

Shayla: Who are the ones skipping over the threshold?

Zephaniah 1:4-9 HCSB I will stretch out My hand against Judah and against all the residents of Jerusalem. I will cut off from this place every vestige of Baal, the names of the pagan priests along with the priests; (5) those who bow in worship on the rooftops to the heavenly host; those who bow and pledge loyalty to the LORD but also pledge loyalty to Milcom; (6) and those who turn back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD or inquire of Him. (7) Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD, for the Day of the LORD is near. Indeed, the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has consecrated His guests. (8) On the day of the LORD's sacrifice I will punish the officials, the king's sons, and all who are dressed in foreign clothing. (9) On that day I will punish all who skip over the threshold, who fill their master's house with violence and deceit.

Midrash:

Zephaniah's book principally deals with the coming of the Day of the Lord and begins by saying that on that awful day, God will be going after the religious leaders. He will go after those who pledge their loyalty to both the Lord and to Milcom. Milcom was a god worshipped by the Ammonites and is a variant name of Molech – the god who required child sacrifice.

That was not Zephaniah's main point, however. He said the Lord was angered by the sin of syncretism: mixing portions of right worship with false. If that's the case, then I believe many of our American churches are in trouble because we routinely mix elements of the Scriptures with principles and practices of corporate America. We listen to Robert's Rules of Order more than the Scriptures in many of our meetings.

Then Zephaniah threw this curious phrase: "I will punish all who skip over the threshold..." The prophet Samuel has the answer we're looking for. At one point, the ark was taken by the Philistines and placed in the temple of the false god Dagon (the image to the right). When they returned the next morning, their idol was toppled, beheaded and its broken hands lay on the threshold of the door. Their false god was shown to be completely incapable of self-defense much less protecting their nation but instead of switching to the living God, they returned the ark to Israel and stopped stepping on the spot where their impotent god's hands lay!

- **1 Samuel 5:5 HCSB** That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.

God often steps into our lives and topples our vain philosophies. He overturns the desks and money counting tables of our lives and demands that we follow Him in faith. As often as not, we simply limp along with our broken ideas and ignore His Word. Listen, when God destroys our false ideas, we need to change our way of thinking, not accommodate the lies! We need to stop skipping over the threshold.

