

# Zephaniah 2:12

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/zeph/zeph-2/zephaniah-212/>

*The LORD pronounces judgment against the Ethiopians. He will judge them with the sword of war.*

The LORD continued His message of judgment on the nations neighboring Judah. This time, the indictment fell on Ethiopia in the south. God did not say much about the land of Ethiopia, nor did He give the reason for the judgment. He simply announced the downfall of the nation, saying: *You also, O Ethiopians, will be slain by My sword* (vs 12).

The term translated *Ethiopian* is “Cushite” in Hebrew. It refers to the residents of the African region of Nubia. The area to which Cush refers is not modern Ethiopia but the area along the Nile just south of Egypt. This place was also called Nubia, roughly corresponding to modern Sudan.

The Cushites (or Ethiopians) were descendants of Cush, the oldest son of Ham (Genesis 10:6; 1 Chronicles 1:8). The term *Cush* means “black,” and, historically, the Cushites were dark-skinned (Jeremiah 13:23). Moses married a wife who was a Cushite (Numbers 12:1). We are told little more than that these *Ethiopians will be slain by God’s sword*. The image of the *sword* means the *Ethiopians* would be defeated in battle.

We are not told here what the Ethiopians did that brought on God’s judgment. It appears that there was a type of exile of Jewish people to Cush, because in Zephaniah 3:10 it says:

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia [Cush] My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings.”

2 Kings 19:9 implies that Cush attempted to aid Hezekiah against the Assyrians. This would indicate that Cush was a player on the international stage, with material military power. However, we are not told details.

From history it is likely this prophecy came to pass when King Cambyses II of Persia defeated Egypt and Ethiopia in 525 BC and brought them into the Persian empire.

## **Biblical Text**

<sup>12</sup> **“You also, O Ethiopians, will be slain by My sword.”**