



unfoldingWord® Translation Questions

v88

Zephaniah

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Zephaniah

Zephaniah 1

Zephaniah 1:1

ULT:

The word of Yahweh that was to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

UST:

These are the messages that Yahweh spoke through Zephaniah during the time when Josiah, the son of Amon, was the king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi. Cushi was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah. And Amariah was the son of King Hezekiah.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 1:2

ULT:

“Removing, I will exterminate everything from upon the face of the ground”—the declaration of Yahweh.

UST:

Yahweh says, “I will completely destroy creatures all over the earth.”

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 1:3

ULT:

“I will take away man and beast; I will take away the birds of the skies and the fish of the sea and the stumbling blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from upon the face of the ground” —the declaration of Yahweh.

UST:

Yahweh says, “I am going to destroy the people and animals that live on the earth. I am going to destroy the birds that fly in the sky and the fish that swim in the sea. I am going to destroy the idols that represent false gods, and I am going to destroy the people who worship those idols. I will do this so that there will not be wicked people on the earth.

What did Yahweh say he would do to man, beast, the birds of the skies, and the fish of the sea?

God said He would destroy them and cut them off.

Zephaniah 1:4

ULT:

“And I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all of the ones living in Jerusalem, and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal, the name of the idol-priests with the priests,

UST:

I am going to punish the people who live in the city of Jerusalem and in other places in the kingdom of Judah. I am going to destroy everything in Jerusalem that is related to the worship of the false god Baal. No one will even remember that there used to be priests of Baal in Jerusalem. And no one will remember the priests descended from Aaron who helped people worship Baal.

Yahweh said he would cut off every remnant of a certain false god. What false god did he name?

He would cut off every remnant of Baal.

Zephaniah 1:5

ULT:

and the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of the skies, and the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king,

UST:

I am going to punish the people who have been going up onto the flat roofs of their houses in order to worship the sun, moon, and stars. I am also going to punish the people who claim to worship me but who swear oaths in the name of the false god Milcom.

People were going up onto their housetops and bowing down to something. What was it?

The ones on the housetops worship the heavenly bodies.

Zephaniah 1:6

ULT:

and the ones turning back from after Yahweh, and who do not search for Yahweh and do not seek him.”

UST:

Finally, I am also going to punish the people who used to worship me but no longer do. I am going to punish the people who no longer ask for my help or ask me to tell them what they should do.”

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 1:7

ULT:

Hush from the face of Lord Yahweh, for the day of Yahweh {is} near. For Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice, he has sanctified his invited ones.

UST:

Yahweh is the God whom you should worship. Soon he will judge and punish people, so show your respect for him by keeping quiet. Be respectful, because Yahweh is getting ready to destroy the people of Judah. He has decided to allow the enemies of Judah to come and destroy them.

What did Zephaniah tell the people to do in the presence (face) of Yahweh?

They were to be silent in the presence of Yahweh.

Zephaniah 1:8

ULT:

“And it will happen on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh that I will visit upon the princes and upon the sons of the king and upon all the ones wearing foreign clothing,

UST:

Yahweh says, “At the time when I destroy 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:

and on that day I will visit upon all the ones leaping over the threshold, the ones filling the house of their lords {with} violence and fraud.

UST:

At that time, I will punish all the officials who force their way into people's homes and take away what they own in order to make themselves rich."

What were the people doing whom Yahweh said he would “visit” (punish)?

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:

And it will happen on that day” —the declaration of Yahweh— “the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate and a wailing from the Second {District} and a great ruin from the hills.

UST:

Yahweh also says, “At the time when I destroy the kingdom of Judah, people will cry out in distress at the Fish Gate of Jerusalem. People will wail with sorrow in the Second Quarter of the city. People will hear a loud crash of buildings collapsing in the towns on the hills that surround the city.

What sounds did Yahweh say would come up from the Fish Gate and the Second Quarter?

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

Zephaniah 1:11

ULT:

Wail, inhabitants of the Maktesh, for all of the people of Canaan will be destroyed, all of the ones weighing silver will be cut off.

UST:

Your enemies are going to slaughter all those who buy and sell goods for money, so all you people who live in the market area of Jerusalem should wail.

What did Yahweh say would happen to the “people of Canaan” (merchants)?

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

Zephaniah 1:12

ULT:

And it will happen at that time, I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will visit upon the men thickening on their sediment, the ones saying in their heart, 'Yahweh will not do good, and he will not do bad,'

UST:

At that time, it will be as if I light lanterns and search even in the darkest places in Jerusalem to find wicked people and punish them. I am going to punish the people who do not even care that they are doing wicked things. They wrongly think that I, Yahweh, do not make people experience the consequences of their actions.

What were some of the people saying about Yahweh?

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

Zephaniah 1:13

ULT:

and their wealth will become plunder and their houses a ruin, and they will build houses, but they will not inhabit {them}, and they will plant vineyards, but they will not drink their wine.

UST:

So an enemy army is going to come and destroy their houses completely. Then that army will carry away their valuable possessions. {This will fulfill what I told the Israelites would happen if they disobeyed me:} 'The people will build houses, but they will not live in them. They will plant vineyards, but they will not be able to make wine from the grapes and drink it.'

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 1:14

ULT:

The great day of Yahweh {is} near, near and hastening quickly! The sound of the day of Yahweh {is} bitter; the warrior cries out then!

UST:

It will soon be the terrible time when I, Yahweh, destroy the people who have sinned against me. Yes, I am going to do that very soon. The people of Judah will cry out in sorrow at that time. Then even the strong soldiers who are trying to defend them will wail in despair.

Who will cry out on the great day of Yahweh?

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

Zephaniah 1:15

ULT:

That day {will be} a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and overcast,

UST:

That will be a time when I, Yahweh, show that I am very angry. It will be a time when people experience much trouble. At that time, an enemy army will destroy many things. It will be a very sad time. People will feel the way they do when black clouds cover the sky.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 1:16

ULT:

a day of horn and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the high corners.

UST:

It will be a time when soldiers blow ram's horns and shout to call other soldiers to come and fight. 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:

For I will bring distress to man, and they will walk like the blind, for they have sinned against Yahweh. And their blood will be poured out like dust, and their innards like dung.

UST:

Because you have sinned against me, Yahweh, I am going to cause you people of Judah to suffer greatly. {As I told the Israelites would happen if they sinned against me,} 'You will wander around, not knowing where to go, as if you were blind.' Your enemies will stab you with their weapons so that your blood and your insides pour out in great quantities.

What will happen to the blood and innards of people who have sinned against Yahweh?

Those who have sinned against God.

Zephaniah 1:18

ULT:

Even their silver, even their gold, will not be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of Yahweh.” For in the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed. For he will make all of the inhabitants of the earth a consummation, indeed, a hastened one.

UST:

At the time when I, Yahweh, show how angry I am with you, you will not be able to save yourselves by giving silver or gold to your enemies.” Because Yahweh is very angry that people have worshiped false gods, he is going to destroy wicked people all over the world. Indeed, he is soon going to destroy wicked people no matter where they live in the world.

What will not be able to deliver people from the wrath of Yahweh?

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

Zephaniah 2

Zephaniah 2:1

ULT:

Gather yourselves together! Yes, gather, O nation not desired,

UST:

You people of Judah ought to be ashamed of your sins! You should certainly gather together {and ask Yahweh to be merciful to you}.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:2

ULT:

before the bringing forth of the decree, {before} the day passes like chaff, before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you, before the day of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you.

UST:

{Gather together and pray for mercy} before Yahweh punishes you as he has said he will. Otherwise he will destroy you completely, just as the wind blows chaff away entirely. Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:3

ULT:

Seek Yahweh, all the humble of the earth who do his justice. Seek righteousness. Seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden on the day of the nose of Yahweh.

UST:

All of you people in Judah who are willing to humble yourselves, worship Yahweh and obey what he has commanded. Try to do what is right and make sure that you stay humble. If you do that, perhaps Yahweh will protect you when he punishes other people for their sins.

Zephaniah says that people may be spared (hidden from) Yahweh's anger if they do something. What should they do?

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

Zephaniah 2:4

ULT:

For Gaza will become abandoned, and Ashkelon a ruin. Ashdod, they will expel her at noon, and Ekron will be uprooted.

UST:

{When Yahweh punishes the Philistines,} the cities of Gaza and Ashkelon will lose all of their inhabitants. An army will attack the city of Ashdod in broad daylight and drive away all of its people. An army will also drive away the people of the city of Ekron.

What will happen to the cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron?

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

Zephaniah 2:5

ULT:

Woe {to} the inhabitants of the region of the sea, the nation of the Kerethites! The word of Yahweh {is} against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines: "And I will destroy you until there is no inhabitant."

UST:

Terrible things will happen to you Philistine people! You live near the sea. Yahweh has said that he will punish you Philistines who live in that part of the land of Canaan. He will punish you until everyone who used to live there is dead.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:6

ULT:

And the region of the sea will become pastures of meadows of shepherds and pens of flocks.

UST:

There will no longer be any cities in the seaside land of Philistia. There will only be grass. Shepherds will keep their sheep there so that they can eat the grass.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:7

ULT:

And the region will be to the remnant of the house of Judah. They will shepherd upon them; in the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down in the evening, for Yahweh their God will visit them, and he will restore their fortune.

UST:

The Judean people who survive will go and live in that land. They will graze their sheep in those pastures. They will move into the houses that the Philistines have abandoned in the city of Ashkelon. This will happen because those Judeans will worship Yahweh once again as their God. Yahweh will take care of them and make them prosperous again.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:8

ULT:

"I have heard the reproach of Moab and the insults of the sons of Ammon, that they have reproached my people and made themselves great against their border.

UST:

Yahweh is the commander of the heavenly armies and the God of the Israelites. He says this: "I have heard the people of Moab and Ammon insult my people. I have seen them stealing territory from my people. So now I swear that I am going to destroy Moab and Ammon as completely as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Crops will no longer grow on their land, only weeds. The only way people will be able to make a living from that land will be to dig in the ground to get salt from the salt deposits there. No one will ever rebuild the buildings that were there. My people who survive will take away all the valuable possessions that once belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites. Those people will be the ones who own that land." (vv8-9)

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:9

ULT:

Therefore, {as} I {am} alive”— the declaration of Yahweh of Armies, the God of Israel — “that Moab will become like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah, a possession of the nettle and the pit of salt and a ruin forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them, and the remainder of my nation will occupy them.”

UST:

Yahweh is the commander of the heavenly armies and the God of the Israelites. He says this: “I have heard the people of Moab and Ammon insult my people. I have seen them stealing territory from my people. So now I swear that I am going to destroy Moab and Ammon as completely as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Crops will no longer grow on their land, only weeds. The only way people will be able to make a living from that land will be to dig in the ground to get salt from the salt deposits there. No one will ever rebuild the buildings that were there. My people who survive will take away all the valuable possessions that once belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites. Those people will be the ones who own that land.” (vv8-9)

What two cities will Moab and the sons of Ammon become like?

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

Zephaniah 2:10

ULT:

This will be to them instead of their pride, for they reproached and made themselves great against the people of Yahweh of Armies.

UST:

The people of Moab and Ammon will get what they deserve for having been so proud. They should not have insulted the people who belong to Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies. They should not have tried to take away their land.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:11

ULT:

*Yahweh {will be} fearsome against them, for he will starve all of the gods of the earth.
And all of the islands of the nations will bow down to him, a man from his place.*

UST:

The people of Moab and Ammon will be greatly afraid when Yahweh punishes them. He will do that so powerfully that people will stop worshiping all other gods. People in every nation will worship Yahweh instead. Each person will do that in his own country.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:12

ULT:

"Also you, Cushites, they {will be} pierced by my sword."

UST:

Yahweh has also said that he will slaughter the people of Ethiopia.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:13

ULT:

And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and he will destroy Assyria. And he will make Nineveh a ruin, a dry place like the desert.

UST:

Yahweh will also punish and destroy the people of Assyria. They live in a land that is northeast of us. He will cause an enemy army to destroy their capital city of Nineveh. It will become a place where no plants grow, like the desert.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 2:14

ULT:

And herds will lie down in its midst, every animal of the nation. Both the desert owl and the screech owl will lodge on its columns. A call will hoot in the window; devastation {will be} in the threshold, for the cedar-work will be bare.

UST:

Groups of many different kinds of wild animals will live where Nineveh used to be. Various kinds of owls will make their nests on top of the columns of its destroyed buildings. Those owls will sometimes perch on the sills of empty windows and hoot. Rubble will block the doorways. Rain and sunlight will ruin the valuable cedar wood that the Assyrians used to build their buildings.

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

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

Zephaniah 2:15

ULT:

This {is} the exultant city, the one dwelling in security, the one saying in its heart, “I {am}, and besides me {there is} not another.” How it has become a ruin, a lair for the beast! Every one passing by will hiss at it; he will shake his fist.

UST:

The people of Nineveh used to be proud. They thought that no other country could conquer them. They said to each other, “Our city is the greatest city! No other city is as great as ours!” But an enemy army will completely destroy Nineveh. It will become a place where wild animals make their dens. People who go by that area will often make hissing sounds and shake their fists to show how much they hated that city.

What will people do who pass by “the exultant city” (Nineveh)?

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

Zephaniah 3

Zephaniah 3:1

ULT:

Woe to the one rebelling and being defiled, the oppressing city!

UST:

The people who live in the city of Jerusalem have rebelled against Yahweh. They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh. They have treated others violently. As a result, terrible things are going to happen to them!

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:2

ULT:

She does not hear the voice; she does not take correction. In Yahweh she does not trust; to her God she does not draw near.

UST:

The people of Jerusalem have not paid attention to the prophets whom Yahweh has sent to correct them. The people in Jerusalem do not believe in Yahweh, their God, and they do not worship him.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:3

ULT:

Her princes {are} roaring lions in her midst. Her judges {are} wolves of the evening; they do not gnaw in the morning.

UST:

The leaders of the city treat its people violently, like lions that roar as they attack their prey. Their judges are greedy. They are like wolves that have not eaten all day and so devour an entire animal that they kill.

To what animals does Zephaniah compare these princes and judges?

The princes of the violent city are like roaring lions.

Zephaniah 3:4

ULT:

Her prophets {are} light, men of treacheries. Her priests profane the holy; they violate the law.

UST:

The prophets in Jerusalem say what they think people want to hear. They do not honestly give the people messages from Yahweh. The priests in Jerusalem do things that the law of Moses forbids. As a result, they have made the temple there unholy.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:5

ULT:

Yahweh {is} righteous in her midst. He does not commit unrighteousness. In the morning, in the morning he gives his justice; at light he is not left out. Yet the unrighteous does not know shame.

UST:

But Yahweh is still in the city, and he always does what is right. He treats people justly, day after day, without fail. Still, wicked people are not ashamed {when they do what is wrong}.

When does Yahweh give his justice?

Yahweh will dispense justice from morning to morning.

Zephaniah 3:6

ULT:

"I have cut off nations, their corners have been demolished; I have destroyed their streets, without one passing over {them}. Their cities are ruined, without a man, with no one dwelling.

UST:

So Yahweh says this: "I have destroyed many nations. I have destroyed their strong city walls and towers. I have destroyed the streets in those cities. No one walks on them anymore. Those cities are in ruins. All the people who used to live in them are now dead.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:7

ULT:

I said, 'Surely you will fear me; you will take correction. Then her dwelling will not be cut off {by} all that I have visited upon her.' Nevertheless, they rose early, they corrupted all of their deeds.

UST:

I said to myself, 'The people of Jerusalem will certainly honor me and allow me to correct them. If they do that, I will not destroy their city. I will not do all the things that I said I would do to them.' But even though the people of Jerusalem knew that I had punished other nations, they eagerly did even more wrong things.'

What did Yahweh want the people to do?

Yahweh hoped the people would fear him and accept correction.

Zephaniah 3:8

ULT:

Therefore, wait for me”—the declaration of Yahweh— “for the day of my arising to the prey. For my judgment {is} to gather nations, for me to assemble kingdoms, to pour out my indignation on them, all of the burning of my nose. For in the fire of my jealousy all of the earth will be consumed.

UST:

So this is what Yahweh declares: “You can confidently expect that an enemy army is going to conquer you and take away your possessions. I have decided to judge all of the people groups on the earth at the same time. I am going to punish them severely because I am very angry with them for being so wicked. Because I am very angry that people have worshiped false gods, I am going to destroy wicked people all over the world.

What did Yahweh say his judgment (decision) was?

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

Zephaniah 3:9

ULT:

Then I will surely give to the peoples a pure lip, for all of them to call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve him {with} one shoulder.

UST:

But after that, I will make the people groups do what is right and say what is right. That way all of them will worship me, Yahweh. I will be the only God whom any of them worship.

What will the peoples do once Yahweh has given them a “pure lip”?

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

Zephaniah 3:10

ULT:

From across the rivers of Cush, my worshipers, the daughter of my scattered one, will bring my offering.

UST:

Enemy armies will take some of the people who worship me away to other countries. They will take them as far away as the place where the Nile River begins. But even from that far away, my people will come back to Jerusalem, bringing offerings to me.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:11

ULT:

On that day you will not feel shame from all of your deeds {by} which you transgressed against me, for then I will remove from your midst the exultant {ones} of your pride, and you will not continue still to be haughty on my holy mountain.

UST:

When I restore you, you will no longer feel shame for disobeying me and doing many wrong things. {Many of} you boasted about how great you thought you were. But I will punish those people, and then you will always come humbly to worship me in my temple.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:12

ULT:

And I will leave in your midst a humble and lowly people, and they will trust in the name of Yahweh.

UST:

Then the people who live in Jerusalem will be poor, but they will be humble. They will depend on me, Yahweh, to help them.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:13

ULT:

The remnant of Israel will not commit unrighteousness and they will not speak a lie, and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth. But they will graze and lie down, and there will be none frightening {them}.”

UST:

Then the people of Israel who survive will not do wicked things. They will not tell lies or say things to deceive others. They will not be afraid that an enemy army will conquer them, so they will be able to eat and sleep peacefully.”

What things will the remnant of Israel no longer do?

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

Zephaniah 3:14

ULT:

Sing, daughter of Zion! Shout, Israel! Rejoice and exult with all of {your} heart, daughter of Jerusalem!

UST:

You Israelites who live in Judah should sing and shout loudly! You people who live in Jerusalem should celebrate because you are feeling very happy!

Why should the “daughter of Jerusalem” (the people who live in Jerusalem) rejoice and exult? (3:14-15)

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

Zephaniah 3:15

ULT:

Yahweh has taken away your judgments; he has turned back your enemy. The king of Israel, Yahweh, {is} in your midst. You will not fear harm again!

UST:

{You should celebrate because} Yahweh is not going to punish you any more. He is going to keep enemy armies far away from you! Yahweh himself, who is the true king of you Israelites, is going to live among you. You will never be afraid again that others will harm you.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:16

ULT:

In that day it will be said to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, Zion! Do not slacken your hands!"

UST:

At that time, prophets will say to the people who live in Jerusalem, "You people who live on Mount Zion should not be afraid! No, you should not become discouraged."

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:17

ULT:

Yahweh your God is {in} your midst; a Mighty One, he will save {you}. He will rejoice over you with gladness; he will be silent in his love; he will exult over you with rejoicing."

UST:

Yahweh your God lives among you! He is mighty, and he will protect you. He will be very happy about you. He will not say anything harsh to you, and you will know how much he loves you. He will sing loudly to rejoice about you."

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:18

ULT:

"I will gather the ones grieving for the solemn assembly, they are from you; the reproach {was} a burden upon her.

UST:

Yahweh says, "Enemy armies took some of you Judeans away from your homeland. Those people became very sad because they could no longer gather with others to worship me. They felt shame because of what had happened to them. But I am going to bring them back to Judah.

(There are no questions for this verse)

Zephaniah 3:19

ULT:

Behold, I will be dealing with all of your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the cast-out one. And I will turn them into praise, and their shame into a name in all of the earth.

UST:

You can be certain that I will severely punish all those who oppressed you. When I do that, I will rescue those who had to make a long journey to go and live in other countries. They felt shame when they had to do that. But now I will make the people of those countries praise and honor them.

Yahweh says that he will turn the shame of the Israelites into something else. Into what?

Yahweh will rescue the lame and gather together the outcast.

Zephaniah 3:20

ULT:

At that time I will bring you in, yes, at the time of my gathering you. Then I will give you for a name and for praise among all of the peoples of the earth, in my restoring your fortunes before your eyes.” Yahweh has spoken.

UST:

When I act to help you, I will gather you together and bring you back home to Israel. Then I will cause all the people groups in the world to praise and honor you greatly. You will be able to see that I am making you rich again.” This is what Yahweh has promised!

What will Yahweh restore to the Israelites?

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