

Seek Yahveh, the God of Judgment & Discipline, Salvation & Blessing

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[0:00] please take your Bibles and go to the book of Zephaniah Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations Ezekiel, Daniel Hosea, Joel, Amos Obadiah, Jonah, Micah Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah if you hit Haggai, Zechariah or Malachi the Italian prophet, you've gone too far Zephaniah if you're visiting or you left your Bible at home you'll find Zephaniah it starts on page 666 no pun intended, that's true I looked at that and went oh my goodness oh anyways, it's true that black Bible page 666 that's where you find Zephaniah that's creepy anyways

I'm back into a book this is where I never, well I shouldn't say never I usually don't get in trouble in this way I usually get in trouble if I'm outside of a book so this is where I like to stay inside a book, Zephaniah and I'm actually going to read the whole book there's three chapters probably take me like 10 to 15 minutes to read the whole thing at one time three chapters so I'm going to read it and then we'll do our study in the first three verses this morning the word of Yahweh which by the way that's capital L capital O capital R capital D that's the word Yahweh or Yahweh you know W or V whichever the word of Yahweh which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah in the days of Josiah son of Ammon king of Judah I will completely remove all from the face of the earth declares Yahweh

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 Yahweh 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 the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests and those who bow down on the housetops to the hosts of heaven and those who bow down swearing to the Lord then swearing by Milcom those who have turned back from following Yahweh and those who have not sought Yahweh or inquired of Him be silent before Yahweh God for the day of Yahweh is near for Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice he has consecrated his guests and will come about on the day of Yahweh's sacrifice that will punish the princes the kings sons and all who clothe themselves with foreign garments now punish on that day all who leap on the threshold who fill the house of their Lord with violence and deceit and on that day declares Yahweh there will be the sound of a cry from the fish gate and wail from the second quarter and allow crash from the hills wail oh inhabitants of the Mortar and all the people of Canaan will be silenced all who weigh out silver will be cut off and will come about at that time and I will search

Jerusalem with lamps I'll punish the men who are stagnant in spirit who say in their hearts Yahweh will not do good or evil moreover their wealth will become plunder and their houses desolate yes they will build houses but not inhabit and plant vineyards but not drink their wine near is the great day of Yahweh near and coming very quickly listen the day of Yahweh in it the warrior cries out bitterly a day of wrath is that day a day of trouble and distress they have destruction and desolation they have darkness and gloom they have clouds and thick darkness they have trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner towers and will bring distress on men so they will walk like the blind because they've sinned against Yahweh and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of Yahweh'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 verse chapter 2 gather yourselves together yes gather oh nation without shame before the decree takes effect the day passes like the chaff before the burning anger of Yahweh comes upon you before the day of Yahweh's anger comes upon you seek Yahweh oh you humble of the earth who have carried out his ordinances seek righteousness seek humility perhaps you'll be hidden in the day of Yahweh's

anger for Gaza will be abandoned and Ascalon a desolation

Astrid will be driven out at noon and Ekron will be uprooted woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast the nation of Cheriathites the word of Yahweh is against you O Canaan land of the Philistines and I will destroy you so that there will be no inhabitant so the sea coast will be pastures caves for shepherds and folds for flocks and the coast will be for the remnant of the house of Judah they will pasture on it and the houses of Ascalon they will lie down in the evening for Yahweh their God will care for them and restore their fortune have you are you hearing Ascalon in your head and seeing that I thought you would envision that here's judgment upon them verse 8 I've heard the taunting of Moab and the revilings of the sons of Ammon with which they've taunted my people and become arrogant against their territory therefore as I live declares Yahweh of hosts the God of Israel surely Moab will be like Sodom and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah a place possessed by nettles and salt pits and a perpetual desolation the remnant of my people will plunder them and the remainder of my nation will inherit them this they will have in return for their pride because they've taunted and become arrogant against the people of the Lord of hosts

[6:31] Yahweh will be terrifying to them for He will starve all the gods of the earth and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him everyone from His place you also Ethiopians will be slain by the sword and He will stretch out His hand against the north and destroy Assyria He will make Nineveh a desolation parched like the wilderness and flocks will lie down in our midst all beasts which range in herds both the pelican and the hedgehog will lodge in the tops of her pillars birds will sing in the window desolation on the threshold for He has laid bare the cedar wook this is the exalted city which dwells securely who says in her heart I am there's no one besides me how she's become a desolation a resting place for beast everyone who passes by her will hiss waving his hand chapter 3 woe to her who is rebellious and defiled the tyrannical city she heeded no voice she accepted no instruction she did not trust in Yahweh she did not draw near to her God her princes within her are roaring lions her judges are wolves at evening they leave nothing for the morning her prophets are reckless treacherous men her priests have profaned the sanctuary they've done violence to the law

Yahweh is righteous within her He will do no injustice every morning He brings His justice to light He does not fail but the unjust knows no shame I've cut off nations their corner towers are in ruins I've made their streets desolate with no one passing by their cities are laid waste without a man without an inhabitant I said surely you will fear me accept instruction so her dwelling will not be cut off all that I have appointed concerning her but they were eager to corrupt all their deeds therefore wait for me declares Yahweh for the day when I rise up to the prey indeed my decision is to gather nations to assemble kingdoms to pour out on them my indignation all my anger burning anger for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of my zeal then notice the change here in verse 9 for then I will give to the people's purified lips that all of them may call on the name of Yahweh to serve Him shoulder to shoulder from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my worshippers my dispersed ones will bring my offerings in that day will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against me for then I will remove from your midst your proud exalting ones and you will never again be haughty on my holy mountain

I will leave among you a humble and lowly people and they will take refuge in the name of Yahweh 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 shout for joy O daughter of Zion shout O Israel rejoice and exult with all heart O daughter of Jerusalem Yahweh has taken away judgments against you he's cleared away your enemies the king of Israel Yahweh is in your midst you will fear disaster no more in that day it will be said to Jerusalem do not be afraid O Zion do not let your hands fall limp Yahweh your God is in your midst a victorious warrior he will exult over you with joy he will renew you in his love he will rejoice over you with shouts of joy I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feast they came from you the reproach is a burden on them behold

I'm going to deal at that time with all your oppressors I will save the lame and gather the outcasts I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth at that time I will bring you in even at the time when I gather you together indeed I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your eyes says Yahweh Squid Game is a demented series on Netflix where people play children's games in the hopes of striking it rich yet what they don't know is losing in one of the games brings death I've never watched an episode nor am I even

interested in watching an episode

I just think it's creepy but if you have watched it I don't know more power to you I've wondered though I did a little research on it I wonder why they didn't have a game of hide and seek as one of the games in Squid Game apparently season 2 of the series comes out next year so maybe they're going to have it then I don't know we have to go hide and seek somebody if you find them they die I don't know I don't know I played hide and seek when I was a kid in our neighborhood but not to the death we didn't normally do that but you seek out the people who are hiding so you won't have to be it again you're determined to find everyone you're seeking them out and in that same vein Christ wants us to seek him the Lord wants us to seek him and he'll judge and discipline so we would seek him and find salvation in him and blessing in him as we come to

[12:33] Zephaniah studying through this and thinking through this what's a great way how can you put this in a theme what's a great way to put this in a short statement and this is what I've come up with there's probably better ones but here's one that I come up with theme of Zephaniah seek Yahweh the God of judgment and discipline salvation and blessing if you want to put Zephaniah in a short statement and a really short statement is this seek the Lord seek Christ seek the Lord he's the God of judgment and discipline salvation and blessing and you see those themes in Zephaniah judgment discipline salvation blessing you'll see these themes rise up and seek Yahweh comes from chapter 2 if you noticed it was it's changed even there so there's this coming judgment upon the earth judgment upon Judah the day of Yahweh and then chapter 2 gather yourselves before the decree and then chapter 2 verse 3 seek Yahweh all you humble of the earth come seek me perhaps you'll be hidden from the wrath and and it keeps going and that's that's where we get the theme of seeking the Lord it's

Zephaniah he's given his prophecy it's like the Lord has him stop and says judgment's coming discipline's coming but salvation can come to you blessing can come to you seek the Lord seek Christ because of the coming judgment and discipline salvation excuse me coming judgment and discipline we should seek Yahweh showing we seek him in a changed life it changes the way we live because we follow God we follow Christ we follow the Lord because of this coming judgment and judgment is coming because of this coming discipline God disciplines his people we should seek Yahweh and it shows that we seek him in a changed life changes the way we live because we're seeking him and I'm going to go through looking at different ways how we can say what Zephaniah is all about I'm going to give you more information about this these themes that come out of Zephaniah as a whole from just these short three chapters so here's another way you can put it the book of Zephaniah in a statement or statements Yahweh will judge all peoples and discipline his own people so that all may repent and seek him and when they do he would show himself to be their savior and their blessing when you come when you humble yourself and you repent God saves you and he'll bless all Gentiles the nations will experience Yahweh's judgment and Yahweh's people Israel will experience his discipline his judgment discipline his judging discipline but Gentiles will also experience his salvation as we saw in chapter 3 starting verse 9 and his people experience blessing it's interesting how the book it starts with this universal perspective of doom upon all but then it ends with a universal perspective of restoration salvation blessing joy you see this coming out this theme of the day of the Lord the day of Yahweh the day of Yahweh

Yahweh will judge the nations and also discipline his people through that judgment discipline he will call all people to seek him in repentance and after his judging disciplining hand he'll bring nations to himself and restore the fortunes of his people Yahweh will intervene on behalf of his people Israel restoring them as his own people who enjoy his presence and enjoy his love and then Yahweh would rejoice over his people and enjoy them as his people you see all that in the end of chapter three he says I'm going to rejoice over you they're the objects of his love an amazing statement that you see in scripture probably one of the most amazing statements that God rejoices over us you see these two aspects of God's character they're highlighted throughout this book his justice his holy justice and his compassionate love but they're not mutually exclusive they go together as far as

Zephaniah was concerned and he shows how both were important around Yahweh's character of his holy justice is his judgment displayed with that phrase with the phrase the day of the Lord the day of Yahweh that day of the Lord has two a two full purpose it's both a time of punishment for those against God and blessed hope for his people Yahweh's hope is offered to Israel if she humbles herself of her foolish pride Yahweh's holy he must vindicate his righteous justice by calling

the nations of the whole world into account before him so he'll judge his own people for their foolish pride and also he'll judge the whole world so this prophetic book warns Judah of Yahweh's disciplining judgment and he calls him to repentance and we can take that away for us as well for us as the church it calls us to repentance where do we need to repent and seek out the [19:15] Lord Yahweh's faithful he will bring back to himself a remnant regathering them redeeming them restoring them so there's a way to split up this book this short prophetic book I won't have it on the screen but I'll just speak this to you there's three different parts Yahweh's the creator and judge he will judge the world and discipline his people you see that in all of chapter 1 and then starting chapter 2 verse 4 all the way to chapter 3 verse 8 that's the bulk of Zephaniah that's the first part second part Yahweh the creator and judge calls all people to seek him in repentance that's that short little three verse thing in chapter 2 verse 1 through 3 he calls all to repent and then third part Yahweh the savior will save

Gentiles and bless his people rejoicing over them that's where we have chapter 3 verses 9 through 20 and you see that it changes that's why I pointed out to you chapter 3 verse 9 changes things where God goes after the nations and nations even the Ethiopians from beyond Ethiopia they're gonna come so he's talking about Gentiles but then his own people Israel will come thus that's theme seek Yahweh the God of judgment and discipline salvation and blessing also Yahweh will judge all peoples and discipline his own people so all may repent and seek him when they do he will show himself to be their savior and their blessing so this is the driving force of the book of Zephaniah now let's go through as we like to do verse by verse Zephaniah chapter 1 starting in verse 1 the word of Yahweh which came to Zephaniah son of

Cushi son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah and the days of Josiah son of Ammon king of Judah now I'm gonna unpack these words first I want you to notice son of Hezekiah in the days of Josiah who is this Hezekiah it's king Hezekiah now you gotta understand this is going back back some generations Hezekiah died and then his son Manasseh took the throne Manasseh was probably the most wicked king ever to reign I think he reigned by 51 or 52 years in Judah he completely reversed all that Hezekiah had done Hezekiah sought the Lord called the people to seek the Lord He took down all these altars and these high places Manasseh reversed all that He led Judah back to worshipping the false idols of the nations and then to top it off Manasseh he had his son or sons pass through the fire to the god of Molech and he named another son after the Egyptian god Ammon because notice in the days of Josiah the son of Ammon Ammon was Manasseh one of Manasseh's sons he named his son after the Egyptian god so now going back again Manasseh reigns then he dies then his son Ammon named after the Egyptian god he took the throne but he only reigned for two years because his servants conspired against him and assassinated him and Josiah was eight years old that kid right there was eight eight years old when he took the throne eight he became king 640 639

BC so that's where it says in the days of Josiah son of Ammon he was the king of Judah but it wasn't until the eighth year of Josiah's reign so now he's what 16 years old 1617 it wasn't until then that he began to seek Yahweh and in the 12th year so so eight so four is about 1617 so now he's like 20 21 years old he began to reform Israel Judah of her wickedness interesting too when Josiah became king the Assyrian empire was on its decline so it left him free to be able to carry out these reforms because they weren't under Assyria's oppressing hand yet because of the evil wicked acts of his father Ammon and then especially his grandfather Manasseh

[24:21] Yahweh's disciplining judgment would come upon his people so it's actually quite possible that Zephaniah's prophecies prompted Josiah to begin his reforms so it was in this time maybe it was in the beginning of Josiah's reign where Zephaniah starts giving his prophecy here and it would prompt Josiah to begin his reforms an even greater response when the book of the law was found in the temple you can read about it in 2nd Kings chapter 22 they're cleaning out the temple right and King Josiah we found this this was a foot rest for one of the priests oh what is this oh this is the book of the law that's kind of important it was just sitting somewhere in the back corner of the room and they find it and Josiah reads it he's like holy cow what have we done we better seek the Lord so this is the time period this is what's these are all these guys and I want you to notice now also

Zephaniah his name his name actually means Yahweh has hidden or Yahweh has caused to be hidden interesting in chapter 2 verse 3 the end of chapter 2 verse 3 the end of verse 3 perhaps you will be hidden in the day of Yahweh's anger maybe if one heeds these words of Yahweh Yahweh

will hide him from the coming doom interesting that's what Zephaniah's name means Yahweh is hidden notice also the son of Kushi normally translated Ethiopian to refer to a person who was from Kush a Kushite from the upper Nile region the Kushites would also face Yahweh's judging condemnation chapter 2 verse 12 but they would also face his salvation so notice the generations too this is the first time that

Zephaniah and by the way this is the only thing we know about Zephaniah what his name means nothing else has told us about him except he was of royal blood so he comes from back to Hezekiah the king but he's the only prophetic book where a prophet is introduced by genealogy so now notice this part the first few words the word of Yahweh this was God's word he spoke by way of divine revelation so this is authoritative God's word is our authority not to me not to anything else not people it's the word of God is our authority and it comes to find out this word of the Lord is a terrifying message and I also want you to notice we're going to get more into verse 2 and 3 in just a moment but I want you to notice 2, 3 and also verse 4 the number of times the word

I is used it's actually six times I will completely remove verse 3 I will remove I will remove notice end of verse 3 I will cut off verse 4 I will stretch out I I'm going to do this I will just Yahweh God he will act I'm doing this so now go to verse 2 here's introduction chapter 1 verse 1 look at verse 2 here is Yahweh announcing through Zephaniah universal judgment I will completely remove all from the face of the earth declares Yahweh notice also to something else the end of verse 2 where it says from the face of Yahweh notice the end of verse 3 excuse me from the face of the earth declares Yahweh notice the end of verse 3 from the face of the earth declares Yahweh it's like an inclusio it begins and ends the same way all in the entire earth would be gathered by

Yahweh experiencing total destruction from him just like he did in Genesis 6 I will remove all I'm going to gather them together remove them that's why judgment is a major theme in Zephaniah's prophecy a word from Yahweh that would challenge the culture of the times because remember Manasseh had been king Ammon became king for two years so the nation of Judah was just in rampant wickedness the culture of the times Judah devoted herself to idolatry perversion downright paganism the land had become as one writer says morally bankrupt Yahweh does not compromise with evil he has the right to judge and he must judge to show himself to be the true just righteous creator and he's got the power to judge he will vigorously reign his wrath against all unrighteousness and ungodliness on the earth destruction is overthrowing this cleansing of sin the earth will be destroyed by

[29:58] God to deal with man's evil the earth will be destroyed to deal with man's evil verse 2 again I will completely remove all from the face of the earth declares Yahweh look at verse 3 I will remove man excuse me remove man and beast I'll remove the birds of the sky the fish of the sea so this word I was bringing this up earlier I gave the inclination it means gathering together or to sweep away to bring to an end and notice how it begins it goes to humans animals birds and then fish you see that Yahweh the creator and the universal judge will call all into account the whole world because he's a just judge he has the power to undo all creation and so notice how it began with humans it's interesting this is the opposite order that's given to us in the book of

Genesis in Genesis the fish are made then the birds then the animals and humans the order is reversed here and Yahweh through Zephaniah does this on purpose God began with humanity because we're the ones who did this man or humans are first because they're the guilty ones we are the reason for this judging condemning proclamation of doom Paul says this in Romans chapter 8 how the creation groans waiting for the redemption of all creation Romans 8:20 for the creation was subjected to futility not of its own will because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also was set free from its slavery to corruption and to the freedom of the glory of the children of God for we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now it groans it's waiting for when

God judges the nations judges peoples and then restores all things it's waiting for that and then I want you to notice also verse 3 man beast birds fish notice it says and the ruins along with the wicked this word ruins actually means stumbling blocks or offenses it's in reference to idolatry and to idols so the idea is this it's the stumbling blocks of sin the stumbling blocks of idolatry so Yahweh will bring to an end the stumbling blocks of idolatry and notice it says the stumbling blocks of idolatry along with the wicked the ones who do the idolatry this is what he's going to do and then the last part of verse 3 and I will cut off man from the face of the earth declares

Yahweh cut off means total removal or utter removal of the wicked the fact of the matter is there will be a day when Yahweh will come to judge the whole world because that's what we read about in Revelation chapter 19 verse 11 through 16 and I saw heaven open and behold a white horse and he was sat upon it called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges and wages war his eyes a flame of fire upon his head many diadems and he has a name written which no one knows except himself and clothe with the robe dipped in blood and his name is called the word of God and the armies which are in heaven clothed in fine linen white clean were following him on white horses and from his mouth comes a sharp sword so with it he may smite strike the nations and he'll rule them with a rod of iron and he treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of the almighty God and his robe and his thigh he has a name written king of kings and lord of lords Jesus himself spoke about this judgment Matthew chapter 12 verse 36 Matthew chapter 13 verse 30 37 to 43 Matthew chapter 13 chapter 22 verse 13 why because Jesus himself will be the judge he's going to come to judge Paul tells us this in Acts 17 verse 30 Acts 17 30 therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent why because he's fixed the day in which he will judge the world and righteousness through a man whom he has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead Jesus will come he'll judge this world

[35 : 21] Peter also picked up on this theme of God's judgment coming against all the earth in 2 Peter chapter 3 Peter tells us this verse 10 but the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and its works will be burned up he says in verse 11 since all these things are to be destroyed in this way what sort of people want you to be in holy conduct and godliness and because this judgment is coming it should spur us on towards holiness and godliness it should spur us on to seek the Lord it should spur us on to seek after him and by the way when we present the gospel to the unsaved we should include the coming judgment just like the apostles did

Peter did that in Acts chapter 10 Paul did that we just read that Acts 17 Paul did it again in chapter 24 of Acts judgment and doom is real so they must be told this so they can escape from this wrath to come this judgment will come upon the world will be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ who will save them so these are the first three verses it puts us on this track of judgment will universally come upon the whole world and then we'll see next week how judgment comes to God's people Judah and get specific here but before we close off this morning excuse me I want to give you four truths that these three verses teach us as pertinent for us to understand four truths these first three verses teach us and directs us first number one

God will vindicate his character by making all wrongs right God will vindicate his character when you look when you go on the news and you see the horrendous things that governments do to people people do to people and even the things that you don't know that are happening in this world the abuse rapes extortion human trafficking sex trafficking these horrible things happening know this it is not unseen by the Lord he sees it all and if these verses tell you anything it tells you this God will vindicate his character he will make all these wrongs right he will judge people will not be able to hide that's why they'll say fall on us hide us from the one who's coming to judge us why we read that as a congregation because as we're going to say but they can't hide

God will vindicate his character he will make all wrongs right here's number two God will vindicate our suffering brought on by evil people and not just suffering in terms of people persecuting you but also the suffering that comes as a result of the fall that's why there's cancer that's why there's disease that's why there's sickness because of the fall but God will vindicate our suffering he'll judge it and wipe it all away there will come a day when he will do this so God will vindicate his character he'll make all wrongs right two God will vindicate our suffering again these are four truths this passage is directing us towards these four truths there's those first two he vindicates his character he vindicates our suffering number three

God wants us to seek him by pursuing holiness and godliness he wants us to seek him judgment is coming he disciplines his people we're going to see that next week so he wants us to seek him run after him go towards him he wants us to seek him he wants us to pursue him and it's going to show itself as we said because of the coming judgment and discipline we should seek Yahweh showing that we seek him in a changed life we're pursuing godliness pursuing holiness because we love him he'll vindicate his character vindicate our suffering wants us to seek him here's the fourth truth god wants people to be saved hearing hearing the judgment to come god is not sadistic who won't ride i

get to throw people in the hell awesome god's not like that he wants people to be saved hearing the judgment is going to come the doom is coming hell is real hell is eternal people will suffer forever in hell he wants people to be saved that's why he says he's hearing this here's the judgment the doom the judgment the doom then he says seek yahweh he wants people to be saved this is four truths that rises implications from the text he vindicates his character vindicates our suffering wants us to seek him wants people to be saved seek yahweh the god judgment and discipline salvation and blessing yahweh will judge all peoples and discipline his own people so all may repent and seek him and when they do he would show himself to be their savior and their blessing let's go to him in prayer as we prayed earlier we want to take seriously this message of judgment that is coming and so we pray we'll take it seriously by being a people who seek you oh god we cling to you oh jesus we come to you with humility we come to you with all our heart with our whole soul with all that's in us we want to seek you to give you a sacrifice of praise and thanks do that in us as a church as a body work in us as a church as a body pray if you're here you don't know jesus and this has pricked your conscience i pray you and ask you will repent and trust christ you'll come and be saved and escape the wrath to come i encourage all of us to take these few moments to ponder what we've seen in god's word

[43:31] that it drives us to more love and devotion to our savior to our lord for being so merciful to us take this time please to take seriously what god has said to us from his word do that now please