# Zephaniah

Zephaniah is a record of the prophecy given to the Prophet Zephaniah.

It’s message is a warning to JeruSalem, the surrounding countries, and the Assyrians. It was probably written around 640 BCE.

*Most of this book is poetry*

Something that only a Bible translator would notice is when words are in the form of Hebrew poetry. There’s a definite cadence that can be seen in the original language. Therefore, because this is the chosen style of God, we’ve tried to recreate it as it was originally intended: in poetic verse.

*Why use poetry?*

Poetry must conform to a certain rhythm and style. These act as memory aids, helping you to recall the words, making it easier for messages to be spread via the most common communication method of the time: song.

*Who was talking?*

When translating the words of the Prophets, you can’t help but notice the constant changing personal pronouns (I, you, he, they, etc.) used in the text. It makes it very confusing to figure out exactly who’s talking.

However, we now realize one reason for the confusion that’s usually overlooked: God didn’t speak to the Prophets personally. Rather, He sent His messages through a mediator, either referred to as a messenger (an angel), or sometimes as ‘The Word’ (which some interpret to mean Jesus).

So there are actually *three* voices speaking:

 1. That of the Prophet, who sometimes quotes himself,

 2. That of the angelic messenger who’s bringing the message from God,

 3. The words of God Himself (which we put in italics).

How can we tell the difference? From the context, the pronouns, and the tenses:

 1. When the Prophet speaks, he’s either clearly reporting what he said or did, or is simply saying what was happening.

 2. When the angelic messenger speaks, he talks about God in the third person.

 3 When God is speaking, all references to God are naturally spoken in the first person.

Did we get it all right? Probably not, but it has been an honest attempt at doing so. If you think you’ve spotted a place where our choice is incorrect, please let us know and we’ll reconsider it.

### Zephaniah

## Chapter 1

1The Word of Jehovah came to ZephaniAh (son of Cushi, grandson of GedaliAh, and great-grandson of AmariAh, son of HezekiAh) in the days of JosiAh (son of Amon) the king of Judah, and said:

 2‘When it comes to being in want,
 Let all on the face of the earth be in want,’ said the [messenger of the] Lord!
 3‘Let men and their cattle all be in want;
 Let things that fly in the sky be in want,
 As well as the fish in the seas.

 ‘May the irreverent all become ill
 Because of their lawless deeds;
 For, from the land, I’ll remove them,’ said the [messenger of the] Lord.

 4‘Then over Judah and JeruSalem
 I’ll stretch out my hand,
 And the name of the BaAl, I’ll remove from this place,
 Along with the names of his priests
 And the things dedicated [to him].

 5‘[I’ll remove] all those who bow on their roofs
 Before the [stars] in the skies,
 As well as those who bow low
 And swear their oaths by their masters,
 Or those who swear oaths by their king.
 6For, they’ve all turned from Jehovah,
 And they’re not seeking their Lord…
 [To Him], they haven’t stuck closely.

 7‘So be cautious before Jehovah [your] God,
 For the Day of the Lord is at hand!
 Jehovah has readied His [great] sacrifice,
 And made His Chosen One holy.

 8‘For the day of sacrifice will arrive
 When I’ll take vengeance upon all their rulers,
 As well as on the house of their king,
 And on those who wear foreign clothes.

 9‘When I take vengeance, you’ll see it;
 For, it’ll come to the gates in that day
 Of those filling the House of Jehovah
 With their treacherous, ungodly ways.

 10‘And in that day,’ said the [messenger of the] Lord,
 ‘There’ll come the sounds of cries from the gates…
 [The sounds] of people who are being stabbed through.
 And from the second quarter, the screams of the women,
 As the battles rage on in the hills.

 11‘So wail, all you who dwell in this place
 That soon will be cut to pieces.
 For [as happened] to the people of CanaAn;
 Those who carry silver will be slaughtered!

 12‘And in that day;
 I’ll search JeruSalem through with a lamp
 And take vengeance upon all the people
 Who’ve paid no attention to my orders,
 And on those who’ve said in their hearts:

 *‘Jehovah will do neither evil nor good!’*

 13‘Then I’ll give them the power to ravage
 And ruin all of your houses.
 So, you’ll build homes in which you won’t live,
 And plant vineyards, from which you won’t drink the wine.

 14‘For the Day of the Lord has approached…
 Yes, it’ll come very soon!
 And the sounds of the Day of the Lord
 Are ordered to be bitter and harsh.

 15‘It’ll be a day of His rage;
 A day of distress and affliction;
 A day of misery and extinction;
 A day of dimness and darkness;
 A day of clouds and [thick] fog.

 16‘It’ll be a day when the trumpets are blown,
 And cries will arise from all your walled cities,
 As well as from your high towers.
 17For, I’ll squeeze out the people,
 And then they’ll walk like the blind
 Because of their sins against [God].

 ‘I’ll pour their blood out in the dust,
 And I’ll [pour] their flesh out like dung.
 18Then their silver and gold won’t save them
 In the Day of the Rage of Jehovah.
 For the fire of His zeal will consume the whole land.

 ‘In a diligent way, He will bring it
 Upon all those who dwell in this land.’

### Zephaniah

## Chapter 2

 1‘So, gather and be bound together,
 You nation that can’t be taught,
 2Before this day passes by like a blossom…
 Before [God’s] wrath has come upon you…
 Before the day of His anger and rage.

 3‘So, seek Jehovah, you meek of the earth…
 Seek what’s righteous and fair!
 Give truthful answers to all,
 And tell them to hide in the Day of God’s wrath.

 4‘For, it’ll bring plundering to Gaza,
 And AshKelon will be wiped away.
 AshDod will fall at mid-day,
 And EkRon will soon be uprooted.

 5‘Woe to you in the lands by the sea…
 All you who’ve [moved there] from Crete.
 For the Word of Jehovah is coming against you
 (You Philistines within CanaAn’s land),
 And I’ll destroy all the places where you dwell.

 6‘[Your lands] will become pastures for flocks…
 They’ll be safe havens for sheep.
 7And the lands of those who dwell by the sea
 Will be given to the remnants of Judah.

 ‘AshKelon’s homes will then become [pens]
 Where sheep will rest [in the heat of the day].
 Then the sons of Judah, Jehovah will visit,
 And from captivity, return them.

 8[‘For God says:]

 *‘For I’ve heard the scorning of MoAb*
 *And of their mistreatment by AmMon’s sons*
 *When they berated My people,*
 *And forced themselves over My borders.*

 9*‘Because of this, as I live;*

 ‘...says IsraEl’s God, Jehovah of Armies,

 *‘MoAb will soon be like Sodom,*
 *And the sons of AmMon, like GomorRah.*

 *‘Damascus will also come to its end*
 *And be heaps of salt throughout the age!*
 *They’ll be plundered by what remain of My people…*
 *They’ll be inherited by the remnant of My nation.’*

 10‘This will happen because of their insolent ways…
 Because they berated [God’s people],
 And because they put themselves higher
 Than Jehovah, the Almighty God.

 11‘Then before them, the Lord will appear
 To destroy the gods of those nations and countries,
 And thereafter, they’ll all bow before him…
 Each man within his own land
 And the gentiles that live in the islands.

 12‘Then, the Ethiopian peoples;
 I’ll put to death with my broadsword!
 13And I’ll stretch out my hand towards the north,
 Then the Assyrians too, will be wiped away…
 I’ll turn Nineveh into a desert!

 14‘Flocks will then feed in her midst
 Beside the wild beasts of the land.
 Chameleons and hedgehogs will live in her fretwork,
 Wild beasts will roar in her ditches,
 And crows will nest in her gates.

 ‘But because she has been a tall cedar,
 15This city that has paid no attention
 Will still have hope that she can survive.

 ‘For, she has said in her heart:

 *‘[Here] I am, and after me, there’ll be no others!’*

 ‘But soon, she won’t be anymore…
 She’ll be a place where wild beasts will dwell,
 And all that thereafter go through her
 Will whistle and just wring their hands.’

### Zephaniah

## Chapter 3

 1‘And you, O great city of [JeruSalem]…
 O my dove, whom I’ve repurchased;
 2To His voice, you just wouldn’t listen,
 And you chose not to follow His orders…
 Upon Jehovah, you wouldn’t rely…
 You refused to turn back to your God.

 3‘So your rulers are like roaring lions,
 And your judges are like Arabian wolves
 That leave nothing over ‘til morning.

 4‘Your prophets are all wanton liars
 [Whose words] are blown by the winds.
 And [God’s] Holy Things are profaned by your priests
 Who have no respect for His Laws.

 5‘But among you, Jehovah’s been righteous…
 No way has He been unjust…
 Each morning, He sends you justice and light.
 But, nothing is hidden from Him,
 And He doesn’t put up with injustice.

 ‘So the wicked will all come to shame,
 6And He will tear down your proud,
 Then destroy all the places where they hide.

 ‘He’ll also wipe away all your roads,
 So that no one will pass through your cities.
 Then all of your towns will be wiped away…
 No one will dwell there, because they’ll be gone!

 7[‘For God says:]

 *‘I told you to fear Me and do as I say,*
 *So I wouldn’t have to destroy you.*
 *But now, prepare for the vengeance*
 *That I’ll be bringing upon you.*
 *For, I’ll rise early and reap,*
 *And even your gleanings, I’ll ruin,* said Jehovah.

 8*‘Then, upon the gathering of nations,*
 *I’ll thereafter pass judgment,*
 *And I’ll pour out My rage on their kings…*
 *Yes, all of My anger and rage*
 *And the fire of My zeal will consume them.*

 9*‘Then, to that generation, I’ll bring just one language*
 *So that all can call on the name of the Lord*
 *And serve him under one yoke.*

 10*‘From the ends of Ethiopia’s rivers*
 *I’ll welcome back those who were scattered,*
 *And to Me, they’ll bring sacrifices.*

 11*‘In that Day, you won’t be disgraced*
 *By the disrespect that you’ve shown Me.*
 *For I’ll remove your insolent ways*
 *And the careless attitudes that you’ve shown…*
 *Then about My Holy Mountain, you’ll boast once again.*

 12*‘But among you, I’ll leave the humble and meek*
 *(Those who respect the name of the Lord).*
 13*And this remnant of IsraEl won’t be unrighteous…*
 *Of vain things, they’ll not speak,*
 *And no way will their tongues then deceive.*
 *Then they’ll eat as they lie in their beds,*
 *And no one will make them afraid.’*

14[And the messenger of the Lord continues:]

 ‘So rejoice, O daughter of Zion…
 O JeruSalem’s daughter, shout loudly…
 Whole-heartedly [cry out in] joy…
 JeruSalem’s daughter, yell in delight!
 15For Jehovah has removed your offenses
 And ransomed you from your enemy’s hands.
 For IsraEl’s King, Jehovah, is with you,
 So you’ll no longer see any evil!

 16‘To JeruSalem, I’ll say at that time:

 *‘Be courageous, O Zion,*
 *And don’t let your hands become weak!*
 17*For Jehovah your God is among you…*
 *The Almighty has brought you salvation!’*

 ‘Then, He will spread gladness among you,
 And because He cares, He’ll revive you.
 He will be as glad and delighted with you
 As He was in the days of your holiday feasts.

 18*‘Then I’ll gather back those who are broken,*
 *And bring woe upon any that scorn you!*
 19*{Look!} In that time, I’ll act on your behalf…*
 *I’ll save all those who were pressured,*
 *And I’ll welcome back those whom I once pushed away.*
 *Then I’ll make them [a people] of boasting and fame*
 *In every place throughout the whole earth.*

 20*‘At that time, your enemies will all be disgraced*
 *And I’ll do whatever you think to be good;*
 *Because, in that time, I’ll accept you…*
 *I’ll make you famous and reasons to boast*
 *Before the rest of the nations on earth.*
 *For in front of their eyes, I’ll return you*
 *From the places where they once held you captive,’*

 ‘...said Jehovah.’