

ZEPHANIAH

I. Meaning of Zephaniah

The name Zephaniah means "he whom Jehovah hides or shelters." This could mean that Zephaniah was born during the reign of Manasseh (687-639? B.C.) and that the Lord hid him or sheltered him from this wicked king.

II. Criticism of Zephaniah

A. Zephaniah derives a lot of his material from earlier writers and thus is not as original as the other prophets (e.g. Ewald).

1. Examples:

- a. The language in Zeph. 1:2,3 is similar to the language in the account of the flood.
- b. The statement in Zeph. 1:7 that the Lord had prepared a sacrifice to be made up of His own people is similar to Isa. 13:3 and 34:6.
- c. The description of the coming day of the Lord in Zeph. 1:14-18 is similar to the descriptions of that day given by Joel in Joel 2:1,2 and Amos in Amos 5:18-20.

2. Answer:

Zephaniah may be giving a summation of what the earlier pre-exilic prophets said. It is interesting to note that nine of the Minor Prophets prophesied before the exile to Babylon and that in the list of those Minor Prophets, Zephaniah is put last even though Habakkuk prophesied after he did. Zephaniah's position in this list may indicate that he was giving a summation of what the earlier pre-exilic prophets said and if that is so, his references to what they said isn't a weakness but a deliberate device of "one whose work stands as a summation and recapitulation of the pre-exile prophecy" that his contemporaries might lay it to heart.

B. Zephaniah isn't a great poet and thus doesn't ^{work} ~~work~~ with Isaiah or even with Hosea in this particular (J.M. Powis Smith).

1. Reasons why Zephaniah is not considered to be a great poet.

- a. No great imaginative powers
- b. No deep insight into the human heart is reflected in his utterances.
- c. No keen sensitiveness to the beauties of nature.

2. Answer