The Chapters of Zephaniah

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Zephaniah

SECTION OUTLINE ONE (ZEPHANIAH 1-3)
Zephaniah describes three special "days," two of which are grievous, while the third is glorious.

   A. The first grievous day (1:1-13; 2:1-15; 3:1-5): Historical in scope, it includes Judah and her surrounding neighbors and is fulfilled by the king of Babylon.
            (1) Her sins (1:4-6, 8-9, 11-12; 3:1-5)
               (a) Idolatry (1:4-6)
               (b) Greed (1:11)
               (c) Utter indifference to God (1:12; 3:2)
               (d) Rebellion, violence, and crime (3:1)
               (e) Leaders who follow pagan customs (1:8-9)
               (f) Judges who are like ravenous wolves that leave no trace of their prey (3:3)
               (g) Godless prophets and priests (3:4-5)
            (2) Her sentence (1:1-3, 7, 10, 13)
               (a) Cries of anguish will be heard throughout the land (1:10).
               (b) The land will be reduced to rubble (1:1-3, 7).
               (c) The people's wealth will be plundered and their homes demolished (1:13).
      2. The Gentiles (2:4-15)
         a. The Philistine cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron (2:4-7): Israel's western enemies
         b. Moab and Ammon (2:8-11): Israel's eastern enemies
         c. Ethiopia (2:12): Israel's southern enemy
         d. Assyria and its capital, Nineveh (2:13-15): Israel's northern enemy
   B. The second grievous day (1:14-18; 3:6-8): Prophetic in scope, it will include all nations and is yet to be fulfilled by the King of heaven.
      1. The designation (1:14): Zephaniah calls it the "day of the LORD," a probable reference to the coming Great Tribulation.
      2. The devastation (1:15-18; 3:6-8)
         a. Earth's citizens will stumble as blind men (1:15-17a).
         b. Their blood will be poured out into the dust (1:17b).
         c. Wealth will become absolutely useless (1:18).
         d. Few survivors will be left (3:6-7).
         e. The entire earth will be devoured by the fire of divine wrath (3:8).

   A. To the Gentiles (3:9): Their many languages will be unified and purified, thus allowing all people to worship God together.
   B. To the Jews (3:10-20)
      1. Their regathering (3:10, 19-20a)
      2. Their restoring (3:20b)
      3. Their refining (3:11-13)
      4. Their rejoicing (3:14-18): God himself will join in their happy song.