

## ZEPHANIAH / SOPHONIAS (ΣΟΦΟΝΙΑΣ)

Status: Canonical

Author: Zephaniah

Location written: Judah

Date: c. 640 – 610 BC

### 1



### *The coming day of the Lord*

1:1 The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah (Sophonias), son of Chusi, son of Godolias,<sup>a</sup> son of Amorias,<sup>b</sup> son of Ezekias,<sup>c</sup> in the days of Josias the son of Amon, king of Judah.

2 “Let there be a complete cutting off<sup>d</sup> from the face of the land!”<sup>e</sup> says the Lord. 3 “Let people and cattle be cut off!<sup>f</sup> Let the birds of the air and the fish of the sea be destroyed! The ungodly shall fail and I will remove the transgressors from the face of the land,” says the Lord. 4 “I will stretch out my hand upon

<sup>a</sup> MT: Gedaliah

<sup>b</sup> MT: Amariah

<sup>c</sup> MT: Hezekiah

<sup>d</sup> NETS: “extinction”

<sup>e</sup> Or “earth”

<sup>f</sup> NETS: “become extinct” / MT: “I will sweep away” (NRS)

Juda and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will remove the names<sup>g</sup> of Baal<sup>h</sup> from this place and also the names of the priests.<sup>i</sup> 5 [I will remove] those who express adoration to the host of heaven<sup>j</sup> from the house-tops, those who swear<sup>k</sup> by the LORD, and those who swear by their king.<sup>l</sup> 6 [I will remove] those who turn aside from the Lord, those who do not seek the Lord, and those who do not hold on<sup>m</sup> to the Lord.”

7 Act in [silent] reverence<sup>n</sup> before the Lord GOD because the day of the LORD is near. Indeed, the LORD has prepared his sacrifice and consecrated<sup>o</sup> those whom he has called.<sup>p</sup>

8 “In the day of the LORD’s sacrifice, I will bring justice<sup>q</sup> on the rulers<sup>r</sup> and on the king’s house<sup>s</sup> and upon all those who wear foreign dress. 9 In that day, I will openly punish on the gateways,<sup>t</sup> on those who fill the house of the Lord their God<sup>u</sup> with ungodliness and deceit.”

10 “In that day,” says the Lord, “the sound of a cry from the piercing gate<sup>v</sup> and a howling from the second [gate] and a great destruction<sup>w</sup> from the hills. 11 Lament, you who dwell in the city that has been broken down,<sup>x</sup> because all have become like C’anaan<sup>y</sup> and all who were exalted by silver have been utterly destroyed. 12 Then, I will search Jerusalem with a candle and will punish those who neglect the commandments committed to

<sup>g</sup> Or “authority / power” / MT: “remnant of”

<sup>h</sup> “Baal” is feminine in LXX, which is why NETS reads “of the goddess Baal”

<sup>i</sup> Many MT-based versions qualify as “idolatrous priests”

<sup>j</sup> That is, the stars and angels.

<sup>k</sup> MT: “bow down / worship and swear by”

<sup>l</sup> MT: “Molech (NIV) / Milcom”

<sup>m</sup> Or “do not remain loyal to / do not consult / do not inquire from”

<sup>n</sup> Or “Be moved with fear” / MT: “Be silent”

<sup>o</sup> Or “sanctified / made holy”

<sup>p</sup> Or “his guests”

<sup>q</sup> Or “take vengeance / punish”

<sup>r</sup> Or “princes”

<sup>s</sup> MT: “king’s children”

<sup>t</sup> Text is unclear; MT: “all who leap over the threshold” / Vg: “every one who enters with arrogance over the threshold” (DRA)

<sup>u</sup> MT “their master / their Lord”

<sup>v</sup> MT: “fish gate” / NETS: “from the gate of men slaying”

<sup>w</sup> Or “crashing”

<sup>x</sup> LXX is difficult here. MT: “you who live in the market district” (NIV) / “you inhabitants of Maktesh / of the Mortar / of the Hollow”

<sup>y</sup> References to C’anaan may also be a reference to merchants and traders, as most MT-based translations read.

them, and who say in their hearts, ‘the Lord will not do any good, neither will he do any harm!’<sup>a</sup>

13 Their prosperity shall become a bounty and their houses a complete desolation. They shall build houses, but shall not dwell in them; and they shall plant vineyards, but shall not drink their wine.

14 Truly, the great day of the LORD is near, it is near and very swift; the sound of the day of the Lord is made bitter and harsh, established powerfully.<sup>b</sup> 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of affliction and distress, a day of desolation and destruction, a day of gloom and darkness, a day of cloud and fog, 16 a day of the trumpet [blast] and [battle] cry against the powerful cities and exalted<sup>c</sup> towers. 17 I will greatly afflict the people and they shall walk as blind, because they have sinned against the LORD. Therefore, he shall pour out their blood as dust and their flesh as dung.<sup>d</sup> 18 Their silver and gold will in no way be able to save them in the day of the LORD’s wrath. Instead, the whole land<sup>e</sup> shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy for he will bring a swift end on all those who inhabit the land.

## 2

### *Against various nations*

2:1 Be gathered and closely joined together, O ignorant<sup>f</sup> nation, 2 before you become as the flower that passes away, before the anger of the LORD come upon you, and before the day of the wrath of the LORD come upon you. 3 Seek the LORD, you humble of the earth who live by his decisions; seek justice and answer accordingly,<sup>g</sup> so that you might {perhaps} be hidden in the day of the wrath of the LORD.

4 Gaza will be utterly spoiled and Ascalon<sup>h</sup> destroyed; at mid-day, Azotus<sup>i</sup> will be

<sup>a</sup> Or “evil”

<sup>b</sup> MT: “the mighty man shall cry there bitterly”

<sup>c</sup> Or “high / exalted”

<sup>d</sup> MT has the passive form “their blood will be poured out...”

<sup>e</sup> Or “earth”

<sup>f</sup> Or “without shame / uneducated” / Vg conveys the idea of “unworthy to be loved / undesirable”

<sup>g</sup> MT: “seek righteousness, seek humility”

<sup>h</sup> MT: “Ashkelon”

<sup>i</sup> MT: “Ashdod”

driven out and Accaron<sup>j</sup> shall be uprooted. 5 Woe to those who dwell on the border of the sea, exiles<sup>k</sup> of the Cretans! The word of the LORD is against you, O C’anaan, land of the Philistines, and I will removed you from your dwelling-place. 6 Crete<sup>m</sup> shall be a pasture of flocks and a fold for sheep. 7 The sea coast will be for the remnant of the house of Juda; they shall pasture there, in the houses of Ascalon. They will find rest in the evening because of the children of Juda, because the LORD their God has visited them; he will undo their captivity! 8 I have heard the abuse of Moab and the insults of the children of Ammon, by which they have reviled my people and exalted themselves against my territories.”

9 “Therefore, as I live,” says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, “Moab shall be as Sodom and the children of Ammon as Gomorrha; Damascus<sup>n</sup> shall be left as a heap of the threshing-floor and desolate forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them and the remnant of my nation will inherit them. 10 This<sup>o</sup> is their punishment in return for their arrogance, for insulting and acting in exaltation on the<sup>p</sup> LORD Almighty.<sup>q</sup> 11 The LORD shall appear<sup>r</sup> against them and shall utterly destroy<sup>s</sup> all the gods of the nations of the earth. The nations on every shore shall worship him, every one from his [own] place. 12 You too, Ethiopians,<sup>t</sup> are to be slain of my sword!”

13 He shall stretch forth his hand against the north to destroy the Assyrian and make Nineveh a dry wilderness, even as a desert. 14 Then flocks with all the wild beasts of the land as well as chameleons<sup>u</sup> will feed in the midst of the city: hedgehogs will dwell in her ceilings; wild beasts will howl in her breaches and

<sup>j</sup> MT: “Ekron”

<sup>k</sup> Or “resident aliens”

<sup>l</sup> MT: “nation of the Cherethites” / Vg; “nation of reprobates”

<sup>m</sup> Or simply “The seacoast”

<sup>n</sup> MT does not mention Damascus and reads: “Surely, Moab is as Sodom, and the sons of Ammon as Gomorrah: an overrunning of nettles and salt-pits, and a desolation unto the age” (YLT)

<sup>o</sup> Or “She shall be theirs in return for their pride” (NETS) (a possible reference to one of the cities previously mentioned)

<sup>p</sup> MT: “against the people of the LORD”

<sup>q</sup> MT: “Sabbaoth / of Hosts”

<sup>r</sup> MT: “be awesome / terrifying”

<sup>s</sup> MT (possibly): “famish / shrivel / reduce to nothing”

<sup>t</sup> MT: “Cushites” (NIV)

<sup>u</sup> MT: “owl / pelican / vulture (meaning uncertain)”

ravens in the porches, even as her loftiness was like a cedar.<sup>a</sup>

### 3

(2:15) 3:1 This is the overconfident<sup>b</sup> city that dwells securely, saying in her heart, “I am [here] and none is to be after me!” What a desolation she has become, a lair for wild beasts! Everyone who passes through her shall hiss and shake his hands.

#### Concerning Jerusalem

(3:1) O, the radiant and ransomed city, the dove!<sup>c</sup> 2 She paid no attention to the voice; she did not accept correction; she did not trust in the LORD and did not draw near to her God. 3 Her rulers<sup>d</sup> within her were as roaring lions, her judges as the wolves of Arabia;<sup>e</sup> they leave nothing until the morning! 4 Her prophets, ‘bearers of the spirit,’ are scoffers;<sup>f</sup> her priests desecrate<sup>g</sup> what is holy<sup>h</sup> and sinfully transgress the law.

5 Yet, the righteous LORD is in her midst. He will never do anything unjust: morning by morning, he will bring forth his judgment to the light and it is not hidden.<sup>i</sup> He does not acknowledge injustice by extortion, or injustice to [obtain] victory. 6 I have brought down the proud<sup>j</sup> with destruction; their fortresses are destroyed! I will make their streets completely empty, with no one passing through. Their cities have come to an end, as no one is left to live in them. 7 I said, “But, you fear me, receive instruction, and you shall not be cut off from the face of the land on account of all the punishment that I have brought upon her. Be ready, rise at dawn; all that is obtained is corrupt.”<sup>k</sup>

<sup>a</sup> MT: “the beams of cedar / the cedar-work will be exposed” / Vg: “I will consume her strength” (DRA)

<sup>b</sup> Or “scornful / exultant”

<sup>c</sup> MT and LXX are difficult, and “the dove” is placed in the following verse in MT. MT alternative: “Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city” (KJV)

<sup>d</sup> Or “princes”

<sup>e</sup> MT: “evening wolves”

<sup>f</sup> MT: “her prophets are reckless / insolent and treacherous / impostors”

<sup>g</sup> Or “profane / defile”

<sup>h</sup> MT: “the sanctuary / the holy place”

<sup>i</sup> MT has “but the unjust knows no shame” instead of the rest of the verse.

<sup>j</sup> MT: “the nations”

<sup>k</sup> LXX and MT are somewhat unclear / MT: “Yet all the more eagerly have they done all their corrupt deeds” (NAB) / “but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings” (KJV)

8 “Therefore, wait for me,” says the LORD, “until the day of my arising<sup>l</sup> as a witness.<sup>m</sup> My judgment shall be on the assembly of the nations, the kings being brought to me, to pour out all my fierce anger upon them. Truly, the whole earth will be consumed with the fire of my zeal.<sup>n</sup>”

9 For then, I will change the language of the people for that generation,<sup>o</sup> so that all may call on the name of the LORD to serve him shoulder to shoulder.<sup>p</sup> 10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, I will be offered sacrifices.<sup>q</sup> 11 In that day, you will not be put to shame by all your {former} practices, by which you have transgressed against me. For then, I will take away from you your disdainful pride and you will no longer speak haughily on my holy mountain. 12 I will leave in you a meek and lowly people, 13 and the remnant of Israel will fear the name of the LORD. They will do no wrong, nor speak vain<sup>r</sup> things, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. They will eat and rest with no one to terrify them.

#### Promises for the daughter of Zion

14 Rejoice, O daughter of Zion! Cry aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Rejoice and delight yourself with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 The LORD has taken away your iniquities, he has ransomed you from the hand of your enemies. The LORD, the King of Israel, is your midst; [and] you will no longer experience [any] harm.<sup>s</sup>

16 At that time, the Lord will say to Jerusalem,<sup>t</sup> “Courage, O Zion! Do not let your hands become weak! 17 The LORD your God is in you; the Mighty One shall save<sup>u</sup> you. He will bring joy upon you and refresh you with his love. He will rejoice over you with delight as in a day of feast! 18 I will gather your afflicted ones. What a terrible thing for anyone to have taken advantage of your shame!”<sup>v</sup>

<sup>l</sup> Or “resurrection”

<sup>m</sup> Brenton has “when I rise up for a witness”

<sup>n</sup> Or “jealousy”

<sup>o</sup> MT: “I will restore to the peoples a pure language” (NKJ)

<sup>p</sup> Literally “under one yoke”

<sup>q</sup> MT is also terse and difficult: “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering” (RSV)

<sup>r</sup> Or “futile / worthless”

<sup>s</sup> Or “see evil / disaster”

<sup>t</sup> MT has the passive form “it will be said to Jerusalem”

<sup>u</sup> Or “deliver / rescue”

<sup>v</sup> A difficult verse, with many possible translations, as “The sorrows for the appointed feasts I will remove from you; they

19 “Behold, I will work in you for your sake at that time,” says the Lord. “I will save her that was oppressed and receive her that was rejected. Then I will appoint them for praise and that shall be honored in all the earth.<sup>a</sup> 20 At that time, their enemies will be put to shame as I treat you well and receive you {home}. Truly, I will appoint you for honor and praise among all the nations of the earth when I return you from your captivity,” says the LORD.

---

are a burden and a reproach to you” (NIV) / “I have taken away your misfortune, no longer need you bear the disgrace of it.” (NJB)

<sup>a</sup> MT: “At that time, I will deal with all who oppress you. I will save the lame and assemble the outcasts. I will give them praise and renown in all the earth, undoing their previous state”