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Zephaniah

Theme: The Coming Day of the Lord

Outline:

1:1-2:3 Warning to Judah of God’s coming Judgment

2:4-3:8 God’s Judgment on specific nations

3:9-20 Future Restoration for Israel

The theme of Zephaniah is the Day of the LORD. The Day of the LORD speaks of a special time of God’s intervention when He displays His LORDSHIP authority over all. Prophetically it looks forward to the DARK days of worldwide judgment that ushers in the Messiah at His Second Coming.

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Zephaniah 3:8 (NKJV)

8 “Therefore wait for Me,” says the LORD, “Until **the day** I rise up for plunder; **My determination** is to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms, **To pour on them My indignation, All My fierce anger; All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy.**

God’s jealousy has to do with Him being rightly revered and worshipped as the ONE true God that He has revealed Himself to be through Israel – through the Exodus, through the history of Israel, through the prophets, through the Messiah, through the last days revelation, and so forth. This the world has failed to do. The world has shown no regard for the God of Israel and so this is what He has determined. In the end the world will be forced to recognize HIS LORDSHIP AUTHORITY. In the end all will bow before Him.

But in this process God is going to bring about a restored remnant in Israel who will be true worshippers. They will be those who call on the name of the LORD (v. 9); whom God calls “My worshipers” (v. 10); a people who have been humbled (v. 11); a people who “trust in the name of the LORD” (v. 12); and a people of truth (v. 13). Thus, Israel will be brought to true repentance, and thus they will be restored in the kingdom.

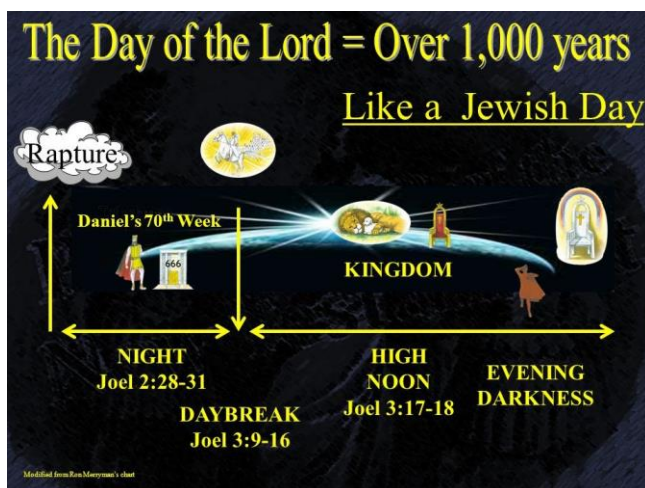
The Day of the LORD has 2 aspects. It has a DARK phase of judgment, but it also has a LIGHT phase of blessing. It is this light phase of blessing that is in view at the end of Zephaniah as seen in 3:9-20.

Zephaniah is largely about the DARK phase of judgment warnings as seen in chapter 3. God duly warns before He brings judgment. Prior to the fall of Jerusalem at the time of Babylonian Captivity 2 Chronicles 36:15 says, “And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them...”

Jeremiah over and over says this same thing. The people could not say they had not been warned and the same is true for the whole world.

Zephaniah 1-2 largely warns about the coming Day of the LORD judgment, but it ends with an emphasis on the restoration blessing phase.

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Tonight we pick our study up at Zephaniah 3:14.

Zephaniah 3:14–17 (NKJV)

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

What a difference!

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Zephaniah 1:15 (NKJV)

15 That day is a day of **wrath**, A day of **trouble** and **distress**, A day of **devastation** and **desolation**, A day of **darkness** and **gloominess**, A day of **clouds** and **thick darkness**,

CONTRAST....

Zephaniah 3:14 (NKJV)

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion! **Shout**, O Israel! Be **glad** and **rejoice** with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

The kingdom has now come. Israel has been cleansed as seen in verses 9-13. This is now the time of kingdom restoration and blessing. And the defining emphasis at this time is JOY – SUPREME exuberant joy!

Singing in the Bible mostly is expressive of JOY! The “daughter of Zion” is told to SING. Daughter of Zion is a poetical name or affectionate title for Jerusalem which as the kingdom capital of the world personifies Israel.

This will be the central headquarters of the world – of Christ’s kingdom empire. Psalm 48 calls Jerusalem “the city of our God” (v. 1) and “The city of the great King” (v. 2).

Israel is told to SING and to SHOUT! They are told to be glad and rejoice with all their heart! This is unbridled holy joy! This is the time to celebrate with supreme exhilarating joy. The kingdom has come! Israel has been restored! This is a time for high exhalation and celebration!

The Jews are addressed with 3 names here: Daughter of Zion, Israel, and Daughter of Jerusalem! This is addressed to the Jews in particular. The DARK phase of the Day of the LORD has passed; the Messiah has come and established the kingdom, Israel is now restored and the glorious Day of the LORD is in place! This is the time for joyous celebration in the superlative (cf. Isa. 12; 35; 60:5).

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Isaiah 12:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth.

6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”

15 The LORD has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You shall see disaster no more.

Three reasons are given for this call to supreme joy and gladness.

First, the LORD has taken away Israel's judgments.

The LORD's disciplinary judgments had been severe. Isa. 40:2 says of Israel, "she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins." To whom much is given there is much accountability. Israel had been the most blessed of nations and therefore the most responsible and therefore had received double for all her sins.

God put Israel through a whole battery of judgments in fulfillment of Lev. 26 and Deut. 27-28. This is what the times of the Gentiles was all about (Dan. 2, 7; Lk. 21:24). In Dan. 9:24-27 God outlined His special disciplinary dealings for Israel and what they would have to go through to bring them to kingdom restoration.

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Daniel 9:24 (NKJV)

24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

Within this framework of 70 weeks, 490 years of special dealings, God is going to accomplish six things.

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- 1. To finish the transgression:** To bring an end to Israel's rebellion.
- 2. To make an end of sins:** To bring an end to Israel's wayward ways.
- 3. To make reconciliation for iniquity:** They will be brought into right relationship with God.
- 4. To bring in everlasting righteousness:** Completion of the 70 weeks will usher in kingdom justice.
- 5. To seal up vision and prophesy:** Completion and fulfillment.
- 6. Anoint the Most Holy:** Inauguration of the Millennial Temple.

In Zephaniah 3 this regiment of things will now have been completed. God's purifying work in Israel is now complete and kingdom restoration is in place.

It is time for rejoicing because the LORD's judgments on Israel are now past. The 70 weeks of Daniel have been completed and God has accomplished His restoration objectives.

Second, the LORD has cast out the enemy of Israel. The enemy may simply be a general term for those who have served as Israel's enemies in her time of distress during the times of the Gentiles.

The whole world is rallied against Israel which comes to a climax at Armageddon as seen in Zechariah 14. The United Nations passes far more resolutions against Israel than any other nation in the world including the most notorious regimes. In a very real sense the whole world of the Gentiles stands as the enemy of the Jew on a consistent basis – with few exceptions.

The enemy could be the ultimate arch enemy called the Antichrist who rallies the world against Israel who in the end is taken out and cast directly in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). Or it could refer to the devil himself who is that ultimate enemy of Israel who at the time of Christ's coming will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for the duration of the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:1-3). Perhaps a combination of all these called "enemy" are in view. Certainly, it applies to all of them.

And third, the King of Israel, the LORD is now in their midst. This is the greatest cause of joy of all!

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Psalm 24:7–10 (NKJV)

7 Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

Who is this King of Israel? He is the King of glory! He is the LORD which is the name YHWH – which is the most sacred name for God. This King is none other than YHWH Himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Messiah is the LORD. The Messiah is the King of Israel Who is divine – He is both God and Man in one person as seen in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This truth is interwoven throughout the OT Scriptures for those who have eyes to see.

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Zechariah 14:9 (NKJV)

9 And the **LORD shall be King** over all the earth. In that day it shall be “The LORD is one,” And His name one.

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Jeremiah 23:5–6 (NKJV)

5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to **David** a Branch of righteousness; **A King** shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is **His name** by which He will be called: **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Think about this: This King Who is God Almighty in the flesh Whom we know to be the Lord Jesus Christ will dwell right in the midst of Israel; right in the midst of Jerusalem. This is Israel’s kingdom GLORY! They had a taste of it in the incarnation at Christ’s first coming, but this kingdom glory is going to far eclipse it as Christ will be present in His resurrection glory dwelling right in Israel’s midst (cf. Ezek. 34:24; Matt. 19:28). What a day that will be!

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Matthew 19:28 (NKJV)

28 So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the **Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory**, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Time for Israel to celebrate with kingdom joy! No more judgments, no more enemies to harass them, no more disaster. This is all behind them and to make it so is the KING of Israel, the LORD Himself is dwelling in their midst. He is their protector! He is their assurance of permanent safety and security!

When I was small we had these arguments about “My dad is bigger than your dad.” Of course it was juvenile. But Israel’s God is BIGGER than any force in the universe and He will be dwelling right in their midst! Nobody going to mess with Israel. This is the basis for their supreme JOY!

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak.

In this kingdom day there will be no cause for fear! Jerusalem, the most trodden down city in the world during the times of the Gentiles will now know perfect peace and security because her divine King is dwelling in her midst. No more fear for Jerusalem – ever again!

No more reason for discouragement, despair, or despondency as symbolized in the hands being weak and limp. No! Now their hands will be lifted up in the strength of JOY and exuberant gladness. Messiah’s presence makes all the difference!

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Joel 3:17 (NKJV)

17 “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”

Slide # 13

Micah 4:3–4 (NKJV)

3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **Neither shall they learn war anymore.**

4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, **And no one shall make them afraid;** For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

17 The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”

In verse 15 we saw the “King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst” and now in verse 17 we see the “LORD your God in your midst”. The LORD’s intimate presence in the midst of His people Israel will be the dominant feature for them in the kingdom. There is nothing greater than the intimate presence of the LORD.

Here in verse 17 the LORD's presence signifies the experience of His security, joy and love.

The LORD in their midst is "The Mighty One". The Hebrew translated here as "Mighty" is the word "*gibbor*". The sense of this word is "valiant warrior" or "mighty one who saves". The LORD is their mighty SAVIOR! He is their protector Who delivers them from all threat of harm and danger.

Note the emphasis: The LORD dwelling in their midst means "no more disaster" in verse 15; the LORD dwelling in their midst is their ever protective Savior!

Not only is Israel called on to rejoice supremely (v. 14) but the LORD Himself will rejoice over them with gladness. The joy goes both ways. God's people are celebrating with joy and so is the LORD.

The kingdom is a time of great joy all around!

And then we have this phrase that is difficult to translate.

Slide # 14

He will quiet you with His love – NKJV

He will be quiet in His love – NASB

He will quiet you by His love – ESV

Very literally this says, "He will rest in His love". One commentator says this is expressing a love "too great for words to express".

His love will be so strong that it will hush all motion and speech, so as to create a rapturous quiet amidst His redeemed.

– ***The Believer's Study Bible***

...a love too great for words... For the LORD's own, His final word is not anger, as with the unbelieving nations, but of love as expressed in this beautiful verse. When it comes to His people, chastised and forgiven, the LORD rests His case in love and rejoicing.

– ***C.I. Scofield***

And verse 17 ends on a very unique note: Speaking of God it says, “**He will rejoice over you with singing.**” God is going to sing a song of joy over His people.

The only other time in all the Bible we have the LORD on record as singing is in Matt. 26:30 when He sang a hymn with the disciples.

At His first coming the emphasis was on Jesus’ experience as a man of sorrows as Israel rejected Him (Isa. 53).
But at His Second coming as Israel is repentant, He will then restore them and He will rejoice over them with singing. You talk about SPECIAL MUSIC – this is it!

In the presence of the LORD is fullness of joy. And in the kingdom God’s people will be full of joy and God Himself will express great joy over His people (cf. Isa. 65:2).

The kingdom is a time of EXTREME JOY!

Even so come Lord Jesus!