

# **ZEPHANIAH – CHAPTERS 2-3 – A Call to Repentance; Judgment on Nations; The Wickedness of Jerusalem; A Faithful Remnant; Joy in God’s Faithfulness!**

## OBSERVATION

## INTERPRETATION

## APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – [ptwente@gmail.com](mailto:ptwente@gmail.com) For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

**A Call to Repentance; - vs. 2:1-3 - Zep 2:1** *Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation,*  
**Zep 2:2** *Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you!*  
**Zep 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.*

### **Judgment on Nations; - vs. 4-15**

**Zep 2:4** *For Gaza shall be forsaken, And Ashkelon desolate; They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, And Ekron shall be uprooted.*  
**Zep 2:5** *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."*  
**Zep 2:6** *The seacoast shall be pastures, With shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks.*  
**Zep 2:7** *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.*  
**Zep 2:8** *"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.*  
**Zep 2:9** *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 saltpits, And a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, And the remnant of My people shall possess them."*

**v. 1** While there are those who argue that the church will indeed go through the Tribulation, I believe this is yet another verse that makes that scenario most unlikely. You see, in **Ephesians 1:6**, Paul used the word *charitoo*, or “accepted” in reference to the church. The only other place in Scripture *charitoo* is used is in **Luke 1:28** in reference to Mary. Who, then, is the nation not desired? Israel. Why is Israel not desired? Because it is she who will bear the brunt of the cataclysmic event referred to in the Old Testament as Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7)—the Tribulation. So the call... No longer is Judah pleasant to God. No longer are they desired by God. They’ve turned their back upon Him.

**Vs. 2-3** The nation not to be desired is told to seek the Lord that she might be hid in the day of Tribulation. According to Revelation 12, a good portion of the nation of Israel will seek the Lord when, in the middle of the Tribulation period, antichrist will reveal his true colors by going into the temple and demanding to be worshipped. **Cf. Col. 3-3** *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*

**v. 4** After outlining the pleading in the day of the Lord, Zephaniah goes on to delineate the places in the day of the Lord. Located in the Gaza Strip, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron were four of the five primary Philistine cities. This area will be wiped out in the day of the Lord as it comes under severe judgment in the Tribulation.

**vs. 5-7** The word, “Palestinian” is a derivative of the word “Philistine.” Thus, the Lord is uttering an indictment and a word of judgment against the Philistines of Zephaniah’s day as well as the Palestinians of the day yet to come.

**vs. 8-10** Moab and Ammon, were constantly battling against Israel. There was a lot of bitterness, a lot of enmity between these national groups. –**cf. (Jer. 48:26-29; Ez. 25:3-7)**

Located across the Jordan River from Israel in present-day Jordan, Moab and Ammon were destined for destruction. Why? “Because they went against My people,” said the Lord. Over and over again in the OT, whenever a nation had the audacity or stupidity to come against Israel, they paid radically—even if it was one of God’s own who did it... As they wandered through the wilderness, the Israelites grew thirsty once again. Murmuring against Moses, they accused him of bringing them to the wilderness to die. Having led this group for many years, Moses was understandably exhausted. He looked at his congregation and said, “You rebels. Must we fetch you water out of this rock?”—and he struck the rock (**Numbers 20:10**). “I don’t like you calling My people rebels,” God said. “They’re My children. Therefore, I can call them what I want, but you can’t. Because of this, you’ll not enter the land of promise” (see Numbers 20:12). What kept Moses out of the Promised Land? He came down on God’s people. Like Moses, we will end up outside the fullness of God’s blessing in our walk presently if we attack God’s people maliciously—if we malign other churches, other denominations, other individuals. **Cf. Numbers 20:10-12**

**Schedule of “no class” weeks due to my travel schedule:**

**There will be no classes during the following weeks in April/May:**

**Mon/Tues – April 12, 13**

**Mon/Tues – May 4, 5**

**Mon/Tues – May 11, 12**

**We will meet on April 20, 21 and study Haggai April 27, 28 and begin Zechariah**

**ZEPHANIAH** — Zephaniah’s name means **Jehovah hides/Yahweh has hidden** -. Jehovah protects, Jehovah treasures. The theme of his name -**The place to hide from the coming judgment of God is in the salvation that He has provided!** **Col 3:3** *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

The beauty of beauties is that **He saves me from the judgment, He not only offers protection from His judgment but He also treats me as a treasure.** He makes me into His treasure by His Holy Spirit! Zephaniah is a beautiful book!

The beginning of the Book through Chapter 3:7, speaks of the certainty of God’s impending judgment on Judah and futuristically on the whole world during the “Day of the Lord”. Dreadful, dark judgment indeed because of man’s continuing rebellion against God.

But the book closes with Zephaniah prophesying, with words of hope, of protection for the remnant and promises for the future of those who know Him truly. In a future day, peoples of all nations will come to worship the Lord. His own people will be renewed in righteousness. And the King of Kings himself will rule in their midst. That day of the Lord’s return will be a day of song and gladness. Even God will burst out in joyful singing. The raging anger of the Lord will be replaced by His happy singing, for salvation will finally have come to His people!!!

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*Zep 2:10 This they shall have for their pride, Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats Against the people of the LORD of hosts.*

*Zep 2:11 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.*

*Zep 2:12 "You Ethiopians also, You shall be slain by My sword."*

*Zep 2:13 And He will stretch out His hand against the north, Destroy Assyria, And make Nineveh a desolation, As dry as the wilderness.*

*Zep 2:14 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.*

*Zep 2:15 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 a desolation, A place for beasts to lie down! Everyone who passes by her Shall hiss and shake his fist.*

**The Wickedness of Jerusalem; vs. - 1-7 - Zep 3:1 Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, To the oppressing city!**

*Zep 3:2 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.*

*Zep 3:3 Her princes in her midst are roaring lions; Her judges are evening wolves That leave not a bone till morning.*

**vs. 11-14** Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, was thought to be indestructible. But the Lord said, “I’m going to destroy it down to its very foundations.” Indeed He did when it was decimated by the Babylonians in 612 B.C. 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. “Each one from his place, Indeed all the shores of the nations.

**v. 15** Zephaniah prophesied that people would say, “Unbelievable!” This is where Nineveh was? Nothing’s left but a place for beasts to lie down!” You see, although Nineveh was considered absolutely impregnable, when the Lord allowed the Tigris River to swell, the foundations of the city crumbled. The walls then came down and the enemy rushed in. It’s funny what can bring us down. Nineveh wasn’t destroyed by the millions of soldiers who came against her. No, **she was brought down by mere rain.** Continuing to talk about the day of the Lord, Zephaniah shifts his focus from the Moabites and Ammonites in the Gaza Strip to Jerusalem herself—a city that should have been totally submitted to the Lord, but that had become far removed from Him. So Nineveh has not yet been destroyed, but her destruction is close at hand. Within ten years of this prophecy, Nineveh 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, the, they were still sort of celebrating, feeling that they could not fall. Their defenses were so powerful that they could overcome the Babylonians.

**v. 1** Regardless of the noble goals of groups like Friends of the Earth or Save Our Planet, the fact remains that, because man is polluted inwardly, there will always be pollution outwardly—for that which is inside a person will eventually be worked out from within him. When, for a brief time, the deity of Jesus was allowed to shine forth on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter said, “Oh, Lord, it is good for us to be here” (**Mark 9:5**). So too, if the glory, goodness, and grace of God shine forth from your life, people will say, “It’s good for us to be with you.” If, however, there’s nothing but bitterness and anger inside, sooner or later, those around you will say, “Let’s get out of here.”

**vs. 2-3** These are the indictments. “She didn’t obey the voice, she didn’t receive correction, she has not trusted not in the Lord, and she has not drawn t near to her God.” Back in Leviticus, chapter twenty six, Moses in the law warned the people. **Cf. Lev. 26:14-24** 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 obdurate 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.

**GRACE GREATER THAN ALL OUR SIN**  
*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Yonder on Calvary’s mount outpoured,  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.*

○ **Refrain:**

*Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*

*Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe!  
All that are longing to see His face,  
Will you this moment His grace receive?*

○ **Refrain:**

*Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*  
  
○ **Marvelous, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Marvelous, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin!**

**Chap. 3:7** But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds. 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.

**Chap. 3:9 Pure Language** - Zephaniah tells us the day is coming when language barriers will be obliterated and we will be able to understand one another perfectly. After the seven years of the Tribulation are passed—when the Lord Jesus shall return to this planet to establish His millennial kingdom—we will all speak one language. 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.

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*Zep 3:4 Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people; Her priests have polluted the sanctuary, They have done violence to the law.*

*Zep 3:5 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.*

*Zep 3:6 "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.*

*Zep 3:7 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.*

**A Faithful Remnant; - vs. 8-13 -** *Zep 3:8 "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.*

*Zep 3:9 "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.*

*Zep 3:10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones, Shall bring My offering.*

*Zep 3:11 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.*

*Zep 3:12 I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people, And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.*

**v. 4** The word “treacherous” means “uncertain.” Haven’t you discovered that you can go crazy if you try to keep up with each new study that comes out concerning exercise and nutrition? That is why I’m so glad we hold in our hands the Word of the One who never changes. His is a Word we never have to apologize for or amend. We don’t have to remove chapters, erase passages, or update the information. God’s Word is a sure foundation.

**v. 5** Even though people are foolish and fickle, even though they neither call upon nor trust in Him, the Lord is still in the midst of them. He is faithful even when His people are faithless (**2 Timothy 2:13**). Don’t you love God for that? Even when we are squirming and floundering, flopping and failing, God is faithful, morning by morning—making His ways known to us, blessing and convicting us, nudging and correcting us. God is faithful, no matter what! To me, one of the most damning aspects of our culture is the fact that people actually flaunt their sin. **While there has always been sin in the world, the difference between our society and those that preceded us is that people now take pride in sin.**

**vs. 6-8** The word “indignation” in the Old Testament is synonymous with “tribulation” in the New Testament. Thus, this passage parallels that of Revelation 6 through 19 which speaks of the judgment of the nations during the Tribulation. After seeing the decree of the Lord in 1:1–6 and the day of the Lord in 1:7–3:8, we are about to see the third and final section of Zephaniah’s book: the deliverance of the Lord—a section I love for in it we see the light break forth and the Son rise. Watch for this in four ways: **the regathering of Israel** (verses 9 and 10), **the repenting of Israel** (verses 11 through 13), **the rejoicing of Israel** (verses 14 and 15), and **the Redeemer of Israel** (verses 16 through 20). Zephaniah 3:9 (a) For then... When will the deliverance of the Lord take place? Not until after judgment is poured out.

**v. 9** Perhaps the “pure language” spoken of here refers to the rebirth of the Hebrew tongue. This much, however, is sure: with one consent, all people will call upon the name of the Lord.

**v. 10** When modern-day Israel was birthed as a nation in 1948, among the dispersed Jews from all over the world who returned to the land were a black-skinned people from Ethiopia called the Falashas. Although they wore prayer shawls, carried the Torah, and celebrated the three major feasts of Judaism, the Falashas were nonetheless a mystery to the Jews in Israel—until they learned the Falasha tradition that said when the Queen of Sheba returned from her visit with Solomon (1 Kings 10:13), along with the gifts Solomon bestowed upon her, she brought Judaism back with her. As a result, unbeknownst to the rest of the world for centuries, there was a group of people living in Ethiopia who were practicing Jews.

**vs. 11-12** Following the miraculous regathering of Israel, there will be a massive repentance by Israel. What a glorious day that will be

### **Summary of Zephaniah:**

- The theme of the book is the **Day of the Lord!** What a beautiful truth is spoken of over and over again in the NT. That is the fact that as His people, who are in Christ Jesus and because of what He has done, I will never face His wrath, I will never face His anger. I will never face His judgment! Why, because he carried us. He paid the price!
- A beautiful thing Zephaniah speaks so bluntly about - the wrath of God that is coming, and the world is due His wrath, **but God has made a provision for His people to escape that wrath.** That provision is to be found in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. **Cf. 1Th 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**
- A theme that runs through the Minor Prophets is that The Lord wins! He’s won! And He wins in the end! Sin and judgment of this world are not going to have the last day. But the Lord is going to have the last day on planet earth.
- A Beautiful, beautiful book! Beautiful is Zephaniah’s name as it relates to this book. – Zephaniah’s name means **Jehovah hides/Yahweh has hidden** -. Jehovah protects, Jehovah treasures. The theme of his name -**The place to hide from the coming judgment of God is in the salvation that He has provided!** **Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**
- The beauty of beauties is that **He saves me from the judgment. He not only offers protection from His judgment but He also treats me as a treasure.** He makes me into His treasure by His Holy Spirit!



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*Zep 3:13 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."*

**Joy in God’s Faithfulness! – vs. 14-20 - Zep 3:14 Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!**

*Zep 3:15 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.*

*Zep 3:16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak.*

*Zep 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."*

*Zep 3:18 "I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, Who are among you, To whom its reproach is a burden.*

*Zep 3:19 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.*

*Zep 3:20 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.*

**v. 13** The word “not” in verse 13 is emphatic. In the day of the repentance of Israel, there will be no iniquity, no lies, no deceit. When asked the most important language to learn, C. H. Spurgeon replied, “Learn the language of No. It will be of greater value to you than learning Greek and Hebrew combined.” Truly, when temptations knock at our door, like a repentant Israel, the best thing we can say is, “No.”

**vs. 14-15** Following the regathering of Israel and the repentance by Israel, there will be rejoicing in Israel. This, very possibly, will be reflected even in her music. Although Jewish music today is written primarily in a minor key, in the day of her rejoicing, I believe the Lord’s presence in her midst will cause Israel to sing not only in a major way but in a major key.

**vs. 16-17** How I love this verse! Here, we see the Redeemer of Israel in her midst—and He is rejoicing. We have a tendency to think God is worried about us. We picture Him with furrowed brow and frowning face. The Lord in our midst is rejoicing, singing, and resting because He sees us in our glorified state. That is, He already sees the finished product. Our vision is obstructed and shortsighted indeed for we can only see our way to the next obstacle. Not so with God. He sees all of time and eternity at once. Yes, He sees our failing; surely He sees our faltering; but He also sees our finishing. He sees us already in glory with Him. That is why He can rejoice over us with great joy. He will rest in His love—not in our flaky love for Him, but in His steadfast love for us. Therefore, because He’s resting in His love for you, regardless of how you think you might be doing, you can rest, as well. Zephaniah 3:17 (c) ...he will joy over thee with singing. In verse 14, Israel was entreated to sing. Here in verse 17, the Lord joins in.

**vs. 18-19** Do you feel like you’re limping through life? Driven out by someone you love? Take heart: the Lord is One who saves you by His grace as He gathers you to Himself.

**v. 20** The book ends with the Lord saying to His “hammer-swinging” prophet, “As you close your prophecy, Zephaniah, make sure My people understand that I see the whole picture. Yes, there are difficulties ahead; yes, there are dark days looming; **but I see the end result—when I will be in their midst, rejoicing, singing, and resting in My love.**” Thus, perhaps the clearest division of the Book of Zephaniah is simply this:

**Chapter 1: Sad day.**

**Chapter 2: Sad day.**

**Chapter 3: Glad day.**

For believers, the seventy or eighty years we spend on this planet are as bad as life will ever be for us. After that, it will only get better—unbelievably better—for the next trillion years. So, if you’re sad, take heart and have hope. The glad day is coming, for the Lord’s message to His people through

Zephaniah prophetically is also His word to you presently: **God will see you through. Therefore, rejoice! Listen and live!**

**v. 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 Oh what a day!

**v. 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.”

**v. 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!

That glorious hope of the future!!!

**Zep 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."**

**The glorious bright future for God’s people. 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 draws near!!!**