

## **The Warrior God**

Book of Zephaniah; Coast School of Theology; Pastor Earl Miles; 11-18-18

### **Introduction**

The book of Zephaniah was written by Zephaniah, a prophet of royal descent (great-great-grandfather was Hezekiah), who lived during the days of King Josiah of Judah (640-609 BC). His prophecy was given after the fall of the northern kingdom, Israel, and before the fall of the southern kingdom, Judah. It was likely proclaimed and written in somewhere in the time of 630-625 BC. (1:1)

*If you saw a someone running toward you with a battle ax, how would you respond?*

### **The Day of the LORD**

Zephaniah talks about the ‘day of the LORD’ more than any other prophet. (1:7, 14)

### **God of the Nations**

The God of Israel/Judah is not a ‘local or national’ God but the God of all. (2:4-13)

### **Strong Language of Wrath and Anger**

The book is filled with vivid poetic imagery of God’s judgment and wrath and anger. (1:15-18; 2:1-3, 11; 3:8; Romans 3:21-26)

### **External Reform Only with Mixed Religion**

Zephaniah appears to be descended from the godly king, Hezekiah, and prophesied during the godly king, Josiah, and yet, there was no real heart change in the people, as a whole, under their rule. Along with that, the people combined the worship of Yahweh with the worship of other gods. (1:1, 5)

### **Divine Justice in the Face of Responsible Rebellion**

The judgment of God described vividly and poetically can sound harsh and even cruel, but it is just - because men are fully responsible – for their sin and for their refusal to turn to God for mercy! (3:1-2, 5, 7)

### **‘Goodness’ Must Hate ‘Badness’**

We struggle the most with the revelation of God’s hatred of sin and His eagerness to judge when we forget that He could not be truly ‘good’ if (1) He did not passionately hate ‘bad’ and (2) that He is ready to forgive. (3:7-8)

### **‘Badness’ is the Worship of Created Things and All It Produces**

God opposes the worship of anything but Himself because (1) He alone is worthy and (2) to worship anything or anyone else produces hatred toward God and others. (1:4, 9; 3:3-4)

### **Shadows Leading to Ultimate Fulfillment**

God has dealt temporal judgment on nations and people in the history of the world (as in the Flood and in the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah). And all of these lesser, temporal judgments are pointing to the ultimate final judgment on sin and evil. (1:2-3; 2:9; Luke 13:1-5)

### **Day of Judgment and Day of Blessing**

There is an ultimate judgment to come but there is also an ultimate blessing to come! So the day of the LORD is both a time of horrible judgment and a time of amazing blessing. (3:8-11)

### **‘Hidden’ in the Day of the LORD**

Whether we experience the horrible judgment in the day of the LORD or the amazing blessing of that day depends on whether we are ‘hidden’ in that day. The name ‘Zephaniah’ means ‘Yahweh hides’ or ‘Yahweh has hidden.’ (2:3; Colossians 3:3- 7)

### **Warnings and Call to Repentance for Mercy**

God foretells His judgment in order to warn sinners of the consequences of their sin and to call them to turn from their sin and turn to Him for mercy. (2:1-3; 3:1-2, 12)

### **Hope of Rescue for the People of God by the Warrior God**

God also foretells His judgment in order to give hope to believers so that they know of His hatred of evil and suffering and can trust Him to deal with these justly and completely one day. (2:7, 9; 3:17, 19-20)

### **Wicked Israel/Judah and Remnant Israel/Judah**

Just because we belong to a nation or a church does not mean that we are truly one of God’s people. Only those who turn from sin and trust in God’s Savior for forgiveness and freedom from sin will be saved from the wrath to come. (1:8-13; 3:13)

### **Rejoicing Over His People**

All those who turn from sin to God for mercy through the Messiah, Jesus, are loved and rejoiced over by God and will enjoy His presence and grace forever. (3:14-17)

### **Restoration of Eden**

God’s ultimate purpose is to save a people for Himself by His grace and restore a perfect world. (3:9-11)