

AM Zephaniah 1:1-18 & 3:14-20

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Date: 22 November 2020

Preacher: Mr Norman Cumming

[0 : 00] Good morning everyone, we're perhaps just starting a minute earlier, but we'll start.

Welcome to everyone this lovely Lord's Day morning. You'll be surprised to see me here, but on Thursday evening, Reverend Kenny MacLeod was advised that he was not allowed to travel out of his Tier 4 area until restrictions are lifted on the 11th of December, and so the baptism of Eleanor is being delayed until that date, on the 13th of December.

However, subsequent to that, I heard yesterday morning, Kenny was advised that the wording of the legislation was changed, and so he could have come, but he decided to leave things the way they are.

So I shall be taking the evening service as well, which reminds us again how much we're missing Jack amongst us, because he would have willingly and be glad to have stepped in as well to take the service.

The service tonight will be at 6 o'clock, God willing. Jack continues to convalesce at home. I think, I'm not able to go and see him now, but speaking to him last night, I think there's some measure of improvement.

[1 : 26] His voice seemed stronger last night, and he says he's still eating very well, enjoyed his tea, and he was even thinking he might have a supper last night as well.

So that was encouraging, and he's walking well around the house. He asks for everyone's prayers. He's thankful that he's been prayed for, and wants to be remembered to everyone here.

Next, this coming Wednesday, the General Assembly has appointed a National Day of Prayer, Wednesday this week, and we are asked to set aside time on that day for prayer for both the Church and the nation.

And it will be the focus of the meeting that evening, which will be led by Robert Dale. Robert and Jane are on a few days holiday at the moment. As mentioned last week, over the last few years, we have brought Christmas presents, such as clothing and chocolate, for the men and women who have come to the Wednesday drop-in.

At the moment, the only service being provided is a weekly provision of takeaway sandwiches from the door of Bethany Christian Trust on the White Sands. And the supervisor, Pamela Crosby, feels to be more suitable this year for us to provide a purchased take-home meal.

[2 : 48] So it will be helpful if financial contributions can be made over the next two weeks and leave any collections, any gifts in the collection box at the rear of the hall in an envelope marked drop-in.

Next Lord's Day at 11 and 6, God willing, we hope to have the Reverend Douglas Cranston with us down from Lanarkshire. Now, some of you may remember that our inter-moderator, Kenny MacLeod, preached here, I think it was end of August, maybe beginning of September, and his subject very much that day was he was preaching on eldership and the responsibilities of eldership.

The Kirk Session met last Wednesday on Zoom, and the Kirk Session is looking to appoint additional elders in the congregation.

And it was decided that a voting form will be given next Sunday to each communicant member. So those are all the notices.

So let us turn to prayer. Let us pray. We are thankful, Lord, we are called together to worship the living God.

[4 : 14] Lord, your word encourages us to venture out on the Lord's Day and to make cause together in the gospel of Christ to come together in adoration and praise of our most great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To praise his name and to acclaim his name and to be instructed in the word, to have the word read and to meditate over it.

So, Lord, we thank you for this privilege you give us week by week on this first day of the week when we call to mind the glorious resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, from the dead.

O Lord, we thank you for this privilege you give us a moment of prayer.

from the living God. O Lord, we confess our faults, our demerits before you. And, Lord, look to Christ and his shed blood and his righteousness.

[5 : 45] O Lord, we thank you for the cleansing power there is in the blood of Calvary for all sin and all unrighteousness. O Lord, we pray in your mercy toward us that you'll feed and nourish our souls in this gathering this morning and again this evening.

O Lord, do us good, each one in Christ Jesus. We pray and for his glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

And we're going to hear singing from Psalm 98 in Sing Psalms. Psalm 98 and verses 4 to 9. The last four stanzas of Psalm 98.

Which begins with the words, Acclaim the Lord. O all the earth, shout loudly and rejoice. It ends in the note of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who comes to judge the earth. He'll judge the world in righteousness. The people's in his truth. Psalm 98 and verses 4 to 9.

[6 : 53] Psalm 98 and verses 4 to 9.

With our faith, sing to the Lord. With our faith, praise to sing.

With our faith, and with our faith, rejoice. Be for the Lord again.

Let us sing. Let us sing. And all in them rejoice triumphantly.

Let us sing. Let us sing. Let us sing. Let us sing. Let us sing. Together joyfully.

[8 : 16] Now let us sing. Now let us sing. Let us sing. Let us sing. Let us sing. May we are the Lord.

who comes to judge the earth. He'll judge the world with righteousness. How we do.

It's lovely to see the youngsters amongst us, Eleanor and Thomas and Samuel and Joel.

I saw you all yesterday on the farm, out in the wind and the rain and the muddy track and all the lovely puddles.

So it's great to see you. We all say that. We'd love to see you all here with us in church. Now I've got a question, a question for you, and listen carefully.

[9 : 29] I wonder if any of you ever feel hungry. Samuel's nodding, or you're nodding and you're rubbing your tummy too.

You feel hungry. I think that would be true of everyone in the room as well. So what do you do when you feel hungry? I want to get some breakfast.

You get some breakfast. What do you do, Samuel? Oh, we come up to see you, Samuel.

And Joel could come too. It's great to see you. Well, I'm sure you ask mummy or daddy, I'm hungry. Can I have something to eat?

And you might get perhaps a lump of cheese or some apple slices, maybe some bread. And if you're really lucky, you might get a piece of cake, mightn't you?

[10 : 32] Sometimes. Well, it's an experience we all have of being hungry. Now I've got another question. Is it good to feel hungry?

Do you say yes? Is it good to feel hungry? Well, yes. I thought you might have said a no, but I think you could be...

I think the answer is no and yes. Because if you feel hungry, your tummy feels a bit sore. And perhaps your tummy is rumbling. Because it's a tummy that happens in the woods.

Daddy and mummy got outshot. Yes. Well, I think we all know that experience of feeling a sore tummy and a rumbling in the tummy.

And you know you need some food. So it's not a nice feeling. But it's also a good thing to feel hungry. Have you ever thought of that? The answer is yes as well. It's good to feel hungry.

[11 : 37] Because if you're hungry, it means that you're well. It means you're well. And if you come to dinner time, and you say, oh, I'm not hungry.

I don't want to eat my dinner. Mummy and daddy will be a bit worried about you. I think, well, perhaps Joel or Samuel or Thomas or Eleanor are not very well today.

Because they're not hungry. So it's good to feel hungry because it's a sign that you are well. And that's a good thing to know that.

Well, the Lord, in the Bible, talks about people being hungry. And he does some wonderful things for people who are being hungry. He provides food for people being hungry.

But sometimes the Lord Jesus spoke about a different kind of hunger. not hungry for food. But being hungry, hungry to know the Lord.

[12 : 45] Being hungry to know the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus spoke about being hungry. Also being about thirsty. Thirsty for him.

So that's something to remember, isn't it? And if you have that kind of hunger, if you have that kind of hunger, it's good news that you are hungry to know Jesus.

Very good news. Because it means that you are well. It means you're well. You're spiritually well. You're well in your heart.

Because you love the Lord. And you're hungering for the Lord Jesus. And you want to love him more and more. And that's a good kind of hunger.

To hunger for the Lord Jesus Christ. And to love him more and more. And if you're hungry for the Lord, that's good. That's good news.

[13 : 46] It means you're well. Now we're all going to pray. We're going to go back to mummy and daddy now. And thank you for coming up, Thomas and Samuel. And we'll pray.

Shall we pray? Our gracious heavenly Father, we thank you for providing us with food and water. Every day, fresh, clean water and bread to eat.

We thank you for this mercy to us. Teach us to be thankful for our food. Oh Lord, we thank you even more. That you are the bread of life.

You feed our souls. Oh Lord, we thank you for the hunger that there is for Jesus. For Jesus and his righteousness and his word.

And grant us each one, young and old, to have this hunger for the Lord Jesus Christ. To his praise. Amen.

[14 : 45] Amen. Now we're going to read from the scriptures, from the Old Testament. Read at the end of the Old Testament, in the prophecy of Zephaniah.

Zephaniah. You work backwards from Malachi, through Zechariah, Haggai, and you come to the prophecy of Zephaniah, the fourth book from the end of the Old Testament.

And we'll read from chapter one, and also some verses from chapter three. Let us hear God's praise from his blessed word.

Zephaniah, chapter one, and verse one. Zephaniah. Zephaniah. The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah, the son of Ammon, king of Judah.

I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth, declares the Lord. I will sweep away man and beast.

[16 : 07] I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the rubble with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth, declares the Lord.

I will stretch out my hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal, and the name of the idolatrous priests, along with the priests, those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those who bow down and swear to the Lord, and yet swear by Milcom, those who have turned back from following the Lord, who do not seek the Lord or inquire of Him.

Be silent before the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is near. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice, and consecrated His guests, and on the day of the Lord's sacrifice, I will punish the officials and the king's sons, and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud. On that day, declares the Lord, a cry will be heard from the fish gate, a whale from the second quarter, a loud crash from the hills.

Whale, O inhabitants of the mortar, for all the traders are no more, all who weigh out silver are cut off. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, the Lord will not do good, nor will He do ill.

[18 : 05] Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them. Though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast. The sound of the day of the Lord is bitter.

The mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day. A day of distress and anguish. A day of ruin and devastation.

A day of darkness and gloom. A day of clouds and thick darkness. A day of trumpet blast and battle cry against their fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring distress on mankind so that they shall walk like the blind because they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood shall be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung.

[19 : 10] Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of the earth shall be consumed.

For a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth. By way of contrast, we'll read from chapter 3 and I think just from verse 14 to the end.

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O Israel.

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has taken away the judgments against you. He has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the Lord is in your midst. You shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not, O Zion.

[20 : 19] Let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness.

He will quiet you by his love. He will exult over you with loud singing. I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. I will save the lame and gather the outcasts and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you in at the time when I gather you together for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Amen. May God bless the reading of his word to each one of us. Here another psalm being sung for us.

[21 : 39] Psalm 119. Again in sing psalms. And it's the last section of Psalm 119. Verse 169.

Let my cry come before you, O Lord. Give me insight as pledged in your word. May my pleading gain access to you.

Save my life as you promised to do. And again in verse 174. I desire your salvation to see and your law is delightful to me.

This is a psalm, a section of the psalm expressing the believer's desire for the living God. Psalm 169. Verse 169.

To the end. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[22 : 40] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. That's right. Amen. May your hand be stretched out for my head Since I try to come as I will wait I desire your salvation to see And your love is delightful to me Let me live and I'll praise you in song May your loss it be held to go on Seek your servant to save the machine By your precepts I step past in key Let us join together in prayer

Let us pray Gracious Heavenly Father The concluding words of that psalm Surely touch our souls each one For we are those who so often stray like sheep And we bless you O Lord for your grace toward us In seeking us out even when we stray O Lord we confess how easy it is to stray away Little by little and bit by bit Losing our desire for you Not being hungry for you and your word Not seeking your presence Not seeking your presence Your fellowship O Lord have mercy upon us And draw us back to yourself even today

O Lord as needed O Lord awaken us May the Holy Spirit stir us up And quicken us And bless us as we meditate upon your word together O Lord we come in our need And our dependence For ourselves and all the members of our family O Lord You know our heart for each member of our family According to their need O Lord for your blessing upon them O Lord we pray for your blessing and the preaching of the word In every place Throughout this world Throughout this day O Lord be pleased to bless the word The gospel To so many souls O Lord may it be a day of grace And power and salvation O Lord we pray for the church Which is suffering in our world O Lord in so many places

[26 : 17] Your people Torn and And stressed And in great weakness Crying out in their In their great need How long O Lord Before you come Lord have mercy upon Fellow believers Who are suffering Grievously In these days For you O Lord O Lord have mercy upon those Even who oppress them O Lord that you'll turn them back Even as you Save the soul of that jailer In that town of Philippi And he was Taken into your kingdom O Lord we Pray for Our churches in the central belt Who have Been restricted again To only Having twenty To gather Together O Lord Difficulties to Make arrangements In the last minute O Lord have mercy upon them

Be with Kenny In that situation In Dough and Vale Bless Kenny McLeod Our interim moderator We thank you For his care For us His concern His prayer His congregation's prayer For us O Lord We thank you That we are remembered In Dough and Vale And we Uphold Kenny Before you Have mercy upon our nation O Lord In these days O Lord Our nation Which is in so much Rebellion Against you Rebellion Against your word Having turned away From Your word O Lord In these days And Even In laws Which have been framed And Being proposed To be framed O Lord Have mercy upon our nation Which has Departed so quickly And so rapidly In these last Few decades Since the last war From the living God O Lord Have mercy We pray upon us O Lord And We see how the nation

Is suffering In these days With These issues of health As a consequence Of the virus Issues of health Because People aren't getting The care And the treatment They should be getting Because of the virus O Lord Treatment being delayed And being put off Perhaps people being Frightened Of going to their surgery O Lord We are suffering Too economically With great pressure With a price to pay In future days O Lord Have mercy Upon us And we pray too For those Who are close to us And in need Remember Joan Nicholson As she cares For her sister Catherine With this Devastating news That she must Face surgery Again With chemotherapy Either side Of the surgery Have mercy Upon Catherine And store And uphold her May she know Some blessing Today

Somehow We pray Lord May there be A ministry To her And bless her Sister Joan Who attends With us here As she cares For her Dear sister We pray for Jack Convalescing at home We uphold him Before we are Thankful for him And his service Here O Lord Do him good Be pleased to Restore him To recover him We realise He is a long way To go We pray for your Mercy upon him And upon his Wife Avril too Be with Stanley O Lord At home And encourage him Bless Robert and Jane Away for a few days In Oban We thank you For their Being with us O Lord And Robert's Readiness And willingness Always To take A service As needs be So Lord We commit Them to you To pray your Blessing upon Their family Their son in London

And their daughter And son-in-law Out in Hong Kong In their need there O Lord Remember us Revive us We pray Bless us O Lord As we Hear further singing And be with us As we meditate Upon your word We pray With the forgiveness Of our sins In Jesus name Amen We're going to hear Further singing This time It's the hymn Rock of Ages Cleft for me A hymn written By 18th century Minister Augustus Toplady And The story is told That The idea The theme Of this Hymn Came to him When he was Sheltering In a rock From a sudden Storm Rock of Ages Cleft for me Let me hide Myself In thee Let the water

[31 : 19] And the blood From thy Riven side Which flowed Be of sin The double cure Save me From its guilt And power Drawing vil For my The blood From thy Riven Severus I wish known, be a sin, the double cure, save me from this hilted blood.

Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands.

Could my seal no rest I know, could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone.

Thou art saved and thou art alone. Nothing in my hand I bring, simply truth I'm lost and weary.

Naked come to thee for dress, helpless go to thee for grace.

[33 : 10] Fall I do the fountain fly, watch me save your o'er I die.

Fall I draw this fleeting breath, when my heart shall close to death.

When I saw two worlds unknown, see beyond thy judgment grow.

Royal angels, laugh for me, let me hide myself in thee.

The prophecy of Zephaniah is about three short chapters long and perhaps not known very well.

- [34 : 33] However, it is part of God's word and Zephaniah reminds us of that at the very opening verse when we read the word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah.
- So it is a word of the Lord and we must, as servants of the Lord, pay attention to it. Just note in passing, his family tree is descended as you see in verse 1 from King Hezekiah, a godly king who reigned when the Assyrian Empire was at its zealous.
- And he had to face up to a huge issue in his lifetime when the Emperor Sennacherib came and invaded Judah.
- Well, time has passed, generations have passed, and the Assyrian Empire is fading now, as all empires eventually do.
- And the Babylonian Empire is growing and threatening. And Nebuchadnezzar in a couple of decades time will be coming on the throne at Babylon.
- [35 : 51] Zephaniah himself is living in the days of King Josiah. Now King Josiah was the last godly king of Judah before the exile.
- His descendants departed severely and terribly from the word of the Lord. So he's prophesying in the reign of King Josiah, probably about 620 BC.
- Probably just before Josiah instituted some remarkable reforms and reformation in the religious life in Judah.
- And perhaps prophesying just before those days. He's contemporary with Prophet Nahum and perhaps also the early days of Jeremiah.
- So this morning, in a short time, we'll be attempting to get a brief overview of the prophecy. And we read the first chapter, and you'll probably have seen what the great thrust of that first chapter was.
- [37 : 18] It was concerning the Day of the Lord. The teachings of the Day of the Lord runs right through Scripture, but we won't spend time looking at it elsewhere in Scripture.
- It is a day when God executes his purposes. It's a day when God vindicates his honour, which has been despised in the world.
- It's a day when God's judgment prevails. There are indeed, I think we can say in Scripture, many days of the Lord.
- But there is one ultimate, great and final day of the Lord. There can be two aspects to a Day of the Lord.
- As it will be two aspects to the final great day of the Lord. It can bring judgment, and it will bring judgment.
- [38 : 25] But it also will bring a day of hope and relief and salvation. It will be a day of fear, but it will be a day of hope for others.
- A day of fear for some, and a day of hope for others. I think when you say the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah were all days of the Lord.
- The invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of Jerusalem was a day of the Lord. And I think we can say that when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 as prophesied by our Lord Jesus Christ, that was a day of the Lord.
- All days which are foreshadowing and giving hints of that great and ultimate day which is yet to come.
- The final day. All warnings that we will be without excuse on that final day. Warnings which God has given in the past and is giving us even in the days which we are experiencing at the present time.
- [39 : 48] We can say that when the sinless one, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave up his life at Calvary. He was being judged there for our sins. He came under God's curse for our sins.

That was a day of the Lord. A fearsome day of the Lord. And brought anguish and pain and a cry of despair out of the heart of our Lord Jesus as he hung upon the cross.

Thankfully we live on the other side of that. There's a day of resurrection which followed. We still await the final day of the Lord.

It may be long or it may be short. We do not know. Paul says, and he's quoting from the words of his Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

[41 : 13] Unexpectedly. Totally unawares. I'm just remembering as I say this, a relative of mine who was preaching.

And he compared it to an experience he had when he was suddenly woken up at night. He was in bed with his wife and there was a man in the room. It was as sudden as that.

He never said what happened next. He's still with us today. But it will be like that. A thief in the night. Unexpected and totally taking many by surprise.

But we are to be those who are watchful and awake. And that day when he comes, Jesus will be seen as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Well, the day of the Lord is a challenge of Zephaniah, the prophet. Are we ready? Are we prepared for it?

[42 : 21] We experience many, many hard days in our lives. Some more and some less. One of my favourite songs is a song from the band which has now come to the end of its career.

Run Rigg, Life is Hard. And it's a very poignant song. It has a note of hope in it with a little allusion to John 3, 16.

We experience hard days in our lives. A day when your friend deserted you. The day when perhaps your character was besmirched publicly and you were innocent.

The day perhaps when you lost your job. The day of death in your family. The day when we will know in our own experience and have the news that we have a life-threatening illness.

All these are hard days. Fearful and awesome. But when we put them into the context of the day of the Lord. The great day of the Lord's wrath.

[43 : 40] They fall into relative insignificance. In chapter 1 of Zephaniah. We read of the Lord's reasons for judgment.

And we will just pick out a few of them. In verse 4 of Zephaniah chapter 1. We read about idolatry. Idolatry which was being practiced in the land.

In verse 5. We read of those who on the one hand bow down and swear to the Lord. And yet on the other hand they also swear by Milken.

A dread God. A false God introduced into Judah, into Israel by one of Solomon's wives. And it's what we call today pluralistic religion.

Saying all ways lead to God. And very much the thesis of what is taught in perhaps many of our schools today.

[44 : 38] And there it was even there in those days. Those who were swearing to the Lord. But also swearing by this false God Milken. And then there was a turning away from God.

Verse 6. Those who knew better. Who turned back. What an awesome and terrible thing it is to turn back. To backslide.

To turn back from following the Lord. And there are those in verse 12. Who are indifferent and complacent. And punish the men.

God says who are complacent. Those who say in their hearts. The Lord will not do good. Nor will he do ill. The Lord has no influence.

No place in our world. It's just a clock which has been wound up. And is running down. And God has no place. No action.

[45 : 38] Has never intervened in the history of this world. They are complacent. And they are being judged for their complacency. And it will come with suddenness.

John in Revelation says. That both rich and poor. And king and slave. Will call to the mountains. Fall on us. And hide us from the face of him.

Who sits on the throne. And from the wrath of the Lamb. In verses 14 to 16. Zephaniah describes the awfulness that day.

In strong language. Verses 14 and 16. The day of the Lord is bitter. Mighty man. The mighty man cries aloud. The day of distress.

Anguish. Ruin. Devastation. Darkness. Gloom. Clouds. Thick darkness. The trumpet blasts. The battle cry. A dark day.

[46 : 40] The day of the Lord. The composer Verdi. When he wrote his Requiem Mass. Used a poem. Based on these words.

Verses 14 to 16. When he wrote the section known as. The Dies Irae. Which means. The day of wrath.

The day of wrath. And in his music. The brass is sounding. The trumpets are blaring. The voices of the choir is rising.

And it's awesome. And strangely. It's the most popular piece of music. You often hear it on classic FM. But it's a piece of judgment.

And a witness to everyone. I think on the last day. When Verdi. The day of wrath. In his Dies Irae. It was sung memorably. At a concentration camp. Just outside Prague. A place called Tierenstadt. It was a holding camp.

[47 : 38] Before people were sent to the killing camps. Further east. And the Red Cross wanted to visit this camp. And they were all smartened up. And tidied up. Play areas for the people. All prepared by German soldiers. So it looked nice and everything was well. But there were some very talented people.

And they sang. Verdi's Mech Requiem Mass. And when they sang it. They knew. They were pronouncing judgment. Upon their captors. And they were sent to the killing camps. And they were sent to the killing camps. And they were sent to the killing camps. Further east. And the Red Cross wanted to visit this camp.

And they were all smartened up. And tidied up. Play areas for the children. All prepared. By German soldiers. So it looked nice and everything was well. But there were some very talented people. And they sang. The Verdi's Mech Requiem Mass.

And when they sang it. They knew. They were pronouncing judgment. Upon their captors. They sang it in Italian. So they wouldn't know.

What it was meaning. So the Day of Wrath. Pictured here. By Zephaniah. In these awesome verses. Verses 14 to 16.

[48 : 35] And it ends by him saying. In the fire of his jealousy. In verse 18. All the earth shall be consumed. For a full and sudden end.

He will make of all. The inhabitants. Of the earth. The day of the Lord. Is a day of wrath.

What does Zephaniah say then? He says. Well pay heed. Give attention to this. And he says in chapter 2. Gather together. Yes gather.

Yes gather. Oh shameless nation. Before. The decree. Takes effect. Gather together. The Amplified Version.

Translation puts it. Collect your thoughts. Consider your ways. Before the awful decree. Is put into effect. Seek the Lord.

[49 : 36] Verse 3. Seek the Lord. Seek righteousness. Seek. Humility. Humility. Humility. Where do we find.

The righteousness. Which will satisfy God. Do we find it in ourselves. We look into our own hearts. What do we see.

Sometimes we try. Maybe try and justify ourselves. But the Lord. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Comes and. Awakens us.

And shows that all our. Self-justifying. Is as filthy wrecks. And motivations.

Are all. Suspect. But there is a righteousness. Which satisfies the Lord. It is the righteousness. Of our Lord.

[50 : 33] Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. Which is made over. To all. Who put their trust. In his. Shed blood. At Calvary. That righteousness.

Is available. For all. Who trust. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. And his perfect. Holy. Sacrifice. For sin. Outside. The city gate.

In Jerusalem. Seek righteousness. Seek. Humility. Humility. These things. Go hand in hand. Seeking righteousness. And seeking humility. It is only. When we come to.

An end of ourselves. When we realize. That we have no righteousness. There is nothing. In us. Which can defend us. Before God. So only when we realize.

That. We have come to an absolute. End of ourselves. We are humbled. That. There is a blessing. We must come to that.

[51 : 28] End of ourselves. We must come to that. End of ourselves. Seek humility. The humbling of God. Of our souls. Before him. And. Then seek the righteousness. Of Christ.

God gives grace. To the humble. It is a promise. To the humble. Those who have been humbled. By God's word. And know. That there is nothing. Nothing in them.

As we heard in that hymn. Simply to thy cross. I cling. Nothing. To offer myself. And God. Will give grace.

To the humble. Seek righteousness. The righteousness. Of Christ. And. He says. Perhaps. In verse 3. You may be hidden.

On the day. Of the anger. Of God. Perhaps. You may be hidden. To the concluding. Statement. To Zephaniah's appeal. To gather.

[52 : 26] Together. To consider. To collect. Your thoughts. Indulge. In some. Self-examination. Are we. Trusting. In our.

Own righteousness. Or. In the righteousness. Of Christ. Jesus. And. If we are. Trusting. In his righteousness. On that day.

We shall be hidden. We shall be hidden. We shall be hidden. We shall be hidden. We shall be hidden. In the righteousness. Of Christ. Christ. Will be our. Hiding place. There is no other.

Hiding place. From the wrath of God. But in Christ. Jesus. Alone. Alone. It's the most dangerous thing. In the world. If we may.

Remain. Trusting. In our. Own efforts. If we. Remain. Trusting. In our. Own efforts. If we. Remain.

[53 : 21] Trusting. In the. Hope. That. Everything. Will be all right. On the last day. If we haven't come. And. And. Come.

To Christ. And. And. Come. To Christ. Jesus. And bowed our knee. Before him. So the day of the Lord.

As well as being. A day of the wrath of God. Is also. A day. Which. A day of hope. And salvation. For those.

Who are in Christ Jesus. And we see this. Most clearly. In the. Concluding verses. Of. Chapter 3. Of Zephaniah. Verses. 14.

To 21. And here. We read. Of the. The. That great. And final day. Speaking. To. To his people. Not of.

[54 : 20] Of wrath. And judgment. And hell. But of. Salvation. And glory. And peace. For God's people. We may have had some. Good days.

In our life. We may have had a. Had the experience. Of a. Wedding day. Birth. Of a baby. Even. The first day. Of your holidays. Could be.

Such a relief. After. A lot of pressure. In your work. But all these. Are. Of nothing. Of no account. Compared. With the coming. Of the Lord.

Jesus Christ. We. Have. If we have. Trust in the Lord. We have. We have. We have experienced. A foretaste. Of that coming. When we first.

Believed. And put our trust. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. On that day. When he comes. There will be no more. Dreadery. No more.

[55 : 15] For some of us. Bad memories. No more. Going back to school. No. Continuing. Sadnesses. In our life.

But joy. Of joys. In the presence. Of the Lord. Jesus. And then. They come towards an end. There's. In those last verses. Of chapter.

Of chapters. Zephaniah. Verses 14. To. To. To. The page. To verse. 20. Of chapter 3. We see.

Three. Glorious. Descriptions. Of Christ. I think. Then we. We read. Of three. Glorious. Facts. About.

His. Believing. People. So. Quite. Briefly. I think. In. Chapter 3. Verse. 15.

[56 : 10] We read. About. The king. Of Israel. Being. In. Your midst. King. Of kings. And. Lord.

Of lords. Therefore. Zephaniah. Says. Shout. Sing. Rejoice. Exalt. Because. The king. Is. In. Your midst. He's. There. And. You see him. Face. To face. Never. Again. Will you be scared.

Or. Anxious. The king. Has. Has. Been. Conquered. And. Cast. Into hell. No longer.

Will the devil. And. Trouble. You. With. Doubts. And. Fears. In. In. In.

[57 : 05] In. Essentially. But. The. The ■ penguin. In. For broadcasts. Ready? If. To. Get closer.

And. remember. Of. The land. That's the hope. Of. Of jetties. Of. But. The. The kingdom.

And. You. Teach us. The kingdom. GE, O! but not only that I think we read in verses 16 and 17 the first part of 17 that he is described as a warrior we may feel today as it says our hands are weak in another translation our hands hang limp but our Lord Jesus is a warrior king and he comes in his power an exceeding great day of the Lord he comes as a warrior king to save his people and he will eternally save us with a loud command and the dead in Christ will rise first he is the mighty one who will save he has promised and for all who are in Christ Jesus there is nothing that can separate in all creation in all universe from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus but there is a third I think little picture here of

Christ in the second half of verse 17 we read here the warrior king he also is one who rejoices over you with gladness he acquires you by his love he will exult over you with loud singing and this I think is the picture of Christ the bright group exulting over his beloved rejoicing over you delighting in his people it's been said that heaven will be no heaven for Christ without his people being there they are his joy and his delight and he calls us brothers and sisters repeatedly in his own parables the Lord described himself as the bridegroom the bridegroom of his people

John in Revelation claims the wedding of the Lamb has come so here we have three descriptions of Christ the king the warrior and the bridegroom who delights our hearts and three glorious facts concerning his trusting people verse 18 that's maybe how it describes us today those who mourn for the festival we are not allowed to sing at the moment there's a mourning for for what we have lost but he's describing here there's a lack of power and his presence in our midst sometimes and this may be the time he takes through us takes us through times of suffering that we may walk by faith more by sight or it may be our own fault because we've become come unprepared we haven't prayed for our meetings together perhaps because the speaker relying more on his preparation his notes than the Holy Spirit and all these issues we come in our dependence upon him to these gatherings these times of worship together we're in dependence upon him that he will come and bless and who knows revive us one day with an unspeakable renewal but we are looking forward in these passages to that greater day when when he when he will we will be joying in his presence and the worship of the Lamb will be perfect and pure in glory and there'll be no no fault in it it'll be all holy and glorious and full of joy and love in his presence that we know no barrenness no reluctance to come to worship in that day in that day of the Lord then we read too that in verse 19 that he will save the lame and gather the outcast and I'll gather their shame into praise and renown in all the earth and that describes us sometimes we are may feel like the outcast may feel the lame like the lame troubled and stressed and Jesus speaks about us sometimes being like the bruised reed or the smouldering that smouldering flax and here we are so often weak and straying but on that day he will save the lame and gather the outcast and change their shame unto praise he will wipe away every last tear from our face and put a smile of joy on our renewed faces once we were nothing in the sight of man and in this world but on that day you will be glorified you will be touched you will be touched with something of the glory of Jesus forever he says we will shine like the sun on that day and the third great fact which we see here

[63 : 36] I think is that when we're in heaven we're at home we've reached our home at that time I will bring you in I'll bring you in at that time when I gather you together home with the Lord and that will be the great joy of heaven that we shall know we're at home with the Lord the best of homes in this world and there thanks be to God many good homes in this world but the best of the homes are but the faintest shadow of our true homeland with Christ in glory so listen for the final words you must take to heart the closing words of Zephaniah the prophet he says all these things are said by the Lord when I restore your fortunes before your eyes says the Lord the Lord has said it he has said it the day of the Lord that great and final day of the Lord is coming as sure as it is written in the word as sure as we've seen the first coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ when he was born in Bethlehem and died in shame on the cross for our sins outside Jerusalem and then was brought resurrected brought to life by the power of the almighty God his father raised to life forever now seated at his right hand in glory that is the great fact of our Lord Jesus Christ he is coming again just as he came the first time he is coming the second time short or long but he says to us we must be ready we must be watchful we must not be found asleep it will be a day of wrath for some a day of hope and salvation for others and God grant that each one of us may know that day is a day of salvation and glory for each one of us seek the Lord seek humility seek his righteousness the Lord has said it we'll close with a further singing from

Psalm 73 which ends on the note of the Christian life both present and future Psalm 73 the Scottish soldier this time and verses 24 to the end verse 24 we read thou thy counsel while I live wilt me conduct and guide is that true of us have we been guided and conducted with the counsel of God with the word of God while I live and here's a promise and to thy glory afterward receive me to abide the Psalm 73 in the Scottish Psalter verses 24 to 28 to God's praise bluetooth anthem pamphlet oh everywhere■■■■■■■■ and still our prot longue

O bless me. But with thy counsel, Father, I live, We'll keep on top and high, And to thy glory after war, Be still to the heart.

Who have I in the heavens are, And keep your Lord alone, And in the air, who my desire, Beside me there is none.

[68 : 54] My flesh and heart, Of ill and ill, Are taught of illy ever.

For all my heart, God, it is a strength and portion forever.

O Lord, we have our heart on thee, Forever, ever, we shall, Let that Todho, ever, Our glory from the Lord, But surely it is good for me that I'm talking to you to God.

In God I trust that all the Lord I may be there abroad.

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we desire to echo those words just sung. But surely it is good for me that I draw near to God.

[70 : 41] In God I trust that all thy works I may declare abroad. So bless us each one as we part we pray.

O Lord, may your word abide with us. And look upon us in the remainder of this day. O Lord, that we live it in a way pleasing to your sight.

And cleanse us afresh from our sins. And if it is possible we'll draw us again together this evening. For your name and your praise. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.