

Annotated Analysis of

ZEPHANIAH

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Yahweh's Wrath and Reign over the Nations

¹⁴ Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. ¹⁵ A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶ A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers. ¹⁷ I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung. Zephaniah 1:14-17

Annotated Analysis of Zephaniah
Prepared by James T. Bartsch
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Email Contact: jbartsch@wordexplain.com

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Overview of the Book of Zephaniah

The Author: Zephaniah ben Cushi, great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah (Zeph. 1:1).

The Date and Setting of the Writing:

Zephaniah wrote his prophecy in the days of Josiah, King of Judah, who reigned 31 years from 640-609 B.C. The actual time of writing was probably between 621 and 612 B.C. (See the pertinent footnotes at Zeph. 1:1).

God had already judged the Northern Kingdom, (often identified in the OT as [Israel](#)) for its idolatry and rebellion. This judgment was carried out by Assyria, who had invaded her in 722 B.C. Most of the Israeli citizens who had not escaped to Judah, the Southern Kingdom, were carried into captivity by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:1-41).

Despite this, the citizens of Judah, for the most part, ignored the warning. Even though good King Josiah sparked a revival in the country, banning the worship of false gods, covert idolatry and rebellion seem to have continued.

God gave a resounding warning to the people of Judah by speaking to them through the prophet Zephaniah. The people of Judah had better repent or Yahweh would inaugurate His wrathful “[Day of the LORD](#),” in which He would punish the nation for its rebellion. But Yahweh’s wrath was not reserved for Judah and Jerusalem alone. He would also judge Judah’s enemies for their evil. He would, furthermore, eventually judge the entire earth.

The prediction of judgment upon Judah and its surrounding enemies was fulfilled when [Babylon](#), under Nebuchadnezzar, invaded Judah and the surrounding countries. Ultimately, the [Day of the LORD](#) will be fulfilled when God judges all the earth through the plagues and calamities of the [Tribulation Period](#).

The Outlines of the Book:

[Brief Outline](#)

[Complete Analytical Outline](#)

Annotated Outline: See below.

The Message of the Book

WordExplain’s title of the Book is “The Day of the LORD: Yahweh’s Wrath and Reign over the Nations.” The key verses are Zeph. 1:14-17, which describe a great day of Yahweh’s wrath which is coming. Even Zeph. 1:18 could be added to this passage.

The [Day of the LORD](#) is a time of terrible judgment. As Zeph. 1:2-3 states, it is a time of terrible judgment upon both man and animals upon the earth. It will be first directed at Judah (Zeph. 1:4-16), but it will ultimately be directed at all the inhabitants of the earth (Zeph. 1:2-3, 17-18; 3:8).

The near [Day of the LORD](#) was [Babylon](#)’s invasion of Judah and the surrounding area. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah in 605, 597, and 586 B.C. The remote [Day of the LORD](#) is the eschatological [Tribulation](#) which is yet to come upon all the inhabitants of the earth (see Rev. 3:10).

The judgments of the [Day of the LORD](#) will descend upon [Israel](#)'s neighbors – the Philistines (Zeph. 2:4-7), Moab and the sons of Ammon (Zeph. 2:8-10), all the earth (Zeph. 2:11), the Ethiopians (Zeph. 2:12), and the Assyrians, whose capital city was Nineveh (Zeph. 2:13-15).

The prophet outlines the cause for Yahweh's judgment upon Jerusalem (Zeph. 3:1-7). But then Yahweh reaffirms His intention to vent His fierce and fiery anger upon the entire earth (Zeph. 3:8).

Zeph. 3:9-20 constitutes a sublime prediction of blessing, primarily upon [Israel](#), but also upon the entire earth. This passage anticipates the blessings of Christ's coming [Millennial Kingdom](#). All the peoples of the earth will call upon Yahweh with purified lips (Zeph. 3:9). Expatriate Israelis will return to [Israel](#) to worship Yahweh (Zeph. 3:10). Yahweh will remove proud Israeli rebels (Zeph. 3:11), but those Israelis who survive His judgment will be left as a humble [remnant](#) who will inherit the land in peace and safety (Zeph. 3:12-13). There will be great joy in [Israel](#). Her sins will be forgiven her, and Yahweh Himself will dwell among His people in the person of Jesus Christ. He will be a great warrior who will protect the humble, righteous [remnant](#) (Zeph. 3:14-17). Yahweh reaffirms He will gather sorrowful expatriate Israelis from all over the globe and permit them again to worship at the appointed feasts in Jerusalem (Zeph. 3:18). Yahweh will judge all [Israel](#)'s oppressors and give the outcast Israelis, now gathered in their homeland, praise and renown in all the earth (Zeph. 3:19-20)!

Though the [Millennium](#) is primarily in view, there are overtones that extend into the Eternal State. [New Jerusalem](#) and a perpetually secure State of [Israel](#) on [New Earth](#) throughout eternity will constitute the final form of fulfillment. [New Jerusalem](#) will serve as the eternal Capital City of [Israel](#) and home of the [Church](#). The redeemed and resurrected Gentiles will flourish upon [New Earth](#). They will bring their produce and manufactured products as a joyful tribute to God and Christ into [New Jerusalem](#), to which they will have continual access (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

The message of Zephaniah is that God, in wrath, will certainly judge His own people, the Nation of [Israel](#), and He will also judge all the peoples of the earth for their idolatry and rebellion against Him. But God, in the person of Jesus the Messiah, will purge rebel Israelis from the Nation, and He will rule over a humble, righteous [remnant](#) of [Israel](#) from Jerusalem. At the same time He will rule over all the earth.

ZEPHANIAH

THE DAY OF THE LORD

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¹⁴ Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. ¹⁵ A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶ A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers. ¹⁷ I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung. Zephaniah 1:14-17

A 1 YAHWEH'S ANGRY, JUDGMENTAL DESTRUCTION OF ALL NATIONS 1:1 - 3:8

B 1 The Destructive Day of the LORD ¹ 1:1-18

C 1 Introduction 1:1

D 1 The description of the revelation: {1} The word of the LORD ²

D 2 The identity of the prophet: which came to Zephaniah ³

D 3 The heritage of the prophet

E 1 son of Cush,

¹ Zeph. 1:1-18 Title - The Destructive Day of the LORD: In Hebrew literature “[the Day of the LORD](#)” had both a relatively near fulfillment and a more remote, [eschatological](#) fulfillment. The near fulfillment of the “[Day of the LORD](#)” was the judgment of Judah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, King of [Babylon](#) in 606, 597, and 586 B.C. The more remote reference is to the judgment of the entire world during the [Tribulation](#).

² Zeph. 1:1 - The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah: “Word” is *dabar* ([1697](#)), a commonly used term for communication. “The word of the LORD” (Yahweh) often speaks of Yahweh’s communication of authoritative prophetic messages to OT prophets. It is used some 250 times. For example, “The word of the LORD” came to Abram (Gen. 15:1); to Moses (Num. 3:16); to Joshua (Josh. 8:27); to Samuel (1 Sam. 15:10); to Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4); to Gad (2 Sam. 24:11); to Solomon (1 Kings 6:11); to Jehu, son of Hanani (1 Kings 16:1); to Elijah (1 Kings 17:16; 21:17); to Micaiah (1 Kings 22:19); to Elisha (2 Kings 7:1); to Jonah (2 Kings 14:25); to Isaiah (2 Kings 20:4); to David (1 Chron. 22:8); to Shemaiah (2 Chron. 11:2); to Jeremiah (2 Chron. 36:21); to Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:3); to Hosea (Hos. 1:1); to Joel (Joel 1:1); to Micah (Mic. 1:1); to Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:1); to Haggai (Hag. 1:1); to Zechariah (Zech. 1:1); and to Malachi (Mal. 1:1). Very often the word of the LORD contained short-term predictions that subsequently came true. A great many more predictions were long-term, [eschatological](#) in nature. All of the predictive word of the LORD will one day be fulfilled exactly as given. Past literal fulfillments guarantee future literal fulfillments.

³ Zeph. 1:1 - Zephaniah: The prophet’s name [likely means](#) “Yahweh Hides.” Though, technically, he is never stated to be the author (in modern western terms), that is because Hebrew authors of Scripture were reluctant to identify themselves. For that reason, the silence of Hebrew authors in “signing their own names” is not a disqualifier. If Zephaniah did not write this book, there is no one who can be brought forward as the likely author. Judaism has long maintained that Zephaniah is the author of the book that bears his name. No conservative scholars disagree.

- E 2 son of Gedaliah,
- E 3 son of Amariah,
- E 4 son of Hezekiah,⁴
- D 4 The chronology of the revelation: in the days⁵ of Josiah⁶ son of Amon, king of Judah:
- C 2 The totality of Yahweh's destruction 1:2-3
 - D 1 The statement of removal: {2} "I will completely remove⁷ all *things* 1:2a
 - D 2 The place of removal: From the face of the earth,"⁸ 1:2b
 - D 3 The guarantor of removal: declares the LORD. 1:2c

⁴ Zeph. 1:1 - Hezekiah: There is no reason to disbelieve that this [Hezekiah was the King of Judah](#). Consequently Zephaniah was Hezekiah's great-great-grandson. Along with David and Solomon, he had the most royal blood in his veins of any Hebrew author.

⁵ Zeph. 1:1 - in the days (of Josiah): Zephaniah prophesied during the long reign of Judah's king Josiah, some time between 640 and 609 B.C. Since Yahweh predicted He would "cut off the remnant of Baal from this place" ([Zeph. 1:4](#)), it seems most likely that Zephaniah wrote shortly after the revival under Josiah in 622 B.C. had taken place, or had at least begun. Since [Zeph. 2:13](#) predicts the future judgment of Assyria and Nineveh, Zephaniah must have written prior to the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C. (so John Hannah, Zephaniah, [The Bible Knowledge Commentary OT, \(TBKCOT\)](#) p. 1523). Thus we can narrow down the time of the writing of Zephaniah to a fairly small window dating between 622 and 612 B.C. Cynical critics, who deny that Biblical authors can predict the future, date this prophecy after the time of Zephaniah. Dating with that sort of bias can be dismissed.

⁶ Zeph. 1:1 - Josiah: Josiah son of Amon was a good king who reigned 31 years from 640-609 B.C. His reign is described in [2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30](#) and also in [2 Chron. 34:1 - 35:27](#). Unfortunately the life of this Godly king was snuffed out when he and his army opposed Pharaoh Neco, who, along with his Egyptian army, was traveling through Judah on his way to aid the Assyrians in their battle against the invading Medes and Persians at [Carchemish](#) in modern day Syria ([2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chron. 35:20-24](#)).

⁷ Zeph. 1:2 - I will completely remove all: The opening declaration of Yahweh is a total and stunning announcement of judgment. The first two words out of Yahweh's mouth sound almost the same. The first word is the [Qal](#) Infinitive absolute of *asaph* ([622](#)), to gather, collect. This word occurs once in [Zeph. 1:2](#) and again in [Zeph. 3:8, 18](#). The second word is the [Hiphil](#) stem of *suph* ([5486](#)), to cease, come to an end. The [Hiphil](#) stem is causative, "I will cause to come to an end," or "I will terminate." "All" is *kol* ([3605](#)), everything, the totality of. The word "things" appears in the NASB in italics. It is not found in the Hebrew text. A literal rendition of [Zeph 1:2](#) is as follows: "Gathering together, I will terminate everything from off the face of the ground" is the declaration of Yahweh" (author's translation). The totality of devastation here immediately reminds one of the catastrophic [Tribulation](#) period, described in such detail in both the Old and the New Testaments.

⁸ Zeph. 1:2 - From the face of the earth: The term "earth" is the Hebrew word *adamah*, [127](#). It can refer to soil that is able to be cultivated ([Gen. 2:5](#)), or it can refer to "land" as the surface of the earth ([Gen. 6:7; 7:4, 23; 8:8](#)). In this particular instance, the NASB, the ESV, and the NIV read here, "from the face of the earth." The Complete Jewish Bible reads, "off the face of the land." Young's Literal Translation reads, "off the face of the ground." This language is universal. This is a global upheaval, which ultimately speaks of the catastrophic [Tribulation](#).

- D 4 The specifics of removal 1:3a
 - E 1 Man and animal: {3} "I will remove man and beast;"⁹
 - E 2 Birds: I will remove the birds of the sky
 - E 3 Fish: And the fish of the sea,
 - E 4 The debris created by the removal: And the ruins
 - E 5 The wicked: along with the wicked;
 - E 6 Mankind: And I will cut off man from the face of the earth,"¹⁰
- D 5 The guarantor of removal: declares the LORD. 1:3b
- C 3 The objects of Yahweh's destruction – the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem 1:4-13
 - D 1 The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, guilty of idolatry 1:4-6
 - E 1 Yahweh's activity against the Kingdom of Judah 1:4a
 - G 1 Against Judah: {4} "So I will stretch out My hand against Judah"¹¹
 - G 2 Against Jerusalem: And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

⁹ Zeph. 1:3 - I will remove man and beast: Once again, this is a catastrophic action. Though in the short-term it may apply to the coming Babylonian invasion, ultimately it refers to something much more [eschatological](#) and global.

¹⁰ Zeph. 1:3 - from the face of the earth: Some translators and commentators restrict this declaration of Yahweh to the land of [Israel](#). But that does not appear to be what He means. He has just said, "I will completely remove *all* things from the face of the earth" ([Zeph. 1:2](#), emphasis mine). He goes on to say that *all* includes "man and beast," "birds of the sky," "fish of the sea," and He will "cut off man from the face of the earth (*adamah*, [127](#))" ([Zeph. 1:3](#)). The language here sounds very much like the language in Genesis in which He declares that he will wipe man off the face of the ground (*adamah*, [127](#)), meaning the entire earth, in the judgment of Noah's global Flood ([Gen. 6:7; 7:4, 23; 8:8](#)). But the judgment Yahweh threatens here is not a judgment of water, but a judgment of conquest, war, famine, disease, attacks by wild animals, earthquakes, and terrifying celestial disturbances (Rev. 6:1-17). These are the judgments of the Great [Tribulation](#).

¹¹ Zeph. 1:4 - against Judah: Judah is the closer range object of Yahweh's punishment. Judah and Jerusalem are the near objects of God's out-stretched hand. Long-term, His hand will reach out against the entire world (Rev. 3:10).

E 2 His destruction of idolaters 1:4b-6

- G 1 Of Baal-worshippers: And I will cut off the remnant¹² of Baal¹³ from this place, 1:4b
- G 2 Of idolatrous priests: *And* the names of the idolatrous priests¹⁴ along with the priests. 1:4c
- G 3 Of star-worshippers: {5} "And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven,¹⁵ 1:5a
- G 4 Of syncretistic worshippers of their king: And those who bow down *and* swear to the LORD and *yet* swear by Milcom,¹⁶ 1:5b

¹² Zeph. 1:4 - remnant: The word is *shear* (7605), a noun, translated in the NASB as "rest" (13X); "remnant" (11X); "remainder" (1X); and "survivors" (1X). Here it probably refers to the "remainder of the worshippers of Baal who had not been killed under the purge of good King Josiah. It is used only once in Zephaniah, and with a negative connotation. Several times, particularly in Isaiah, *shear*, "[remnant](#)," refers to a faithful, purified residue of Yahweh's people, the people of [Israel](#) (Isa. 10:20, 21, 22; 11:11, 16; 28:5). Zephaniah uses a related, but different word for the faithful [remnant](#) of [Israel](#), the noun *sheerith* (7611) (Zeph. 2:7, 9; 3:13).

¹³ Zeph. 1:4 - the remnant of Baal: "[Baal](#)" is the untranslated Hebrew *ba'al* (1168). It is most often stated to mean "[lord](#)," and perhaps more accurately, "[owner, possessor](#)." He is depicted in archaeological finds as having a female consort, Ashoreth (Babylonian "Ashtar"). In apostate [Israel](#) the false worship of the one frequently included the worship of the other (e.g., Judges 2:13; 3:7; 6:25, 28, 30; 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:4; 12:10; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3; 23:4; 2 Chron. 33:3-4). Consequently, worship of the god and goddess of fertility was license for sexual indulgence and the frequenting of temple prostitutes.

"[Baal](#)" was sometimes used in the OT in connection with other words. So, for example, Baal-berith means "Lord, or Possessor of the Covenant" (Judges 8:33; 9:4). More frequently, Baal was identified as the god or Baal of a certain town or locality. "Baal-hermon" referred to the "Baal" of a town or the area adjacent to Mount Hermon (Judges 3:3; 1 Chron. 5:23). Several times "Baal" was incorporated as a portion of the proper name of an individual. Strangely enough, for example, Eshbaal was the son of King Saul (1 Chron. 8:33) and, even stranger, Merib-baal was the son of godly Jonathan, King David's best friend (1 Chron. 8:34; 9:40).

Most often, however, the term "Baal" in the OT appeared by itself. Note the frequent occurrence, for example, in the account of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:1-46). Though Josiah had attempted to weed out idolatry in Judah (2 Kings 23:4-20), there was still a remnant of [Baal](#) that Yahweh would destroy (Zeph. 1:4). See also the entry on [Baal](#) in WordExplain's Glossary.

¹⁴ Zeph. 1:4 - idolatrous priests: Two English words translating but one Hebrew word, the plural of *chomer* (3649), used only in 2 Kings 23:5; Hos. 10:5; Zeph. 1:4.

¹⁵ Zeph. 1:5 - host of heaven: "Host" (*tsaba*, 6635) "of heaven" (*shamayim*, 8064) literally means "army of the heavens." The stars were poetically designated as God's army up in the heavens ([Isa. 34:4](#); [Jer. 33:22](#); [Dan. 8:10](#)). Unfortunately, the stars became objects of worship ([Deut. 4:19](#); [2 Kings 17:16](#); [21:3, 5](#); [2 Chron. 33:3, 5](#); [Jer. 8:2](#)). King Josiah did his best to rid Jerusalem and Judah of star worship ([2 Kings 23:4-5](#)). In other contexts, the term "host of heaven" refers to God's army of angels ([1 Kings 22:19](#); [2 Chron. 18:18](#)).

¹⁶ Zeph. 1:5 - Milcom: The Masoretic Text (MT) reads "Malcam" derived from *melech* (4428), "king." The editors of the NASB have emended (edited) the MT to read Milcom (4445) (see the NASB footnote). Milcom (if one alters the MT) was probably the god of the sons of [Ammon](#) ([1 Kings 11:5, 33](#); [2 Kings 23:13](#)). These worshippers in Judah were syncretistic. They did swear to Yahweh, but they also swore by Milcom. There is, however, no need to edit the MT. The wording should read "their king" (so Net Bible, [Zeph. 1:5](#)). According to Net Bible, "The referent of 'their king' is unclear. It may refer sarcastically to a pagan god (perhaps Baal) worshiped by the people...." The Net Bible has the preferable translation and explanation here. Regardless, it seems there was syncretism here – the worship of Yahweh combined with the worship of a false god.

- G 5 Of the apostates from Yahweh: {6} And those who have turned back from following the LORD, 1:6a
- G 6 Of the apathetic towards Yahweh: And those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him." 1:6b
- D 2 The alarm sounded concerning "the [Day of the LORD](#)" 1:7a
 - E 1 The call to silence: {7} Be silent before the Lord GOD!
 - E 2 The reason for silence – the proximity of the [Day of the LORD](#): For the day of the LORD is near,¹⁷
- D 3 The ghastly sacrifice 1:7b
 - E 1 Yahweh's preparation: For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,¹⁸
 - E 2 Yahweh's ghoulish guest list: He has consecrated His guests.¹⁹

¹⁷ Zeph. 1:7 - For the day of the LORD is near: Three times in this book Zephaniah warns of the proximity of the [Day of Yahweh](#). Literally, the text here reads, "Because near [is] day of Yahweh." The warning appears twice again in [Zeph. 1:14](#), "Near [is] day of Yahweh – the great [one]; near and [coming] very quickly. Sound of day of Yahweh [is] bitter; yelling there – [the] warrior" (author's literal translation). This [Day of the LORD](#) to which Zephaniah referred here was coming very quickly, and it would be characterized as bitter for Judah because it would include the sound of warfare. No doubt the near [Day of the LORD](#) to which Zephaniah referred was [Babylon's](#) invasion of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar in 605, 597, and 586 B.C. Yet this near "[Day of Yahweh](#)" also prefigured a more distant, [eschatological Day of Yahweh](#) – chiefly, the global judgment associated with the horrific [Tribulation](#) period.

¹⁸ Zeph. 1:7 - For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice: Zephaniah compared the upcoming judgment which Yahweh has prepared to a sacrifice at which, normally, animals would be offered to placate His wrath. This time, however, the sacrifice (*zebach*, [2077](#)) would consist not of animals, but of the humans of Judah and Jerusalem! How terrible! But how terrible were the sins of Judah and Jerusalem! Not surprisingly, *zebach* is used most frequently in Leviticus (e.g., Lev. 3:1, 3, 6, 9; 4:26; 9:18). It is used but twice in Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:7, 8), both times in a context of judgment upon Judah.

¹⁹ Zeph. 1:7 - He has consecrated His guests: The verb "has consecrated" is the [Hifil](#) stem of *qadash*, ([6942](#)) "to set apart, devote, or consecrate" ([BDB](#)). The causative sense is, "He has caused to be devoted (to be sacrificed) – His guests." The word "guests" is the plural of the [Qal](#) passive participle of the common verb *qara* ([7121](#)), meaning here, "His called ones." It is not as though these called ones whom Yahweh has "consecrated" are morally or spiritually pure, thus holy. The exact opposite is true. They are morally and spiritually impure. They are rebellious sinners. It is for that reason that Yahweh has devoted these called ones, these human guests – the people of Judah and Jerusalem – to be sacrificed by the invading Babylonian army. They will be sacrificed as an offering to Yahweh to atone for Judah's grievous sins. This is very similar to Yahweh's devoting the cities that Israel was to conquer under Joshua – to destruction. The cities of Canaan were filled with evil people, and their utter destruction was a sacrifice to Yahweh (Josh. 6:17; 7:1). Yahweh will list those people of Judah and Jerusalem whom He has called and devoted to be sacrificed in Zeph. 1:8-9.

- D 4 The consecrated guests of sacrifice on the near "[Day of the Lord](#)" 1:8-13
- E 1 The government elite 1:8
- G 1 The time of the sacrifice: {8} "Then it will come about on the day of the LORD'S sacrifice"²⁰
- G 2 The objects of Yahweh's punishment: That I will punish²¹
- H 1 Government officials: the princes,²²
- H 2 Immediate descendants of the king: the king's sons²³
- H 3 The wealthy influential in government: And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.²⁴

²⁰ Zeph. 1:8 - on the day of the LORD's sacrifice: This is another reference to "the [Day of the LORD](#)," here called the LORD's sacrifice. Unfortunately, Yahweh's intention was to immolate the Jewish people on His altar of sacrifice (*zabach*, [2077](#)).

²¹ Zeph. 1:8 - I will punish: The word is *paqad* ([6485](#)), which is very fluid in translation. The NASB lists 65 different renderings, although a number of them are variants of the same English word or phrase. The word appears 304 times, 235 of them in the Qal stem. The word can be used in a positive context, such as its first use, "Then the LORD **took note** of Sarah as He had said ..." ([Gen. 21:1](#)) (emphasis mine). It can be used in a neutral context, such as the frequent occurrences of the word "numbered" in the book of Numbers: "their **numbered** men of the tribe of Simeon were 59,300" ([Num. 1:23](#)) (emphasis mine). It can also be used in a negative context, signifying "to take note of" or "to search for" in an adversarial sense of "to hunt down." The word is used five times in Zephaniah. Four times it is used in a negative context, "I will punish" in [Zeph. 1:8, 9, 12](#); and "I have appointed" in [Zeph. 3:7](#). Only once is it used in a positive sense, "For the LORD their God will **care** for them and restore their fortune" ([Zeph. 2:7](#), emphasis mine).

²² Zeph. 1:8 - the princes: In English, the word "princes" (*sar*, [8269](#)) is synonymous with the sons of a king. But it is a much broader designation in Hebrew, in which it can refer to government advisors, heads of clans or tribes, and even military leaders. Hence, in the outline heading, I have used the broader term, "government officials." Sometimes the king's sons were also government officials, but the designation here seems broader than that.

²³ Zeph. 1:8 - the king's sons: No doubt the king was King Josiah. It is likely that Josiah would not have approved of the actions of his sons, but perhaps a great deal of what his sons were up to was kept secret from him. (See [Zeph. 1:9](#), where deceit was employed.) Centuries earlier, King David had been oblivious of the machinations of his sons Absalom (2 Sam. 15:1-37) and Adonijah (1 Kings 1:5-37).

²⁴ Zeph. 1:8 - all who clothe themselves with foreign garments: Since the preceding two members of this list were people high in government, this clause seems to designate wealthy individuals who had close connections with the government leaders. They had discretionary wealth, but their hearts were more akin to Gentile values than Israeli values. Thus they purchased and proudly wore clothing from among the surrounding nations, who were not fearers of God.

- E 2 The violent and deceitful government-sanctioned thieves 1:9
- G 1 Burglars: {9} "And I will punish ²⁵ on that day all who leap on the *temple* threshold, ²⁶
- G 2 Operating on behalf of high government officials: Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit. ²⁷
- E 3 The districts of Jerusalem 1:10-11
- G 1 The time of the disaster: {10} "On that day," 1:10a
- G 2 The guarantor of disaster: declares the LORD, 1:10b
- G 3 The sounds of disaster from different parts of the city 1:10c-11
- H 1 Outcry: "There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, ²⁸ 1:10c
- H 2 A wail: A wail from the Second Quarter, ²⁹ 1:10d

²⁵ Zeph. 1:9 - I will punish: This is the second occurrence of the word *paqad* (6485). See the note on this word at [Zeph. 1:8](#).

²⁶ Zeph. 1:9 - all who leap on the *temple* threshold: The word "temple" does not appear in the original. It is a guess by the NASB editors. The ESV, RSV, and NIV do not use the word "temple. In my judgment its use is not warranted. Yahweh is speaking against those who invade another's home with alacrity in order to steal.

²⁷ Zeph. 1:9 - Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit: "Lord" is actually the plural ("lords") of *adon* (113). [Keil](#) insists that this is a "plural of majesty," and that it should be rendered in the singular, "lord." He cites [1 Sam. 26:16](#) and [2 Sam. 2:5](#) as examples. That is certainly possible. But since [Zeph. 1:9](#) immediately follows [Zeph. 1:8](#), it makes more sense to understand, in context, that the burglars were operating on behalf of their lords, i.e. the king's sons and other corrupt government officials. Of course the thieves themselves would receive a cut of their plunder, but they would never need to fear prosecution inasmuch as government officials were in cahoots with them. The intrigue of the government officials and their hired thugs was disguised with deceit. Presumably, godly King Josiah himself was ignorant of these plots. Corruption was so endemic no one was telling him.

²⁸ Zeph. 1:10 - sound of a cry from the Fish Gate: On the day when the Babylonians would invade the city a sound of outcry (*tseaqah*, 6818) would originate from the Fish Gate ([2 Chron. 33:14](#); [Neh. 3:3](#); [12:39](#)). The Fish Gate was located somewhere at the Northeastern extremity of Jerusalem. It was the Gate through which commercial fishermen brought their catch to sell at the Fish Market. It is the gate through which Nebuchadnezzar [entered the city](#) ([Hannah](#), p. 1527). The outcry is most likely the cry of distress by the people of Jerusalem near the Fish Gate as the Babylonian soldiers broke into the city. Historically, Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and took captives in 606, 597, and 586 B.C. The last invasion was the most devastating and complete.

²⁹ Zeph. 1:10 - A wail from the Second Quarter: "Wail" is the noun *yelalah* (3215), a howl of distress, used only 4X in the OT ([Isa. 15:8](#); [Jer. 25:36](#); [Zeph. 1:10](#); [Zech. 11:3](#)). The word is probably *onomatopoeic*. The Second Quarter (see also [2 Kings 22:14](#); [2 Chron. 34:22](#)) is the lower city upon the hill Acra ([Keil](#), p. 442). The distress will be caused by the Babylonian invasion.

- H 3 Crashing: And a loud crash from the hills.³⁰
1:10e
- H 4 Wailing: {11} "Wail, O inhabitants of the
Mortar,³¹ 1:11
- J 1 Because of the silencing of ethnic
vendors: For all the people of
Canaan will be silenced;³²
- J 2 Because of the demise of merchants:
All who weigh out silver will be cut
off.³³
- E 4 Those who insist God is apathetic 1:12-13
- G 1 The time of judgment: {12} "It will come about at
that time³⁴ 1:12a
- G 2 The relentlessness of Yahweh's search: That I will
search Jerusalem with lamps,³⁵ 1:12b

³⁰ Zeph. 1:10 - a loud crash from the hills: "Crash" is *sheber* (7667), the sound of wreckage and breaking caused by the Babylonians soldiers. "Hills" (*gibah*, 1389) refers to the hills of the lower city (*Keil*, Minor Prophets, p. 442).

³¹ Zeph. 1:11- Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar: The verb "Wail" (*yalal*, 3213) corresponds to the noun *yelalah* (3215) used in [Zeph. 1:10](#). It means to "howl" with distress at the Babylonian invasion. "Mortar" (*Maktesh*, 4389), "bowl," used only here, refers to the market or business district of Jerusalem. It may refer to the low-lying Tyropean Valley portion of Jerusalem (Hannah, [TBKCOT](#)).

³² Zeph. 1:11- people of Canaan ... silenced: "Canaan" (*Kenaan*, 3667) probably refers to ethnic merchants from the area who came to Jerusalem to conduct business with the sons of [Israel](#). [Israel](#) had been instructed to destroy all Canaanites during the Conquest ([Josh. 6-12](#)), but pockets of them had remained. Even after the return from Exile, the presence of foreign traders is mentioned ([Neh. 13:16-21](#)). These ethnic merchants would be silenced by the Babylonian invasion.

³³ Zeph. 1:11 - all who weigh out silver will be cut off: "Silver" is *keseeph* (3701) and refers to coinage. Coins were not necessarily standardized, so it was necessary to weigh silver to obtain the correct value. Those who weighed silver were merchants. The cutting off (*karath*, 3772) of these merchants refers to their destruction, or at least to the deprivation of their ability to conduct business, all caused, or course, by the predicted Babylonian invasion. *Karath* is used in Zephaniah in [Zeph. 1:3, 4, 11; 3:6, 7](#). *Keseeph* (silver) is used in [Zeph. 1:11, 18](#).

³⁴ Zeph. 1:12 - at that time: I.e., the impending "[Day of the LORD](#)." The near [Day of the LORD](#) to which Yahweh referred was the coming destruction by [Babylon](#).

³⁵ Zeph. 1:12 - I will search Jerusalem with lamps: The metaphor is one of searching throughout the day, but not giving up his search even at night. The searcher, Yahweh, is grim and relentless – He will continue His search even at night-time by the aid of lamps so that He will not leave a single offender unpunished.

- G 3 Yahweh's punitive action: And I will punish the men ³⁶ 1:12c
 - H 1 The complacent: Who are stagnant in spirit, ³⁷
 - H 2 Those who have a perverse view that God is uninvolved: Who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!' ³⁸
- G 4 The results of Yahweh's judgment 1:13
 - H 1 Looted possessions: {13} "Moreover, their wealth will become plunder" ³⁹
 - H 2 Empty homes: And their houses desolate; ⁴⁰
 - H 3 Societal instability
 - J 1 Building houses in which others will live: Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit *them*, ⁴¹
 - J 2 Planting vineyards of which others will partake: And plant vineyards but not drink their wine." ⁴²

³⁶ Zeph. 1:12 - I will punish the men: "Punish" is the third occurrence of the verb *paqad* (6485) in Zephaniah. We have already seen it at [Zeph. 1:8, 9](#). See the note on this word at [Zeph. 1:8](#). Yahweh will initiate a personal "search and destroy" mission. The thought is parallel to the first part of this verse, "I will search Jerusalem with lamps." The next time *paqad* will be used will be in Zeph. 2:7, where it appears in a positive context.

³⁷ Zeph. 1:12 - Who are stagnant in spirit: The Hebrew text reads, literally, "Who are thickening on the dregs [of their wine]." They are complacent, inactive. Their complacency has a negative spiritual overtone, as seen in the next line.

³⁸ Zeph. 1:12 - The LORD will not do good or evil: There are many who hold this view of God – that God, if He really exists, is inactive and apathetic – impotent, if you will. This is an utterly perverse view of God. God loves to bless His own who follow Him, and He will not refrain from bringing judgment on those who ignore Him, as these Israelites were doing.

³⁹ Zeph. 1:13 - their wealth will become plunder: Invading Babylonian soldiers will confiscate their possessions.

⁴⁰ Zeph. 1:13 - their houses ... desolate: They will be carried off as exiles to [Babylon](#) ([2 Kings 24:10-16, 20; 25:1-11, 21; 1 Chron. 6:15; 1 Chron. 9:1](#)). Their houses will remain empty.

⁴¹ Zeph. 1:13 - not inhabit *them*: Because either the former occupants will be killed or else taken captive to [Babylon](#) during the coming invasion.

⁴² Zeph. 1:13 - not drink their wine: Because either they will be killed or else taken captive to [Babylon](#) during the coming invasion.

C 4 The characterization of Yahweh's destruction – The great [Day of the Lord](#): a day of adversity, battle, bloodshed, and Divine judgment upon Judah and Earth's inhabitants for their evil 1:14-18

D 1 "The near, great [Day of the Lord](#)" 1:14

E 1 The proximity of the [day of the LORD](#)

G 1 {14} Near ⁴³ is the great ⁴⁴ day of the LORD,

G 2 Near ⁴⁵ and coming very quickly;

E 2 The sound of the [day of the LORD](#)

G 1 The sound: Listen, ⁴⁶ the day of the LORD!

G 2 Yelling warriors: In it the warrior cries out bitterly.⁴⁷

⁴³ Zeph. 1:14 - Near: Zephaniah had already described this devastating judgment from Yahweh as being "near" (*qarob*, [7138](#)) ([Zeph. 1:7](#)). Here he uses it twice in the same verse ([Zeph. 1:14](#)). This "near" [day of the LORD](#) is the sequential invasion of Judah and Jerusalem by [Babylon](#) (606, 596, and 586 B.C.).

⁴⁴ Zeph. 1:14 - great: *gadol*, [1419](#). Literally, the text reads, "Near is day of Yahweh – the great (one)." The same word, in similar contexts, appears in [Jer. 30:7](#); [Joel 2:11](#); [Mal. 4:5](#). The term "great" hints to the reader that this [Day of the LORD](#), though it is near in the sense that it will shortly affect Judah in terms of the Babylonian invasion, is also chronologically more remote, and will affect all of earth's inhabitants (see [Zeph. 1:18](#)). Jesus warned of "great tribulation" ([Matt. 24:21](#)). The elder who spoke to the Apostle John identified a future time of trouble as "the tribulation – the great one" ([Rev. 7:14](#)). So this reference to the near [day of the LORD](#) did double duty, identifying a time of judgment upon Judah, but also serving as a harbinger of the [Great Tribulation](#) in the remote future.

⁴⁵ Zeph. 1:14 - Near: *qarob*, [7138](#)

⁴⁶ Zeph. 1:14 - Listen: This verbal imperative used by the translators of the NASB is unfortunate. The word is not a verb, but the simple noun *qol* ([6963](#)), which means "sound." The translations of the ESV, RSV, or NKJV are preferable. The text reads, literally, "Sound of day of Yahweh (is) bitter."

⁴⁷ Zeph. 1:14 - In it the warrior cries out bitterly: A more accurate rendering of the last half of [Zeph. 1:14](#) is as follows: "The sound of the day of Yahweh is bitter; there the yelling warrior" (author's translation). The NASB translation leaves the reader with the impression that the Jewish warrior will yell bitterly because he and his army are being beaten. That is probably not the meaning. Rather, in the ears of the Jewish populace, the [Day of the LORD](#) will have a bitter sound. That bitter sound will be characterized by the war cries of the Babylonian soldier and his army. As a matter of fact, in the closing days of the reign of Zedekiah, the city of Jerusalem was under siege. When the Chaldean army broke into the city, the Jewish army fled by night in a futile attempt to escape. Undoubtedly they were not yelling at all, but were as silent as possible to avoid detection ([2 Kings 25:1-7](#)).

D 2 A day of great adversity 1:15

E 1 Wrath: {15} A day of wrath ⁴⁸ is that day,E 2 Trouble and distress: A day of trouble and distress, ⁴⁹E 3 Destruction and desolation: A day of destruction and desolation, ⁵⁰E 4 Darkness and gloom: A day of darkness and gloom, ⁵¹E 5 Clouds and darkness: A day of clouds and thick darkness, ⁵²

D 3 A day of battle 1:16

E 1 {16} A day of trumpet and battle cry ⁵³E 2 Against the fortified cities ⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Zeph. 1:15 - wrath: *ebrah*, [5678](#). “Wrath” may refer to the fury of the Babylonian soldiers in battle (see [Gen. 49:7](#); [Psa. 7:6](#); [Isa. 16:6](#)), but more likely, it refers to the fury of God ([Psa. 90:9, 11](#); [Isa. 9:19](#); [13:13](#); [Lam. 2:2](#); [Ezek. 7:19](#); [22:21, 31](#); [Hos. 5:10](#); [13:11](#); [Zeph. 1:18](#)), directed at disobedient, idolatrous Judah.

⁴⁹ Zeph. 1:15 - trouble ... distress: “Trouble” is *tsarah* ([6869](#)), translated in the NASB as “distress(es)” 35X; as “trouble(s)” 33X. “Distress” is *metsuqah* ([4691](#)), used only in [Job 15:24](#); [Psa. 25:17](#); [107:6, 13, 19, 28](#); [Zeph. 1:15](#). The two words are synonyms, but they are paired together in the same context only in [Ps. 25:17](#) and [Zeph. 1:15](#).

⁵⁰ Zeph. 1:15 - destruction ... desolation: “Destruction” is *shoah* ([7724](#)); “desolation: is *meshoah* ([4875](#)). *Meshoah* is used only 3X in Scripture ([Job 30:3](#); [38:27](#); [Zeph. 1:15](#)), and each time it is paired off with *shoah*. These synonyms were used because of their [assonance](#).

⁵¹ Zeph. 1:15 - darkness ... gloom: “Darkness” is *choshek* ([2822](#)), used most frequently in Job and Isaiah (once in Zephaniah). Moses used it 4X in the first chapter of the Bible – [Gen. 1:2, 4, 5, 18](#). “Gloom” is *aphelah* ([653](#)). In the NASB *aphelah* is usually translated “darkness,” but when it appears with *choshek*, it must somehow be differentiated, so it is translated “gloom.” The synonyms overlap in [Isa. 58:10](#); [59:9](#); [Joel 2:2](#); [Zeph. 1:15](#).

⁵² Zeph. 1:15 - clouds ... thick darkness: “Clouds” is the plural of *anan* ([6051](#)), first used in [Gen. 9:13, 14, 16](#) – in a connotation of hope. It was used as the vehicle in which God’s presence resided when He led [Israel](#) out of bondage ([Ex. 13:21, 22](#)). In the books of Exodus - Deuteronomy, 1 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Nehemiah, and even twice in Ezekiel ([Ezek. 10:3, 4](#)), a cloud signified either God’s guiding presence or His presence in the temple. Less frequently *anan* is used in a context of judgment, as it is here in [Zeph. 1:15](#); so also in [Joel 2:2](#).

“Thick darkness” is the translation of the single Hebrew word *araphel* ([6205](#)). Frequently “thick darkness” accompanies God Himself ([Exod. 20:21](#); [Deut. 4:11](#); [5:22](#); [2 Sam. 22:10](#); [1 Kings 8:12](#); [2 Chron. 6:1](#); [Ps. 18:9](#); [97:2](#)). At other times the context does not denote God’s presence ([Job 22:13](#); [38:9](#)). At yet other times, *anan* is a negative, even adversarial condition of humanity or of [Israel](#) ([Isa. 60:2](#); [Jer. 13:16](#); [Ezek. 34:12](#); [Joel 2:2](#); [Zeph. 1:15](#)).

⁵³ Zeph. 1:16 - trumpet ... battle cry: Obviously, these terms in regard to the [Day of the LORD](#) here signify warfare against Judah.

⁵⁴ Zeph. 1:16 - fortified cities: These cities were built by kings to resist an enemy invasion. When [Babylon](#) invaded Judah, Judah’s fortified cities slowed down, but did not deter the invasion.

- E 3 And the high corner towers. ⁵⁵
- D 4 A day of bloodshed as punishment for sin 1:17
- E 1 Distress: {17} I will bring distress on men ⁵⁶
- E 2 Aimlessness: So that they will walk like the blind,
- E 3 Spiritual judgment: Because they have sinned against the LORD; ⁵⁷
- E 4 Widespread bloodshed; And their blood will be poured out like dust ⁵⁸
- E 5 Indiscriminate death: And their flesh like dung. ⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Zeph. 1:16 - high corner towers: “Corner towers” translates the plural of *pinnah* (6438), which ordinarily means simply “corners.” In this context it refers to an elevated and fortified corner of a city wall from which large stones could be catapulted and arrows shot (see [2 Chron. 26:15](#)). In the Babylonian invasion, these corner towers would be unable to stem the flood of Babylonian warriors.

⁵⁶ Zeph. 1:17 - I will bring distress on men: “I will bring distress” translates the *Hifil* stem of *tsarar* 6887. The *Hifil* stem of this word is used in [Deut. 28:52](#); [1 Kings 8:37](#); [Jer. 10:18](#); [48:41](#); [49:22](#); [Zeph. 1:17](#); [Neh. 9:27](#); [2 Chron. 6:28](#); [28:20](#), [22](#); [2 Chron. 33:12](#). Two of the more descriptive translations are “besiege” ([Deut. 28:52](#); [1 Kings 8:37](#); [2 Chron. 6:28](#)) and the description of the heart of a woman as being “in labor” ([Jer. 48:41](#); [49:22](#)). The sense of the *Hifil* stem is to “make narrow for, press hard upon, cause distress to” when used with a prefixed *lamedh* (l) attached to a person used as an object ([BDB](#)). That is certainly true in [Zeph. 1:17](#) where Yahweh reveals He will “bring distress” “on men” (literally, upon “man” – the singular is used). Though the [Day of the LORD](#) in view here is still [Babylon](#)’s invasion of Judah, the wording is telling. Yahweh will bring distress not merely upon the men of [Israel](#), but upon the more general “man” – i.e. mankind as a specie. Increasingly, one must conclude that the more distant distress upon all mankind predicted in the [Tribulation](#) is what is also in view here. See also [Zeph. 1:18](#) and [Rev. 3:10](#).

⁵⁷ Zeph. 1:17 - because they have sinned against the LORD: This is the ultimate cause of man’s downfall and of Yahweh’s judgment – all men have sinned (third plural, [Qal](#) Perfect of *chata*, 2398). The sense of the [Qal](#) stem is to “miss,” further, to “miss the goal or path of right and duty,” in another word, to “sin” ([BDB](#)). Here the sin is emphatically against Yahweh. Literally, the text reads, “because against Yahweh they have sinned.” Missing God’s standards is always at the root of distress and judgment. Had there never been any sin on this globe, there never would have been distress or judgment.

⁵⁸ Zeph. 1:17 - blood poured out like dust: The blood of humans has inestimable value inasmuch as men were created in the image and likeness of God ([Gen. 9:6](#)). Blood is the conveyor of life. Even the blood of animals was valued as the source of animal life, and it was valued as a covering (atonement) for human sin. As such, Noah and his sons, as well as Israelis were forbidden to eat blood ([Gen. 9:4-5](#); [Lev. 17:10-14](#)). Yet in the upcoming Babylonian invasion in the [Day of the LORD](#), human bloodshed would be so widespread that human blood would have no more value than dirt.

⁵⁹ Zeph. 1:17 - flesh like dung: The bodies of men, ordinarily of high value, as part of God’s creation of man in His own image and likeness ([Gen. 1:26-27](#)), will have no more value in that terrible day than human excrement.

- D 5 A day of Yahweh's wrath and jealous devouring of all earth's inhabitants 1:18
 - E 1 Inconsequential wealth
 - G 1 Useless commodities: {18} Neither their silver nor their gold⁶⁰
 - G 2 The inability to deliver: Will be able to deliver them
 - G 3 The terrible day: On the day of the LORD'S wrath,⁶¹
 - E 2 The global destruction of the [Great Tribulation](#)
 - G 1 The global extent: And all the earth will be devoured⁶²
 - G 2 The destructive motivation of Yahweh: In the fire of His jealousy,⁶³
 - G 3 The terrible consequence
 - H 1 Complete: For He will make a complete

⁶⁰ Zeph. 1:18 - Neither their silver nor their gold: Many times the wealthy can buy their way out of duress, or at least insulate themselves from it. Wealth will not deliver men from God's anger on the [Day of the LORD](#).

⁶¹ Zeph. 1:18 - on the day of the LORD's wrath: Men's wealth will be unable to snatch them away from judgment on the day of the wrath (*ebrah*, [5678](#)) of Yahweh. [Isa. 13:13](#) speaks of this day in the same terms, as does [Ezek. 7:19](#). The latter passage expands on the inability of the wealth of the wicked to deliver them on the day of the wrath of Yahweh. We have already seen this day described as a day of wrath (*ebrah*) ([Zeph. 1:15](#)). Here ([Zeph. 1:18](#)) the wrath is more explicitly stated as being the wrath (*ebrah*) of Yahweh, not the wrath of any man. NT interpreters miss the mark when they attempt to equate the [Day of the Lord](#) ([2 Thess. 2:2](#)) with the benign [parousia](#) of Jesus "and our gathering together to Him" ([2 Thess. 2:1](#)) (i.e., the [Rapture](#)). The two events are distinctly different. The [day of the LORD](#) is a day of wrathful [retribution](#) on the wicked, not a day of pleasurable [reunion](#) for the elect.

⁶² Zeph. 1:18 - and all the earth will be devoured: The reader should be reminded that the term "earth" (*erets*, [776](#)) can refer to the entire globe (as in [Gen. 1:1](#)), or it can refer to a specific piece of real estate ([the "Promised] Land," as in [Gen. 12:1](#)). Indeed, though the NASB and ESV both translate *erets* here as "earth," the NIV, the Jewish Complete Bible, and Young's Literal Translation all render it "land." However, as [Keil and Delitzsch](#) point out, there is a control here. In [Zeph. 1:2-3](#), Yahweh has already declared He would "completely remove all things from the face of the earth," literally, "ground" (*adamah*, [127](#)). The language of totality in [Zeph. 1:2](#), "I will *completely* remove all things from the face of the earth" (emphasis mine), and in [Zeph. 1:3](#), "I will cut off man from the face of the earth" (*adamah*, [127](#)), expands the scope of the judgment from a localized, merely [Israeli](#) judgment, to a global, international judgment. Similar language occurs in [Genesis 6:7; 7:4, 23](#).

We conclude, then, that in Zeph. 1:18, the language advances beyond [Babylon](#)'s invasion of Judah. Once again, the language describes "totality" – "all the earth will be devoured," "He will make a *complete* end," "of *all* the inhabitants of the earth" (emphasis mine). Though in the short term, the Babylonian invasion was in view, ultimately, the Divine author had in mind the terrifying devastation known as "[The Tribulation](#)," which is to come upon the entire world ([Rev. 3:10](#)). The judgments of the [Tribulation](#), the remote [Day of the LORD](#), are graphically outlined in the Seal Judgments ([Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1](#)), the Trumpet Judgments ([Rev. 8:2-9:21; 11:15-19](#)), and the Bowl Judgments ([Rev. 16:1-21](#)) portrayed in the Book of Revelation.

⁶³ Zeph. 1:18 - jealousy: *qinah* ([7068](#)), translated "jealousy" here and "zeal" in [Zeph. 3:8](#). Other passages also speak of God's jealousy: Num. 25:11; Deut. 29:20; Psa. 79:5; Isa. 26:11; Ezek. 16:38, 42; 23:25; 36:5-6.

end,⁶⁴

H 2 Terrifying: Indeed a terrifying one,

G 4 The global victims: Of all the inhabitants of the earth.⁶⁵

B 2 The Plea to Repent to Escape Judgment 2:1-3

C 1 The plea to Judah to assemble before the day of Yahweh's anger 2:1-2

D 1 The plea to assemble: {1} Gather yourselves together,⁶⁶ yes, gather, 2:1a

D 2 The characterization of the nation: O nation without shame,⁶⁷ 2:1b

D 3 The urgency of the assembly 2:2

E 1 Before the statute is enacted: {2} Before the decree takes effect⁶⁸

E 2 The rapidity of the approach of the day — The day passes like the chaff—

E 3 Before the anger of Yahweh: Before the burning anger⁶⁹ of the LORD comes upon you,

⁶⁴ Zeph. 1:18 - complete end: These two words translate the single Hebrew noun *kalah* (3617), sometimes rendered “complete destruction” ([Isa. 10:23](#); [Jer. 4:27](#); [5:10, 18](#); [Dan. 9:27](#)), and twice elsewhere, “complete end” ([Nahum 1:8, 9](#)). Yahweh is speaking of the widespread destruction of humanity. In the [Tribulation](#), one plague alone (the breaking of the Fourth Seal) will result in the demise of one quarter of the earth’s population ([Rev. 6:7-8](#)). At the sounding of the Sixth Trumpet, an additional third of mankind will be slain ([Rev. 9:15, 18](#)). If the earth’s population is estimated at 7 billion today, that would mean the deaths of 3.5 billion people across our globe. The carnage of the [Day of the LORD](#) will be unimaginable!

⁶⁵ Zeph. 1:18 - Of all the inhabitants of the earth: Once again “earth” is *erets* (776), which can mean “land” or “earth.” In the broader context of the first chapter, Zephaniah referred to the inhabitants of the entire earth, not merely the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

⁶⁶ Zeph. 2:1 - Gather yourselves together: Zephaniah urges the nation of Judah to gather for a solemn assembly [to repent of their evil](#) (cf. [Neh. 8:1-3, 9](#); [9:1-4](#); [Joel 2:12-14](#)).

⁶⁷ Zeph. 2:1 - nation without shame: Zephaniah’s characterization of the nation of Judah. They should have been ashamed of their idolatry and their lawlessness, but they were not.

⁶⁸ Zeph. 2:2 - before the decree takes effect: God had decreed judgment on Judah, and indeed, the entire earth (Zeph. 1:2-18). Yet as in the case of His pronouncement of judgment upon Nineveh within forty days ([Jon. 1:1-2](#); [3:1-4](#)), Yahweh is a God of mercy. Genuine repentance can forestall judgment ([Jon. 3:5-10](#)).

⁶⁹ Zeph. 2:2 - burning anger: “burning” is *charon* (2740). It is always used of Yahweh or God. Sometimes it is translated as “fierce,” as in “fierce” anger ([Hos. 11:9](#)). “Anger” is *aph* (639), literally, one’s nostril or nose (see [Gen. 2:7](#); [7:22](#); [24:43](#)), but here, Yahweh’s nostril as flaring in anger. *Aph* is used 4X in Zephaniah (Zeph. 2:2 [twice]; Zeph. 2:3; 3:8). The sense here is that Yahweh’s nostril is flared in anger at the sinful people of Judah

- E 4 Before the day of Yahweh's anger: Before the day of the LORD'S anger ⁷⁰ comes upon you.
- C 2 The plea to the humble of the land to seek righteousness to escape the day of Yahweh's anger 2:3
 - D 1 The plea to seek Yahweh: {3} Seek the LORD,
 - D 2 The subjects of the plea: All you humble of the earth ⁷¹
 - D 3 The characteristic of the subjects: Who have carried out His ordinances; ⁷²
 - D 4 The further content of the plea
 - E 1 Seek righteousness,
 - E 2 seek humility.

⁷⁰ Zeph. 2:2 - LORD'S anger: "Anger," once again in this verse is *aph* ([639](#)), literally, one's nostril or nose (see Gen. 2:7; 7:22; 24:43), but here, Yahweh's nostril as flaring in anger.

⁷¹ Zeph. 2:3 - all you humble of the earth: "Earth is, again, *erets* ([776](#)), which can mean either "land" or "earth." Here, I should think the primary referent is "land." Zephaniah is addressing, first, the humble of the "land" of Judah. If they seek Yahweh, perhaps they personally will be spared in the day of Yahweh's anger.

But there is a more distant referent. Long-term, this warning to seek Yahweh is addressed to all the humble of planet Earth. Perhaps they, the righteous, will be spared in the judgment that is to plague the entire earth during the [Tribulation](#). We know that the [Church](#) itself will, in its entirety, be exempted from the [Day of the LORD](#) (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:4-5, 9; 2 Thess. 2:1-2, 13; Tit. 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 4:1). Such will not be the case, however, for believers saved *after* the [departure](#) of the [Church](#) and the subsequent commencement of the [Day of the LORD](#). Countless believers will be martyred for their faith during the [Tribulation](#) (Matt. 24:9; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 13:7, 10, 15; 17:6; 18:24; 19:1-3; 20:4). Yet some will [survive](#) the agonies and persecutions of the [Tribulation](#) (Dan. 12:1-3; Zech. 14:1-5; Matt. 24:13, 22, 31; 25:31-40, 46). Believers alive on earth at the time of the [Great Tribulation](#) should ask to be hidden "in the day of the LORD'S anger."

⁷² Zeph. 2:3 - Who have carried out His ordinances: Zephaniah was describing Israelis who live in the land of Judah who are part of the [remnant](#) (Isa. 10:20, 21, 22; 11:11, 16; 28:5; Zeph. 2:7, 9; 3:13; Rom. 9:27; 11:5) who truly believed in God and strove to keep His commands. In the longer term, this describes believers who endeavor to obey God during the [Tribulation](#) (see the footnote on Zeph. 2:3 - "Perhaps you will be hidden").

D 5 The reason for the plea: Perhaps you will be hidden ⁷³ In the day of the LORD'S anger. ⁷⁴

B 3 The Destruction of Nations 2:4-15 ⁷⁵

C 1 The destruction of Philistia on the west 2:4-7

D 1 The destruction of the inhabitants of Philistia 2:4-5

E 1 The fate of the Philistine cities 2:4

G 1 Of Gaza: {4} For Gaza ⁷⁶ will be abandoned

⁷³ Zeph. 2:3 - Perhaps you will be hidden (in the day of the LORD'S anger): Judgment is coming upon the nation of Judah. Though the judgment is designed to punish the disobedient, sometimes, in a tragedy, the innocent righteous also suffer. For example, when parents divorce, innocent children suffer. When a nation is judged for its evil, even the righteous suffer. Zephaniah is urging the righteous to pray for exemption from suffering. Though Jeremiah suffered in God's discipline of the nation, at least God preserved him (Jer. 36:26), and he did not have to endure being carried captive to [Babylon](#) (Jer. 39:11-14; 40:1-6).

The beauty is that the [Church](#) will escape the terrors of the [Tribulation](#) period. The [Church](#) consists of those who are sons of light and sons of day (1 Thess. 5:5). That day of catastrophe will not affect the [Church](#), for God has not destined the [Church](#) for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through Christ (1 Thess. 5:9).

Even so, believers who are saved after the [Rapture](#), and during the [Tribulation](#) should pray that they will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger against the world. Though most believers during the [Tribulation](#) will die for their faith, some will be preserved alive through appalling circumstances. They will be approved at the [Judgment of the Survivors of the Tribulation](#). They will be left alive to inhabit the [Millennial Kingdom](#) of Christ (Zech. 14:1-5; Matt. 24:13, 22, 31; 25:31-40, 46). But again, most believers in the [Tribulation](#), however, will be martyred for their faith (Matt. 24:9; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 13:7, 10, 15; 17:6; 18:24; 19:1-3; 20:4).

⁷⁴ Zeph. 2:3 - LORD'S anger: "Anger" here again is *aph* (639), literally, one's nostril or nose (see Gen. 2:7; 7:22; 24:43), but here, Yahweh's nostril as flaring in anger. *Aph* was used twice in Zeph. 2:2. It will be used again in Zeph. 3:8.

⁷⁵ Text of the outline - B3 The Destruction of Nations 2:4-15: In this section God, through Zephaniah, singled out for destruction several nations [in four different directions](#) from [Israel](#). [Israel](#) will one day inherit the land of the Philistines to the west (Zeph. 2:4-7) (including modern day Gaza strip, presently occupied by "Palestinian" Arabs); and the countries of [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) to the east (Zeph. 2:8-11) (presently controlled by Jordan). God also singled out the destruction of Ethiopia to the south (Zeph. 2:12); and Assyria (modern day Iraq/Iran) to the north (Zeph. 2:13-15). Though these latter two nations did not border [Israel](#), they represented the Northeastern most and southernmost nations with which [Israel](#) was familiar. Assyria, moreover, had already invaded and taken captive the northern kingdom of [Israel](#)/Samaria in 722 BC. In the days of Hezekiah and Isaiah, Assyria had invaded Judah (Isa. 36:1-37:38). In the future there will be amity between [Israel](#) and Assyria (Iraq/Iran) (Isa. 11:16; 19:23). That fulfillment awaits the arrival of Jesus' [Millennial Kingdom](#). Not until then will [Israel](#) have an abiding peace, surrounded as she is today by a sea of hostile neighbors.

⁷⁶ Zeph. 2:4 - Gaza: Four of the five (1 Sam. 6:17) principal cities of the Philistines are singled out for destruction. [Gath](#) is the only city unmentioned here. [Gaza](#) (*Azzah*, 5804) was probably the [oldest](#) and most southerly. It lay along the seacoast, but in Bible times, somewhat removed. Judah captured it, along with Ashkelon and Ekron (Judges 1:18), but by the time of Samson it had reverted back to Philistine control (Judges 16:1). Modern day [Gaza City](#) is today the largest city of the so-called "Palestinians." The larger region is known as the [Gaza Strip](#) (see [modern map](#)). Zephaniah here predicts that Gaza will be abandoned (Zeph. 2:4). According to Matthew Henry ([unabridged commentary](#), p. 1379), Alexander the Great razed the city. Yahweh promised to destroy the land of the Philistines (Zeph. 2:5). Judah will one day pasture their flocks in the land of the Philistines under the care of Yahweh, their God (Zeph. 2:6-7). View a 2005 [aerial map](#) of the Gaza Strip. View the [skyline](#) of modern Gaza City.

- G 2 Of Ashkelon: And Ashkelon ⁷⁷ a desolation;
- G 3 Of Ashdod: Ashdod ⁷⁸ will be driven out at noon
- G 4 Of Ekron: And Ekron ⁷⁹ will be uprooted.
- E 2 Woe to the Philistines 2:5
 - G 1 Their description
 - H 1 Their geography: {5} Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast,⁸⁰
 - H 2 Their lineage: The nation of the Cherethites!⁸¹

⁷⁷ Zeph. 2:4 - Ashkelon: [Ashkelon](#), *Ashqelon* (831), another city of the Philistines. Unlike Gaza and Ashdod, it was situated right on the seacoast. Of the three Philistine cities that bordered the Mediterranean, Ashkelon was in the middle, Ashdod was to the North, and Gaza to the South. Judah captured Ashkelon (Judges 1:18), but only for a time. Zephaniah predicted Ashkelon would become a place of waste and desolation. The near judgment was the invasion by Egypt and by [Babylon](#). The far judgment will take place in the [Tribulation](#). Amos 1:8 also predicted judgment on Ashkelon. Judah will one day pasture their flocks in the land of the Philistines under the care of Yahweh, their God (Zeph. 2:6-7). Ashkelon is currently an [Israeli city](#) since the war of Independence (1948). It is situated 31 miles south of Tel Aviv and 8 miles north of the border with the [Gaza Strip](#). Ultimately, it will remain under Jewish control (Zeph. 2:7). (View a photo of the [skyline of modern Ashkelon](#).)

⁷⁸ Zeph. 2:4 - Ashdod: [Ashdod](#) (795) was the northernmost coastal city of the five principal Philistine cities. Ashdod would be judged by an invasion in broad daylight. This most likely referred to the Babylonian invasion. Modern Ashdod was [established by Israelis](#) “in 1956 on the sand hills near the site of the ancient town” It is situated due west of Jerusalem. Ashdod is [Israel’s largest port](#). It is the fifth largest city in [Israel](#). (View a photo of the [marina and skyline](#) of modern Ashdod.)

⁷⁹ Zeph. 2:4 - Ekron: [Egbron](#) (6138) was the northernmost city of the Philistines, located inland from the Mediterranean coast and due north of [Gath](#). It was west of Jerusalem and slightly to the north. Judah conquered it (Judges 1:18), but it reverted to Philistine control (1 Sam. 5:10; 6:16-17). However, under Samuel, [Israel](#) seems to have regained control of Ekron and Gath (1 Sam. 7:14). That control was apparently short-lived. Even with the [Israeli](#) victory over Philistia following David’s defeat of Goliath, the Philistines had resumed control of both cities (1 Sam. 17:52). Injured King Ahaziah inquired of Baal-zebub, god of Ekron (2 Kings 1:3, 6). He died because of it (2 Kings 1:16-17). By the time of Zephaniah (and King Josiah), Ekron was still a Philistine city under the judgment of God (Zeph. 2:4-5). There is [no modern-day city](#) at the site of the Biblical Ekron.

⁸⁰ Zeph. 2:5 - Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast: The [Philistines](#) lived along the Mediterranean seacoast, at least from Ashdod to the north, south to Ashkelon, and furthest south to Gaza. Zephaniah’s pronouncement of “Woe” (*hoy*, [1945](#) – used far more often in Isaiah than in any other OT book) upon the Philistines alerts us to three observations: (1) It is not merely Judah who will suffer Yahweh’s anger in the [Day of the LORD](#) (Zeph. 1:4-18a; 2:1-3). Surrounding nations will also suffer. (2) Since the nations referenced include the Philistines on the West (Zeph. 2:4-7), [Moab](#) and the sons of [Ammon](#) on the East (Zeph. 2:8-10), the Ethiopians to the South (Zeph. 2:12), and Assyria and Nineveh to the North(east) (Zeph. 2:13-15), Yahweh’s judgment, ultimately, will be not only local (the land of the Sons of [Israel](#)), but also global. Indeed Yahweh’s angry judgment is ultimately against the nations of the entire earth (Zeph. 1:2-3, 18b; 2:11; 3:8). (3) Finally, it is not merely the humble and obedient [remnant](#) of Judah who in the days of Zephaniah are asked to seek Yahweh and cry for mercy amidst judgment (Zeph. 2:3) – it is also the humble and obedient of the entire Earth in the days of the [Tribulation](#) who are so exhorted.

⁸¹ Zeph. 2:5 - Cherethites: NASB footnote: “I.e. a segment of the Philistines with roots in Crete.” The Hebrew word is the plural of *Kerethi* ([3774](#)). David referred to them as distinct from the Philistines in 1 Sam. 30:14. A parallel prophecy to this one in Zeph. 2:5 is to be found in Ezek. 25:16. Elsewhere, a portion of David’s elite

- G 2 Their verbal doom: The word of the LORD is against you,⁸²
- G 3 Their further description: O Canaan, land of the Philistines;⁸³
- G 4 The totality of their demise
 - H 1 Yahweh's destruction: And I will destroy you⁸⁴
 - H 2 The absence of survivors: So that there will be no inhabitant.⁸⁵
- D 2 Judah to inhabit Philistia 2:6-7
 - E 1 The depopulating of Philistia 2:6
 - G 1 Used for pastures: {6} So the seacoast will be pastures,⁸⁶

bodyguard / special forces were identified as Cherethites in 2 Sam. 8:18; 15:18; 20:7, 23; 1 Kings 1:38, 44; 1 Chron. 18:17. In Zeph. 2:5 Cherethites are synonymous with Philistines.

⁸² Zeph. 2:5 - The word of the LORD is against you: If the word of Yahweh is against you, you are doomed, indeed! This is the second and final appearance of the phrase "word of the LORD" (lit. "word of Yahweh"), the first having been in Zeph. 1:1.

⁸³ Zeph. 2:5 - Philistines: The plural of the proper noun *Pelishiti* (6430). [Philistia](#) was a relatively small country, about 25-30 miles in length along the Mediterranean, and about half that wide. According to [BDB](#), *Pelishiti* are inhabitants of Philistia. They are descendants of Mizraim (4714) who immigrated from Caphtor (Crete?) to the western seacoast of Canaan. However, the Biblical text states that the Philistines descended from Casluh (*Kasluchim*, 3695), not Caphtor (*Kaphtori*, 3732) (Gen. 10:14; 1 Chron. 1:11-12). Yet, we are also told that the Caphtorim who came from Caphtor destroyed the Avvim, "who lived in villages as far as Gaza". The Caphtorim then lived in the place which the Avvim had previously inhabited (Deut. 2:23). Evidently both statements are true.

Modern day "Palestinians" are unrelated ethnically to the Philistines who once inhabited the region. Modern-day "Palestinians" are expatriates from Egypt and from Jordan that were not permitted by their respective countries to return following [Israel](#)'s successful war for independence in 1948. The chief similarity between the ancient Philistines and the modern-day "Palestinians" is that both remained inveterate enemies of [Israel](#). One day [Israel](#) will control the entire Mediterranean seacoast (Zeph. 2:6-7), as was long ago promised by God (Gen. 15:18; Josh. 1:4).

⁸⁴ Zeph. 2:5 - And I will destroy you: To this point in Zeph. 2, the prophet has been speaking. Suddenly Yahweh Himself interjects – "And I will destroy you!" This judgment was [initially fulfilled by Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt](#), who reigned from 609-594 B.C. (see Jer. 47:1). This conquest by Egypt most likely occurred in 609 B.C. (Charles Dyer, Jeremiah, [TBKCOT](#), p. 1194). However, [Babylon](#) also joined in destroying the Philistines. Through Jeremiah (Jer. 47:1-7), God predicted a torrent from the north ([Babylon](#)) that would "destroy all the Philistines" (Jer. 47:4). Ashkelon, for example, was destroyed by [Babylon](#) in late 604 B.C. (Dyer, [TBKCOT](#), p. 1194).

⁸⁵ Zeph. 2:5 - no inhabitant: Once again, this prophecy was fulfilled initially by [Pharaoh Neco II](#) (Jer. 47:1). The Babylonians and the Greeks under Alexander the Great also devastated this region.

⁸⁶ Zeph. 2:6 - the seacoast will be pastures: Zephaniah's point is not merely that the land of the Philistines will be used for pastoral purposes for livestock (Zeph. 2:6), but that it will be under the control of Judah (Zeph. 2:7). It is doubtful this prophecy has ever yet been completely fulfilled. Though today a portion of the land of the Philistines is inhabited by Israelis (i.e. from Ashdod to Ashkelon), much of the rest remains solidly under the control of

G 2 Used for flocks: *With* caves for shepherds and folds for flocks.⁸⁷

E 2 The Israeli control of Philistia 2:7

G 1 The ultimate possessors of Philistia: {7} And the coast will be For the remnant of the house of Judah,⁸⁸

G 2 The agrarian pursuit: They will pasture on it.

G 3 The Jewish control of the houses: In the houses of Ashkelon⁸⁹ they will lie down at evening;

G 4 The reasons for the Jewish control of Philistia

H 1 The efforts of Yahweh, [Israel's](#) God: For the LORD their God will care for them⁹⁰

“Palestinians,” who are controlled by a militant Islamic terrorist organization, Hamas. This passage awaits [Millennial](#) fulfillment.

⁸⁷ Zeph. 2:6 - with caves for shepherds and folds for flocks: This phrase reinforces the previous one, that “the seacoast will be pastures.” This points to a largely agricultural / pastoral setting. While portions of today’s seacoast along the boundaries of ancient Philistia can be seen to be devoted to agriculture, most cannot, for it is too populated. This is particularly true around Gaza and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the farther SSW one travels, the closer he is to the Sinai Desert, a region inhospitable for grazing sheep. Once again, the main import of this prophecy awaits [Millennial](#) fulfillment.

⁸⁸ Zeph. 2:7 - the coast will be for the remnant of the house of Judah: The entire area bordering the seacoast formerly possessed by the Philistines, and now possessed half by [Israel](#), and half by the “Palestinians,” will, in the future, be entirely under the control of the [remnant](#) (the noun *sheerith*, [7611](#)) of Judah, used three times in Zephaniah (see below). This word (*sheerith*) was first used in Gen. 45:7 by Joseph, who applied it to the entire family of his father Jacob (renamed by God, “[Israel](#)”). It came to mean, a portion of the people of [Israel](#) not carried off into exile (2 Kings 19:4, 31), or to those Jewish people who returned to the land of [Israel](#) from exile (Ezra. 9:14; Hag. 1:12, 14; 2:2). Long-term, there will be a regathering of the [remnant](#) of [Israel](#) from all over the world to return to the Land of Promise (Jer. 23:3).

The [remnant](#) of the people of [Israel](#) will eventually control all Philistine territory (presently some is controlled by the “Palestinians”) (Zeph. 2:7), and as well, [Moabite](#) and [Ammonite](#) territory (presently controlled by Jordan) (Zeph. 2:9). These sons of Israel will be morally pure and inhabit their land in safety and peace (Zeph. 3:3). Once again, all three of these predictions await [Millennial](#) fulfillment. The noun *sheerith* ([7611](#)) is related to the noun *shear* ([7605](#)), which appears in Zephaniah only once, in Zeph. 1:4. There it appears in a negative context as referring to the “remnant of Baal” worshipers. Elsewhere, particularly in portions of Isaiah, *shear* appears in a positive light in referring to the [remnant](#) of [Israel](#) or Jacob (Isa. 10:20, 21, 22; 11:11, 16; 28:5).

⁸⁹ Zeph. 2:7 - Ashkelon: This prophecy of Jewish control of Ashkelon has been partially fulfilled in that the city is now an [Israeli city](#). Nevertheless, Zephaniah’s prophecy requires Israeli control of the entire region once populated by the Philistines. That has not happened, for the “Palestinians”, represented by the terrorist organization, Hamas, control the Gaza Strip. Complete fulfillment awaits the [Millennial Kingdom](#) of Jesus Christ.

⁹⁰ Zeph. 2:7 - For the LORD their God will care for them: It is Yahweh, Judah’s God, in the person of Jesus, the [Messiah](#), who will personally care for the restored [remnant](#) of [Israel](#). The verb “will care for them” is the [Qal](#) Imperfect 3MS with 3MP suffix of *paqad* ([6485](#)), a very fluid verb with a wide variety of meanings. We have already encountered this verb in Zeph. 1:8, 9,12. We will encounter it again in Zeph. 3:7. Only in Zeph. 2:7 is it used in a positive context in Zephaniah. The other four times it appears in a negative context. See the footnote on “I will punish” at Zeph. 1:8 for a more detailed explanation.

- H 2 His restoration of [Israel's](#) well-being: And restore their fortune.⁹¹
- C 2 Yahweh's destruction of [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) on the east for taunting [Israel](#) 2:8-11
- D 1 The prompting of judgment – Yahweh's hearing of the taunting of [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) against His people 2:8
- E 1 The contempt of [Moab](#): {8} "I have heard the taunting of Moab"⁹²
- E 2 The jeering of [Ammon](#): And the revilings of the sons of Ammon,⁹³

⁹¹ Zeph. 2:7 - restore their fortune: The word “restore” is *shub* ([7725](#)), used only here and in Zeph. 3:20 in the book. The word “fortune” is mildly problematic because of a textual difficulty dealing with two synonyms. The received, or “written” (*Ketiv*) word is *shebuth* ([7622](#)), with a 3rd M Pl suffix, “their captivity” or “their captives” ([BDB](#)) or “their imprisonment.” The *Qere* reading is *shebith* (also [7622](#)), with the same meaning. According to the Strong’s definition, both words mean “exile; concretely prisoners; figuratively a former state of prosperity.” The One who will restore Judah from exile and restore her former prosperity, according to Zephaniah, is Yahweh their God (Zeph. 2:7). Zephaniah will repeat this prophecy (Zeph. 3:20). Though this prophecy has been partly fulfilled in that [Israel](#) was restored as a State in May of 1948, she still does not control her own territory, nor does she dwell in safety. Furthermore, she does not believe in God, for, if she did, she would acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as her Messiah. Nevertheless, to deny that God will restore [Israel's](#) fortune, as [Replacement Theology](#) does, is to fly in the face of Biblical predictions. The [Church](#) is not spiritual [Israel](#). The [Church](#) participates in certain blessings of the [Abrahamic Covenant](#), but it does not replace [Israel](#). The believing remnant of [Israel](#) will endure as a nation into eternity. God’s next major restoration of the fortunes of [Israel](#) will take place during the [Millennium](#). The ultimate fulfillment will take place during the [Eternal State](#) in connection with [New Jerusalem](#), the eternal capital city of redeemed [Israel](#) located upon [New Earth](#) (Rev. 21:1-22:5). The [Church](#) and redeemed [Israel](#) will share [New Jerusalem](#) as their capital city. The [Church](#) will constitute [Messiah's](#) Bride; [Israel](#) will constitute the leading nation of [New Earth](#), over whom [Messiah](#) and God the Father will reign as Co-Regents (Rev. 22:1, 3).

Here is a list of Scriptures in the [MT](#) that use the same language as Zeph. 2:7; 3:20 in regard to [Israel](#). (These readings are based on the *Ketiv* reading, not the *Qere* reading.) Jer 30:3, 18; Jer 31:23; Jer 32:44; Jer 33:7, 11; Jer 33:26; Hosea 6:11; Joel 4:1; Amos 9:14; Zeph 2:7; Zeph 3:20; Psa. 85:1. See a [side-by-side listing](#) of all the uses of *shebuth* and *shebith*.

⁹² Zeph. 2:8 - I have heard of the taunting of Moab: [Moab](#) ([Moab](#), [4124](#)) was a son of Lot by his unnamed older daughter (Gen. 19:37). His descendants, the [Moabites](#), settled the land of [Moab](#). Since Lot was the nephew of Abraham, the nations of [Moab](#) and [Israel](#) were related. [Moab](#) was situated on the Eastern shore of the Dead Sea along its southern half. The [Arnon River](#) was its northern border (Num. 21:13). Originally the Amorites were the northern neighbors of [Moab](#) (Num. 21:13), but the tribe of Reuben displaced them (Num. 21:23-25). The southern border of [Moab](#) was marked by the [River Zered](#) (Num. 21:12). Edom was the country to the south of [Moab](#). [Modern-day Jordan](#) today occupies the whole eastern shore of the Dead Sea and extends farther north into what used to be the territory of [Ammon](#), as well as the tribes of [Reuben](#), [Gad](#), and [half the tribe of Manasseh](#). [Israel](#) will one day inherit the territories of both [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) (Zeph. 2:9), and thus the territory of modern Jordan.

Exactly when [Moab](#) uttered “taunting” (the noun *cherpah*, [2781](#)) against [Israel](#) is not known. But the Biblical record states that [Moab's](#) King Balak hired the prophet Balaam to curse [Israel](#) (Num. 21:1-24:25). Israel was in servitude to Eglon, king of [Moab](#), for eighteen years (Judges 3:12-14). 2 Kings 3:1-27 records a battle between Israel and [Moab](#). More often *cherpah* in the NASB is translated as “reproach” (60X) or “reproaches” (2X); as “disgrace” (5X); as “scorn” (3X); and 1X each as “contempt,” “shame,” and here, “taunting.”

⁹³ Zeph. 2:8 - the revilings of the sons of Ammon: The [sons of Ammon](#) were the descendants of Lot by his unnamed younger daughter (Gen. 19:38). Early in [Israel's](#) history, God instructed the sons of [Israel](#) to leave [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) untouched (Deut. 2:9, 18-19). This was so because they were both distantly related to Israel, and God had given these descendants of Lot their land as their possession. But later on both nations became inveterate enemies of [Israel](#). They sometimes conquered [Israel](#) as a punishment from God when the Israelis worshiped their

- E 3 Their scorn: With which they have taunted ⁹⁴ My people ⁹⁵
- E 4 Their plots to occupy Israeli land: And become arrogant against their territory. ⁹⁶
- D 2 The nature of judgment 2:9
 - E 1 Yahweh's vow of desolation against the land of [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#)
 - G 1 The One taking the vow: {9} "Therefore, as I live," declares the LORD of hosts, ⁹⁷ The God of Israel,
 - G 2 The doom of [Moab](#): "Surely Moab will be like Sodom ⁹⁸

false gods. Here God promises judgment upon the [sons of Ammon](#) for their revilings (*gidduph*, [1421](#)) against Yahweh's people.

⁹⁴ Zeph. 2:8 - taunted: The NASB footnote reads "Lit *reproached*." The word is the [Piel](#) (intensive) Perfect of the verb *charaph* ([2778](#)), "to reproach, defy, taunt." This word is the verbal equivalent of the noun "taunting" (*cherpah*, [2781](#)) earlier in this same verse with reference to [Moab](#). Again, we do not know precisely when the [sons of Ammon](#) taunted [Israel](#).

⁹⁵ Zeph. 2:8 - My people: I.e., the people of [Israel](#). Ultimately all nations who taunt [Israel](#) will experience God's judgment. The [Church](#) can never [replace Israel](#) as the special nation of God.

⁹⁶ Zeph. 2:8 - become arrogant against their territory: One specific illustration of "becoming arrogant" against [Israel](#)'s territory is given in the account of Jephthah in the book of Judges. When Jephthah asked the king of the [sons of Ammon](#) why he had come to fight against his land (Judges 11:12), the king replied that [Israel](#) had taken away his land from the Arnon River as far as the Jabbok River, bordered by the [Jordan River](#) (Judges 11:13). Jephthah correctly replied that Israel had taken away the disputed land from the Amorites, not the Ammonites. For a refutation of the claim of the king of the sons of Ammon, see the Glossary entry discussing "[the original territory of the Ammonites](#)."

Today the so-called "Palestinians" and virtually the whole rest of the world are arrogant against the territory of Israel. God will one day gather all nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat and place them on trial. Their sin? Scattering God's people Israel among the nations and carving up God's land (Joel 3:1-3). The land belongs to God and to His chosen nation, not to the Palestinians, the Arabs, the United Nations or countries like the United States or Russia, who wish to dictate what Israel may or may not do in its own, God-given land.

⁹⁷ Zeph. 2:9 - LORD of hosts: LORD is, of course, *Yahweh* ([3068](#)), the proper name of the God of Israel, meaning "the Self-Existing One." It is used 34X in 24 verses in Zephaniah. The second part of this designation for God is the word "hosts" (the plural of *tsaba*, [6635](#)). A more contemporary translation would be "armies" or "troops." It is used a remarkable 486X in the OT, but only 3X in Zephaniah. In Zeph. 1:5 it refers to the "hosts of heaven," or "armies of heaven." The reference is to the stars, which, sadly, some of the people of Judah worshiped. In Zeph. 2:9, 10, the designation "[Yahweh of Troops](#)" refers to Yahweh as being Commander-in-Chief of His armies, namely the angels of heaven. Many Christians portray God as being solely a God of love and compassion. He is that, but He is far more than that. He is also a God of war who ultimately takes vengeance on those who oppose Him or ignore Him. Islam is a corrupt reproduction of God's designation as "[Yahweh of Troops](#)".

⁹⁸ Zeph. 2:9 - Moab will be like Sodom: Not that a fiery conflagration would consume [Moab](#), but rather, that [Moab](#) would become deserted and empty, just like [Sodom](#) in the aftermath of its destruction (Gen. 19:23-29). Though many scholars believe that "[Sodom](#) was probably located in plain [sic] South of the Dead Sea, now covered with water," more likely it is to be identified with [Bab edh-Dhra](#) right on the SE edge of the [Siddim Valley](#). Bab edh-Dhra is indeed [a scene of desolation](#). The desolation to befall Moab is explained subsequently in Zeph. 2:9, "A place possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation." See the Glossary entry for [Sodom](#).

- G 3 The doom of [Ammon](#): And the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah—⁹⁹
 - H 1 Their defilement: A place possessed by nettles and salt pits,
 - H 2 Their ruin: And a perpetual desolation.
- E 2 The occupation of [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) by the remnant of [Israel](#)
 - G 1 Confiscation: The remnant¹⁰⁰ of My people will plunder them
 - G 2 Possession: And the remainder of My nation will inherit them."¹⁰¹
- D 3 The cause of judgment: the arrogance of [Moab](#) and [Ammon](#) against Yahweh's people 2:10
 - E 1 Their arrogance: {10} This they will have in return for their pride,
 - E 2 Their reproach: because they have taunted¹⁰²
 - E 3 Their belittling: and become arrogant¹⁰³ against the people of the LORD of hosts.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Zeph. 2:9 - the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah: Just as [Gomorrah](#) was judged by God and became a place of desolation, so also would God judge the land of the [sons of Ammon](#). It, too would become "A place possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation" (Zeph. 2:9). [Gomorrah](#) is likely to be identified with the site of Numeira at the SE corner of the [Dead Sea](#).

¹⁰⁰ Zeph. 2:9 - remnant: This is the word *she'erith* ([7611](#)), first used in Zeph. 2:7 (see the footnote), and again in Zeph. 3:13. The [remnant](#) of Israel will plunder the territory of [Moab](#) and the sons of [Ammon](#), presently controlled by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

¹⁰¹ Zeph. 2:9 - the remainder of My Nation will inherit them: The remainder (*yether*, [3499](#), used only here in Zephaniah) of Israel, God's chosen nation, will one day inherit the land formerly belonging to [Moab](#) and the sons of [Ammon](#), and presently the possession of modern day Jordan. This will most likely occur during Christ's [Millennial Reign](#).

¹⁰² Zeph. 2:10 - because they have taunted: "Taunted" is *charaph* ([2778](#)), used only here and in Zeph. 2:8. It means to "reproach, defy, or taunt."

¹⁰³ Zeph. 2:10 - become arrogant: literally, "become great against" (*gadal*, [1431](#)), used here and in Zeph. 2:8.

¹⁰⁴ Zeph. 2:10 - against the people of the LORD of hosts: Against Israelis, who are defended by [Yahweh of Troops](#). "Hosts" is *tsaba* ([6635](#)), used in Zeph. 1:5 in reference to the armies of heaven (i.e. the stars), and in Zeph. 2:9, 10, where it refers to the armies of angels whom Yahweh commands. See also the note at Zeph. 2:9. Virtually all the nations of the world do and will oppose [Israel](#), but [Yahweh of Troops](#) will defend them in His time (Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-19). He will even defend His people against the proponents of [Replacement Theology](#).

- D 4 The long-term result of judgment: future universal submission to Yahweh 2:11
- E 1 Yahweh's frightening of them: {11} The LORD will be terrifying to them,¹⁰⁵
- E 2 His global humiliation of false gods: for He will starve all the gods of the earth;¹⁰⁶
- E 3 The subservience of all nations: and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him,¹⁰⁷ everyone from his *own* place.
- C 3 Yahweh's destruction of Ethiopia on the south: {12} "You also, O Ethiopians, will be slain by My sword."¹⁰⁸ 2:12

¹⁰⁵ Zeph. 2:11 - The LORD will be terrifying to them: "will be terrifying" translates the [Nifal](#) Participle of *yare* ([3372](#)). The most basic meaning of *yare* is "to fear, revere, be afraid" ([BDB](#)). In this book, *yare* is used in Zeph. 2:11; 3:7, 15, 16).

In the present context, Yahweh will be a cause of fear to the people of Moab and to the sons of Ammon (Zeph. 2:8-10). However, the very next lines of Zeph. 2:11 expand this dread of Yahweh to all the extremities of the earth – all the Gentile nations! This will be especially true as the terrors of the [Tribulation](#) unfold. Only people of the world who survive the [Tribulation](#), but who also survive the [Judgment of the Gentile Nations](#) because they are believers in Jesus will remain alive to inhabit the [Millennial](#) Earth (Matt. 25:31-46). King Jesus will certainly be a cause of fear to all the world. He will rule the nations with a "rod of iron" (Psa. 2:9; Isa. 63:1-6; Zech. 14:9-19; Rev. 19:11-21).

¹⁰⁶ Zeph. 2:11 - He will starve all the gods of the earth: The scope of this judgment clearly extends far beyond the immediate area surrounding Israel/Judah – it encompasses the entire earth! This is the judgment of the yet-to-come [Tribulation](#) period. To "starve all the gods of the earth" is to send a famine to all the earth represented by pseudo gods (Rev. 6:5-8).

¹⁰⁷ Zeph. 2:11 - all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him: "Coastlands" refers to the portions of the earth's continents that border the sea. That description is meant to encompass all nations. All nations will eventually bow down and worship Yahweh from afar – from their own countries. This will take place during Christ's [Millennial Kingdom](#). Yahweh, in the person of Jesus the [Messiah](#), will be king over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). The entire earth will full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). This will be true because Jesus will conduct a [judgment of all the survivors](#) of the [Tribulation](#) period, both Jewish (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:1-30) and Gentile (Joel 3:1-3; Matt. 25:31-46). All rebels will be eliminated from the face of the earth, and only those who believe in and submit to Jesus as their [Messiah](#) will be left alive to inherit the entire [Millennial](#) earth (Matt. 5:5; 25:34, 46).

¹⁰⁸ Zeph. 2:12 - You also, O Ethiopians, will be slain by My sword: Ethiopians (plural of *kushi*, [3569](#)) were descendants of [Cush](#) (Gen. 10:6; 1 Chron. 1:8), and they resided in the upper Nile region (today's southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia). The Ethiopians were the people on the southern extremity of Israel's knowledge of the world. Under King Jesus, Yahweh will rule *all* the nations with a rod of iron, and He will slay the wicked simply by commanding their demise (Psa. 2:8-12; Isa. 11:4; Rev. 19:15, 21).

- C 4 Yahweh's destruction and humiliation of Assyria on the north 2:13-15
 - D 1 The announcement of His destruction and desolation of Assyria and Nineveh 2:13
 - E 1 Yahweh's far reach
 - G 1 The direction of His reach: {13} And He will stretch out His hand against the north ¹⁰⁹
 - G 2 The target of His reach: And destroy Assyria, ¹¹⁰
 - E 2 His desolation of Nineveh
 - G 1 Devoid of humans: And He will make Nineveh a desolation, ¹¹¹
 - G 2 Reverting to desert: Parched like the wilderness.

¹⁰⁹ Zeph. 2:13 - against the north: This is the first time in this section of Zephaniah depicting judgment against Israel's surrounding neighbors that a cardinal direction is indicated. But after indicting [Cushites](#), Ethiopians, far to Israel's south, Zephaniah turns immediately to a nation far to the north of Israel, [Assyria](#). The extreme distance of the nations mentioned to the south and north/northeast indicate that God would judge *all* nations of the world, not merely those in the proximity of Israel. This will take place, in part, during the [Tribulation](#) period, but especially at the [Second Coming](#) of the [Messiah](#) for the purpose of [Retribution](#). God's judgment will be complete when all the people from all the nations of the world who survive the [Tribulation](#) will be summoned to be judged by Jesus, the [Messiah](#) / Judge. [Post-Tribulation judgment](#) is hinted at in Joel 3:1-3, and fleshed out in Matt. 25:31-46. The standard of judgment in both passages is the Gentiles' treatment of Jewish people, and in the Matthew passage, Messianic Jewish people.

¹¹⁰ Zeph. 2:13 - Assyria: The Hebrew proper name *Ashshur* ([804](#)), used 151X in the OT. It most often refers to the land (Gen. 2:14) or the people (2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 19:23) or the nation (2 Kings 15:20) of [Assyria](#). Rarely, it refers to the second son of Shem, son of Noah (Gen. 10:22). Ashshur appears to be the [primitive capital city](#) of the nation that came to be known as [Assyria](#) (its Greek name). It was situated on the west bank of the Tigris River. Calah and Nineveh, founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-12), became major cities of the Assyrian Empires. Nineveh is most noted in the account of the prophet Jonah (Jonah 1:2). Assyria initially constituted a [portion](#) of what is now modern day Iraq, but always in distinction from [Babylon](#). [At its zenith](#), however, between 824 BC and 671 BC it conquered all of modern-day Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, and portions of modern-day Palestine, Turkey, Iran, Arabia, and even Egypt, dwarfing the confines of modern day Iraq. Here in Zeph. 2:13, Zephaniah predicted that Yahweh would destroy [Assyria](#).

¹¹¹ Zeph. 2:13 - He will make Nineveh a desolation: Zephaniah predicted the fall of Nineveh, the greatest city of the [Assyrian](#) Empire. The Book of Jonah (Jonah 1:1-4:11) records the repentance and sparing of Nineveh. The prophet Nahum (Nah. 1:1-3:19) predicts its demise. See "[When and how was Nineveh destroyed?](#)" and the "[Fall of Nineveh Chronicle](#)." See also a restoration of the exterior entrance of the [Adad gate of Nineveh](#).

The word "devastation" is *shemamah* ([8077](#)), used in Zeph. 1:13; 2:4, 9, 13. In the NASB it is almost always translated as some form of the adjective "desolate" or the noun "desolation." [BDB](#) identifies it as "devastation, waste, desolation."

D 2 The description of desolation 2:14

E 1 The list of animals that will inhabit her

G 1 {14} Flocks ¹¹² will lie down in her midst,G 2 All beasts which range in herds; ¹¹³G 3 Both the pelican ¹¹⁴ and the hedgehog ¹¹⁵ Will lodge in the tops of her pillars; ¹¹⁶G 4 Birds will sing in the window, ¹¹⁷

¹¹² Zeph. 2:14 - Flocks: Though the plural of *eder* ([5739](#)) is almost always translated “flocks,” here, the next line nullifies the idea that these are domesticated animals. No humans are present to tend flocks, so this must refer to groups of wild animals. (See the next footnote.)

¹¹³ Zeph. 2:14 - All beasts which range in herds: NASB footnote – “Or *All* kinds of *beasts in crowds*; Lit *Every* kind of *beast of a nation*”. These were not domesticated flocks and herds. In fact, this line of the verse does not even refer to herds at all – that comes from the preceding line. The word here translated in the plural – “herds” – is actually the singular of *goy* ([1471](#)), the standard noun, the plural of which (*goyim*) designates “peoples,” “nations,” “Gentiles.” So the emphasis in this line is not on the “herd” mentality of animals, but rather on their diversity. Every kind of animal indigenous to a particular *nation* (in this case [Assyria](#)) will inhabit Nineveh. This line is most likely in apposition to the first line. So this line nullifies the idea that the animals in the preceding line were domesticated flocks and herds. The preceding line, in this context, more aptly would refer to a pride of lions than to a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle. The point of both lines together is that Nineveh will be abandoned to groups of wild animals. There will be no humans present to tend a flock of sheep or goats. Nineveh will be abandoned.

¹¹⁴ Zeph. 2:14 - pelican: The noun *qaath* ([6893](#)), is, according to [BDB](#), “a ceremonially unclean bird (1) perhaps pelican or cormorant (2) perhaps an extinct bird, exact meaning unknown.” Some of the more interesting options are “vulture” ([RSVCE](#)); “owl” (ESV); “desert owl” (NIV). NASB translates all 5 occurrences of *qaath* as “pelican.” When translations are that diverse, one concludes that no single translation has guaranteed certainty. Translators are using an educated guess.

¹¹⁵ Zeph. 2:14 - hedgehog: The noun *qippod* ([7090](#)) is translated in all 3 occurrences in the NASB as “hedgehog.” In America, it is more commonly known as the porcupine.

¹¹⁶ Zeph. 2:14 - in the tops of her pillars: These six English words translate the one Heb. word, *bekaphtoreyha*, “in her capitals.” (It should here be noted that the NASB footnote here reads, “Lit *her capitals*.” The base word, minus prefix (“in”) and suffix (“her”), is the plural of *kaphtor* ([3730](#)), which probably means “capitals.” The phrase “tops of her pillars” is meant to define the single word “capitals.” A capital is an ornamental load-bearing architectural device used to distribute weight in ancient buildings. We most often think of a capital as being at the top of a pillar abutting the ceiling, but capitals were also used at the base of a pillar to distribute the weight of the load more widely on the floor of the building. The phrase describes a building in Nineveh in which the ceiling will have fallen into such disrepair that only the pillar, adorned with a capital, is left standing. The pelican would find this an appropriate place to roost. But the entire pillar might have fallen also, leaving only the base capital on the floor. Alternatively, the capital might have fallen onto the ground. In either case, this would be a place on which a porcupine might climb. (See the photos illustrating [capitals and pillars](#) in various stages of disrepair.)

¹¹⁷ Zeph. 2:14 - Birds will sing in the window: NASB footnote: “Lit *A voice*” – the word is *qol* ([6963](#)). The translation is imaginative, but probably conveys what Zephaniah meant. At least the editors had the courtesy to let us know they were being creative. The idea is that the homes or buildings of Nineveh will be abandoned, and birds will sing in the windows unimpeded by any human interference.

- E 2 The abandoned homes and buildings
- G 1 Desolation *will be* on the threshold; ¹¹⁸
- G 2 For He has laid bare the cedar work. ¹¹⁹
- D 3 The desolate humiliation of the once proud, self-secure Nineveh 2:15
- E 1 {15} This is the exultant city Which dwells securely, ¹²⁰
- E 2 Who says in her heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me." ¹²¹
- E 3 How she has become a desolation, ¹²²
- E 4 A resting place for beasts! ¹²³
- E 5 Everyone who passes by her will hiss
- E 6 *And* wave his hand *in contempt*. ¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ Zeph. 2:14 - Desolation ... on the threshold: "Desolation" is *choreb* ([2721](#)), used only 16X in the OT. In the NASB it is translated *heat* - 4X; *dry* - 3X; *drought* - 2X; and 1X each for the following: *fever, ruined, ruin, utter waste, desolation*. The ruinous, dry heat that will afflict the thresholds (*saph*, [5592](#)) of Nineveh speaks of abandoned homes and buildings with roofs caving in and exposing the thresholds to the drying heat of the desert sun.

¹¹⁹ Zeph. 2:14 - laid bare the cedar work: "Cedar work" (*arzah*, [731](#)) is used only here in the entire OT. It speaks of interior cedar paneling in Nineveh that will be exposed ("laid bare" - *arah*, [6168](#)) to the desert sun, and eventually ruined. Note the [assonance](#) of the initial vowel sounds.

¹²⁰ Zeph. 2:15 - dwells securely: Ninevites thought that their city, the greatest city of that part of the world, was immune from invasion and defeat. [Assyrians](#) were a deadly and disciplined military force that had conquered and controlled vast stretches of Middle Eastern geography. Zeph. 2:15 closely parallels Isa. 47:8, which is part of a lament for [Babylon](#). It is possible that Zephaniah loosely copied this verse from Isaiah's prophecy, but applied it to Nineveh instead of [Babylon](#).

¹²¹ Zeph. 2:15 - no one besides me: Ninevites were proud of their city. They believed they could never be conquered. Again, this verse closely parallels the description of [Babylon](#) in Isa. 47:8.

¹²² Zeph. 2:15 - desolation: The noun *shammah* ([8047](#)) means here, an object of horror. In the future, those who passed by would exclaim over the utter ruin of what was once a great city.

¹²³ Zeph. 2:15 - beasts: Nineveh will be abandoned and will become the home of wild animals (*chayyah* - [2421](#), "living creatures"), a point the prophet has just made in Zeph. 2:14.

¹²⁴ Zeph. 2:15 - hiss ... wave his hand: An exclamation and gesture appropriate in that culture for expressing shock and disbelief, and perhaps even derision (see also Mic. 6:16; Jer. 19:8).

B 4 Woe upon Jerusalem 3:1-7

- C 1 The statement of woe upon the rebellious city 3:1
 - D 1 {1} Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled,
 - D 2 The tyrannical city! ¹²⁵
- C 2 Her failure to trust in and obey Yahweh 3:2
 - D 1 {2} She heeded no voice,
 - D 2 She accepted no instruction. ¹²⁶
 - D 3 She did not trust in the LORD,
 - D 4 She did not draw near to her God.
- C 3 The bankruptcy of her civil and spiritual leaders 3:3-4
 - D 1 Her self-serving princes: {3} Her princes ¹²⁷ within her are roaring lions, 3:3a
 - D 2 Her devouring, unjust judges 3:3b
 - E 1 Her judges ¹²⁸ are wolves at evening;
 - E 2 They leave nothing for the morning.

¹²⁵ Zeph. 3:1 - the tyrannical city: Based on this city's description as failing to trust in Yahweh, her God (Zeph. 3:2), the city must be Jerusalem.

¹²⁶ Zeph. 3:2 - She heeded no voice, She accepted no instruction: Throughout the history of Israel/Judah, the nation was tone-deaf to Yahweh.

¹²⁷ Zeph. 3:3 - princes: The word is the plural of *sar* ([8269](#)), an all-purpose word for leader, in this case, leaders of the country. These would be officials subordinate to the king. They could include the king's sons (see Zeph. 1:8, the only other usage in Zephaniah).

¹²⁸ Zeph. 3:3 - judges: Plural Participle of *shaphat* ([8199](#)), "the ones judging," used only here in Zephaniah. The word is typically translated as some form of the verb "judge" in the NASB. Unfortunately, Israel's judges were anything but just and righteous.

- D 3 Her treacherous prophets: {4} Her prophets ¹²⁹ are reckless, treacherous men; 3:4a
- D 4 Her profane, Law-breaking priests 3:4b
- E 1 Her priests ¹³⁰ have profaned the sanctuary.
- E 2 They have done violence to the law.
- C 4 The righteousness and justice of Yahweh contrasted with the shameful injustice of Judah 3:5
- D 1 The righteousness and justice of Yahweh
- E 1 His righteousness: {5} The LORD is righteous within her;¹³¹
- E 2 His abstention from perversity: He will do no injustice. ¹³²
- E 3 His unceasing justice: Every morning ¹³³ He brings His justice to light; ¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Zeph. 3:3 - prophets: Plural of *nabiy* (5030). The designation of a true spokesman of God. [Prophets](#) heard messages from God and passed them on to people. Thus, Abraham was a [prophet](#) (Gen. 20:7), as was Samuel (1 Sam. 3:20), Gad (1 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:11), Nathan (2 Sam. 7:2; 12:25), Elijah (1 Kings 18:36; 4:5), Elisha (1 Kings 19:16; 2 Kings 9:1); Jonah (2 Kings 14:25); Isaiah (2 Kings 19:2; 2 Kings 2:1, 11, 14; Isa. 37:2; 38:1; 39:3), Jeremiah (2 Chron. 36:12; Jer. 1:5), Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:5; 13:2), Habakkuk (Hab. 1:1; 3:1), Haggai (Hag. 1:1, 3, 12; 2:1, 10), Zechariah (Zech. 1:1, 7), to mention but a few. God typically spoke to [prophets](#) by means of a dream or vision (Num. 12:6). But He spoke with Moses face to face (Num. 12:7-8). Of course there were a great many who were either false prophets, or perhaps those who had at one point been a true prophet, but were now uttering words not from God, but from their own initiative. Israel was warned not to follow those prophets (Deut. 13:1, 3, 5; 18:20-22).

¹³⁰ Zeph. 3:4 - priests: The plural of *kohen* (3548). The priests have defiled the sanctuary and violated the Law possibly by failure to distinguish between the holy and the profane – not recognizing that which is clean and unclean, and by not keeping the Sabbath (Ezek. 22:26).

¹³¹ Zeph. 3:5 - The LORD is righteous within her: Unlike the leaders of Jerusalem, Yahweh remained righteous within the capital city of Israel / Judah. “Righteous” is the adjective *tsaddiq* (6662), overwhelmingly translated in the NASB as “righteous.”

¹³² Zeph. 3:5 - He will do no injustice: “Injustice” is the noun *avlah* (5767), which is, according to [BDB](#), “injustice, unrighteousness, wrong.” Elsewhere in this book, the word is used in Zeph. 3:13.

¹³³ Zeph. 3:5 - Every morning: Literally, “In morning in morning”... or, as we would say, “Morning by morning” or “Morning after morning”

¹³⁴ Zeph. 3:5 - Every morning He brings His justice to light: This verse, along with Lam. 3:23, reminds one of the chorus of the great old hymn, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” – “Morning by morning, new mercies I see.” “Justice” is the noun *mishpat* (4941). In the NASB it is most often translated “justice” (118X); “ordinance(s)” (108X); “judgment(s)” (102X); and a host of other, less-frequent terms. “...To light” is the common noun *or* (216) with a prefixed *lamedh* (letter l) translated “to,” thus, “to light.” Light, which displaces darkness, is characteristic of God’s nature, first occurring on the first day of creation in Gen. 1:3-5. See also 1 John 1:5.

- E 4 His perfection: He does not fail. ¹³⁵
- D 2 The shamelessness of the unjust: But the unjust knows no shame. ¹³⁶
- C 5 Yahweh's reflection on His desolation of nations and their cities 3:6
 - D 1 His decisive action against nations: {6} "I have cut off nations; ¹³⁷
 - D 2 The plight of their fortifications: Their corner towers are in ruins. ¹³⁸
 - D 3 The desolation of their streets
 - E 1 Desolation: I have made their streets desolate, ¹³⁹
 - E 2 Devoid of people: With no one passing by;

¹³⁵ Zeph. 3:5 - He does not fail: Once again, these words, along with Lam. 3:22, remind us of the following words of the first verse of the hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" – "Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not; As Thou has been, Thou forever wilt be." "Fail" is the [Niphal](#) perfect tense of *adar* ([5737](#)), used of a flock of sheep – here with the preceding negative "not" (*lo*) – with Yahweh there is "nothing lacking" or "nothing missing" in His character or in His dealings with man.

¹³⁶ Zeph. 3:5 - But the unjust knows no shame: "Shame" is *bôsheth* ([1322](#)), used only here and in Zeph. 3:19 in this book. Yahweh is perfect in His righteousness, justice, and compassion. But Jerusalem's leaders have no shame in exhibiting the opposite traits. It should have been no surprise that the nation of Judah was headed for the judgment and shame of the seventy-year Babylonian Captivity, beginning in 605 B.C.

¹³⁷ Zeph. 3:6 - I have cut off nations: In Zeph. 3:6 God details for Jerusalem's benefit the list of judgments He has already performed on various nations. (1) He has cut them off; (2) He has left their defensive corner towers in ruins; (3) Their streets are empty, with no bypassers; (4) Their cities have been ruined, devoid of residents. If God has done this to the nations around Jerusalem, the people of Judah and Jerusalem had better repent. How do they expect that God will not judge them, for God holds them to a higher standard than He does the pagan nations!

"Cut off" is the Hiphil perfect of *karath* ([3772](#)), a Hebrew verb often used in connection with killing (cutting) an animal in conjunction with ratifying a covenant. Here it probably means inflicting debilitating or even fatal damage upon nations. "Nations" is the plural (*goyim*) of the noun *goy* ([1471](#)) – almost always translated "nation(s)" in the NASB. The term refers to Gentile nations in distinction to the chosen nation of Israel.

¹³⁸ Zeph. 3:7 - Their corner towers are in ruins: "Corner towers" – the plural of the noun *pinnah* ([6438](#)) – refers to defensive fortifications on the corners of city walls. "Are in ruins" is the [Niphal](#) perfect of *shamem* ([8074](#)) which means to cause desolation that is appalling.

¹³⁹ Zeph. 3:6 - I have made their streets desolate: "Made desolate" is the [Hifil](#) perfect of *chareb* ([2717](#)). It is used of God's drying up of rivers, which are then empty of water (2 Kings 19:24). "Dried up" streets are devoid of travelers, and are thus desolate, as the next line states – "With no one passing by."

- D 4 The ruin of their cities
 - E 1 Ruined: Their cities are laid waste,
 - E 2 Devoid of residents
 - G 1 Without a man,
 - G 2 without an inhabitant.
- C 6 His amazement that Jerusalem would not learn a lesson, but pursued her own destruction through corruption 3:7
 - D 1 Yahweh's hope
 - E 1 {7} "I said, 'Surely you will revere Me,'¹⁴⁰
 - E 2 Accept instruction.'¹⁴¹
 - D 2 Yahweh's anticipated diversion of judgment
 - E 1 So her dwelling will not be cut off¹⁴²
 - E 2 *According to* all that I have appointed concerning her.¹⁴³
 - D 3 Yahweh's utter disappointment: But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds.¹⁴⁴

B 5 Yahweh's Angry Devouring of [Israel](#) and All Nations 3:8

¹⁴⁰ Zeph. 3:7 - Surely you will revere Me: Yahweh hoped that the nation of Israel would certainly respond to His judgment on the surrounding nations. Surely Israel would honor Him, though the other nations had not. "Revere" is the [Qal](#) Imperfect of the common verb *yârê'* (3372), commonly meaning "to fear" or "be afraid of", with overtones of according one's superiors, such as parents or God, reverence and honor (see [BDB](#)).

¹⁴¹ Zeph. 3:7 - Accept instruction: Yahweh urges Jerusalem and the Nation of Judah to accept instruction, *mûsâr* (4148), often translated "discipline" or even "reproof". The capital city of Assyria, Nineveh, had accepted the warning of Yahweh through the prophet Jonah. They had escaped Yahweh's promised judgment. Now, Yahweh hoped, perhaps the capital city of Israel would repent of her evil and escape the promised judgment. There was still a window of time. Would they repent?

¹⁴² Zeph. 3:7 - So her dwelling will not be cut off: If Jerusalem and Judah were to repent, the punishment from the invading Babylonian army would be forestalled. Jerusalem would not be overthrown and her people would not be carried into exile.

¹⁴³ Zeph. 3:7 - *According to* all that I have appointed concerning her: Throughout the prophecy, God through Zephaniah had predicted terrible judgment upon Jerusalem and Judah. But if the nation were to repent, God would withdraw all the punishment He had promised. God is not slow, but rather patient. He withholds promised judgment in hopes that His goodness will lead the nation to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

¹⁴⁴ Zeph. 3:7 - But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds: Far from learning a lesson from God's judgment of surrounding nations, the city of Jerusalem, representing the nation of Judah, plunged headlong into sin and vice. God's judgment would inevitably descend upon them with a vengeance. This it did in 606, 597, and 586 B.C.

- C 1 Yahweh's declaration of coming judgment
 - D 1 {8} "Therefore wait for Me," declares the LORD,
 - D 2 "For the day when I rise up as a witness."¹⁴⁵
- C 2 Yahweh's fateful decision to assemble peoples
 - D 1 Nations: Indeed, My decision is to gather nations,¹⁴⁶
 - D 2 Kingdoms: To assemble kingdoms,¹⁴⁷
- C 3 To pour out His wrath upon them
 - D 1 His indignation: To pour out on them My indignation,¹⁴⁸
 - D 2 His anger: All My burning anger;

¹⁴⁵ Zeph. 3:8 - For the day when I rise up as a witness: This is the horrific [Day of the LORD](#) – the time when God pours out His fierce wrath and judgment not only upon Israel (Jer. 30:5-7; Dan. 12:1; Zech. 14:1-2), but upon all the nations of the world (Isa. 13:6-13; 24:1-6, 19-22; Jer. 25:31-33; Ezek. 30:3; Obad. 1:15-16; Zeph. 1:2-3, 14-18; 3:8; Matt. 24:21-22, 29; Rev. 3:10; 6:16-17; 14:19; 15:1, 7; 16:1-21; 19:11-15).

¹⁴⁶ Zeph. 3:8 - to gather nations: Yahweh will target the nations of the earth with His great wrath. This is not a localized day of judgment merely upon Judah. This is a world-wide judgment. See the preceding footnote.

¹⁴⁷ Zeph. 3:8 - To assemble kingdoms: Not only nations, but territories, or groups of nations – kingdoms – ruled over by an emperor or other powerful monarch, will be targeted for Yahweh's vengeance and wrath. See the footnote at Zeph. 3:8 - "For the day when I rise up as a witness."

¹⁴⁸ Zeph. 3:8 - indignation ... anger: Yahweh Himself resolves to judge a rebellious earth with great indignation (*za'am*, [2195](#)), translated 21X in the NASB as "indignation" and 1X as "insolence" (Hos. 7:16). This is its only use in Zephaniah. Anger is *'aph* ([639](#)), which literally means "nostril," but is used extensively to indicate anger. (When someone is angry, his nostrils are distended and he breathes angrily through them.) *'Aph* is used 4X in Zephaniah – twice in Zeph. 2:2, and once each in Zeph. 2:3 and 3:8. During the [Great Tribulation](#), also known as "[The Day of the LORD](#)," God will pour out His wrath upon a rebellious earth. Today, the [Church Age](#), is the day of grace and the patience and forbearance of a God who wishes all to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). But His day of indignation and anger against an evil world is drawing ever closer.

C 4 The fiery result

D 1 For all the earth will be devoured ¹⁴⁹D 2 By the fire of My zeal. ¹⁵⁰

A 2 YAHWEH'S JOYFUL MILLENNIAL REIGN OVER PURIFIED NATIONS 3:9-20

B 1 The Nations' (Gentiles') Predicted Worship and Service of Yahweh 3:9

C 1 Yahweh's gift of pure lips: {9} "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, ¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Zeph. 3:8 - For all the earth will be devoured by the fire of my zeal: "Earth" is *erets* (776). The noun can be translated either "land" or "earth." Since the qualifier "all" (*kōl*, 3605) is used, and since Yahweh has determined to assemble "nations" and "kingdoms," *erets* should here be translated "earth."

"Devoured" is *akal* (398). Literally it refers to the eating of food (Gen. 2:16). Metaphorically, in this context it refers to the fire of Yahweh's zeal devouring the earth. In Zeph. 1:18, its only other usage in this book, *akal* was also associated with the fire of Yahweh's zeal (there, "jealousy") as devouring the whole earth. This anticipates the global destruction occurring in the [Tribulation](#) period. The ultimate fulfillment of fire devouring the entire earth anticipates God's future [destruction of the entire universe](#), including the earth (2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12). Before [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#) can be created (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), the entire universe, corrupted by man's sin eventuating in decay and death, and all the vestiges of the corrupted universe must be [purged by fire](#). This includes the [fiery, perpetual purging of evil people](#) (Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:15).

¹⁵⁰ Zeph. 3:8 - zeal: *qinah* (7068), used in connection with fire as well as the devouring of the entire earth, both times in Zeph. 1:18; 3:8. Zeal, used of both God and man, denotes a heightened, almost overpowering emotional state in which the zealous person is so intense, he is bound to pursue and complete his objective. Notice the Psalmist's zeal for God's house (Psa. 69:9). Notice that God's zeal will establish His Messianic King in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:7). Yahweh's zeal will secure a [remnant](#) out of Zion / Jerusalem (Isa.37:22). But before that, the fire of Yahweh's zeal will devour the entire earth (Zeph. 1:18; 3:8). This will take place during the [Tribulation](#) period. In Zeph. 1:18, *qinah* is translated "jealousy."

¹⁵¹ Zeph. 3:9 - For then I will give to the peoples purified lips: Thus begins one of the most sublime [Millennial](#) prophecies in all the OT. A number of different themes appear in this section (Zeph. 3:9-20) – (1) Gentiles will worship Yahweh in unity and collaboration (Zeph. 3:9). (2) Believing Jewish exiles from all over the globe will return to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh with great joy and freedom (Zeph. 3:10-11a, 18). (3) Yahweh will purge out from the midst of Israel all the arrogant, non-believing Jewish rebels (Zeph. 3:11b) (see also Ezek. 20:33-38). (4) Yahweh will leave in Israel a humble, submissive [remnant](#) who take refuge in His name (Zeph. 3:12). (5) This [Millennial remnant](#) of Israel will be morally and spiritually pure (Zeph. 3:13a). (6) This believing Jewish [remnant](#) will dwell securely in the land of Israel with no fear of attack from enemies (unlike her present danger) (Zeph. 3:13b). (7) The believing [remnant](#) of Israel will experience great joy (Zeph. 3:14). This joy stems from two conditions – (a) Yahweh, the King of Israel (in the person of Jesus Christ) will be dwelling among His people (Zeph. 3:15b, 17); (b) Israel need no longer fear attacks from her enemies (Zeph. 3:15:c-17a). (8) King Jesus will be a warrior who will pour out [retribution](#) on Israel's enemies (Zeph. 3:15b, 17a, 19a). (9) Yahweh, in the person of Jesus, will turn the humble exiles who have returned to Israel (characterized as "lame" and "outcast") into praise and renown throughout the entire earth (Zeph. 3:19b-20)! (10) Thus Yahweh will restore the fortunes of Israel (Zeph. 3:20)!

"Peoples" is the plural of *'am* (5971). It is used in Zeph. 1:11 in reference to the "people of Canaan"; in Zeph. 2:8, 9 in reference to "My people"; in Zeph. 2:10 in reference to "the people of the LORD of hosts"; in Zeph. 3:12 in reference to "a humble and lowly people" – i.e. the purified remnant submissive to Yahweh and His King, Jesus. In Zeph. 3:9 the reference to "the peoples" is a reference to the nations (plural) of the earth. That this is true is confirmed in Zeph. 3:20, where Yahweh predicts he will give Israel "praise and renown" among "all the peoples of the earth."

[The time](#) when God gives the peoples of the earth "purified lips" will be the [Millennial Kingdom](#). All rebel Gentiles will have been sorted out and eliminated from the earth (Matt. 25:31-46). Only righteous Gentiles will be

C 2 Their genuine worship of Him: That all of them may call on the name of the LORD,¹⁵²

C 3 Their unified service: To serve Him shoulder to shoulder.¹⁵³

B 2 Israel's Predicted Return to Worship and Serve Yahweh in the land of Israel 3:10-20

C 1 The return of expatriate Israelis to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem 3:10

D 1 Their location: {10} "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia¹⁵⁴

D 2 Their description

E 1 My worshipers,¹⁵⁵

E 2 My dispersed ones,¹⁵⁶

D 3 Their sacrifice: Will bring My offerings.¹⁵⁷

left alive to participate in the glories of Christ's [Millennial Kingdom](#). In an even more remote eschatological time, only Gentiles with purified lips will live upon [New Earth](#) throughout the [Eternal State](#) (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15). "The nations" will live upon [New Earth](#) and walk (live) in the light of the glorious [New Jerusalem](#) (Rev. 21:24). They will bring the "honor and glory" of the nations into the city at any time of day (Rev. 21:26), for there will be no night there, and its gates will always be open (Rev. 21:25).

¹⁵² Zeph. 3:9 - That all of them may call on the name of the LORD: When all the peoples have purified lips [at the beginning](#) of the [Millennium](#), they will all call upon the name of LORD (Yahweh)! Let us remember that the name of the King of Israel from then onward is Jesus. His name means, "Yahweh is Salvation"!

¹⁵³ Zeph. 3:9 - To serve Him shoulder to shoulder: Literally, "so that [they] will serve Him [with] one shoulder" (NetBible note 34 on [Zeph. 3:9](#)). This signifies a unity of spirit, purpose, and effort.

¹⁵⁴ Zeph. 3:10 - From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: Ethiopia is [Cush](#). The rivers of Ethiopia are the upper Nile River and its tributaries. [Cush](#) was the most distant land to the south of Israel known to Israelis of Zephaniah's day. The location described here is "beyond" that known place. After predicting judgment upon the people of [Cush](#) (*kushiy*, [3569](#)) (Zeph. 2:12) Yahweh predicts Israeli expatriates who have been dispersed beyond the upper tributaries of the Nile, who are believers in Jesus, and who have survived the deadly [Tribulation](#) period, will return to Israel to worship Him.

¹⁵⁵ Zeph. 3:10 - My worshipers: From discussing "the peoples" (Gentiles) of the earth, Yahweh turns to discussing the future state of His own people – "My worshipers" – the redeemed people of Israel.

¹⁵⁶ Zeph. 3:10 - My dispersed ones: Specifically, Yahweh has in mind Israelis of the [Diaspora](#) from all over the world. He has used Ethiopia ([Cush](#), [3568](#)) as a distant point of reference to symbolize all dispersed, believing Jews at the end of the [Tribulation](#) being recalled to their homeland.

¹⁵⁷ Zeph. 3:10 - will bring My offerings: Dispersed Israelis who believe in Jesus as their King will return to Jerusalem at the close of the [Tribulation](#) and the start of the [Millennium](#) from all over the world to bring their offerings to Yahweh. The fulfillment of this prophecy presupposes a [rebuilt Israeli Temple](#) with an operational sacrificial system in force during the [Millennial reign](#) of King Jesus. That is exactly the situation as revealed to and foretold by the prophets Ezekiel (Ezekiel 40-47:12), Joel (Joel 3:18), and Isaiah (Isa. 2:2-3; 27:13; 66:20). These prophecies must be fulfilled during the [Millennium](#), not the Eternal State. In [New Jerusalem](#) it is distinctly revealed that there will be no Temple (Rev. 21:22). It is the fault of [non-literalists](#) (e.g. [Amillennialists](#) and Covenant

C 2 Yahweh's removal of proud Israeli rebels 3:11

D 1 Yahweh's removal of Israel's shame caused by her rebellion

E 1 The absence of shame: {11} "In that day you will feel no shame¹⁵⁸

E 2 The cause for shame

G 1 Their deeds: Because of all your deeds

G 2 Their rebellion: By which you have rebelled against Me;¹⁵⁹

D 2 Yahweh's removal of arrogant Israelis

E 1 His purging: For then I will remove from your midst¹⁶⁰

Theologians) that they ignore or gloss over the details of Biblical prophecies. They assume, for example, that [Ezekiel's Temple](#), which they view as [nonliteral](#), is fulfilled in the city of [New Jerusalem](#), which they also view as [nonliteral](#). The complex details of these prophecies simply do not support their metaphorical conclusions. If the reader objects that there cannot be any animals sacrifices after Christ offered his once-for-all sacrifice, I would offer the same line of reasoning that some of us Protestants offer to Catholics, who insist that with every mass Jesus body and blood is being offered up. Both the Lord's Table and the Animal Sacrifices of the Millennial Kingdom are memorial, not efficacious.

¹⁵⁸ Zeph. 3:11 - In that day you will feel no shame: "That day" refers to the time when Yahweh regathers a repentant Jewish [remnant](#) from all over the globe to return to the land of [Israel](#). "That day" will be at the close of the [Tribulation](#) and the beginning of the [Millennium](#). It will be after the repentant [remnant](#) have gone through a time of national crisis and extreme sorrow – a national mourning for having executed their own [Messiah](#). That national purging and time of remorse is described in Zechariah 12:10-13:1. "That day" will also occur after King Jesus will have weeded out all the Israeli rebels at some position outside the land of [Israel](#) (Ezek. 20:33-38).

¹⁵⁹ Zeph. 3:11 - all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me: Most of [Israel](#)'s history has been one of rebellion against Yahweh. The first generation of the Exodus deliverance rebelled against God at Kadesh-Barnea by disbelieving that God could empower them to conquer their opponents in the promised land of Canaan (Num. 13:1-14:45). As punishment the entire older generation of Israelis save Joshua and Caleb perished during forty years of wilderness wanderings. Subsequently, the book of Judges details a series of cycles of apostasy, subjugation by enemies, repentance, and restoration. The Northern Kingdom began in idolatry at Dan and Bethel. The Northern Kingdom was carried off into captivity in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians. But the Southern Kingdom endured mostly evil kings also. They were carried into exile in 605, 597, and 586 B.C. The Babylonian exile seemed to stop the idolatry, but it didn't stop the rebellion. Judah's post-exile history was marred by enemy domination due to frequent lapses in keeping the Law. The greatest act of rebellion ever – not yet committed in Zephaniah's day – was Israel's execution of her own Messianic King, Jesus. As a consequence, just as the prophet Daniel (Dan. 9:26) and Jesus (Matt. 24:1-2) Himself predicted, the nation's temple and the capital city of Jerusalem were obliterated by the Romans in A.D. 70. For nearly 2000 years, there was no nation of [Israel](#). Finally, on May 14, 1948, [Israel](#) declared its independence and miraculously escaped annihilation during the ensuing war. But even today, the boots of foreigners trample Jerusalem underfoot. [Israel](#)'s history of rebellion awaits the national remorse predicted by Zechariah (Zech. 12:10-13:1). Following that national confession and the elimination of all rebels (Ezek. 20:33-38), the returning Jewish [remnant](#) will experience great joy as they return to the land of [Israel](#) (Ezek. 36:22-38).

¹⁶⁰ Zeph. 3:11 - For then I will remove from your midst your proud, exulting ones: There has always been a relatively small [remnant](#) within Israel that have remained true to Yahweh. But the bulk of Israelis throughout history, sadly, have not had a heart to follow God. They have had proud, rebellious hearts and have been stiff-necked in their opposition to God and His will. That was true in the days of Zephaniah; it was true in the days of Jesus' ministry in [Israel](#), and it remains true to this very day. Only a small number of Israelis today acknowledge Jesus as their

- E 2 The target of His purge: Your proud, exulting ones,
- D 3 The humble result
 - E 1 The absence of self-exaltation: And you will never again be haughty
 - E 2 The place of worship: On My holy mountain. ¹⁶¹
- C 3 Yahweh's humble remnant 3:12
 - D 1 The reality of a remnant: {12} "But I will leave among you
 - D 2 The character of the remnant: A humble and lowly people, ¹⁶²

[Messiah](#). To the great bulk of Jewish people, Jesus is an imposter and a blasphemer, or simply irrelevant.

The day will come when Yahweh will remove the proud, exulting Israelis from the face of the earth. He, in the person of His returning King, Jesus (Ezek. 20:33), will bring Israelis from all over the world with a mighty hand and with an outpouring of wrath (Ezek. 20:34). He will bring them into a deserted area inhabited by the nations of the world outside the land of [Israel](#). There He will enter into judgment with them "face to face" (Ezek. 20:35-36). (There is, by the way, plenty of wilderness in the Sinai peninsula or in Saudi Arabia for this to take place.) He will make them pass under the rod and bring them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20:37). He will purge out from among them all the rebels, those who transgress against Him. He will bring them out of the lands in which they have been exiled, but these rebels will not be permitted to enter the land of [Israel](#) and live peacefully in the [Messiah's Millennial Kingdom](#). Then they will know that Jesus is Yahweh (Ezek. 20:38). After this time the obedient [remnant](#), the Messianic Jews will listen to Jesus, and they will no longer profane His holy name (Ezek. 20:39). On the Temple Mount the whole surviving [remnant](#) of [Israel](#) who were permitted to enter the land, will serve Yahweh and His exalted King, Jesus in the land of [Israel](#), bringing their gifts and offerings (Ezek. 20:40). God and Jesus will accept them and they will know that Jesus is Yahweh come in the flesh (Ezek. 20:41-42). They will remember the ways in which they, as a nation, have been unfaithful to Yahweh, and they will loathe themselves for the evil they have committed against Him (Ezek. 20:43). They will acknowledge that Jesus is King over them, and that He, as Yahweh, has mercifully not dealt with them as they have deserved (Ezek. 20:44). This time of great repentance and mourning is also foretold in Zechariah 12:10-13:1. The terms under which God will act favorably toward the surviving [remnant](#) are those of the [New Covenant](#) (Jer. 31:31-37). See also Ezek. 36:22-38.

¹⁶¹ Zeph. 3:11 - you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain: The purified remnant of [Israel](#) will never again come and worship *in haughtiness* in the [Millennial Temple](#) on the Temple Mount. Yahweh will have completely implemented his [New Covenant](#) with Israel (Jer. 31:31-32). He will place His law within them and write it upon their hearts (Jer. 31:33). He will be their God and they will be His people (Jer. 31:33). This transformation will be so complete that Jewish people will no longer need to urge one another, "Know Yahweh," for all will know Him, from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:34). Yahweh will remember their sins and past transgressions no more (Jer. 31:34). In spite of the contention of [Amillennialists](#) and even many [Historical Premillennialists](#), [Israel](#) will not cease being a nation before God on into eternity (Jer. 31:35-37). The [Replacement Theologians](#) are wrong. [Israel's](#) future as a nation is secure! This will fulfill Paul's assessment that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26, expounding upon Isa. 59:20-21, Jer. 31:33-34, and Isa. 27:9). The writer of Hebrews also affirmed these same truths in connection with the [New Covenant](#) (Heb. 8:8-12).

The reference to "My holy mountain" reaffirms the future existence of a [Jewish Temple](#) on the Temple Mount. That means that the Muslim shrine called "The Dome of the Rock" as well as the Al Aqsa Mosque, both of which presently defile the Temple Mount, will ultimately be purged from God's holy mountain. Geophysical changes will occur around Jerusalem (Zech. 14:10-11). In the place where Muslim shrines now reside, the [Millennial Temple](#) will be built. It is described in great detail in Ezekiel 40:1-47:12, and also referenced in Joel 3:18.

¹⁶² Zeph. 3:12 - a humble and loyal people: These humble and loyal sons of [Israel](#) are the [remnant](#) who have survived the [Tribulation](#) period and the subsequent [purging](#) of Jewish rebels. These are they who will be left alive to inhabit the [Millennial Kingdom](#) under Jesus, King of [Israel](#), and King of the World (Zech. 14:9; Matt. 25:1-12; Luke 19:11-27).

- D 3 The reliance of the remnant: And they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. ¹⁶³
- C 4 Israel's righteous, honest remnant 3:13
 - D 1 No unrighteousness: {13} "The remnant ¹⁶⁴ of Israel will do no wrong ¹⁶⁵
 - D 2 No dishonesty
 - E 1 And tell no lies, ¹⁶⁶
 - E 2 Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths;
 - D 3 Complete national security
 - E 1 Their normal routines: For they will feed and lie down ¹⁶⁷
 - E 2 Their freedom from anxiety: With no one to make them tremble." ¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Zeph. 3:12 - they will take refuge in the name of the LORD: LORD is the English designation of Yahweh, the proper name for God. Let us remember that Jesus' name, in Hebrew, means, "Yahweh is Salvation." It is my belief that, to take refuge in the name of the LORD is not only to take refuge in the name of Yahweh, but also in the name of His Ultimate [Messianic](#) King, Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁶⁴ Zeph. 3:13 - remnant: The believing, saved [remnant](#) of [Israel](#) who have repented of their evil, and especially of their evil in rejecting Jesus as their [Messiah](#). God will take away the hearts of stone of this [remnant](#). He will place His Spirit within them and give them hearts of flesh (Ezek. 11:17-20; 36:24-27). They will know and believe in Yahweh and in His Anointed King, Jesus.

¹⁶⁵ Zeph. 3:13 - do no wrong: The conversion of the believing Jewish [remnant](#) will be so profound that they will be perfected in holiness during the [Millennial](#) reign of Christ. This conversion of the [Remnant](#) of [Israel](#) will be based upon the [New Covenant](#). This regeneration of [Israel](#) will be accomplished by means of the [Holy Spirit](#), mediated by the [Messiah](#) / Redeemer (Isa. 59:20-21). This same profound conversion will also be true of the believing Gentiles who inhabit Christ's [Kingdom](#). Sadly, however, a great many of the Gentiles' offspring will not be converted. They will be duped by [Satan](#) at his arrival upon Earth at the close of the [Millennium](#). They will join with him in [revolting against the King in Jerusalem](#), but to no avail. They will be consumed by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:7-9).

¹⁶⁶ Zeph. 3:13 - tell no lies...[no] deceitful tongue: As an example of the profound moral and spiritual conversion of the [remnant](#), they will never be dishonest. This is quite in contrast to their previous moral bankruptcy (Isa. 59:1-15). This will be the characteristic of [Israel](#) both in the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and in the [Eternal State](#).

¹⁶⁷ Zeph. 3:13 - they will feed and lie down: Using the metaphor of a flock of sheep or goats secure and unthreatened in the pasture, the Sons of [Israel](#) will dwell and live and work in the Promised Land of Canaan / [Israel](#) with security and safety. This will be the characteristic of [Israel](#) both in the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and in the [Eternal State](#).

¹⁶⁸ Zeph. 3:13 - with no one to make them tremble: There will be no Muslim terrorists or belligerent Arab states who will seek to annihilate [Israel](#). There will be no Anti-Semitic United Nations to threaten and bully [Israel](#). There will be no United States conniving to pressure [Israel](#) into pro-Palestinian concessions, threatening to punish [Israel](#) for building settlements in her own land. With her King living in her midst and protecting her, [Israel](#) will fear no invasion and no dissent. Her Ruler will be the "Prince of Peace", and "there will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace on the throne of David and over His kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and

righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6-7; 59:17-18). This security will be the characteristic of [Israel](#) both in the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and in the [Eternal State](#).

B 3 The Causes for Millennial Rejoicing 3:14-20

C 1 The removal of judgment from Zion 3:14-16

D 1 The urging of Zion to celebrate with exuberance 3:14

E 1 Addressed to the daughter of Zion: {14} Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! ¹⁶⁹E 2 Addressed to Israel: Shout *in triumph*, O Israel! ¹⁷⁰E 3 Addressed to the daughter of Jerusalem: Rejoice and exult with all *your* heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁷¹

D 2 The reason for rejoicing: Yahweh has removed His judgments (and is in Israel's midst) 3:15

E 1 Yahweh's removal of His judgments: {15} The LORD has taken away *His* judgments against you, ¹⁷²E 2 Yahweh's removal of Israel's enemies: He has cleared away your enemies. ¹⁷³E 3 Yahweh's residence among them: The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; ¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Zeph. 3:14 - Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion: The citizens of [Zion](#) (Jerusalem) are urged to shout for joy in their bliss as it will be in the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and the [Eternal State](#). According to [Constable](#), The phrase "daughter of" is a way of referring to the citizens of [Zion](#) (Jerusalem) as the children of the city. Children born in any city are the children of that city, in a metaphorical sense, as well as the children of their physical parents in a literal sense. Elsewhere, "daughters of Jerusalem" sometimes refers to the villages surrounding Jerusalem, those little communities that Jerusalem spawned.

¹⁷⁰ Zeph. 3:14 - Shout ... O Israel: Not only were the citizens of [Zion](#) (Jerusalem) to shout for joy in their bliss, but so were the citizens of the entire nation. This will be the characteristic of [Israel](#) both in the [Millennial Kingdom](#) and in the [Eternal State](#).

¹⁷¹ Zeph. 3:14 - daughter of Jerusalem: A poetic synonym for "daughter of [Zion](#)" – citizen of Jerusalem.

¹⁷² Zeph. 3:15 - The LORD has taken away *His* judgments against you: Through the blood of the [Messiah](#) at His [First Advent](#), and because of the mournful acceptance of that sacrifice on the part of the believing [remnant](#) (Zech.12:10-13:1), Yahweh will remove his indictment against [Israel](#). He does not merely sweep their sins "under the carpet," so to speak, but He has completely paid for all their sins and transgressions in the supremely effective sacrifice of the [Messiah](#) (Isa. 59:16, 20).

¹⁷³ Zeph. 3:15 - He has cleared away your enemies: The enemies of [Israel](#) are the enemies of God. There are several notable passages which predict the obliteration of [Israel](#)'s enemies: Psalm 2:8-9; 89:23; 110:1-3, 5-7; Isa. 59:18; 63:1-6; Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-5, 9, 12-15; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:8-12; Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1-9:21; 12:5; 16:1-21; 19:11-21; 20:7-15.

¹⁷⁴ Zeph. 3:15 - The LORD, the King of Israel, is in your midst: **From one OT standpoint**, it might be legitimate to assume that this passage means nothing more nor less than that Yahweh, in the visible form of His Shekinah Glory, will live within the midst of the people of [Israel](#) in Jerusalem, in the [Millennial Temple](#). Just as the Pillar of

- E 4 The result – freedom from fear of judgment: You will fear disaster no more.¹⁷⁵
- D 3 The urging of Zion not to fear 3:16
- E 1 The consolation to Jerusalem: {16} In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid,"¹⁷⁶

Cloud by day, and the Pillar of Fire by night led the people through their wilderness wanderings, and rested upon the tabernacle, so Yahweh's glorious Presence will inhabit the [Millennial Temple](#). **But from another OT standpoint**, this bold prediction must mean more than that.

First, it was not merely the Presence of God in the form of the Shekinah Glory that led [Israel](#) through the wilderness. Yahweh revealed Himself to Moses as "[The Angel of Yahweh](#) (the LORD)" (Exod. 3:2). It is my contention that the [Angel of Yahweh](#) was none other than the pre-incarnate [Word of God](#) (John 1:1-3, 14-18). That Angel, the Pre-Incarnate Christ, continued to accompany, guard, and guide the Sons of Israel (as recorded in Exod. 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2). The Messenger of Yahweh in the OT was revealed as The Message of Yahweh (The [Word of God](#)) in the NT.

Second, there are passages, even in the OT, that explicitly portray a corporeal person acting on behalf of the Nation of [Israel](#) in the end times. A day is coming when Yahweh will act on behalf of [Israel](#) (Zech. 14:1). Yahweh will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle (Zech. 14:2). Yahweh will go forth against those nations (Zech. 14:3). The *feet of Yahweh* (emphasis mine) will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4). Yahweh will come, and all the holy ones with Him (Zech. 14:5). Yahweh will be king over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). Nations will come from all over the world to worship the King, [Yahweh of Troops](#), and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Zech. 14:16-17). That visible King can be none other than the physical descendant of David, the [Messiah of Israel](#).

God predicted to David through the prophet Nathan that his seed would sit upon David's throne. God would establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:12-13). Indeed, God would establish David's house, throne, and kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:16). This promise to David later became known as the [Davidic Covenant](#) (Psa. 89:3, 28, 34, 39). This Covenant can be fulfilled only through Jesus, sitting on David's throne in Jerusalem upon the Earth.

In the second Psalm, the world revolts against Yahweh and His Anointed (Psalm 2:1-3). Yahweh, in His fury, announces that He will install His Anointed as King anyway upon Mount [Zion](#), His holy mountain (Psa. 2:4-6). The Davidic Son of God recites the decree of Yahweh: He is the Son of Yahweh. He will rule the entire earth. He will break the rebellious nations with a rod of iron and shatter them like clay pottery (Psa. 2:7-9). This can be fulfilled in no other person than Jesus of Nazareth.

A child is to be born in [Israel](#). The government will rest on His shoulders. Appellations of Deity are ascribed to Him. There will be no end to His government nor of peace, justice, and righteousness as He sits on David's throne, reigning over David's kingdom (Isa. 9:6-7).

The [Messiah](#) is to sit upon Yahweh's throne until Yahweh makes the [Messiah](#)'s enemies a footstool for His feet (Psa. 110:1). Yahweh will stretch forth the [Messiah](#)'s scepter from [Zion](#), and will decree to Him to Rule from [Zion](#) in the midst of His enemies (Psa. 110:2). [Messiah](#)'s people will volunteer to assist Him in battle in the day of His power (Psa. 110:3). The [Messiah](#) is also a Priest forever after the order of [Melchizedek](#) (Psa. 110:4). The [Messiah](#), assisted by Yahweh, will shatter kings (Psa. 110:5), judge the nations and kill His enemies (Psa. 110:6), pausing only long enough to refresh Himself with a drink from a brook (Psa. 110:7). Only Jesus of Nazareth can fulfill these predictions.

Third, in the New Testament, it is apparent from the prediction of Gabriel to Mary that her son, Jesus, is the fulfillment of the [Davidic Covenant](#) (Luke 1:26-33). Jesus affirmed that His twelve disciples would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of [Israel](#) when He Himself would sit on His glorious throne (Matt. 19:27-28). It is the Lord Jesus who will physically return and take vengeance upon His enemies (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 19:11-21), [ruling for 1000 years](#) (Rev.20:1-6).

¹⁷⁵ Zeph. 3:15 - You will fear disaster no more: Once the [Tribulation](#) has ended, the [Judgments](#) of all who have survived the [Tribulation](#) have taken place, and the [Millennium](#) has begun, the nation of [Israel](#) will no longer need to fear disaster. Perpetual enemies, such as (modern-day) Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Russia, will no longer be populated by Israel-hating Arabs and other ethnic groups. All people on earth will submit to King Jesus. "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse" (Isa. 11:9b-10a).

¹⁷⁶ Zeph. 3:16 - "Do not be afraid": For centuries, [Israel](#), a tiny nation in a sea of hostile Arab neighbors, has lived in fear. Today Israelis live in almost daily fear of [rockets fired by Hamas](#) from Gaza. When Christ reigns from Jerusalem, [Zion](#), [Israel](#) will no longer need to fear. She will live in peace and security (Isa. 2:1-4). Citizens from

- E 2 The consolation to Zion: O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp.
- C 2 Yahweh's dwelling in the midst of Israel as a loving, joyfully protective warrior 3:17
- D 1 Yahweh's residence within Israel: {17} "The LORD your God is in your midst,"¹⁷⁷
- D 2 Yahweh's presence as a victorious soldier: A victorious warrior.¹⁷⁸
- D 3 Yahweh's exuberant joy over Israel: He will exult over you with joy,¹⁷⁹
- D 4 Yahweh's quiet love of Israel: He will be quiet in His love,¹⁸⁰
- D 5 His jubilant celebration over Israel: He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

friendly nations from all over the world will flock to Jerusalem to worship King Jesus and learn of His truths and worship at Jewish feasts (Isa. 2:1-4; Zech. 14:16-19).

¹⁷⁷ Zeph. 3:17 - The LORD your God is in your midst: Bodily in the person of the [Messiah](#). This will be true during the [Millennium](#) (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Zech. 14:9; Matt. 19:28; 25:31; Rev. 20:4-6). Throughout [eternity](#), God and the [Messiah](#) will rule together (a co-regency) (Rev. 22:1, 3).

¹⁷⁸ Zeph. 3:17 - A victorious warrior: This depiction of Jesus is consistent with the OT description of Yahweh as "the [LORD of hosts](#)" (lit. [Yahweh of Troops](#)). Theological liberals are most comfortable portraying God as a God of love. They are typically exceedingly squeamish about depicting Him as a God of war, of vengeance, and of retribution. But we are not allowed to pick and choose which attributes of God we will celebrate and which we will disregard. Jesus came the first time to be a sacrificial Lamb (Isa. 53:7; John 1:29, 36). He will return the second time as conquering Sovereign, a victorious warrior. A number of passages make this abundantly clear (Psa. 2:7-9; 110:1-7; Isa. 63:1-6; Zech. 14:1-15; Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 19:11-27; 2 Thess. 2:6-10; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:7-15).

¹⁷⁹ Zeph. 3:17 - He will exult over you with joy: It almost makes me angry when I consider the contention of [Replacement Theologians](#) – [Amillennialists](#) and, to a large degree, [Historical Premillennialists](#) – that there is only one people of God, that the [Church](#) is [spiritual Israel](#), and that [Israel](#) *as a nation* has no future in the plan of God. How does God feel about that? And how *will* God feel about [Israel](#)? The time is coming when God will exult with great joy and celebration over His one select nation, the nation of [Israel](#). She will then be purged of all rebels and restored in the perpetual Promised Land of [Israel](#) in obedience and submission to Yahweh her God and to Jesus, her [Messianic King](#). God and Jesus will be absolutely "pumped" about that! The [Church](#), who is the [Bride of the Messiah](#), can NEVER take the place of God's chosen Nation, the restored and repentant Nation of [ISRAEL](#). Let us not deprive the Lord God of his exuberant celebration over His Nation! Why do we have the audacity to think we can do that???

¹⁸⁰ Zeph. 3:17 - He will be quiet over you in His love: "Love" is the feminine noun *'ahabah* ([160](#)). J. Alec Motyer, "Zephaniah," in *The Minor Prophets*, p. 958, has stated it well:

"Most often the Lord's love is expressed by the Hebrew word *hesed*. This is the love that issues in commitment, the 'ever-unfailing' fidelity of love, love that lives in the will as much as in the heart. Here, however, the word is *'ahaba*, the passionate love of Jacob for Rachel (Gen. 29:20) and of Michal for David (1 Sam. 18:28), the fond love of Jacob for Joseph (Gen. 37:3), Uzziah's devotion to gardening (2 Chron. 26:10), Jonathan's deep friendship with David (1 Sam. 18:3), the devotee's delight in the Lord's law (Ps. 119:97). This too is the Lord's love for his people (Hos. 3:1), a love that delights him (Zeph. 3:17c), makes him contemplate his beloved with wordless adoration (v. 17d), a love that cannot be contained but bursts into elated singing (v. 17e)."

- C 3 Yahweh's world-wide gathering of expatriate, downtrodden Israelis – the disappointed, the lame, and the outcast – for worship of Himself 3:18-19
 - D 1 Yahweh's gathering of the disappointed to worship 3:18
 - E 1 Those who grieve over being unable to celebrate Jewish feasts: {18} "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts—¹⁸¹
 - E 2 Their Israeli origin: They came from you, *O Zion*;¹⁸²
 - E 3 Their reproach as expatriates: *The reproach of exile* is a burden on them.¹⁸³
 - D 2 Yahweh's gathering of the lame and outcast to turn their shame into praise in all the earth 3:19
 - E 1 Yahweh's plan to punish Israel's oppressors
 - G 1 Yahweh's timely resolve: {19} "Behold, I am going to deal at that time
 - G 2 The target of His resolve: With all your oppressors,¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Zeph. 3:18 - I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts: Yahweh will gather from all over the world the Jewish [remnant](#) who have a heart for Him – those who yearn to keep the appointed Biblical feasts, but cannot because of their exile. Grieving over the inability to keep the feasts is illustrated in Lam. 1:4. Two impediments will be removed in the [Millennial Kingdom](#) – the impediment of distance, and the impediment of a non-existent temple, as is true today. The impediment of distance will be overcome because Yahweh will gather believing Jewish exiles from all over the world and bring them back to the Promised Land. The impediment of a non-existent sanctuary will be removed because returning Jewish exiles and the survivors of the [Tribulation](#) and the subsequent [Judgment of Israel](#) will joyfully build the [Millennial Temple](#) on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem just as described in Ezekiel 40:1-47:2.

¹⁸² Zeph. 3:18 - They came from you, *O Zion*: As [Keil](#) (p. 463) points out, every clause in Zeph. 3:18 is difficult. There is an economy of words in the Hebrew text that is perplexing to the translator. The words "They came" literally are "They were" in the [MT](#) (NASB footnote). The words "O Zion" do not appear in the [MT](#), but are supplied by the NASB editors from the context (Zeph. 3:16).

¹⁸³ Zeph. 3:18 - *The reproach of exile* is a burden on them: Again, the Hebrew is difficult – "of exile" is supplied by the NASB translators, and probably with good reason, judging from the context (Zeph. 3:10, 20). To show the English reader how economical the Hebrew text is, in contrast to the NASB "fleshed out" translation, I here quote [Keil](#)'s (p. 462) more literal translation of Zeph. 3:18: "I gather together those that mourn for the festive meeting; they are of thee; reproach presses upon them."

¹⁸⁴ Zeph. 3:19 - Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors: "At that time" refers to Yahweh's wrath upon the nations of the world for their godlessness and their oppression of [Israel](#) during the course of the [Tribulation](#) (Rev. 3:10; 6:12-17; 16:8-11, 14, 29-21). It also refers to Christ's annihilation of His and [Israel](#)'s enemies at the time of His [Second Coming](#) (Zech. 12:1-9; 14:3, 12-15; Rev. 19:11-21). It also refers to Christ's [judgment of the nations](#) of the world at the close of the [Tribulation](#) and prior to the start of His [Millennial](#) reign (Joel 3:1-3; Matt. 25:31-46). At issue there is the world's treatment of the nation of [Israel](#) (Joel 3:1-3) and the world's treatment of Jesus' brothers – Messianic Jews – the [Remnant](#) who have survived the [Tribulation](#) (Matt. 25:31-46).

- E 2 Yahweh's rescue of the marginalized
 - G 1 The lame: I will save the lame
 - G 2 The outcast: And gather the outcast,¹⁸⁵
- E 3 Yahweh's global reversal of shame
 - G 1 The description of the reversal: And I will turn their shame into praise and renown
 - G 2 The scope of the reversal: In all the earth.¹⁸⁶
- C 4 Yahweh's giving Israel praise among all the earth's peoples 3:20
 - D 1 Yahweh's timely regathering of Israel
 - E 1 The time of Yahweh's restoration of Israelis: {20} "At that time¹⁸⁷ I will bring you in,¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Zeph. 3:19 - I will save the lame And gather the outcast: Yahweh's redemption of the nation of [Israel](#) will be so complete that He will deliver even the most undesirable of the nation – the lame (those with physical disabilities) and the outcast (perhaps a reference to Israelis banished from their country because of their or their ancestors' prior unbelief). Some of the same terms are used in Ezek. 34:16. This portion of Zeph. 3:19 is quoted almost verbatim from Micah 4:6.

¹⁸⁶ Zeph. 3:19 - and I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth: There may be another meaning to this text than the one stated in the previous footnote. Of all the nations of the world, none is more despised than the nation of [Israel](#). I believe that has long been true. It has certainly been true in the last three quarters of a century, the perspective of my life. I was born just after the conclusion of World War II, which lasted from 1939-1945. Nazi Germany symbolized, at least in recent history, the most overt display of Anti-Semitism on record. The forcing of Jews to wear the Golden Star, the Jewish ghettos, the Jewish concentration camps, and the gas chambers led to the genocide of six million Jewish people. But Anti-Semitism lives on today. Arab states revile [Israel](#), and publicly state their intention to annihilate the Jews. They refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the State of [Israel](#). The United Nations as an assembly is virulently pro-Palestinian and anti-[Israel](#). Even the United States, under the reign of President Obama, is more pro-Palestinian and anti-[Israel](#) than any previous American administration.

But God is not through with [Israel](#). This lame, outcast nation is His special nation. He will save the [remnant](#) of the lame nation, and gather the [remnant](#) of the outcast nation, and He will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth! The glory of the LORD will appear upon [Israel](#). Nations will come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising (Isa. 60:2-3). The wealth of the nations will come to [Israel](#) (Isa. 60:5) The nation which will not serve [Israel](#) will perish, and the nations will be utterly ruined (Isa. 60:12). The sons of those who afflicted [Israel](#) will come bowing to them, and all who despised [Israel](#) will bow themselves at the soles of their feet (Isa. 60:14). Instead of attempting to force Jerusalem to become the capital city of a proposed "Palestinian state," the nations will call Jerusalem the city of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of [Israel](#) (Isa. 60:14)! The praise and renown of [Israel](#) in all the earth will be fulfilled initially in the [Millennial Kingdom](#), and ultimately upon [New Earth](#) in the [Eternal State](#).

¹⁸⁷ Zeph. 3:20 - At that time: At the end of the [Tribulation](#) and prior to the beginning of Christ's [Millennial Kingdom](#).

¹⁸⁸ Zeph. 3:20 - I will bring you in: "I" refers to Yahweh, working in tandem with Jesus, the [Messiah](#); "you" refers to the redeemed [remnant](#) of [Israel](#); "bring you in" – the action of Yahweh and [Messiah](#) of restoring the believing [remnant](#) of [Israel](#) into the land of Promise, the land of [Israel](#), under the terms of the [Abrahamic Covenant](#) and the [New Covenant](#).

- E 2 The time of Yahweh’s gathering of Israelis: Even at the time when I gather you together;¹⁸⁹
- D 2 Yahweh’s gift of acclaim to Israel
- E 1 Verbal approval: Indeed, I will give you renown and praise¹⁹⁰
- E 2 Global approval: Among all the peoples of the earth,¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Zeph. 3:20 - Even at the time when I gather you together: A synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry to the first line of this verse. “Even at the time” is the same time as the first line of the verse, “At that time.” Furthermore, the clause, “when I gather you together” is the same event as “I will bring you in.” “When I gather you together” is the English translation of the single Heb. Infinitive of the verb [qabats](#) (6908), which appears here in the first person singular [Piel](#) (intensive) stem. [Qabats](#) is also used in Zeph. 3:8, where Yahweh states that His decision is ... “to **assemble** kingdoms” to pour out on them His indignation. It is used again in Zeph. 3:19, where Yahweh states that He will “**gather** the outcast.” And of course, it is used, finally, in Zeph. 3:20, in which Yahweh states of the time when “**I gather you together**” (emphases all mine). The modern terminology for the return of Israelis to the Promised Land is [Aliyah](#). The present return, however, which began late in the nineteenth century, is preliminary to the return to which Yahweh refers in Zeph. 3:10-20. The present return is a return largely in unbelief. The majority of Jewish people in [Israel](#) today are cultural Jews, ones who do not even practice Judaism. The vast majority of Jews in [Israel](#) today do not place their faith in Jesus as their [Messianic King](#). But that will change. In the [Millennium](#), the only Jewish people who exist will be those who have placed their faith in Jesus as their [Messiah](#).

¹⁹⁰ Zeph. 3:20 - I will give you renown and praise: We have seen the combination of “renown” ([shem](#), 8034, most often translated “name”) and “praise” ([tehillah](#), 8416) before – in Zeph. 3:19 – “And I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.” Here, the two members are reversed from their order in Zeph. 3:19. Elsewhere in Zephaniah, [shem](#) is translated “name” or “names” (Zeph. 1:4; 3:9, 12). [Tehillah](#), “praise” occurs in Zephaniah only in Zeph. 3:19, 20. [Israel](#), in her disobedience to and rebellion against God, had been defeated by her enemies and had become “*an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth*” (Deut. 28:25). She had become “a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people” among which the LORD had driven her (Deut. 28:37). The alien in [Israel](#) had become the “head” and the Israeli the “tail” (Deut. 28:43). Today, [Israel](#) is the most reviled nation in all the earth. When Christ returns to set up [His kingdom in Israel](#) and God brings back to [Israel](#) the repentant [remnant](#), all that shame and derision directed against [Israel](#) will be halted. Instead, God will give to the obedient [remnant](#) “renown and praise” in all the earth!

¹⁹¹ Zeph. 3:20 - Among all the peoples of the earth: This gathering of the Jewish [remnant](#), this giving her to be for a “name and praise” cannot be restricted to a small corner of the Middle East. In the [Millennial Kingom](#) Yahweh will literally cause redeemed [Israel](#) to have a great reputation and will cause her to be an object of praise throughout the entirety of planet Earth. “Peoples” is the plural of [am](#) (5971), usually translated, “peoples.” It is a synonym for [goyim](#), the plural of [goy](#) (1471) (“nations,” frequently translated, in certain contexts, “Gentiles”). Though the conservative commentator [C. F. Keil](#) concedes that the prophet Zephaniah is focused solely upon the salvation of [Israel](#), [Keil](#) believes this salvation applies also to the salvation of the Gentiles that coincided with Jesus’ foundation of the [Church](#). This is a very common view held by proponents of Covenant Theology, but it simply cannot be supported by the facts. Though I believe that Zeph. 3:9 refers to Gentile salvation, Zeph. 3:10-20 describes the salvation of [Israel](#), more specifically, of the [remnant](#) of the nation of [Israel](#).

- D 3 The occasion of the global praise
- E 1 The restoration of Israel's fortunes: When I restore your fortunes before your eyes,"¹⁹²
- E 2 The Guarantor of Israel's fortunes: Says the LORD.¹⁹³

Annotated Analysis of Zephaniah
Prepared by James T. Bartsch
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Email Contact: jbartsch@wordexplain.com

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¹⁹² Zeph. 3:20 - When I restore your fortunes before your eyes: We encountered this concept in Zeph. 2:7 (... "For the LORD their God will care for them And restore their fortune.") In both instances the word "restore" appears in the [Qal](#) stem of *shub* ([7725](#)). The word translated, "your fortunes" (Zeph. 3:20) "their fortune" (Zeph. 2:7) is problematic. In Zeph. 2:7 the [Kativ](#) reading is *shebut*, but the [Qere](#) reading is *shebit*. The reading in Zeph. 3:20 is *shebut*. *Shebut* means, literally, captivity. The AV translated the phrase "turn away their captivity" in Zeph. 2:7; 3:20. Both NASB and ESV translate the phrase "restore their fortune" in Zeph. 2:7 and "restore your fortunes" in Zeph. 3:20. It is possible that the extended meaning of "restore captivity" is to "restore fortune(s)". In either case, the initial fulfillment of this prediction will take place in the [Millennium](#). The ultimate fulfillment will be in the [Eternal State](#) in connection with [New Jerusalem](#) and [New Earth](#).

The view of [Replacement Theology](#) and Covenant Theology – that the [Church](#) has forever replaced [Israel](#) – is incompatible with the phrase "before your eyes." It is the eyes of the Jewish people to which the prophet refers here, not the eyes of the Gentile-dominated [Church](#).

¹⁹³ Zeph. 3:20 - Says the LORD: For centuries, the standard view of Christendom has been that of [Replacement Theology](#) – that the [Church](#) has permanently replaced [Israel](#) in the progress of God's kingdom upon earth. But it is not man who defines the outcome. It is Yahweh Himself. And Yahweh Himself has asserted that He will restore the fortunes of the State of [Israel](#) before the very eyes of the Israeli people. [WordExplain](#) stands firmly upon the side of God and against the dogmas of [Replacement Theology](#). There is a future for the Nation of [Israel](#), and it is a glorious future. The [Messiah](#) Himself will sit upon the throne of David, and He will rule [Israel](#) and the world from Mount Zion. [Israel](#) will be the most prosperous and successful nation upon the face of the earth. You can count on it! Why? Because Yahweh Himself has asserted it!