

If Zephaniah's purpose is to give a summation of what the pre-exilic prophets said about judgment and salvation, these features would not be necessary.

### III. Person of Zephaniah

Zephaniah was the great, great grandson of Hezekiah who in all probability was the King of Judah (Zeph. 1:1).

Note: Two objections are raised to Hezekiah being the King of Judah:

- A. Zephaniah didn't say Hezekiah was the king of Judah (cf. Zeph. 1:1).

The reason for this was that Zephaniah didn't want to write "the king of Judah" twice and since the phrase "the King of Judah" was used in connection with Josiah's name, Zephaniah didn't use it in connection with Hezekiah's name. Furthermore, if Hezekiah were not a celebrated man, namely, the King of Judah, why did Zephaniah trace his genealogy back four generations to him? There would be no point to it if Hezekiah was just an ordinary man! It would seem then that Hezekiah was the King of Judah and that Zephaniah traced his genealogy back to him to show that he was of royal descent.

- B. Only two generations occur between Hezekiah and Josiah whereas three generations occur between Hezekiah and Zephaniah who prophesied during the reign of Josiah (cf. Zeph. 1:1).

The answer to this is that Manasseh reigned for 55 years, i.e. for nearly two generations.

### IV. Date of Zephaniah

Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah who reigned from 638 B.C. to 608 B.C. (cf. Zeph. 1:1). Josiah began to reign when he was eight years old (cf. 2 Chron. 34:1) and he reigned until he died in battle against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt (cf. 2 Chron. 35:20-24) after about a 30 year period (cf. 2 Chron. 34:1). We can narrow the date when Zephaniah prophesied even further:

- A. It was before the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

Zephaniah prophesied that Nineveh would be destroyed (cf. Zeph. 2:13b). Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. Therefore, Zephaniah had to prophesy before that time.

- B. It was possibly before the beginning of Josiah's reformation in 626 B.C.

Josiah began his reformation in the twelfth year of his reign which would be about 626 B.C. (cf. 2 Chron. 34:3). Since there doesn't seem to be anything in Zephaniah that would conclusively indicate that he was aware of this reformation, it would be reasonable to assume that Zephaniah prophesied before the beginning of this reformation, i.e., between 638 B.C. and 626 B.C. If that is the case, Zephaniah's prophecies may have been an important factor in Josiah's reformation.