

Lessons from the Book of Zephaniah

Zephaniah prophesied during the time of King Josiah (1:1). Judging from internal evidence surrounding the destruction of Nineveh and the reformations of Josiah, the date can be described as being between 630-612 B.C. As the great, great grandson of Hezekiah, Zephaniah was from royal descent. But now he speaks on behalf of the King of kings.

There are several practical lessons we can learn from Zephaniah.

1. God will destroy the earth (1:2). God goes on to say that he will sweep away man, beast, birds, fish, and the wicked. There is coming a day when God will destroy the earth, when everything will be overthrown. Peter said, “The heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). The earth will be destroyed.

2. God hates idolatry (1:4). God does not want false gods to have priority over him. He wants to be first. Therefore, God hates idolatry.

3. The day of the Lord is a terrible day. Concerning the day of the Lord, Zephaniah wrote, “A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry” (1:15-16). The day of the Lord is a terrible and fierce day, for on that day God will execute his wrath against the world. Such strong language is only fitting to describe the day of the Lord.

4. Money does no good at the day of the Lord (1:18). Many people gain great riches, but those riches cannot save from God's wrath--only the blood of Jesus can do that. No matter how much money one has, he will still stand before God and be judged. If he is not found faithful, he will be lost regardless of his material status. Peter said that Jesus, not riches, saves us. "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

5. Those who seek the Lord seek shelter (2:3). Those who obey God seek shelter in him. Yahweh is not some God who delights in showing his wrath, but rather he wants to protect those who come to him. But, God can only protect those who do his will. Those who do God's will seek refuge in God; they seek refuge against the terrible day of the Lord.

6. The Lord remembers his remnant (2:7). The Lord remembers his remnant. He does not treat them the same way he treats the unfaithful. But, he protects and cares for his remnant; God is "mindful of them." God knows who are his and he will take care of them. This means that we, as God's remnant, do not need to worry. God will take care of us. No matter what happens in life, God is in control and he will protect his remnant. We need to walk by faith and not by sight and trust God to protect us.

The book of Zephaniah is a wonderful little book. It teaches us about the day of the Lord. It teaches us that the day of the Lord is a terrible, fierce day, but God protects those

who seek refuge in him. The unrighteous should fear the day of the Lord, but God's remnant does not need to fear that day.