

Lessons Old Testament  
Prophets Could Give  
to America Today

*Zephaniah*

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# Introduction

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- Zephaniah means “Jehovah Hides.”
- King Hezekiah was his great-great-grandfather. This prompted some to call him “the royal prophet.” Zephaniah was a contemporary with Jeremiah.
- Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, king of Judah.
- Josiah was a good king and a great reformer. Unfortunately, his reforms were short-lived.
- Zephaniah proclaimed the coming of “the day of the Lord.”

12 Tribes				722	Assyria takes 10 tribes		2 Tribes of Judah		609	Babylon	539	Medo-Persia	
Obadiah	Joel	Jonah	Amos	Hosea	Nahum		-		Daniel			-	
Elisha		-		Micah	-	Zephaniah	Habakkuk		-	Ezekiel	-	★ Zechariah	
-				Isiah			Jeremiah			-	Haggai - Malachi		

Obadiah

Zephaniah

# God's Wrath on Judah

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# Lord's Judgment (1-6)

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- Zephaniah announces a universal and all-consuming judgment (1-3).
- He gives a special mention and specific attention to Judah (4-6).
- Those who “turn back” become apostate and no longer follow after Yahweh, nor seek Him as their God.

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# Day of the Lord (7-18)

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- The day of the Lord is at hand. It is both a day of judgment (1:8–3:8) and a day of hope (3:9–20).
- The people are complacent (apathetic toward God and spiritual issues).
- It will affect Judah and Jerusalem (1:7-13).
- There will be punishment upon the princes and king's children.
- There will be punishment to those wearing foreign clothes (pagan worship

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# Day of the Lord (7-18)

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- There will be wailing and mourning in the city of Jerusalem.
- The Lord will search out and punish the complacent.
- This great day is described (14-18).
- A day that is near and hastens quickly.
- A day of devastation and distress.
- A day in which silver and gold cannot deliver one from the wrath of God.

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# Nation to Repent (2:1-3)

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- They are to repent before the Lord's anger comes upon them (1-2).
- It is a nation without shame - so full of sin, they are shameless.
- They are to seek the Lord, seek righteousness, seek humility (3).
- After asking them to "look within" and see their need, Zephaniah now prompts them to "look around" at other nations.



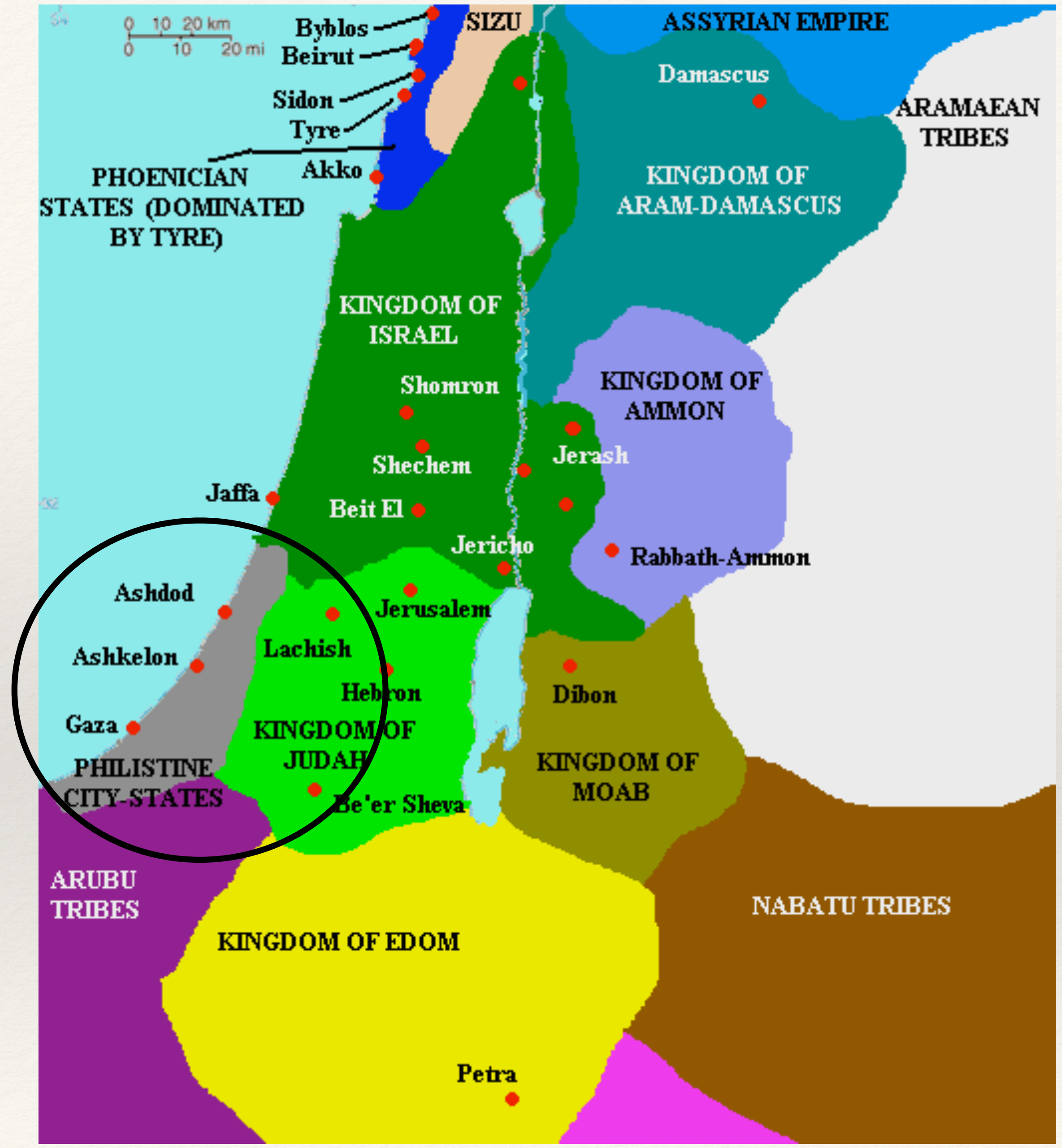
God's Wrath on  
Surrounding Nations

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# East and West (2:4-11)

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- These are nations that surround Judah from all four points of the compass.
- Philistia (4-7) - it's cities will be made desolate, the inhabitants destroyed.
- Land will be for the remnant of Judah, whose captivity God will restore.
- (vs. 6-7) Remnant: two ideas - only a few survivors, but all hope is not lost.

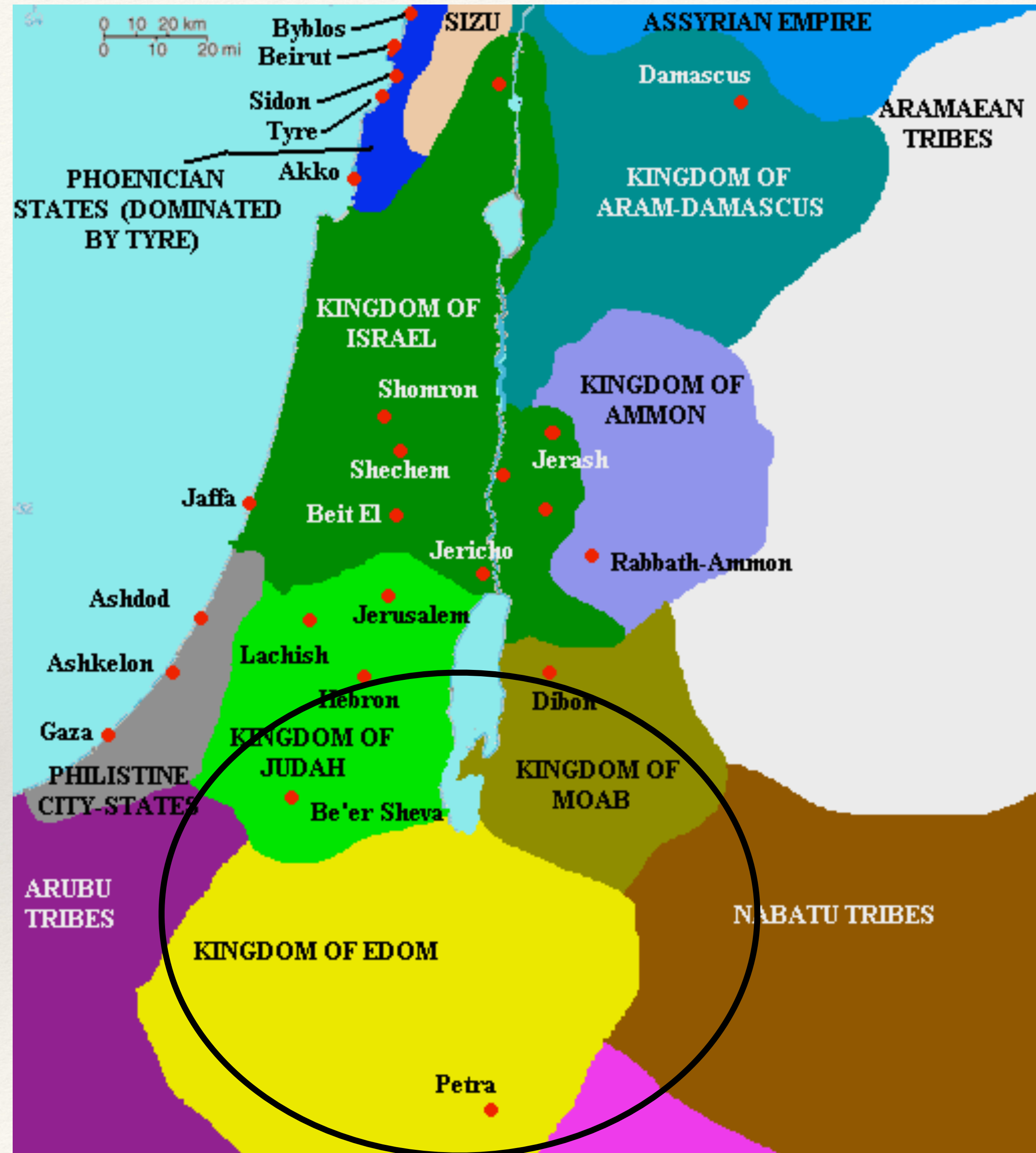


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# East and West (2:4-11)

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- Moab & Ammon (8-11) - will be like Sodom and Gomorrah because of their pride and mocking of God's people.
- Verse 9 - Sin always presents a "therefore."
- Moab and Ammon will meet the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities destroyed by the Lord in the day of Abraham (Genesis 19:23-28).



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# South and North (12-15)

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- Zephaniah had now moved from west and east to south.
- Ethiopia (12) - will be slain by the sword.
- The “Cushites” referred to the people of the modern day Sudan and Ethiopia.
- Assyria (13-15) - with its capital Ninevah will become desolate.
- Assyria illustrates the enemies of the Lord and struck fear in the smaller nations of the ancient Near East.



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# Woe to Jerusalem (3:1-7)

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- Has rebelled against the Lord (1-5).
- She has not obeyed His voice.
- Her civil and religious leaders are like lions and wolves.
- The unjust know no shame.
- The Lord, however, is righteous and never fails in His justice.



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# Woe to Jerusalem (3:1-7)

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- Zephaniah now pronounces judgment on Judea and Jerusalem.
- She has ignored God's judgment upon other nations (6-7).
- This should have prompted her to receive God's instructions.
- Finally, Zephaniah ends his message by calling them to "look beyond."

Through Judgment  
to Blessing

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# Wait Upon the Lord (3:8)

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- The faithful are told to wait for the Lord to carry out judgment (8).
- They are to do this just as Micah said he would do (Micah 7:7-9).

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# God Will Restore His People (3:9-13)

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- After His judgment, God will restore his peoples (including Gentiles?).
- (vs. 10) His dispersed people (Israel?) shall bring offerings from afar.
- God will remove the proud from His “holy mountain” leaving a meek and humble people who trust Him (11-13).

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# Joy in Jerusalem (3:14-20)

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- The Lord will remove their judgments and their enemies (14-15).
- The Lord will be in their midst, providing gladness and singing (16-17).
- The Lord has given them great assurance (18-20).

# Conclusion and Application

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# Conclusion

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- The message of Zephaniah is simple:
- Judgment is coming but blessings will follow for those who heed his warning.
- It was a message of comfort to those in captivity and hope for those who would be taken in captivity.
- God would establish His Kingdom.

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# Conclusion

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- The message is the same for us today.
- The “day of the Lord” is coming: similar to the message of 2 Peter 3:7-10.
- God’s people are admonished to remain faithful: similar to 2 Peter 3:11-14.
- We can “look beyond” the coming judgment for the blessing that follow.



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# Lesson # 1

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- God rules the world
- He is in control and turns the course of nations and history as He pleases.
- If this were not so, he could not promise that He would restore His people.
- Proverbs 21:1 - “The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.”

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# Lesson #2

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- God is Judge, and We Are to Obey
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).
- We are to do good no matter what everyone else around us is doing.
- We are to live subject to the human authorities in our lives (1 Peter 2:13).
- If we suffer persecution for doing good, we are following in Jesus's footsteps.

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# Warren Wiersbe

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The Day of the Lord is an important biblical concept that we must take seriously, because it tells us where things are going and how they're going to end. During the Day of the Lord, God will send tribulation to the world, judge the nation, save His people Israel, and then establish His righteous kingdom. God warns the world that judgment is coming, and it's foolish for anybody to be unprepared. The big question is "Where will you hide on that great day?"

Zephaniah 2:3