

## Majoring in the Minors Part 9 – Zephaniah

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Majoring in the Minors / Judgment; Justification; Vindicate; Joy / Zephaniah 2:3

The Day of the Lord is coming. It will create awe and wonder in all people. But there will be two groups. Those who are in fear because they are about to receive the final judgments of God. And those who rejoice because they have been delivered and God has vindicated Himself.

Doctor to patient: "I have bad news and worse news."

Patient: "So let's have it."

Doctor: "The bad news is that you only have 24 hours to live."

Patient: "I can't imagine what could be worse than that!"

Doctor: "I forgot to tell you yesterday."

Source Unknown

## Background

- The entire book
- is a warning about

- the coming of
  - “The Day of the Lord.”
- For many
  - judgment and condemnation
- For others
  - joy in deliverance.

## Name

- Zephaniah means:
  - Yaweh Hides

## Genealogy

Zephaniah 1:1 (ESV)

The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah...

- He traces back his
  - lineage to Hezekiah.
  - (the king of Judah).
- Makes Zephaniah
  - only prophet of
  - noble birth.

Location

Zephaniah 3:1 (ESV)

Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city!

- Because Zephaniah
  - is noble family

- likely live in Jerusalem.
- See the evil of leaders
- from insider view.

## Timeline

### Zephaniah 1:1 (ESV)

... in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

- Josiah ruled
- from 640–609 BC.
- Next hint:

### Zephaniah 2:13 (ESV)

And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the

desert.

- Talks about destruction
  - of Nineveh as future.
  - happened in 612 BC.
- Josiah became king
  - 8 years old.
- Last good king
  - in history of Israel
- Prior kings:
  - Manasseh
  - Amon
  - Very wicked kings.

- Took time before
- Josiah began reforms.

#### 2 Chronicles 34:3 ESV

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images.

- 16 years old
- began to seek God.
- 20 years old
- began to reform
- remove idols.
- Zephaniah talk only bad
- about leadership in Israel
- must be talking before

- reforms of Josiah.
- Zephaniah must have
  - been a great spiritual
  - leader for Josiah.
- Perhaps one of reasons
  - Josiah began to seek
  - the Lord!
- › In this evil world
  - › you never know
    - › what kind of impact
      - › you may have on
        - › someone else.
- That means book

- of Zephaniah was
- likely written
  - before reforms
  - 630–625 BC.
- This was only
- 20 years before
- Nebuchadnezzar
  - sacked city
  - took 10k nobles
  - away to Babylon.

Theme

The Day of the Lord

- God's judgment are about



- to come on you.
- Called that judgment
  - “the day of the Lord.”
- This phrase always
  - referred to a coming
  - judgment of God.
- His wrath would
  - be poured out
  - on the wicked.
- Used heavily
  - Minor Prophets
  - Last Major Prophets

- Here is a sample:
- mostly Bad...

The Bad

Joel 1:15 (ESV)

Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

Joel 2:1–2 (ESV)

Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

--

a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains...

Joel 2:11 (ESV)

The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is

exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

Joel 2:31 ESV

The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Joel 3:14 (ESV)

Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

Amos 5:18 (ESV)

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

Amos 5:20 (ESV)

Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

Obadiah 15 (ESV)

For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own

head.

Isaiah 2:11–12 (ESV)

The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

--

For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;

Ezekiel 30:3 (ESV)

For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

- The Biblical images
  - of “the day of the Lord”
  - are intense...
- Reminds me
  - of this picture.

There is a striking picture of an old burned-out mountain shack. All that remained was the chimney...the charred debris of what had been that family's sole possession. In front of this destroyed home stood an old grandfather-looking man dressed only in his underclothes with a small boy clutching a pair of patched overalls. It was evident that the child was crying. Beneath the picture were the words which the artist felt the old man was speaking to the boy. They were simple words, yet they presented a profound theology and philosophy of life. Those words were, "Hush child, God ain't dead!"

## The Good

- 1 good one!

## Malachi 4:5–6 (ESV)

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. --

And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

- Zephaniah focuses on
  - both aspects

- of God's coming
  - judgment.
  
- With a healthy dose
  - focused more on
    - destruction
  
- Yet still a
  - significant portion
    - on redemption.

## Zephaniah's Day of the Lord

Zephaniah 1:2–6 (ESV)

"I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

--

"I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the rubble with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

--

"I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

--

those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those who bow down and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom,

--

those who have turned back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD or inquire of him."

- God is predicting
  - 2 Judgments.
  
- First against Judah
  - 20 years later
  - apostate Judah destroyed.
  
- Second,
  - destruction of world

- mankind
- all animals.
- Destruction of Judah
- prefigures
- last great destruction.

#### Prophets and Kings (Section 4–National Retribution)

Habakkuk was not the only one through whom was given a message of bright hope and of future triumph as well as of present judgment. During the reign of Josiah the word of the Lord came to Zephaniah, specifying plainly the results of continued apostasy, and calling the attention of the true church to the glorious prospect beyond. His prophecies of impending judgment upon Judah apply with equal force to the judgments that are to fall upon an impenitent world at the time of the second advent of Christ.

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#### The Day of the Lord



Zephaniah 1:7–12 (ESV)

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.

--

And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice— "I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

--

On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud.

--

"On that day," declares the LORD, "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills.

--

Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar! For all the traders are no more; all who weigh out silver are cut off.

--

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.'

- Notice who

- God is most upset with...
- Officials – leaders in rebellion
- Violent and Fraudulent
- The complacent

those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.'

- Who is God
- most upset with?
- Leaders in apostasy
- People who
  - did nothing
  - said nothing
  - disbelieved coming judgment.
- It appears

- for many
- the sin they are condemned
  - sin of omission
  - not commission.
- Not necessarily
- the evil they did...
- But the evil
- they did NOT
- speak against!!!

What Will It Be Like?

Zephaniah 1:14–16 (ESV)

The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.

--

A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and

thick darkness,

--

a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities  
and against the lofty battlements.

- Zephaniah
- doesn't leave much
- to the imagination...

Zephaniah 1:17 (ESV)

I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

- Now you know,
  - why so few sermons
  - on minor prophets.
- 
- Doom and gloom.

- People don't like
- sermons like this...

By the age of 5, Beethoven was playing the violin under the tutelage of his father--also an accomplished musician. By the time he was 13, Beethoven was a concert organist. In his 20s he was already studying under the very watchful eyes of Haydn and Mozart. In fact, Mozart spoke prophetic words when he declared that Beethoven would give the world something worth listening to by the time his life ended. As Beethoven began to develop his skills, he became a prolific composer. During his lifetime, he wrote nine majestic symphonies and five concertos for piano, not to mention numerous pieces of chamber music. Ludwig van Beethoven also wrote sonatas and pieces for violin and piano. He has thrilled us with the masterful works of unique harmony that broke with the traditions of his times.

The man was a genius. Beethoven was not, however, a stranger to difficulties. During his twenties, he began to lose his hearing. His fingers "became thick," he said on one occasion. He couldn't feel the music as he once had. His hearing problem haunted him in the middle years of his life, but he kept it a well-guarded secret. When he reached his fifties, Beethoven was stone deaf. Three years later he made a tragic attempt to conduct an orchestra and failed miserably. Approximately five years later, he died during a fierce thunder storm. He was deaf, yet a magnificent musician.

On one occasion, Beethoven was overheard shouting at the top of his voice as he slammed both fists on the keyboard, "I will take life by the throat!"

Swindoll, Hand me another brick, p. 190-191.

- People don't like

- sermons like this...
- Yet I would like to suggest
  - of all people
    - we should focus
      - on these passages.
- Why?
- Prophets of the NT
  - talk about
    - Day of the Lord too.
- They always use term
  - refer to 2nd coming.

## 2nd Coming

- New Testament Prophets

### 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2 (ESV)

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

--

not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

- Day of the Lord
- =====
- Coming of Jesus
- Most important
- teaching to
- preach about today:
  - 2nd Coming of Jesus.

- That is: Day of the Lord

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3 (ESV)

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

--

While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

- Sudden Destruction
  - Thief in the night.
- Problem...
  - many sermons
    - talking about
      - second coming
        - only focus on



- Joyous part...
- There is much
  - joy to be had!
- But there is also
  - much
    - gloom
    - fear
    - destruction
    - sadness

2 Peter 3:3–12 (ESV)

knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say,

--

"Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of

creation...”

--

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

--

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

--

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God,

--

because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

- The Day of the Lord
- (2nd Coming)
- has a lot of
  - burning

- fire
- destruction
- cataclysm
- fear

## Repentance

- Why does God
- talk so much
- about all the
  - ugly parts
  - of 2nd coming?
- Does He just
- want to scare people?
- want to push people away?

- No!
- Contrary!
- He wants them to repent.
- People rarely repent
- when all is well.
- We often need
- to be
- knock upside the head
  - dose of reality
  - to turn to God.
- We can call
- all these passages
- about the “day of Lord”
  - dose of reality...

- That brings me to
- scripture passage:

Zephaniah 2:3 (ESV)

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.

- Purpose of Book
  - of Zephaniah
    - not to scare
    - push people away.
- Get them to
  - repent
  - come to God.

It was a bright Sunday morning in 28th century London, but Robert Robinson's mood was anything but sunny. All along the street there were people hurrying to church, but in the midst of the crowd Robinson was a lonely man. The sound of church bells reminded him of years past when his faith in God was strong and the church was an integral part of his life. It had been years since he set foot in a church&md;years of wandering, disillusionment, and gradual defection from the God he once loved. That love for God&md;once fiery and passionate&md;had slowly burned out within him, leaving him dark and cold inside.

Robinson heard the clip-clop, clip-clop of a horse-drawn cab approaching behind him. Turning, he lifted his hand to hail the driver. But then he saw that the cab was occupied by a young woman dressed in finery for the Lord's Day. He waved the driver on, but the woman in the carriage ordered the carriage to be stopped.

"Sir, I'd be happy to share this carriage with you," she said to Robinson. "Are you going to church?" Robinson was about to decline, then he paused. "Yes," he said at last. "I am going to church." He stepped into the carriage and sat down beside the young woman.

As the carriage rolled forward Robert Robinson and the woman exchanged introductions. There was a flash of recognition in her eyes when he stated his name. "That's an interesting coincidence," she said, reaching into her purse. She withdrew a small book of inspirational verse, opened it to a ribbon-bookmark, and handed the book to him. "I was just reading a verse by a poet named Robert Robinson. Could it be...?"

He took the book, nodding. "Yes, I wrote these words years ago."

"Oh, how wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Imagine! I'm sharing a carriage with the author of these very lines!"

But Robinson barely heard her. He was absorbed in the words he was reading. They were words that would one day be set to music and become a great hymn of the faith, familiar to generations of Christians:

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy  
grace'Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest  
praise.

His eyes slipped to the bottom of the page where he read:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it&md;Prone to leave the God I  
love;Here's my heart, O take and seal it,Seal it for Thy courts above.

He could barely read the last few lines through the tears that  
brimmed in his eyes. "I wrote these words&md;and I've lived these  
words. &ls;Prone to wander...prone to leave the God I love.'" "

The woman suddenly understood. "You also wrote, &ls;Here's my heart,  
O take and seal it.' You can offer your heart again to God, Mr.  
Robinson. It's not too late."

And it wasn't too late for Robert Robinson. In that moment he turned  
his heart back to God and walked with him the rest of his days.

- Remember name Zephaniah
- means: "Yaweh Hides"
- God is promising
- He will hide us
- on day of the Lord
  - if we repent!

- This is a
- beautiful promise.

### Sermons Like This...

- There may be some
  - here today
  - thinking...
- 
- I don't like
  - sermons like this...
- 
- Or I don't need
  - sermons like this...
- 
- Let me be honest
  - I don't either.



- I don't like to
  - preach them either.
  
- Firstly,
  - trying to be true
    - to the Word of God.
  
- Not just giving
  - people what
    - they want to hear.
  
- More importantly,
  - if you didn't need this
    - you have friends
      - that do need this.

- Pass it on.

## The Good

- Why this destruction???

### Zephaniah 3:8–9 (ESV)

“Therefore wait for me,” declares the LORD, “for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

--

“For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord.

- Why judgment?
  - to purify earth
  - remove sin

- cleanse universe.
- If we want
  - a pure heaven
  - pure new earth.
  - Evil must be purged.
- In a sense,
  - this is a good thing!

Zephaniah 3:13 (ESV)

those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid."

- After the destruction
  - of the wicked comes
  - time of peace...

- Then it will be
- time to praise!!!

Zephaniah 3:14–17 (ESV)

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

--

The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

--

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

--

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

- Don't worry.
- time to praise

- coming soon.
- Just before us
- time of
- trial
- doom
- hardship
- Just on the
- other side of that.
- Joy unspeakable!

He sat by the fire of seven-fold heat,

As He watched by the precious ore.

And closer He bent with a searching gaze

As He heated it more and more.

--

He knew He had ore that could stand the test

And He wanted the finest gold,

To mold as a crown for the King to wear,

Set with gems of price untold.

--

So He laid our gold in the burning fire,

Though we fain would have said Him, "Nay."

And He watched the dross that we had not seen,

As it melted and passed away.

--

And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright

And our eyes were so dim with tears,

As we saw the fire, not the Master's hand,

And questioned with anxious fear.

--

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow,  
As it mirrored a Form above  
That bent o'er the fire, though unseen by us  
With a look of infinite love.

--

Can we think that it pleases His loving heart  
To cause a moment of pain?  
Ah, no, but He saw through the present cross  
The bliss of eternal gain.

--

So He waited there with a watchful eye,  
With a love that is strong and sure,  
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat  
Than was needed to make it pure!

Source Unknown.

Appeal

- Hold on.
- Judgment is coming.
- Crazy time.
- Afterwards
  - we get to party!
- The dangers
  - and toils
  - before/during
    - Day of the Lord
- But it
  - will be worth it!!!