



Handout for week of 12/10/18 Luke 3: 7-18 & Zeph. 3: 14-18

[www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)

Connie May © 11/9/18

Drawing with permission by Fr. Robert Beck

Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Willpower alone is not Enough](#)

Stone, Naomi. [The Grace of Kindness](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

Zeph. 3: 14 Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 HaShem hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy; The King of Israel, even HaShem, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more. 16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: 'Fear thou not; O Zion, let not thy hands be slack. 17 HaShem thy G-d is in the midst of thee, a Mighty One who will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will be silent in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.' 18 I will gather them that are far from the appointed season, who are of thee, that hast borne the burden of reproach.

#### COMMENTARY:

The ninth of the twelve Minor Prophets of the Canon of the Old Testament; preached and wrote in the second half of the seventh century B.C. He was a contemporary and supporter of the great Prophet Jeremias. His name (Heb. Zephanja, that is "the Lord conceals", "the Lord protects") might, on the analogy of Gottfried, be most briefly translated by the words God protect. The only primary source from which we obtain our scanty knowledge of the personality and the rhetorical and literary qualities of Zephaniah, is the short book of the Old Testament (containing only three chapters), which bears his name. The scene of his activity was the city of Jerusalem.

The date of the Prophet's activity fell in the reign of King Josias (641-11). Zephaniah is one of the few Prophets whose chronology is fixed by a precise date in the introductory verse of the book. Under the two preceding kings, Amon and Manasse, idolatry had been introduced in the most shameful forms (especially the cult of Baal and Astarte) into the Holy City, and with this foreign cult came a foreign culture and a great corruption of morals. Josias, the king with the anointed sceptre, wished to put an end to the horrible devastation in the holy places. One of the most zealous champions and advisers of this reform was Zephaniah, and his writing remains one of the most important documents for the understanding of the era of Josias. The Prophet laid the axe at the root of the religious and moral corruption, when, in view of the idolatry which had penetrated even into the sanctuary, he threatened to "destroy out of this place the remnant of Baal, and the names of the . . . priests" (i, 4), and pleaded for a return to the simplicity of their fathers instead of the luxurious foreign clothing which was worn especially in aristocratic circles (i, 8). The age of S Zephaniah was also a most serious and decisive period, because the lands of Anterior Asia were overrun by foreigners owing to the migration of the Seythians in the last decades of the seventh century, and because Jerusalem, the city of the Prophets, was only a few decades before its downfall (586). The far-seeing watchman on Sion's battlements saw this catastrophe draw near: "for the day of the Lord is near" is the burden of his preaching (i, 7). "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and exceeding swift: ... That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds" (i, 14-15). iii, 9-20. A consolatory prophecy, or prophetic glance at the Kingdom of God of the future, in which all the world, united in one faith and one worship, will turn to one God, and the goods of the Messianic Kingdom, whose capital is the daughter of Sion, will be enjoyed. The universality of the judgment as well as of the redemption is so forcibly expressed in Zephaniah that his book may be regarded as the "Catholic Epistle" of the Old Testament. The last exhortation of Zephaniah (iii, 9-20) also has a Messianic coloring, although not to an extent comparable with Isaias.