

**Wenstrom Bible Ministries**  
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**Zephaniah: Zephaniah 1:7a-The Day of the Lord is Imminent for the  
Inhabitants of Jerusalem in Zephaniah's Day**

**Lesson # 18**

**Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests. (NASB95)**

“**Be silent**” is the interjection *has* (חַס), which is a marker of inactivity with emphasis upon not speaking and is used with imperative force which demands awesome or respectful silence by the inhabitants of Jerusalem when the Lord speaks through the prophet Zephaniah.

“**Before the Lord GOD!**” is composed of the following: (1) preposition *min* (מִן), “**before**” (2) masculine plural construct form of the noun *pāne* (פָּנֵי), “**before**” (3) masculine singular form of the noun *’ādōnāy* (אֲדֹנָי), “**Lord**” (4) first person singular pronominal suffix *’ānî* (אֲנִי), which is not translated (5) masculine singular proper noun *yhwh* (יהוה), “**God**” (6) first person singular pronominal suffix *’ānî* (אֲנִי), which is not translated.

The noun *’ādōnāy* means “the Sovereign” since it pertains to the sovereign authority of God over Judah and the entire human race and speaks of His majesty as the ruler of Judah and the entire human race.

This word is modified by the first person singular pronominal suffix *’ānî*, which means “my” since it is functioning as a possessive personal pronoun referring of course to Zephaniah and expresses the personal covenant relationship between Zephaniah and the God of Israel.

The preposition *min* means “before” and is prefixed to the masculine plural construct form of the noun *pāne*, which means “presence” and together, they form a preposition which means “before the presence.”

They pertain to the presence or proximity of someone understood in terms of the person's face with the implication of being before or in front of them and here it speaks of the inhabitants of Jerusalem being in God's presence in the sense that they are before Him since He is omnipresent.

The proper noun *yhwh* (*Yahweh*) "**Lord**" is the covenant-keeping personal name of God used in connection with God's covenant relationship with the Jewish people and emphasizes that God has a covenant relationship with these individuals living in the city of Jerusalem who were turning themselves back from following Him.

This word thus indicates that the Lord through Zephaniah is speaking of those who have trusted in Him and are believers since in Old Testament Israel non-believers did not have a covenant relationship with Him but only believers.

The noun *yhwh* is modified by the first person singular pronominal suffix <sup>ā</sup>*nî*, which means "my" since it is functioning as a possessive personal pronoun referring of course to Zephaniah and expresses the personal covenant relationship between Zephaniah and the God of Israel.

**"For the day of the LORD is near"** presents the reason for Zephaniah's previous command that the inhabitants of Jerusalem be silent before the presence of His sovereign and Lord.

**"The day of the LORD is near"** is composed of the following: (1) masculine singular adjective *qārôb* (קָרוֹב), **"is near"** (2) masculine singular construct form of the noun *yôm* (יּוֹם), **"the day of"** (3) masculine singular proper noun *yhwh* (יְהוָה), **"the Lord."**

The adjective *qārôb* means "near, imminent" since it pertains to a point of time close to another point of time.

Therefore, this word denotes imminency indicating that the day of the Lord was imminent in Zephaniah's day or in other words great destruction was coming to Judah and Jerusalem in Zephaniah's day.

The noun *yôm* means "time period" since it does not pertain to a twenty-four period but rather an indefinite period of time which could range from a relatively short to very long period of time.

Here it refers to the period of time encompassing Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invading the city of Jerusalem which ultimately resulted in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

**Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the presence of my Sovereign, my Lord because the period of judgment to be brought about by the Lord is imminent. Indeed, the Lord has prepared a sacrificial meal. He has consecrated His invited guests. (Author's translation)**

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophet Zephaniah issues the inhabitants of Jerusalem a command to be silent before the presence of his sovereign and his Lord who is of course the God of Israel.

This command emphasizes the Creator/creature distinction in that the creature must be silent before his or her Creator.

Thus, Zephaniah is expressing with this command that He is speaking for God and this demands that the citizens of Judah and the city of Jerusalem are to show reverential respect by listening to his message from God on behalf of all of them.

Then, Zephaniah presents the reason for this command, namely that the period of judgment to be brought about by the Lord or caused by the Lord was imminent.

This command in fact presents the reason for the book of Zephaniah which is to proclaim "the day of the Lord" to those Jews living in Judah and the city of Jerusalem in Zephaniah's day in order to warn them of the God of Israel's imminent judgment of their nation and capital city for their sinful lives.

Indeed, this command and the reason for this command presents the theme of the book of Zephaniah.

This command in Zephaniah 1:7 and this book are designed to warn, convict and encourage and motivate those believers in Judah and Jerusalem who were in apostasy or who did not believe in the God of Israel to repent.

For those who were believers in apostasy repentance would involve confession of sin followed by obedience to the Lord's commands and for those who were unbelievers, this would involve exercising faith in the God of Israel.

Therefore, this command in Zephaniah 1:7 and the reason for this command are an expression of God's grace which is an expression of His attribute of love in that He is warning His people that He will severely discipline them because He loves them.

"The day of the Lord" in Zephaniah 1:7 is not a twenty-four period but rather it is a period of time in which the God of Israel judged the citizens of the kingdom of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem between 605-587 B.C. through the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar.

To summarize, "the day of the Lord" prophecies already fulfilled in history in several different ways are as follows: (1) Assyrian deportation of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. (Amos 5:18, 20), (2) locust plague in Joel's day (Joel 1:15), (3) Babylonian exile of Judah between 605-586 B.C. (Zeph. 1:7; Ezek. 13:5), (4) Babylonian defeat of Egypt in 586 B.C. (Ezek. 30:3), (5) destruction of Edom (Obad. 1-14).

There are several "day of the Lord" prophecies which will be fulfilled during the last three and a half years of Daniel's Seventieth Week (Zeph. 1:14; Joel 2:1; 2:11, 31; 3:14; Zechariah 14:1-2; Is. 13:6-16).

There are some that will be fulfilled through the Second Advent of Jesus Christ (Zech. 14:3-8) and His subsequent millennial reign (Zech. 14:9-21; Joel 3:17-21).

The day of the Lord or the period in which God judged Judah and Jerusalem came to pass between 605-587 B.C. and during this period, the Babylonian invasions led by Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled the prophecies issued against Judah and Jerusalem which are recorded in Zephaniah 1:4-13.

These prophecies in these verses are not related to the tribulation portion of Daniel's seventieth week.

We must remember that Zephaniah 1:5-6 is connected to the prophecies recorded in Zephaniah 1:4 which contains two prophetic declarations which are not related to the tribulation portion of Daniel's seventieth week which will end with the Second Advent of Jesus Christ and there are several reasons to support this.

First the worship of Baal took place during the days of Zephaniah and secondly Antichrist will be worshipped during the tribulation portion of Daniel's seventieth week.

In fact, Antichrist will kill those who do not worship him (Revelation 13).

Daniel 11:36-40 and Second Thessalonians 2:3-10 teach that the Antichrist will exalt himself above every god that people worship.

Thus because Zephaniah 1:4 was fulfilled through the Babylonian invasions of Jerusalem Zephaniah 1:5-6 was as well since these verses are tied to the prophecies in Zephaniah 1:4.

Lastly, Zephaniah 1:8-13 describes the city of Jerusalem in the prophet Zephaniah's day since these verses describe Jews living in Jerusalem which fits the description of them during the days of Zephaniah and the Babylonian invasions.

They also describe places in the city of Jerusalem which existed in Zephaniah's day but have not since and they also describe the foreign clothing of the Jews which can only be found historically in Judah and Jerusalem during Zephaniah's day.

So these prophetic declarations recorded in Zephaniah 1:4-13 were fulfilled in a near sense through Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon sacking Judah and the city of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar's armies did kill the majority of those practicing idolatry in Judah since Nebuchadnezzar's armies destroyed the city of Jerusalem during his third invasion of this city in 587 B.C.

He killed those apostate Jewish believers who had entered into a covenant relationship with God as a result of being declared justified by Him through faith in Him.

This king also killed those Jews who had never entered into a covenant relationship with Him as a result of never trusting in Him.

Nebuchadnezzar's attack of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. during the third year of Jehoiakim, Judah's king resulted in the first of three deportations of the Jewish people (Daniel 1:1; 2 Kings 24:1-2, 13; 2 Chronicles 36:5, 6, 7).

Nebuchadnezzar captured the city of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and in 587 B.C. destroyed the city and the temple.