Zephaniah 1:4-7

1:4 – "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

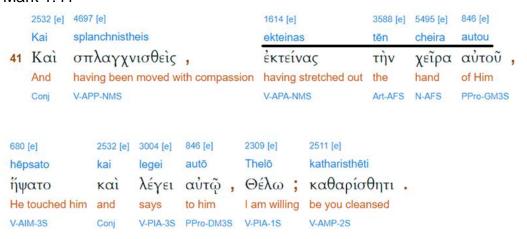


- 1. Verses 1:2-3 spoke of God's wrath on the earth, but in verse 1:4 Zephaniah begins to rebuke the people of YHWH. The chosen people of Judah. (Northern Israel has already been deported by Assyria 100 years before in 722 BC. The Book of the Law was found in 622 BC and this was possibly written around 617 BC.)
- 2. Amos used the same method of starting large and moving inwards in Amos 1:6-2:16 when he first spoke against the pagan nations around Israel and Judah, but finished with words against Israel and Judah.
- 3. The Lord not only speaks against Judah, but also the chosen city of Jerusalem and then the chosen kingly line of David in 1:8.
 - a. Again these destructive words against God's people, God's city and God's kingly tribe do not nullify the promises given to the people, the city and the line of David.
 - These words of judgment mean there must be an eventual repentance and restoration.
- 4. Two phrases of judgment are used:
 - a. "I will stretch out my hand"
 - i. This refers to God's activity being involved more than usual
 - ii. It is often the term used when God delivered Israel from Egypt
 - iii. Now this powerful activity of God will move in history to punish the people he delivered.
 - iv. The punishment is as miraculous as the deliverance from Egypt.
 - v. This Hebrew phrase is translated into the Greek OT (LXX, or the Septuagint) as **ekteno ten cheira mou**. This is the same phrase used when Jesus stretched out his hand to heal:

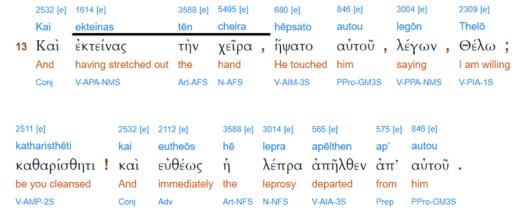
1. Matthew 8:3 -



2. Mark 1:41 -



3. Luke 5:13 -



4. In Luke 11:20 the reaching out of the "finger of God" was an indication that the kingdom of God has come. Jesus was beginning the restoration: "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

b. "I will cut off from this place" -

- i. The use of the Hebrew word which indicates a direct object 'et is used five times to identify five objects God's divine activity will "cut off" or "exterminate". YHWH will be stretching his hand out against:
 - 1. 1:4 'et "every trace of Baal" or "the remnant of Baal"
 - 2. 1:4 'et "the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests"
 - 3. 1:5 **we'et -** "Those who worship on the housetops the host of the heaven"
 - 4. 1:5 **we'et -** "Those who worship and swear oaths by YAHWEH but who also swear by Milcom"
 - 5. 1:6 **we'et -** "Those who have turned back from following YHWEH and have not sought YAHWEH nor inquired of Him"
- c. Zephaniah will eventually move into identifying the sins of the people against each other, but first he addresses their false relationship with YHWH.

1:5 – "those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those who bow down and swear to the Lord and yet swear by Milcom (or, "their king"),



1:6 – "those who have turned back from following the Lord, who do not seek the Lord or inquire of him."



1:7 – "Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests."

