

STORM WARNINGS!**#10 – ZEPHANIAH: GET READY FOR THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD****ZEPHANIAH 1 - 3**

Zephaniah – Zephaniah’s ministry (640 – 621 BC) occurred during the reign of King Josiah who led religious reform and revival (II Kings 22, 23). Zephaniah warned of the coming of the “Day of the Lord” if Judah didn’t continue in the religious revival. King Josiah died before the religious reform could become permanent, and the people reverted to their wicked ways. Jeremiah was a contemporary prophet.

I. Get Ready for the Day of the Lord (chapter 1)

The Day of the Lord – God’s dramatic and decisive intervention in human history for judgment. It can include war, natural disasters, and supernatural calamities! **The Day of the Lord** is used by the prophets Amos, Obadiah, Malachi, as well as Zephaniah.

(God says, “I will stretch out My hand against...”) “Those who bow down on the housetops to worship the starry host, those who bow down and swear by the Lord and also swear by Molech, those who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of Him.” Zephaniah 1:5-6

- **Judgment on _____ worshippers** (vss. 5 & 6) – The Jews were not only “worshipping” the Lord, but also worshipping other gods such as Molech (violating Exodus 20:3). They had become “practical atheists” neither seeking the Lord nor inquiring of Him. Idol worship is anything or anybody that you magnify, glorify, are loyal to, and depend on to solve your problems, bring happiness and success, and give you life meaning. What are your idols?

“On the day of the Lord’s sacrifice I will punish the princes and the king’s sons and all those clad in foreign clothes.” Zephaniah 1:8

- **Judge those dressed in foreign _____** (vs. 8) – Wearing foreign clothes symbolizes the adoption of cultures, lifestyles, and values of others that are different than and opposed to the culture, lifestyle, and values of God as taught in the Bible. Too many Jews were becoming foreigners in God’s eyes. The same is true today.

“On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit.” Zephaniah 1:9

- **Judge those who fill their master’s houses with _____ and deceit** (vs. 9-10) – NIV translates this as fill temple of their gods with violence and deceit. Whether it is their master’s house or temple of their gods, the point is filling either (or both) with the results of violence and deceit. Violence and deceit were the primary ways of achievement and getting ahead for the kings and princes (vs. 8) – the national and community leaders.

“At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think ‘The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.’” Zephaniah 1:12

- **Judge the _____** (vs. 12) – Many were apathetic, who as “practical atheists” didn’t think God would do anything in their lives, good or bad. They were through the motions of religious activity because they just didn’t care. God warns Christians against this in Revelation 3:15-17. Lukewarm makes God sick and angry. He will puke you out of His mouth.

II. Get Right With God (Chapter 2)

Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord comes upon you, before the day of the Lord’s wrath

comes upon you.

Zephaniah 2:1-2

- **Gather together as God's _____** (vss. 1 & 2) – There was still time for the people to avert God's judgment. The first step was to gather together as the people of God to do some serious business with God. The prophet Joel calls this a "sacred (or solemn) assembly." Why an assembly? We related to God, not only as individuals, but as a people as well. Today, God deals with whole nations, as well as with individuals. It's not too late to get right with God until the "appointed time" of judgment comes. But it's coming! Then, it's too late.

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what He commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger. Zephaniah 2:3

- **With humility, seek the _____** (vs. 3) – When we are humble, we realize our own unrighteousness and unworthiness of God's holiness and blessings. Then we can really seek God without our pride being an obstacle. When we "seek" the Lord, we desperately want to know Him more deeply, and do His will and His ways. Are you ready to humbly seek the Lord?

III. Get Hope for the Future (Chapter 3)

"Therefore wait for Me," declares the Lord, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out My wrath on them – all My fierce anger.

Zephaniah 3:8

- **Wait for the Lord, for He will judge your _____** (vs. 8) – To wait on the Lord is to patiently wait in faith, expectation, and hope for God's timing in His judgment. This "Day of the Lord" will be His decision (we can't rush it) on when. God's fierce wrath will be amazing, awesome, and catastrophic when He "testifies" (to make a serious declaration). God will avenge those who have sinned against Him and oppressed His people.

"But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid."

Zephaniah 3:12-13

- **God's remnant will survive and _____** (vss. 12 & 13) – Who is God's remnant? Those who truly are His – who remained faithful to God in spite of the temptations, pressures, and persecution. The remnant will be meek (submissive to God), humble, do no wrong, will not deceive, and speak no lies. Their reward? God will bless, protect, and provide. In the case of Judah, the remnant were the Jews who willingly came back from the Babylonian captivity.

"The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

Zephaniah 3:17

- **The Lord our God is _____ us!** (vs. 17) – For those who are truly His (the remnant), God is always with us (even we feel abandoned). He is mighty to save us from any struggles we face. When we are stressed, He can quiet us with His love. He can give you peace. Have you turned to Him in your struggles?

Answers: I. Idol; clothes; violence; complacent. II. People; Lord. III. Enemies; thrive; with.