



**COMING UP...** JUL 14: Jeremiah part 1 (chs. 1-33) JUL 21: Jeremiah part 2 (chs. 34-52) JUL 28: Habakkuk AUG 4: Lamentations AUG 11: Obadiah

#### THE TIMES ...

Nahum was sent to Nineveh to announce her impending judgment (occurred in 612 BC)

Hezekiah's son and grandson, Manasseh and Amon, have just finished their wicked 57-year rule (see 2 Kings 21) ...

They've willingly been Assyria's loyal vassal

They've adopted Assyria's ways and worship

They've hung "Damocles' Sword" over Judah

Now "Josiah the Reformer" has come to Judah's throne implementing sweeping spiritual changes in accordance with the newly rediscovered Word of God (see 2 Kings 22-23)

But while Josiah's reforms are changing the outward appearance of the kingdom, they're not penetrating deep into the people's hearts

Judah's repentance is only "skin deep"

So Zephaniah is sent to warn and to beg

#### ZAPHANIAH SUMMARIZED IN A WORD OR PHRASE: "The Day"

[See "Pre-Exilic Kings and Prophets in Israel and Judah" chart, p. 5]

#### THE BASICS ...

Who: Zephaniah ("The Lord hides") When: pre-exilic (640-621 BC) Where: primarily to Judah and Jerusalem

Why: "Zephaniah's purpose was to announce coming judgment on Judah in the Day of the Lord. However, he said that judgment would extend to all the nations of the earth, indicating that the Day of the Lord would also bring deliverance for Israel and the Gentiles." -Dr. Charles Dyer

#### LESSON THEME: Repentance is known by new obedience

### A Coming Day of Judgment (1:2-3:8)

Against the whole world (1:2-3)

Notice the Noahic flood language (see Gen 6)

It will begin with God's people (1:4-2:3)

Special revelation: responsibility and judgment

Judah is judged for her syncretism

She's judged for her heartless religiosity

But repent now ... and perhaps God will even yet be merciful!

It will spread to the Gentile nations (2:4-15)

West: Philistia; East: Moab and Ammon

South: Egypt/Ethiopia; North: Assyria

For your oppression borne of arrogance

For an indifferent, complacent, carefree attitude

For your prideful self-sufficiency

Even consuming Jerusalem (3:1-8)

For harboring *oppressors* who disregard rights

For harboring *rebels* who refuse to submit

For harboring *defilers* who're polluted by sinful influences and practices

The holy city is unholy ... and God has had enough

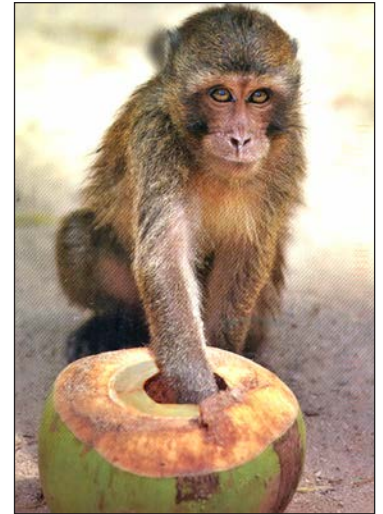
### Lessons for Judah

God isn't fooled by appearances, by your superficial repentance

As the Holy One, God will judge sin; "God will not let His children sin successfully."

Illustration: the monkey trap ▷

When the sinner won't offer himself to God as a living sacrifice (Rom 12), he'll become the *sacrifice* for and *victim* of his own sin



A monkey trap

### A Coming Day of Joy (3:9-20)

But God isn't leading them to Babylon to leave them in Babylon ...

They will return (3:9-10)

Israel will turn to Him; *He* will come for them

The remnant will return to the Promised Land

They will be restored (3:11-13)

Their fortunes will be reversed

They will rejoice! (3:14-20)

### Lessons for Judah

God will not always be angry with you

He *will* turn toward you again, healing and restoring you (see Numbers 23:19-20)

His chastening is only for a little while, for your purification and holiness

One day, the whole earth will recognize and worship God for how He's dealt with you

One day, God says, My people will be a blessing to the entire world

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### APPLICATION 1: Repentance is known by new obedience

#### "Superficial" Repentance

Loves remorse and religiosity

Is looking for a quick fix or a shortcut so it can just "get on with it"

Has an attitude of "this change is enough" rather than "do whatever it takes, Lord"

Believes God is pleased and/or fooled by wearing this "mask" of superficiality

Desires "to appear" more than "to be"

Such ones are the "monkeys" with their hand caught in the gourd

Such ones are too attached to the world and its ways to trust and surrender more

Such ones keep up appearances and pretend; but their hearts are growing harder every day

In reality such ones are defiant, indifferent, callous and complacent towards holiness

#### Bottom Line

Pretenders *will be* exposed and disciplined

When the sinner won't offer himself to God as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2), he'll instead become the *sacrifice* for and *victim* of his own sin (Rom 6:23)

**BUT** ... those who repent will be shown mercy and restored by the Lord (1 John 1:9 - Peter)

Believer: Remember the pile ...

#### Questions

Is your heart cold, lukewarm or hot toward the Lord, His Word and His worship today?

Do you have a "Sunday only" relationship?

Where have you grown weary of walking with the Lord and obeying Him?

Does your lifestyle (speech, actions, attitudes) magnify the Lord or does it instead disgrace His name in front of others?

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### APPLICATION 2: The faithful worship while they wait on God

#### Worship While We Wait

Focus on God's *timeless* character over our *present-day* suffering

Worship Him for Who He is ...

He's an all-powerful Savior

He'll always be with you and never forsake you

He's compassionate and merciful to the humble

He's the protector of the weak and of those who wait and depend on Him

He is faithful and just

Pray the Psalms; sing hymns or spiritual songs to yourself (see Eph 5:18-20)

Have hope ... because God is faithful to do what He says He'll do—one day He'll turn your day of suffering into a day of joy

Continue to walk in the light with Him while you're waiting

Wait on Him to do His good work

Encourage one another in these truths because ...

Every believer is fighting some battle every day that you know nothing about!

We need to worship together, encourage one another and wait patiently together (for instance, in a Home Group)

**Zephaniah Would Remind Us ...**

True repentance can be recognized by a new obedience in the opposite direction

The faithful worship while they wait on God

**FOR NEXT TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PODCAST:** <https://feeds.transistor.fm/old-testament-survey>



**Judah's Doomed Neighbors**  
**Zeph 2:4-11**  
 Zephaniah announced God's judgment against both JUDAH and its long-time foes all around, including PHILISTIA, MOAB, and AMMON.

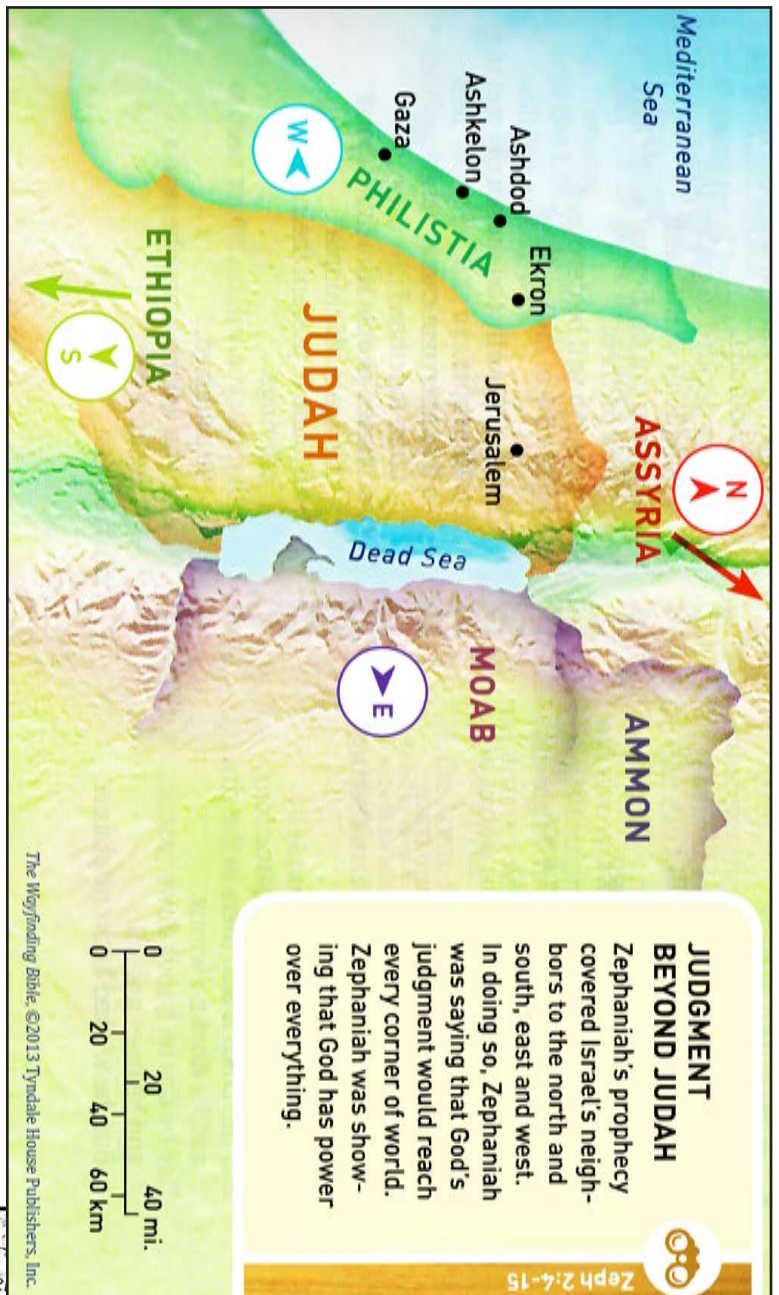
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"Zephaniah" by James Tissot

**ZEPHANIAH**

Judgment in the Day of the Lord					Blessing in the Day of the Lord	
judgment on Judah					restoration for Israel	
Judgment on all the earth	Judgment on all Judah	Judgment on all the nations around Judah	Judgment on the city of Jerusalem	Judgment on all the earth	Future blessings for the Gentiles	Future blessings for Israel
1:1 1:3	1:4 2:3	2:4 2:15	3:1 3:7	3:8 3:8	3:9 3:9	3:10 3:20



## The Day of the Lord (2:1-3)

Zeph 3:8-20  
 Isa 2:1-22; 13:6-9  
 Joel 1:1-15; 2:1-32  
 Amos 5:18-20;  
 9:1-15  
 1 Cor 5:5  
 1 Thes 5:2  
 2 Pet 3:10

Zephaniah paints a graphic word picture of the future day of God's judgment. That day will engulf all nations and cause terrible havoc on the earth. Accordingly, God's people must repent immediately in the hope of finding a place of refuge in that day (2:1-3). The humble and trusting remnant must patiently await God's day of restoration (3:8). Following God's day of judgment, a purified people will worship and rejoice in the Lord's saving work and enjoy his presence forever (3:9-20). The horrifying spectacle of judgment leads to ultimate blessing.

Disaster beyond any yet seen is coming to the whole world. Zephaniah reveals that the day of the Lord forms a continuum from the time at hand to the distant future (see also Isa 2:1-22; Amos 5:18-20; 9:1-15). For the northern kingdom, the day of the Lord came when Assyria destroyed Samaria as God promised through Amos. The day of the Lord came for the southern kingdom with the invasions of Babylon in 605-586 BC and the destruction of Jerusalem. Zephaniah also speaks of the great and final day of the Lord, when all sin and opposition will be put away forever (3:9-13).

The day of the Lord's judgment can begin at any moment. All people in every age should trust in the Lord (3:12) and wait patiently (3:8) for God to fulfill his will and purposes. Believers must concern themselves with the coming judgment of the world, warning others of the seriousness of unbelief, while living faithfully in the hope of God's promised future.

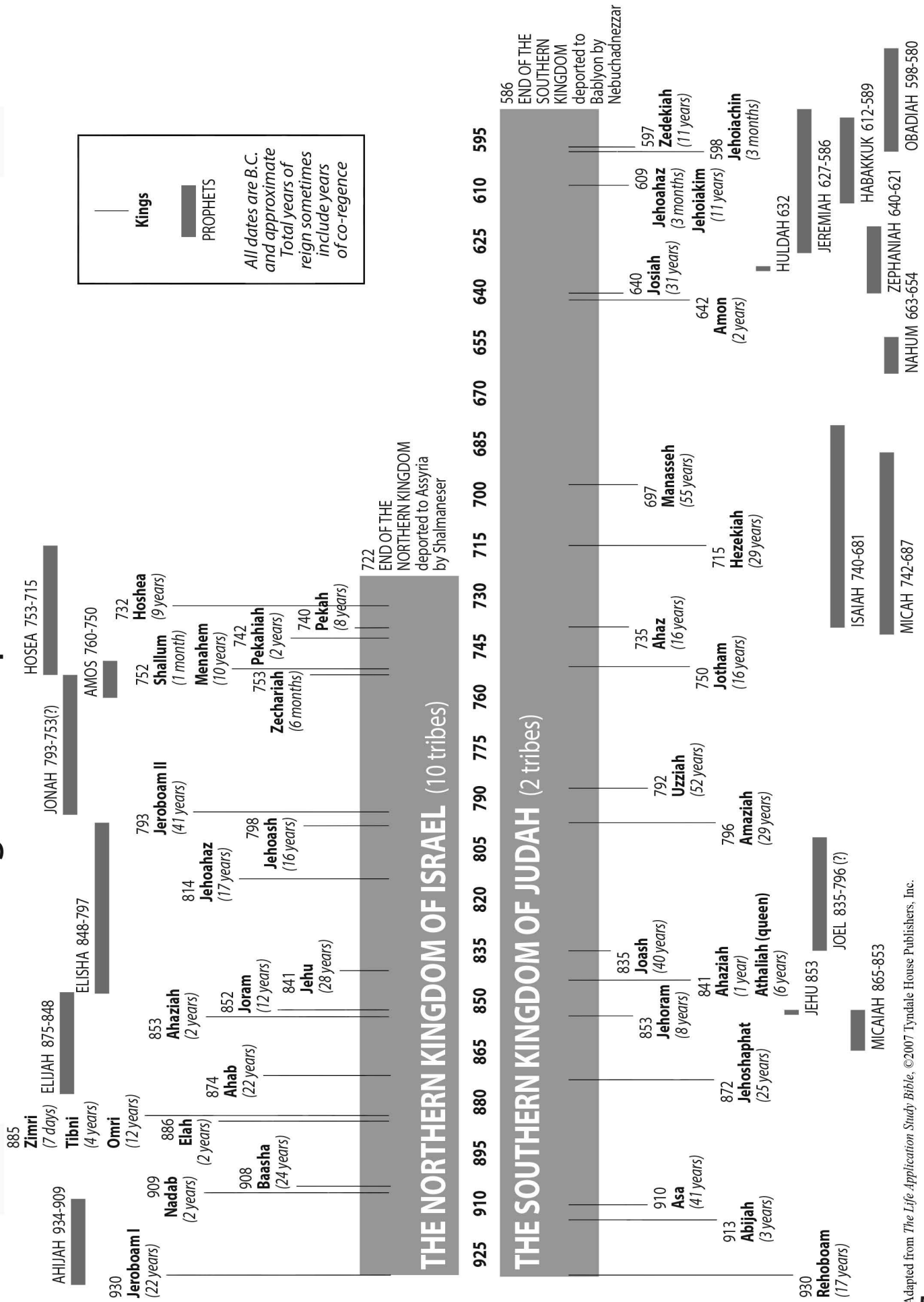


The Near East during Zephaniah's Time (about 635~622 BC). Zephaniah prophesied early in the reign of Josiah (640-609 BC), before Josiah began making reforms (2 Kgs 22:3-23-27 at that time, the ASSYRIAN EMPIRE was at the height of its power under King Ashurbanipal (668-626 BC).

- ASSYRIA 2:13
- ETHIOPIA 2:12; 3:10
- JERUSALEM 1:4, 12; 3:1-20
- JUDAH 1:1, 4, 8; 2:7
- NINEVEH 2:13

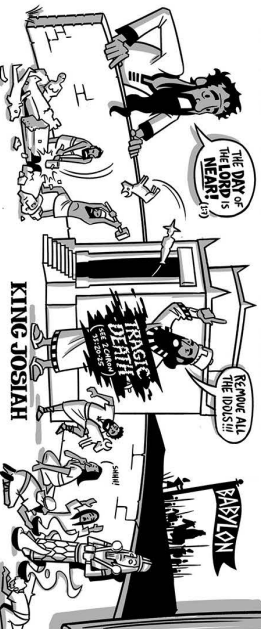
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# Pre-Exilic Kings and Prophets in Israel and Judah



**Kings** ———  
**PROPHETS** ———

All dates are B.C.  
 Total years of reign sometimes include years of co-regence



KING JOSIAH

# ZEPHANIAH



## 1-2:3 JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM

**1** JERUSALEM'S LAND IS GOING TO END

**REVERSAL of GENESIS 1**  
APOCALYPTIC IMAGES REFER TO AN ARMY

**ZEPHANIAH DOESN'T SAY WHO, BECAUSE HE WANTS TO HIGHLIGHT GOD'S ROLE.**

**21-3** HATE FOR THE KETNAMANT

SEEK THE LORD, YOU AND ARE HUMBLE. (2:3)

IN YOUR HECK, SAME AS, O GOD!

## 2:4-3:8 JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS & JERUSALEM AGAIN!

**24-10** ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE NATIONS

**24-10** ...NO LONGER ...JERUSALEM!

**31-0** GOD DOESN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE HIS OWN PEOPLE ANYMORE...

**ALL OF THEM WILL FALL BEFORE BABYLON**

PHILISTINES, HITTITES, CASSITIANS

**MY DECISION IS TO GATHER ALL THE NATIONS & POUR OUT MY WRATH ON THEM.** (3:8)

**BURNING BABYLON**

NOT TOTAL DESTRUCTION, BUT

## 3:9-20 HOPE FOR THE NATIONS & JERUSALEM

**39-10** GOD TRANSFORMS THE NATIONS INTO A UNITED FAMILY

**I WILL PURIFY THE LIPS OF THE NATIONS SO THEY CAN CALL ON THE LORD.** (3:9)

**311-20** GOD RESTORES JERUSALEM

**FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**

*Bless the residents* (SEE GEN 12:5-7)

**"O LORD GOD ALL LIVE AROUND YOU & HE CALL CELEBRATE YOU AND SING (3:17)**

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## TIMELINE OF ZEPHANIAH

