

Like many of the minor prophets the book of Zephaniah follows a pattern of judgment on all people for their sin, followed by the restoration of God's chosen people. Within this book we see God's primary target as the nation of Judah who had fallen into grievous sin under the reign of king Manasseh. Every aspect of the nation had been drenched with religious syncretism – the peoples attempt to combine God's ways with those ways of the idolatrous nations that surrounded them. Even in the midst of this disastrous and blatant sin, God through his pure act of grace calls for repentance which results in restoration and blessing. God is the altogether righteous one who will judge the living and the dead but also by his grace he offers through faith the way of salvation and restoration.

As a life group please read the entire prophecy of Zephaniah

1. What is the time-period in which Zephaniah prophecies? (Zeph. 1:1; 2:13; 2 Kings 21,22) What king was it likely that Zephaniah grew up under? Why could this be significant especially in light of 2 Kings 22:8-13?  
Extra option: Who were Zephaniahs contemporaries (prophets at the same time)? What were their messages and to whom were they prophesying?
2. The phrase "The Day of the Lord" or similar appears consistently throughout this prophecy. What is the "Day of the Lord"? Is this prophecy fulfilled close to the time of declaration or is it a future fulfilment? (Or is it a bit of both?) What character trait of God is displayed in the Day of the Lord?
3. Summarise what the key issues are that God has against his people as communicated through the prophet. How can these types of issues infiltrate our own worship of God? (i.e. the worship of idols: Idols by definition are anything that has a preeminence over God and his law. Idols take centre stage in the heart.)
4. This prophecy has a broader scope than just the nation of Judah. What is that scope? How dose Romans 3:9-23 reinforce this truth?

5. How significant is chapter 2:1-3 in the overall proclamation of this prophecy? What are the key actions that are instructed? How should these commands relate to our own walk with the Lord?
6. What role does repentance play in God's plan for restoration? How do the following NT text highlight this truth? (Mark 1:15, 6:12; Matt. 3:8; Luke 5:32, 15:7; 17:20; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 8:22, 11:18; 2 Peter 3:9.)
7. This prophecy also provides a great deal of hope. How is this hope described? How does the NT describe the same hope?

Key questions to consider at the end of your study of God's word.

- a) What have we learned?
- b) How should we pray and change in response to what we've learned?
- c) Who can we prayerfully share what we've learned with and how?

