

SUMMER QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2016

THEME: TOWARD A NEW CREATION

UNIT ONE – Judgment and Salvation

“THE TERROR AND TENDERNESS OF DIVINE LOVE... THE WARNING”

ZEPHANIAH					
Judgment and Doom					
“I will completely remove all things from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD. (1:2)					
INTRODUCTION (1:1)	DIVINE JUDGMENT ON JUDAH	INVITATION	SURE DOOM OF NATIONS	SURE DOOM OF JERUSALEM	Joy and Deliverance
	CHAPTER 1:2-18	CHAPTER 2:1-3	CHAPTER 2:4-15	CHAPTER 3:1-8	KINGDOM PROMISES TO REMNANT
Scope	Judah		Nations		Remnant
Subject	Sin	Hope	Desolation		Restoration
Key Words	“The day of the LORD”	“Seek”	“Woe”		The LORD is with you
Theme	Judgment and doom are certain unless there is repentance before God. Only then can there be hope and restoration.				
Key Verses	1:14; 2:3				
Christ in Zephaniah	Jesus Christ hides us from God’s wrath, and is the One who will someday rule the earth as King of Israel (Zephaniah 3:15-17; see Colossians 3:3-4).				

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Sunday School Lesson No. I - June 5, 2016

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

Lesson Text: Zephaniah 1:4-6, 14-16; 2:3

Required Reading: Zephaniah 1:2 – 2:4

Motto Text: Zephaniah 2:3 (NLT), *“Seek the LORD, all who are humble, and follow his commands. Seek to do what is right and to live humbly. Perhaps even yet the LORD will protect you—protect you from his anger on that day of destruction.”*

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

BACKGROUND

In the 7th Century B. C., God raised the prophet Zephaniah, who was called by some a puritan! This was because he was an aristocrat of royal blood, who lived and was educated among the elite. But his heart was stirred by the Divine hand of purity. He sought to present the truth to a people who through some grim years of sin, had forgotten the real nature of Jehovah. In fact, because of Jehovah’s silence during their sins, they thought it to be consent. This would later strike terror to those who were sinning among them. Yet Zephaniah gave hope to the hopeless which shows the tender side of God’s Divine love (Zeph. 2:3). After his pronouncement of judgment on Judah and its constituents who would not repent, he turns to their neighbors on the west, east, south and north to declare God’s judgment, but closes his prophesy with the tender love of hope for the remnant of the saints who would turn their hearts back to God and the restoration that would await them in the future.

INTRODUCTION

As we begin a new quarter, I will begin with a quote from the Expositor and Illuminator by Union Gospel Press on this unit called Looking Ahead: “Sin and God’s judgment for sin are prominent subjects in Scripture. Beginning with its entrance into the world in Genesis 3, the Bible traces sin and its effects throughout the history of mankind. Alongside this emphasis on human sin, however, we find the all-important biblical teaching of salvation.

Our study this quarter begins with three lessons from the short book of Zephaniah, which speaks of both judgment and salvation. Zephaniah’s warning in our first lesson about the coming Day of the Lord has much to say to us today, for we live in a similar immoral environment. The second lesson reminds us of God’s holiness and the dire consequences of living unholy lives. Lesson 3, however, shows us that God is also gracious. There is always hope, for God Himself offers it to all who look to Him in faith.”

Anticipated Power Points:

- **The Warning Declared...Judgment is Coming. Zephaniah 1:2-18**
- **The Wrath Clothed in Mercy. Zephaniah 2:1-3**

LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Warning Declared...Judgment is Coming. Zephaniah 1:2-18

A. God’s terror against His country. vv. 2-3

This terror is best described as the “*Day of the Lord*.” The Jews thought the “*Day of the Lord*” would be the time that Jehovah would bring swift destruction against the enemies of Israel, only to find out that it will be a time when God will bring judgment on all the wicked, even Israel! (Read Amos 5:18-20).

B. God’s terror against the compromising. vv. 4-8

The hand of the Lord is against Judah because she compromised her worship with other gods. Exodus 20:3 explicitly declared Israel would “*have no other gods*” before Jehovah. Israel had a variety of other gods (Baal, Molech, Milcom and all the host of the heavenly zodiac). They sacrificed their children, participated in sacred prostitution, you name it. (Read Lev. 18:21; Ez. 23:37; Amos 5:25-26, etc.). According to verse 6, many of Judah’s people forsook the Lord to worship and practice idolatrous worship.

v. 7 – The prophet orders Judah to “shut their mouths” and prepare for God’s judgment that would be meted out by His invited guests. According to MacArthur, “The guests were the dreaded Babylonians, who as ‘priests’ were invited to slay the sacrifice, i.e., Judah (cf. Isa. 13:3; 34:6; Jer. 46:10; Hab. 1:6).”

v. 8 – Even the king’s children and princes who had adopted the pagan ways and means of dress and worship were judged and destroyed. Note Zedekiah’s children’s fate in II Kings 25:7.

C. God’s terror described in His coming judgment. vv. 9-18

vv. 9-11 – The merchants and money grabbers took full advantage of the disadvantaged, plundering the poor and seeking to make money in any way possible!

v. 12 – God’s all-seeing eye will not allow anyone to escape the judgment.

vv. 13-18 – Describes the utter destruction that the Lord will mete out on Judah at every level. There will be no worth in human life and dignity. Beloved, sin’s price is too high. Deuteronomy 28:29, “*And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.*”

II. The Wrath Clothed in Mercy. Zephaniah 2:1-3

A. Like in the days of Sodom, God searched for 10 righteous to save the city (Gen. 18:32). vv. 1-2.

B. God offers refuge to the repentive. v. 3

Isaiah 26:20, “*Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.*”

CLOSING

Beloved, we must respect the terror and tenderness of Divine love. This week we focused on the warning. Let us take refuge in the Solid Rock, Jesus Christ, our blessed hope!



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Looking Ahead: June 12, 2016 Zephaniah 3:6-8

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