

# Zephaniah 1:1-6

Zephaniah 1:1 – “The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.”

1121 [e]	1436 [e]	1121 [e]	3569 [e]	1121 [e]	6846 [e]	413 [e]	1961 [e]	834 [e]	3068 [e]	1697 [e]
ben-	ge-dal-yāh,	ben-	kū-šî	ben-	ṣə-pan-yāh	'el-	hā-yāh,	'ā-šer	Yah-weh	də-ḅar-
בֶּן־	גְּדַלְיָהּ	בֶּן־	כּוּשִׁי	בֶּן־	צְפַנְיָהּ	אֶל־	הָיָה	אֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה	דְּבַר־
the son	of Gedaliah	the son	Cushi	the son of	Zephaniah	to	came	which	of Yahweh	The word
N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms	Prep	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	Pro-r	N-proper-ms	N-msc

  

3063 [e]	4428 [e]	526 [e]	1121 [e]	2977 [e]	3117 [e]	2396 [e]	1121 [e]	568 [e]
ye-hū-dāh.	me-lek	'ā-mō-wn	ben-	yō-šî-yā-hū	bî-mê	hiz-qî-yāh;	ben-	'ā-mar-yāh
יְהוּדָה:	מֶלֶךְ	אֲמוֹן	בֶּן־	יְאֹשִׁיָּהוּ	בֵּימֵי	חֶזְקִיָּהּ	בֶּן־	אֲמַרְיָהּ
of Judah	king	of Amon	son	of Josiah	in the days	of Hezekiah	the son	of Amariah
N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms	Prep-b   N-mpc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms

1. The long genealogy in the superscription of a prophet is unusual.
  - a. Jeremiah, a contemporary of Zephaniah, is similar. It dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> year of King Josiah’s reign, which would be 627-626 BC:
 

“The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.” – Jeremiah 1:1-2
2. “Hezekiah most likely is the great King Hezekiah, because:
  - a. It is normal to be known by your father’s name, not the name of your great-great-grandfather four generations earlier. The most likely exception is that Zephaniah’s Gr-gr-grandfather was still remembered and his name was still known in Zephaniah’s day.
  - b. The reason Hezekiah is not called “King Hezekiah” would be because Josiah is recognized as in the very same sentence as “king of Judah”. In fact, even King Amon which is clearly a reference to the King Amon of Judah is not identified as “king of Judah” but merely listed as the father of Josiah.
3. Listing the prophet’s name and clear identification helps establish authority and accountability for the prophet and the words of the prophet.
  - a. If the prophecy has no discernable name it may be impossible to hold anyone accountable.
  - b. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 indicates that real prophets were to be held accountable for their prophecies:
 

“The prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come

to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”

- c. Even in Mesopotamia (Assyria, Babylon, etc.) prophets were legally bound to their oracles.
  - i. Example: One prophet from Mari (city 2950-2650 and 2550-2220 BC on Euphrates River and country around it) enclosed along with his written oracle a clipping of his hair and the fringe of his garment for personal identification later.
  - ii. Each of the oracles written and preserved for the Assyrian king Esarhaddon have the name of the prophet recorded with the prophecy.

1:2 – “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the Lord.

3068 [e]	5002 [e]	127 [e]	6440 [e]	5921 [e]	3605 [e]	622 [e]	622 [e]
Yah·weh.	nə·'um-	hā·'ā·dā·māh	pə·nê	mê·'al	kōl,	'ā·sêp	'ā·sōp
יְהוָה:	נֹאֵם	הָאֲדָמָה	פָּנָי	מֵעַל	כֹּל	אֶסֶף	אֶסֶף 2
Yahweh	says	of the land	the face	from	everything	I will consume	Utterly
N-proper-ms	N-msc	Art   N-fs	N-cpc	Prep-m	N-ms	V-Hifil-Imperf.Jus-1cs	V-Qal-InfAbs

1. This verse introduces the concept of the ultimate Day of the Lord
  - a. A main theme of Zephaniah’s is the “day of the LORD”
  - b. Zephaniah uses this expression “day of the LORD” more than any other prophet.
    - i. 1:7 – “Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the **day of the LORD is near**; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his quests.”
    - ii. 1:8 – “And on the **day of the LORD’s sacrifice**— “I will punish the officials and the king’s sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.”
    - iii. 1:14 – “The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.”
    - iv. 1:15-17 – “A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,  
 1:16 – “a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.”  
 1:17 – “I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.”
    - v. 1:18 – “Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the **day of the wrath of the LORD**. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.
    - vi. 2:1-2 – “Gather together, yes, gather, O shameless nation, before the decree takes effect—before the day passes away like chaff— before there comes upon you the burning anger of the LORD, before there comes upon you the **day of the anger of the LORD**.”
    - vii. 2:3 – “Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the **day of the anger of the LORD**.”

- viii. 3:8 – “Therefore wait for me,” declares the LORD, “for **the day** when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.”
- ix. 3:11 – “On **that day** you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.”
- x. 3:16 – “On **that day** it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.”
- c. “*asop* ‘*asep*” –
  - i. “Utterly” – *asop* – means “to gather”, “to remove”.
  - ii. When this word *asop* is combined with the next Hebrew word *asep* which means “to sweep away”, Zephaniah joins an infinitive absolute (*asop*) with a finite verb (*asep*) to express in the Hebrew an idiom of intensification.
  - iii. Translated:
    1. “Utterly I will consume everything from the face of the land says Yahweh” – literal
    2. “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.” – ESV
    3. “I will completely sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.” – Berean Study Bible
    4. “I will utterly consume all *things* from off the land, saith the LORD.” – KJ
    5. “I will utterly consume everything From the face of the land,” Says the LORD;” – New King James
    6. “I will completely remove all *things* From the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.” – New American Standard
    7. I, the LORD, now promise to destroy everything on this earth—“ – Contemporary English Version
    8. “I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.” – NIV
- d. “everything” – *kol* – means “the whole”, “all”
- e. “of the land – *haadamah* – “ground”, “land”
- f. A jarring opening to the book. A shocking introductory statement of a prophecy.
  - i. No build up or preparation
  - ii. No warning or call to repentance. Just a promise of total overthrow.
  - iii. Words like “Utterly”, “Consume”, “Everything”, “Face of the Land” give the hopeless impression of finality.
- g. This is the announcement of unavoidable and impending calamity.
- h. Consider two accounts in Genesis:
  - i. Creation on the surface of the earth and from the ground of the earth comes life, plants, animals and man.
  - ii. Noah’s Flood when the same type of calamity came on the ground, life, plants, animals and man.

1:3 – “I will sweep away man and beast;

**I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the rubble (or, “stumbling blocks”) with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth,” declares the Lord.**

854 [e]	4384 [e]	3220 [e]	1709 [e]	8064 [e]	5775 [e]	622 [e]	929 [e]	120 [e]	622 [e]
'eṭ-	wə·ham·mak·šê-lō·wt	hay·yām,	ū·dê·gê	haš·šā·ma·yim	'ō·wṗ-	'ā·sêṗ	ū·bê·hê·māh,	'ā·dām	'ā·sêṗ
אֶת־	וְהִמְכַשְׁלוֹת	וְהַיָּם	וְדָגָיו	הַשָּׁמַיִם	עוֹרְף־	אֶסְפָּא	וּבְהֵמָה	אָדָם	אֶסְפָּא 3
with	and the stumbling blocks	of the sea	and the fish	of the heavens	the birds	I will consume	and beast	man	I will consume
Prep	Conj-w, Art   N-fp	Art   N-ms	Conj-w   N-mpc	Art   N-mp	N-msc	V-Hifil-Imperf.Jus-1cs	Conj-w   N-fs	N-ms	V-Hifil-Imperf.Jus-1cs

3068 [e]	5002 [e]	127 [e]	6440 [e]	5921 [e]	120 [e]	853 [e]	3772 [e]	7563 [e]
Yah·weh.	ne·'um-	hā·'ā·dā·māh	pe·nê	mê·'al	hā·'ā·dām,	'eṭ-	wə·hiḵ·rat·tī	hā·re·šā·'im;
יְהוָה:	נֹאֵם־	הָאָדָמָה	פְּנֵי	מֵעַל	הָאָדָם	אֶת־	וְהִכַּרְתִּי	הַרְשָׁעִים
Yahweh	says	of the land	the face	from	man	-	and I will cut off	the along with wicked
N-proper-ms	N-msc	Art   N-fs	N-cpc	Prep-m	Art   N-ms	DirObjM	Conj-w   V-Hifil-ConjPerf-1cs	Art   Adj-mp

1. These things are listed in this order:
  - a. Man
  - b. Beast
  - c. Birds
  - d. Fish
2. Genesis 1:20-30 gives the order of creation on days five and six as:
  - a. Fish
  - b. Birds
  - c. Living creatures (livestock, creeping things, beasts)
  - d. Man ...but, Man was given dominion or responsibility:
 

““Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
3. All of the earth will be judge because, as seen in the next verse, God’s people Judah had failed their purpose of being a light to the Gentiles, God’s chosen representatives and a blessing to the nations. Thus, Judah fails, the nations fail, mankind has failed and all that man was responsible for is doomed.

**1:4 – “I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,**

4480 [e]	3772 [e]	3389 [e]	3427 [e]	3605 [e]	5921 [e]	3063 [e]	5921 [e]	3027 [e]	5186 [e]
min-	wə·hiḵ·rat·tī	yə·rū·šā·lim;	yō·wō·šê·bê	kāl-	wə·'al	yə·hū·dāh,	'al-	yā·dā	wə·nā·tī·tī
מִן־	וְהִכַּרְתִּי	יְרוּשָׁלַיִם	יוֹשְׁבֵי	כָּל־	וְעַל	יְהוּדָה	עַל־	יָדִי	וְנִטְיִיתִי 4
from	and I will cut off	of Jerusalem	the inhabitants	all	and against	Judah	against	My hand	And I will stretch out
Prep	Conj-w   V-Hifil-ConjPerf-1cs	N-proper-fs	V-Qal-Prtcpl-mpc	N-msc	Conj-w   Prep	N-proper-ms	Prep	N-fsc   1cs	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjPerf-1cs

3548 [e]	5973 [e]	3649 [e]	8034 [e]	853 [e]	1168 [e]	7605 [e]	853 [e]	2088 [e]	4725 [e]
hak·kō·hā·nîm.	'im-	hak·ke·mā·rîm	šêm	'eṭ-	hab·ba·'al,	šê·'ār	'eṭ-	haz·zeh	ham·mā·qō·wm
הַכֹּהֲנִים:	עִם־	הַכֹּמְרִים	שֵׁם	אֶת־	הַבַּעַל	שְׂאֵר	אֶת־	הַזֶּה	הַמְּקוֹם
the [pagan] priests	with	of the idolatrous priests	the names	-	of Baal	every trace	-	this	place
Art   N-mp	Prep	Art   N-mp	N-msc	DirObjM	Art   N-proper-ms	N-msc	DirObjM	Art   Pro-ms	Art   N-ms

1:5 – “those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens,  
those who bow down and swear to the Lord and yet swear by Milcom (or, “their king”),

7812 [e]	853 [e]	8064 [e]	6635 [e]	1406 [e]	5921 [e]	7812 [e]	853 [e]
ham·miš·ta·ḥā·wīm	wə·'eṭ-	haš·šā·mā·yim;	liš·bā	hag·gag·gō·wṭ	'al-	ham·miš·ta·ḥā·wīm	wə·'eṭ-
הַמְשַׁתְּחוּיִם	וְאֶת־	הַשָּׁמַיִם	לְצַבָּא	—	הַגִּגֹּת	עַל־	הַמְשַׁתְּחוּיִם
Those who worship	and	of the heaven	host		the housetops	on	Those who worship
Art   V-Hitpael-Prtcpl-mp	Conj-w   DirObjM	Art   N-mp	Prep-l   N-csc		Art   N-mp	Prep	Art   V-Hitpael-Prtcpl-mp

4445 [e]	7650 [e]	3068 [e]	7650 [e]
bə·mal·kām.	wə·han·niš·bā·'îm	Yah·weh,	han·niš·bā·'îm
—	בְּמִלְכָּם:	וְהִנְשַׁבְּעִים	וְלִיהוָה
	by Milcom	but who [also] swear	by Yahweh
Prep-b   N-msc   3mp	Conj-w, Art   V-Nifal-Prtcpl-mp	Prep-l   N-proper-ms	Art   V-Nifal-Prtcpl-mp

1:6 – “those who have turned back from following the Lord,  
who do not seek the Lord or inquire of him.”

3808 [e]	834 [e]	3069 [e]	310 [e]	5472 [e]	853 [e]
lō-	wa·'ā·šer	Yah·weh;	mê·'a·ḥā·rê	han·nə·sō·w·ḡîm	wə·'eṭ-
לֹא־	וְאֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה	מֵאַחֲרַי	הַנְּסוּגִים	וְאֶת־
not	and	Yahweh	from [following]	Those who have turned back	and
Adv-NegPrt	Conj-w   Pro-r	N-proper-ms	Prep-m	Art   V-Nifal-Prtcpl-mp	Conj-w   DirObjM

1875 [e]	3808 [e]	3069 [e]	853 [e]	1245 [e]
də·rā·šū·hū.	wə·lō	Yah·weh	'eṭ-	biq·šū
·	דָּרָשׁוּהוּ:	וְלֹא	יְהוָה	אֶת־
	inquired of Him	nor	Yahweh	-
V-Qal-Perf-3cp   3ms	Conj-w   Adv-NegPrt	N-proper-ms	DirObjM	V-Piel-Perf-3cp