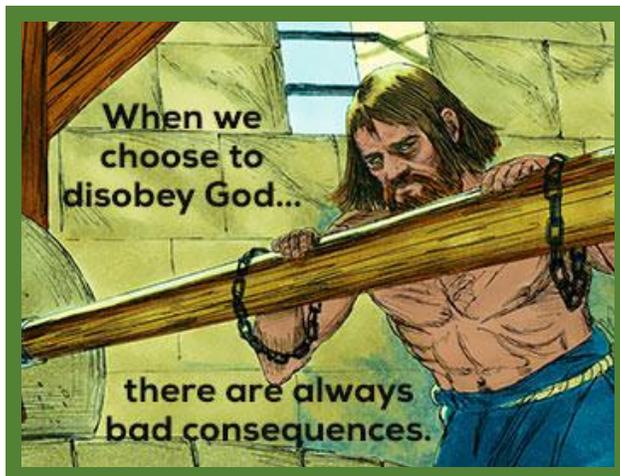


SUMMER QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2016
THEME: TOWARD A NEW CREATION
UNIT ONE – JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

“THE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE”



Sunday School Lesson No. II – June 12, 2016

Presented by Rev. Frank A. Davis, III, Pastor-Teacher

Lesson Text: Zephaniah 3:1-8

Required Reading: Zephaniah 2:4 – 3:8

Motto Text: Zephaniah 3:8 (NLT), *“Therefore, be patient,” says the LORD. “Soon I will stand and accuse these evil nations. For I have decided to gather the kingdoms of the earth and pour out my fiercest anger and fury on them. All the earth will be devoured by the fire of my jealousy.”*

Reliable Resources: Preaching from the Prophets (Kyle Yates); Word Search 10 Electronic Library; Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Precepts for Living (UMI Publishing); MacArthur Study Bible

INTRODUCTION

Beloved, before God unleashes His awesome fury and indignation, He speaks not only to Judah in Chapter 2, but He sheds His ring of terror around Judah’s neighbors.

God speaks to Philistia on the west (2:4-7); Moab and Ammon on the east (2:8-11). Jehovah speaks to Ethiopia on the south (2:12) and to Assyria on the north (2:13-15). God humbled Philistia; He humbled the relatives of Israel, Moab and Ammon. God challenged the Egyptians through war and the death of their youth. Finally, He cut down Assyria for her great pride.

But beloved, it truly startled me that Zephaniah pronounced such woeful judgment on Jerusalem, the sacred city of God. He realized historically during the reign of their great king Josiah, there had been a fiery campaign to step out idol worship. (Read II Kings 22; II Chronicles 34:1-3). Of course, Zephaniah prophesied during this era. But what God’s prophet saw was that although a worthy king sought to please God, there was a heart of hypocrisy lurking in the people. They appeared sacred on the outside, but they never truly repented from their idolatrous hearts. (Read II Kings 22:24-37).

Anticipated Power Points:

- **Departure from the Lord. Zephaniah 3:1-4**
- **Declaration from the Lord. Zephaniah 3:5-7**
- **Deliverance by the Lord. Zephaniah 3:8**

LESSON OUTLINE

Quoting Dr. Warren Wiersbe: “Zephaniah saw deeper, he saw the hearts of the people, and he knew their religious zeal was not sincere. The reforms were shallow; the people got rid of the idols in their homes, but not the idols in their hearts. The rulers of the land were still greedy and disobedient, and the city of Jerusalem was the source of all kinds of wickedness in the land. Even today, many believers lack discernment and think that every ‘religious movement’ is a genuine work of the Lord. Sometimes mere outward reformation only prepares the way for a work of the devil (Matt. 12:43-45).”

I. Departure from the Lord. Zephaniah 3:1-4

Beloved, let me open by saying there are no perfect people, even among the earthly saints of God. But God expects those of us who are called by His name to not be sinless, but to sin less! Note the folly of Judah’s leaders: The city of Jerusalem has slumped into degradation and devilish shame. It is no longer referred to as the city where God’s name is declared, but she has fallen into a state of filth, pollution, and ungodly oppression. Beloved, this is a shame! Why? Because Judah has forsaken its God! Now it has to pay the high cost of rebellion and sin. Remember Galatians 6:7-8, *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*

Beloved, Jerusalem, from its leading citizens on down, had become a den of secret iniquity and a cesspool of festering waste in the sight of the Lord. Her princes lived to consume the people and her prophets were arrogant opportunists who sought only their own pleasure in the lives and souls of the people. Beloved, this is a picture of the political kingpins who campaign in our day. They claim to be servants but they perform like potentates....God, please deliver us! And Lord help us and those of my profession, preachers and religious superstars, who have become pimps and profiteers over God’s heritage. Beloved, our God will not sit idle in the midst of such sin.

II. Declaration from the Lord. Zephaniah 3:5-7

v. 5 – Zephaniah declares first that God is faithful. Though a deceiving element had arisen, Jehovah is still faithful and observant to the deeds of the ungodly. The unjust will not escape.

v. 6 – God’s judging hand has crushed the cities surrounding Judah as an example of His righteousness, but Judah remains cold and rebellious, not moved by God’s hand to their neighbors. (Read Zephaniah 2:4-15).

III. Deliverance by the Lord. Zephaniah 3:8

The prophet warns that the judgment will come and we know that it came from the Babylonian captivity, which lasted 70 years (Jer. 29:10, *“For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”*). But Zephaniah looked even further down the corridor of prophesy to an extreme purging, not only of Judah but of the world. When this cleansing is completed, then Judah and the Gentiles will bring honor, glory, worship and praise to the One and Only true God.

CLOSING

How will this cleansing be accomplished? It was made possible through the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. Praise God for that precious flow that will make us white as snow. To God be the glory!



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TV Broadcast: WHNO TV-Channel 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m.

Looking Ahead: June 19, 2016 Zephaniah 3:9-14, 20

Please join us each Wednesday noon at Bibleway as Pastor Davis teaches the Sunday School Lesson