

## Zephaniah ~ Part 3

### ETHEOPIAS JUDGMENT

*<sup>12</sup> "You too, Ethiopians, will be put to death by My sword."*

They would be punished by His sword, fulfilled by **Nebuchadnezzar's** invasion and conquest of Egypt (see Ezekiel 30:24-25).

### Ashur's Judgement

*<sup>13</sup> He will stretch out his hand against the north; He will destroy Ashur (Assyria); he will make Ninveh desolate, as dry as the desert. <sup>14</sup> Herds will lie down in it, and all kinds of wild animals too - jackdaws and owls will roost on her columns, voices screeching in the windows, desolation on the doorsteps, for its cedarwork is stripped bare. <sup>15</sup> This is the city, once so joyful, whose people felt themselves secure, who used to say to herself, "I am [the greatest]! I have no rival." What a ruin she has become - a place for wild animals to lie down! Everyone passing by her hisses and shakes his fist!*

**Nebuchadnezzar** will also destroy **Ashur**. **Nineveh** will be a refuge for animals and birds, and everyone who passes by her shall hiss and shake his fist. **Nineveh**, formerly known as an **exultant city**, will be deprived of its joyful abandon (Isaiah 24:8) as well as its safety and security. Human pride and power are useless in a time of **God's** judgment. In its pride (Zephaniah 2:10; 3:11), **Nineveh** arrogantly boasted, *"I am, and there is no one else."* This primacy is reserved for **God** alone (Isaiah 45:6; cf. Exodus 20:3), and such pride will be punished. Anyone who sees the destruction of **Nineveh** *hisses* (cf. Jeremiah 19:8) and *shakes his fist*, actions not of aggression but of horror and amazement at how the mighty have fallen.

### Y'hudah's Sins Listed

**God's** people cannot think that they will emerge unscathed on the day of the **Lord**. If they sin (vv. 1–4) and are shameless (v. 5), they are also held accountable, especially if they lack repentance (vv. 6–7). This section is a woe upon **Yerushalayim**.

*<sup>3</sup> <sup>1</sup> Woe to her who is filthy, defiled; woe to the tyrant city! <sup>2</sup> She wouldn't listen to the voice, wouldn't receive correction; she didn't trust in Adonai, didn't draw close to her God.*

**Yerushalayim** was soon to learn that to reject **God's** correction leads to destruction.

*<sup>3</sup> Her leaders there with her are roaring lions, her judges desert wolves, who don't leave even a bone for tomorrow.*

Among those who should lead the city aright, but have in fact turned against *her leaders*, the civil authorities (1:8; 1 Chronicles 28:1), and *judges*, those in charge of settling legal disputes (Exodus 18:13, 22). Instead of showing benevolence, these leaders were acting as *roaring lions*, ferocious beasts possessing great power, about to seize prey (Amos 3:4), and as *desert wolves*, known for their ravenous appetite (Genesis 49:27). Leaders, rather than guarding their flock, devour it.

*<sup>4</sup> Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; her cohanim profane the holy and do violence to Torah. <sup>5</sup> Adonai, who is righteous, is there among them; he never does anything wrong. Every morning he renders his judgment, every morning, without fail; yet the wrongdoer knows no shame.*

Unlike human leaders, **God** consistently demonstrates His righteousness by not breaking the law (Ezekiel 18:5–9) and His justice by ensuring that all receive fair treatment (cf. Exodus 23:6).

*<sup>6</sup> "I have cut off nations, their battlements are ruined; I have made their streets ruins, no one walks in them. Their cities are destroyed, abandoned, unpeopled. <sup>7</sup> I said, 'Surely now you will fear me, you will receive correction'; so that her place will not be cut off by all the punishments I brought on her. But no, they only grew all the more eager to be corrupt in all that they do. <sup>1</sup>*

The desolation brought upon the surrounding nations by the **Lord** was meant to serve as a warning sign to **Y'hudah**, turning His people back to Him. **God** calls the city to *fear*, not in panic but in respectful awe at His power (2:11; Exodus 14:31). This is further defined as willingness to *receive correction* (contrast Zephaniah 3:2 as well as Jeremiah 2:30; 5:3), learning from **God's** reproof in renewed obedience and showing the fear of **God** in action (Proverbs 10:17). If they were to do this, they would not experience **God's** judgment: *that her place will not be cut off.*

If you find yourself struggling to maintain your faith in a secular society, recall **Zephaniah's** encouragement to stand firm in your identity as part of **God's** people. Share your faith through actions, allowing **God's** light to shine in your involvement. This not only strengthens your own faith but invites others to experience **God's** love. As you actively contribute to the community, your faithful witness may inspire others to seek a relationship with **Yeshua**.

In our next post, we will conclude our exploration of **Zephaniah**.

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<sup>1</sup> Zephaniah 2:12-3:7.