

Zephaniah 1:4-7

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-	we·hik·rat·tî	ye·rū·šā·lim;	yō·wō·šə·bê	kāl-	wə·'al	ye·hū·dāh,	'al-	yā·dî	we·nā·tî·tî
מן	וְהִכְרַתִּי	יְרוּשָׁלַיִם	יוֹשְׁבֵי	כָל־	וְעַל	יְהוּדָה	עַל־	יָדִי	וְנָטִיתִי 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·nīm.	'im-	hak·kə·mā·rīm	šēm	'et-	hab·ba·'al,	šə·'ār	'et-	haz·zeh	ham·mā·qō·wm	
–	הַכֹּהֲנִים:	עִם־	הַכֹּמְרִים	שֵׁם	אֶת־	הַבְּעַל	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. Verses 1:2-3 spoke of God's wrath on the earth, but in verse 1:4 Zephaniah begins to rebuke the people of YHWH. The chosen people of Judah. (Northern Israel has already been deported by Assyria 100 years before in 722 BC. The Book of the Law was found in 622 BC and this was possibly written around 617 BC.)
2. Amos used the same method of starting large and moving inwards in Amos 1:6-2:16 when he first spoke against the pagan nations around Israel and Judah, but finished with words against Israel and Judah.
3. The Lord not only speaks against Judah, but also the chosen city of Jerusalem and then the chosen kingly line of David in 1:8.
 - a. Again these destructive words against God's people, God's city and God's kingly tribe do not nullify the promises given to the people, the city and the line of David.
 - b. These words of judgment mean there must be an eventual repentance and restoration.
4. Two phrases of judgment are used:
 - a. **“I will stretch out my hand”** –
 - i. This refers to God's activity being involved more than usual
 - ii. It is often the term used when God delivered Israel from Egypt
 - iii. Now this powerful activity of God will move in history to punish the people he delivered.
 - iv. The punishment is as miraculous as the deliverance from Egypt.
 - v. This Hebrew phrase is translated into the Greek OT (LXX, or the Septuagint) as ***ekteno ten cheira mou***. This is the same phrase used when Jesus stretched out his hand to heal:

1. Matthew 8:3 -

2532 [e]	1614 [e]	3588 [e]	5495 [e]	680 [e]	846 [e]	3004 [e]	2309 [e]	
Kai	<u>ekteinas</u>	tēn	<u>cheira</u>	hēpsato	autou	legōn	Thelō	
3	Καὶ	ἐκτείνας	τὴν	χεῖρα	, ἥψατο	αὐτοῦ	, λέγων ,	Θέλω ;
	And	having stretched out	the	hand	He touched	him	saying	I am willing
	Conj	V-APA-NMS	Art-AFS	N-AFS	V-AIM-3S	PPro-GM3S	V-PPA-NMS	V-PIA-1S

2511 [e]	2532 [e]	2112 [e]	2511 [e]	846 [e]	3588 [e]	3014 [e]
katharisthēti	kai	eutheōs	ekatharisthē	autou	hē	lepra
καθαρίσθητι !	καὶ	εὐθέως	ἐκαθαρίσθη*	αὐτοῦ	ἢ	λέπρα .
be you cleansed	And	immediately	was cleansed	his	-	leprosy
V-AMP-2S	Conj	Adv	V-AIP-3S	PPro-GM3S	Art-NFS	N-NFS

2. Mark 1:41 -

2532 [e]	4697 [e]	1614 [e]	3588 [e]	5495 [e]	846 [e]	
Kai	splanchnistheis	<u>ekteinas</u>	tēn	<u>cheira</u>	<u>autou</u>	
41	Καὶ	σπλαγχνισθεῖς ,	ἐκτείνας	τὴν	χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ,	
	And	having been moved with compassion	having stretched out	the	hand of Him	
	Conj	V-APP-NMS	V-APA-NMS	Art-AFS	N-AFS	PPro-GM3S

680 [e]	2532 [e]	3004 [e]	846 [e]	2309 [e]	2511 [e]
hēpsato	kai	legei	autō	Thelō	katharisthēti
ἥψατο	καὶ	λέγει	αὐτῷ ,	Θέλω ;	καθαρίσθητι .
He touched him	and	says	to him	I am willing	be you cleansed
V-AIM-3S	Conj	V-PIA-3S	PPro-DM3S	V-PIA-1S	V-AMP-2S

3. Luke 5:13 -

2532 [e]	1614 [e]	3588 [e]	5495 [e]	680 [e]	846 [e]	3004 [e]	2309 [e]	
Kai	<u>ekteinas</u>	tēn	<u>cheira</u>	hēpsato	autou	legōn	Thelō	
13	Καὶ	ἐκτείνας	τὴν	χεῖρα	, ἥψατο	αὐτοῦ	, λέγων ,	Θέλω ;
	And	having stretched out	the	hand	He touched	him	saying	I am willing
	Conj	V-APA-NMS	Art-AFS	N-AFS	V-AIM-3S	PPro-GM3S	V-PPA-NMS	V-PIA-1S

2511 [e]	2532 [e]	2112 [e]	3588 [e]	3014 [e]	565 [e]	575 [e]	846 [e]
katharisthēti	kai	eutheōs	hē	lepra	apēlthen	ap'	autou
καθαρίσθητι !	καὶ	εὐθέως	ἡ	λέπρα	ἀπῆλθεν	ἀπ'	αὐτοῦ .
be you cleansed	And	immediately	the	leprosy	departed	from	him
V-AMP-2S	Conj	Adv	Art-NFS	N-NFS	V-AIA-3S	Prep	PPro-GM3S

4. In Luke 11:20 the reaching out of the “finger of God” was an indication that the kingdom of God has come. Jesus was beginning the restoration: “But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

b. **“I will cut off from this place” –**

- i. The use of the Hebrew word which indicates a direct object - **'et** - is used five times to identify five objects God's divine activity will “cut off” or “exterminate”. YHWH will be stretching his hand out against:
 1. 1:4 – **'et** - “every trace of Baal” or “the remnant of Baal”
 2. 1:4 – **'et** - “the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests”
 3. 1:5 – **we'et** - “Those who worship on the housetops the host of the heaven”
 4. 1:5 – **we'et** - “Those who worship and swear oaths by YAHWEH but who also swear by Milcom”
 5. 1:6 – **we'et** - “Those who have turned back from following YHWEH and have not sought YAHWEH nor inquired of Him”
- c. Zephaniah will eventually move into identifying the sins of the people against each other, but first he addresses their false relationship with YHWH.
- d. Each of the five objects that YHWH “will cut off from this place” are corruptions of the true worship given to Israel to fellowship with YHWH and honor him.
- e. There is no need to address the moral corruption of the people of God unless the spiritual life is based on Truth.
- f. There must be Truth before there can be godly character.
- g. **#1 Direct Object to be cut off: “every trace of Baal”**
 - i. Apparently Josiah's reforms had removed a large portion of Baal worship, but a total removal of Baal worship was near.
- h. **#2 Direct Object to be cut off: “the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests”**
 - i. These “idolatrous priests” were the heretical religious leaders
 - ii. This cutting off of the corrupt priests would be so complete that even their names would be forgotten.
 - iii. The Hebrew word for “idolatrous priests” is **chemarim** (or, hak-kə·mā·rîm) from the base word **komer** pronounced /kaw-mawr/. This is understood to mean “a priest in idol worship”, but it is not clear if it is used as another word for “priest” or if it is intended to be used to refer to a false priest. In this verse and other places it seems to clearly be referring to priests involved in idolatrous practices. These priests were leading the people into these Idolatrous practices:
 1. 2 Kings 23:5 – “And he (Josiah) deposed the **priests** whom the kings of Judah had ordained to make offerings in the high places at the cities of Judah and around Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and the moon and the constellations and all the host of the heavens.
 2. Hosea 10:5 – “The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-aven. Its people mourn for it, and so do its **idolatrous priests**—those who rejoiced over it and over its glory—for it has departed from them.”
 - iv. This began to take place during Josiah's reforms as predicted in 1 Kings 13:1-2.

- v. King Josiah acted on this in 2 Kings 23:20.
- vi. The previous two verses refer to activity in Northern Israel among the corrupt priesthood there. Zephaniah’s words are clearly stated to be in “Jerusalem” and in “this place”
- vii. The idolatrous priests had clearly infiltrated the Temple worship in Jerusalem.
- viii. Two phases or two levels of fulfillment:
 - 1. There would be a type of total overthrow of idol worship with the Babylonian captivity since the returning Jews shunned idol worship after that and did not return to idol worship
 - 2. But this prophecy extends to the total removal on the eschatological day of the Lord

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”),

<p>7812 [e] ham-miš-ta-ḥā-wīm הַמְשִׁתַּחֲוִים Those who worship Art V-Hitpael-Prtcpl-mp</p>	<p>853 [e] wə-’eṭ- וְאֶת- and Conj-w DirObjM</p>	<p>8064 [e] 6635 [e] šaš-šā-mā-yim; liš-bā הַשָּׁמַיִם לַצִּבָּא of the heaven host Art N-mp Prep-l N-csc</p>	<p>1406 [e] 5921 [e] hag-gag-gō-wṭ ‘al- הַגִּגֹּת עַל- the housetops on Art N-mp Prep</p>	<p>7812 [e] ham-miš-ta-ḥā-wīm הַמְשִׁתַּחֲוִים Those who worship Art V-Hitpael-Prtcpl-mp</p>	<p>853 [e] wə-’eṭ- וְאֶת- 5 and Conj-w DirObjM</p>
<p>4445 [e] 7650 [e] 3068 [e] 7650 [e] bē-mal-kām. wə-han-niš-bā-’îm Yah-weh, han-niš-bā-’îm - בְּמִלְכָּם: וְהִנְשָׁבְעִים לַיהוָה הִנְשָׁבְעִים by Milcom but who [also] swear by Yahweh and swear [oaths] Prep-b N-msc 3mp Conj-w, Art V-Nifal-Prtcpl-mp Prep-l N-proper-ms Art V-Nifal-Prtcpl-mp</p>					

1. The first two Direct Objects to be addressed was the corrupt religious leadership. Now, Zephaniah promises the false worshippers will be cutoff.
2. #3 Direct Object to be cut off: “Those who worship on the housetops the host of the heaven”
 - a. They watched the stars, planets and constellations from their housetops while seeking to manipulate their fortunes or gain guidance for the future.
 - b. Deuteronomy address this in 4:19:

“And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.”

 - i. This does not mean that the Lord gave the stars to the nations to worship.
 - ii. This does mean that the Lord was the creator of the stars to serve all the nations as created objects. These created objects serve the Lord their creator and are seen as created things by all mankind. They declare God’s glory, but are not to be given worship by man. Israel and all nations should only worship and serve the Creator that made these things.

- c. The book of Jeremiah identifies these very same people who were seeking the stars in Jeremiah 44:15-30
 - d. “housetops” indicates private worship that had been individualized having abandoned the structure of true worship that was to be regulated by the Temple.
 - i. The worshippers created their own system
 - ii. The worshippers found truth in their own eyes
 - iii. The worshippers refused to abandon their own feelings
3. **#4 Direct Object to be cut off: “Those who worship and swear oaths by YAHWEH but who also swear by Milcom”**
- a. Syncretistic worship is a religious system that develops from the blending of two (or more) belief systems creating a new tradition. This is a fatal compromise which destroys the integrity of both systems. This is particularly dangerous if one religious system is Truth and Reality, but it is contaminated with falsehoods and deception
 - b. Note the two names of deity:
 - i. YAHWEH –
 - ii. Milcom – “bemalkam” from Malkam. This is Moloch. He was the national god of the Ammonites:
 - 1. 1 Kings 11:5 – “For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.”
 - 2. 1 Kings 11:33 – “because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did.”
 - 3. 2 Kings 23:13 – “And the king (Josiah) defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.”
 - 4. The oath taking and swearing is basically referring to what the people based their life on and placed their trust in:
 - a. They would swear oaths or place their trust in and base their decision making on YHWH and the worldview he presented
 - b. But, they would also swear oaths, or place the confidence in and behave in a manner that would agree with the worldview and cultural norms of Moloch and the Ammonites.
 - 5. This would be similar to our own cultures confusion with:
 - a. Creation and Evolution
 - b. Women’s health and Abortion
 - c. Criminal justice system and Social justice
 - d. Education and Censorship
 - e. Christianity and Mysticism
 - f. Science and Personal Preferences
 - g. And, on and on and on....
 - 6. This combined system of worldviews is self-destructive.

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·'et-
לֹא	וַאֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה	מֵאַחֲרַי	הַנְּסוּגִים	וְאֵת 6
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	'et-	biq·šū
דְּרָשׁוּהוּ:	וְלֹא	יְהוָה	אֵת-	בִּקְשׁוּ
inquired of Him	nor	Yahweh	-	have sought
V-Qal-Perf-3cp 3ms	Conj-w Adv-NegPrt	N-proper-ms	DirObjM	V-Piel-Perf-3cp

1. #5 Direct Object to be cut off: “**Those who have turned back from following YHWEH and have not sought YAHWEH nor inquired of Him**”
 - a. These are sins of omission instead of commission.
 - b. The people turned back from, did not seek and did not inquire of YHWH, but they were turning to, seeking and inquiring:
 - i. Baal,
 - ii. false priests,
 - iii. the stars
 - iv. Moloch.
2. “Seek” is *bqs* or *biqsu* – “baqash” – meaning “to seek”
3. “Inquire” is *drs* or *darash*– “derasuhu” – meaning “to resort to” or “to seek”. This may have a meaning of seeking guidance
4. All three accusations here indicate no effort was made to seek YHWH, his thoughts, his words, his plans or his guidance.
5. Yet, the people were very religious

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 guests.”

3068 [e]	3117 [e]	7138 [e]	3588 [e]	3069 [e]	136 [e]	6440 [e]	2013 [e]
Yah·weh,	yō·wm	qā·rō·wb	kî	Yah·weh;	'ă·dō·nāy	mip·pə·nê	has
יהוה	יום	קרוב	כי	—	יהוה	אדני	מפני 7
of Yahweh	the day	[is] at hand	for		GOD of the Lord	in the presence	Be silent
N-proper-ms	N-msc	Adj-ms	Conj		N-proper-ms	N-proper-ms	Prep-m N-cpc

	7121 [e]	6942 [e]	2077 [e]	3068 [e]	3559 [e]	3588 [e]
	qə·ru·'āw.	hiq·dîš	ze·bah	Yah·weh	hê·kîn	kî-
.	קראיו:	הקניש	זבח	יהוה	הכין	כי
	His guests	He has invited	a sacrifice	Yahweh	has prepared	for
	V-Qal-QalPassPrtcpl-mpc 3ms	V-Hifil-Perf-3ms	N-ms	N-proper-ms	V-Hifil-Perf-3ms	Conj

1. Stop making such weak attempts at religion
2. Be silent. These people cannot defend themselves so stop talking. They have nothing to say.
3. Judgment is coming.