



***Zephaniah: Remaining Confident
in the Culture Wars***
Date: 10/30/2016

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Read Together

King Manasseh spent a lifetime dedicated to evil. Scripture says he “led Judah astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel” (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20). Manasseh reigned over Judah for five decades; an entire generation knew no other king but him. Josiah came to power two years after Manasseh’s death. In time, King Josiah would enact many religious and social reforms, bringing spiritual revival after the long and disastrous reign of Manasseh. It was in this transformational period that Zephaniah proclaimed God’s message.

It is believed that Zephaniah prophesied during the early years of King Josiah’s reforms (c.627 BC). His message was one of judgment for the wicked enemies of Israel and for the unfaithful within Israel. Zephaniah warned of the imminent Day of the Lord; a judgment upon all who are idolatrous (1:4), all who have turned their back from following the Lord (1:6), all who have sought acceptance from foreign peoples rather than by God’s steadfast love (1:8), and all who have become complacent to God’s commands and promises (1:12).

God passionately pleaded with Israel to change their ways “before the decree takes effect” (2:2). He beckoned His people to repent and be restored to a right relationship with their God. This message of repentance and the promise of restoration was not exclusive to Israel; the nations—even the enemies of Israel—would “call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him with one accord” (3:9).

Outline

1. A Day of Judgment (Zephaniah 1:1-3:9)
 - a. Against Judah (Zephaniah 1:2-2:3)
 - b. Against the Nations (Zephaniah 2:4-15)
 - c. Against Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:1-8)
2. A Day of Restoration and Joy (Zephaniah 3:9-20)
 - a. Return of a Scattered People (Zephaniah 3:9-10)
 - b. Restoration of a Sinful People (Zephaniah 3:11-13)
 - c. Rejoicing of a Saved People (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- As you study Zephaniah, identify the most significant questions you need to answer to better understand its message.



- The Triune God is always the main character of Scripture. What does the book of Zephaniah teach us about God?
- Knowing what Zephaniah teaches us about God, what does the book teach us about humanity?
- Discuss the Day of Lord as Zephaniah presents it. How might this message have resonated with the people of Judah who originally received Zephaniah's prophesy? How does this message of judgment and salvation affect 21st Century Americans—both believers and those who are far from God?
- Spiritual apathy and covenant complacency were two sins that plagued the people of Judah. What were some of the ways these sins were evidenced in the lives of the people (Zephaniah 1:4-13)? In what ways are spiritual apathy and Gospel complacency still plaguing mankind today? In what areas are you prone to fall into apathy or complacency?
- After proclaiming the imminent judgment on the godless nations, Zephaniah returns warn God's people (3:1-7). What actions brought about God's judgment against His people? How did God's people respond to His warning? What did God promise his people in the future (3:8-20)?
- Read Zephaniah 2:2-3, 9 and 3:9-13. Describe God's plan for the humble and faithful remnant of His people. Identify additional passages of Scripture that complete or complement these promises.
- How should the Body of Christ "go there" with the message of Zephaniah? How do you personally need to "go there" with this message?

Do Life Together

These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!

- How is God calling you to exchange doom for everlasting hope?
- How has Jesus already provided hope in this area?
- Who do you need to share this hope with this week?

Pray Together

Pray through Philippians 2:9-11. Celebrate Christ and His sovereign authority over His creation.

