

ZEPHANIAH

The Man: Prophesied c. 640-630 B.C., before Josiah's reform and perhaps before Jeremiah began his ministry. Zephaniah appears to be familiar with Jerusalem, so he probably was from there.

The Times: A turbulent age, after many cities had been lost to the Assyrians. Worship of the Baals, the stars, and an Ammonite god all corrupted Judah's religious practice.

The Message: Destruction is coming to Judah and to the whole earth as God's punishment for idolatry and injustice. This "Day of the Lord" will also strike the nations that have been enemies of Israel. But a virtuous remnant shall know peace and prosperity.

Prophetic Themes in Zephaniah

Authority: ... says the Lord: [1:2-3,10]

Covenant Relationship: Jerusalem has not trusted in the Lord, but the Lord is just and does no wrong: [3:1-2,5]

Specific Sin: idolatry: [1:4-12]

Judgment: destruction and desolation of the whole earth: [1:2-3,14-18]

Call to Repentance: Seek the Lord ... seek justice, seek humility: [2:1-3]

Remnant: I will leave a remnant and bring about their restoration: [3:11-20]

Readings at Mass

2:3; 3:12-13 – Call to repentance and the promise of a remnant. [Year A, 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time]

3:14-18 – A promise of restoration for the faithful remnant of Israel. [Year C, 3rd Sunday of Advent; Dec. 21; May 31 (Feast of the Visitation)]

3:1-2,9-13 – I will purify the lips of the remnant of Israel, that they may call on my name. [Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Advent]