

June 25th 2006: OT review: Zephaniah 3:14-20

In looking at book Zephaniah.....import to understand.....that the prophet who wrote ..was no working class character...such as Amos or Joel or Jonah

Zephaniah was from the aristocracy--→Great, great, grandson of Hezekiah

He had influence in the kings palace.....and moved in high political circles
When he spoke.....leaders listened

- **Consequently his preaching about judgment**.....A coming Day of the Lord....
Helped bring about a revival in.....that started with the King...leaders

*** The context for this prophecy of**.....is the beginning of the reign of king Josiah
...whose story you will find in 2 Chron 34

By this time the sister state.....had already been destroyed by.....some 82 years b4.
Some 53 years later.....Judah would suffer.....Babylonians

B4 Josiah

Judah had endured 57yrs of two very wicked kings.....**Manasseh** (repentant)
And **Amon**...who was not.....

Of Manasseh's reign we read in 2Chron 33:9-10.....
Of Amon's reign.....33:21-23.....

- We can only imagine....the legacy of evil....these 2 kings... left behind

Then to the thronein 640.BC.....came Josiah.....just 8 years old

When he was 16→ began to seek.....

When he was 20→he began to reform the land....

When he was 26.....→began to cleanse and purify the Temple.....found the law

It was during the reign of Josiah Zeph 1:1 tells us.....that Zephaniah began to speak
And because of his position.....as a cousin of the king.....**I believe that what he said**
.was used by the HS.....to move the young king.....advisors....towards spiritual revival

A quick read of his first two chapters.....will help you understand why this was so
When God speaks thro Zephaniah.....He pulls no punches

Listen as I read part of chapter one from the Message paraphrase.....

Is it any wonder that the leaders chose...at that time.....to seek after God
In the hope that He would be merciful

- **But the major thing we need to be aware of.....Is that what Zephaniah preach**
Was not just for Judah.....or for the age in which he lived

He also predicted a Coming Day of the Lord.....for the whole world
A Day still to come.....When God will bring judgment on all mankind....
.....for all the evil and sin.....that has been happening from the beginning.

- **Now some might say.....Well that's a bit harsh** → But is it ?????

God made this world so beautiful.....and created human beings to live...
Each person a miracle.....with so much potential for good within....
HE entrusted the human race with looking after it....
And look at what humankind has done !!!!!

He set within the human heart.....a desire to worship Him..... But its been blocked
Gave an in-built ability to know right from wrong

Even gave us written rules to live by.....Standards for good relationships with others
But selfishnesscruelty.....greed.....lust.....jealousy

And if you don't think that such is enough...to justify God proclaiming
A Last day of judgment.....**Then think** of how He sent His only Son.....
To be the One who could enable any person to escape this judgment
.....**and yet so** many ignore Jesus completely...treat His name...swear

- **The wonder is not that God should prepare a judgment.....**
But that He should have held back that Day of His Wrath.....for so long

Zephaniah.....along with telling...about God's future Day of judgment
also tells us why God has held back His judgment....

- **It is to give more and more people....the chance to seek to connect with Him**
To find Him and to claim His love and mercy.....For He desires that no one..

So in 2: 2—3 he says.....

Zephaniah presents the two wonderful parts of God's Character

- He is perfect and Holy
You will always know where you stand with God.....He does not change

He is consistently holy.....and sin and evil and wickedness cannot come before Him
He is justHe always does that which is right

The promises He has made.....Such as evil will be punished....righteousness honoured
HE is unable to break

- **But He is also Love and Mercy**

And therefore He has made a way.....for humankind to return to Him.....

Of course Zephaniah saw this as particularly applying.....to God's people

For God showed him.....that there would be a remnantwho would seek God

And for them the blessings would be incredible

It would not be final judgment.... But restoration.....and God's favour

So in 3:14—17 he just about breaks into joyful song.....as He talks with certainty

.....about the blessing God has ahead for those who seek Him

Little did Zephaniah know.....that God would make such a restoration

possible for all people....of all nations

That God in His love would give us an escape from ...judgment of that Last Day

...by taking the sin and wrong doing that is part of us all.....and dealing with it Calvary

The Day of Judgment will still come.....

It will have to come before this world is completely destroyed

But there is safetyfor everyone who has trusted in God.....through Jesus

Whose every wrong doing.....has been covered by His love and sacrifice

The way has been made.....but we need to humbly accept it

(The dream and the card filing system..)

But just as wonderful.....as deliverance from punishment.....

Is the joy of knowing how much God loves.....those who accept His gift of forgiveness

Just look at the promises found in 3:17

1. The Lord your God is with you and He is mighty to save
2. He will take great delight in you
3. He will quite you with His love
4. He will rejoice over you with singing

***Take away with you today...these precious promises...for you
...from the very heart of God.***