

The Message of the Old Testament

A Book-by-Book Study

Zephaniah

- ▶ Possibly a member of the royal household.
- ▶ Days of King Josiah.
- ▶ 627-626 B.C.
- ▶ A contemporary of Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk.

Outline

God Sweeps Away Sin (1:2-17a)
God Consumes the Nations (1:17b-3:5)
God Creates the Remnant (3:6-20)

The Message of Zephaniah

I. God Sweeps Away Sin (1:2-3)

Zephaniah begins not with a catalog of sins but a striking statement of total, devastating punishment.

The same sins as have been mentioned by other prophets are the cause of his judgment.

(1:7)

(1:14-16)

II. God Consumes Nations (2:5-11)

(2:5)

(2:8-9a)

God Consumes Nations . . . Yet those who humble themselves before the Lord will be rescued in this day.

(2:3)

(2:7)

III. God Creates the Remnant

(3:9-13)

(3:15-20)

Renewal results from punishment. It is the ultimate purpose of judgment, and the remnant's rejoicing gives human voice to this theological principle. God always retains a remnant beyond devastation to promote renewal.

Zephaniah concludes the emphasis on judgment begun in Nahum. At this point in the Twelve all

polytheists on earth stand under divine condemnation. The sins chronicled in Hosea-Micah will be punished. Still renewal is the goal beyond devastation. (House, 383)

Haggai

Haggai's Opening Word

"In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: "Thus says the Lord of hosts:" (1:1-2a)

Background

- ▶ 606 BC---first invasion of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.
Many taken captive to Babylon including Daniel.
- ▶ 597 BC---second invasion. Ezekiel taken captive
- ▶ 587 BC---city besieged
Fell and was burned in 586 BC; Temple was destroyed
Another great deportation of Jews to Babylon
- ▶ 538 BC---Babylon falls to Medo-Persians led by Cyrus
- ▶ Cyrus issues a decree allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem and promising financial assistance for rebuilding of the temple.

Haggai's Message in Brief

536 BC---many Jews (50,000) made the 900 mile journey back to Jerusalem. Those who returned laid the foundation stone to _____ the temple which had been destroyed, but were stopped by the nearby Samaritans. _____ passed. Haggai came on the scene around 520 BC and started preaching.

In brief, Haggai called the returned exiles to prioritize the rebuilding of the Lord's temple in Jerusalem. And the people _____ to him. Though Haggai's prophecies stop in December of 520 BC, we know from the book of Ezra that the temple was rebuilt, _____, and dedicated scarcely more than three years later, by March 516.

Outline

- I. God Rebukes the People (1:1-11)
- II. The People Return to Work on the temple (1:12-14)
- III. God Promises Greater Glory (2)

Haggai's Message

A Stinging Rebuke — 1:2-8

Return to Work — 1:12-13

God Promises Greater Glory

2:3-4

2:6-9

That for which they were to look forward sets the stage for _____ arrival!

He was presented at the temple as an infant.

He came again at the age of 12.

He visited several other times through his life. He is the one to bring _____.

Zechariah

Zechariah's Opening Word

"In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, . . ." (1:1)

- ▶ Longest minor prophet.
- ▶ Most difficult to understand.
- ▶ Began prophesying the same time as Haggai (520 BC)
- ▶ Like Haggai, he exhorted the people to get back to building the temple
- ▶ Uses symbolic language abundantly

Theme

"The theme of the book is the kingdom of God. This theme is presented in many variations interwoven with other themes. Jerusalem's relation to the kingdom is a thread which runs through the whole book. The Lord's intention to reestablish his dwelling there is the reason for building the Temple. God's coming and dwelling in Jerusalem are signs of her election. She is the centerpiece of the drama of the "that day." when all else falls under the Lord's final judgment, Jerusalem will stand exalted and confirmed."

John D. W. Watts, "Zechariah," in Broadman Bible Commentary, 7:311.

Outline

- 1: Divine Justice in the Past (1:1-6)
- 2: Divine Rule of Peace (1:7-6)
- 3: Divine Forgiveness and Blessing (7-8)
- 4: Divine Shepherd (9-11)
- 5: Divine Dwelling (12-14)

Zechariah's Message

Divine Justice in the Past

(1:2-6)

Through Zechariah, God leads the people . . .

. . . to consider how it went with their forefathers

- ▶ They _____ His laws
- ▶ They heard the prophets calling them to return to the Lord
- ▶ They paid those prophets ____ attention
- ▶ They could but acknowledge that God had dealt appropriately with them

. . . to behave differently from their forefathers.

_____ to Him and He will return to them.

Divine Rule of Peace (Chapters 1-6)

Eight visions in chapters 1-6 present a picture of the whole world at peace under the rule of God's anointed priest and king.

Summary verses (6:9-13)

Divine Forgiveness and Blessing (Chapters 7-8)

Summary verses (8:3-8)

Divine Shepherd (9-11: shepherd and king)

Zechariah 9 continues the picture of future blessing. All Israel's oppressors and foes will be defeated by the Lord. The Davidic ruler appears both as a king and as a shepherd. He arrives triumphant and meek, riding on a _____. (9:9-10)

The people are blessed because the Lord shepherds his people. (9:16-17a)

Divine Shepherd (12-14: shepherd and victim)

Zechariah 12 and 13 present the shepherd now as one who is _____ and _____.

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn." (12:10)

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the Lord of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;" (13:7)

Being struck is not the _____, however. "In chapter 14 the prophet describes a celebration of the day of the Lord and the consummation of the kingdom." (Dever, 916)

(14:8-11)

Zechariah tells us that a Divine _____ would come who would become the ruler of the world, who would bring peace, who would defeat enemies, and who would be tender like a shepherd, who would be rejected, and who would be looked upon by those who had pierced (killed) him.

How can people look upon someone future having pierced and killed him in the past? He must return!! Wow!! And this all before he even came!

Malachi

Malachi's Opening Word

"The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.." (1:1)

- ▶ Last of the minor prophets.
- ▶ Ministered in Jerusalem about 70 years after Haggai and Zechariah.
- ▶ 475-450 BC near the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- ▶ Other than his name, we know very little.
- ▶ Malachi means "My Messenger."
- ▶ Exiles had been restored to Judah from Babylon
- ▶ Temple had been rebuilt.

- ▶ True worship remained a problem.

Outline — Six Disputes

1. The People Question God's Love (1:2-5)
2. The People Do Not Honor God (1:6-2:9)
3. The People Profane the Covenant (2:10-16)
4. The People Weary God with Their Words (2:17-3:5)
5. The People Rob God (3:6-12)
6. The People Have Spoken Against God (3:13-15)
7. Repentance and Final Warnings (3:16-4:6)

The Message of Malachi

The People Question God's Love (1:2-5)

The People Do Not Honor God

1:6b-8

1:14

The People Profane the Covenant

2:13-16

The People Weary God with Their Words

2:17-3:4

The People Rob God

3:8-10

The People Have Spoken Against God

3:13-14

Repentance and Final Warnings

4:1-2

4:5-6

“Genesis kicks off with the selfish sin of Adam and Eve. Their selfishness plants firm roots, so that by the time we get to Malachi thousands of years later, after God has specially worked with his people again and again, after he has restored them from exile, after the walls and temple have been rebuilt, human selfishness is still flowering in full bloom.” (Dever, 927)

Yet the one who will finally set things right is coming. It will be a great and awesome day.