

Let's Worship God

9th-14th July 2018
Zephaniah



ZEPHANIAH

Monday - Zephaniah 2:1-2 - Repentance

What are men and women to do when faced with the awful prospect of an abyss such as that which has been described in Zephaniah 1? What can any of us do, confronted as we are with the twin realities of our own sinfulness and the inevitability of God's judgement? We are to 'Gather together, yes, gather.' Zephaniah is preaching the doctrine of repentance, we are to turn away from our sins and trust in the Lord. How glorious is this? God who judges sinners gives the hope of salvation to those who would repent and gather again under His wings. Here there is grace for a backslidden and cold church. This reviving grace will only come if we, by God's grace, repent and turn from our worldliness and coldness and seek the Lord. But see the urgency here, we cannot wait, we are to see the state of things now and quickly gather again to God.

1) There is little time; we are to turn now 'before the decree takes effect.' We do not know when we will die, and we do not know when Christ will return. Today is the day of salvation, let us turn today before it is too late.

2) There is fierce wrath to come so turn 'before there comes upon you the burning anger of the Lord.' We cannot take God lightly for we are all 'sinners in the hands of an angry God' who will consume us in the hot fire of His wrath lest we turn from our sin.

3) There is endless wrath to come as we are warned to repent 'before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the Lord.' If we are found guilty on the day of Judgement there will be no second chances and the sentence will be eternal.

God offers us the grace of salvation, but only if we turn from our wicked ways. We must think upon these solemn truths and strike while the iron is hot. Do not wait; repent from your worldliness and sin. If you do, you will find grace and love in the Lord.

Questions

1. What is repentance?
2. Why should we be urgent in our repentance?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would have a repentant heart.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Zephaniah 2:3

Praise: Psalm 31 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

ZEPHANIAH

Tuesday - Zephaniah 2:1-3 - Seek the Lord

What would you do if you were diagnosed with a terminal illness and there was only one cure? No doubt you would put everything aside and seek the cure. It is the very same in the spiritual realm, we have the disease of sin and the only cure is the Lord. All we need to do to receive salvation is 'seek the Lord.' Here is the free offer of the Gospel, simply seek the Lord and you will be saved. But how do you know that you truly seek the Lord? Here Zephaniah explains the heart of a true seeker of the Lord.

1) Humility. One who truly seeks the Lord is humble; he or she knows there is no good thing in them. The Christian confesses he is a sinner and wretched, he totally relies upon God for all things including salvation.

2) Righteousness. To stand before a holy God we need to live a perfectly good life. The Christian knows he is not good and therefore seeks the Lord for righteousness. It is only in Jesus Christ can we receive righteousness for our righteousness is as 'filthy rags' (Isaiah 64:6).

3) Obedience. One who is humble and trusting in Christ for righteousness is one who also seeks to obey God and keep 'his just commands.' When we are born again we receive new hearts that seek to please God and heed the words of Christ 'if you love me keep my commandments' (John 14:15).

When we truly seek God we know that we are His children and receive the joy of salvation. However, it does not necessarily mean we will not suffer on earth. This is why the last sentence says 'perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord.' God will judge the nations (vv. 4-15), and often when nations suffer so too do Christians. This is because we live in the same society and communities, when society collapses we bear the consequences too. This should cause us to pray for our rulers and the salvation of our neighbours.

Questions

1. What does it mean to 'seek the Lord.'

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would seek the Lord.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Zephaniah 2:3

Praise: Psalm 32 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

ZEPHANIAH

Wednesday - Zephaniah 2:1-7 - Judgement to the West

The Lord God continues the theme of repentance in chapter 2, but in a way one would not expect. In verses 4-15 Zephaniah prophesies of what will come upon the nations surrounding Israel. As the nations are lined up, the judgement given, the pattern should bring to remembrance the solemnity of God's awesome power. Seeing that there is nowhere to escape, the church is to turn away from her sin and trust alone in God Almighty.

In verses 4-7 Judgement comes to the west of Israel. All the cities mentioned make up the 'land of the Philistines.' The Philistines were an ancient sea people along the Mediterranean coast who attacked God's people throughout the Old Testament. It is important to note that when God's enemies attack His people, He is not a spectator who sits on the sidelines of history anxiously observing the world, unable to do anything. In fact it is the opposite, because His laws are just as relevant to the Gentiles as they are to His people, He will judge all the earth. Here, it is the Philistines who are judged as God declares: 'I will destroy you until no inhabitant is left.'

All is not lost, however, as there is hope. For the Gospel will flourish and referring to the church Zephaniah proclaims: the 'Lord their God will be mindful of them and restore their fortunes.' The pagan people of Philistine will be judged, but the land 'shall be pastures, with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks.' This means that God will save a people for Himself and they will be well fed. In the Old Testament this is seen in the return from exile as the Israelites repopulate the western coast, but ultimately it looks forward to the worldwide prosperity of the Gospel in the golden age to come. There is joy and fulfillment to be had in Christ, but it only comes through repentance and faith. May we all, individual and nation alike, turn from our sin and rest in the Lord.

Questions

1. Why does God judge the nations?
2. What does it mean that God is mindful of His people?

Prayer Points

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

Memory Verse

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Zephaniah 2:3

Praise: Psalm 33 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

ZEPHANIAH

Thursday - Zephaniah 2:8-11 - Judgement to the East

If there is one judgement that we in the western world should take comfort in it is this one here. God turns to the eastern nations of Moab and Ammon and declares their end. Their particular sin is in their taunting and reviling of God's people. How wonderful to know that Almighty God does not just stand back when we are mocked for our faith, He hears and has compassion on us. In this case, the mocking of the church is done by her cousins. Moab and Ammon descend from Lot through his incestuous relationship with his daughters in Genesis 19:30-38. They are ethically related to the people of God, but mock them for their faith. This is like our own situation in the western world where the Gospel once flourished and Christianity was respected. Now our nation has turned her back on Christ and now mocks the church in both the media and society. Like Moab and Ammon, our nation is judged by God for her mocking. We often look upon our nation with tears and think how can it get any worse, but there is hope as a better day is coming.

God has promised by His own name 'Therefore, as I live', that he will judge those who mock us and they will fall in their pride. There is a time coming where He 'will be awesome against them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth.' Their idols will be destroyed as Christ's enemies are made His footstool and by His power and might they 'shall bow down, each in its place, all the lands of the nations.' It is difficult living in the secular west, but there is coming a time when the Gospel will flourish once again in this land. This should bring us to our knees to pray for Christ's kingdom and cause us to spread the Gospel with hearts full of faith. Dear Christian, do not lose heart, keep fighting the good faith and know that God is in control and His kingdom is being built.

Questions

1. How does God react to His church being mocked?
2. How does the promise of Christ's kingdom encourage us?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God is in control.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Zephaniah 2:3

Praise: Psalm 34 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

ZEPHANIAH

Friday - Zephaniah 2:12 - Judgement to the South

The shortest statement in this list of prophecies is reserved for Cush. It is important again to note who the direct spokesman and executioner is: 'You also, O Cushites, shall be slain by my sword.' The Cushites are to be identified as the remote Ethiopians, possibly the most southerly people known to the Hebrews. It is probably the remoteness of this nation that makes them the most perfect example to set before the people of God. If even the wicked in Ethiopia are not safe from the judgement of God, what hope is there for a disobedient covenant people? Too often covenant children and adults who do not profess can fall into some kind of religious comfortability. They can fall into a subconscious belief that they are better than outright pagans in other lands and that God will be 'merciful' to them. The truth is the opposite, for our Lord Christ says in Matthew 10:15 'Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for...' those who know the truth yet do not profess His name.

But why is this statement in Zephaniah so brief? It may be to highlight the immediacy of Ethiopia's devastation; no sooner is it identified than it is destroyed. God will yield His own sword by His own hand and destroy all who act so wickedly. Read Deuteronomy 32:39-42 to see this solemn truth. This short verse tells us how jealous God is for His own holiness. No sin can stand in His sight. This should cause to further see how God is to be revered. He is our holy God. If we are to have the mind of Christ we should have the same mentality towards our sin. We should seek out the spiritual Ethiopians of our lives and pray that God gives us the grace to slay sin with the power of God's sword. What sins are we actively committing today? Seek it out and put it to death (Colossians 3).

Questions

1. Where is Cush?
2. Why is their judgement verse so short?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would put sin to death.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Zephaniah 2:3

Praise: Psalm 35 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

ZEPHANIAH

Saturday - Zephaniah 2:13-15 - Judgement to the North

Lastly, we reach the final judgement of the nations. God proclaims that 'he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria.' The great northern empire of Assyria is a well-known foe of God's people throughout the Bible. Over a century before, Assyria was God's instrument in pouring His wrath upon the covenant breaking northern kingdom. Such will be the devastation upon Assyria; that her capital will be utterly destroyed. Instead of standing tall with her glorious standing walls, Nineveh will face such a demolition that 'Herds shall lie down in her midst.' She will be inhabitable for humans; the only sign of life will be that of wild animals finding new homes in a wasteland of ruin. This prophecy was soon fulfilled in history as Assyria was demolished by Babylon in 612 BC. God always keeps His promises!

The particular sin that kindled the wrath of God is given, Assyria says 'in her heart, "I am, and there is no one else."' She is full of pride and self, she exalts her own name and capabilities rather than bow down before the one true God. O how glorious and proud we all feel when things are going our way. Like Nineveh, we can often flourish in this life. We may gain wealth, earn respect, and have plenty of possessions. But what often happens in such circumstances is that we start to live upon our own strength and wisdom. God is jealous for His own glory, so when nations, and we, do not give Him the glory and humbly accept His provision, His judgement is only around the corner.

In chapter 2 we have seen the Almighty wrath of God upon the nations. There is no person, no culture, and no country that will avoid the judgement. Let us come before God with true humility and by His grace seek out and destroy pride and arrogance in our lives.

Questions

1. What is the sin of Assyria
2. Why does God hate pride?

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

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. Zephaniah 2:3

Praise: Psalm 36 - See 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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