

Aids to the study of Zephaniah include our emphasis on reading the book and discovering in your Bible atlas where the countries and places mentioned are named. Some background study on the worship of Baal and Malcam will also prove interest...the New Bible Dictionary is a good place to start. Read through the book a second time and note the specific verses of promise and hope. You will see that many of these are in the future but can you not find some that offered hope in the immediate present as well? Notice carefully the descriptions of Jerusalem and think through the attitude of Jehovah towards His people's sins.

Further Reading in the commentaries noted on page 66

b. For further study:

--view the nature of punishment in chapter 1 in the light of the nature of the offenses.

--compare the performance of Judah's leaders in 3:3-4 with similar pictures of leadership and its failure in Jeremiah.

--begin to work for an eschatological harmony among the books of the Minor prophets..see what is promised the nation of Israel and what is suggested for the rest of the world. See if there is any common pattern linking these things together.

10 A Study Survey of Haggai (God's obligation)

a. An overview:

Of the Prophet Haggai nothing is known save his existence a fact witnessed to in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14. He is one of the three post-exilic prophets and with Zechariah responsible for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. The historical background is of key importance: the Jews had returned in 537-6 and begun rebuilding the city and temple but had stopped this work on the basis of a decree issued probably under the rule of Cambyses about 530. Following the death of that ruler and an interregnum of perhaps 1-2 years, Darius I took the throne and instituted a strong period of civil government after overcoming several interregnum rebellions. It became apparent to the prophets Haggai and Zechariah that the time had come to rebuild the temple and this was the burden of their ministries. Haggai challenges the nation to see how it has failed in that it has not given God the place that was properly His. He does not make the exact equation that if worship is in order everything else will go well..he sees the pervasiveness of evil and dissident expressions of life as being great detriments to the progress of God's work...but he does, with authority, argue that God must be first if other things are to go well.

Some scholars have seen Haggai as a collection of prophetic accounts gathered after the fact but the first-hand concept of information and the general unity of the book militates against this and argues for a genuine work. The Hebrew is "choppy" but this may simply be the style of the author who prepared essentially a prose document with some poetic portions.

In outline form we offer this: