

## Slide # 1

### **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**

As noted, the theme of Zephaniah is the coming Day of the Lord. This is also the main theme for the book of Joel in the OT. This is a major theme scattered throughout the prophets in the OT and then built on in the NT climaxing in the book of Revelation which brings all things to consummation.

The Day of the LORD is just as the title suggests. This is all about the LORDSHIP of the LORD. It is the time when God intervenes in human history to show undeniably that He is LORD OVER ALL! He does this in fulfillment of prophecy that is centered in Israel in particular.

There is both a short view and a long view when it comes to the Day of the Lord prophecies. Sometimes we call this near/partial fulfillment in contrast to distant/complete fulfillment. The Day of the Lord prophecies major on two times in particular, that being the time of the Babylonian Captivity; and then the Tribulation Period which will climax in the Second Coming of Christ.

By way of review:

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Day of the LORD

- **Definition:** The ***Day of the LORD*** is the time when God overtly intervenes in human affairs (especially in relation to Israel) with catastrophic judgment in fulfillment of prophecy which overwhelmingly demonstrates His **LORDSHIP!**

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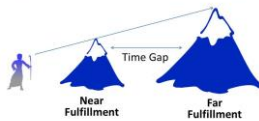
#### *Day of the LORD Judgment!*

Interwoven Aspects...

- Near \* Far
- Local \* Universal
- Judah/Jerusalem \* The Nations

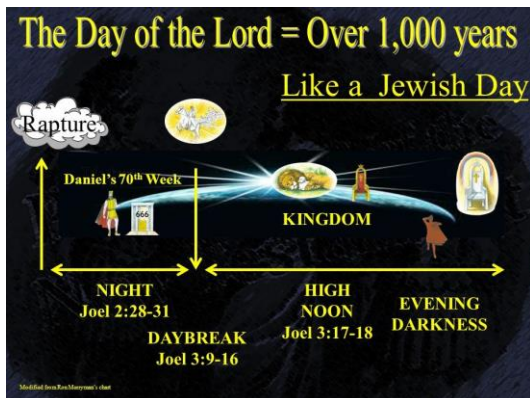
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#### Prophetic Telescoping



And we note that there is a dark/judgment phase of the Day of the Lord intervention and then there is a light/blessing phase of the Day of the Lord which follows the pattern of a typical Jewish Day.

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Have you ever thought about this: Without divine intervention the trend for humanity is ever an increasing downward pattern as far as depravity. We need divine intervention. That is true individually and it is true corporately in terms of humanity generally.

After the fall of mankind things steadily got worse and worse until “every intent of the thoughts” of mankind were “only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). This called for divine intervention in the form of a worldwide flood.

After the flood things started heading down hill again pretty fast to where in united rebellion it became so bad that God said, “now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them” (Gen. 11:6). And so God necessarily intervened once again confusing their language and scattered them over the face of all the earth (Gen. 11:7-8).

Then God called one man out of the nations by the name of Abraham by which He would build a special chosen nation. But it wasn't to long and even this chosen people spiraled down into the times of the Judges in which “every one did what was right in his own eyes” (Jn. 17:6; 21:25). Time after time God intervened to bring them back to repentance.

Then came the time of the kings which did not fare much better. The people continually gravitated towards idolatry which resulted in God's divine intervention of judgment that resulted in captivity.

Coming back from captivity the people gravitated towards religious legalism that became so bad that when the true Messiah showed up they rejected Him. Once again God intervened in divine judgment in causing His temple to be destroyed in 70 AD and the Jews to be scattered throughout the whole world.

During the course of the Church age the over all trend is growing apostasy. Paul said, “evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse” and they have (2 Tim. 3:13). Yes, there have been pockets of “revival” but once Christianity has gone into an area the general trend tends to be downward. All the major universities in the USA started out emphasizing a godly education but today all are apostate.

And so we are awaiting the next great divine intervention which the Bible describes as the last days Day of the Lord. God will remove His true Church and put His people into the purifying fires of the Tribulation Period which is called “the time of Jacob's trouble” but Jer. 30:7 goes on to say, “But he shall be saved out of it.”

This intervention in the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel will be the greatest of all judgment interventions and will result in national Israel turning to the LORD. Then will come the Second Coming when Messiah/Jesus comes and ushers in the blessing phase of the Day of the Lord. In this kingdom phase Christ will rule with a rod of iron – clearly manifesting His Lordship in a way that will be totally unchallenged (cf. Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

Finally, at the end of the millennial reign of Christ Satan will be loosed for a short time and it doesn't take long for the repopulated earth (those born in the kingdom age) to head south and follow Satan in this final stand of rebellion. God will again intervene in the very last phase of the Day of the Lord intervention and with fire from heaven devour them all (Rev. 20:7-10). Thus, the Day of the LORD will close the chapter on human history and the door will open to the eternal state with a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21).

In Zephaniah the first 2 and ½ chapters largely deal with the dark judgment phase of the Day of the LORD, but then Zeph. 3:9-20 deals with the kingdom blessing phase.

Throughout redemptive history God consistently holds out the KINGDOM HOPE for His people. People need hope! People without the LORD and hope beyond this life consistently become disillusioned. World Magazine reported that 44% of teens reported feeling “persistently sad and hopeless”. They shared that 26% of young girls had contemplated suicide over the last year. And they said this “calls into question whether the benefit of pandemic measures outweighed the social cost born by many students.” (World Magazine, May 7, 2022 – p. 15)

People need HOPE! And praise the LORD He is a God that provides HOPE – ultimately a kingdom hope! As God's people when we come to the end of this life – a KINGDOM hope remains. The Best is still to be!

In Zeph. 3:8 God says that He has determined to gather all the nations and pour out on them His fierce anger in judgment! We don't have to wonder where it is going. The world is on a collision course with God's judgment! God is on record as saying so.

But then in the very next verse God says He is going to bring about restoration for His repentant people. They will be a changed people. And it will be a time of boundless joy for both God and His people as seen in Zeph. 3:14-17. And that brings us to the conclusion of the book in Zeph. 3:18-20.

### **Zephaniah 3:18–20 (NKJV)**

**18 “I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, Who are among you, To whom its reproach is a burden.**

God will do this! God will bring about Israel's restoration. Nine times in Zeph. 3:9-20 God says, “I will”.

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3:9 “I will restore...”

3:11 “I will take away...those who rejoice in pride...”

3:12 “I will leave...a meek and humble people...”

3:18 “I will gather those who sorrow...”

3:19 “I will deal with all who afflict you...”

3:19 “I will save the lame...”

3:19 “I will appoint them for praise...”

3:20 “I will bring you back...”

3:20 “I will give you fame and praise...”

Clearly this will be a God-thing – He will do it – He will make it happen. What a great encouragement this is to the godly remnant who also have to endure the hard times before the kingdom blessings get here. The kingdom is coming! We have hope! God will do this! He is very clear and emphatic on it.

Prior to the Second Coming many Jews will come back to the land (cf. 2:1) but not all of them. Even at the Second Coming many will have to be gathered back to the land of promise – and they will be!

God will then gather the godly remnant back to the land who sorrowed over being scattered out of the land and not being able to worship at the annual feasts as proscribed by God in the OT as seen in Exodus 23 and Lev 23 (cf. Ex. 23:14-17).

These godly people had been burdened by the reproach put on them in being exiled out of the promised land. It had hampered their worship, but now God will restore them. As we noted in verse 10 God calls them “My worshipers”. In the kingdom the special place of worship will be at the Millennial Temple in the holy city of Jerusalem.

We have a hint here that at least some of the biblical feasts in the OT will once again be celebrated in the kingdom. Zechariah seems to support this indicating certainly that the feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated (cf. Zech. 14:16-21).

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**Zechariah 14:16-17 (NKJV)**

**16** And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep **the Feast of Tabernacles.**

**17** And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

**19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, And gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame In every land where they were put to shame.**

At the Second coming there is going to be a divine reckoning with all those who have afflicted God's people the Jews (cf. Mt. 25:32). God will truly bless those who blessed His people and curse those who cursed them (Gen. 12:3).

He will deal with those who afflicted His people, but He will save the lame (the afflicted) and He will gather those who were driven out. God is bringing His people HOME. The people of Israel and the land of Israel belong together as soul and body. Isaiah repeatedly talks about a special highway that will be constructed to make way for the return of His people (cf. Isa. 11:6; 19:23; 35:8; 62:10).

And God will appoint for converted Israel praise and fame in all the very places where previously they had been put to shame. Suddenly, it will be the greatest thing in all the world to be a Jew.

With this millennial blessing, national Israel will go from being the most hated nation in the world today, to being the most admired and looked-up to nation. Anti-Semitism will be a thing of the past.

**– Tim LaHaye**

### **Slide # 8**

#### **Zechariah 8:23 (NKJV)**

**23** “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days **ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man,** saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” ’ ”

**20 At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you; For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes,” Says the LORD.**

This is the time of the kingdom inaugurated at the Second Coming. Again, the emphasis is made that God will gather them.

And once again the emphasis is made that God will give them fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth. The Jews will be recognized as the most special people in all the world. They truly will be favored above all.

### **Slide # 9**

#### **Deuteronomy 26:18–19 (NKJV)**

**18** Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments,

**19** and that **He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor,** and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”

#### **Deuteronomy 28:13 (NKJV)**

**13** And the **LORD will make you the head and not the tail;** you shall be **above only,** and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.

Restored Israel will now be in the place of honor that God intended all along for His people with a holy calling.

God says, this will happen, “When I return your captives before eyes”. This phrase “return your captives” is the equivalent of saying, “restore your fortunes”. It will be an obvious God thing when He does it – as He says, “before your eyes”. They will see it unfold right before their eyes (cf. Zeph. 2:7).

For thousands of years, including today, the name Israelite or Jew has been a reproach and a byword in all nations. In the day when the Lord will “turn back your captivity,” however, it will not be a reproach but “a praise!” – **Henry Morris**

And the book closes with “**Says the LORD**”. The word LORD here is YHWH – God’s sacred covenant name. The covenant God of Israel will do it. It is a divine certainty. It has God’s Word of promise on it. All the covenant promises made in the Abrahamic covenant will now be fulfilled.

Ultimately all these promises will see their fulfillment in the millennial kingdom.

At best, the prophets used the return from Babylon as a mere foreshadowing of the future Messianic Age when the Lord would be faithful to keep His covenant with Israel literally and completely.

– ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

My King was born King. The Bible says He’s a Seven Way King. He’s the King of the Jews—that’s an Ethnic King. He’s the King of Israel—that’s a National King. He’s the King of righteousness. He’s the King of the ages. He’s the King of Heaven. He’s the King of glory. He’s the King of kings and He is the Lord of lords. Now that’s my King. Well, I wonder if you know Him. Do you know Him?

Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Well, all the power belongs to my King. We’re around here talking about black power and white power and green power, but in the end all that matters is God’s power. Thine is the power. Yes. And the glory. We try to get prestige and honor and glory for ourselves, but the glory is all His. Yes. Thine is the Kingdom and the power and glory, forever and ever and ever and ever. How long is that? Forever and ever and ever and ever. . . And when you get through with all of the ever’s, then [there’s still forever more]. . . Amen!

- ***Pastor S.M. Lockridge***

In the Day of the LORD all will know our Jesus is LORD over all. Hab. 2:14 says, in that day “the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.”

In that Day the earth will be totally saturated and filled with the truth that the LORD IS LORD over all. It will be a time of glorious restoration for God’s people Israel and for the whole world.



**Isaiah 62:7 (NKJV)**

7 And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Keep praying! Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6). Give Him no rest till He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Keep on praying. Keep praying, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10).

For indeed, His "is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." (Mt. 6:13) And the Day of the LORD will prove it!

Amen!