

Zephaniah 1

1-16-03

“Complacency!”

1. Intro: (vs.1)

1.1. Book Intro:

- 1.1.1. **Hezekiah**(good king of Judah) also fathered **Manasseh**(very bad king)
 - 1.1.1.1. 2 Kings 21:16 “Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.”
 - 1.1.1.2. After taken captive, he humbled himself before the Lord, but this had very little effect on his debased people!
- 1.1.2. Manasseh had **Amon**(very bad king) – He followed his father’s **reprobate** example instead of his **repentant** one.
- 1.1.3. Amon had **Josiah**(good king) – Was king at 8 yrs old. - And then...
 - 1.1.3.1. “For in the eighth year of his reign(age 16), while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David;
 - 1.1.3.2. and in the twelfth year(age 20) he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images.” 2 Chron.34:3
- 1.1.4. Josiah was leading a **religious reform**...Yet! It was not **true revival**. For it never got into the **hearts** of the people!
 - 1.1.4.1. It was only a surface change!
- 1.1.5. **The day of the Lord** – **Historically** applies to Babylon’s invasion(606bc), but **prophetically** speaks of a future day of wrath in the end times.

1.2. Zephaniah intro:

- 1.2.1. The only prophet w/royal blood in his veins(1).
- 1.2.2. His kinship w/the king(Josiah)didn’t seem to avert his preaching.
- 1.2.3. Zephaniah was the **Paul Revere** of the prophets warning Judah that, “Judgment was coming! Judgment was coming!”
 - 1.2.3.1. He preached about “**the day of the Lord**” more than any other prophet...including Joel(referring to it more than 20 times).

- 1.2.4. His **purpose** was not to “drive them to despair” but to “drive them to the Lord” & “to their duty”!
 - 1.2.4.1. “Not to frighten them out of their **wits**, but to frighten them out of their **sins!**” (Matthew Henry)
- 1.2.5. Zephaniah’s **goal...to move people beyond guilt to repentance.**
- 1.2.6. His name means “Yahweh hides” or “Yahweh has hidden”(see 2:3).
 - 1.2.6.1. So his message was basically, “the day of the Lord **IS** coming, but if you repent, God would give them a place to **hide!**”
 - 1.2.6.2. He is our **hiding place!**

2. **I WILL UTTERLY CONSUME!** (2-7)

- 2.1. A true prophet not only sees **farther** but he sees **deeper**.
- 2.2. His wrath will consume **His creation** (2,3) & **the hypocrites in the land** (4-6).
 - 2.2.1. This wasn’t any “*sky-is-falling*” threat! (chicken little/acorn)
- 2.3. (5) They were “double dipping!” (actually triple)
 - 2.3.1. They were covering all bases! (ever met someone like that?)
 - 2.3.2. Hey, we’re for **both** parties! But, duplicity is abominable w/God!
 - 2.3.2.1. Christ will be our **all...or nothing!**
God **fills** our universe & there is **no room** for another god!
If He **reigns** in your heart there is **no space** for another reigning power!
 - 2.3.2.2. Spurg said, “The idolater who distinctly gives himself to his false god, has one sin less than he who brings his polluted & detestable sacrifice unto the temple of the Lord, while his heart is w/the world & the sins thereof.”
 - 2.3.2.3. To have **1 foot on truth & the other on falsehood** will involve a terrible fall & total ruin!
 - 2.3.2.4. I saw on the news this week a man caught giving away **classified information** to our enemies. How, violated we feel, how un-American, what a traitor, a Benedict Arnold.
 - 2.3.3. They were like the **circus elephant Milan, Italy**. Which in the midst of a parade suddenly veered from the line and marched into a church. [In Milan, church doors are large, and in the summer are often wide open.] **This visitor wandered up the center aisle, trumpeted a bit, swung her trunk around and headed back to the parade.**

2.3.3.1. Unfortunately, many humans seem to imitate this pious pachyderm. On a Sunday morning we lurch into church, make a few noises, observe the congregation, then step out to resume our place in the parade. The great drama of worship is played out, but it is lost on us. **We are elephants in church!**

2.3.4. ***We must rest on Jesus alone! Live for Him alone! & depend on Him alone!***

3. **I WILL PUNISH! (8-11)**

- 3.1. His wrath will also consume the **worldly princes**(8); **violent oppressors**(9); **corrupt merchants**(10,11).
- 3.2. Zephaniah seems to start at the **royal palace**, & work his way through the **city streets**, inviting people to **lament** w/him.

4. **I WILL SEARCH! (12,13)**

- 4.1. His wrath will also consume the **indifferent**(12,13).
- 4.2. **SEARCH!** - The people of Jerusalem would try to hide, but the invading soldiers would search every “nook & cranny”.
 - 4.2.1. Last Saturday I was at a volleyball match. Coach lost his contact on the court before the match. Funny to watch a dozen people w/their faces a few inches from the floor so intent searching for it.
 - 4.2.2. **Q:** What if he took a flashlight to every nook & cranny of your life?
- 4.3. **SETTLED!** – “**On their lees**”. (NIV) “**At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs...**”
 - 4.3.1. **Dregs or Lees** = Sediment settling during fermentation, especially in wine.
 - 4.3.1.1. It gives it its color & body. If it is not **poured off**, the wine becomes thick & syrupy.
 - 4.3.1.2. It must be poured vessel to vessel to get rid of the bitter dregs!
 - 4.3.2. This **simile** is that of **settled, souring syrup, rotting & reeking!**
 - 4.3.3. “*To settle upon one’s lee’s*” is a proverb for **sloth, indifference & the muddy mind.**” (George Adam Smith)
 - 4.3.4. **Q:** Are you **stagnant in spirit?**

- 4.4. **SMUG! - Complacency** – Herein lies the root of the problem!
- 4.4.1. “Most of us have no real loves and no real hatreds. Blessed is love, less blessed is hatred, but **thrice accursed** is that indifference which is neither one nor the other.” Mark Rutherford (1831-1913)
- 4.5. The **complacent** would find out their theology was all wrong! - What a rude awakening!
- 4.5.1. **A good king** was on the throne; the **nation was growing**; the **Assyrians** were no longer a threat.
- 4.5.2. And besides Judah had God’s **temple** & He wouldn’t let anyone destroy His temple would He?
- 4.5.3. Let’s take a Complacency Quiz!
- 4.5.4. **Q: Are you a tomorrow-thinker or a yesterday-dweller?**
- 4.5.5. **Q: Do you ever warn others of the future, or does that day seem so far away?**
- 4.5.5.1. I was in an auto shop today looking at my notes & a man said (re: going to war w/Iraq) “**we here don’t have anything to worry about!**”
- 4.5.6. **Q: Which picture seems to best describe you?...**A laughing tourist taking photos in the lowlands w/rose-colored filters; **or** a lean, tough-minded climber scaling the rugged mountain peaks?¹
- 4.5.7. **Q: What ship was this quote a reference to? “Even God couldn’t sink this ship!”** (Titanic)
- 4.5.7.1. It was **moving too fast** for her tonnage thru the north Atlantic ice fields.
- 4.5.7.2. The ship’s owners wanted to set an Atlantic crossing **speed record**.
- 4.5.7.3. **No safety drills** had taken place.
- 4.5.7.4. The vessel was equipped w/only **20 life boats** for 2,200 passengers & crew.
- 4.5.7.5. The **wireless operators** were busy **arranging ticker-tape parades & parties** to celebrate their arrival in NY. Thus they ignored or made light of repeated **warnings** of icebergs.
- 4.5.7.6. Even **Captain Edward Smith**, w/more than 40 yrs of exp, seemed **complacent**...After all he too thought the ship was unsinkable.²

¹ Chuck Swindoll pg.178 (adapted from)

² Garner, “Titanic”; pg.1 (from Swindoll pg.79)

4.5.7.7. Even after the accident that tore a huge gash in the side **complacency** still prevailed.

4.5.7.8. Many trusted in the Titanic's watertight compartments.

4.5.7.9. Others, mocked the bulky orange life jackets.

4.5.8. **This tragedy parallels the story of our world.**

4.5.8.1. We'd like to think that human ingenuity has made us safe from disaster.

4.5.8.2. We have the American "*we are to great to fall*" mentality! **But are we really?**

4.5.8.3. Under the surface, **sin** has **ripped a gash** in humanity's soul

4.5.8.4. Believe or not folks **this world is sinking!!!**

4.5.9. Zephaniah kept radioing the warning, "**Babylonian Iceberg, Babylonian iceberg!**" – But none were listening!

4.5.9.1. **Q:** Is there any warning going on in your life? Are you heeding it?

5. **I WILL BRING DISTRESS! (14-18)**

5.1. Look at the 11 words he chooses to describe that day(15,16).

5.2. (17) His enemies will be treated like refuse!

5.3. (18) Besides the literal fire that burnt Jerusalem, we see the fire of God's **jealous** love over His people.

5.3.1. Because of this love He accepts no rivals, He permits no rebellion.