

## ***Session 3 The Forerunner Message in Zephaniah 1-2***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Outline of Zephaniah 1-2**

<b>1:2-3</b>	God's cosmic judgment
<b>1:4-6</b>	God's judgment on Jerusalem and Judah
<b>1:7-14</b>	The scope of God's judgment
<b>1:15-18</b>	God's terrifying beauty
<b>2:1-3</b>	Calling a faithful remnant to gather
<b>2:4-7</b>	God's judgment on Philistia
<b>2:8-11</b>	God's judgment on Moab and Ammon
<b>2:12</b>	God's judgment on Cush
<b>2:13-15</b>	God's judgment on Assyria

#### **B. Hezekiah is mentioned as Zephaniah's great-grandfather (1:1). Most see this as a reference to King Hezekiah. Zephaniah was probably in the royal family and shared a great-grandfather with Josiah.**

***The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. (Zeph. 1:1)***

#### **C. Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, possibly making him a contemporary to the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1). As a great-grandson of Hezekiah, he likely had access to the king's court as well as familiarity with the book of Deuteronomy.**

#### **D. On several occasions there are clear connections between Zephaniah's message and Deuteronomy.**

1. Zeph. 1:13 - Deut. 28:30
2. Zeph. 1:13 - Deut. 28:39
3. Zeph. 1:15 - Deut. 28:53, 55, 57
4. Zeph. 1:15 - Deut. 4:11
5. Zeph. 1:17 - Deut. 28:29
6. Zeph. 1:18 - Deut. 32:21–22
7. Zeph. 3:5 - Deut. 32:4
8. Zeph. 3:17 - Deut. 28:63; 30:9
9. Zeph. 3:19-20 - Deut. 26:19

#### **E. Familiarizing ourselves with the storyline of the Torah will help us understand more clearly the perspective of the prophets and why they made the declarations they made.**

***<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."* (Rev 22:9)**

## II. THE WORSHIP REFORM DURING JOSIAH'S REIGN

- A. Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah who sought to lead the nation through a worship reform. In doing so the messenger was calling Israel back to her original and primary mandate to be a kingdom of priests. Israel's primary role is to lead the nations in worshipping the one and true God. The Lord brought Israel out of Egypt for this reason. She was emancipated to worship.
- B. In Exodus 19, the Lord led Israel to Mt Sinai and spoke to them about their calling to be a priestly kingdom (Ex. 19:5-6). The prophet Jeremiah showed us that the visitation on Sinai was also God's betrothal of Israel.
- C. Exodus 19 is a foundational place in the Scriptures that is essential to understanding the revelation of the Bridegroom. It is the first place in Scripture where God reveals Himself to His people in that manner. A majestic scene, it is filled with majestic beauty, wonderment, and awe or the fear of the Lord (Ex. 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 8, 20, 21; 9:1, 13; 10:3).

***And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" (Ex. 5:1)***

- D. In Zephaniah we see the jealousy of the Lord confronting the culture of false worship and idolatry (1:4-5, 18; 2:15) through judgment and by calling the people to Himself (2:3, 11; 3:10). The book ends with Jesus the warrior-king leading the nation into the worship God desires (3:14-17).
- E. Zephaniah was assisting King Josiah in the worship reform in the land of Israel. The *primary* outcome of the forerunner ministry is for hearts to turn and the first commandment be established.  
***"... Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10)***  
***"But if they (messengers) had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings." (Jer. 23:20)***
- F. Forerunner messengers proclaim Jesus as Bridegroom, King, and Judge and declare what the Scriptures say about the unique dynamics related to God's end-time storyline that are inherent in the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (Mt. 24:14). Forerunner messengers prepare people spiritually by preaching the power of salvation and helping them understand the unique dynamics—positive and negative—that will occur in the generation the Lord returns. God's people must be prepared spiritually so they will not be overcome with fear, deceived by the enemy, seduced by the culture, paralyzed by confusion, or offended at the Lord's judgments, but instead are filled with peace, gratitude, faith, confidence, clarity, and holy love.
- G. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all nations before Jesus returns (Mt. 24:14). The kingdom message has a personal application as individuals freely receive salvation and a global, cosmic application as all the nations receive Jesus as their King when He returns. Forerunner messengers declare the gospel of the kingdom, calling people to be saved and to understand what the Scriptures say about the unique global dynamics related to Jesus bringing in a harvest of souls and raising up a victorious Church, while confronting the wicked kings of the nations in the generation in which He returns.

### III. THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. The overarching message of the prophet Zephaniah is the day of the Lord (Zeph. 1:1, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18; 2:2, 3, 8) and the call of Israel and the nations to respond to the Lord in light of it.
- B. *Day of the Lord* preaching is a primary focus of both the Old Testament prophets as well as Jesus and the New Testament apostles. In scripture there is a *call to respond in love and righteousness in light of the coming day of the Lord* or the coming Kingdom. The Day of the Lord shows up nearly 80 times in the Old Testament and approximately 100 times in the whole of scripture.
- <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. <sup>11</sup>Therefore ... what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness ...*** (2 Pet. 3:10-11)
- C. The coming of the kingdom proclaimed by John the Baptist and Jesus implied the Day of the Lord.
- “... John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup>and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”*** (Mt. 3:1-2)
- “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*** (Mt. 4:17)
- “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*** (Heb. 10:24-25)
- D. The day of the Lord is “His Day” in which He openly manifests His sovereign power and wisdom over the nations, decisively displaying His intervention both in judgment and of salvation. In the day of the Lord, Jesus’ zeal will release unprecedented activities of the Holy Spirit in revival and judgment.
- E. The prophets spoke of the scope of God’s day as great and its impact as terrible. The Day of the Lord will touch all the peoples of the earth, and it will display Jesus’ terrifying beauty and majesty.
- <sup>11</sup>For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?*** (Joel 2:11)
- <sup>5</sup>“I will send you Elijah...before... the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”*** (Mal. 4:5)
- F. Key *Day of the Lord* passages in the Old and New Testament: Isa. 2:10-22; 4:1-6; 11:1-15; 13:6-9; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7, 12, 14-18, 20; Zech. 14:1-4; Mal. 4:5; 1 Thes. 5:2-3; 2 Thes. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:17.
- G. The Day of the Lord is God’s glory revealed in history with great conflict and blessing.
1. Bridegroom: the day of the gladness of His heart – Song. 3:11
  2. King: the day of the Lord – Joel 2:11
  3. Judge: the day of His wrath – Ps. 110:5

#### IV. GOD’S COSMIC JUDGMENT (ZEPH. 1:2-3)

- A. The first chapter of Zephaniah shows us the terrifying beauty of God’s majesty (1:15) as He zealously confronts His people for their idolatry and false worship (1:4-7), prepares the nations for the sacrificial feast (1:7), and sets the stage for the new heaven and the new earth (1:2-3).
- B. Zephaniah’s prophetic message centers around God’s dealings with His people. However, he also highlights the scope of God’s divine judgment – which encompasses the globe because of global resistance to a clear global apostolic witness of the gospel. (Mt. 24:14; Acts 17:30; Rev. 9:21; 16:9)  
***<sup>2</sup>“I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land,” says the LORD; <sup>3</sup>“I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land ...” (Zeph. 1:2-3)***
- C. ***I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land:*** Some translations use “earth” instead. His judgments will be like the flood of the days of Noah (Gen. 6). Jesus told His disciples that the day of the Lord would be like the days of Noah (Mt. 24:37 Lk. 17:26). The reference to Noah’s flood shows us the measure of the end-time devastation (Isa. 13:12).
- D. The death toll in the book of Revelation is at least 50% over a period of 1260 days. If the earth’s population is 8 billion when the great tribulation starts, 4 billion will die over a period of 1260 days. Based on those numbers, approximately 3 million people in the world would die every day. Currently the daily death toll today is about 150,000. The Black Plague of 1347-1352 killed 25 million – 13,698 per day.  
***He shall judge among the nations. He shall fill the places with dead bodies.* (Ps. 110:6)**
- E. ***I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea:*** The judgment of the Lord is like a great cosmic reversal of Genesis 1. Paul in Romans 8 called it the groaning of creation that is seeking to be released from the bondage as a result of the sin of humanity. These judgments also create a Genesis 1:1 scenario of darkness and deformity out of which He brings what I like to call the New Genesis.  
***<sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Rom. 8:22)***  
***“For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth [Gen 1:1], and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.” (Isa. 60:2)***  
***<sup>25</sup>Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. <sup>26</sup>They [heaven and earth] will perish, but You will endure. Yes, they [heaven and earth] will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them [heaven and earth], and they [heaven and earth] will be changed [new heaven and new earth]. (Ps. 102:25-26)***
- F. ***The stumbling blocks along with the wicked:*** God will confront not only the idols but all those who without repenting or responding to the gospel continue to participate in them.
- G. ***I will cut off man from the face of the land:*** The intensity and the scope of God’s judgment will be global, resulting in the death of many.

## V. GOD’S JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM AND JUDAH (ZEPH. 1:4-7)

- A. Zephaniah communicates the unthinkable, which is that Judah and Jerusalem will be under strong judgment. In Zephaniah’s day, this happened partially during the invasion of Babylon 605-586 BC.<sup>1</sup> To the people of Judah and Jerusalem, this was highly unlikely. Jerusalem was understood to be impenetrable, under divine protection because of the Temple of the Lord in the city.

***“I will stretch out My hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, the names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests—<sup>5</sup>Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; those who worship and swear oaths by the Lord, but who also swear by Milcom; <sup>6</sup>Those who have turned back from following the Lord, and have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him.” (Zeph. 1:4-6)***

- B. Jerusalem has powerful promises (Ps. 48); thus it was inconceivable to them that she would be consumed by the judgments of God. Jerusalem and Judah were engaged in deep spiritual and moral compromise while presumptuously hiding behind a false sense of nationalistic pride and security.

***“Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these...’ <sup>8</sup> Behold, you trust in lying words ... <sup>9</sup> Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, <sup>10</sup> and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’? <sup>11</sup> Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes ...” (Jer. 7:4, 8-11)***

- C. ***I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, the names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests:*** The Lord will thoroughly cleanse and rid the land of false worship. The Father will have the worship He desires. He redeems idolaters and makes them worshippers (Jn. 4:11-24).

- D. Israel’s compromise consisted of mixture. Her abandonment involved the adding of other spiritual and moral elements while still “acknowledging” YHWH. The gods, like Baal, became their every-day gods to whom they turned for their economy and prosperity, turning to God as the god of crisis.

- E. ***Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; those who worship and swear oaths by the Lord, but who also swear by Milcom:*** Jerusalem engaged with Milcom (child sacrifice) as well as astrology horoscope (Ps. 68:1-6; cf. Dt. 4:19). Astrology is thought to have begun with the Sumerians, from whom the Babylonians had their origin. Could this speak of Jerusalem’s future involvement with the Harlot Babylon (Ezek. 8:14, Rev. 17)?

- F. ***Those who do not seek the Lord nor inquire of him:*** The people forsook the worship of the true God and trusted idols for their guidance and wisdom. Baal was both a fertility god as well as a weather or storm god, so they turned to Baal for rain, critical in an agrarian society for the growth of crop and economics. We see this contrasted in the lives of Saul (1 Sam. 28:6-9) and David (1 Sam. 30:6, 8; Ps. 27:4).

***<sup>6</sup>Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. (Isa. 55:6)***

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<sup>1</sup> See Mike Bickle’s *Book of Joel* teaching series on the small day of the Lord and the eschatological day of the Lord.

## VI. THE SCOPE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT (ZEPH. 1:7-14)

- A. In this section, Zephaniah issued his first call to respond in light of the coming judgments of the Lord. The prophet's message resembled the message of John the Baptist and Jesus in the gospels.
- In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt. 3:1-2)*
- <sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 4:17)*
- B. *Be silent in the presence of the Lord God:* Some believe this to be a priestly declaration offered before the time of sacrifice. It is possible that this is an earthly manifestation of what takes place in heaven during "the half hour of silence" after the seventh seal of Rev. 8:1 is opened. Much of the book of Revelation show God's end-time judgements from heaven's perspective, whereas the OT prophets saw the judgments as they are manifested in the earth. Jesus said on earth as it is in heaven.
- "... there was silence in heaven for about half an hour... <sup>3</sup>Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. <sup>4</sup>And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup>Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake..." (Rev. 8:1-5)*
- C. *For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests:* The concept of sacrifice here is that of the ritual sacrifice performed in the temple. However, it does not refer to the sacrifice of sheep and cattle, but rather to the sacrifice of the wicked (Ezek. 39:17-20; Mt. 24:28; Lk. 17:37; Rev. 19:17-18). Some suggest this to mean that those who reject the price and sacrifice of God will make their own payment for sin. If Christ had not paid our debt, we would still have a debt to pay.
- D. Every sphere and social status is affected (Zeph. 1:12-13). There will be great turmoil and anguish of heart. However, it is the Lord's mercy as it is His desire to deliver humans from self-sufficiency in the hope of turning them to the cross (Zeph. 1:12; cf. Isa. 26:9; Rom. 5:6; 2 Cor. 3:6).
- <sup>8</sup>"And it shall be, in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel. <sup>9</sup>In the same day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. [Gen. 6:11, 13] <sup>10</sup>... The sound of a mournful cry ... Fish Gate, a wailing ... Second Quarter, and a loud crashing from the hills. <sup>11</sup>Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh! For all the merchant people are cut down; all those who handle money are cut off." (Zeph. 1:8-11)*
- E. *Those who leap over the threshold:* This refers to those engaging in false worship by dishonoring the threshold which had a special meaning even among the pagans (1 Sam. 5:5). In the temple, it possibly had special meaning because of the blood on the doorpost at Passover (Ex. 12:7, 22-23).
- F. Great anguish in the land: The Fish gate, the outskirts, the Second quarter, and Maktesh, the market square of the city, will be vulnerable. The core of the city of God will be invaded by enemy armies. The hills where idols were often worshipped will be infiltrated by enemy armies as well.

## VII. GOD'S TERRIFYING BEAUTY (ZEPH. 1:15-18)

- A. Zephaniah gives an eightfold description of the Day of the Lord, which is a time in history when God through salvation and judgment openly manifests His zeal for righteousness, justice, humility, and love.
1. ***The great day of the Lord is near and hastens quickly***: The Day of the Lord will be swift and sudden. Paul taught that the Day of the Lord would like a thief in the night and that many would be falsely allured into comfort only to be met with sudden destruction (1 Thes. 5:2-10).
  2. ***The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter***: The noise of the Day of the Lord is both the announcement of the messengers (Rev. 10:9) and powerful men crying in deep inner turmoil.
  3. ***The day of wrath***: The day in which God's anger (Ps. 7:11) and divine displeasure (Isa. 59:16) against the wicked is manifested openly.
  4. ***A day of trouble and distress***: A time of great crisis and conflict and the source of deep anguish. Jesus taught about this distress, that hearts would fail because of fear (Lk. 21:26).
  5. ***A day of devastation and desolation***: The Day of the Lord will result in great destruction, resulting in towns and cities abandoned.
  6. ***A day of darkness and gloominess***: As in Moses' day (Ex. 10:22), there will be supernatural darkness that will descend on the earth. There will be great sadness and depression.
  7. ***A day of clouds and thick darkness***: The day of clouds and thick darkness points back to when the Bridegroom God appeared to Israel and was betrothed to His people. God showed His majestic splendor on Mt. Sinai, descending like a storm-cloud. (2 Kgs. 2:11-12; Job 38:1; 40:6; Ps. 58:9-11; 77:18; 81:7; Pr. 1:27; 10:25; Isa. 40:23-24; 41:15-16; 66:15; Jer. 23:19; 25:32-33; 30:23; Ezek. 1:4; Amos. 1:14; Nah. 1:3-4; Hab. 3:14-15; Zech. 9:14-17; Acts 1:9; 1 Thes. 4:17; Rev. 11:12)
  8. ***A day of the trump and alarm against the fortified cities***: This time will be preceded and marked by day-of-the-Lord preachers (Joel 2:1), who will preach, teach, and prophecy the gospel of the kingdom which includes the proclaiming God's end-time judgments. The messengers will be men and women with understanding who move in power (Dan. 11:33-35).
- B. ***I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men***: God's judgments will cause great anxiety and sorrow, resulting in a restlessness and aimlessness in life.
- C. ***Blood shall be poured out like dust ... flesh like refuse***: There will be much bloodshed and death.
- D. ***Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath***: The wealthy will not be spared and nor be able to negotiate their way with the Lord and His cause to be delivered except they repent and receive the payment of the Son of Man for their sin.
- E. ***The whole land shall be devoured by ... His jealousy***: He will judge as a passionate Bridegroom.
- F. ***He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land***: His judgment will be speedy and thorough and will touch all those who dwell in the land. Zechariah prophesied 2/3 would be cut off.

## VIII. THE CHURCH: A RESPONSE TO THE DAY OF THE LORD MESSAGE (ZEPH. 2:1-3)

- A. God calls for His people to gather, turn to Him, and seek Him before and during the crisis. I believe that the solemn assembly is both the identity of the church as well as season of intentional event gatherings of believers to seek the Lord wholeheartedly, rending their heart before the Lord.
- B. Zeph. 2:1-3 as does Joel 2:15 take place under the New Covenant. These passages could point to a strong presence of messianic believers in the land who labor and contend for Israel's full covenant inheritance (Acts 3:19-21; 28:20). I believe that Peter's allusion in Acts 2:17-21 to Joel 2 is intentional in establishing the Church's fundamental and eschatological identity as a solemn assembly that contends for the full release of the promise of the Father before the Day of the Lord.
- C. I believe the call to "gather" summons the Church (*meek of the earth*) in the land to pray. It could also be an evangelistic call for unbelievers (*undesirable nation*) in the land to turn to Christ and seek God.

<sup>1</sup>Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, <sup>2</sup>Before the decree is issued, or the day passes like chaff, before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you! <sup>3</sup>Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger." (Zeph. 2:1-3)

- D. *Undesirable nation*: This rebuke is based on God calling them a special treasure, special people, and a holy nation (Ex. 19:6). He calls her to turn to Him even though He speaks strongly (Heb. 6:9).
- E. Zephaniah calls the people to seek the Lord which involves seeking Him intimately through worship, obedience, and the pursuit of transformation.
  - 1. Seek the Lord – worship and intimate devotion
  - 2. Seek righteousness – right behavior personally and socially
  - 3. Seek humility – dependence on Him

## IX. GOD'S JUDGMENT AGAINST THE WEST COAST OF ISRAEL 2:4-7

- A. The coastal regions such as Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, the Cherethites, Canaan, and the land of the Philistines will come under severe judgment. These locations all refer to the whole coastal region of the land. However, by His mercy it becomes a dwelling place for those returning from captivity (Ps. 69:33; 79:11-13; 102:20-22; 146:7)
- B. God intervenes and gives a fresh start to the returning captives by giving them the ability to provide for and feed their family through farming.

<sup>24</sup>"The threshing floors ... full of wheat... vats new wine and oil. <sup>25</sup>So I will restore to you the years that the swarming... crawling ... consuming... and chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you. <sup>26</sup>You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously... <sup>27</sup>Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. (Joel 2:26-27)



## X. GOD’S JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NATIONS (ZEPH 2:8-12)

- A. When the Lord called Abraham in Genesis 12:3, He promised him that those who bless him would be blessed and those who curse him would be cursed. In Numbers 20-25, Moab refused to bless the Israelites by denying them passage, seeking to curse them, and then leading them into compromise.
- B. At the end of the age, Moab and Ammon continue to reject, insult and threaten (2:10) God’s people.  
***8“I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders.” (Zeph. 2:8)***
- C. God will manifest His severe judgments against Moab and Ammon and make them like Sodom and Gomorrah. Zephaniah proclaims Moab’s desolation and that Israel will plunder them (2:9).  
***9“Therefore, as I live,” says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah— overrun with weeds and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation.” (Zeph. 2:9)***  
***9 “... From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever.” (Isa. 34:9-10)***  
***“Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ...” (Isa. 63:1)***  
***4... “They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.” (Mal. 1:4)***
- D. ... will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth: The nations were deeply connected to the gods they worshipped. If a nation defeated another nation, it was perceived as a victory of their god. The God of Israel will confront all the nations, subdue them, and bring them under His leadership.
- E. ***People shall worship Him ... indeed all the shores of the nations:*** The Psalms and the prophets all declare that the earth will be filled with God’s glory and that the nations will worship Him.
- F. ***You Ethiopians also, you shall be slain by My sword:*** In Deuteronomy 32:40-42, God promises Israel that He will wield His sword against her enemies. God’s faithfulness is seen in judgments.
- G. In Romans, Paul speaks of a gospel priority<sup>2</sup> where he states that the gospel related to salvation is to the Jew first, then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16). He speaks in Romans 2:9 of this same priority related to judgment. Zephaniah starts by declaring that God will judge the world, beginning his emphasis on God’s controversy with Israel. Zephaniah then calls whosoever in the land to respond and seek the Lord because the Day of the Lord is near. He continues his message prophesying God’s judgment against the nations as part of his message of repentance to Israel for their restoration.
- H. Judah and Jerusalem worship the gods of the nations, and God judges the nations to expose the weakness of the nations to Israel so they put their trust in Him; He exposes the weakness of the nations to themselves so that they too would turn to the Lord and worship Him (Zeph. 2:11).

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<sup>2</sup> See Samuel Whitefield on this subject “One King” as well as “Israel and the Great Commission.”