

12 Prophets - Zephaniah Part 1

Month	Tribe	Prophet
Tishrei	Ephraim	Hoshea
Cheshvan	Menasheh	Yoel
Kislev	Binyamin	Amos
Tevet	Dan	Ovadia
Shevat	Asher	Yonah
Adar 1, Adar 2	Naphtali, Levi	Michah
Nisan	Yehudah	Nachum
Iyar	Issachar	Habakkuk
Sivan	Zebulan	Zephaniah
Tammuz	Reuven	Haggai
Av	Shimon	Zechariah
Elul	Gad	Malachi

As we begin our study of Zephaniah we look again at our chart showing the months of the Hebrew calendar and how they correspond to Trei Asar and the 12 tribes. Zephaniah is associated with Zebulan and Sivan.

Before we analyse the name of Zephaniah, we'll look at Zebulun whose name means "habitation" taken from the root "zabal" meaning to reside. This is interesting as the month of Sivan is the month of Shavuot and within it is the remembrance of the giving of the Torah at Sinai. As significant as this is, we see that even more significantly that this is also the moment in history when the Creator of All chooses to come upon the mountain. Here, He takes the Nation of Israel and its mixed multitude that has emerged from Egypt for His own people so that He may have a habitation among them and dwell in their midst in the Mishkan, which will later become the Temple in Jerusalem.

Zephaniah's lineage is from the royal line, and yet, it is only in this book that he appears to be mentioned. He does not seem to feature elsewhere.

Zephaniah's name is associated with "hiddenness" – his name can be interpreted as "hidden of Yah" or "Yah hides". We derive this from the following "Tzafun" (hidden) Yah (GOD).

H6846

צפניה / צפנייה

tsephanyâh / tsephanyâhû

BDB Definition:

Zephaniah = "Jehovah has treasured"

- 1) the 9th in order of the 12 minor prophets; descendant of king Hezekiah of Judah and prophet in the time of king Josiah of Judah
- 2) son of Maaseiah and second priest in the reign of king Zedekiah of Judah; succeeded Jehoiada and an officer of the temple; slain at Riblah on the capture of Jerusalem
- 3) father of Josiah and Hen in the time of the prophet Zechariah
- 4) a Levite

Part of Speech: noun proper masculine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from [H6845](#) and [H3050](#)

H6845

צָפַן

tsâphan

BDB Definition:

1) to hide, treasure, treasure or store up

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to hide, treasure, treasure up

1a2) to lie hidden, lurk

1b) (Niphal) to be hidden, be stored up

1c) (Hiphil) to hide, hide from discovery

Part of Speech: verb

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: a primitive root

Same Word by TWOT Number: 1953

H3050

יָהּ

yâhh

BDB Definition:

1) Jah (Jehovah in the shortened form)

1a) the proper name of the one true God

1b) used in many compounds

1b1) names beginning with the letters 'Je'

1b2) names ending with 'iah' or 'jah'

Part of Speech: noun proper deity

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: contraction for [H3068](#), and meaning the same

Same Word by TWOT Number: 484b

The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language.

([Esther 8:9](#))

and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

([Genesis 8:4-5](#))

We see the principal of hiddenness expressed in the accounts of the Flood and Purim, where seemingly, those who sought to dominate, abuse and annihilate the presence of HaShem in the world, whether it be the evidence of the Children of Israel, or the Sovereign Creator through nature and their fellows, were so oblivious because of the hiddenness of HaShem that they believe that they have become the gods of the world.

What we will discover is that the judgement of the "adamah" as described by the prophet Zephaniah is not designed to annihilate, but to restore the true balance, as it was in the Flood, the Exodus and Purim.

Celebration of the periodic holidays: But besides this holiness that was determined about their levels according to the level of the holiness of these days, there are other specific attributes to each time period according to its content. And the root of them all is the order arranged by the Supreme Wisdom, such that the refinement refined and the great light that shone at a particular time return at that period of the year to shine light similar to the first light and have the effect of the refinement be renewed in the one that received it [originally]. So see that, according to this, we were commanded on the holiday [of Passover] about all the things that we are commanded in memory of the exodus from Egypt. For since that refinement was a very great refinement that happened to us - as we wrote above - it was embedded that upon the return of that period of the year, a light similar to the light that shone then, shine; and that the effect of that refinement be renewed in us. Therefore we were commanded in all of those matters. And in the same manner, the holiday of Pentecost (Shavuot) for the giving of the Torah; and the holiday of Tabernacles (Sukkot) for the clouds of glory. Even though [the latter] is not specifically at the same time, the Torah fixed this holiday for the memory of that matter, as it is stated (Leviticus 23:43), "that I placed them in huts, etc." And likewise Chanukah, and likewise Purim [have observances tied to the events they commemorate).

Derech HaShem Part 4, 7:6

The Day of the LORD

As we study through Zephaniah, we'll see the phrase "the day of the LORD" appear a few times; three times in fact, all in chapter 1.

What is the day of the LORD?

The passage from Derech HaShem (The Way of GOD) is helpful to us in unpacking this phrase.

The key is the Hebrew calendar and the Moedim, specifically the day of Shavuot. This is the day of HaShem's appearance in establishing the Torah upon the whole of mankind, giving the responsibility to Israel in the first instance to guide and instruct both themselves and the nations around. This was not a call to perfection but a call to obedience as the Tree of Life became accessible once again to all of humankind, fulfilling its role in being an instructor toward life. It is for this reason that the writer of Hebrews speaks in terms of the following:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

[\(Hebrews 4:12-13\)](#)

The word of GOD first enters into the world in a codified manner at Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai) and immediately has the ability to discern. The original tablets which are broken by Moshe is the same picture as the apple incident in Eden. The version of the tablets kept in the Ark are efficacious in bringing to light the errors of mankind, but not as efficacious as the original sapphire tablets. They are the image of the Tree of Life, its embodiment.

As Ramchal expresses in Derech HaShem, each time we approach the Moedim as anniversary/remembrance, we are not purely looking at past events with some sort of dewy-eyed nostalgia, but the power of the original event is possible today, May it be His Will, to effect the same change and imbue that moment with the same light which was revealed at that time. This is the essence of the events that we see in Acts 2 in the Shavuot after the Ascension of Messiah Yeshua. However, just as Israel became compromised in its adoption of the gods of the Canaanites and Ammonites, the believing community today has also compromised itself with the belief systems of the modern world, rather than imbuing society with the light of the Living Torah as expressed in Yeshua HaMashiach.

So, the day of the LORD becomes a day of reckoning as the world is examined through the lens of Torah and its faithfulness to the embodiment of the Living Torah as expressed through Messiah Yeshua.

The day of the LORD is not an expression fixed to one moment in time, but is an expression of the event when the Holiness of the Creator will bring a rectification to all things in the world.

Within the context of the 12 Prophets, the reckoning upon Israel and Judah is first brought through the rise of the Assyrian and then the Babylonian Empires. Through time we see the expression of the various world empires rising and falling in accordance with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar as interpreted through Daniel the prophet. A final rectification is still to take place as described in that dream and through the Apocalyptic writings of the Apostle John and as described in the book of Zephaniah.

Hiddenness is not a permanent state, it is the precursor to revelation and resolution. Just as the child is hidden for 9 months from the world, the kingdom of Messiah has been hidden for the last 2000 years waiting to be birthed.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

(2 Peter 3:9-13)

The language of Peter's epistle is the language of Shavuot also known as HaBikkurim, the renewal of the Source of Creation.

Who is Zephaniah?

Other than the introduction we know very little about Zephaniah. He is of the lineage of Hezekiah and therefore of the line of David and Mashiach. It seems possible that for this reason the revelation given to him is more explicit regarding future events, although this is speculation on the part of the writer, but of all the 12 prophets so far, this seems to be the point where we see a change in the emphasis of the prophet. The word of the LORD is no longer confined to the immediate judgment being declared upon Israel and Judah, or the nations in the time leading up to the Babylonian exile. What is now clear is that the language of the prophet speaks to future times making comparison to the Flood of Noach and the Giving of the Torah, key events that establish the authority of the Creator of the Universe over men and all creation, not for the sake of destruction, but in a desire to bring rectification to all of Creation.