

# Let's Worship God

2nd-7th July 2018  
Zephaniah



# ZEPHANIAH

## **Monday - Zephaniah 1:1; 2 Chronicles 34 - Introduction**

Today we start a new study in the Prophecy of Zephaniah using notes by Rev. Craig Scott. This is a book you may not have read before, but it is one that will challenge and cause you to think about your own Christian walk. The book brings about a message for God's people as to how they are living their lives. Are you separate from worldliness? Do you desire holiness? By grace we should be answering yes to all three, but the fact is we often drift into spiritual backsliding. In Zephaniah God speaks to a backslidden people as He warns them of judgement and wrath.

Zephaniah lives during a testing period as the church is recovering from idolatry. 100 years previously Northern Israel was punished by God for her sin and was taken captivity by the Assyrians in 720 BC. The Southern Kingdom of Judah seems to be heading the same way as the two previous kings in Manasseh and Amon lead the church into idolatry. Josiah is crowned King at 8 years of age and commences a period of reformation as he exhorts the people to follow God's Word once again.

It is during this reformation where Zephaniah prophesises to the Church. The book is split into two sections. Section 1 (1:2-3:8) warns the church of the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord is when God will judge sin and pour out His wrath. Temporally this was fulfilled in 587 BC where Jerusalem fell and was exiled to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. Ultimately though, the Day of the Lord is the last judgement where God judges all peoples. In section 2 there is a message of hope. Zephaniah proclaims mercy and salvation to those who repent and turn to the Lord.

Zephaniah teaches us that God will chastise His people if we are not holy and devoted to Him. We see these warnings both in Zephaniah and the 7 churches of Revelation. By grace, let us heed these warnings and may they stir us to a true desire to please God and live holy lives.

## **Questions**

1. Who is Zephaniah?
2. What is the Day of the Lord?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that our nation would turn back to God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

“Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near;” Zephaniah 1:7a

**Praise: Psalm 25 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# ZEPHANIAH

## **Tuesday - Zephaniah 1:1-3 Universal Judgement**

As we tread the path of Zephaniah we now realise we are on holy ground. Many Christian books like to start off with a light hearted story to attract the reader lest they be put off by another 'serious book about religion.' We see no such fear as Zephaniah opens with the solemn judgement of God. In His wrath He will 'utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth.' This is universal judgement, all things will be consumed. This is due to the sin of mankind. This world was created as a habitat for man to glorify God, but when we fell in Adam the whole world suffered too. It is our fault that there is sickness, violence, pain, and death. It is also our fault there are earthquakes, tsunamis, and natural disasters. Death and destruction only came into the world because of sin.

The modern world views God as some 'grandfather in the sky' figure, but see here who performs the judgement. It is God Himself for He says 'I will' four times. The warrior-king is coming, and He will 'sweep away' all things. 'Sweep away' means utter destruction and is used three times, there is no escape. The temptation is to tone down the horror of this passage with a note on love. God is love, but here there is no hope until chapter 3. We must realise how holy and just our God is, He hates sin with all His being and will punish. Because of my sin and yours, the whole earth will be consumed. This is even the language of Jesus Christ in Matthew 13:41 'The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers.'

Let us grieve the sin we commit every day, and know its true power and sinfulness. Such is the effects of sin that God will universally 'sweep away everything' because of lawlessness. Let us also praise God who is holy and just, for unlike men in this world He always does what is right.

## **Questions**

1. Why will the whole universe be judged?
2. What is the relationship between the holiness of God and sin?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would see sin for the evil it is.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

“Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near;” Zephaniah 1:7a

**Praise: Psalm 26 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# ZEPHANIAH

## **Wednesday - Zephaniah 1:4-6 Judgement on Judah**

After the warning of universal judgement, Zephaniah now turns to his first port of call, the Church! The people of God are those who profess the name of Christ and their covenant children. When we are brought up in the Christian home we have the privilege of hearing God's Word every week, and so there are no excuses. This is why Christ warns us in Luke 12:48 'Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required.' The judgement starts at the house of God and in Zephaniah's day they are judged because they do not 'seek the Lord.'

It is important to notice that the judgement of wrath here will be poured upon those who do not follow God. True believers receive mercy and grace, but everyone else receives judgement. Despite knowing the things of God they do not follow Him, instead they follow idols. They do not look to the Bible for guidance but 'the host of heaven.' They look to horoscopes in the papers rather than prayer. God hates this, and all forms of idolatry. But notice the greatest act of idolatry is in the context of worship. Judah is not going to the Temple, but to Baal for worship. The Priests do not confess the True God alone, but God and 'Milcom.' The worship of God is the most important aspect of the Christian life. We are to worship Him as He commands, and worship Him alone. Christ alone, is the way of salvation, it is not Christ and Mohammad, nor Christ and Buddha, but Jesus Christ alone.

When we are baptised, whether in childhood or profession, we enter the covenant of grace. This means we have the covenantal duty to profess Christ as Lord. When we fail to do so, we are judged according to this covenant. While we refrain from giving our hearts to Christ we will be 'cut off' from His blessings and presence. May we all see that we as the church will be the first to be judged and turn from idolatry and trust in God alone.

## **Questions**

1. Why does God's judgement start at the church?
2. What is idolatry?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for the privilege we have of worshipping God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

“Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near;” Zephaniah 1:7a

**Praise: Psalm 27 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# ZEPHANIAH

## Thursday - Zephaniah 1:7-9 Judgement is Near

What do you think about when you enter the presence of God? How do you feel when you come to Him in prayer or just before worship? Some answers may be 'boldly' for He sits on a throne of grace, or with joy because I love my God and Saviour. These are both good, but lest there is also a sense of awe and fear, then we forget whom we worship. He is the Almighty God who will judge all, therefore 'Be silent before the Lord.' We should never forget Isaiah before His throne: 'holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts' as he confesses 'woe is me, for I am undone.' Silence is a sign of reverence for our Lord.

Here silence is called for because 'the day of the Lord is near.' For Judah it was coming very soon, for mankind it will come as a thief in the night. When the warrior-king returns, judgement will commence. God declares that He will 'punish the officials and the king's sons.' Josiah was a godly king, but His court was full of false believers. God will judge the ministers in government and the church as they teach and lead by example. For Judah, they have failed and three sins are mentioned:

1. 'Foreign attire' represents adopting lifestyles, customs, and moral behaviour that are of the world and not God.

2. 'Leaps over the threshold' demonstrates a respect for religious superstition. The Philistines once had the Ark of the Covenant in their possession and when their Dagan statue broke they started a new superstition by not walking over the threshold (1 Samuel 5:5).

3. 'Violence & Fraud' is having statues of gods in one's home. This causes harm to the healing trust in God and whosoever does this commits fraud, or is deceitful, in the name of God.

Our Lord is a jealous God and He will consume all who practise idolatry. Judgement will come in the 'day of the Lord' and this day is always 'near'. Let us have awe and fear as we reverence the One who has all power and authority to judge you and me.

## Questions

1. What does it mean to show reverence to God?
2. Are there examples in your life where you follow after the customs of the world rather than God?

## Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would come to God in reverence
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

"Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near;" Zephaniah 1:7a

**Praise: Psalm 28 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# ZEPHANIAH

## **Friday - Zephaniah 1:10-16 Judgement on God's People**

Throughout the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, He taught repeatedly that the church of Christ contains both wheat and tares, wise and foolish virgins, sheep and goats, true and false believers. It is in this context of a mixed church where God will also judge. It doesn't matter whether we are labourers and fishermen (Fish Gate), or work in finance (Mortar is the financial district), every person from every aspect of society will hear the judgement call.

God knows our inner most thoughts and will search all of us as He proclaims: 'I will search Jerusalem with lamps.' The warning is to those who are 'complacent.' The idea here is of undisturbed wine thickening in the dregs, it is useless. Here it is speaking about professed Christians who are lethargic. They attend church, never miss a Bible study, but there is no real spiritual life and urgency. Often they have a blase view of God: 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill.' Their attitude is 'God does not mind if I do such and such' or 'I can go anywhere I want, God is forgiving.' They do not truly know the Lord for if they did, they would know about His holiness and law. They are so busy in the world enjoying their worldly pleasures and entertainments that they are blind to the fact the Lord will judge them (2 Cor. 5:10).

The reality is, the 'great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast.' There needs to be urgency in the Christian: urgency in prayer, Bible reading, holiness, good works, and evangelism. We are to treat every day as a time to grow in Christ. For when that Day comes, there will be no second chances, no what ifs. It will be a 'day of wrath... of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation.' We are to take God seriously, and one way we do this is having Christ as Lord over every aspect of our lives and living accordingly.

## **Questions**

1. What does it mean to be spiritually complacent?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would not be complacent.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

“Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near;” Zephaniah 1:7a

**Praise: Psalm 29 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# ZEPHANIAH

## **Saturday - Zephaniah 1:17-18 Judgement on Mankind**

It is not only the church who will be judged, but all of humanity. Today unbelievers often mock Christians and God by saying such things as: 'If God is real where is He now?' or 'I fear no God for if He's real why doesn't He punish sin?' These people continue in their sin and believe God is powerless to stop them. The truth, however, is the opposite. He is currently pouring His wrath upon sinful mankind (Rom. 1:18) as He declares 'I will bring distress on mankind.'

We often think that God's wrath is some form of visual judgement like an earthquake or natural disaster. This often is true (Isaiah 45:7), but He also pours out His wrath by leaving man to his own devices and lets them panic in the midst of their own sinful actions. We see this in the western world where people know and see sin all around them. Read the newspaper or watch the news and what do we see? Nothing but chaos: violence, greed, selfishness, theft, and lawlessness. People see all this and become distressed but God pours out His wrath by withholding His truth from them. In the midst of tribulation, sinners perish without counsel or help. They seek a way out of trouble, but never find it. There is only restlessness, anxiety, and no peace as God's wrath is upon the spiritually blind. Sinners do not see this and think God is silent, but as we look at society we see an active God pouring out His wrath on a society full of anxious and distressed people.

The reason why mankind is judged is 'because they have sinned against the Lord.' They now bear His judgement, and they cannot pay the infinite debt of sin. 'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them'; it is Christ alone who can save us. The ultimate judgement will be 'In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed.' Let us see judgement to come, see its destructive power and flee to Christ. How this ought to stir us to pray for the lost who will be consumed lest they repent and believe in the Gospel.

## **Questions**

1. How does God pour out His wrath?
2. Why are people spiritually blind?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

"Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near;" Zephaniah 1:7a

**Praise: Psalm 30 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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