, Israel!
Celebrate with all your heart.*

¹⁵*The LORD has canceled your condemnation
and cleared away your foes.
The King of Israel is among you;
you need not dread disaster anymore.*

Zeph 3:14-15

¹⁶*At that time, he’ll tell Jerusalem,
“Don’t be afraid, Zion;
don’t let your hands get weak.”*

¹⁷*The LORD your God is among you
as a victorious soldier.
I’ll celebrate over you
and renew my love for you;*

*I'll celebrate over you with happy songs
18like on festival days.*

*"I'll remove disaster from you, Zion;
you won't be ashamed of being in exile.
19At that time, I'll deal with your oppressors,
save the lame, gather the outcast,
and turn their shame into praise and renown
the world over.*

*20Then I'll bring you home,
gather you together,
and give you renown among the nations
when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes,"
the LORD says. **Zeph 3:16-20***