THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

I. INTRODUCTION - 1:1

A. Name

1. צפניה

2. He whom Jehovah Hides - Jehovah has Hidden

3. Play upon the name in 2:3

B. Family

1. Father – Cushi

2. Grandfather - Gedeliah

3. Great Grandfather – Amariah

4. Great Great Grandfather – Hezekiah
   a. Only prophet to go back four generations

   (1) Most - No father: Daniel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Malachi

   (2) Some - Only father: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah

   (3) Zechariah - Father and grandfather

   b. Reason - Hezekiah was King Hezekiah

C. Date

1. Days of Josiah - 640-610 (609)
   a. Began to seek God in his eighth year – 632
   b. Began the reforms in the twelfth year – 628
c. Deuteronomy discussed in his eighteenth year - 622

2. More likely after 622 - The year of the discovery of Deuteronomy leading to the revival
   a. If Zephaniah sparked Josiah’s interest - 640-632
   b. If before beginning of reforms - Prior to 628

3. Contemporary with Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah

D. Locale

1. Judah

2. Jerusalem
   a. Member of the royal house
   b. Familiarity with Jerusalem’s geography

E. Historical Setting

1. A time of royal revival after excesses of Manasseh

2. Corruption of royal house in spite of Josiah

3. Religious Syncretism

4. Assyrians in Decline

F. Major Points

1. The Judgment of God

2. The Universality of Judgment

3. The Severity and the Goodness of God

4. The Necessity of Warning

G. Theme: The Day of Jehovah
H. The Verse

1. *The Word of Jehovah* - The Source of the Prophecy

2. *Which came unto Zephaniah* - The Prophetic Means

3. The Genealogy
   
   a. *The son of Cushi*
   
   b. *The son of Gedaliah*
   
   c. *The son of Amariah*
   
   d. *The son of Hezekiah*

4. The Timing: *In the days of Josiah*
   
   a. *The son of Amon*
   
   b. *King of Judah*
II. THE DAY OF JEHOVAH - 1:2 - 3:8

A. The Universality of Judgment - 1:2-3

1. All Things to be Consumed: *I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground* - Says Jehovah - 1:2

   a. God will use His broom

   b. He will sweep away what is on the earth - *I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground*

   c. Sweep away everything from the face of the earth

2. The Sweeping Away Includes All Types of Life - 1:3

   a. *I will consume man and beast*

   b. *I will consume the birds of the heavens*

   c. *And the fish of the sea*

   d. *The stumblingblocks (Idols) with the wicked*

   e. *I will cut off man from off the face of the ground* - Says Jehovah

      (1) Play upon words

      (2) Cut off man (יהוה) from the face of the ground (יהוה) - 1:3c

B. The Judgment of Judah - 1:4 - 2:3

1. Against Religious Practices - 1:4-6

   a. Object: Judah and Jerusalem - 1:4a

      (1) *I will stretch out My hand upon Judah*

      (2) *And upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem*
b. Baalism - 1:4b
   (1) Baal - *I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place*
   (2) Ashteroth – Female consort to Baal
   (3) Remnant of Baal - All that may still be left in light of Josiah’s reforms

c. *The name of the Chemarim - With the priests* - 1:4c
   (1) פְּרָעָר - Idolatrous priests
   (2) II Kings 23:5
   (3) Hosea 10:5

d. Sabeanism: Star worshippers - *The host of heaven* - 1:5a
   (1) *Them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops*
   (2) Strictly forbidden by the Law - Deuteronomy 4:19
   (3) Carried the death penalty - Deuteronomy 17:3-7
   (4) Astrology practiced at this time
      (a) II Kings 21:3-5; 23:5
      (b) Jeremiah 7:17-18; 8:2; 44:17-19, 25
   (5) *Housetops*: Flat roofs allowed for observation of star worship - Jeremiah 19:13; 32:29

e. *Swear by Jehovah and by Malcam* - 1:5b
   (1) Syncretism and compromise
      (a) *And them that worship*
      (b) *That swear to Jehovah*
(c) Swear by Malcam

(2)  נְאַרְם - God of the Ammonites - Jeremiah 49:3

(3) Reference to Molech

f. Apostates: Them that are turned back from following Jehovah - 1:6a

(1) Those that have not sought Jehovah

(2) Nor inquired after Him


a. Announcement of the Day of Jehovah - 1:7

(1) Hold your peace at the presence of the Lord Jehovah - Be silent

(2) The reason: For the Day of Jehovah is at hand - The Great Tribulation

(3) It is a sacrifice - For Jehovah had prepared a sacrifice

(4) He has consecrated His guests - Set apart for destruction

b. The royal house judged - 1:8

(1) The timing: It shall come to pass in the Day of Jehovah's sacrifice

(2) Princes and king's sons

(a) I will punish the princes

(b) And the king's sons

(3) All such as are clothed with foreign apparel
(a) God had regulated a dress code
   i) Numbers 15:38-39
   ii) Deuteronomy 22:11-12

(b) Foreign clothing acts also as mimicking foreign customs

(4) No mention of the king - King Josiah was a righteous king

c. The priesthood judged - 1:9

(1) The timing: *And in that day* - Same as above

(2) I will punish all those that leap over the threshold
   (a) Religious sin: Idolatrous practice - As the Philistines do in I Samuel 5:4-5 (OR)
   (b) Social sin: Leaping over the wall for the purpose of spoiling

(3) Done with violence and deceit - *Fill their master's house with violence and deceit*

(4) Priesthood was worshipping pagan deities within the Temple Compound

d. The commercial area taken - 1:10-11 (Taunt Song)

(1) The timing: *And in that day says Jehovah* - The prophetic future

(2) The Fish Gate and Second Quarter: The Industrial Quarter - 1:10
   (a) *There shall be the noise of a cry from the Fish Gate*
   (b) *And a wailing from the Second Quarter*
i) I Kings 22:14

ii) II Chronicles 34:22

(c) *And a great crashing from the hills* - As the idols are thrown down to their destruction

(d) Home of Huldah the Prophetess - II Kings 22:14

(3) The Maktesh - 1:11

(a) *Wail* - Ye inhabitants of the Maktesh

i) סָלַמ

ii) Tyrophean Valley

iii) The Market District

(b) The reason: *For all the people of Canaan are undone*

i) Merchants

ii) Israel has become a Canaanite

(c) *All they that were laden with silver are cut off*

e. The search for sinners - 1:12

(1) The Timing: *And it shall come to pass at that time*

(2) *I will search Jerusalem with lamps*

(a) Like Diogenes of Sinope searching for an honest man

(b) But God is not searching out righteousness but sin - So nothing is hid
First purpose for the Tribulation - To make an end of wickedness and wicked ones

(3) *I will punish the men that are settled on their lees*

(a) *Lees*

i) Solid matter settling on the bottom after fermentation

ii) Thickening - Remains too long on less and becomes syrupy and bitter

(b) Judah settled down on its dregs and impurities

(4) The result: *That say in their heart*

(a) *Jehovah will not do good*

(b) *Neither will He do evil*

f. The results - 1:13

(1) *Their wealth will become a spoil*

(2) *Their houses a desolation*

(a) Their houses to become a devastation

(b) *Yea they shall build houses - But shall not inhabit them*

(3) Crops - Others enjoy

(a) *They will plant vineyards*

(b) *But shall not drink the wine thereof*

(4) Amos 5:11

3. The Description - 1:14-18
a. The Great Day of Jehovah - 1:14

(1) It is Jehovah’s Day - It is the Tribulation

(2) It is soon to come - People of God are to live in a state of constant anticipation

(a) The Great Day of Jehovah is near

(b) It is near and hastens greatly

(c) Emphasis is on the certainty of this Day

(3) Even the voice of the Day of Jehovah

(4) The result: The mighty man cries there bitterly

b. That day: A day of divine judgment - 1:15

(1) A day of wrath

(2) A day of trouble and distress

(3) A day of wasteness and desolation

(4) A day of darkness and gloominess

(5) A day of clouds and a day of thick darkness

(6) Similarity with Joel 2:2

c. A day of war - 1:16

(1) A day of the trumpet and alarm

(2) A day of the battle cry

(a) Against the fortified cities

(b) Against the high battlements - The corner towers
(3) Similarity with Joel 2:1

d. A day of judgment against sinners - 1:17

(1) The threat: God will bring distress against the people

(a) *I will bring distress upon men*

(b) *That they shall walk like blind men*

(2) The reason: *Because they have sinned against Jehovah*

(3) The result – Death

(a) *Their blood will be poured out like dust*

(b) *Their flesh as dung* - Entrails like filth or dung

e. A day of judgment against the Land - 1:18

(1) Beyond hope - *Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the Day of Jehovah’s wrath*

(2) The threat: *But the whole Land will be devoured by the fire of His jealousy*

(3) The result: He will make a sudden end of all who live on the earth

(a) *For He will make an end*

(b) *Yea - A terrible end*

(c) *Of all them that dwell in the earth*

(Changes from declaration statements to five admonitions)

a. The command to gather - 2:1

(1) *Gather yourselves together*
(a) נַחֲצַיָּם קַשָּׁה

(b) Gather together like stubble in preparation for judgment

(2) *Yea gather together*

(3) *O nation that has no shame*

(a) נ"ר – Goy

(b) Like a Gentile nation that does not know God

(4) This is the regathering in unbelief in preparation for Judgment

b. The time: Before the Tribulation begins - 2:2

(1) *Before the decree brings forth – Arrives*

(2) *Before the Day pass as the chaff*

(3) *Before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you*

(4) *Before the Day of Jehovah’s anger come upon you*

c. The message to the Remnant - 2:3

(1) *Seek you Jehovah:* To seek the God of Israel

(a) *All you meek of the earth*

(b) *That have kept His ordinances*

(2) The admonition

(a) *Seek righteousness*

(b) *Seek meekness*

(3) The promise: *It may be ye will be hid in the Day of Jehovah’s anger*
(a) Protected during the Tribulation
(b) Play upon the meaning of Zephaniah's name

(4) To seek Jehovah is to seek righteousness and to seek His righteousness proves meekness

(5) *Seek:* נָכוּן - To be rightly related to God

(a) Deuteronomy 4:29
(b) Psalm 27:4

C. The Judgment Upon the Gentile Nations - 2:4-15

INTRODUCTION: If God punished these other nations in the past - He will surely judge them in the future

1. Philistia (West) - 2:4-7

a. The four cities - 2:4 (Use of alliteration)

(1) Gaza: *For Gaza shall be forsaken*

(a) נָכוּן יְרוּבֶה

(b) *Forsaken* - Forsaken Town will be forsaken

(2) *Ashkelon: A desolation*

(a) אֲשֵׂכֵלֹן לְשֵׁמֶחָה

(b) *A desolation* - Fruitful City fruitless

(3) *Ashdod: At noon day*

(a) אַשְׁדּוֹד נִרְשֵׁה

(b) Fortress Town no fortress

(c) Driven out *at noonday*
i) A time when armies rest

ii) Perhaps indicating the speed of conquest

iii) Enemy superior - Will not need the element of surprise

(4) \textit{Ekron: Shall be rooted up}

(a) שִׁירֶה שְׁפֵךְ

(b) Rooted up - Root Town will be uprooted

b. Philistine population totally disappears - 2:5

(1) Declaration: \textit{Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast} - The Philistine Plain

(2) \textit{The nation of the Cherethites}

(a) Caphtor – Crete

(b) Amos 9:7

(3) \textit{The Word of Jehovah is against you}

(a) \textit{O Canaan} – The Land promised to Israel

(b) \textit{The Land of the Philistines} - Living in a section promised to Israel

(4) The judgment

(a) \textit{I will destroy you}

(b) Result: \textit{That there shall be no inhabitant}

(c) Now fulfilled

c. \textit{The seacoast shall be pastures} - 2:6

(1) \textit{With cottages for shepherds}
Exegetical Outline Notes: The Twelve Minor Prophets

(2)  And folds for flocks
d.  Possessed by the population of Judah - 2:7

(1)  The coast shall be for the Remnant of the House of Judah

(a)  שֵׁם יֶדְתֵּי - Remnant of the House of Judah

(b)  They shall feed their flocks thereupon

(c)  In the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening

(2)  The time: After the restoration of Israel

(a)  For Jehovah their God will visit them

(b)  And bring back their captivity

2.  Moab and Ammon (East) - 2:8-11

a.  The sin - 2:8

(1)  Both Children of Lot - Genesis 19:30-38

(2)  Their sin

(a)  Reproached the Jews
   i)  I have heard the reproach of Moab
   ii)  And revilings of the Children of Ammon
   iii)  Wherewith they have reproached My people

(b)  Took Jewish territory - Magnified themselves against their border

b.  Comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah - 2:9
(1) The declaration: *Therefore as I live says Jehovah of Hosts - The God of Israel*

(2) *Surely Moab shall be as Sodom and the Children of Ammon as Gomorrah*

(a) Born out of the sin of Sodom and now will die like Sodom and Gomorrah

(b) *A possession of nettles - Wild vetches*

(c) *Salt pits - What Sodom became*

(d) *A perpetual desolation*

(3) Inhabited by the Remnant of My people: יִשְׂרָאֵל

(a) *The residue of My people shall make a prey of them*

(b) *The Remnant of My nation shall inherit them*

c. Their sin: Anti-Semitism - 2:10

(1) *This shall they have for their pride - The above judgment*

(2) *Because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of Jehovah of Hosts*

d. God’s purpose: *Jehovah will be terrible unto them - 2:11*

(1) To show He alone is God - *For He will famish all the gods of the earth*

(2) Men will worship God - *Men shall worship Him*

(a) *Every one from his place*

(b) *Even all the isles of the nation*

3. Ethiopia (South) - 2:12
a. *Ye Ethiopians also*

b. *Ye shall be slain by My sword*

c. Fulfilled by the invasion of Cambysis II of Persia in 525 B.C.

4. Assyria (North) 2:13-15

a. The announcement of judgment - 2:13

(1) *And He will stretch out His hand against the North*

(2) *And destroy Assyria*

(3) *He will make Nineveh*
   
   (a) *A desolation*
   
   (b) *Dry like the wilderness*
   
   (c) When Xenophon passed through in 401 B.C.,
   he could find no trace of it

b. Her desolation - 2:14

(1) *Herds shall lie down in the midst of her - All the beasts of the nations*

(2) *Both the pelican and the porcupine shall lodge in the capitals thereof - Their voice shall sing in the windows*

(3) *Desolation shall be in the thresholds - For He has laid bare the cedar-work*

c. The mockery - 2:15

(1) *This is the joyous city that dwelt carelessly*

(2) *That said in her heart*

   (a) *I am*
(b) And there is none beside me

(3) How she is become a desolation - A place for beasts to lie down in!

(4) Everyone that passes by her

(a) Shall hiss

(b) And wag his hand

D. The Judgment of Jerusalem - 3:1-7

1. The Woe - 3:1

a. Woe - Two emotions

(1) Warning of doom

(2) Regret that the time of judgment has come

b. The reasons for the woe: The status of Jerusalem

(1) Woe to her that is

(a) Rebellious - Acting against the Law of Moses: Spiritual Adultery

(b) Polluted - Therefore disqualified from performing any sacred duties

(2) To the oppressing city - Specifically forbidden in the Law of Moses

(a) Exodus 22:21

(b) Leviticus 29:33

(c) Leviticus 25:14

(d) Deuteronomy 23:18
2. The Four Sins - 3:2
   a. *She obeyed not the Voice* - Of the Prophets
   b. *She received not correction* - Did not learn from previous disciplinary judgment
   c. *She trusted not in Jehovah* - No faith
   d. *She drew not near to her God* - No true worship

3. The Four False Leaders - 3:3-4
   a. *Her Princes* - *In the midst of her are roaring lions* (Destroying)
   b. *Her Judges* - *Are evening wolves* - *They leave nothing for the morrow* (Preying)
   c. *Her Prophets* - *Are light and treacherous persons*
   d. *Her Priests*
      (1) *Have profaned the Sanctuary* - The Temple
          (a) They were to be the Temple caretakers
          (b) They have become the Temple profaners
      (2) *They have done violence to the Law*
          (a) They were to be the teachers of the Law
          (b) They have become breakers of the Law

4. God is Righteous in Contrast - 3:5
   a. *Jehovah in the midst of her is righteous* - He has no sin
   b. *He will not do iniquity*
c. *Morning by morning He does bring His justice to light - He fails not*

d. *But the unjust knows no shame*

5. **God’s Warning - 3:6-7**

   a. Destruction of nations was meant to serve as a warning to Israel - 3:6

      (1) *I have cut off nations - Their battlements are desolate*

      (2) *I have made their streets waste - So that none pass by*

      (3) *Their cities are destroyed*

         (a) *So that there is no man*

         (b) *So that there is no inhabitant*

   b. Israel’s response - 3:7

      (1) If they received God’s correction - They would not have suffered destruction

         (a) God said: *I said*

            i) *Only fear you Me*

            ii) *Receive correction*

         (b) Reason: *So her dwelling shall not be cut off - According to all that I have appointed concerning her*

      (2) Response was only to do more corruption still

         (a) *But they arose early*

         (b) *And corrupted all their doings*

E. **The Judgment of All Nations - 3:8**
1. His Message to the Remnant
   a. Therefore: *Wait ye for Me says Jehovah - Until the day that I rise up to the prey*
   b. Until God moves into the final judgment of the Tribulation
2. After God gathers all nations against Israel, He will destroy them
   a. *For My determination is to gather the nations - That I may assemble the kingdoms*
   b. The purpose
      (1) *To pour upon them Mine indignation - Even all My fierce anger*
      (2) *For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy*
3. These things all will mark Israel’s restoration
III. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL - 3:9-20

A. The Conversion of the Gentiles - 3:9-10

1. The Sheep Gentiles Saved - 3:9

   a. Then will I turn to the peoples a pure language

      (1) נ farkaf

         (a) Nature of object is changed

         (b) From impure to pure lips

      (2) נ farkaf - Clear

      (3) In the Kingdom there will be one universal language: Hebrew

      (4) Reversal of Babel

   b. The reason:

      (1) That they may all call upon the Name of Jehovah

      (2) To serve Him with one consent

2. Will Help in the Regathering - 3:10

   a. Extent: From beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia

   b. Gentiles will bring

      (1) My suppliants - Jews who have turned to God

      (2) Even the Daughter of My Dispersed - Jews outside the Land

   c. Shall bring Mine offering - Bring Jews back as offerings to the Lord

B. The Regeneration of Israel - 3:11-13
1. The Removal of the Sin and Sinners - 3:11
   a. The timing: *In that day shall you not be put to shame*
      (1) *For all your doings*
      (2) *Wherein you have transgressed against Me*
   b. *For - I will take away out of the midst of you your proudly exulting ones*
   c. *You shall no more be haughty in My Holy Mountain*

2. The saving of the Remnant that will seek refuge in the Lord - 3:12
   a. *But I will leave in the midst of you an afflicted and poor people - The Remnant*
   b. *They shall take refuge in the Name of Jehovah*
   c. *The poor and the needy of Isaiah - The Faithful Remnant*

3. The Results for the Remnant - 3:13
   a. *שומרי ישראל - the Remnant of Israel*
   b. The Remnant of Israel shall not sin
      (1) *Shall not do iniquity*
      (2) *Nor speak lies*
      (3) *Neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth*
   c. Security in the Land
      (1) *For they shall feed and lie down*
      (2) *None shall make them afraid*

C. The Regathering of Israel - 3:14-20
1. The Rejoicing - 3:14
   a. Sing - *O Daughter of Zion*
   b. Shout - *O Israel*
   c. Be glad and rejoice with all the heart - *O Daughter of Jerusalem*

2. The Reasons - 3:15-17
   a. Jehovah has taken away your judgments - Judgment of Israel removed - 3:15a
   b. He has cast out your enemy - Enemies cast out - 3:15b
   c. Jehovah as the King of Israel is in the midst of her - 3:15c
   d. Fear removed - 3:15d-16
      (1) You shall not fear evil any more
      (2) In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem
         (a) Fear you not - *O Zion*
         (b) Let not your hands be slack - Despair over circumstances that render a person unable to function
            i) II Chronicles 15:7
            ii) Nehemiah 6:9
            iii) Isaiah 13:7
            iv) Ezekiel 7:17
   e. God Himself rejoices over Jerusalem - 3:17
      (1) Jehovah your God is in the midst of you
(2) *A Mighty One who will save*

(a) Physically

(b) Spiritually

(3) *He will rejoice over you with joy*

(4) *He will rest in His love*

(5) *He will joy over you with singing*

f. Chiasm of 14-17

A. Zion sings - 14a

B. Israel’s Shout - 14b

C. Jerusalem’s joy - 14c

D. God’s deliverance - 15a

E. The presence of Jehovah
   the King - 15b

F. No more fear - 15c

G. Jerusalem’s future
   message - 16a

F. No more fear - 16b

E. The presence of Jehovah
   the God - 17a

D. The Mighty Deliverer - 17b

C. God’s joy - 17c

B. God’s silence - 17d
A. God sings - 17e

3. The Regathering - 3:18-20

a. The regathering of those who sorrow for the solemn assembly (Festivals) - 3:18

(1) *I will gather them that sorrow for the solemn assembly*

(2) *Who were of you - God's people*

(3) *The burden upon her was a reproach - In the past*

b. Punishment of afflictors: *Behold at that time I will deal with all them that afflict you* - 3:19a

c. Regathering of afflicted - 3:19b

(1) *I will save that which is lame*

(2) *I will gather that which was driven away*

(3) The purpose: *I will make them*

(a) *A praise*

(b) *A name*

(4) *Whose shame had been in all the earth*

d. The promise - 3:20

(1) *At that time I will bring you in*

(2) *At that time I will gather you*

(3) *I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth*

(4) The timing: *When I bring back your captivity before your eyes - Says Jehovah*