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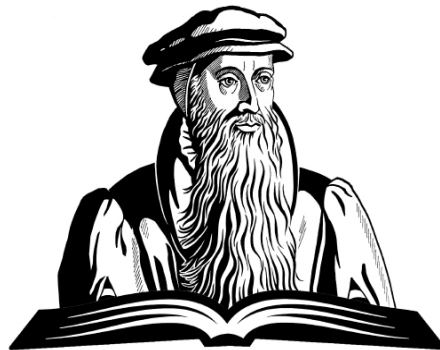
**BIBLE FOR
6TH GRADE STUDENTS**

Old Testament

Lesson 109

Zephaniah—Threatenings and Promises

Lecture Presenter: Dr. Daniel Sweetman



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Dr. Daniel Sweetman is an instructor at Grace Christian Academy in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.
www.gcagr.org

Module

BIBLE FOR 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

Old Testament

113 LESSONS

77 Lessons presented by Mr. Daniel Van Brugge

36 Lessons presented by Dr. Daniel Sweetman

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|--|---|
| 01. The Bible: The Word of God | 26. Joseph and His Brethren |
| 02. Creation: The Work of an Almighty God | 27. Jacob Comes to Joseph |
| 03. Man: A Special Place in God's Creation | 28. God Heard Their Cry |
| 04. A Gracious Promise | 29. Moses and the Burning Bush |
| 05. Cain and Abel | 30. Let My People God |
| 06. Only Noah Found Grace | 31. Deliverance |
| 07. The Coming Judgment –A Way of Escape | 32. God's Patience with a Complaining People |
| 08. The Noahic Covenant | 33. Keeping the Law: Not to Merit /Thankfulness |
| 09. The Tower of Babel | 34. The Lord Dwells Among His People |
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| 11. Abram Intercedes for Lot | 36. Moses Intercedes for a Rebellious People |
| 12. Melchizadek | 37. Worshiping God Rightly |
| 13. Righteous by Faith | 38. Walk Not According to the World |
| 14. Two Sons | 39. Hearts of Ingratitude |
| 15. Lessons from Lot's Life | 40. Aaron's Rod Blossoming |
| 16. Faithless Abraham – Faithful God | 41. The Serpent of Brass Lifted Up |
| 17. Abraham Tested – God's Provision | 42. Phinehas Turning Away God's Wrath |
| 18. Isaac and Rebekah | 43. Cities of Refuge |
| 19. Jacob: A Better Desire than Esau | 44. A New Generation |
| 20. Jacob the Deceiver | 45. Moses' Last Days |
| 21. God Preserves Jacob | 46. Joshua—God's Promise Fulfilled |
| 22. Jacob Returns to Beth-el | 47. A Promise to Rahab |
| 23. Joseph Loved – Joseph Hated | 48. The Rise of Judges |
| 24. An Eye upon God | 49. Gideon—God with Him |
| 25. Joseph Raised Out of Prison | 50. Samson |

51. Ruth the Moabitess
52. Samuel Judges Israel
53. Israel's First King
54. The Kingdom Established
55. David Anointed the Next King
56. David Hunted by Saul
57. The Last Days of Saul
58. David, the Next King
59. Fetching the Ark
60. Thou Art the Man
61. David's Return to Jerusalem
62. Seven Sons of Saul Killed
63. Genealogies of Israel
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66. David Prepares for the Temple
67. David's Departing Instructions
68. Solomon Becomes King
69. Solomon Builds the House of God
70. The Kingdom is Rent
71. A Wicked Divided Kingdom
72. Ahab's Reign and Death
73. Elisha Begins his Work
74. Elisha's Voice is Heard
75. A Succession of Kings
76. Ahaz and Hezekiah
77. The Captivity of Judah
78. Introduction to the Prophets
79. Isaiah's Vision & Song
80. Isaiah Prophecies about Christ
81. The Prophet Jeremiah Called and Sent
82. Jeremiah Opposed and Comforted
83. Ezekiel, the Captive Prophet
84. Ezekiel's Comforting Visions
85. Daniel and His Three Friends
86. Nebuchadnezzar's Forgotten Dream
87. Three Friends in the Fiery Furnace
88. Nebuchadnezzar's Madness
89. The Writing on the Wall
90. Daniel in the Lions' Den
91. Daniel's Visions and Dreams
92. Ezra—Return from Captivity
93. Ezra—Rebuilding the Temple
94. Ezra—The Scribe
95. Nehemiah—Rebuilding the Walls
96. Nehemiah—The Task Completed
97. Esther the Queen
98. Esther—Haman's Plot
99. Esther—The Jews Saved
100. Hosea—The Minor Prophets
101. Joel and the Day of the LORD
102. Amos the Fearless Herdsman
103. Obadiah Prophecies Edom's Fall
104. Jonah's Flight
105. Jonah's Mission
106. Micah Preaches Judgment & Mercy
107. Nahum—A Message for Nineveh
108. Habakkuk's Questions, God's Replies
- 109. Zephaniah—Threatenings & Promises**
110. Haggai Urges Building the Temple
111. Zechariah—The Night Visions
112. Zechariah Prophecies of Christ
113. Malachi—Last Old Testament Prophet

Lesson 109

Zephaniah—Threatenings and Promises

Zephaniah, chapters 1 through 3

Memory Verse

*“I will leave also in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people,
and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.”*

—Zephaniah 3:12

The Time of Zephaniah

“If God be for us, who can be against us?” Paul exclaims in Romans 8:31. In the book of Zephaniah, we learn that the opposite is also true: “If God be against us, who can be for us?” (Zephaniah 2:5). We like to hear of God’s love and mercy. We also must realize that God is holy, just, and righteous, and he must punish sin. Let us study the book of Zephaniah and learn what God’s justice means for us.

We read in chapter 1, verse 1 that Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah, most likely in the beginning of Josiah’s reign. Josiah’s grandfather was Manasseh, the most wicked of all the kings of Judah, who was remarkably converted while he was in prison in Babylon. Manasseh returned to the throne and tried to undo some of the dreadful spiritual damage he had done to Judah. When he died, his son Amon became king. Sadly he did not continue his father’s reforms, but did evil in the sight of the Lord. He was killed by some of his servants after only two years as king. Amon’s son Josiah was only eight years old when he was crowned king of Judah.

A Message of Judgment

In 2 Kings 21:13–14 we read that because of the horrible sins and bloodshed of Manasseh, the Lord would “wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.” This is also the message of the book of Zephaniah. Mincing no words, the prophet Zephaniah starts out by declaring, “I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD” (verse 2). In verse three, we read the word “consume” two more times. Six times in this short book we read the words “cut off” or “cut down.” Four times we read the words “anger” and “punish”, and twice the words “destroy,” “wrath,” and “woe.” Other words we read are “howl,” “cry,” “reproach,” “famish,” and “devour.” Who was the Lord angry at and why? Zephaniah had a message for the people of Judah in chapter 1; and the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians, and Assyrians in chapter 2. In chapter 3, he singled out the people of Jerusalem.

God does not punish arbitrarily. In the book of Zephaniah, he clearly points out the sins which he must punish. We read in chapter 1 that the people of Judah, God’s covenant people, had turned

their backs to him and were worshiping false gods such as Baal (verse 4), the sun moon and stars (verse 5), ignored God's warnings (verse 6), and followed the fashions of the world (verse 8). They did not think God saw or cared about what they did: "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil" (verse 12). In chapter 3, verse 2, we read that the people did not obey, ignored corrections, did not trust God, and no longer even prayed to the Lord. In verses 3 and 4, princes are compared to devouring lions, and judges to wolves. Prophets are said to be light and treacherous, and priests polluted God's house.

Did anyone tremble when they heard Zephaniah's dreadful descriptions of the fear, terror and desolation which God would send upon them? When Zephaniah saw a few who seemed to be moved, he cried out, "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger" (chapter 2:3).

A Message of Mercy

The last blast of Zephaniah's trumpet of alarm is, "All the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy" (chapter 3, verse 8). Then there is an amazing change. In the very next verse Zephaniah goes on to say, "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent." The rest of the book of Zephaniah is filled with words of comfort. Having just read of God's fearful judgments makes reading of God's love and mercy all the more amazing. Not only do we read of God's people rejoicing in the Lord, we read of God rejoicing in his people: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with love; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17). How can this be? The solution to this riddle is found in Luke 23:44-46. May this fill your heart with love!

Review Questions

1. Who was Zephaniah's great-great-grandfather?
 - a. Cush
 - b. Gedaliah
 - c. Hiskiah
2. In Zephaniah 1:5, what did the people of Judah do on their roof tops?
 - a. Pray to the Lord
 - b. Look at their neighbours' wives
 - c. Worship the host of heaven
3. In Zephaniah 1:12, who does God say he will punish?
 - a. Princes clothed with strange apparel
 - b. Men that were settled on their lees

d. Rulers, prophets, and priests

4. In chapter 1:13, what will the people of Judah not be able to do? (choose 2)

- a. Live in the new houses they built
- b. Harvest the grain they sowed
- c. Drink wine from the vines they planted.

5. In Zephaniah 2:4, all five Philistine cities are mentioned EXCEPT:

- a. Gaza
- b. Ashkelon
- c. Gath

6. Who will replace the Philistines in their land? (Zephaniah 2:6, 7)

- a. Shepherds with flocks
- b. Egyptians and Babylonians
- c. The remnant of the house of Judah
- d. Both a and c

7. Make a list of the expressions used in Zephaniah 1:15–16 to describe the day of the LORD.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

8. From chapter 3:3–4, list the four groups of leaders, and their description.

Groups of Leaders	Their Descriptions

Discussion Questions

1. When people have questions about what is happening in the world around them, what are some places they go for answers? What is the best place to go? Have you ever had your questions answered there?

2. In chapter 3:2, Habakkuk says, “O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid.” Should we fear God? If so, what kind of fear should we have toward God? What kind of fear should we not have?

3. For a long time, the monk Martin Luther tried to make himself righteous before a just and holy God. He did everything the Roman Catholic Church prescribed, and more. He was very troubled, until he read Romans 1:17, where Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith.” Suddenly it was as if the gates of heaven swung open, and Luther walked through them into paradise. From that moment on, Luther was a new man. What did Luther suddenly understand, when he read this verse?

4. Paul quotes “the just shall live by faith” in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. Why do you think this was one of Paul’s favourite texts?
