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Table of Contents

Translation Questions	4
Zephaniah	4
Contributors	23
unfoldingWord® Translation Questions Contributors	23
unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors	23
unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors	24

Zephaniah

Zephaniah 1

Zephaniah 1:1

ULT

¹ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.

UST

¹ Yahweh's message came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the grandson of Gedaliah, and the great-grandson of Amariah, whose father was King Hezekiah. Yahweh gave this message during the time when King Amon's son Josiah was the king of Judah.

What did God tell Zephaniah he would do to the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea and to man? (vv1-2)

God said He would destroy them and cut them off.

Zephaniah 1:2

ULT

² "I will utterly remove everything from the surface of the earth—this is the declaration of Yahweh.

UST

² Yahweh said, "I will sweep away everything that is on the earth.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:3

ULT

³ I will destroy man and beast; I will destroy the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. For I will cut off man from the surface of the earth—this is the declaration of Yahweh.

UST

³ I will sweep away people and animals. I will sweep away birds and fish. I will get rid of wicked people; so that there will be no more wicked people on the earth."

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:4

ULT

⁴ I will reach out with my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every remnant of Baal from this place and the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

UST

⁴ "These are some of the things that I will do: I will punish the people who live in Jerusalem and other places in Judah, and destroy everything that has been used in the worship of Baal and and cause people to no longer remember the names of the pagan priests or the other priests who have turned away from me.

What is the name of the idol of which God said he would cut off every remnant?

He would cut off every remnant of Baal.

Zephaniah 1:5

ULT

⁵ the people on the housetops who bow down to worship the heavenly bodies, and the people who bow down and swear to Yahweh but who also swear by Milcom. ^[1]

UST

⁵ I will get rid of those who go up on the roofs of their houses and worship the sun, moon, and stars, and those who claim to worship me but also swear using the name of their king.

Who did the ones on the housetops worship?

The ones on the housetops worship the heavenly bodies.

Zephaniah 1:6**ULT**

⁶ and those who have turned away from following Yahweh, those who neither seek Yahweh nor ask for his guidance.”

UST

⁶ Finally, I will get rid of all those who previously worshiped me but no longer do; those who no longer seek my help or request me to tell them what they should do.”

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:7**ULT**

⁷ Be silent before the Lord Yahweh! For the day of Yahweh is near; Yahweh has prepared the sacrifice and set apart his guests.

UST

⁷ Be silent in front of Yahweh the Lord, because it will soon be the time when Yahweh will judge and punish people. Yahweh has prepared himself to get rid of the people of Judah; they will be like animals that are set apart to be slaughtered for sacrifices, and he has chosen their enemies to be the ones who will get rid of them.

What are the people to do in the presence of Yahweh?

They were to be silent in the presence of Yahweh.

Zephaniah 1:8**ULT**

⁸ “It will come about on the day of Yahweh’s sacrifice, that I will punish the officials and the sons of the king, and everyone dressed in foreign clothes.

UST

⁸ Yahweh says, “On that day when I will get rid of the people of Judah, I will punish their officials and the king’s sons, and all those who worship foreign gods—

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:9

ULT

⁹ On that day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, those who fill the house of their master with violence and deceit.

UST

⁹ including those who show that they revere their god Dagan by avoiding stepping on the threshold of his temple, and those who do violent things and tell lies in the temples of their gods.”

Who did Yahweh say he would punish on the day of sacrifice?

Yahweh will punish the princes and the king’s sons, everyone dressed in foreign clothes, those who leap over the door sill, and those who fill their master’s house with violence and deceit.

Zephaniah 1:10

ULT

¹⁰ So it will be on that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh— that a cry of distress will come from the Fish Gate, wailing from the Second District, and a great crashing sound from the hills.

UST

¹⁰ Yahweh also says, “On that day, people will cry out at the Fish Gate of Jerusalem. People will wail in the Second Quarter of the city, and people will hear a loud crash of buildings collapsing in the hills.

What sounds will come up from the Fish Gate and the Second Quarter in that day?

A cry of distress, and wailing will come in that day.

Zephaniah 1:11

ULT

¹¹ Wail, O inhabitants of the Market District, for all the merchants will be ruined; all those who weigh out silver will be cut off.

UST

¹¹ All you people who live in the market area of Jerusalem should wail, because all those who sell goods for money will be slaughtered.

What will happen to the merchants in that day?

They will be ruined, and all those who are weighed down with silver will be cut off.

Zephaniah 1:12**ULT**

¹² It will come about at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish the men who are like wine left to thicken on its dregs and say in their heart, 'Yahweh will not do anything, either good or evil.'

UST

¹² It will be as though I will light lanterns to search in dark places in Jerusalem for those who have become very satisfied with their behavior and complacent about their sins. They think that I, Yahweh, will do neither good nor bad things, as if I do not even exist!

What did some of the men in Jerusalem say about Yahweh?

They said, "Yahweh will not do anything, either good or evil!"

Zephaniah 1:13**ULT**

¹³ Their wealth will become plunder, and their houses will be an abandoned devastation! They will build houses but not live in them, and plant vineyards but not drink their wine.

UST

¹³ So I have decided that armies will come and carry off their valuable possessions, after destroying their houses. The people will build new homes, but they will not live in them; they will plant vineyards again, but they will never drink any wine made from grapes that grow."

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:14**ULT**

¹⁴ The great day of Yahweh is near, near and hurrying quickly! The sound of the day of Yahweh will be bitter; the warrior cries aloud there!

UST

¹⁴ It will soon be the day when Yahweh will punish people. It will be here quickly. It will be a time when even brave soldiers will cry loudly.

What day will be a day of fury, a day of anguish, and a day of darkness? (vv14-15)

The great day of Yahweh will be a day of fury, anguish, and darkness.

Zephaniah 1:15**ULT**

¹⁵ That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

UST

¹⁵ It will be a time when God shows that he is very angry, a time when people experience much distress and trouble. It will be a time when many things are ruined, destroyed, and when everyone goes away. It will be a time when it is very gloomy and dark, when the clouds are very black.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:16**ULT**

¹⁶ It will be a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the high battlements.

UST

¹⁶ It will be a time when soldiers will blow trumpets to call other soldiers to battle. Your enemies will tear down the walls around your cities and the high towers at the corners of those walls.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 1:17**ULT**

¹⁷ For I will bring distress upon mankind, so that they will walk about like blind men because they have sinned against Yahweh. Their blood will be poured out like dust, and their inner parts like dung.

UST

¹⁷ Because you sinned against Yahweh, he will cause you to experience great distress; you will walk around groping as blind people do. Your blood will flow from your bodies like falling soil, and your corpses will lie on the ground and rot.

Whose blood will be poured out like dust on the day of Yahweh?

Those who have sinned against God.

Zephaniah 1:18**ULT**

18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the wrath of Yahweh. In the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed, for he will bring a complete, a terrible end of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

1:5 ^[1], but some modern versions read , the name of a pagan god that many people worshiped.

UST

18 At the time that Yahweh shows that he is very angry with you, you will not be able to save yourselves by giving silver or gold to your enemies. Because Yahweh is very jealous, he will send a fire to burn up the entire world, and he will completely get rid, in a most terrifying way, of all the wicked people who live on the earth.

What will not be able to save them on that day?

Their silver and their gold will not be able to save them.

Zephaniah 2

Zephaniah 2:1

ULT

¹ Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame—

UST

¹ You people of Judah who ought to be ashamed, gather together to ask God to be merciful to you.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:2

ULT

² before the decree takes effect and that day passes like the chaff, before the burning anger of Yahweh comes upon you, before the day of the anger of Yahweh comes upon you.

UST

² Yahweh is very angry with you, so gather together now, before he punishes you—before he punishes you and sweeps you away as the wind blows away the chaff.

What must the people do to avoid the fierce anger of Yahweh's wrath? (vv2-3)

The people must seek righteousness and humility to avoid Yahweh's wrath.

Zephaniah 2:3

ULT

³ Seek Yahweh, all you humble people on earth who do his commands! Seek righteousness. Seek humility, and perhaps you will be hidden on the day of the anger of Yahweh.

UST

³ All you people in Judah who are humble, worship Yahweh and obey what he has commanded. Try to do what is right and to be humble. If you do that, perhaps Yahweh will protect you on the day when he punishes people.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:4**ULT**

⁴ For Gaza will be abandoned, and Ashkelon will turn into a devastation. They will drive out Ashdod at noon, and Ekron will be uprooted!

UST

⁴ When Yahweh punishes Philistia, the cities of Gaza and Ashkelon will lose all their inhabitants. Ashdod will be attacked and the people will be driven away at noon, when they are resting. The people of the city of Ekron will also be driven out.

What will happen to those who will not heed the warning of Yahweh? (vv4-5)

All peoples who will not heed the warning of Yahweh will be uprooted and destroyed.

Zephaniah 2:5**ULT**

⁵ Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Kerethites! Yahweh has spoken against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines. I will destroy you until no inhabitant remains.

UST

⁵ And terrible things will happen to you people of Philistia who live near the sea, because Yahweh has said he will punish you, also. He will get rid of all of you; not one of you will survive!

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:6**ULT**

⁶ So the seacoast will become pastures, with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks.

UST

⁶ The land of Philistia near the sea will become a pasture, a place for shepherds and their sheep pens.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:7**ULT**

⁷ The coastal region will belong to the remnant of the house of Judah, who will pasture their flocks on it. Their people will lie down in the evening in the houses of Ashkelon, for Yahweh their God will care for them and restore their fortunes.

UST

⁷ The people of Judah who survive will possess that land. At night they will sleep in the deserted houses in Ashkelon. Yahweh will take care of them; he will enable them to prosper again.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:8**ULT**

⁸ "I have heard the taunts of Moab and the reviling of the sons of Ammon when they taunted my people and made boasts against their territory.

UST

⁸ Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God of the Israelites, says this: "I have heard the people of Moab and Ammon insult my people and plan to conquer my people's country.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:9**ULT**

⁹ Therefore, as I live—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel— Moab will become like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah; a place of nettles and salt pits, deserted forever. But the remnant of my people will plunder them, and the remainder of my nation will take possession of them."

UST

⁹ So now, as surely as I live, I will destroy Moab and Ammon as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Their land will be a place where there are nettles and salt pits; it will be ruined forever, with none of their people living there! My people who survive will take away all their valuable possessions and also occupy their land."

What cities will Moab and Ammon become like?

Moab will become like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah.

Zephaniah 2:10**ULT**

¹⁰ This will happen to them in return for their pride, since they taunted and boasted against the people of Yahweh of hosts.

UST

¹⁰ The people of Moab and Ammon will get what they deserve for being proud, because they made fun of the people who belong to Yahweh, commander of the angel armies.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:11**ULT**

¹¹ Then Yahweh will be awesome against them, for he will starve all the gods of the earth. Everyone will bow down to him, everyone from his own place, nations on every shore.

UST

¹¹ Yahweh will cause them to be terrified when he destroys all the gods of their countries. Then people from every nation will worship Yahweh, each in his own country.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:12**ULT**

¹² You also, O Cushites, will be pierced by my sword,

UST

¹² Yahweh says that he will also slaughter the people of Ethiopia.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:13**ULT**

¹³ and he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh an abandoned devastation, a dry waste like the desert.

UST

¹³ Yahweh will punish and destroy Assyria, that land northeast of us, and cause its capital Nineveh to become ruined and deserted, and as dry as the desert.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 2:14**ULT**

14 Then herds will lie down in her midst, every animal of the nations, both the desert owl and the screech owl will rest in the top of her columns. A call will sing out from the windows; rubble will be in the doorways; her carved cedar beams will be exposed.

UST

14 Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and many kinds of wild animals will lie down there. Owls and crows will sit on the columns of the destroyed buildings, and they will hoot through the windows. There will be rubble in the doorways, and the valuable cedar beams in the roofs of the buildings will become visible.

What kind of birds will nest in the top of Assyria's pillars?

Owls will nest in the tops of Assyria's pillars.

Zephaniah 2:15**ULT**

15 This is the exultant city that lived securely, that said in her heart, "I am, and nothing is my equal." How she has become a horror, a place for beasts to lie down in. Everyone that passes by her will hiss and shake his fist at her.

UST

15 The people of Nineveh used to be happy and proud, thinking that they were very safe. They were always saying, "Our city is the greatest city; there is no city as great as ours!" But now it will become a horrible place to see, a place where wild animals make their dens. And everyone who passes by there will hiss and scorn that city, and shake their fists to show that they detest that city very much.

What will become of the exultant city?

The exultant city will become a horror, a place for beasts to lie down in.

Zephaniah 3

Zephaniah 3:1

ULT

¹ Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city.

UST

¹ Terrible things will happen to Jerusalem, the city whose people have rebelled against Yahweh and who have become unacceptable to him because of the sins that they have committed. They act violently toward others and they oppress other people.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:2

ULT

² She listens to no voice, she does not accept correction. She does not trust in Yahweh and will not draw near to her God.

UST

² The people there pay no attention to the prophets whom Yahweh has sent to tell them the wrong things that they are doing and try to correct them. The people in Jerusalem do not trust in their God or worship him.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:3

ULT

³ Her officials are roaring lions in her midst. Her judges are evening wolves who leave nothing to be gnawed upon in the morning.

UST

³ Their leaders are like roaring lions; they are like wolves that attack during the evening, and eat everything that they kill, with the result that the next morning there is nothing left of those animals to eat.

What are the princes of the violent city like?

The princes of the violent city are like roaring lions.

Zephaniah 3:4**ULT**

⁴ Her prophets are insolent and treacherous men. Her priests have profaned what is holy and have done violence to the law.

UST

⁴ The prophets in Jerusalem are proud, and the priests give messages that no one should trust. They make the temple unholy by doing things that are against the law of Moses.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:5**ULT**

⁵ Yahweh is righteous in her midst. He does no wrong. Morning by morning he will dispense his justice; each dawn he does not fail. Yet unrighteous people know no shame.

UST

⁵ But Yahweh is also in the city, and he never does what is wrong. He treats people justly, day after day; but wicked people are never ashamed about their wrongdoing.

When will Yahweh dispense justice?

Yahweh will dispense justice from morning to morning.

Zephaniah 3:6**ULT**

⁶ "I have cut off nations; their fortresses are ruined. I have laid waste their streets, so that no one passes over them. Their cities are destroyed, without a man, without an inhabitant.

UST

⁶ Yahweh says this: "I have destroyed many nations; I have destroyed their strong city walls and towers. Now I have caused the streets in those cities to be completely deserted. Those cities are ruined and there is no one still alive there. They are all dead.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:7

ULT

⁷ I said, 'Surely you will fear me and accept correction. Then your dwelling will not be cut off by all that I have planned to do to you.' But all the more they were eager to behave corruptly in all their deeds.

UST

⁷ So I said to myself, 'Because of what I have done to those other nations, surely the people of Jerusalem will honor me now and allow me to correct them. If they do that, I will not destroy them; I will not punish them like I said that I would do.' But in spite of knowing how I punished those other nations, they were still eager to get up early each morning and continue to perform evil deeds."

What did Yahweh hope the people would do?

Yahweh hoped the people would fear him and accept correction.

Zephaniah 3:8

ULT

⁸ Therefore wait for me—this is the declaration of Yahweh—for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather the nations, to assemble the kingdoms, to pour out on them my indignation—all of my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth will be consumed. ^[1]

UST

⁸ This is what Yahweh declares: "Wait for the day when I will take action to plunder you! I have decided to gather the people of the kingdoms of the earth and cause them to know that I am very angry with them. All over the earth I will punish and destroy people; I will burn them up with my anger as if it were fire!

What decision has Yahweh made about the nations?

Yahweh has decided to assemble the nations and pour out his anger and wrath on them.

Zephaniah 3:9

ULT

⁹ But then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call upon the name of Yahweh to serve him shoulder to shoulder.

UST

⁹ When that happens, I will cause all people to be changed and enable them to speak only what is pure, in order that everyone can worship me as one people.

What will Yahweh then call the people to do?

Yahweh will call the people to serve him standing shoulder to shoulder.

Zephaniah 3:10**ULT**

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers—the daughter of my scattered people—will bring offerings due me.

UST

¹⁰ Then my people who were forced to go to other countries, those who live along the upper part of the Nile River in Ethiopia, will come to me and bring offerings to me.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:11**ULT**

¹¹ In that day you will not be put to shame for all your deeds by which you rebelled against me, since at that time I will remove from among you your proud, exalting ones, and you will never again act arrogantly on my holy mountain.

UST

¹¹ At that time, you people in Jerusalem will no longer be ashamed about what has happened to you, because you no longer will be rebelling against me. I will get rid of all the people among you who are very proud. No one on Zion, my holy hill, will strut around proudly anymore.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:12**ULT**

¹² But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will find refuge in the name of Yahweh.

UST

¹² Those who are still alive in Israel will be poor and humble; they will trust in me.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:13**ULT**

¹³ The remnant of Israel will do no injustice and speak no lies, and no deceitful tongue will be found in their mouth; so they will graze and lie down, and no one will make them afraid."

UST

¹³ Those people who are still alive in Israel will not do anything wrong; they will tell no lies or deceive anyone. They will eat and sleep safely, because no one will cause them to be afraid."

How will the remnant of Israel change after this?

The remnant of Israel will no longer commit injustice and speak lies.

Zephaniah 3:14**ULT**

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

UST

¹⁴ You people who live in Jerusalem and other places in Israel, sing and shout loudly! Be glad, and rejoice with all your inner being,

Why should Israel sing and cheer? (vv14-15)

Israel should sing and cheer because Yahweh has taken away their punishment.

Zephaniah 3:15**ULT**

¹⁵ Yahweh has taken away the judgments against you; he has driven out your enemies! The king of Israel, Yahweh, is among you. You will never again fear evil!

UST

¹⁵ because Yahweh will take away the charges against you, and he will make your enemies go far away from you! Yahweh himself, the king of the Israelites, will live among you, and you will never again be afraid that others will harm you.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:16**ULT**

¹⁶ In that day it will be said to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion. Do not let your hands fall limp.

UST

¹⁶ At that time, other people will say to us people of Jerusalem, "You people of Jerusalem, do not be afraid; do not become weak or discouraged."

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:17**ULT**

¹⁷ Yahweh your God is among you, a mighty one to save you. He will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

UST

¹⁷ Yahweh your God will live among you. He is mighty, and he will rescue you. He will be very happy about you; because he loves you, he will cause you to rest without being anxious. He will sing loudly to rejoice about you,

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:18**ULT**

¹⁸ The sorrows for the appointed feasts I will remove from you; they are a burden and a reproach to you. ^[2]

UST

¹⁸ like people who are happy at a festival. Yahweh says, "I will no longer allow any enemies to destroy you. You will no longer be defeated or ashamed.

(There are no questions for this verse.)

Zephaniah 3:19**ULT**

¹⁹ Behold, I am about to deal with all your oppressors. At that time, I will rescue the lame and gather up the outcast. I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

UST

¹⁹ Truly, I will severely punish all those who oppressed you. I will rescue those who are helpless and those who were forced to go to other countries, just as a shepherd would rescue his lost sheep. I will give them praise and honor in every country where they were exiled, places where they had been disgraced.

Who will Yahweh rescue from those who have mistreated Israel?

Yahweh will rescue the lame and gather together the outcast.

Zephaniah 3:20**ULT**

²⁰ At that time I will bring you in; at that time I will gather you together. I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says Yahweh.

3:8 ^[1]. However, some ancient and modern versions have .

3:18 ^[2]

UST

²⁰ At that time, I will gather you together and bring you back home to Israel. I will cause you to greatly praised and honored among all the nations of the earth. You will see when I bring your people home again." This is what Yahweh, has declared!

Why will all the nations respect and praise Israel?

All the nations will respect and praise Israel when they see that Yahweh has restored them.

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