

## Zephaniah 3

In Zephaniah 3 we are going to see a progression.

1. God goes from pronouncing a woe upon Jerusalem to pouring out His wrath upon them which in turn refines and purifies the remnant of His people.
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The God who disciplines and defends His people, ultimately delights in those who truly know Him.

### **I. He Pronounces Woe** v1-4

#### **A. Because of the People** v1-2

*Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, The tyrannical city!*

*2 She heeded no voice,*

1. It wasn't as though the people of Judah were ignorant.
2. They had been thoroughly forewarned and begged to repent by Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and others
3. She did not hear

*2 She heeded no voice, She accepted no instruction.*

1. Not only did she not hear...
2. She did not accept the Word.

*2 She heeded no voice, She accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD, She did not draw near to her God.*

1. That is not surprising. How will they draw near to God if they do not trust Him?
2. And how will they trust Him if they do not accept His Word?
3. And how will they accept God's Word if they refuse to heed His Word?
4. So, we see a glimpse into God's wrath as He says "Woe!"...a word used to express dissatisfaction mingled with pain.

#### **B. Because of the Princes** v3

*v3 Her princes within her are roaring lions, Her judges are wolves at evening; They leave nothing for the morning.*

1. Judah's nobility is compared to roaring lions
2. Her judges are compared to ravaging wolves
3. They gnaw their prey to the very bone...leaving nothing for the next morning.

#### **C. Because of the Prophets and Priests** v4

*v4 Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law.*

Thus people, princes, prophets, and priests were ripe for judgment and in this we see God's wrath revealed.

## II. He Pours Out Wrath v5-8

5 *The LORD 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.* 6 *“I have cut off nations; Their corner towers are in ruins. I have made their streets desolate, With no one passing by; Their cities are laid waste, Without a man, without an inhabitant.*

1. Nations to the N, the S, the E, and the W were falling under the righteous and just judgement of God
2. Why is God doing this? Because of His righteousness and justice, but also...
  - a. To bring the reality of judgment closer and closer to home
  - b. To take away any “refuges” the people of Judah thought they had in surrounding countries
  - c. And ultimately to convince them to repent and return to God.

7 *“I said, ‘Surely you will revere Me, Accept instruction.’ So her dwelling will not be cut off According to all that I have appointed concerning her. But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds.*

8 *“Therefore wait for Me,” declares the LORD, “For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal.*

1. His judgment was poured out on Jerusalem, but there is coming a day when all the nations will gather for judgment
  - a. Only God can judge me!
    1. Do you think that is a good thing?
    2. v5 *The LORD is righteous within her; He will do no injustice.*

b. Revelation 20:11-15 *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

## III. He Purifies a People v9-13

9 *“For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder. 10 “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings. 11 “In that day you 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, exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain. 12 “But I will leave among you A humble and lowly people, And they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. 13 “The remnant of Israel will do no wrong And tell no lies, Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths; For they will feed and lie down With no one to make them tremble.”*

1. This is a picture of the transforming work of the gospel message.

2. Ezekiel 36:24-28 *For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.*

3. 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

This is also a picture of the Great Commission being fulfilled.

9 *“For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder. 10 “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings.*

1. Matthew 28:19 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations*

2. Isaiah 66:20 *Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.*

3. Revelation 7:9-10 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”*

#### **IV. He Removes His Judgments and our Enemies v14-19**

*14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15 The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more.*

1. The Lord will remove his hand of judgment. He will lift His hand of wrath.

2. John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

3. Stop and think about this. His hand of wrath is upon You if You are lost.

a. What does that feel like?

b. The wrath of God was on Jesus. Think about that.

4. The weight Jesus felt on the cross, we should feel if we are not saved...and if You don't feel that, then God help you.

15 *The LORD has taken away His judgments against you*

1. When we are saved, we should feel the release! NO condemnation.

2. Romans 5:8-9 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*

15 *The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. 16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. 17 "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.*

1. God will clear away our enemies.

2. He will be in our midst, a victorious warrior!

3. Colossians 2:13-15 *When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.*

a. He then made a public display or spectacle of him

b. This is a picture of a victorious Roman general parading his defeated enemies through the streets of Rome.

17 *"The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.*

1. Isaiah 62:5 *For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.*

2. He will gather us, save us, and rejoice over us as we rejoice in Him v18-20

18 *"I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts—They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them. 19 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth. 20 "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 the LORD.*

### **Conclusion:**

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Do you know Him?