

Why Jerusalem Fell II

The writing of consideration (Zephaniah) took place approximately 630-625 B.C. during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. Roughly based upon the condition of the nation, the writing may have been penned prior to the reforms of Josiah (since I was not there...go figure) and before the fall of Nineveh (2:13). Judah is denounced for its idolatry and the worshipping of Baal, Chemarim, host of heaven, and those “that swear to Jehovah and swear to Malcam” (1:4-6).

As a result, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are told, “Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord Jehovah; for the day of Jehovah is at hand: for Jehovah hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath consecrated his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of Jehovah's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's sons, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel. And in that day I will punish all those that leap over the threshold, that fill their master's house with violence and deceit. And in that day, saith Jehovah, there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and a wailing from the second quarter, and a great crashing from the hills. Wail, ye inhabitants of Maktesh (*where the market place was, and comprised of unscrupulous merchants, ret*); for all the people of Canaan are undone; all they that were laden with silver are cut off. And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil. And their wealth shall become a spoil, and their houses a desolation: yea, they shall build houses, but shall not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but shall not drink the wine thereof” (1:7-13). Thus, the people are warned, “The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Jehovah; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he will make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land” (1:14-18). Thus, the Chaldeans, with Nebuchadnezzar at their head, would bring judgment on Judah, and other nations. In chapter three Zephaniah reveals the seven transgressions at the forefront of Judah's judgement:

- 1) Rebellious
 - 2) Polluted
 - 3) Oppressing
 - 4) Obeyed not the voice
 - 5) Received not instruction
 - 6) Trusted not in Jehovah
 - 7) Drew not near to her God
- (Zeph. 3:1-2)

In the next installment, we will consider the specifics of these transgressions.