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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- The prophets
Nahum, Habakkuk
Jeremiah

were contemporaries of.

- Zephaniah

a prophet of judgment.

- Chapter 1
- He prophecies of the coming devastation of the land of Judah & Jerusalem.
 - This prophecy was fulfilled in 586 BC.

- **Chapter 2**

- **The faithful remnant**
is called to seek Jehovah
when the nations
near and far
will feel
Jehovah's vengeance.

- **Chapter 3**

Contrasts

The future blessings

of the

faithful remnant

as opposed to the

unfaithful majority.

- **Jeremiah**

the contemporary of Zephaniah describes the fall of Judah.

- **Habakkuk**

also a contemporary depicts the same moral view as Jeremiah

- **Zephaniah**

shows in brevity the coming of **Judah's** and **Jerusalem's** devastating fall.

- As a matter of interest the fall of Nineveh which occurred in 612 B.C. was an event still in the future.
(**Zephaniah 2:13**)

- During the reigns of **King Manasseh** & **Amon** his son the southern kingdom of Judah **sank to astounding moral and spiritual depths.**

- **2 Chronicles 33:9**
Manasseh caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to stray so that they did worse evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

- In the year 621 BC

Hilkiah the priest
discovered the lost book of
the Law of Moses.

(2 Kings 22:8)

- It had been
lost so long

no one knew where it was located.

- Josiah, the young king,
attempted to restore
the people of Judah.
(2 Chronicles 34 & 35).

- Zephaniah
also predicts a coming
Day of the Lord.
- Young King Josiah
attempted reforms
but the people soon
reverted to their old, evil ways.
- Therefore, Zephaniah
warns of impending doom.
- Babylon
is on the horizon.

- "Zephaniah uses the expression **"Day of the Lord"** more than any other prophet"
- **Jesus** alluded to **Zephaniah** **on two occasions:**
(Matthew 13:41- Zephaniah 1:3)
and
Matthew 24:29- Zephaniah 1:15).
 - Both of these passages are associated with **the second coming of Christ.**

- Taking a hint from **Zephaniah 1:12**, artists of the Middle Ages pictured Zephaniah as a man **with the lamp in his hand.**
- **Searching Jerusalem** for sinners to bring them **to judgment.**

- **Zephaniah 1:12** (NET)

At that time I will search through Jerusalem with **lamps**.

- I will **punish** the people who are entrenched in their **sin**,

- Those who **think** to themselves,

- ‘The LORD neither **rewards** nor **punishes**.’

- The major message of this book is **The Day of the Lord:**
 - **A day of judgment.**
 - A day of **imminent terror.**
 - Which will fall **upon all creation** as a judgment for sin.

- It is a grim picture **of destruction,**
- But out of it will come **a remnant.**
- A day of deliverance **for the faithful.**
- As well as destruction **for the unfaithful.**

- Let us **NOT** read into this that which is not there.
- The N.T writers make it crystal clear that the N.T. church is **spiritual Israel.**

- Zephaniah preached during the reign of godly King Josiah,
- A time of religious “revival”
(**2 Kings 22-23**).
- Josiah came to the throne at the age of eight,
- And at the age of sixteen began a revival for Judah.

- When Josiah was twenty,
he began a great reformation in the land:

- Pulling down the idols

- And judging the
false priests and prophets.

- He then began to
rebuild the temple
and led the nation in a
celebration of the Passover.

- It was a time of religious revival.

- But it didn't last long.

- **But Zephaniah saw deeper;**
 - He saw the **hearts of the people,**
 - And knew that **their religious zeal** was not sincere.
 - The reforms were **shallow;**
- The people got rid of the idols **in their homes,**
- But not the idols **in their hearts.**

- The rulers of the land were still greedy and disobedient,
 - Jerusalem was the source of all kinds of wickedness in the land.
 - Sometimes mere outward reformation only prepares the way for a work of the devil (Matthew 12:43-45).

- Matthew 12:43 (NET)

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through dry places looking for rest but does not find it.

- 12:44 Then it says, ‘I will return to the home I left.’ When it returns, it finds the house empty, swept clean, and put in order.

• 12:45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there, so the last state of that person is worse than the first.

- We may divide Zephaniah's message into three parts,
- Two = judgment
- One = mercy.

- **We begin with Judgment**
of **Judah**:

- **Zep 1:2** “I will **destroy** everything from the face of the earth,” says the LORD.
- **1:3** “I will destroy **people** and **animals**; I will destroy the **birds** in the sky and the **fish** in the sea.
(**The idolatrous images**)
- I will **remove humanity** from the face of the earth,” says the LORD.

- Zep 1:4 “I will attack Judah and all who live in Jerusalem.
- I will remove from this place every trace of Baal worship,
- as well as the very memory of the pagan priests.
- Zep 1:5 I will remove those who worship the stars in the sky from their rooftops,
 - those who swear allegiance to the LORD while taking oaths in the name of their ‘king,’

- **Zephaniah 1:6**

and those who

turn their backs

on the LORD

- and do not want the LORD's help or guidance.”

- God names the trouble spots:
Judah and Jerusalem.
(Zephaniah 1:4)

- What?

- The people of God
going through judgment? Yes.

- The city of God
where the temple stands? Yes!

- How can God destroy

- His holy people

and

- His holy city?

- The prophet describes **three kinds of sinners** in these verses:
 - Those who have **forsaken Jehovah** and who worship only idols, (Zep 1:4-5)
 - Those who worship *both* **Jehovah** and the **idols**, (Zep 1:5)
 - Those who have **forsaken the Lord** and want nothing to do with Him, (Zep 1:6)
- **These same attitudes are with us today.**

- The coming judgment is described in

Zephaniah 1:7-18.

- He calls it

“the Day of the Lord,”

- A phrase used by several other OT writers, **especially Joel.**

- **“The Day of the Lord”**
has a two-fold meaning:
 - (1) **Locally**,
God’s judgments on
Israel and **Judah**
in the past;
 - (2) **Prophetically**,
that future time of judgment
when God will
pour out His wrath
(**Revelation 6-19**).

- In case # 1,

“the Day of the Lord”

would be the

Babylonian invasion

in 606 B.C.

- And the destruction of

Jerusalem and temple

in 586 B.C.

- The noise of the invasion will start at the fish gate.
(Nehemiah 3:3)
- The far North gate.
- And then travel right up to the top of Mt. Zion.
(Zephaniah 1 :10)

- But it will not be **foreign soldiers** doing the work;
 - **It will be God** searching out the city, **as with a lamp,** **exposing sin** and **punishing wickedness.**
- (Zeph 1:14-16)

- Zephaniah

used eleven different words

to describe the coming

Day of the Lord.

- Rich and poor

will suffer;

- No one's

silver or gold

will be able to save him.

- Zephaniah 1:14 (BBE)

The great day of the Lord is near,
and coming very quickly;

- 1:15 That day is a day of wrath,
 - A day of trouble and sorrow,
 - A day of wasting and destruction,
 - A day of dark night and deep shade,
 - A day of cloud and thick dark.

- **Zephaniah 1:16** (BBE)

A day of sounding the **horn** and the **war-cry** against the walled towns and the high towers.

- **1:17** And I will **send trouble** on men so that they will go about **like the blind**,

- Because they have **done evil** against the Lord:

- And their blood will be **drained out** like dust, and their strength like waste.

- **Zephaniah 1:18** (BBE)

Their **silver** and their **gold** will not be able to keep them safe in the **day of the Lord's wrath**; but all the land will be burned up **in the fire of his bitter wrath**:
for he will put an end,
even suddenly,
to all who are living in the land.

- Zephaniah 2:1-3

the prophet turns to

Jerusalem

and

Judah

and pleads with the people

to turn to the Lord

and repent of their sins.

- Zephaniah 2:1-3

*“Before God’s
decree of judgment
comes to pass,
while there is still time,
turn to the Lord
and ask for mercy.”*

- Sadly, the nation
was content to be
“religious”
but not godly.

God Will Judge the Nations

(**Zephaniah 2:4-3:7**)

- The prophet names various Gentile nations around Judah
- And announces that God will judge them for their sins as well.
 - He begins with Philistia - Philistines and predicts that their coasts will become pastures for the flocks.

- Then he names Moab and Ammon (Zep 2:8-11),
- They had mistreated God's people and proudly "magnified themselves";
- Therefore God would humble them. (Zephaniah 2:8-10)
- Their lands would be ruined.
- Their idols would prove powerless.

- Egypt is next on the list and he promises them war **that will slay their youths.**

(**Zephaniah 2:12**)

- Nineveh

will be so completely destroyed that their land will be a wilderness

(**Zep 2:13-15**).

- Wild birds will dwell there.

- Their beautiful buildings will be buried under the sands.

- Nahum had also **prophesied the fall of Nineveh** and its complete destruction.

- **Zephaniah closes**
with an appeal
to his own people
(**Zep 3:1-7**).
- If God judges the
sins of the heathen,
how much more
will He judge the
sins of Judah.

- 1Peter 4:17

For the time is come for judgment to *begin at the house of God:*

- and if it begin first at us,
- what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?
- 4:18 And if the righteous is scarcely saved,
- where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

- He calls Jerusalem filthy and polluted
- Yet young King Josiah had removed the idols.
- God could see their hearts,
- And in their hearts He saw rebellion.

- They had no real faith in the Lord.
 - The princes and judges were like prowling animals, seeking someone to devour.
- The prophets lacked seriousness of thought and concern.
(Zephaniah 3:4)
 - They were also “treacherous,” because they led the people astray.
(Zephaniah 3:4)

- **The priests polluted** whatever they touched, including the holy sanctuary.

(**Zephaniah 3:4**)

- They could

see God's judgment

day after day,

but they did not take it to heart.

- They saw Him punish other nations, but they said,

- **“It will never happen here.”**

- It did happen there.
 - In 606 B.C.
the Babylonians
destroyed the nation,
the city, and the temple.

- **“Sin is a reproach**
to any people”
(Proverbs 14:34)
 - Especially the **people of God.**

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



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