

THIS prophet, a contemporary of Jeremiah, exercised his ministry during the reign of Josiah. It was a time of revival (2 Ki. 22.), but the captivity was impending, nevertheless, and Zephaniah points out the moral state which, despite the superficial revival under Josiah (Jer. 2. 11-13), made it inevitable.

Zephaniah is in four parts: I. The coming invasion of Nebuchadnezzar a figure of the day of the LORD, 1. 1-2. 3. II. Predictions of judgment on certain peoples, 2. 4-15. III. The moral state of Israel for which the captivity was to come, 3. 1-7. IV. The judgment of the nations followed by kingdom blessing under Messiah, 3. 8-20.

CHAPTER 1.

Part I. The coming judgment on Judah a figure of the future day of the LORD (Zeph. 1. 1-2. 3).

THE word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of ^aJosiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

2 I will utterly consume all *things* from off the land, saith the LORD.

3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.

4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, *and* the name of the ^bChemarims with the priests;

5 And them that worship the ^chost of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship *and* that swear by ^dMalcham;

6 And them that are turned back from the LORD; and *those* that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.

7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: ¹for the ^cday of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

8 And it shall come to pass in

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the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.

9 In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, *that there shall be* the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills.

11 Howl, ye inhabitants of ⁱMaktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.

12 And it shall come to pass at that time, *that* I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are ^esettled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.

13 Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.

14 ^hThe great day of the LORD is near, *it is near*, and hasteth greatly, *even* the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

15 ⁱThat day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

a 2 Ki.22.1-20;
2 Chr.34.1-33; Jer.1.2;
22.11.

b i.e. *idolatrious priests.*
Cf.2 Ki.23.5.

c 2 Ki.23.12;
Jer.19.13.

d An idol of the Ammonites, same as *Molech*, or *Milcom*.

e *Day (of Jehovah).* vs. 7-18; Zech. 12.1-14. (Isa. 2.10-22; Rev. 19.11-21.)

f Lit. *The Mortar*, a depression in Jerusalem where the bazaars were.

g Jer.48.11;
Amos 6.1.

h Joel 2.1,11.

i v.2; Isa.22.5;
Jer.30.7;
Joel 2.2,11;
Amos 5.18.

¹ As in the other Prophets, the approaching invasion of Nebuchadnezzar is treated as an adumbration of the true day of the LORD in which all earth-judgments will culminate, to be followed by the restoration and blessing of Israel and the nations in the kingdom. See "Day of the LORD" (Isa. 2. 10-22; Rev. 19. 11-21); "Israel" (Gen. 12. 2, 3; Rom. 11. 26). Cf. Joel 1., 2.

16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be de-voiced by the fire of his jealousy; for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

CHAPTER 2.

The call to the remnant (Isa. 1. 9; Rom. 11. 5), in the day of judgment on the nations.

GATHER yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not ^bdesired;

2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.

3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

Part II. Judgments on certain nations.

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.

5 Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.

6 And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

7 And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.

8 I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have

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reproached my people, and magnified *themselves* against their border.

9 Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.

10 This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified *themselves* against the people of the LORD of hosts.

11 The LORD *will be* terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.

12 Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword.

13 And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.

14 And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; *their* voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work.

15 This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.

CHAPTER 3.

Part III. The moral state of Jerusalem in the prophet's time. (Cf. Isa. 3. 1-26; Jer. 6. 1-15.)

WOE to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!

2 She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God.

3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

4 Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests

a Prov. 11. 4; Ezk. 7. 19.

b Lit. that hath not shame. Cf. Jer. 3. 3.

c Remnant. vs. 1-3, 7-9; Zeph. 3. 13-20. (Isa. 1. 9; Rom. 11. 5.)

d Or, bring again. Cf. Zeph. 3. 19, 20; Deut. 30. 1-9; Isa. 11. 11; Jer. 23. 5-8.

e i.e. coasts.

f i.e. nations.

g Isa. 10. 12; Ezk. 31. 3; Nah. 1. 1; 2. 10; 3. 15, 18.

h Nah. 1. 1, note.

i Psa. 2. 12, note.

have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

5 The just LORD *is* in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

6 I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.

7 I said, Surely thou wilt ^a fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, *and* corrupted all their doings.

Part IV. (1) The judgment of the nations. (Cf. Zech. 14. 1-21; Mt. 25. 32, *note.*)

8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination *is* to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, ^bto pour upon them mine indignation, *even* all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

9 For ¹then will I turn to the ^cpeople a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, *even* the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that ^drejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more

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a Psa. 19. 9, *note.*

b *Armageddon.* Zech. 12. 1-9. (Rev. 16. 14; 19. 11-21.)

c Lit. *the peoples*, i.e. *Gentiles.*

d Jer. 7. 4; Mic. 3. 11; Mt. 3. 9.

e Heb. *in my holy name.*

f Psa. 2. 12, *note.*

g *Remnant.* vs. 13-20; Hag. 1. 14. (Isa. 1. 9; Rom. 11. 5.)

h *Kingdom* (O.T.), vs. 13-20; Zech. 6. 12, 13. (Gen. 1. 26; Zech. 12. 8.)

i Isa. 35. 3, 4.

j Deut. 30. 9; Isa. 62. 5; 65. 19; Jer. 32. 41.

k Isa. 11. 12; 27. 12; 56. 8; Ezk. 28. 25; 34. 13; 37. 21; Amos 9. 14.

be haughty ^ebecause of my holy mountain.

12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall ^ftrust in the name of the LORD.

13 The ^gremnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make *them* afraid.

(2) *The kingdom blessing of Israel.*

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the ^hking of Israel, *even* the LORD, *is* in ²the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.

16 In that day ⁱit shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: *and* to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save, ^jhe will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

18 I will gather *them that are* sorrowful for the solemn assembly, *who* are of thee, *to whom* the reproach of it *was* a burden.

19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

20 At that time ^kwill I bring you *again*, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.

¹ In Zephaniah the conversion of "the peoples" is stated out of the usual prophetic order, in which the blessing of Israel and the setting up of the kingdom precedes the conversion of the Gentiles. See Zech. 12. 1, *note*, and Zech. 12. 8, *note*. But the passage gives clear testimony as to when the conversion of the nations will occur. It is *after* the smiting of the nations. Cf. Isa. 11. 9 with context; Dan. 2. 34, 35; Psa. 2. 5-8; Acts 15. 15-17; Rev. 19. 19-20. 6.

² That this, and all like passages in the Prophets (see "Kingdom (O.T.)," Gen. 1. 26; Zech. 12. 8), cannot refer to anything which occurred at the first coming of Christ is clear from the context. The precise reverse was true. See Isa. 11. 1, *note*.