

Zephaniah Chapter 2

- Chapter 1 described the Day of the Lord and the Jews, how that would impact Israel.
- Chapter 2 now describes the Day of the Lord and the Gentile nations that were and have been against Israel - they will be judged for how they have treated Israel

V: 1-3 The Bible, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, but I can't say the same for the chapter divisions. Helpful as they are for navigating through our Bibles sometimes the divisions are off, as is the case with verses 1-3 here in Zephaniah Chapter 2. These verses in context clearly belong in chapter 1 because they are still speaking of Israel.

- This is a last warning to gather together in repentance before judgment comes upon them.

“Seek the LORD” - *“Seek righteousness”* - *“Seek humility”* - these are all good encouragements that go right along with our Lord's instruction to us:

Matthew 5:6 *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

Matthew 6:33 *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

- They are told to seek the Lord - speaking to those who have not gone along with all the things that have brought judgment down upon them, the faithful remnant - that in that day they may be hidden.
- Ultimately there were those who were protected from that judgment: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah being examples of that.

2 Peter 2:9 *“... the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”*

- I believe that those of us who have put their faith in Jesus Christ and have been made righteous by the blood of the Lamb are in the same boat - that we'll be hidden in the time of the great tribulation that will befall a Christ rejecting world.

Romans 5:9 *“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”*

- In His infinite grace and mercy God gives encouragement to the faithful to hang in there, and at the same time warns the rebellious to turn from their wicked ways and repent.

2 Chronicles 7:14 “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

- God could justifiably just smoke em and be done, but He doesn't, He beckons them to Himself in what may be a final attempt to do so.

Amos 5:6 “Seek the LORD and live, lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph and devour it, with no one to quench it...”

1 Peter 4:17 “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

- Following that pattern we see God's people, Judah judged, then the rest of the Gentile nations.

V: 4-5 Judgment falls upon the Philistines and specifically their main cities. **Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron** - for whatever reason **Gath** is left out of this proclamation although I doubt they avoided the judgment in general.



- Along with the listing of Philistine cities there is the corresponding judgments that will befall them, they will be: “forsaken” - “desolate” - “driven out” - “up-rooted” - “destroyed.”

Ezekiel 25:15-17 “¹⁵Thus says the Lord GOD: because the Philistines dealt vengefully and took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred, ¹⁶therefore thus says the Lord God: I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. ¹⁷I will execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I lay My vengeance upon them.”

V: 6-7 The seacoast will be more or less abandoned, a place for sheep to graze and shepherds to watch their flocks. The remnant of the house of Judah will be there because the Philistines will be gone.

Jeremiah 47:1, 4-5 “¹The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines...” “⁴Because of the day that comes to plunder all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains; for the LORD shall plunder the Philistines, that the remnant of the country of Caphtor. ⁵Baldness has come upon Gaza, Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley. How long will you cut yourself?”

- When the remnant returns they will take up residence in the homes of their enemies having lost their own, but the bottom line is that God will bring the remnant back, but not so with the Philistines.

Jeremiah 33:26b "... For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them."

V: 8 Ours is the God who hears - He is Jehovah-Shammah - and He's taken note of those who have insulted and reproached His people - and I'd bet that He is still taking note!

Ezekiel 25:3-5 "3Say to the Ammonites, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD: because you said, "Aha!" against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity, 4indeed, therefore, I will deliver you as a possession to the men of the East, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk, 5And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels and Ammon a resting place for flocks. Then you shall know that I am the LORD."

- They not only reproached and insulted His children, but they made arrogant threats against their borders - God took issue with their attitude towards ownership of the land that belongs to Israel.
- Again there are people today that essentially are attacking the borders of Israel, trying to move those borders, trying to take the land - and God will deal with that in His time.

Genesis 12:7 "Then the LORD appeared to Abraham and said, "to your descendants I will give this land..."

Genesis 15:18 "On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates."

- They would be taken out of the land for a season, or for a lesson, then they would be brought back as a nation in the land.

Amos 9:14-15 "14I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them." 15I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God."

Jeremiah 30:3 “For behold, the days are coming says the LORD, that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah, says the LORD. And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.”

Jeremiah 31:16-17 “¹⁶Thus says the LORD: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. ¹⁷There is hope in your future, says the LORD, that your children shall come back to their own border.”

V: 9-10 The Moabites and the Ammonites, both related to Abraham, both mortal enemies of Israel, both destined for destruction based on how they treated Israel.

Genesis 12:3 “I will bless those that bless you, and curse him who curses you.”
• They will be like Sodom and Gomorrah - not much of them left these days.

V: 11 The Lord will be awesome to them.... KJV - “Terrible to them...” God will deal with the “gods” of the earth, their idols.

Zechariah 13:2 “It shall be in that day, says the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.”

Malachi 1:11 “From the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.”

V: 12 Ethiopia shall be slain by the sword:

Isaiah 18:1, 6 “¹Woe to the land shadowed with buzzing wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.” - “⁶They will be left together for the mountain birds of prey and for the beasts of the earth; the birds of prey will summer on them, and all the beasts of the earth will winter on them.”

Psalms 17:13 “Arise, O LORD, confront him, cast him down; deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword.”

V: 13 Assyria will be destroyed, their capital Nineveh will be made desolate.

Isaiah 14:24-25 “²⁴The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand: ²⁵That I will break the Assyrian in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders.”

V: 14-15 Within 10 years of this prophecy Nineveh will be destroyed, the Assyrian empire will be conquered by the Babylonians.

- They dwelt arrogantly, securely they thought - yet they became a desolation just as the Lord had proclaimed.

Isaiah 47:8-9 “⁸Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children; ⁹but these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments.”

- Nineveh, that great city that was so proud, they lived carelessly. Even as the city was being taken by the Babylonians, they were partying, feeling that they could not fall.
- Their defenses were so powerful that they discounted the Babylonians, underestimated them. They said, “I am, there is none beside me. No one can stand up against us. We’re the most powerful nation in the world”, and yet they fell.

All of this proves:

Hebrews 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

- Gospel message: