

## Zephaniah ~ Part 2

### Y'hudah's Day of the Lord

*2<sup>1</sup> Gather together, gather yourselves, nation devoid of shame;<sup>2</sup> before the decree takes effect, and the day comes when one passes like chaff; before Adonai's fierce anger comes on you, before the day of Adonai's anger comes on you.<sup>3</sup> Seek Adonai, all you humble in the land, you who exercise his justice; seek righteousness, seek humility - you might be hidden on the day of Adonai's anger.*

The term for *gather* is related to the word for "straw, stubble." **Y'hudah** is a nation no one, including **Adonai**, longs for. Therefore, they are exhorted to humble themselves before the **Lord's** mercy. The triple occurrence of *seek* prescribes an antidote for idolatry and self-sufficiency—humbly *seek the Lord and righteousness*, while waiting on Him to respond (Zephaniah 3:8). For **God's** people who have sinned, seeking is essential to finding Him (Deuteronomy 4:28–30; Hosea 3:5; 10:12; cp. Zechariah 8:21–22).

### Philistia's Judgment

*4 For 'Azah will be abandoned, Ashkelon will be desolate, they will evacuate Ashdod at noon, and 'Ekron will be uprooted.<sup>5</sup> Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the K'reti! The word of Adonai is against you, Kena'an, land of the P'lishtim: "I will destroy you; no one will be left."<sup>6</sup> The seacoast will be reduced to pastures, meadows for shepherds, pens for sheep;<sup>7</sup> and the coast will belong to the remnant of the house of Y'hudah. They will pasture their flocks there and, in the evening, lie down in the houses of Ashkelon. For Adonai, their God, will remember them and restore their fortunes.*

*P'lishtim.* These coastal dwellers, for so long enemies of **God's** people lying to their north and east, will be taken over by Israel. **'Azah** (modern **Gaza**), **Ashkelon**, **Ashdod**, and **Ekron** are four of the five **Philistine** city-states lying on the **Mediterranean** coast and coastal plain, presented in south-to-north order. The **seacoast** indicates the location of the **Philistines**, from which the name "Palestine" is derived. They lived to the southwest of **Y'hudah** and are also called **Cherethites** (1 Samuel 30:14; 2 Samuel 15:18), showing historical links with **Crete**. An unusual title for them is **Kena'an**, which more regularly refers to the natives of the territory before the arrival of **Isra'el** and the **Philistines** (Genesis 12:5), but could indicate the traders from the area (Zephaniah 1:11). *God will be remember* His people, taking note of their need and responding to it (Zechariah 10:3). This involves not only thought but also action, since he will *restore* (Zephaniah. 3:20) the bounty of which they have been deprived. The mention of *pastures* and *shepherds* predicts that, after the **P'lishtim** cities have been destroyed, the area will be repopulated by **God's** people (v. 7), who will live in peace. **Zephaniah** prophesied against **Y'hudah's** longtime enemies in **Philistia**, to the west of **Y'hudah** along the coast. Is this a good argument for modern Gaza?

### Mo'av's Judgment

*8 "I have heard the insults of Mo'av and the taunts of the people of 'Amon, how they reviled my people and boasted of expanding their territory.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, as I live," says Adonai-Tzva'ot, the God of Isra'el, "Mo'av will become like S'dom and the people of 'Amon like 'Amora, a land covered with nettles and salt pits, desolate forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them, the survivors in my nation will inherit them."<sup>10</sup> This is what they will earn for their pride, for having reviled and boasted against the people of Adonai-Tzva'ot.<sup>11</sup> Adonai will be fearsome against*

*them, for He will make all the earth's gods waste away. Then all the coasts and islands of the nations will worship him, each from its place.*<sup>1</sup>

Next come **Mo'av** and **`Amon**. **God** had heard their insolent words and boasts against His *people*. They will be left desolate, and the **residue** of **God's people** will dwell there. Verse 11 anticipates millennial conditions, when **the Lord** has reduced *all the gods of the earth to nothing*.

### **Ethiopians Judgment**

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

*Ethiopians* (in some translations) are **Cushites** (3:10; Isaiah 11:11), probably referring to **Egypt, Isra'el's** enemy to the south. In the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE, **Egypt** was under the control of the **Ethiopian Twenty-fifth Dynasty**. In BCE, **Egypt** and **Ethiopia** were both defeated by the **Persians** under **Cambyes** so that this defeat could refer to his campaign.<sup>2</sup>

Consider the distractions that fill your home, from technology to busy schedules, potentially pulling your family away from spiritual growth and togetherness. Inspired by Zephaniah 2:1-11, commit to intentional family devotion time each week. Choose a day, turn off distractions, and engage in discussions about your faith. This could involve reading a passage, sharing personal struggles, or praying together. Doing so cultivates a spirit of humility and dependence on **God** in your home, encouraging everyone to seek His guidance together.

In our next post, we will continue to explore **Zephaniah**.

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<sup>1</sup> Zephaniah 2:1–11.

<sup>2</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1736.