



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Zephaniah 1: 4-6, 14-16, 2:3

LESSON: THE DAY OF THE LORD — June 5, 2016

INTRODUCTION:

The prophet is Zephaniah, whose name means "*Jehovah Hides*." Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah who ascended his throne in 639 BC., at the age of eight years-old (2 Chronicles 34-35). The book of Zephaniah was written before 629 BC when Josiah found and eagerly read the Holy Scriptures discovered in the temple. Zephaniah lived about 600 years B.C. (B.C. means years Before Christ came to the earth). He lived in the country called Judah. ¹Zephaniah is no ordinary preacher. He is the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah, one of Judah's most famous rulers. He has royal blood in his veins, but more important, he has the message of God on his lips. Strange to say, Zephaniah preached during the reign of godly King Josiah, and it was a time of religious "*revival*" (II Kings 22-23). To all appearances, it was a time of religious concern and consecration. In the first two chapters of his book, the prophet Zephaniah will relate the day of the Lord to both the Jews and the Gentiles. The people had pursued other deities, but, for Judah, Yahweh was to have been the only God and thus the only deity on which they could swear by. They had many other sins which brought them to this point. Zephaniah describes three special days, two of which are grievous, while the third is glorious.

1. **THE FIRST GRIEVOUS DAY** includes Judah and her surrounding neighbors where judgment is brought and is fulfilled by the king of Babylon (1:1-13; 2:1-15; 3:1-5).
2. **THE SECOND GRIEVOUS DAY** will include all nations and is yet to be fulfilled by the King of heaven (1:14-18; 3:6-8).
3. And lastly, **THE GLORIOUS DAY** Zephaniah proclaims justice (3:9-20).

1:1 The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. Zephaniah is not living the life of ease, but, God's Word comes to him which would be a dangerous calling for what God was about to tell him. The names listed above are Cushi, Gedaliah, Amariah, and Hizikiah. The purpose of giving this ancestry is to link the prophet with the house and line of royalty that he would subsequently condemn. Zephaniah was the last prophet God sent to Judah prior to its being carried off captive into Babylon.

1:2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. Jehovah warns that He will destroy everything in the land, air, and sea. The destruction will be universal, and it will be complete. Nothing will be left!

1:3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked: and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord. God created everything on the earth and He is willing to not only destroy His creation, but He will also destroy the idols that the people worshipped—the "stumbling blocks" that offended the Lord. God was very specific! He will consume it all from off the face of the earth.

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/exhortation-to-submit/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

LESSON:

I. JUDGMENT IS COMING Zephaniah 1:4-6

1:4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;—

When God stretches out His hand, it means that judgment is coming! Judah as well as the neighboring inhabitants of Jerusalem will not get away. He calls the name of the idol god they had been worshipping (Baal) to let them know that *"He will cut off the remnant of Baal from that place and destroy any trace of it."* "Baal" was the Canaanite storm god whose worship had infected Israel since the generation following Joshua, under whom the people failed to drive the Canaanites out of the land. So, therefore, *"The remnant of Baal"* (the remains of Baal worship), *"and the name of the Chemarims with the priests"* will be cut off. The temple of God was located in Jerusalem. "Chemarims" ²means *"black-robed,"* and is applied to the idolatrous priests whom the king had appointed to conduct worship in high places. These priests wore black robes while together with the legitimate priests (Jewish priests wearing white robes) corrupted the worship of Jehovah. This shows that even the priests were involved. They were like an unfaithful wife. They had committed spiritual adultery.

1:5 And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham;—

Altars were often erected upon the housetops, for they could see a clear sky. They burned incense on the housetop and the drink offerings were poured out. So, those that worshipped the host of heaven upon the housetops would also be cut off. They ³worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, rather than God who created the sun, moon, and stars. "Malcham" was the national idol of the Ammonites. "Malcham" was the same as Molech. God's people had stopped looking to God and started worshipping the false gods of the people around them. The sad thing was that some of them still went through the formality of worshipping God while they swore allegiance to "Malcham." They included God, as if He was a part of the many gods. God will not be God to anyone who has other gods. He will be the only One, or He will not be your God.

1:6 And them that are turned back from the Lord; and those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for him.

The list just goes on. There were *"those that formerly worshipped God, but now no longer do, and there were those who never loved God and never wanted to."* They will also be cut off and destroyed. They were guilty of sins of commission (worshipping idols) and omission (ignoring the Lord).

II. JUDGMENT IS NEAR Zephaniah 1:14-16

1:14 The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

The day of the Lord is described as the great day because of the major effect that it will have upon the land and its habitants. Its nearness is emphasized by the repetition of the word *"near"*, and the speed with which it is approaching is indicated by the words *"hasteth greatly."* All of this is to show the urgency of the matter. And when the day of the Lord arrives, the mighty man (the strong soldier) will do something that one does not ordinarily do—he shall cry bitterly.

² <http://biblehub.com/zephaniah/1-5.htm>

³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/zephaniah/01.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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1:15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,— Verses 14-16 describe the Day of the Lord in great detail. It will be an awful day, for it will be characterized by wrath. It will be...

- *a day of wrath:* is a day when the LORD is angry; a pouring out of God's wrath coming upon Jerusalem.
- *a day of trouble and distress:* a day when people are not happy and they have much pain; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they being taken and led captive, their houses plundered and demolished, and the whole city and temple lay in ruins.
- *a day of wasteness and desolation:* a day when there are storms that destroy everything; the whole country of Judea, and the metropolis of it; of their houses, fields, and vineyards.
- *a day of darkness and gloominess:* a day that is dark because there is no light; the displeasure of God being shown in the very heavens, by the darkness and gloominess of them,
- *a day of clouds and thick darkness:* a day that the clouds make very dark; the thick clouds with which they were covered.

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

- *a day of the trumpet and alarm:* a day when the trumpet makes a noise in the war against strong cities and corner towers. It will be sounded; for a death blow is going to be delivered against the fenced cities, and against the high towers which were considered impregnable. They will be attacked and nothing will protect them from the onslaught of the invaders.

III. HOPE IS PRESENT Zephaniah 2:3

2:3 Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Once the day of the Lord has arrived, it will be too late; but before it arrives, there is a time to seek the Lord's face. The meek of the earth are those who have not strayed away from God. They implored them to seek the Lord (Jehovah); seek his righteousness, and seek meekness—putting everything at His disposal.

SUMMARY:

Judgment was coming to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. God would destroy and put an end to every remnant of those who worshipped Baal; the idolatrous priests, so that even the memory of them will disappear. And those who worship the host of heaven on their housetops, bowing to the sun, moon, and stars; who prostrate themselves before Yahweh but swear by Malcham too will be destroyed. Those who turned back from following the Lord and those who had not sought the Lord nor wanted Him will also be destroyed (**1:4-6**).

The great day of the Lord was near and speeding fast—a day when strong men will weep bitterly—judgment was near. It's a day of the wrath of God poured out; a day of terrible distress and anguish, a day of ruin and desolation, a day of clouds and thick. A trumpet alarm will blow against the walled cities and high towers (**1:14-16**).

But there was hope for those who did what God commanded. When they seek the Lord; seek righteousness; seek meekness, they may be able to hide in the day of the Lord's anger (**2:3**).