

My Favorite Thing About ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah 3:17

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Zephaniah's prophetic ministry took place during the reign of Josiah, the last king to bring revival (641-609) in Judah.

There is quite a bit of bad news in Zephaniah – more than 2/3 of the book is filled with woes and warnings – The Day of the Lord is coming!

First to Judah and Jerusalem:

- **Zephaniah 1:2-6** - I will completely remove all *things* from the face of the earth," declares the LORD. "I will remove man and beast; I will remove the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, And the ruins along with the wicked; and I will cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD. So I will stretch out My hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will cut off the remnant of **Baal** from this place, *and* the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests. And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven, and those who bow down *and* swear to the LORD and *yet* swear by **Milcom (Molech)**, and those who have turned back from following the LORD, and those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him."
- **Zephaniah 1:12** - And it will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are stagnant in spirit, who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!'
- **Zephaniah 1:15-18** - A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶ a day of trumpet and battle cry, against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. ¹⁷ And I will bring distress on men, so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; and their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. ¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Then to the Nations:

- **Zephaniah 2:4** - Gaza will be abandoned and Ashkelon left in ruins. At midday Ashdod will be emptied and Ekron uprooted.
- **Zephaniah 2:8-11** - I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land. ⁹ Therefore, as surely as I live," declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, "surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah -- a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever.... ¹⁰ This is what they will get in return for their pride, for insulting and mocking the people of the LORD Almighty. ¹¹ The LORD will be awesome to them when he destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship him, everyone in its own land.
- **Zephaniah 3:5-8** - The LORD within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame. ⁶ "I have cut off nations; their strongholds are demolished. I have left their streets deserted, with no one passing through. Their cities are destroyed; no one will be left-- no one at all. ⁷ I said to the city, 'Surely you will fear me and accept correction!' Then her dwelling would not be cut off, nor all my punishments come upon her. But they were still eager to act corruptly in all they did. ⁸ Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them -- all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger.

As with all the previous books we've covered, Zephaniah doesn't just threaten judgment, he also offers a way out.... There is a solution....

There is a remedy.... Humble yourself and Repent.... Come back – from the edge – before it's too late.

- **Zephaniah 2:1-3** - before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD's wrath comes upon you. ³ **Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility;**

All in all, pretty grim, right? The Day of the Lord **IS COMING** and there will be **UNIVERSAL** judgment.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About ZEPHANIAH** – In the midst of all the doom and gloom, God sings over His remnant people.

- **Zephaniah 3:12-17** - The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; for they shall feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble." ¹⁴ Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O Israel! **Rejoice and exult** with all *your* heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away *His* judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you will fear disaster no more. ¹⁶ In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; do not let your hands fall limp. ¹⁷ **"The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.**

The "rejoice" of verses 14 and 17 have different meanings:

- **v. 14 = Brighten-up, cheer-up, make merry**

The Remnant are called to **cheer-up, brighten-up, make merry**. Why? Because the judgments of God have been severe, but the enemy has been turned back – the judgments are over and their King is once again in their midst! They have nothing to fear **EVER AGAIN**... Hallelujah!!

- **v. 17 = Spin around with violent emotion, be glad, be joyful**

Zephaniah 3:17, then, is more accurately translated as, "**Jehovah your God is in your midst, the Mighty One will save; He will exult over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His Love, He will dance over you with shouts of joy.**"

What an amazing verse! Can you imagine?! The God of the Universe singing and dancing over you with unabashed joy? How awesome it must be to hear His shouts of joy - How breathtaking to see God dance.

It reminds me of **Isaiah 62:1-5 and Revelation 21:1-7**:

- For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. ² The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. ³ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. ⁵ As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; **as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.**
- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

No matter what lies Satan whispers in your ear, no false god **WILL EVER** love you like this. No idol **WILL EVER** love you like this. No person **WILL EVER** love you like this. Nothing the world offers **WILL EVER** love you like this.

- **Luke 15:5-7** - And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more **rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents** than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.
- **Luke 15:9-10** - And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**"
- **Luke 15:21-24** - The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, **'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'** So, they began to celebrate.

John Piper: "We must banish from our minds forever any thought that God admits us begrudgingly into his Kingdom, as though Christ found a loophole in the law.... No way! God himself, the Judge, put Christ forward as our substitutionary sacrifice, and when we trust Him, God welcomes us with bells on. He puts a ring on our finger, kills the fatted calf, throws a party, shouts a shout that shakes the ends of creation and leads in the festal dance."

- **Hebrews 12:2** - Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the **joy** set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Do you know what that joy was? **YOU!!** As He died, Jesus saw **YOUR** face. The cross was worth it to Him because **YOU** are worth it to Him. And He can't wait until **THAT DAY** when all the ugly of sin is forever gone and we get to dance!!

You are loved.
You are chosen.
You are cherished.
You are forgiven.
You are free.
You are redeemed.
And He is singing over you.

That's why Ch. 3 - V. 17 is My Favorite Thing About Zephaniah.