

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *Zephaniah 1-3*

Zephaniah, a “prince of the royal house of Judah,” was the prophet during the reign of King Josiah. The book addresses the social injustice and moral decay of Judah and her neighbors. The theme of Zephaniah is the coming Day of the Lord and His wrath upon the nations, including Israel. The book opens with sorrow and closes with rejoicing.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

640 B.C. Amon becomes king of Judah

641 B.C. Josiah becomes king of Judah

c. 640-625 B.C. Time of Zephaniah's life and prophecy in Judah.

TRIP PLANNER:

- I. Judgment against Judah (1:2-2:3)
- II. Judgment on the surrounding nations (2:4-15)
- III. Jerusalem's corruption (3:1-5)
- IV. The Lord's purifying judgment (3:6-20)

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Fish Gate – Situated on the east of the Lower city. It was named for the fish market that was nearby. Through it passed those who had caught fish in the Lake of Tiberias and the River Jordan.

Second Quarter – A district of Jerusalem; scholars differ on its location.

Maktesh – Market district of Jerusalem; name means “mortar.”

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Zephaniah – The great-great grandson of Hezekiah, the twelfth king of Judah (716-687 B.C.). Zephaniah means “Yahweh has hidden/protected.”

Josiah – The king whom Zephaniah served. He became king at the age of eight after his father, Amon, was assassinated. At the age of 16, Josiah “sought the Lord” and destroyed much of the evil practices that were instituted by his grandfather. It is likely that Zephaniah had an influence on the spiritual life of Josiah.

Ethiopia, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and Assyria – These surrounding nations were used by God as instruments of punishment for Israel's wickedness, but God would ultimately punish them for the wrongs they inflicted upon His people.

FUN FACTS:

Nahum and Jeremiah – were contemporaries of Zephaniah.

Baal – A fertility god, and the principal god of the Canaanites. King Josiah purged Baal worship from the Southern Kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 23).

Molech – The national god of the Ammonites. It was a consuming and destroying fire to whom children were sacrificed. It was also known as Milcom and Malcham. Among the Moabites, the god was known as Chemosh.

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DESTINATION:

Haggai

Haggai means “a festival.” The book of Haggai is the tenth of the twelve minor prophets. Haggai was sent by God to preach to the restored community of Jews in Jerusalem after their return from exile in Babylonia. He encouraged his fellow Jews to finish rebuilding the Temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Haggai 1:1 dates it in the “second year of Darius the king.” This is Darius I, (522-486 B.C.), so the prophecy is dated in the year 520 B.C.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

c. 875 – 600 B.C. Assyrian Empire at its strength

722 B.C. Fall of the Northern Kingdom

710 B.C. Sennacharib's invasion of Judah

c. 742-681 B.C. Ministries of Micah and Isaiah in Judah

605 B.C. First exile of Jews to Babylon

586 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem

536 B.C. Zerubbabel leads 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem

520 B.C. Haggai prophesies

520-518 B.C. Zechariah prophesies

457 B.C. Ezra leads second group of Jews back to Jerusalem

445 B.C. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem; rebuilds the walls

PLACES OF INTREST:

Jerusalem - The most famous city in the world. It's located in the Judean Hills of Israel, with the Hinnom and Kidron valleys as part of its borders. Its elevation is 2600 feet above sea level. Also known as the "city of David." It was the capital city for the Southern Kingdom until 586 B.C. when the city was conquered and the Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army.

The Temple - The Temple was the holy place of worship, located on Mount Moriah. It was built to be God's house here on earth. It was the main place of worship for the Israelites. The first Temple was built by King Solomon, after his father King David had acquired most of the materials needed. The construction of the Temple was started in the fourth year of Solomon's reign and completed in the eleventh year. The Babylonians destroyed the Temple in 586 B.C. The second Temple was constructed by Zerubbabel, and re-consecrated in 516 B.C., but was profaned by the Syrians in 167 B.C. The Temple was finished in four years, and dedicated with great pomp and rejoicing (Ezra 6:16). Historians designated the second Temple as "Zerubbabel's Temple." However, it was destroyed a second time by the Roman army in 70 A.D. This time it was completely destroyed, "With not one stone left on top of another," as prophesied by Jesus, in Matthew 24:2.

FUN FACTS:

The rebuilt Temple (also known as the second Temple) lasted 5 centuries until it was rebuilt by Herod the Great in 20 B.C.

The prophecy of Haggai is second only to that of Obadiah in brevity among OT books.

Temple dimensions - The foundation of the first Temple was 90 feet by 30 feet, the roof was 180 feet high. The space covered by the Temple and its courts was about 585 by 6100 feet. The Holy of Holies measured 30 square feet, and was closed off by a veil of blue and crimson fine-spun linen (it was this veil, or curtain, that was torn in half during the Crucifixion of Christ).

TRIP PLANNER:

This book consists of only two chapters containing four brief oracles, all occurring within a four-month period. His primary message: Rebuild the Temple.

Haggai was sent as a motivator and edifier - Get your priorities right! Put God first, and He'll take care of your other needs. Haggai teaches us that faithfulness and material blessings are directly connected; that "when a goodwork is awaiting its accomplishment, the time to do it is now" (Farrar); "discouragement, however profound, is not an adequate reason for neglecting duties, even when they seem to be encompassed with difficulty."

It can be simply outlined

Chapter 1 - Rebuild the Temple

Chapter 2:1-9 - The Lord's Glory Will Fill the Temple

Chapter 2:10-37 - A Curse Turned to Blessing

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Haggai - There is no personal information about him. It is very likely Haggai returned to Jerusalem as a child with the first group of 50,000 persons led by Zerubbabel in 536 BC. It is also possible he did some writing of psalms during this time. The Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT, which was made around 250 B.C.) credits him as being the author/co-author of several psalms (Psalms 138, 146-149). Haggai was the first prophet in Jerusalem after the return from Babylonian captivity. He began to preach in 520 B.C. after the work to rebuild the Temple had ceased due to opposition. Haggai was a contemporary of Zechariah, and also of Confucius (557-479 B.C.).

Zerubbabel - Son of Shealtiel. He was governor of the tribe of Judah during the time of the return from the Babylon exile. He was the grandson of Jehoiachin, the last king of Judah taken captive to Babylon (1 Chr. 3:17). A descendant of David, he was in the direct line of the ancestry of Jesus (Luke 3:27; Matt. 1:12). He led the first group of captives back to Jerusalem and was the prime builder of the second Temple.

Joshua - The high priest. With the blessing of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-2), Zerubbabel and Joshua led the first band of captives back to Jerusalem. They also returned the gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had removed from the Temple.

Zechariah, the prophet - A prophet from 520 B.C. to 518 B.C. in Jerusalem. He was the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo, who along with Haggai was instrumental in inspiring his fellow Jews to rebuild the Temple (see Ezra 6:14). After rebuilding the Temple foundation the first two years, construction came to a standstill for 17 years, because of, among other things, opposition from settlers in Samaria.

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