



Zephaniah Bible study guide

A clear 3-session guide for personal study, small groups, and churches

Read Zephaniah as a whole before working through the sessions. Let its own structure set the agenda.

Every question sends you back to the biblical text. The guide helps you observe the passage, follow the author's argument, interpret it in context, and respond faithfully.

CHOOSE YOUR DEPTH

- Short: Read the book overview and discuss the first and final question in a session.
- Study: Work through all 3 sessions and answer each question from the passage.
- Deep: Open the free chapter commentary and dictionary links while you study.

protos-app.com/commentary/zephaniah

Zephaniah at a glance

BIG IDEA

“That terrible day of the Lord is near. [1]

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Zephaniah. Date: Likely between 635 and 622 BC. Setting: Near the beginning of King Josiah's reign in Judah, before his religious reforms. [1]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Read this book in its historical setting and as prophetic proclamation. Track audience, covenant background, indictment, hope, and how later Scripture receives its promises.

MAJOR THEMES

- To warn of the coming “day of the Lord” and to urge repentance
- The book's literary movement and central claims
- Faithful response within the people of God
- Hope, judgment, grace, and obedience in their proper context

INTERPRETIVE CARE

- Locate judgment and hope in the prophet's historical setting before making modern parallels.
- Treat prophetic imagery as Scripture's language, not a shortcut around careful context.

Zephaniah 1

18 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jerusalem · Baal · LORD · Face · Sacrifice · Silver

Questions

- Try to state the argument in one sentence before anyone reacts to it.
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Why does the writer bring Baal into this argument, and what claim does the example support?
- The word face is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What problem was this letter written to solve, and does knowing that change how the instruction lands?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Zephaniah 2

15 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Ashkelon · LORD · Moab · Ammonites · Ashdod · Assyria

Questions

- What is the writer trying to get these readers to do or stop doing?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- What does the writer assume the readers know about Ashkelon, and how is that knowledge being used?
- Define chaff from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- Is this a command, a description, or an argument? They are not read the same way.
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Zephaniah 3

20 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jerusalem · Cush · Praise · Zion · Beyond · Call

Questions

- What has the writer already established that this section is building on?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- Where else have you heard praise used, and is it being used that way here?
- What did the first readers face that we do not, and what does that change?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Sources, method, and reuse

Protos created this guide to help readers understand Zephaniah in its literary and historical context. Questions are designed to be answered from the passage, not from guesswork or personal opinion alone.

REFERENCES

[1] Tyndale Open Study Notes

Tyndale House Publishers. Book background, purpose, setting, and structural orientation. CC BY-SA 4.0.

<https://tyndaleopenresources.com/>

[2] Protos study guide editorial

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<https://protos-app.com/free-bible-study-tools>

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A Bible dictionary, 1,129 entries [_protos-app.com/bible-dictionary](https://protos-app.com/bible-dictionary)

Printable Bible reading plans [_protos-app.com/reading-plans](https://protos-app.com/reading-plans)

Protos is also available on iPhone and Android, with verse-by-verse study help beside the passage you are reading.

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