

**Slide # 1**

**Zephaniah**

**Theme:** The Coming Day of the Lord

**Outline:**

1:1-2:3 Warning to Judah of God’s coming Judgment

**2:4-3:8 God’s Judgment on specific nations**

3:9-20 Future Restoration for Israel

Both the book of Joel and Zephaniah have the Day of the LORD as their main theme. The coming Day of the LORD is a major theme throughout the prophets in the OT and is also addressed in the NT.

**Slide # 2**

***Day of the LORD***

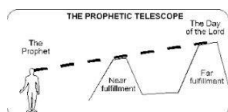
***Definition:*** The **Day of the LORD** is the time when God overtly intervenes in human affairs (especially in relation to Israel) with catastrophic judgment in fulfillment of prophecy which overwhelmingly demonstrates His **LORDSHIP!**

**Slide # 3**

• ***LAYERS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD JUDGMENT***

- 1) Judgment in reference to Babylonian Captivity.
- 2) Judgment in reference to the Second Coming.
- 3) Judgment in reference to dissolving of the present heavens and earth at the close of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

**Slide # 4**



In Zephaniah we see both aspects of the Day of the LORD judgment interwoven into the text. We see coming judgment in relation to the Babylonian Captivity and then we see judgment also in relation to the Second Coming of the Messiah.

After warning the Jews of this DARK day of judgment that was coming Zephaniah 2:1-3 presents this threefold emphasis which amounts to a summons to get ready and be right with the LORD.

### **Slide # 5**

Zeph. 2:1: GATHER, gather

Zeph. 2:2: Before, Before, Before

Zeph. 2:3: Seek, Seek, seek

Each verse here carries an emphasis. The undesirable/shameless nation of the Jews is summoned to GATHER back to the land of Israel BEFORE the coming Day of the LORD and there they are told to SEEK the LORD that they might be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger.

The appeal to the Jews to SEEK the LORD and thus be involved in God's program is now strengthened by reminding them, as he prophesies the destruction of Israel's enemies, that God keeps His unconditional promises to His people.

God is the God of all nations and He holds all the nations accountable for His truth that He has revealed in conjunction with His people Israel. Israel is uniquely God's witness nation and God holds the world accountable for it.

Yes, Israel would be judged and humbled in the Day of the LORD but those nations that led Israel to stumble and treated her with contempt would also experience the fury of God's wrath.

Zephaniah, in chapter 2 addresses the enemies surrounding Israel – perhaps in a representative way. He first addressed Philistia to the west (2:4-7); then Moab and Ammon the east (2:8-11); then Ethiopia to the south (2:12) and finally Assyria to the north (2:13-15).

### **Slide # 6**



Much of the judgment prophesied here relates to the time of the Babylonian Captivity when Babylon not only took captive Israel but they also destroyed many other people groups in the process as well. However, as seen in verse 11 there is an ultimate distant complete fulfillment which will be realized in conjunction with the judgment of Christ's Second Coming and the establishment of His kingdom.

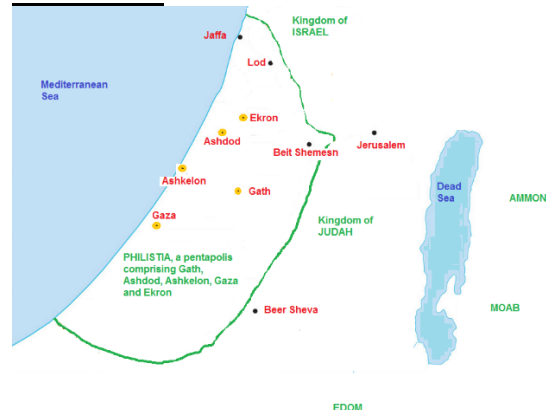
### Zephaniah 2:4–10 (NKJV)

**4 For Gaza shall be forsaken, And Ashkelon desolate; They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, And Ekron shall be uprooted.**

Named here are four of the principal cities of Philistia. Gath is not included – perhaps because this city at the time of this prophecy had already become subject to Judah (cf. 2 Kg. 18:8; 2 Chron. 26:6).

Evidently, Ashdod fell quickly at noonday indicating either in half a day or at a time they were caught off guard as noonday was not the normal time for battle.

### Slide # 7



At the time of the Babylonian invasion, they crushed Philistia. The Philistines as a constituted group of people then disappeared from the scene of history. Gaza was the capital city of this area and appropriately means "forsaken". After the Babylonian Captivity the Jews would come back and use this area as pastureland.

**5 Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, The nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines: "I will destroy you; So there shall be no inhabitant."**

The Cherethites were a Philistine tribe (1 Sam. 30:14; Ezek. 25:16) that are believed to have originated from Crete (Deut. 2:23; Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7). Canaan means low or flat referring to the lowland along the coast where the Cherethites dwelt. There were several Cherethite warriors in David's army (cf. 2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23; 1 Chron. 18:17).

The Philistines lived in the Mediterranean coastal plains before the time of Abraham (Gen. 20:1ff; 21:22-34; 26:1ff). They were descendants of Ham and came from Caphtor (Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7), generally thought to be Crete. – **David Levy**

The name Palestine is a Roman word linked with the word Philistine referring to the biblical land of the Philistines. The word fell out of use but then was revived by the British when they assumed supervision over the land in 1920. It again fell by the wayside as a legal description once Israel became a nation again in 1948.

**6 The seacoast shall be pastures, With shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks.**

**7 The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; They shall feed their flocks there; In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. For the LORD their God will intervene for them, And return their captives.**

After the time of the Babylonian Captivity the Philistines no longer inhabited this area. It then became a place of pastures and shepherds used by the Jews.

God would turn the situation around. Whereas the Philistines had historically antagonized Israel - now the Jews would rule this coastal area.

This turn of events is seen as a God-thing. He would intervene in bringing a remnant of Jews back from the Babylonian captivity who would then occupy this area previously held by the Philistines. This was fulfilled to the letter.

### **Slide # 8**

This promise was fulfilled in 536 B.C., when Judah returned from the Babylonian captivity. It will be further fulfilled during the Millennium (3:14-20). – **David Levy**

The phrase “return their captives” is sometimes translated as “restore their fortunes”. It is a technical formula used consistently in reference to the restoration of Israel (cf. Deut. 30:3; Ps. 14:7; 85:1-4; Jer. 30:3, 18; 32:44; 33:10-13; Amos 9:14; Zeph. 3:20).

**8 “I have heard the reproach of Moab, And the insults of the people of Ammon, With which they have reproached My people, And made arrogant threats against their borders.**

One thing that comes out repeatedly in the Scriptures is that even though God’s people Israel are in sin – yet at the same time God does not appreciate those who abuse them. Even though God often uses the Gentiles to discipline His people Israel – at the same time He holds those Gentiles accountable for mistreating His people.

### **Slide # 9**

#### **Jeremiah 25:9 (NKJV)**

**9** behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the LORD, ‘and **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant**, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.

#### **Jeremiah 25:12 (NKJV)**

**12** ‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that **I will punish the king of Babylon** and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the LORD; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

What was the problem? Didn't God want to use Babylon – going so far as to call Nebuchadnezzar “My servant”? Yes, He did but here was the problem.

### **Slide # 10**

#### **Isaiah 47:6 (NKJV)**

**6** I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, And **given them into your hand**. You **showed them no mercy**; On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.

#### **Jeremiah 50:11 (NKJV)**

**11** “Because **you were glad**, because you **rejoiced**, You destroyers of My heritage, Because you have grown fat like a heifer threshing grain, And you bellow like bulls,

Even if God is angry with His people Israel – even if He gives them over to Gentile hands – yet they better be careful because they are still His people and God still takes it very personally how they are treated.

In showing no regard for Israel those who reproach and insult them in effect show no respect for the God of Israel. Such was the case with Moab and Ammon.

Moab and Ammon were the blood relatives of the Jews. Moab and Ammon descended from Lot's daughters through incest as seen in Genesis 19. As history developed the people groups who came from these sons of incest became the perpetual enemies of the Jews. In Numbers 22 the Moabite king named Balak sought to hire the evil prophet Balaam to curse Israel.

During the time of the Judges Moab and Ammon repeatedly tried to defeat Israel (Jud. 3:12-14; 10:7-9; 11:4-6). Consistently they arrogantly violated Judah's borders showing no respect for them as a people – and no regard for Israel's covenant God named YHWH Who had given them this land and set the borders (cf. Isa. 16:6; 25:10-11; Jer. 48:29-30; Ezek. 25:1-3, 6; Amos 1:13).

Because Moab and Ammon had relentlessly abused God's people (the Jews) they were to be punished accordingly (Jer. 48:27-31; Ezek. 25:8-11).

**9 Therefore, as I live,** Says the **LORD of hosts**, the **God of Israel**,  
**“Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, And the people of Ammon like**

**Gomorrah— Overrun with weeds and saltpits, And a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, And the remnant of My people shall possess them.”**

“Sin always creates a therefore” – so says Dr. David Jeremiah. How true, because of their haughty abuse of the Jews – THEREFORE verse 9.

Sodom and Gomorrah in the Bible are proverbial for total destruction. They are often used as outstanding examples of being completely and utterly overthrown to where they are no more (cf. Gen. 19:24-26; Deut. 29:23; Isa. 13:19; 34:13; Jer. 49:18; Hos. 9:6; 10:8).

God literally blew Sodom and Gomorrah off the map! Where are they today? We don't know for sure but a good guess is that they appropriately are under the DEAD SEA. That whole area is overrun with weeds and saltpits. Nothing lives in the DEAD SEA although it is full of minerals.

When we were in Israel we went swimming in the Dead Sea. You can't drown there because everything is buoyant. It is so full of salt and minerals that everything just floats.

### **Slide # 11**



When we were there I purposely tasted the water and let me tell you it is salty beyond imagination. After getting out you can't wait to hit the showers because it like swimming in thick salt water. The ocean is salty too but this is a whole other level.

Whatever happened to the Moabites and the Ammonites? They are no more.

God used Saul (1 Sam. 11:1-11) and David (2 Sam. 10:1-14) to defeat Ammon, while Jehoram and Jehoshaphat defeated Moab (2 Kg. 3:4-27). – **David Levy**

As prophesied by Zephaniah the lands of Moab and Ammon have largely remained a “*perpetual desolation*” through the centuries.

I have visited a few countries in my lifetime, and the poorest country that I have ever been in is the modern nation of Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. It occupies what was the land of the Moabites and the Ammonites. – **J. Vernon McGee**

### Slide # 12



Note God says, “as I live” which is the language of an oath. God swears by Himself because there is no higher authority by which to emphasize His resolute commitment to do this.

He is the “LORD of hosts” – that is YHWH who rules over the armies of heaven. Host here refers to God’s angelic army. And then there is a double emphasis on WHO He is as the “God of Israel”.

The name LORD in the phrase “the LORD of hosts” is YHWH which is God’s covenant name signifying His eternal covenant relationship with Israel. This is followed up by “the God of Israel”. So there is a double emphasis here to make the point.

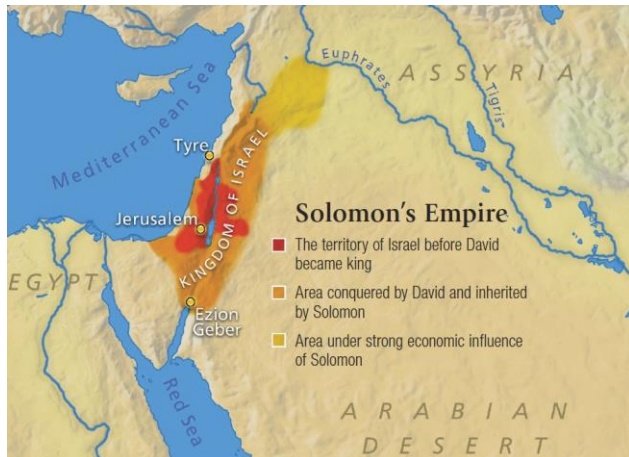
This is the KEY point in this whole surrounding context. The surrounding nations of Israel refused to take the God of Israel serious as seen in their mistreatment of Israel. Yes, God held His people Israel accountable for their sin – but He also held the surrounding nations accountable for the truth of Who He is as the God of Israel – which is to say the ONE true God as revealed through Israel.



The nations of the world should never lose sight of that because when they do they have lost sight of God and that spells disaster in the end.

Following the Babylonian captivity the Jews would also possess this territory in part but the final fulfillment of this awaits the Millennial kingdom when Israel will finally possess all the land that God promised them in the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen. 15:18).

### Slide # 13



Ultimately this is what God has promised Israel as stated to Abraham.

### Slide # 14

#### **Genesis 15:18 (NKJV)**

**18** On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—

### Slide # 15



**10 This they shall have for their pride, Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats Against the people of the LORD of hosts.**

Note again God states the actions of Moab and Ammon to be a matter of PRIDE. In verse 8 He spoke of their “**arrogant threats**” and here in verse 10 He speaks of “**their pride**” in daring to make arrogant threats against “**the people of the LORD of hosts.**” (cf. Num. 11; 24:17; Judg. 3:12; 10:7; 1 Sam. 11:1-5; 2 Sam. 12:26-31; Isa. 25:10-11; Jer. 48:29-30).

There is lot of emphasis here on arrogance and pride which God hates – being found 3 times in verses 8 and 10.

It is a really BIG deal to mess with Israel because it doing so one messes with God Himself. Israel is stated to be the apple of God’s eye (Deut. 32:10; Zech. 2:8). God is really sensitive when it comes to Israel. And it is the height of prideful arrogance to dare mess with her.

The Day of the Lord climaxes with the whole world pridefully taking on God by daring to attack Israel in relation to the Second Coming of Christ.

### **Slide # 16**

#### **Zechariah 14:1–2 (NKJV)**

**1** Behold, the **day of the LORD is coming**, And your spoil will be divided in your midst.

**2** For I will gather **all the nations to battle against Jerusalem**; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

At the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ Satan will be released from his prison and will once again go out and deceive the nations the Bible says that the number who will follow him will be innumerable like the sand of the sea. Once again the world will arrogantly DARE to march on Jerusalem – the capital of Israel – the capital of the Great King.

### **Slide # 17**

#### **Revelation 20:7–9 (NKJV)**

**7** Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

**8** and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

**9** They went up on the breadth of the earth and **surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city**. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

This is sheer arrogance to threaten the borders of Israel – to dare to overthrow God’s people. At the concluding phase of each layer of the Day of the LORD judgment God shows His LORDSHIP over the prideful rebellion of the nations as they are put down in relation to Israel.

**Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)**

**18** Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

This is the besetting sin of mankind and ultimately before the God of Israel the whole world will be humbled in reference to Israel. God is going to do this in relation to Gog and Magog; He is going to do it in relation to the whole world that under Antichrist rallies against Jerusalem; and He will do it at the conclusion of the Millennium as they once again march on Jerusalem.

Here is where the nations are. In the March/April edition of Israel My Glory in an article titled “UN REWRITES TEMPLE-MOUNT HISTORY” they reported the following.

The UN General Assembly recently passed a resolution that calls Jerusalem’s Temple Mount by its Muslim name only. The so-called Jerusalem Resolution is part of Islam’s effort to erase Jewish history and rebrand the site as exclusively Islamic.

Adopted by a vote of 129 to 11, with 31 abstentions, the resolution refers to the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism, solely as Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary).

This is reflective of what the world thinks about YHWH – the holy covenant God of Israel. They honor the false god of Islam over the true God of Israel. This is reflective of the arrogant spirit of Psalm 2 where the world in the end plots together against YHWH and His Anointed and yet Psalm 2:5 says God “***shall speak to them in His wrath***” and verse 6 says He will then set His King – that is King Jesus on the holy hill of Mount Zion.

The nations are exceedingly dull in learning how greatly they displease the Lord when they deal in pride against the nation whom He has chosen as His medium for world-wide blessing.

– ***Charles Feinberg***

It's still true God blesses those who bless Israel, and He curses those who curse Israel (Gen. 12:1-3). Be among those who bless Israel!