

I Will Utterly Consume All Things: Zephaniah 1's Global Judgment

Scriptures for Today

""Zephaniah 1:1-6

The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. 2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. 3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. 4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests; 5 And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham; 6 And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for him.""

Introduction — God Speaks When the World Sleeps

Zephaniah is one of the least-read books in the Bible — **not because it's unclear, but because it's uncomfortable.** Modern churches love “uplifting” passages. Zephaniah is not one of them. And, if you notice, most of the Bible is not UPLIFTING. The Bible is breaking us down because we need it.

God put this all in the Bible for a reason: **You cannot appreciate God's mercy unless you understand God's judgment.** Make sure you heard me. I'll say it again. You cannot appreciate God's mercy unless you understand His judgment.

The world is full of people who want comfort without any conviction that they are wrong. They want God's blessings without any rules for them to follow. They want forgiveness without fear of God. They want to be in control of everything.

Zephaniah pulls the curtain back and says: **“Before the mercy comes, you must see the fire.”** God is a consuming fire. He has great wrath and judgment upon evil.

Where Are We in History? Zephaniah preached during the reign of **King Josiah** of Judah (around 640–630 B.C.). At this time:

- Judah is spiritually bankrupt.
- Idols are on every hill.
- Baal worship is normal.
- The temple is neglected.
- The people “swear by the LORD” but worship other gods on the side.

And Josiah hasn't begun his reforms yet. It is a nation **sleepwalking toward destruction**. That's what many people are doing. They are awake but yet they are asleep. They run towards pure destruction. Hey, run towards God with all that you've got.

If God judged Judah — His chosen people — for their idols, what do you think He will do with America? Think about that. If you don't think God will judge America, you aren't hearing His words in the Bible.

If you ignore this message, you will miss the warning God intended to protect your family. We should be crying for this country. It will be destroyed. We have wicked rulers in every city. We have wicked leaders in the capital. Open your eyes. The country that was founded on God has turned their back on Him.

Zephaniah steps into this same moment with **one of the most terrifying openings in Scripture**. And today, we're going to walk through it — one verse at a time. We love the Bible here, and we're all going to focus in on His words today.

Verse 1 — The Prophet With Royal Blood

""Zephaniah 1:1

The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.""

Zephaniah isn't just a nobody — he may have been the **great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah** as Hizkiah there is most likely an alternate spelling for Hezekiah. He most likely has royal blood. But he doesn't stand in the palace — he stands in the pulpit. He's a preacher. And please hear me on this. God doesn't care about the throne you come from — He cares about the truth you stand for.

Why his genealogy matters

- He comes from a line of kings. Some prophets didn't. God uses anyone.
- He preaches under Josiah — the last good king of Judah.
- He is warning Judah **before** the Babylonian invasion.

Zephaniah is the preacher nobody wanted. He was sent to a nation that thought judgment would never come. We are the same way in our thinking. We get told that this country is great over and over again as it murders unborn babies through abortion. Listen, if you've been told that abortion is okay, you need to understand that it's not.

If God raised up a prophet from the royal line, it must mean the message was too important to ignore. Do not ignore this message. Whatever else you're doing right now and whatever else has your attention, it's time to **FOCUS** in on the word of God.

Verse 2 — The Shock of Judgment

""Zephaniah 1:2

I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD.""

That's a simple yet terrifying statement. This is not poetic exaggeration. It is not symbolic. It is not limited to Judah. This is **global language**. The same phrase appears in Genesis during the Flood.

People today say, "God wouldn't judge the world." Zephaniah says, "Yes, He will — and yes, He has." Remember the flood. That's why God reminds us with a rainbow. Do you think that's a fairy tale? It's not. That was with a flood. The rainbow promises God won't do it again with a flood. It was real just as this is real right here in Zephaniah. God can use fire. He didn't promise not to destroy this world with fire.

Why **MUST** a good God do this? Why does every nation fall? It's because of their wickedness.

God says He will **UTTERLY** or completely consume. "Consume" means "to sweep away completely," like a farmer clearing a field to start over. God will clear it all out and start over. If this nation can't get things right, God will clear it all out and start a new one.

The point here? What is the point? God gives nations time to repent — but not forever. God is patient. But His patience runs out.

Verse 3 — The Judgment Touches Everything

""Zephaniah 1:3

I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.""

This isn't something identical to the flood but the language is similar. This language mirrors the pattern of the Flood — sweeping, total, all-encompassing — but it doesn't mean God killed every sea creature in the Genesis flood. It means judgment reaches every realm of creation. When God judges a nation, the land suffers, the animals suffer, the crops suffer, the economy suffers, and the people suffer. Nothing stays untouched.

God is a consuming fire. It's all going. All of it. **Why everything?** Because sin corrupts everything it touches.

Look closely there. Key phrase: "the stumblingblocks with the wicked."

This means: **The idols, the altars, and the objects that caused people to sin will be destroyed along with the people who used them.** If you refuse to remove your idols, God will remove them for you — and the process is never painless.

"When God comes in judgment, He doesn't just deal with people — He deals with the things that mastered them." Nothing escapes.

Not "annihilation of humanity." Not "the end of mankind." Not "extinction." It means: **God will clear the land of the people living in rebellion.** To be cut off from the land means God removes a rebellious people from the place He gave them — whether by death, exile, or destruction. It is judgment through removal, not extinction.

This is like a landlord evicting a tenant, a tree branch being cut off, or a shepherd removing a diseased sheep.

Verse 4 — God Targets the Idols First

""**Zephaniah 1:4**

I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;""

God begins judgment among **His people first**. They are listed FIRST. God will come for you and I first if we don't do what He says. Understand this. Why? Because we know better. And that's fair and that's good.

"Baal" — the fertility god Israel kept returning to. **"Chemarims"** — black-robed idolatrous priests. These were religious leaders who mixed pagan worship with the worship of God. Sounds like Catholic priests. Same thing. They mix pagan worship with the worship of God. Doesn't work. It's pure evil.

And God says right here in the Bible: Enough. "I've had enough."

Because nothing angers God more than **religion without repentance**. You can attend church every week and still be worshiping Baal in your heart. Just because you walk into a church, it doesn't mean you're doing good.

What do you run to for comfort before you run to God?

Verse 5 — God Exposes Double-Minded Worship

""**Zephaniah 1:5**

And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham;""

This is devastating:

They “swear by the LORD” **and** swear by **Malcham** (Molech), the god of child sacrifice. They want God’s blessings **and** the world’s idols. They want God’s name **and** their own desires. That is spiritual adultery. That’s cheating on God. You still want God but you want all the other things too. You still want your wife, but you want other women too. **ADULTERY.**

God hates adultery. God hates you going after other things that aren’t Him. Understand me.

Modern Examples of “double worship”

- People who pray on Sunday and watch filth on Monday.
- People who say “God is first” but make decisions based only on money.
- People who want salvation but not submission.
- People who claim faith but follow the world’s morality.

God will not share space with your idols. He will expose them — or He will remove them. Let me say this **AGAIN**. God will not share space in your life with your idols that you worship. He will not do it. It’s best if you just go ahead and get rid of all those things that take you away from God.

Verse 6 — The Three Groups God Judges

""Zephaniah 1:6

And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.""

God identifies **three groups**:

1. Those who walked away. “Turned back from the LORD.” They once followed Him — now they don’t.

2. Those who never sought Him. People who never intended to follow God.

3. Those who don’t even ask about Him. They don’t pray. They don’t care. They don’t pursue truth.

So, again, notice who God is targeting right here and right now. This covers every type of unbelief — rebellion, apathy or not caring at all, and ignorance or not knowing.

Which of these three categories does your heart drift toward? What step will you take **TODAY** to seek the Lord? Don’t rebel against Him. Don’t care less about God. And don’t act like you didn’t know.

Conclusion — Judgment Is Coming, But So Is Hope

Zephaniah gives us the truth as God gave it – direct, urgent, and not diluted or watered down. He doesn't sugarcoat truth. He doesn't comfort the comfortable. He wakes the sleeping.

And his message is clear: **God will judge the world — but He wants to save you BEFORE that day comes.**

You cannot change the world. But you can let God change YOU — and that's where revival begins. Everyone else gets their own choice.

You can be saved and not be doing what God is asking you to do. This is where you're treading under foot the Son of God who saved you. Don't do this. Now that you're saved, the Holy Spirit is with you. He's with you at every moment. He knows what's happening. Don't bring the judgment of God upon you.

Turn from one idol this week. Name it. Break it. Replace it with obedience to Jesus Christ. Tomorrow, do it again. Break another idol down in your life.

Next-Sermon — “Consider Your Ways: Haggai 1’s Rebuke of Neglect”

Zephaniah showed us the fire of God's judgment. Next time, Haggai will show us something just as serious — **God's response to spiritual neglect.**

""Haggai 1:5

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.""

Haggai steps into a moment when God's people had returned from exile, but they stopped building God's house and started building their own. Sometimes that's what we try to do. We are here to build God's house. Not our own house. God's house. All of us.

Look, many times people come in here looking to build themselves up and their own home and their own finances and their own this and their own that. No, we are here to build God's house.

These people you'll see in Haggai – they weren't rebellious. They were distracted. They weren't shaking their fist at God. They were just too busy for Him. Sounds like almost everyone in this country. Everyone is too busy with their own things. The things of God mean nothing.

And God says, **“Look at your life — and look at what's missing.”** Next time, we'll see:

- Why God shuts the heavens
- Why people work harder yet have less
- Why blessings dry up when priorities drift

- And how quickly things change when God goes first again

If you've ever wondered why life feels stuck, empty, or frustrating, Haggai gives the answer.

“Consider Your Ways: Haggai 1’s Rebuke of Neglect.” Come ready to look in the mirror and see what God wants to rebuild in you.

Let's pray.