

Two Reflections:

- ① The Lord still speaks today
- ② The Lord's message is and always will be all that is necessary for humanity to know, love, worship, and glorify Him.

Jesus is the embodiment, upholder, and fulfillment of the Lord's Word.

The Day of the Lord

- ① A day of just judgment for all who are declared guilty.
- ② A day of loving blessing for all who are declared innocent.
- ③ Has immediate and future fulfillment in Zephaniah: all the prophets.

Immediate: Exile to Babylon
Future: Second Coming when all will be judged.

* We can be certain that the future Day of the Lord is a day of blessing by faith in Jesus.

The Lord speaks. → He speaks to real people.
 1 The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.

The Great Day of the Lord → He speaks in real time.

- 2 I will completely sweep away everything from the face of the earth— this is the LORD's declaration.
- 3 I will sweep away people and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, and the ruins along with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth. This is the LORD's declaration.
- 4 I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the residents of Jerusalem. I will cut off every vestige of Baal from this place, the names of the pagan priests along with the priests;
- 5 those who bow in worship on the rooftops to the stars in the sky; those who bow and pledge loyalty to the LORD but also pledge loyalty to Milcom
- 6 and those who turn back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD or inquire of him.
- 7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD, for the day of the LORD is near. Indeed, the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated his guests.
- 8 On the day of the LORD's sacrifice I will punish the officials, the king's sons, and all who are dressed in foreign clothing.
- 9 On that day I will punish all who skip over the threshold, who fill their master's house with violence and deceit.
- 10 On that day – this is the LORD's declaration – there will be an outcry from the Fish Gate, a wailing from the Second District, and a loud crashing from the hills.
- 11 Wail, you residents of the Hollow, for all the merchants will be silenced; all those loaded with silver will be cut off.
- 12 And at that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who settle down comfortably, who say to themselves: The LORD will not do good or evil.
- 13 Their wealth will become plunder and their houses a ruin. They will build houses but never live in them, plant vineyards but never drink their wine.
- 14 The great day of the LORD is near, near and rapidly approaching. Listen, the day of the LORD – then the warrior's cry is bitter.
- 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and total darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities, and against the high corner towers.
- 16 I will bring distress on mankind, and they will walk like the blind because they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung.

5 couplets describing the intensity of the Day of the Lord. The second word is an escalation of the first.

* In Jesus, the justice of the Lord was satisfied

Zephaniah's Overall Theme: There are just and devastating consequences for unfaithfulness to the Lord.

Sweep away = make an end of
Cut off = annihilate/carry out a death sentence.

* The implication is one of obvious judgment. The question is: for who?

- ① Those who reject the Lord for other "gods" or idols.
- ② Those who think they can worship the Lord AND another god/idol.
- ③ Those who reject the Lord entirely.

Yahweh, The Lord, is God exclusively, and is to be worshipped as such.

→ The Lord is active in His searching of the hearts of people.

The reason for the imminent intense Day of the Lord is humanity's iniquity (sin).

The description of this day and the reality of sin reminds us that the Lord is just in His judgment.

In the Day of the Lord, none of our idols will be able to save.

18 Their silver and their gold will be unable to rescue them on the day of the LORD's wrath. The whole earth will be consumed by the fire of his jealousy, for he will make a complete, yes, a horrifying end of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Reflection: We cannot simultaneously cherish God's love, grace, and mercy if we do not understand His justice, righteousness, and holiness.

A Call to Repentance

There is a window of time available during which we can call out for and receive the Lord's mercy.

- 2 Gather yourselves together; gather together, undesirable nation,
 - 2 before the decree takes effect and the day passes like chaff,
 - before the burning of the LORD's anger overtakes you,
 - before the day of the LORD's anger overtakes you.
- 3 Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who carry out what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be concealed on the day of the LORD's anger.

mercy = not receiving the consequence you justly deserve.

grace = receiving a reward you do not deserve.

Judgment against the Nations

- 4 For Gaza will be abandoned, and Ashkelon will become a ruin. Ashdod will be driven out at noon, and Ekron will be uprooted.
- 5 Woe, inhabitants of the seacoast, nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines: I will destroy you until there is no one left.
- 6 The seacoast will become pasturelands with caves for shepherds and pens for sheep.
- 7 The coastland will belong to the remnant of the house of Judah; they will find pasture there. They will lie down in the evening among the houses of Ashkelon, for the LORD their God will return to them and restore their fortunes.
- 8 I have heard the taunting of Moab and the insults of the Ammonites, who have taunted my people and threatened their territory.
- 9 Therefore, as I live - this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel - Moab will be like Sodom and the Ammonites like Gomorrah: a place overgrown with weeds, a salt pit, and a perpetual wasteland. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the remainder of my nation will dispossess them.
- 10 This is what they get for their pride because they have taunted and acted arrogantly against the people of the LORD of Armies.
- 11 The LORD will be terrifying to them when he starves all the gods of the earth. Then all the distant coasts and islands of the nations will bow in worship to him, each in its own place.
- 12 You Cushites will also be slain by my sword.
- 13 He will also stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria; he will make Nineveh a desolate ruin, dry as the desert.
- 14 Herds will lie down in the middle of it, every kind of wild animal.

We experience both in Jesus.

The Lord is Judge and He will Judge:

- 1 Those who taunt/mock His character and existence. (vs. 8-9)
- 2 Those who think they are above Him in their pride. (vs. 10-11)
- 3 Those who think they can stand apart from Him. (vs. 13-15)

The Lord extends mercy to those who repent:

- 1 Humility is required.
- 2 Obedience naturally follows
- 3 Righteousness comes through Jesus.

Zephaniah 2: 4-15 - The Lord will judge the nations.

- 1 Cities of the Philistines in Canaan:
 - Gaza
 - Ashkelon
 - Ashdod
 - Ekron
 (North to South)
- 2 Nations to the East across the Jordan:
 - Moabites
 - Ammonites
- 3 Nation to the South: Cushites (Egypt)
- 4 Nations to the North: Assyria

All the world will face the Lord's just judgment.

* Jesus absorbed judgment for all the nations and is the standard by which all will be judged.

Both eagle owls and herons will roost in the capitals of its pillars.
Their calls will sound from the window, but devastation will be on the threshold, for he will expose the cedar work.

15 This is the jubilant city that lives in security, that thinks to herself: I exist, and there is no one else.

What a desolation she has become, a place for wild animals to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her scoffs and shakes his fist.

Zephaniah 3:1-8 - The Lord will Judge His People.

The New Testament affirms that there will be judgment for those who appeared to be among God's people.

"For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household..."
- 1 Peter 4:17

"Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord...' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me...'"
- Matthew 7:21-23

→ A word signifying coming catastrophe; also used as an expression at a funeral.
Woe to Oppressive Jerusalem

3 **Woe** to the city that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressive city!

2 She has not obeyed, she has not accepted discipline.

She has not trusted in the LORD, she has not drawn near to her God.

3 The princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are wolves of the night, which leave nothing for the morning.

4 Her prophets are reckless - treacherous men.

Her priests profane the sanctuary, they do violence to instruction.

5 The righteous LORD is in her; he does no wrong.

He applies his justice morning by morning; he does not fail at dawn, yet the one who does wrong knows no shame.

6 I have cut off nations; their corner towers are destroyed.

I have laid waste their streets, with no one to pass through.

Their cities lie devastated, without a person, without an inhabitant.

7 I thought: You will certainly fear me and accept correction.

Then her dwelling place would not be cut off based on all that I had allocated to her.

However, they became more corrupt in all their actions.

Therefore, wait for me - this is the LORD's declaration - until the day I rise up for plunder.

For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, in order to pour out my indignation on them, all my burning anger; for the whole earth will be consumed by the fire of my jealousy.

Final Restoration Promised

9 For I will then restore pure speech to the peoples so that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him with a single purpose.

10 From beyond the rivers of Cush my supplicants, my dispersed people, will bring an offering to me.

11 On that day you will not be put to shame because of everything you have done in rebelling against me.

For then I will remove from among you your jubilant, arrogant people, and you will never again be haughty on my holy mountain.

12 I will leave a meek and humble people among you, and they will take refuge in the name

The Lord sees both outward action and inward heart affection and knows those who are and are not His people:

- ① Those who are not obedient...
- ② Those who don't accept discipline...
- ③ Those who do not trust Him...
- ④ Those who do not draw near...
- ⑤ Those who pray upon the weak...
- ⑥ Those who do not practice fidelity and sincerity before Him...
- ⑦ Those who continue in sin with no shame before Him...
- ⑧ Those who do not cast themselves upon His mercy...

... are not His people.

* There are 16 statements in the last 12 verses of Zephaniah about what the Lord will do... they culminate in the Lord saving those who are His people.

Salvation is the Lord's work.

In Our Salvation, We Receive:

- ① Renewal - purity (vs. 8-10)
- ② Restoration - dignity (vs. 11a)
- ③ Reorientation - humility (vs. 11b-12)
- ④ Rest (vs. 13)
- ⑤ Refuge - protection (vs. 14-15)
- ⑥ Reunification - unity (vs. 18-20)



of these, the greatest gift of our salvation in the gospel of Jesus Christ is reunification with the Lord. Sin has been removed and we can behold Him and be held by Him for all eternity.

of the LORD.

¹³ The remnant of Israel will no longer do wrong or tell lies; a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouths.

[They will pasture and lie down, with nothing to make them afraid.] ^④

¹⁴ Sing for joy, Daughter Zion; shout loudly, Israel!

Be glad and celebrate with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has removed your punishment; [he has turned back] your enemy. ^⑤

The King of Israel, the LORD, is among you; you need no longer fear harm.

¹⁶ On that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear; Zion, do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The LORD your God is among you, a warrior who saves. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will be quiet in his love. He will delight in you with singing."

¹⁸ [I will gather] those who have been driven from the appointed festivals; they will be a tribute from you and a reproach on her. ^⑥

¹⁹ Yes, at that time I will deal with all who oppress you.

I will save the lame and gather the outcasts; I will make those who were disgraced throughout the earth receive praise and fame.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you back, yes, at the time I will gather you.

I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes.

The LORD has spoken.

The Warrior among us who saves, rejoices in saving, quiets us with His love, and delights over us is Jesus Christ!