

Zephaniah
Chapter One
October 8, 2025

The theme of Zephaniah is the approaching “day of the Lord.” This “day” is one of judgment against those who sin against God, and one of blessing for those who follow him.

Despite having seen the destruction and exile of Israel (the northern kingdom), Judah (the southern kingdom) refuses to keep its covenant obligations to God. If Judah repents and abandons its evil ways, “perhaps” God will forgive. Regardless, God’s judgment will lead to renewal for Judah and other peoples.

The book declares judgment on many nations, all of which opposed God through opposition to his people. The last nation warned is Judah herself. God is displeased with those who claim to be his own people.

Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem:

1:1-3

The objects of judgment:

vv. 4-13

- a. The idolaters (1:4-7)**
- b. The princes (1:8)**
- c. The oppressors (1:9)**
- d. The merchants (1:10-11)**
- e. The indifferent (1:12-13)**

The description of judgment:

vv. 14-18

- a. The nearness (1:14a)**
- b. The horror (1:14b–18)**

Small Group Discussion:

1. What is the "Day of the Lord" as described in Zephaniah 1?
2. How does the theme of judgment apply to our lives today?
3. How does Zephaniah 1 challenge our understanding of wealth and material possessions?
4. In what ways does God's wrath coexist with His mercy and love, based on Zephaniah 1?
5. How can we apply the lessons from Zephaniah 1 to modern societal issues like greed, corruption, and inequality?
6. What does Zephaniah 1 teach us about the consequences of turning away from God, and how can we apply this lesson in our lives today?

Next Week's Lesson:

Zephaniah 2