



Zephaniah 1-3

This is the word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, who was the son of Gedaliah, who was the son of Amariah, and the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, the king of Judah (1:1).

Now the reason why he traces his genealogy back so far, is that he might come to Hizkiah. This was probably king Hezekiah, most of the ancient Jewish Rabbis and traditions declare that it was king Hezekiah, of which he was a descendant. Thus he was of the royal seed. King Hezekiah was his great, great grandfather. So he thus identifies himself, but his time of prophecy was during the reign of Josiah.

Now Josiah was the son of Amon, who was the son of Manasseh, who was the son of Hezekiah. During the reign of Josiah, there was a spiritual kind of renewing. There was a reformation of sorts, not total, it was only surface. People started attending worship again, but it was with a divided heart. They had the world in their heart, and the pleasure god in their lives, but they were attending, because it became sort of the popular thing to do, the worship services.

Jeremiah was prophesying during the reign of Josiah. Jeremiah was just a young man in his teens, as he was prophesying during the reign of Josiah, and he was speaking about the shallowness of the reform. When the people were crowding into the temple again, he went down to the temple and he cried out to the people coming into the temple for worship, “Trust not in lying vanities”, he said, “saying, ‘The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord!’ don’t think that just attendance in the temple of the Lord’s gonna save you, going to do anything for you. God is looking for a change of heart”. Thus, it was a time of surface reform, but within the hearts of the people there was still a lot of worldliness.

During the time of Josiah’s reign, at the end of Josiah’s reign, he, his reign has been dated from about 629 to 609. During the time of his reign, the Assyrian empire fell, but it would appear from the prophesies in Zephaniah, that the empire had not yet fallen. So somewhere in the reign of Josiah, before the fall of Ninevah, the capital of Assyria, is this prophecy of Zephaniah, the great, great grandson of Hezekiah. God is declaring, he starts right off, he hits hard at the beginning. And he said...

I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord (1:2).

“You’re going to get wiped out. I’m going to utterly consume all of the things from off the land.”

I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord (1:3).

There is going to be a thorough purging of the earth. Even the seas. Now as we read the prophesies of the great tribulation in the book of Revelation, we find that during some of these cataclysmic judgments of God upon the earth, that some of them will actually be striking the oceans, the seas, and a third part of the living creatures within the sea, will die. God’s judgment that is coming, going to be thorough, going to be complete.

And I also will stretch out my hand upon Judah, [You see, the first is universal, now it narrows down to Judah.] and upon all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place (1:4),

Now this prophecy against Jerusalem, and Judah was fulfilled within twenty five years from the time of the prophecy. So this part was, was soon to be, this judgment was soon to be meted upon the people, at the time that Zephaniah was prophesying. Incidentally, he is the last of the, of the prophets that were known as the pre-oxalic prophets. Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi, are the post-oxalic prophets. They prophesied after the Babylonian captivity. So this is the last of the prophets before the Babylonian captivity. He and Jeremiah.

So God said He’s gonna judge Jerusalem and Judah, cut off the remnant of Baal from this place. The people had embraced the worship of Baal, that pagan god that was worshiped with all kinds of licentious rights.

and the name of the Chemarims [Who were the idolatrous] priests (1:4);

Literally, “Chemarim” is black-robed. I don’t know why so many religions wear black robes. But

they, the pagan priests, the idolatrous priests wore black robes. You know if I wore a robe, I think I'd want to wear a white one, rather than a black one. But, at any rate, along with the Kohannan. The Kohannan were the Levite priests. But God's gonna cut them off, they have become wicked. They speak falsely concerning God. They are using their office to their own gain. They have forsaken the law of God, so God's gonna cut off both the idolatrous priests, as well as those priests that stood in the temple of God, but were no longer representatives of God.

And them that worship the host of heaven (1:5),

Now astrology is an ancient religion, it goes back to Babylon. Believing that the position of the stars and the position of the planets have some kind of influence upon your life. You see, they worshiped the various planets as gods. Jupiter was a god, Mars was a god, Venus was a goddess, and they worshiped the planets as gods. Thus they felt that the position of the planets, that these gods had some kind of mystic influence over your life. Thus there was the good time to do things, and the bad times to do things, and they were using horoscopes, feeling that these stars had some kind of a mystical power and influence upon your life. It is an amazing thing to me today. Absolutely amazing, that many intelligent people still follow horoscopes! Still think that the stars, and the position of the stars have some kind of influence over their lives. That, in this day and age, is absolutely astounding to me! So they were worshiping the host of heaven...

on their housetops (1:5);

The housetops were a place where the people usually lived. Their patios were their housetops. They would go out, and many times in the summer, sleep on the rooftop of their house. They um, you go to Jerusalem today, and you can see them hanging clothes on the housetop. You see ladies scrubbing the housetops, the floors of the housetops, because there's still sort of a family patio gathering place. So those that worshiped the host of heaven.

and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham (1:5);

Or the god Molech. A divided heart. They swore by the Lord, but they also swore by the god of pleasure, Molech. There are people today who sort of have a divided heart. They worship the Lord, but they also worship pleasure, or they worship power. This divided heart, God is going to bring punishment against them.

And those that are turned back from the Lord; [Those that had just really turned their back on God, that aren't really even divided, they just walked away from the Lord.] and those that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of him (1:6).

Now, there are those who say they do not believe in God. I feel sorry for them, I believe that they are fools. The Bible said, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God". And, I think that they have taken a very foolish position. But there are those who say they believe in God, and yet they live as though God did not exist, and I think that, that is even worse! To say, "Well I believe in God", and yet not include God in your life, to live as though God did not exist. To never enquire of God, to never seek the guidance of God, or His help for your life, yet affirming a belief in Him, is greater blasphemy than the man who says, "Well I don't believe in God". At least he is consistent in his position. But to say you believe in God, and never enquire of God is an inconsistency. Now the prophet commands...

Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, and he hath bid his guests (1:7).

"The day of the Lord's judgment of the earth at hand. He's prepared a sacrifice." Turn to Revelation, chapter nineteen, and we read verses that are somewhat similar to this. Beginning with verse seventeen. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all of the fowls that fly in the midst of the heavens, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;"

Now here, "The Lord has prepared a sacrifice, and He has bid His guests". Who are His guests? The vultures. "And come and feast that you might eat the flesh of kings, and of captains, and of mighty men, the flesh of horses, and those that set upon them, the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Thus the great battle of Armageddon. The final judgment of God upon man, as He allows man to go against each other in this final conflict, which will exceed anything ever known in the annals of war in the history of

mankind. And so the day of the Lord is coming, it's at hand.

In Amos, chapter five, he speaks in verse sixteen, "Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord saith thus, Wailing shall be in all the streets. They shall say in all of the highways, Alas! Alas! And they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skillful of lamentation to wailing".

We went over that awhile back. We told you that they had people who were very skillful at wailing. They were professional wailers. You could hire them to come and wail at your funeral. So the people would think, "Oh my, he was greatly loved", and all. "Listen to the wailing!" So they would hire these skillful at wailing. Ha, ha! I've met a few of those!

Verse eighteen he said, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and the bear met him; or went into the house and he leaned his hand upon the wall, and the viper bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark and no brightness in it?"

So the day of the Lord in the scripture is a day of vengeance. A day of judgment. But also, beyond that vengeance and judgment it is a day of God's glorious reign. But the, it, the reign of Jesus Christ will be preceded by a period of, of darkness such as the world has never seen before, or will ever see again! I personally believe that the day of the Lord is near. I believe that we're already seeing precursors to this judgment of God that is going to come upon the earth. I believe that the hand of God's judgment is beginning to fall already. Thus he speaks here of the day of the Lord is at hand. He's prepared the sacrifice.

It shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel (1:8).

Now God had sort of prescribed the kind of clothes that the children of Israel were to wear. However the princes, those that were in the royal court, they had opportunity of intermixing with people from other nations. They began to adopt the clothing fashions of the other nations. This is a reference to that.

In the same day also I will punish all of those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit (1:9).

The idea of leaping on the threshold is, leaping over the threshold to break into a house, for the purpose of robbery, in order that they might fill their master's house with the loot from the violence, and from their deceit.

It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, [The day of the Lord] that there shall be a cry from the fish gate, and a howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills (1:10).

Fish gate to the north, and this is where the Babylonian army actually invaded, from the north, and from that area of the fish gate.

It shall come to pass that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees (1:12):

Those that are just kicked back, and are living a life of ease, not concerned about the Lord, not concerned about the things of righteousness. But just sort of settled kind of existence. "I, you know, I've got what I want and I'm happy", and not concerned about the conditions of the land, and of the nation.

"Settling in their lees" is a term from wine making. When they would make the wine, they would allow it to settle, and it's the little settlings that would come down in the wine, and settle in the bottom. The process of making the wine would be to pour the wine, once the, the lees, or the settlement had come to the bottom, to pour the wine into another vessel. Let it settle again. If they did not pour the wine from vessel to vessel, then the lees begin to sour. They begin to stink, and they pollute the wine. So this idea of just being polluted, and living in that pollution. Not really concerned about the pollution. Just in that condition, and God is going to deal with those who have settled on their lees.

that say in their heart, [And this is the whole attitude] The Lord will do no good, neither will he do evil (1:12).

"God doesn't really matter. God has withdrawn Himself. God has no part in the affairs of man. God has no power to do good for you. God has no power to do evil. God is removed, and has removed His hand. So you're on your own. Get what you can for yourself." The idea is that God has just removed Himself. "Just settle back with no thought of God, no consideration of God, no commitment to God."

Therefore their goods shall become a booty, [They're settled back, they're comfortable in their houses and all, but,] their houses will become a desolation: they will build houses, but they will not inhabit them; they will plant vineyards, but they will not drink of the wine thereof. The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and it hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly (1:13-14).

Getting close! "You're within ten years of the first invasion by Babylon. Within twenty five years of your land, of your city, of your people being carried off!" And yet there was this careless, indifferent attitude towards God and the things of God. Rather than seeking the Lord, rather than just really getting desperate before God, they were just going on as though there was no danger, as though they weren't being threatened with judgment. A careless indifference to the things of God.

That day is a day of wrath, [This day of the Lord.] it's a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness, ["God is gonna waste this place."] and desolation, ["He's gonna make it desolate."] it's a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness (1:15),

Going back to Amos, chapter five, verse eighteen, that we read.

A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers (1:16).

The trumpets were used to sound the alarm to the people. "The enemy is invading!" They would blow the trumpets. Like, sort of an air raid siren today that goes off, and you know that the place is about to be attacked.

And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. [That is, their bodies will rot on the ground, there'll be nobody to bury them.] Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them [All of their wealth that they've amassed to themselves will not be able to redeem them.] in this day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealous: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all of them that dwell in the land (1:17-18).

God is ready to wipe them out.

Chapter 2

So the call...

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired (2:1);

No longer are they pleasant to God. No longer are they desired by God. They've turned their back upon Him.

Before the decree bring forth, before the day passes the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord (2:2-3),

"Before this judgment comes, seek the Lord! There's still opportunity. If you would turn to God, God will still save. God will still redeem, before you are blown away like chaff. Before the fierce anger of God is poured out, seek the Lord!"

all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be that you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger (2:3).

"Seek the Lord." Now Jesus in Luke, chapter twenty one, was telling His disciples of the great day of God's judgment that was going to come upon the earth. He told them of the things that would transpire during the great tribulation. He spoke of these cataclysmic events that would take place in the heavens. Then Jesus said to them, "Pray ye always, that you will be accounted worthy to escape all of these things that are going to come to pass upon the earth".

As the Lord speaks to the churches in the book of Revelation, to His church in Philadelphia, He said, "Because you have kept my word, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation which is coming, to try men who dwell upon the earth". But we should be seeking the Lord, we should be seeking righteous, if so be that God will spare us and hide us from the great wrath of God that is going to be poured out upon the earth.

It is a comforting thing for me to realize that God has not appointed us unto wrath. He tells us that twice in Romans, and in Thessalonians. We've not been appointed to wrath, but God has appointed that we should be with Him in His heavenly kingdom. Be with Him there in heaven, while His judgment is being

poured out upon the earth. “Pray ye always you’ll be accounted worthy to escape all these things.” Jesus said, “Because like a snare it is going to come upon them that dwell upon the earth”. So, be careful that at no time you be guilty of drunkenness, of surfeiting, or being so loaded down with the cares of this life that, that day would catch you unprepared. The day of the Lord, a day of darkness and gloominess. A day of judgment. But, “pray, seek the Lord, seek righteousness, seek meekness. It may be that you shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger”.

For he announces now the judgment that’s gonna be coming upon the land of the Philistines. He lists four of their five major cities.

For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up (2:4).

These were always tough people. They were always a feign to the children of Israel, because they were so tough. They were always in conflict with the Philistines, and usually were getting the worst of the battle. But, even these powerful Philistine cities are going to fall to the army of the Babylonians that will sweep through the land. So...

Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, [These are the sea coast towns of the Philistines.] the nation of the Cherethites! [Which are the Philistines.] the word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant (2:5). [You go to the sites of these cities even today, and you find just the ruins of these once great Philistine cities.] And the sea coast shall be a dwellings, and cottages for the shepherds, and folds for the flocks (2:5-6).

This area that was once inhabited. An area that was once very populated, will become desolate and in the ruins, the shepherds will keep their sheep in the caves, and in the ruins of these cities. It’ll be desolate.

The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereon: and in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity. I have heard of the reproach of Moab (2:7-8),

Now Moab was a descendant of Lot, as was Ammon, and they were constantly enemies to the children of God. Though they were related, Abraham was the uncle of Lot, yet the descendants of Lot, Moab and Ammon, were constantly battling against Israel. There was a lot of bitterness, a lot of enmity between these national groups. So, “I have heard of the reproach of Moab”.

and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border (2:8).

They took advantage when Israel was weakened by the invasion of the Babylonians. They, they moved into the territory, to take some of the land for themselves. Take advantage of the disadvantage of the people of God.

Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. [They will come into the judgment of God.] This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts. The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even to the coasts of the heathen (2:9-11).

We are told that, “Every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord”. The Lord, that all men will worship Him. “Everyone from his place, even all of the coasts of the heathen.”

Ye Ethiopians also, [They are the southern most part of the nations that had to deal, they were the Kushites that had to deal with Israel.] ye shall be slain by my sword. And he will stretch out his hand against the north, [From the south, Ethiopia, to the north, Ninevah.] and I’ll destroy Assyria; and make Ninevah a desolation, and dry like a wilderness (2:12-13).

The destruction of Ninevah. And to the present day, they have never rebuilt all of the canals, and the irrigation systems that once made that a very lush, tropical, well it is tropical, but a very lush area for growing foods and all. It’s still just barren desolate in that area that was once that great city of Ninevah.

Flocks will lie down in the midst of her, all of the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the

bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; [In the ruins, just the wild animals, the birds, the owls and so forth.] their voice shall sing in the windows of the ruins; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand (2:14-15).

So Ninevah has not yet been destroyed, but her destruction is close at hand. Within ten years of this prophecy, Ninevah was conquered and destroyed by Babylon. That great city that was so proud, that lived carelessly. Even as the city was being taken by the Babylonians, they were still sort of celebrating, feeling that they could not fall. Their defenses were so powerful that they could overcome the Babylonians. But they said, "I am, there is none beside me. No one can stand up against us. We're the most powerful nation in the world", and yet they fell.

Chapter 3

Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city (3:1)!

Now he's dealt with the judgment from the north to the south, and all of the lands of the Philistines. Now he comes back to Jerusalem. "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted!" The city of God has become filthy, spiritually, morally filthy. It's polluted. "To an oppressing city!"

She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God (3:2).

These are the indictments. "She didn't obey the voice, she didn't receive correction, she trusted not in the Lord, and she drew not near to her God." Back in Leviticus, chapter twenty six, Moses in the law warned the people. Beginning with verse fourteen. "But if you will not hearken unto me, saith the Lord, and will not do all of these commandments, if you despise my statutes, or if your soul abhors my judgments, so that you will not do all my commandments, but that you break my covenant, I also will do this to you. I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and a burning ache, that shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you and you shall be slain before your enemies. And they that hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee where there is none pursuing. And if you will not yet for all of this, hearken to me."

If after this, you still are not listening, you still are not obeying, "then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain, and your land shall not yield her increase. Neither shall the trees of her land yield her fruit. And if you walk contrary unto me, if after this you still are stubborn and rebellious, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring you seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins. And I will send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, and your highways shall be desolate. And if you will not be reformed by me, by these things, and you still walk contrary to me, then I will also walk contrary to you. I will punish you yet seven times for your sins." And he goes on and says, "You know, it's gonna get tougher, and tougher, and tougher. The punishment is going to increase!"

Now here, the prophet said that, "They did not obey the voice of the Lord. She did not receive the correction". God sent these things for correction. They came, but they did not accept the rebuke, and the reproof of the Lord, but they continued stubborn and abdurant in their rebellion against God. They did not trust in the Lord. They did not turn to the Lord. They did not draw near to God.

Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; [They devour and destroy.] they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous [Light would be humorous, you know, so much humor in the pulpit, and they're known for their funny jokes that they tell.] her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The just Lord is in the midst thereof; and he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame (3:3-5).

God was there to reprove them. God was there to rebuke them, but they knew no shame. They, they not only were wicked and vile in their practices, but they were proud of them! They boasted of them, they

flaunted their wickedness before man.

I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. [God said, "I'm gonna wipe it clean".] I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they arose early, and corrupted all their doings (3:6-7).

The idea of arising early is an eagerness towards sin. "I can't wait to get to it!", and a rushing towards sin. Rising up early to get involved in evil.

Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger (3:8):

Now the prophecy goes to the future. The great battle of Armageddon, when God will assemble the nations, and the kingdoms into the valley of Megiddo, that He might pour His indignation, and His fierce anger upon them.

for all of the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy (3:8).

As we have pointed out, Revelation chapters six actually, through nineteen, give us a lot of details of the, the judgment of God that is soon to come upon the earth. And culminating in the battle of Armageddon, there in the book of Revelation. "And gathering together His indignation." The word indignation is an old testament word, used very often to describe the great tribulation. The day of God's wrath and judgment that's gonna come upon the earth.

For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent (3:9).

After this great judgment of God, after this desolation of the earth, decimation of mankind, then God is going to establish His kingdom. "He will turn to the people to a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." Our Lord shall reign! He'll reign in righteousness, He'll reign in power, and all the earth will bow before Him, and worship Him.

From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring offerings unto me. In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain (3:10-11).

There will be just that beautiful work of God's Spirit, and no exalting of, of one group over another. But all of us just as one, serving the Lord. He will be the center of worship and praise. He will be the exalted one, and we there, His servants, just loving Him, and serving Him.

I also will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall do no iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid (3:12-13).

Peace. No, no violence, no crime. You can lie down in peace and not worry about someone trying to break in.

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem (3:14).

It will be a day of rejoicing, shouting. Oh! I can hardly wait! I can hardly wait, as I look at the world today, I don't know many of you know Rick Dietrich, who was on staff here. Just got word yesterday, and I don't have any more than this. His brother was, was murdered at an ATM machine, so pray for Rick. But the violence in our newspapers, practically everyday we read of some kid being shot, here in Orange County. Again today the headlines of the paper, some young fourteen year old boy was gonna go back to be with his dad, to get out of this area because of the violence and all. He missed his plane, and that evening he was shot dead. Here in Westminster! I mean it's, I say, "Oh God hasten the day!" I can hardly wait for the Lord to come, and just what shouting, rejoicing, and, and all! As we have come into that promise of God. That glorious day of His righteousness, and His reign.

The Lord has taken away thy judgments, he has cast out thine enemy (3:15):

Satan, the enemy that Jesus said has come to rob and to destroy. He will be cast out, and the Lord

will reign in righteousness, and the judgments are taken away.

the king of Israel (3:15),

The true king, as the inscription above the cross, “The King of the Jews”. This was the accusation made against Jesus. When Pilate said, “Are you then a king?” Jesus said, “Thou sayest it.” You’ve said it. The King of Israel.

even Yahweh, is in the midst of thee: and you will not see evil any more (3:15).

Can you imagine that kind of a day, when you’ll not see evil any more? It’ll be gone, the earth will be rid of all of the evil, all of the crime, all of the cheating, all of the stealing. You’ll not see evil any more! Just God’s people, dwelling together in love. Dwelling together in peace, in righteousness. Ah what a day!

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thy hands be slack. For the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, and he will joy over thee with singing (3:16-17).

Oh what a day! No wonder when Jesus said to John, “Behold, I come quickly!”, he said, “Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Dwell in the midst of your people”. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in his love, He will joy over thee with singing.”

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame (3:18-19).

In that day there will be a restoring. There will be no homeless people. There will be no struggling to just get by. There will be no pressures, like we experience in our society today. As the prophet Isaiah described it, he said, “Hoe every one that thirsteth. Come ye to the waters”. Buy bread without money. The earth is the Lord’s, the fullness thereof, and it shall produce an abundance for God’s people. No one will be destitute. No one will be without shelter. No one will be without love. No one will be forsaken, and feel lonely and desolate.

But there will be a glorious rejoicing through all the earth, for the King reigns. He reigns in righteousness and truth. “Those that are driven out, let them be gathered together, and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.” The church of Jesus Christ has suffered reproach from the world. But as God gathers us together, every place where there’s been mocking, and reproach against the church, God will bring forth praise.

And at that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I will gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord (3:20).

The glorious bright future for God’s people. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee, He is mighty, He will save, He will rejoice over thee in joy. He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing!” What a day!

Oh thank you Zephaniah, for sharing with us that glorious hope of the future! In this dark, and desperate world, we don’t go around hanging our heads. The outlook is awfully dark, but oh the uplift never looked better! So, as Jesus said, “Look out! Lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh!”

Father, we thank You for Your Word, and the hope that it brings to us in these days of darkness. When evil prevails. Lord we see that the evil days are only waxing worse and worse. Wickedness abounds in the land. They have forsaken Your laws, Your statutes, Your judgments. They’re desiring to live Godless lives, as they’ve turned after their own fleshly desires, indulging themselves in their fleshly, perverted activities. But Lord, we thank You that You will deliver Your people out of this corrupt age, and You will bring us into the glory of Your presence, and into Your kingdom, and God Himself, shall dwell in the midst of them, and He shall be their King, and they shall be His people. Lord, hasten that day, but in the meantime, may we seek the Lord. May we seek Your righteousness, and Lord put a shelter around Your people. Protect them Father, from the evil in the world. Draw us Lord, close to You, into that safety in Your presence. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

