

# Zephaniah 1:1–9

## Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

### I. Apocalyptic Picture of Universal World Judgment

Zeph 1:1–9

#### A. *Historical Setting and Eschatological Vision*—“an end of everything” (1:1–2) [6.9]

1:1	The word of YHWH / that came / to Zephaniah /	<u>  17  3  </u>	<u>  6  6  0  </u>
		Hab 3:19-Zeph 1:1a	<b>17  15  2</b>
	Son of Cushī / <sup>a</sup> son of Gedaliah / son of Amariah /	<u>  15  3  </u>	<u>  6  6  0  </u>
		Hab 3:19-Zeph 1:1b	<b>23  21  2</b>
	The son of Hezekiah //	<u>  6  1  </u>	<u>  2  2  0  </u>
		Hab 3:19-Zeph 1:1c	<b>25  23  2</b>
	In the days / of Josiah son of Amon / king of Judah //	<u>  24  3  </u>	<u>  6  0  6  </u>
		Hab 3:18-Zeph 1:1	<b>37  26  11</b>
1:2	“I will indeed gather to make an end / of everything /	10 2	3 3 0
	from upon / the face of the earth” / <b>ne’um</b> YHWH //	<u>  20  3  </u>	<u>  5  5  0  </u>
		Hab 3:18-Zeph 1:2	<b>45  34  11</b>

#### B. *The Undoing of Creation* (1:3)

[7.4]

1:3	“I will make an end of humankind / and beast /	15 2	3 3 0
	I will make an end / <sup>a</sup> of the birds of the heaven /	11 2	3 3 0
	and the fish of the sea /	<u>  8  1  </u>	<u>  2  2  0  </u>
		Hab 3:17-Zeph 1:3c	<b>73  56  17</b>
	And the stumbling blocks / along with the wicked //	<u>  15  2  </u>	<u>  3  3  0  </u>
		Hab 3:17-Zeph 1:3d	<b>76  59  17</b>
	I will cut off human beings /	12 1	3 0 3
	from upon / the face of the earth” / <b>ne’um</b> YHWH //	<u>  20  3  </u>	<u>  5  0  5  </u>
		Hab 3:18-Zeph 1:3	<b>64  45  19</b>

#### C. *Judah’s Divine Punishment for Idolatrous Practices* (1:4–5)

[7.7]

1:4	I will stretch out my hand / against Judah /	17 2	4 4 0
	and against / all the inhabitants of Jerusalem //	17 2	4 4 0
	and I will cut off / from this place / the remnant of Baal /	<u>  20  3  </u>	<u>  7  0  7  </u>
		1:3–4b	<b>34  19  15</b>

	The name of the idol-priests <sup>a</sup> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">among</span> the (real) priests //	_16 1_	<u>5 0 5</u>
		1:1-4	67 41 <b>26</b>
1:5	And those who bow down on the roofs / to the host of heaven //	22 2	6 6 0
	and those who bow down / who swear to YHWH /	19 2	4 0 4
	but who swear / by their <i>mulk</i> -sacrifice //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		1:3-5	<b>51 25 26</b>

**D. YHWH Has Prepared a Sacrifice—the Day of YHWH (1:6–7)** [4.7]

1:6	And those who turn away <sup>a</sup> from following YHWH //	18 1	4 4 0
	and those / who do not seek YHWH /	13 2	5 0 5
	and they do not inquire of him //	<u>10 1_</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		1:5-6	<b>23 10 13</b>
1:7	Hush / before <sup>a</sup> <span style="background-color: yellow;">[Lord]</span> <sup>b</sup> YHWH //	{-1a} 9 2	3 3 0
	for near / is the Day of YHWH /	<u>12 2_</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		1:5-7b	30 13 <b>17</b>
	For YHWH has prepared / a sacrifice /	12 2	4 0 4
	he has consecrated his guests //	<u>8 1</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		1:6-7	24 7 <b>17</b>

**E. YHWH’s “Day of Sacrifice” is against Judah’s Assimilated Officials (1:8–9)** [9.6]

1:8	And it shall come to pass / on the day / of YHWH’s sacrifice /	14 3	4 4 0
	and I will visit / <sup>a</sup> against the princes /	<u>13 2_</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		1:6-8b	31 14 <b>17</b>
	[And] <sup>b</sup> against the sons / <sup>c</sup> of the king /	7 2	3 3 0
	and against all who put on / foreign raiment //	<u>15 2_</u>	<u>5 0 5</u>
		1:5-8	<b>49 23 26</b>
1:9	And I will visit / against all who leap /	14 2	4 4 0
	over the threshold <sup>a</sup> on that day //	<u>11 1_</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		1:8-9b	<b>23 18 5</b>
	Those who fill / the house of their Lord /	13 2	3 0 3
	with violence and fraud //	<u>9 1</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
	D	1:6-9	<b>52 25 27</b>
		1:1-9	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">131</span> 72 59

Scansion in SAS Units: (6.9).(7.4).7.7.(4.7).(9.6)  
= (15 + 11) + 14 + (11 + 15) = **26 + 14 + 26 = 66**

## Notes:

- 1:1<sup>a</sup> Reading *munaḥ* here as disjunctive.
- 1:3<sup>a</sup> Reading *mehuppak* followed immediately by *ga'ya* (= *meteg*) in Letteris as disjunctive; BHS omits *ga'ya* (= *meteg*).
- 1:4<sup>a</sup> Reading *tiḥhā* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 1:6<sup>a</sup> Reading *tiḥhā* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 1:7<sup>a</sup> Reading *tiḥhā* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 1:7<sup>b</sup> The word לַיְהוָה (“Lord”) is omitted as a secondary addition to the original numerical composition.
- 1:8<sup>a</sup> Reading *merka* preceded immediately by *ga'ya* (= *meteg*) in Letteris and Ginsburg as disjunctive; BHS omits *ga'ya* (= *meteg*).
- 1:8<sup>b</sup> Removing the *wau*-conjunction to improve balance in mora-count.
- 1:8<sup>c</sup> Reading *munaḥ* here as disjunctive.
- 1:9<sup>a</sup> Reading *tiḥhā* in BHS as conjunctive.

## Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Zeph 1:1–9 has 5 strophes: 1:1–2, 3, 4–5, 6–7 and 8–9.

A	1:1–2	3 balanced dyads:	$[17 + 15] + [6 + 24] + [10 + 20]$	=	$32 + 30 + 30$	morae
B	1:3	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	$[15 + (11 + 8)] + 15 + [12 + 20]$	=	$34 + 15 + 32$	morae

X	1:4–5	2 triads + pivot:	$[17 + 17 + 20] + 16 + [22 + 19 + 11]$	=	$54 + 16 + 52$	morae
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B'	1:6–7	triad & 2 dyads in balance:	$[18 + 13 + 10] + [(9 + 12) + (12 + 8)]$	=	$41 + 41$	morae
A'	1:8–9	2 balanced quatrains:	$[(13 + 13) + (8 + 15)] + [(14 + 11) + (13 + 9)]$	=	$49 + 47$	morae

2. The 1<sup>st</sup> strophe (1:1–2) is a single part with three subdivisions: 1:1ab, 1cd and 2.
- Hb 3:19–Zp 1:1      **23** words before *atnach*
  - Hb 3:18–Zp 1:1      **26** words before *atnach*
  - Hb 3:18–Zp 1:2      **34** (= **17** x 2) words before *atnach*
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> strophe (1:3) is a single part with three subdivisions: 1:3a–c, 3d and 3ef.
- Hb 3:18–Zp 1:3      **64** (= **32** x 2) words
4. The 3<sup>rd</sup> strophe (1:4–5) is a single part with three subdivisions: 1:4a–c, 4d and 5.
- 1:1–4                  **26** words after *atnach*
  - 1:3–5                  **51** (= **17** x 3) words and **26** words after *atnach*
  - 1:1–5                  **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
5. The 4<sup>th</sup> strophe (1:6–7) is a single part with three subdivisions: 1:6, 7ab and 7cd.
- 1:1–6                  **51** (= 3x17) words before *atnach*
  - 1:6–7                  **17** words after *atnach*
6. The 5<sup>th</sup> strophe (1:8–9) is a single part with four subdivisions: 1:8ab, 8cd, 9ab and 9cd.
- 1:5–8                  **49 = 23 + 26** [compositional formula]
  - 1:1–8                  **64** (= **32** x 2 = 2x2x2x2x2x2) words before *atnach*
  - 1:6–9                  **52** (= **26** x 2) words

## Observations

1. The 5 strophes in Zeph 1:1–9 may be outlined in a menorah pattern on prosodic grounds:

### **Apocalyptic Picture of Universal World Judgment (1:1–9)**

A	YHWH's word came to Zephaniah, son of Hezekiah, king of Judah	[6.4]	1:1
B	It came to the son of Hezekiah: "I am bringing an end of everything!"	[2.3]	1:2
C	The undoing of creation—cutting off humans from upon the earth	[7.4]	1:3
X	<b>Judah's divine punishment is for idolatrous practices</b>	[7.7]	1:4–5
C'	YHWH has prepared a sacrifice—the Day of YHWH	[4.7]	1:6–7
B'	YHWH is coming against Judah's rulers	[3.2]	1:8ab
A'	He is coming against those who fill the Temple with violence & fraud	[4.6]	1:8c–9

2. There is no use of the four primary compositional numbers [17, 23, 26 and 32] in the first two strophes in Zephaniah (1:1–3) unless one starts the word-count from either the beginning of the last verse or the second to last verse of Habakkuk. A similar situation appears at the beginning of Habakkuk in relation to Nahum. This evidence provides objective support for the conclusion that the three books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah (as we now have them within the Book of the Twelve Prophets) constitute a trilogy in terms of their literary/numerical composition.
3. The peculiar interest in the number 14 in the composition of Strophes One and Two (1:1–3), and again in Strophe Five (1:8–9) may reflect interest in the person of king David (whose name has the numerical value of 14). Zephaniah is presented as the "son of Hezekiah" and his ministry takes place "in the days of Josiah ... king of Judah." Zephaniah is thus a descendant of David. In this regard, he is unique among the twelve so-called Minor Prophets. The name "Hezekiah" is also the 14<sup>th</sup> word in the book of Zephaniah; and Hezekiah is a "son of David" as a member of the Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem.
4. In terms of the 131 words in Zephaniah 1:1–9, the **arithmological center** falls on the word עַם ("with [the priests]") in 1:4b, with 65 words on either side. The **meaningful center** is found by including 13 words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

	כל־יושבי ירושלם	(As for) all the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
	והכרתי מן המקום הזה	Indeed I will cut off from this place
	את שאר הבעל	the remnant of Baal,
	את שם הכמרים	the name of the idol-priests
	עַם הַכֹּהֲנִים	with the (real) priests;
5	וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁתַּחֲוִים עַל הַגִּגֹּת	And those who bow down on the roofs
	לְצַבֵּא הַשָּׁמַיִם	to the host of heaven;
	וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁתַּחֲוִים הַנִּשְׁבָּעִים לַיהוָה	And those who bow down—who swear to YHWH,
	וְהַנִּשְׁבָּעִים בְּמִלְכָם	but who swear by their <i>mulk</i> -sacrifice.

In this instance the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

$$131 = 52 + 27 + 52 \quad [\text{word count— for Zephaniah 1:1–9}]$$

5. The 56-word **meaningful framework** (with the 36-word framework highlighted in gray) reads as follows:

1	דבר־יהוה אשר היה אל־צפניה בן־כושי בן־גדליה בן־אמריה בן־חזקיה	The word of YHWH that came to Zephaniah, Son of Cushy, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah -- (It came to) the son of Hezekiah,
2	בימי יאשיהו בן־אמון מלך יהודה אסף אסף כל מעל פני האדמה נאם־והיה	In the days of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah. “I will indeed gather to make an end of everything, From upon the face of the earth, utterance of YHWH.

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8	והיה ביום זבח יהוה ופקדתי על־השרים ועל־בני המלך ועל כל־הלבשים מלבוש נכרי	And it shall come to pass on the day of YHWH’s sacrifice; And I will visit against the princes, And against the sons of the king, And against all who put on foreign raiment.
9	ופקדתי על כל־הדולג על־המפתן ביום ההוא הממלאים בית אדניהם חמס ומרמה	And I will visit against all who leap Over the threshold on that day— Those who fill the house of their Lord With lawlessness and fraud.

6. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae for Zeph 1:1–9:

$$131 = 52 + 27 + 52 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$131 = 48 + 35 + 48$$

{with others in between}

$$131 = 28 + 75 + 28$$

$$131 = 18 + 95 + 18$$

$$66 = 26 + 14 + 26 \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

$$30 = 11 + 8 + 11 \quad \text{briques (primary SAS units)}$$

7. In the prosodic structure of Zephaniah 1:1–9, the basic building blocks in each poetic verset are the **briques** (primary SAS units). These sub-units are delineated by the Masoretes, who marked most of the boundaries with one of the following:

- **Soph Pasuq** A large colon following a word signifies the end of a verse, which does not always coincide with the end of a sentence.
- **Atnach** A small caret-like mark (like ^) beneath the consonantal text, pointing upward, is used to divide most verses. Its primary importance for our purposes concerns its use in the matter of numerical composition—i.e., the total word-count in each line is divided into the number of words before and after *atnach*.

In the prosodic analysis presented with the translation (above), the presence of these two primary disjunctive markers is indicated with a double slash (//). Zephaniah 1:1–9 has 30 **briques** (primary SAS units), 24 of which are marked by:

- *soph pasuq* 9 times, at the end of each verse
- *atnach* 8 times, in each verse, except v 2
- *zāqēp qaṭan* 7 times (vv 1, 3, 4 [bis], 5, 7, 8)

The boundaries of the remaining six **briques** are marked by:

- *rəḥīa<sup>c</sup>* 4 time (vv 1, 2, 3 [bis])
- *tīpḥā* 1 time (v 5)
- *təḥîr* 1 time (v 9)

8. The prosodic structure of Zephaniah 1:1–9, in terms of its **briques** [primary SAS (syntactic accentual stress) units], may be displayed as follows [^ represents atnach; : represents soph pasuq; and † is any other such boundary marker].

- A <sup>1</sup> *dəḥar yhwḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *ʾāšer ḥāyāḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *ʾel šəpānyāḥ ben kūšî* †<sup>†</sup> *ḥen gəḏalyāḥ* †<sup>†</sup>  
*ben ʾāmaryāḥ ben hizqīyāḥ* ^ *bîmē yōšīyāḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *ḥen ʾāmôn meleḵ yəḥûḏāḥ* :  
<sup>2</sup> *ʾāsōp ʾāsēp kōl* †<sup>†</sup> *mēʿal pənē ḥāʾăḏāmāḥ nəʾūm yhwḥ* :
- B <sup>3</sup> *ʾāsēp ʾăḏām ūḇəḥēmāḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *ʾāsēp ʿōp ḥaššāmayim ūəḡē hayyām* †<sup>†</sup>  
*wəḥammaḵšəlōt ʾet ḥarəšāʿîm* ^  
*wəḥikrattî ʾet ḥāʾăḏām* †<sup>†</sup> *mēʿal pənē ḥāʾăḏāmāḥ nəʾūm yhwḥ* :

X <sup>4</sup> *wənāṭîṭî yādî yəḥûḏāḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *wəʿal kol yōšəḇé yərûšālāim* ^  
*wəḥikrattî min hammāqôm hazzeh ʾet šəʾār ḥabbaʿal* †<sup>†</sup>  
*ʾet šēm hakkəmarîm* im *hakkōḥānîm* :  
<sup>5</sup> *wəʾet ḥammištaḥăwîm ʿal haggaggōt* †<sup>†</sup> *lišḇāʾ ḥaššāmayim* ^  
*wəʾet ḥammištaḥăwîm hannišbāʿîm la-yhwḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *wəhannišbāʿîm bəḥalkām* :

- B <sup>6</sup> *wəʾet hannəsôgîm mēʾaḥărē yhwḥ* ^ *waʾāšer lōʾ biqšû ʾet yhwḥ wəlōʾ ḏərəšūḥû* :  
<sup>7</sup> *ḥas mippənē* [ʾăḏōnay] *yhwḥ* ^ *kî qārôḇ yôm yhwḥ kî ḥēḵîn yhwḥ* †<sup>†</sup>  
*zəḇaḥ ḥiqḏîš qərûʾāyiw* :
- A <sup>8</sup> *wəḥāyāḥ bəyôm zəḇaḥ yhwḥ* †<sup>†</sup> *ûḇāqadtî ʿal ḥaššārîm wəʿal bənē hammeleḵ* ^  
*wəʿal kol hallôḇəšîm malbûš nokrî* :  
<sup>9</sup> *ûḇāqadtî ʿal kol ḥăḏḏôlēg* †<sup>†</sup> *ʿal ḥammiptān bayyôm ḥahûʾ* ^  
*ḥaməmalʿîm bêt ʾăḏōnêḥem ḥāmās ūmirmāḥ* :

9. The 30 **briques** are distributed in five strophes in Zephaniah 1:1–9 as follows:

$$(6 + 5) + \boxed{4 + 4} + (5 + 6) = 11 + 8 + 11 = 30$$

The **arithmological center** of Zeph 1:1–9 falls on the word im (“with”) in the second half of verse 4, with 65 words on either side. There are 68 SAS units, 30 briques, 12 versets, and 5

strophes. The **arithmological center** is in the middle strophe, the middle two versets, the middle two *briques*, and the middle two SAS units.

#### 10. Bibliography {to be added later}

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