
ZEPHANIAH 2: 1 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, you nation that has no shame,

The prophet, having declared the judgments which were ready to fall on his people, earnestly exhorts them to repentance, that these judgments may be averted, Zep 2:1-3. He then foretells the fate of other neighboring and hostile nations: the Philistines, Zep 2:4-7; Moabites and Ammonites, Zep 2:8-11; Ethiopians, Zep 2:12; and Assyrians, Zep 2:13. In the close of the chapter we have a prophecy against Nineveh. These predictions were accomplished chiefly by the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 1

Gather yourselves - Others, sift yourselves. Separate the chaff from the wheat, before the judgments of God fall upon you. O nation not desired - unlovely, not delighted in; hated because of your sin. The Israelites are addressed.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 2 before the appointed time when the day passes as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes on you, before the day of the LORD's anger comes on you.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 3 Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who have kept his ordinances. Seek righteousness. Seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger.

Verse 3

Ye meek of the earth - עֲנָוִי anavey, ye oppressed and humbled of the land.

It may be ye shall be hid - The sword has not a commission against you. Ask God, and he will be a refuge to you from the storm and from the tempest.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 4 For Gaza will be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation. They will drive out Ashdod at noonday, and Ekron will be rooted up.

Verse 4

Gaza shall be forsaken - This prophecy is against the Philistines. They had been greatly harassed by the kings of Egypt; but were completely ruined by Nebuchadnezzar, who took all Phoenicia from the Egyptians; and about the time of his taking Tyre, devastated all the seignories of the Philistines. This ruin we have seen foretold by the other prophets, and have already remarked its exact fulfillment.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 5 Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the LORD's word is against you, Canaan, the land of the Philistines. I will destroy you, that there will be no inhabitant.

Verse 5

The sea-coasts, the nation of the Cherethites - The sea-coasts mean all the country lying on the Mediterranean coast from Egypt to Joppa and Gaza. The Cherethites - the Cretans who were probably a colony of the Phoenicians. See on 1Sam 30:14 (note), and Amo 9:7 (note).

ZEPHANIAH 2: 6 The sea coast will be pastures, with cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks.

Verse 6

And the sea-coasts shall be dwellings - Newcome considers כרת keroth as a proper name, not cottages or folds. The Septuagint have Κρητη, Crete, and so has the Syriac. Abp. Secker notes, Alibi non extat כרת, et forte notat patriam כרתים טא. "The word כרת is not found elsewhere, and probably it is the name of the country of the Cherethim."

ZEPHANIAH 2: 7 The coast will be for the remnant of the house of Judah. They will find pasture. In the houses of Ashkelon, they will lie down in the evening, for the LORD, their God, will visit them, and restore them.

Verse 7

The coast shall be for the remnant - Several devastations fell on the Philistines. Gaza was ruined by the army of Alexander the Great, and the Maccabees finally accomplished all that was predicted by the prophets against this invariably wicked people. They lost their polity, and were at last obliged to receive circumcision.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 8 I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the children of Ammon, with which they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.

Verse 8

I have heard the reproach of Moab - God punished them for the cruel part they had taken in the persecutions of the Jews; for when they lay under the displeasure of God, these nations insulted them in the most provoking manner. See on Amo 1:13 (note), and Gen 19:25 (note); Deu 29:23 (note); Isa 13:19 (note); Isa 34:13 (note); Jer 49:18 (note); Jer 50:40 (note).

ZEPHANIAH 2: 9 Therefore as I live, says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, surely Moab will be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, a possession of nettles, and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation. The remnant of my people will plunder them, and the survivors of my nation will inherit them.

Verse 9

The breeding of nettles - That is, their land shall become desolate, and be a place for nettles, thorns, etc., to flourish in, for want of cultivation.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 10 This they will have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of Armies.

Verse 10

Because they have reproached - See on Zep 2:8 (note).

ZEPHANIAH 2: 11 The LORD will be awesome to them, for he will famish all the gods of the land. Men will worship him, everyone from his place, even all the shores of the nations.

Verse 11

He will famish all the gods of the earth - They shall have no more sacrifices; their worship shall be entirely destroyed. Idolaters supposed that their gods actually fed on the fumes and spirituous exhalations that arose from the burnt-offerings which they made unto their idols. It is in reference to this opinion that the Lord says, "He will famish all the gods of the land."

ZEPHANIAH 2: 12 You Cushites also, you will be killed by my sword.

Verse 12

Ye Ethiopians also - Nebuchadnezzar subdued these. See Jer 46:2, Jer 46:9; Eze 30:4, Eze 30:10. See also on Amo 9:7 (note).

ZEPHANIAH 2: 13 He will stretch out his hand against the north, destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, as dry as the wilderness.

Verse 13

He will - destroy Assyria - He will overthrow the empire, and Nineveh, their metropolitan city. See on Jonah and Nahum.

ZEPHANIAH 2: 14 Herds will lie down in the midst of her, all the animals of the nations. Both the pelican and the porcupine will lodge in its capitals. Their calls will echo through the windows. Desolation will be in the thresholds, for he has laid bare the cedar beams.

Verse 14

And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her - Nineveh was so completely destroyed, that its situation is not at present even known. The present city of Mossoul is supposed to be in the vicinity of the place where this ancient city stood.

The cormorant **קא** kaath; and the bittern, **קפד** kippod. These Newcome translates, "The pelican and the porcupine."

Their voice shall sing in the windows - The windows shall be all demolished; wild fowl shall build their nests in them, and shall be seen coming from their sills, and the fine cedar ceilings shall be exposed to the weather, and by and by crumble to dust. See the note on Isa 34:11-14 (note), where nearly the same terms are used.

I have in another place introduced a remarkable couplet quoted by Sir W. Jones from a Persian poet, which speaks of desolation in nearly the same terms. "The spider holds the veil in the palace of Caesar:

The owl stands sentinel in the watchtower of Afrasiab."

ZEPHANIAH 2: 15 This is the joyous city that lived carelessly, that said in her heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me." How she has become a desolation, a place for animals to lie down in! Everyone who passes by her will hiss, and shake their fists.

Verse 15

This is the rejoicing city - The city in which mirth, jocularly, and pleasure, reigned without interruption.

And wag his hand - Will point her out as a mark and monument of Divine displeasure.