

## The Preacher of Doom

Zephaniah

PROPOSITION: Zephaniah tells what God will do because of sin, apathy, idolatry, and atheism.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. The book of Zephaniah must be judged on quality not quantity.
2. The prophecy came to Zephaniah "in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah" (Zeph. 1:1).
3. Josiah's reforms had restored the rituals, but the people's worship was only external.
4. Outline of the book of Zephaniah:
  - a. Look Within: Wrath of God Coming on Judah (1:1 – 2:3)
  - b. Look Around: Wrath of God on All Nations (2:4 – 3:8)
  - c. Look Beyond: After Wrath of God, Healing (3:9-20)
5. Key Verse: Zephaniah 1:14
6. Skepticism, atheism, and idolatry had cause the people to believe in an inactive, indifferent, or non-existent God (cf. Zeph. 1:12).
7. To those who say in their hearts, "The Lord will do no good, nor will he do ill" (Zeph. 1:12), God shouts, "I will!" (Zeph. 1:2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 17; 2:5; 3:9, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20).

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. God will be righteous.**

- A. "I will deal with all your oppressors..." (Zeph. 3:19).
- B. "The Lord within her is righteous; he does no injustice..." (Zeph. 3:5).
- C. He cannot deny Himself; He must do what is right (cf. 2 Tim. 2:13).
- D. Because of His infinite (or perfect) justice, He must punish sin.
- E. In Deuteronomy 32:4 Moses sang, "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice...."

#### **II. God will punish.**

- A. Zephaniah announces an all-consuming judgment.
  1. "I will sweep away..." (1:2, 3).
  2. "I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth..." (1:3).
  3. "I will stretch out my hand against Judah..." (1:4).
  4. "I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal..." (1:4b).
- B. Twice in chapter one, God says through Zephaniah, "I will punish" (1:8, 9).
- C. A third class, the depraved and indifferent, is next brought under judgment (1:12).
- D. As a consequence of their sins, God would bring distress upon them (1:17, 18).
- E. Knowing that God is a jealous and consuming fire, we beg men to repent and turn to serving Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 1:6-8).

#### **III. God will purify and humble the people.**

- A. The day of the Lord is one of the themes of the prophet Zephaniah (cf. 1:14, 15, 16; 3:8, 11). It would be a day of terror.
- B. However, the humbly penitent would "not be put to shame" (3:11). Instead, they will be purified.
- C. God is looking for unity and purity (Zeph. 3:9; cf. John 15:6).

#### **IV. God will redeem and restore.**

- A. "He will quiet you by his love" (Zeph. 3:17).
- B. God would deal with those who afflicted His people (3:19).
- C. But, He would "save the lame and gather the outcast" (3:19). "I will make you ashamed no more."
- D. The work of revival is the work of the Lord. "'(I will) restore your fortunes before your eyes,' says the Lord" (Zeph. 3:20).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Zephaniah gives four steps to hell in 3:1, 2.
2. We have responsibility to respond in an active way to an active God (cf. Zeph. 2:3; 3:15).