**“Studying the Southern Kingdom Prophets”—Zephaniah 2-3**

**Hezekiah was a good king, but his son, Manasseh, was the most evil of all kings. He sawed Isaiah in two, introduced the worship of Moloch and child sacrifice, and killed his own sons to Moloch in the Valley of Hinnom. He forbade Isaiah to preach, so Isaiah wrote down all of his prophecies…..this is the written prophecy for today (Hebrews 11—heroes of the faith.) Zephaniah, “Hidden God,” the 9th of the 12 minor prophets. His genealogy is listed as in the royal lineage of Hezekiah. He is the only prophet who traces his lineage for four generations.**

**Zephaniah 2 - Judgment against the Nations**

**In this chapter we have, I. An earnest exhortation to the nation of the Jews to repent and make their peace with God, and so to prevent the judgments threatened before it was too late (**[**Zeph. 2:1-3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zeph.2.1-Zeph.2.3)**), and this inferred from the revelation of God’s wrath against them in the foregoing chapter. II. A denunciation of the judgments of God against several of the neighboring nations that had assisted, or rejoiced in, the calamity of Israel--1. The Philistines,** [**Zeph. 2:4-7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zeph.2.4-Zeph.2.7)**. 2. The Moabites and Ammonites,** [**Zeph. 2:8-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zeph.2.8-Zeph.2.11)**. 3. The Ethiopians and, 4. Assyrians,** [**Zeph. 2:12-15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zeph.2.12-Zeph.2.15)**. All these shall drink of the same cup of trembling that is put into the hands of God’s people, as was also foretold by other prophets before and after. God has not only judged His own people, but He also judges the nations; AND THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS CHAPTER AND THROUGH VERSE 8 OF CHAPTER 3!! But, God is gracious, long-suffering, and not willing than any should perish. (2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”) Therefore, He sends out a final call. Although you would think that He had reached the end of His patience, in the first three verses, we find Zephaniah send out God’s last call to the nations of Judah to repent and to come to Him!**

**2:1-2, “Gather yourselves together, yes; gather together, O undesirable nation, before the decree is issued, *or* the day passes like chaff, before the Lords fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the Lords anger comes upon you!”**

1. **Discuss the phrase, “Gather yourselves together**.” The idea is gathering together in a solemn demonstration of national mourning and repentance.
2. **Note the urgency inherent in verse 2**. **Elaborate**. **Before the decree is issued**: All the announcement of judgment in the previous chapter is understood as a warning and as an invitation to repentance.

**2:3, “Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger.”**

1. **Verse 3 is one of the Old Testament references to the New Testament “rapture.” Highlight its significance.**
	1. **When is “The Day of the Lord’s Anger?” It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger**: In more than one place, God promises to *hide* His righteous in the day of great judgment.
	2. **See Isaiah 26:19-21, “**Your dead shall live; *Together with* my dead body[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+26%3A19-21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-18150a)] they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.20Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. 21For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.”
	3. **See also Luke *21:36. “***Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+21%3A36&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-25863a)] to escape all these things that will come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man.” This is especially relevant to the time of the Great Tribulation, when Jesus warned us to *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*
	4. **Verse 3 is a “Remez,” or a hint at something deeper**. **Find other O.T. examples of this language tool. HINTS OF THE RAPTURE…**
		1. **See Isaiah 26:19-21, “**Your dead shall live; *Together with* my dead body[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+26%3A19-21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-18150a)] they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.20Come, my people, enter gyyour chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. 21For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.”
		2. **Psalm 27:5, “**For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion;
		in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.”
		3. **Refer also to the N. T. in Revelation 3:10, “**Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”
	5. **Recall also the meaning of Zephaniah’s name, “Whom the Lord has hidden."**
		1. **Could this be another subtle hint “pointing to” the rapture?**
	6. **There are O.T. patterns of the rapture throughout the books. Refer to:**
		1. **Enoch and the flood of Noah in Genesis 5:24, “**And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.”
		2. **Isaac’s absence after his offering in Genesis 22:19--24:62.**
		3. **Ruth during the threshing floor scene in Ruth 3:7-9, “**And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.8Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9And he said, “Who *are* you?” So she answered, “I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”
		4. **Daniel’s absence in the “fiery furnace” in Daniel 3.**
	7. **Equate the day of “Hag Shavuot, or Feast of Weeks, Harvest, Pentecost” to the rapture. Enoch was born on that day and was raptured on that same day. The church was born on that day….could it be raptured on that day?**

**\*\*ZEPHANIAH TURNS TO THE WEST! \*\***

**2:4-7, “For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon desolate; they shall drive out Ashdod at noonday and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the Lord *is* against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines: I will destroy you; so there shall be no inhabitant. The seacoast shall be pastures, with shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks. The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed *their* flocks there; in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. For the Lord their God will intervene for them, and return their captives.”**

**Outline of Zephaniah 2:4-15, the Judgment of the Nations:**

**Verses 5-7—Philistines in the west**

**Verses 8-11—Moabites and Ammonites in the east**

**Verse 12—Ethiopians in the south**

**Verses 13-15—Assyrians in the north**

1. **Where are Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron? These are cities of the Philistines, with Gath included in that bunch.** . God promises to destroy the cities of the Philistines and give their land as pasture **for the remnant of the house of Judah**. At this point, Gath had already been conquered by the Assyrian King, Sargon II in 711 B.C. MENTIONED HERE ARE FOUR OF THE CITIES OF THE PHILISTINES WHO ARE GOING TO BE JUDGED. Gath is not mentioned, because, by this time, it has come under the rule of the southern kingdom, Judah.
	1. **Why Ashdod at noonday?** This city was in a very warm climate, even though by the sea. They typically took 2-3 hours off in the middle, heat of the day for “**siestas.” This is a symbolism of “catching them sleeping” or off-guard.**
2. **Who are the Cherethites?** They came from the island of Crete. The name **Cherethites** is a reference to their early geographical links with Crete, Hamitic descent. The word means, “IMMIGRANT.” **(THIS IS THE SAME WORD USED FOR THE PHILISTINES/PALESTINIANS, thus debunking the thought that Israel’s land given by God was their land, they are immigrants, even by their name!)** \*\*\***SEE INSERT ABOUT CRETE MYTHOLOGY.**
	1. **See also Deuteronomy 2:23, “**And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place,” **Jeremiah 47:4, “**Because of the day that comes to plunder all the Philistines, To cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains; For the Lord shall plunder the Philistines, The remnant of the country of Caphtor,” **and Amos 9:7, “**“*Are* you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me, O children of Israel?” says the Lord. “Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, The Philistines from Caphtor, And the Syrians from Kir?”
3. **What is the implication of verse 6’s “seacoast?” The translation should say, “A land filled with cisterns,” implying a lack of water and dryness, rather than a lush, fertile area. Dug cisterns hints at the lowliness of shepherd life, especially in an arid area.**
4. **Talk about the “Ashkelon” area. It is a coastal dwelling today. This is a modern-day city.**

**\*\*NOW, ZEPHANIAH TURNS TO THE EAST! \*\***

**2:8-11, “I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be like Sodom and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah; overrun with weeds and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them. This they shall have for their pride, because they have reproached and made arrogant threats against the people of the Lord of hosts. The Lord *will be* awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; *people* shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations.”**

1. **Who is Moab? This is one of the sons of Lot’s incestuous relationship with his daughter. THE EAST.** First God looked to the west and saw the Philistines; now He looks to the east and sees the Moabites and the Ammonites. God promises to judge these peoples and bring them to **perpetual desolation**.
	1. **See Genesis 19:36-38, “**Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he *is* the father of the Moabites to this day. 38And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he *is* the father of the people of Ammon to this day.”**…**..this is Northern Jordan today.
	2. **Discuss the comparison of Moab and Ammon to Sodom and Gomorrah**. The comparison of Moab and Ammon to Sodom and Gomorrah is not surprising in view of their origin: Moab and Ammon were the offspring of the incestuous relations of Lots daughters with their drunk father after he fled the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. **Why did Moab and Ammon consistently oppose God’s people?** **See Numbers 22:1-6, “**Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *across from* Jericho.2Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4So Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.” And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time. 5Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which *is* near the River[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+22%3A1-6&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-4381a)] in the land of the sons of his people,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+22%3A1-6&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-4381b)] to call him, saying: “Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed,” **Judges 3:12, ”**And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord,” **11:4-33, 2 Chronicles 20:1, “**It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat,” **2 Samuel 10:1-14, “It** happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. 2Then David said, “I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me.”So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David’s servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. 3And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, “Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not *rather* sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?”4Therefore Hanun took David’s servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away,” **and Ezekiel 25:8-9, “**Thus says the Lord God: “Because Moab and Seir say, ‘Look! The house of Judah *is* like all the nations,’ 9therefore, behold, I will clear the territory of Moab of cities, of the cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kirjathaim.” **Their land would become one of the most desolate areas in the Middle East, Jordan.**
3. **In verse 11, what judgment will be poured out on the Moabites and Ammorites?**
	1. **They will be judged for their pride and arrogance. See Isaiah 16:6, “**We have heard of the pride of Moab—*He is* very proud—of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath; *but* his lies *shall* not *be* so.”
	2. **They will be judged for their gross immorality and idolatry. Refer to I Kings 11:7, “**Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.”
	3. **They will be judged for their psychopathic inhumanity. See also 2 Kings 3:26-27, “**And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him *as* a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indignation against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to *their own* land.”
	4. **Reference the New Testament, I John 2:16**, “For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”

**\*\*ZEPHANIAH TURNS TO THE SOUTH\*\*** Now God looks to the south, announcing judgment against the **Ethiopians**.

**2:12, “You Ethiopians also, you shall be slain by My sword.”**

1. **Who are the Ethiopians?**  Descendants of Cush. Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, etc. **Examine Genesis 10:6, “**The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put] and Canaan,” **2 Kings 19:9, “**And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “Look, he has come out to make war with you.” So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, “ **2 Chronicles 14:9-13, “**Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. 10So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11And Asa cried out to the Lord his God, and said, “Lord, *it is* nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You *are* our God; do not let man prevail against You!” 12So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13And Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the Lord and His army. And they carried away very much spoil,” **and Isaiah 37:9, “**And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “He has come out to make war with you.” So when he heard *it,* he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying.”

**\*\*ZEPHANIAH TURNS TO THE NORTH\*\***

**2:13-15, “And He will stretch out His hand against the north, destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh desolation, as dry as the wilderness. The herds shall lie down in her midst, every beast of the nation. Both the pelican and the bittern shall lodge on the capitals *of* her *pillars;* their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation *shall be* at the threshold; for He will lay bare the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt securely, that said in her heart, I *am it,* and *there is* none besides me. How has she become desolation, a place for beasts to lie down! Everyone who passes by her shall hiss and shake his fist.”**

1. **Discuss how God completes the “circle of judgement” of the nations who have been against Israel? And He will stretch out His hand against the north**: God completes the circle of judgment against Israel’s neighbors by looking at **Assyria** and her capital city of **Nineveh**, which will be made a desolate city fit only for the habitation of animals and birds.
	1. **Is this a worldwide judgment**?  **Can it be compared to the tribulation?**
	2. **Compare this with Isaiah 17’s destruction of Damascus, Syria. Isaiah 17:1-3, “**“Behold, Damascus will cease from *being* a city, and it will be a ruinous heap.
	2The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken; they will be for flocks which lie down, and no one will make *them* afraid. 3The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, The kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria.”
	3. **Where is Nineveh? Look at Genesis 10:11, “**From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, “One **of the oldest cities in the world. In Zephaniah’s day it was virtually impregnable. The walls are report to have stood 100 feet high, 50 feet thick. And they were surrounded by a 150 feet wide moat. 1200 towers protected it. The ancient capital of Assyria. This city was a city sixty miles in compass. Its population was at least 120,000 and was known as “proud.” She remained untouched for 200 years, and superior to all other cities. The attack on the outer wall began in 614 B.C. by the Medes and Babylonians. God reduced this city to rubble and gave it over to wild beasts!**
		1. **Discuss Nahum 1:8, “**But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.**2:6, “**The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved,” **3:13, “**Surely, your people in your midst *are* women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates* **and 15, “**There the fire will devour you,
		the sword will cut you off; It will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many—like the locust! Make yourself many— like the *swarming* locusts.” **There was a legend that Nineveh would not be taken until the river became its enemy. History records that when the Medes and Babylonians attacked Nineveh, there was a sudden rise in the level of the Tigris River, with water beginning to soften the sun-dried bricks. A section of wall collapsed, causing a breach in the defenses and the city was soon overrun and destroyed. Nineveh was destroyed by Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar’s father, in 625 B.C.**
			1. **Relate this to of** [**James 4:6**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=James+4:6&t1=en_nas)**, “***God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*
	4. **What are the pelican and bittern reference? See Psalm 102:6, “**I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. **And Isaiah 34:11, “**But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
	And He shall stretch out over it.” **The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.…the vulture, owl or jack daw.**
		1. **The “bittern” could be translated, “hedgehog or porcupine.” See Isaiah 14:23, “**23“I will also make it a possession for the porcupine,
		and marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,” says the Lord of hosts.”
	5. **Who is the “rejoicing city?” Nineveh.**  When Alexander the Great marched his armies up the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, Nineveh had been so completely covered, that they were unaware that beneath their feet lay the once mighty city of Nimrod.
		1. **Refer to Genesis 10:8-11.** Nineveh felt strong and confident, but God knew how to bring her low. Here the Lord fulfills the principle c. Zephaniah never mentions *why* the nations are ripe for judgment. Perhaps he assumes we’ve already read Amos and Isaiah and Nahum, which do detail the sins of these neighboring nations.
2. **The precision of these ancient prophecies can also be a startling prediction of America’s final destiny. Talk about it.**
3. **Does Zephaniah 2, then, have a purpose for today’s America?**

**Zephaniah 3– The Lord Rejoices Over the Restoration of His People**

***OUTLINE FOR ZEPHANIAH 3:***

**(1-5) Jerusalem, THE SINS OF A WICKED CITY**

**(6-7) FAILURE TO LEARN FROM THE EXAMPLE OF THE FATE OF OTHER CITIES**

**(8) THE UNIVERSAL DAY OF JUDGMENT**

**(9-10) RENEWAL OF THE GENTILE NATIONS AFTER THE JUDGMENT**

**(11-13) THE ISRAELI SURVIVORS**

**(14-20) A GLORIOUS WORK OF SALVATION**

**We now return to Jerusalem, and must again hear what God has to say to her, I. By way of reproof and threatening, for the abundance of wickedness that was found in her, of which divers instances are given, with the aggravations of them (**[**v. 1-7**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=zephaniah+3:1-7)**). II. By way of promise of mercy and grace, which God had yet in reserve for them. Two general heads of promises here are: — 1. That God would bring in a glorious work of reformation among them, cleanse them from their sins, and bring them home to himself; many promises of this kind here are (**[**v. 8-13**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=zephaniah+3:8-13)**). That he would bring about a glorious work of salvation for them, when he had thus prepared them for it (**[**v. 14-20**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=zephaniah+3:14-20)**). Thus the "Redeemer shall come to Zion,’’ and to clear his own way, shall "turn away ungodliness from Jacob.’’ These promises were to have their full accomplishment in gospel-times and gospel-graces. The first eight verses of this chapter conclude this section on judgment. Up to this point, Zephaniah has been concentrating on the harsh, extreme, unmitigating judgment of God upon His people. This is, no doubt, the strongest language in the scripture until you come to Matthew 23. This judgment is worldwide, and does include God’s own people.**

**3:1-5: “Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, to the oppressing city! She has not obeyed *His* voice, she has not received correction; she has not trusted in the Lord, she has not drawn near to her God. Her princes in her midst *are* roaring lions; her judges *are* evening wolves that leave not a bone till morning. Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The Lord *is* righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, but the unjust knows no shame.”**

1. **Who is “her?” Jerusalem.** From the way that Zephaniah 2 ended we perhaps hoped that this **oppressing city** was Nineveh. From the references to **her prophets**, **her priests**, and the **sanctuary** and the **law**, we know *Jerusalem* is the **oppressing city**.
	1. **Refer to Romans 3:14-16**, ““Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness.” 15“Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; 16Destruction and misery *are* in their ways;
	17and the way of peace they have.”
2. **Verse 2 has a series of four “she has not’s.” Name them and discuss. The prophet tells us the root of Jerusalem’s sin.**
	1. **She has not obeyed His voice**: God called to His people, but they did not listen. If there is any voice for the sheep to obey, it is the voice of the shepherd - but **she has not obeyed His voice**.
	2. **She has not received correction**: Correction certainly came, but she did not *receive* it as correction from the Lord. Instead it was a bad time, tough circumstances, whatever - but **she has not received correction**.
	3. **She has not trusted in the Lord**: God never gave her a reason to stop trusting in Him; He never proved Himself unfaithful or untrustworthy. Now Gods people will openly deny and contradict Gods word and promises, showing that **she has not trusted in the Lord**.
	4. **She has not drawn near to her God**: The worst offence is saved for last. God longs for relationship with His people, but they rejected His desire and went their own way, so **she has not drawn near to her God**.
	5. **Verse 4, “her prophets are insolent”—literally, “her prophets are “lightweight,” THERE IS NO WEIGHT TO THEIR MESSAGES….JUST LIKE AMERICA TODAY!**

**3:5-7, “I have cut off nations, their fortresses are devastated; I have made their streets desolate, with none passing by. Their cities are destroyed; *there is* no one, no inhabitant. I said, surely you will fear Me; you will receive instruction; so that her dwelling would not be cut off, *despite* everything for which I punished her. But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds.”**

**\*\*Verses 6-8 are the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, and Armageddon.**

1. **There seems to be little repentance evident. Discuss.**  **The Lord is righteous in her midst**: This makes the unrighteousness of His people even more criminal and tragic. God has been nothing but **righteous** to them, yet they respond with sin. Eventually they put themselves on the wrong side of Gods righteousness and face His **justice**.

**3:8-13, “Therefore wait for Me, says the Lord, Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination *is* to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My**

**jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. In that day you**

**shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed *their* flocks and lie down, and no one shall make *them* afraid.”**

1. **What does the word “all” mean?** Pour on them My indignation . . . then I will **restore**: In light of the repeated and chronic sin of the nations and of Gods own people, God will bring judgment - and then *restoration*.
	1. **Relate Psalm 2:1-6, “**Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?
	2The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together,
	Against the Lord and against His Anointed, *saying,*3“Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.” 4He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.5Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:6“Yet I have set My King
	On My holy hill of Zion,” **and Revelation 16:13-16, “**And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rEVELATION+16%3A13-16&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-30969a)] of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.15“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”16And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon,” **to this section. Could this be the “bowl judgments” in Revelation?**
2. **Most scholars believe that verse 9 begins the “blessings” section. Could this be fulfilled in the days of the Millennium**? The Lord now shifts from frightful predictions or destruction to prophecies of blessing and peace**.**
	1. **Why is the “pure language” mentioned here Hebrew? Verse 9.**
3. **Verse 10’s reference to Ethiopia implies that “an offering” for God. Some scholars are suggesting that Ethiopia might have the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat. (Acts 8:26-29, “**Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert. 27So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”**). Defend. In 1991, the return of the Ethiopian Jews made history. Within 36 hours, 14,000 Ethiopian Jews were flown into Israel.**
4. **Where is “God’s holy mountain?” Millennial kingdom.**
5. **Does the Millennial earth experience “lack of fear?”**
	1. **Refer to Isaiah 11:6, “**The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
	the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.”
6. **Verse 13 alludes to the picture of a shepherd and his sheep. Refer also to Revelation 14:1-5, “**Then I looked, and behold, aLamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rEVELATION+14%3A1-5&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-30928b)] His Father’s name written on their foreheads. 2And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God,” **and Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd…”**

**3:14-20, “Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the Lord, *is* in your midst; you shall see disaster no more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. 17--The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet *you* with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, *to whom* its reproach *is* a burden. Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, and gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will bring you back, even at the time I gather you; for I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I return your captives before your eyes, says the Lord.”**

1. **This last section of Zephaniah, or last paragraph, is vastly different from the rest of the writing. Why? The faithful minority has passed through the punishment of the nation and is compared with Isaiah 52:7-10, “**How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things,* Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”
8Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices, With their voices they shall sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye When the Lord brings back Zion. 9Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem. 10The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” **Sing, O daughter of Zion!** In light of the glorious promise of restoration, Israel should sing and shout with joy. God will save and redeem them from both their enemies and their iniquities.
2. **Verse 17, besides being my “third” favorite scripture, has been known as the verse which designates Zephaniah as “The Prophet of Love.**” **Do you agree?**
3. **Does Verse 18 imply that having “her children in exile” bring reproach on Jerusalem? See Zechariah 12:10, “**And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son,* and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”
4. **Review what the Millennial Kingdom will look like (according to Unger):**
	1. **Supreme joy, Zephaniah 3:14.**
	2. **Judgments against Israel removed, Zephaniah 3:15a.**
	3. **The Lord’s presence will be with Israel, Zephaniah 3:15b.**
	4. **Israel will cease from evil or fear, Zephaniah 3:15c-17a.**
	5. **The Lord will rejoice over Israel with His love, Zephaniah 3: 17b.**
	6. **The saved remnant will gather together, Zephaniah 3:18.**
	7. **The Lord will have judged Israel’s oppressors and the saved remnant will be exalted, Zephaniah 3:19-20.**
5. **A comparison of the Book of Zephaniah with Revelation. This small minor prophet seems to have influenced John in his writing of Revelation. Discuss.**

**Zephaniah Revelation**

**(Old Jerusalem) (New Jerusalem)**

**God Comes as King Jesus Comes as King**

**Judgment on God’s People (1-2:3) (1-3)**

**Judgements on Nations (2:4-15) (4-19)**

**Day of Judgment (3:1-8) (20)**

**Final Bliss (3:9-20) (21-22)**

1. **How does the third chapter of Zephaniah compare with other prophecies? Is there a connection to America?**

**And, here are the promises…**

**Zephaniah 1:7, “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, he hath bid his guests.”**

**Zephaniah 2:3 “Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lords anger.”**

**Zephaniah 3:17, “The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save, He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”**

**Luke 21:36, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthyto escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”**

**2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”**