

PART 1 – CONTEXT**1. צפניה א:א**

דבר יקוק | אָשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־צַפְנִיָּה בֶן־כּוּשִׁי בֶן־גְּדַלְיָה בֶן־אַמְרִיָּה בֶן־חִזְקִיָּה בִּימֵי יְאֹשָׁהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹן מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:

1. Zephania 1:1

The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah, during the reign of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah.

2. תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה טו עמוד א

במתניתא תנא כל שמעשיו ומעשה אבותיו סתומין ופרט לך הכתוב באחד מהן לשבח כגון (צפניה א:א) דבר ה' אשר היה אל צפניה בן כושי בן גדליה בידוע שהוא צדיק בן צדיק

2. Babylonian Talmud Tractate Megilla 15a

It was taught in a *baraita*: anyone whose actions and the actions of his ancestors are obscured and not explained, and the verse mentioned one of them favorably, for example: “The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah” (Zephaniah 1:1), it is known that not only was he a righteous man, he was also the son of a righteous man.

3. מלבים על צפניה א:א

דבר ה' וכו' עד בן חזקיהו - יחס אותו עד ארבעה דורות שהיו אבותיו גדולים וי"א שהיה מזרע חזקיה המלך בימי יאשיה קודם שעשה תשובה

3. Malbim on Zephania 1:1

The word of God... son of Hezekiah – the lineage of four generations is given because they were great people. There are those who say he was the offspring of King Hezekiah.

In the days of Josiah – before he repented.

4. ילקוט שמעוני ירמיהו רמז רסב ד"ה ירמיה הנביא היה

ירמיה היה משלשה נביאים שנתנבאו באותו הדור, ירמיה, צפניה, וחולדה הנביאה. ירמיה היה מתנבא בשווקים. צפניה בתוך בתי כנסיות. וחולדה אצל הנשים

4. Yalkut Shimoni

Jeremiah was one of three prophets who gave prophecy in the same generation: Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Chuldah the Prophetess. Jeremiah gave prophecy in the market place, Zephaniah in the synagogue, and Chuldah with the women.

PART 2 – CONTENT**5. Breakdown of the Structure of Zephania**

		Zephania 1:18	
Chapter 1	Destruction coming to whole world, including Yehuda, for their sins	On the day of the Lord's wrath, in the fire of His passion, the whole land shall be consumed; for He will make a terrible end of all who dwell in the land.	בְּיוֹם עֲבָרַת יִקָּח וּבְאֵשׁ קִנְאוֹתוֹ תֹאכַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי־קָלָה אֲדִי־נִבְהָלָה גְעִשָׁה אֶת כָּל־יִשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:
		Zephania 2:9	
Chapter 2	Element of comfort for Yehuda, alongside prophecy of downfall of nations	The remnant of My people shall plunder them, The remainder of My nation shall possess them.	שְׂאֵרִית עַמִּי בְּיוֹם וַיִּתֵּר גּוֹי [גּוֹיִי] נִתְקָלוּם:
		Zephania 3:20	
Chapter 3	Harsh description of Yehuda's sins, followed by prophecy of consolation	At that time I will gather you, and at [that] time I will bring you [home]; for I will make you renowned and famous among all the peoples on earth, when I restore your fortunes before their very eyes —said the Lord.	בְּעֵת הַהִיא אֲבִיא אֶתְכֶם וּבְעֵת קִבְּצִי אֶתְכֶם כִּי־אָתֶּן אֶתְכֶם לְשֵׁם וְלִתְהִלָּה בְּכָל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ בְּשׁוּבִי אֶת־שְׁבוּתֵיכֶם לְעֵינֵיכֶם אָמַר יְקוּק:

PART 3 – CONCEPTS

6. Comparison chart showing similar description of Nineveh and Jerusalem

Descriptions of Assyria	Descriptions of Jerusalem
<p>Zephania 2:15 הָאֲמָרָה בַּלְבָּבָהּ אָנִי וְאֵפְסִי עוֹד That thought in her heart, “I am, and there is none but me”?</p>	<p>Zephania 1:12 הָאֲמָרִים בַּלְבָּבָם לֹא-יִיטִיב יְקוּק וְלֹא יַרְעֶה: Who say in their hearts, “The Lord will do nothing, good or bad.”</p>
<p>Zephania 2:15 זֹאת הָעִיר הַעֲלִיזָה הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת לְבִטָּחָה Is this the joyous city that dwelt secure</p>	<p>Zephania 3:1-2 הָעִיר הַיּוֹנָה... בִּיקוּק לֹא בִטָּחָה Overbearing city... She has not trusted in the Lord</p>
<p>Zephania 2:13 וַיַּשֶּׁם אֶת-נִינְוֵה לְשִׁמְמָה He will make Nineveh a desolation</p>	<p>Zephania 1:13 וְהָיָה חֵילָם לְמִשְׁפָּה וּבִתְיָהֶם לְשִׁמְמָה Their wealth shall be plundered and their homes laid waste.</p>
<p>Zephania 3:6 הַכְּרָתִי גוֹיִם נְשָׂמוּ פְנוֹתָם הַחֲרֻבְתִּי הַיּוֹצֵאתָם מִבְּלִי עוֹבֵר נֶצְדוּ עָרֵיהֶם מִבְּלִי-אִישׁ מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב: I wiped out nations: their corner towers are desolate; I turned their thoroughfares into ruins, with none passing by; Their towns lie waste without people, without inhabitants.</p>	<p>Zephania 1:4,13,16 וְנָטִיתִי יָדִי עַל-יְהוּדָה וְעַל כָּל-יְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְהַכְּרַתִּי מִן-הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה... וּבָנִוּ בָתִּים וְלֹא יֵשְׁבוּ... יוֹם שׁוֹפָר וְתִרְוַעָה עַל הָעָרִים הַבְּצֻרוֹת וְעַל הַפְּנֹת הַגְּבוּהוֹת: I will stretch out My arm against Judah and against all who dwell in Jerusalem; and I will wipe out from this place... They shall build houses and not inhabit them... A day of horn blasts and alarms— against the fortified towns and the lofty corner towers.</p>

7. ירמיהו טו:ד

וְנַתְּתִים לְזוּעָה [לְזַעֲזָה] לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ בְּגִלְגַל מְנַשֶּׁה בֶן-חֶזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה בִירוּשָׁלַם:

7. Jeremiah 15:4

I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, on account of King Manasseh son of Hezekiah of Judah, and of what he did in Jerusalem.”

8. צפניה ב:ג

בְּקִשׁוֹ אֶת-יְקוּק כָּל-עַנְיֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁפֹּטוֹ פָּעְלוּ בְּקִשׁוֹ-צֶדֶק בְּקִשׁוֹ עֲנֹה אֲוֵלִי תִסְתָּרוּ בְיוֹם אַף-יְקוּק:

8. Zephania 2:3

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land who have fulfilled His law; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will find shelter on the day of the Lord’s anger.

9. רשי על צפניה ב:ג

כי אם תעשו כן אפקוד על שכיניכם הרעים פלשת ועמון ומואב כמו שהנביא מסדרן והולך

9. Rashi on Zephania 2:3

For if you will do this then I will call to account your bad neighbours, Philistia, Amon and Moav,” as the prophet continues to list them.

10. רדק על צפניה ב:ג

תסתרו שלא תמותו בחרב עם הכלל. אבל מן הגלות לא הבטיחם כי כבר נגזרה גזירה בימי מנשה כמו שכתוב ונאמר ליאשיהו המלך ונאספת אל אבותיך בשלום ולא תראנה עיניך בכל הרעה אשר אני מביא על המקום הזה

10. Radak to Zephania 2:3

"You will take shelter, in that you will not die by the sword with the rest." He did not promise to save them from exile, though, for the decree had already been issued in the days of Menasheh, as it is recorded, and as it had been stated to King Yoshiyahu, "You will be gathered to your ancestors in peace and your eyes will not see all of the evil I will bring upon this place."

11. Abarbanel on Zephania 2:3

The Talmud (Chagigah 4b) records that R' Ami would cry when he reached this verse, saying, "They will do of this, and still, 'Maybe?!'" But I don't know why R' Ami cried, for the people of Judea and Jerusalem had sinned greatly in all forms of rebellion for a long time. Even were they to seek righteousness and humility in the end, why should their sin be forgiven entirely, without them receiving any punishment? Does God let things go entirely? Therefore the prophet said, "Perhaps you will take shelter," (2:3) meaning, "The wrath has already emerged from before God, the blow has begun. Should you return to Me now, perhaps it would not help, for once permission has been given to the destroyer to destroy, he does not distinguish. But perhaps you will take shelter on that day of rage, and God will spill His rage upon the rest of the nations." **"Perhaps you will take shelter" was not meant to doubt the efficacy of repentance, but to say that perhaps you would take shelter and the evil would not befall you, and perhaps you would experience it lightly, as suffering.**

TZEPHANIA SUMMARY**Context**

- **When?** During the reign of Yoshiyahu, late 7th century BCE, within the last 50 years before the destruction of the First Temple

Content

- Mixture of rebuke for their sins, description of destruction coming to all nations (including Yehuda) along with some consolation for the future

Concepts

- Don't be arrogant and be fooled into a false sense of security - need to repent and serve God properly
- No one is exempt from judgement on the Yom Hashem
- It is never too late to repent. Element of consolation - even though destruction is coming, there will be a remnant who will survive