

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 01 March.....Nahum 1-3.....Don't Mess with God
- 2) 08 March.....Zephaniah 1-2.....Everyone is Accountable**
- 3) 15 March.....Zephaniah 3.....Our Great Salvation
- 4) 22 March.....Obadiah 1.....Compassion for Lost People
- 5) 29 March.....Zechariah 1-12.....The Promised Messiah
- 6) 05 April.....Luke 24:1-12.....The Declaration
- 7) 12 April.....Luke 24:19-35.....The Promise Fulfilled
- 8) 19 April.....Zechariah 13-14.....A Refined People
- 9) 26 April.....Habakkuk 1-2.....Hard Questions, Hard Answers
- 10) 03 May.....Habakkuk 3.....Awestruck
- 11) 10 May.....Haggai 1-2.....Seek God First
- 12) 17 May.....Malachi 1.....True Hope
- 13) 24 May.....Malachi 2.....Faithful
- 14) 31 May.....Malachi 3.....A Pure People

INTRODUCTION

- Zephaniah foretells the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Chaldeans/Babylonians. He calls Jerusalem to repentance – but no one listens; and he voices God’s threats against Israel’s neighboring nations with like destruction – but, still, no one listens
- We see that man’s wickedness will one day force God once more to remove man & beast, birds & fish from the face of the earth; BUT “perhaps” the righteous will be hidden from the Lord’s anger
 - ♦ This could be a reference to the end times when the world will be engulfed in flames as predicted by Peter:
- 2Peter 3:7** *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*
- 2Peter 3:12** *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*
- ♦ **Question:** Can God be talked out of this?
- Next week, we’ll see that Zephaniah brings encouraging promises of Jerusalem’s joyful return out of captivity in due time Chap 3
- **Question.** Why does God speak vaguely – even with prophecies? He doesn’t give indisputable specifics and whether it is near or far.
 - ♦ **Possible Answer.** He gives us just enough substantiated evidence to keep our faith and hope alive, while giving enough wiggle room for non-believers to continue their merry way toward destruction (no one is forced to believe in God)

Passage	Comments
The Day of the Lord	There are several passages dealing with the “Day of the Lord” throughout Scripture. Some refer to a futuristic day, others seem to refer to a near-term event, but ALL refer to a Time of Trouble, Destruction, and Clean Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joel 1:15 Day of the Lord would be a day of destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians • Isa 2:12 The Day of the Lord is reserved for the proud; and it will be cruel with wrath & fierce anger Isa 13:6 • Jer 46:10 It is a day of vengeance on God’s enemies • Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20 Solar phenomena precede it • 2Peter 3:10 It will come suddenly • Zephaniah has the most to say about it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 1:7 It is near; 1:8 The rich will suffer first; 1:14 It will come fast; 1:18 Money won’t help, and the land will be devastated; 2:3 Seek the Lord to possibly escape
2:1-15	Exhortation to repent before Chaldean invaders come <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv1-3. Zephaniah says to gather yourselves in an assembly to contemplate repentance – and PERHAPS the righteous can escape God’s wrath <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ PERHAPS? Why isn’t God more specific here? • v7. Ah, better days are coming for Judah as God intends to eventually restore her fortunes (Millennial) • vv8-15. Prophetic doom of Judah’s foes due to pride (vs10). It was pride that was the root cause of Sodom’s problems..... Eze 16:49
God’s Variableness	This concept of grasping God’s variableness and His sovereignty is a lesson unto itself. Consider other “variable” passages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exod 32:30 " I (Moses) am going up to the LORD, PERHAPS I can make atonement for your sin." Prov 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD Mat 24:20 Pray that your flight won’t be in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: Ac 8:22 "...pray God, if PERHAPS the thought of your heart may be forgiven thee" 2Tim 2:25 <i>With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if PERHAPS (or peradventure [KJV]) God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth</i>

Passage	Comments
Zeph 1:1-18	God’s Full Fury is Coming. Is There Time to Change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v3. God plans to wipe out “man and beast” again from the “face of the earth.” Wow, what did man & beast do? • v5. There are those who bow down both before God & false gods (syncretism) – IOW, they mix truth with error <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What would such religions look like? • v6. Per this vs, there are two types of unbelievers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Those who reject God (cf Hebrews 6) 2. Those who choose not to seek after Him • We also see other types of unbelievers in Scripture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Hardened enemies of the Gospel Phil 3:18-19 ♦ Unsaved people who receive few stripesLk 12:48 • v7. Why be silent before God? Shouldn’t we call out? • vv10-13. The city of Jerusalem, itself, would be the sacrifice, and the “guests” to the sacrifice, though not mentioned, are possibly the Babylonian army • vv12-14. God will punish the “stagnant in spirit” (NASB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ or “men who settle down comfortably (HSB)”; or literally, men who are like wine left on its dregs (NIV) ~ IOW, men who are bitter and don’t care ♦ Can we spot such people today? Any in our midst?

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- Zephaniah reminds us that we are all accountable to God
- We who follow Christ must resist the pressure to conform to religious pluralism or secularism or luke-warmness

NEXT WEEK:

Zephaniah 3.
 Things promise to get better for Israel, as God intends to save the lame, gather the outcast, and to restore the fortunes His people

