

THE KING IS COMING

Survey of Judah Alone, Captivity, Return, and Years of Silence

LESSON 5: THE PROPHECIES OF ZEPHANIAH AND
NAHUM . . . *PROPHECY*

MEMORY. Memorize these dates: the reign of David begins (1004 BC), the reign of Solomon begins (965 BC), the division of the kingdom (926 BC), the captivity of Israel (722 BC), and the fall of Assyria (609 BC).

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READING. Read Zephaniah and Nahum. After doing your reading, in the space below write down something that you found to be interesting or important. It can be something that you have never noticed before or something that you want to remember and apply.

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DISCUSSION.

1. *Background of Zephaniah.* During whose reign did Zephaniah prophesy? (Zeph 1:1) At what part of his reign does the prophecy of Zephaniah fit? (vv. 2-6; cf. 2 Kgs 22:1-30) What is peculiar about the genealogy of Zephaniah? (Zeph 1:1) (Optional: What does the name "Zephaniah" mean?)

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DISCUSSION.

2. *Prophecy of Zephaniah.* A possible outline of the prophecy of Zephaniah is as follows: (1) The Wrath of the Lord = The Day of the Lord (1:2-2:3), (2) The Decision of the Lord = The Gathering of the Nations (2:4-3:8), and (3) The Promise of the Lord = The Salvation of the Remnant (3:9-20).

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DISCUSSION.

- 2. *Prophecy of Zephaniah.*** Describe the judgment that God would bring on Judah (Zeph 1:2-6, 14-18). Was the punishment inevitable? (2:1-3) Explain. Why did God pronounce a woe on Judah? (3:1-5) What hope remained for the faithful of Judah? (vv. 14-20)

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DISCUSSION.

3. *Background of Nahum.* The prophecy of Nahum was an oracle (or burden) against whom? (Nah 1:1) How had the Assyrians responded to the last prophet who condemned them? (Jonah 3:4-9) The name "Nahum" means "comforter." Who would derive comfort from the prophecy of Nahum?

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DISCUSSION.

4. *Prophecy of Nahum.* A possible outline of the prophecy of Nahum is as follows: (1) The Awesome Judge of Nineveh (1:2-13), (2) The Terrible Fall of Nineveh (1:14-2:13), and (3) The Deserved Punishment of Nineveh (3:1-19).

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DISCUSSION.

4. *Prophecy of Nahum.* Read Nah 1:2-8. How can we reconcile the severity and the goodness of the Lord? What good news was coming to Judah? (v. 15; cf. Joel 3:17; Isa 40:9; 52:7; Rom 10:15) Why did God pronounce a woe on the Assyrians? (Nah 3:1-4) What would God do to them? (vv. 5-7; cf. v. 19)

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CONNECTION. The Old Testament (OT) points forward to Christ and the New Testament (NT). Record any significant OT-NT connections that you observe in Isaiah. In addition, answer the following question and be ready to discuss: How does Zeph 3:15-17 find its ultimate fulfillment in the Lord Jesus?

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APPLICATION. Read again Nah 1:2-8. Take this description of God and make it into a personal prayer (e.g., "A jealous and avenging God is Yahweh" = "Yahweh, you are a jealous and avenging God.") Feel free to build on the words (e.g., "Yahweh, you are a jealous and avenging God. You are jealous for me, and I know that you will fully and finally avenge me when Jesus returns."). After praying your prayer, meditate on the pros/cons of praying Scripture.