

Bible Commentary on Zephaniah

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Bible Commentary on Zephaniah

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Introduction

This is not your typical commentary, so I'd like to give a few words of explanation before you begin. As a child I was taught to read the Word of God on a daily basis. Our goal as a family was to read through the Bible once a year, and that is what we did. When I became an adult I kept reading the Bible from cover to cover.

One day, however, I realized that I wanted something more. Reading the Bible was good, but I wanted to actually *study* it. Could I explain what each verse meant? Did I really understand what each chapter was saying? I decided to start writing daily commentary instead of just reading the Word.

This commentary was put together to help me study the Bible. I have no plans to release it, for there are far better commentaries out there that were written by much wiser men. This document is simply a tool to help me understand what the Word of God has to say.

Jon Cooper
4/14/2019

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Introduction to Zephaniah

This book contains the prophecies of Zephaniah. The first verse of this book tells us that his vision was received in the days of Josiah the king. According to the timeline that I put together (see Resource 2, "Timeline"), Josiah reigned over Judah from 639 BC to 608 BC. Scholars believe that this book was written around 635 BC.

8/28/2018, 7/18/2019

Zephaniah 1

"1 The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah."
(Zephaniah 1)

Before we get started we need to understand the context of this book. In Zephaniah 1:7 we are told that this book is about the Day of the Lord, which is always a reference to the seven-year tribulation period. That means these prophecies aren't about the Babylonian exile or some other judgment in ancient Jewish history; instead this is end-times prophecy! So let's keep that in mind as we move forward.

There is something else very unexpected about this book. Josiah was not a wicked king; he was actually wise and righteous. In fact, he was one of the only kings who was actually prophesied by name! In 1 Kings 13:2 the Lord sent a prophet to Jeroboam and told him that a king named Josiah would arise and destroy the pagan altar that Jeroboam had created, and burn the bones

of the pagan priests upon it – and that is exactly what Josiah did. 2 Kings 22:2 tells us that Josiah was a righteous king who repaired the temple, destroyed the idols, and did what was right. That means Zephaniah didn't prophesy under a wicked king; instead his message was sent to a righteous king who feared the Lord. That's quite different from what we've seen in the other prophets, isn't it?

We are given quite the lineage for Zephaniah. It turns out he was the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah.

This prophecy was given before the time of the Babylonian exile. It was given when things were going fairly well and the nation was ruled by a righteous king.

"2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD." (Zephaniah 1)

That is quite a message to send to King Josiah! However, this message is about the Day of the Lord – the coming seven-year tribulation. In that day God will wipe out much of the world's plant life (Revelation 8:7), sea life (Revelation 16:3), and population (Revelation 6:8). This book is a warning about the end-times judgments. The tribulation will be far worse than anything Israel has experienced before and will never be repeated. The distress and pain of that period will be astonishing.

"3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked: and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD." (Zephaniah 1)

All of these things will come to pass during the tribulation

period. There will be few survivors. In fact, Jesus said that if He didn't cut those days short then no life would survive on the planet at all (Matthew 24:22). Everyone and everything would die. (These verses could fit right into Revelation, couldn't they?)

For the record, were verses 2 and 3 fulfilled during the Babylonian exile? Definitely not! There were numerous survivors of that day who were actually left behind in Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 40). These verses are talking about end-times prophecy.

"4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests; 5 And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham; 6 And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him."
(Zephaniah 1)

It should be noted that Josiah – the very king Zephaniah ministered under – actually destroyed Baal worship in Israel (along with any other idolatry he could find). However, Josiah didn't see Judah or Jerusalem destroyed. God was with him because Josiah was righteous. None of these things accompanied Josiah's destruction of Baal worship during his day.

These verses tell us that when the tribulation begins the Jews will be living in Judah and Jerusalem but they won't be serving the Lord. Instead they will be worshiping their various idols. During the tribulation God is going to destroy the idols and those who worship them.

"7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests." (Zephaniah 1)

This is how we know that this book is definitely about the tribulation period. The reference to the Day of the Lord makes it clear, and the accompanying verses depict an awful time that will see the large-scale destruction of both animal and human life. It fits the end-times judgments very well.

What guests has the Lord bidden before the Day of the Lord begins? Well, the Bible tells us that before the tribulation period starts the Lord is going to rapture the church and take them to Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:51). While the judgments of the tribulation are being poured out on this world they will partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). So what supper is ongoing at this time? The marriage supper of the Lamb. What guests are bidden to it? The raptured church. I'm sure no one could have known in Zephaniah's day, but this sounds a lot like an Old Testament rapture reference to me. (For more information on this topic see Appendix B, "Pre-Tribulation Rapture".)

How does the world know that the tribulation is at hand? Because the supper guests (the church) have departed and are gone. Once the church is raptured the world knows that the time is near for the tribulation to begin. That is one of their signs that the Day of the Lord is near.

"8 And it shall come to pass 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 strange apparel. 9 In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit." (Zephaniah 1)

In the Bible clothing is symbolic of righteousness. Strange apparel would be strange garments – specifically, false righteousness that does not come from the Lord. Do you remember the parable of the wedding supper that Jesus told in Matthew 22:1-13? Those who came but weren't dressed in wedding garments were cast out (Matthew 22:12-13). You must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ in order to attend His feast! Those who try to come dressed in their own righteousness will be punished, even if they are the rich and famous children of kings.

Who is God against? Those who perpetrate violence and deceit. Those who do such things will be punished (and cast into the lake of fire if they do not repent). The tribulation period is when God will punish the nations for all the wickedness they have done. It is a time of God's wrath against all the evils of this world, and the evil people who commit it. The Lord offers mercy to those who repent – and everlasting pain to those who do not.

"10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. 11 Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off." (Zephaniah 1)

There will be a tremendous amount of howling during the tribulation period. We see one reason given for the howling: the

merchants have been killed, which has brought economic activity to a standstill. Given all the judgments God that will pour out upon the world during the tribulation, it's easy to see why the economies of the world will be destroyed.

God is making it clear to Jerusalem that they are not going to be spared. This is not a time that will only fall on the Gentiles and leave the Jews alone. No, the Jews will suffer as well because they are also guilty of idolatry. The only ones who will be spared are those who were raptured before it began.

"12 And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil." (Zephaniah 1)

This has been a very popular opinion through the ages – that God exists, but He's walked away from His creation and no longer does anything. He doesn't help people and He doesn't punish them, but just ignores His creation altogether. This is a viewpoint the Lord hates! Anyone who has read through the prophets can quickly see how wrong that viewpoint is. God is *very* involved in His creation. He blesses those who are righteous and saves them from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Likewise, He curses those who are wicked and punishes them for their sins, and He sends judgments upon wicked nations. God is going to find these people who are blaspheming His name in this manner and will punish them.

These men are telling themselves that God isn't going to judge the world. The Day of the Lord is not going to come and everything is going to be fine. There is no God to worry about – or if there is He isn't going to get involved. God is going to prove them very, very wrong.

"13 Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof." (Zephaniah 1)

Since they stole from God by robbing Him of the glory He is due for reigning over creation, the Lord will take away their possessions. They will do all the work needed to build a house and plant a vineyard, but after all that investment of time and labor and money it will be taken from them. God is going to curse the work of their hands and they will not get to enjoy the reward of their labor. (Incidentally, notice how having your pay taken from you and given to someone else is a terrible curse that God inflicts on the wicked! It is *not* a moral economic system; instead it is a judgment of God – a curse.)

One of the blessings of the Millennium is that people will build houses and inhabit them; they will plant crops and enjoy their fruit (Isaiah 65:21). What they have reaped will *not* be taken away from them. In those days their wages will not be taken by force and redistributed to others (as happens today under the disguise of things like "welfare"). People will no longer rob their neighbors (either directly or through "taxes") in order to force them to pay their bills (or healthcare, or education, or rent). Instead each person will get to enjoy the work of their hands for a long, long time (Isaiah 65:22).

"14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of

trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers." (Zephaniah 1)

This could have been taken out of Revelation, couldn't it? The tribulation is at hand! It is a day when the mightiest of men will be unable to stand, but will wail and cry and weep and mourn. As Jesus said, it is a day of trouble, greater than any trouble that has ever been seen before (Matthew 24:21). As Revelation 6 makes clear, it is a period when there will be war, waste, and desolation all over the world. It is a day characterized by terrible darkness (Revelation 16:10).

It will indeed be a day of alarm for the fenced cities. War will come (Revelation 6:2-4), and billions will die (Revelation 6:8), and an earthquake will level whatever the war has left standing (Revelation 16:18-20). This passage is definitely speaking of the coming of the tribulation. Once the Lord has bidden His guests to His wedding supper, that Day will indeed hasten greatly.

So many people today look at these passages and say "Why study prophecy? None of it matters! It will all pan out in the end anyway". I think it's terrible to look at the Bible and say "Eh, none of this stuff over here is important". If it wasn't important then God wouldn't have devoted so much time to it or repeated it so often! This is something we need to take to heart. Jesus repeatedly commanded us to *watch for end-times events* (Matthew 24:42, 25:13; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:37-38). He also commanded us to know His Word and study it (Mark 12:24). This is clearly on God's mind so it should be on our mind as well. If God cares about it (which He does), and commands us to pay attention to it and watch for it (which He did), then *we should obey Him* and do as He commanded. God specifically sent prophets to *kings* to proclaim this message. Why would we ever

think we could just dismiss it as being utterly unimportant and irrelevant? Is it really wise to look at a prophet sent from God and tell him "What you have to say isn't relevant to my life"?

"17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung." (Zephaniah 1)

God is emphasizing just how bad the tribulation will be. Great distress will come upon mankind! A huge number of people will die – well over half of the world's population (see Revelation 6:8 and Revelation 9:15). Everything in the oceans will die (Revelation 16:3). The trees, grass, and crops will burn (Revelation 8:7). The cities will be leveled (Revelation 16:18-20). The water supply will be poisoned (Revelation 16:4). It will be a time of *staggering* death and loss. The world has never seen a time like this before (Matthew 24:21); more will die during this time than have died in all the wars the world has ever seen put together. If Jesus didn't put a stop to it then literally *everything in the world would die* (Matthew 24:22)

Why will this happen? Why will God judge the world? Because God offered it mercy, compassion, and His kindness to this wicked world and was rejected. He offered to save the world and the world refused. So the Lord will remove all of His servants from this world and then judge the world that refused its rightful King. He will then return and reign over the world for the rest of time. Sin is what will bring this judgment upon the world, and the only way to escape the tribulation is to repent and believe now, before the rapture happens.

"18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." (Zephaniah 1)

This is something we've seen before (James 5:1-3), but it bears repeating. The rich think they have their wealth, and food, and security guards, and power, and their private underground bunkers, and those things will enable them to survive anything that happens. As James 5:3 says, they have heaped together treasure for the last days – ill-gotten treasure that was obtained by robbing others. The rich think they're immune, but they are not. The tribulation period will be so terrible that, as Ezekiel 7:19 says, people will actually cast their silver and gold out into the streets because it has no value and cannot save their lives! Their riches will not spare them from the wrath of an angry God. The Lord's intent is to kill *all* of the wicked inhabitants of this wicked world (Luke 19:27), and that is exactly what He's going to do.

The fact that God sent this message to *Josiah* – a righteous king who was never going to see any of these events take place – should tell us that *God wants us to pay attention* and study this! If these prophecies only matter to those who are going to live through that terrible time, I'm sure God could have arranged for this material to be left out of the Bible and communicated through Elijah once that day came. But God gave it to Josiah *and us*, so we need to take care not to ignore it.

8/28/2018, 7/18/2019, 4/23/2022, 7/17/2022, 7/25/2022

Zephaniah 2

"1 Gather yourselves together, yea, gather

together, O nation not desired; 2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you. 3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger." (Zephaniah 2)

Isn't this amazing? God is revealing the way to escape the wrath to come – in other words, how to be spared the tribulation period. Those who repent and believe in Jesus will be hid during that terrible time. The reason they will not have to experience the tribulation is because Jesus will return and take us out of this world entirely! This passage is a reference to the rapture, although no one at the time could possibly have realized it. Yet now we can look back and see what this is really saying!

In chapter 1 God warned us of a terrible time of judgment that no one will be able to endure – a time of bloodshed and death and destruction. After He told us about the horrible danger that's coming (and which draws nearer every day), the Lord explains how to escape it so we never have to endure that judgment! That is how God works: He tells us about the threat and *then* explains how to be saved from it. That is the way we should preach as well. Before people will be interested in being saved they must know what they are being saved from!

We can see Lord's the anger and wrath that is poured out upon sin, and we can also see His great mercy and compassion by offering a way to be spared that terrible time. Not only is there a way to be saved, but He tells us about it long in advance.

Who will seek the Lord with meekness and humility? Who seek after righteousness? That would be those who are saved – those who have repented and believed in the Messiah. Everyone

who is truly saved will walk in God's ways. (They may not do it perfectly, but their life will bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit.) Those who are saved will be hid and will not face the wrath of God.

Today is the day to accept this offer, before the opportunity passes and it is too late. The days are quickly passing by and we don't know how many more are left.

"4 For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. 5 Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. 6 And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks." (Zephaniah 2)

You never want to hear that the word of the Lord is against you! During the tribulation God is destroying all the nations that were enemies of Israel, who oppressed her and took her land. God is going to destroy the land of the Philistines so thoroughly that there will not be anyone left! Even the sea coast will be depopulated, and shepherds will keep their sheep there.

We hear a lot about Gaza in the news, don't we? Now you know what its fate is going to be. You don't want to be in that part of the world during the tribulation! (In fairness, though, you don't want to be in the world at all during that terrible time).

For the record, Nebuchadnezzar exiled the kings of the Philistines to Babylon and absorbed their territory in 604 BC.

"7 And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity." (Zephaniah 2)

One thing we will see during the Millennium is God greatly expanding Israel and giving her all the land that He promised. God will regather them to the land (after the antichrist scatters them) and bless them. The land that once belonged to their enemies will belong to Israel, and the Jews will dwell in it securely. God will visit them – in fact, God will dwell among them forever, watching over them and protecting them.

"8 I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border. 9 Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them." (Zephaniah 2)

God blesses those who bless Israel and curses those who curse Israel (Genesis 12:3). Those who have magnified themselves against Israel, and who have attacked her and cursed her and taken her land, will be punished. Moab and Ammon did terrible things, and the nations who dwell in those parts of the world today continue to do so – and God is going to punish them for all their sins. The Lord is going to make Moab and Ammon like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah – cities that were utterly

destroyed and obliterated off the face of the world. Those wicked nations will be destroyed, and their land will remain a desolation forever in memorial of God's wrath upon them.

It's quite possible that the judgment against Israel's enemies, which was long thought to be something that happens before the tribulation begins, might actually happen either at the end of the tribulation or even at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. This could play out a number of different ways. What we know for sure is that it is going to happen. Their doom is sealed and draws nearer every day.

For the record, the Babylonians conquered both the Moabites and the Ammonites in 582 BC. This was 4 years after Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

"10 This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of hosts. 11 The LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." (Zephaniah 2)

What was it Jesus said? Those who have done it unto the least of His children have done it unto Him (Matthew 25:40). Those who have oppressed, cursed, enslaved, and killed His people will be wiped out. God Himself will destroy them. However, those who have watched over His children and cared for them during the tribulation time will be blessed. That is what Jesus was talking about in the sheep and the goat judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). The righteous will demonstrate their faith by living it out (James 2:18), and the way they will do that during the tribulation is by caring for the persecuted people of God.

Moab and Ammon hated the Jews and tried to kill them and take their land, so God will obliterate those nations and give their land to Israel.

God is going to destroy all of the idols during the tribulation; none will survive. In the Millennium the Lord will be worshiped by people all over the world! The whole world will be filled with the knowledge of God (Isaiah 11:9, Habakkuk 2:14). Even in the distant islands the Lord of hosts will be worshiped! Things will not be like they are today, when idolatry is everywhere. People will worship the Lord wherever they are. They won't need to go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God, as they did in the days of Zephaniah.

It is a terrible thing to magnify yourself against the people of God. It may seem like a winning strategy now, but when Jesus returns that is going to change.

"12 Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword." (Zephaniah 2)

In Ezekiel 38:5 Ethiopia was one of the nations that allied with Gog-Magog in order to invade Israel. It's no wonder that God is going to punish them for their unprovoked invasion of His people!

"13 And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.
14 And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall

uncover the cedar work. 15 This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand." (Zephaniah 2)

The Assyrians persecuted Israel relentlessly, and so God is going to punish them for what they have done. The nation will be destroyed and their capitol wiped out. Instead of a bustling city it will be abandoned, home to flocks and wild animals.

The enemies of God's people are going to be judged and destroyed for their sin. They thought they had gotten away with it and there would be no consequences, but they were very wrong. The city that once dwelt without a care will be brought to ruin and mocked by all who see it.

For the record, Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC.

8/28/2018, 7/18/2019

Zephaniah 3

"1 Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! 2 She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. 3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. 4 Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law." (Zephaniah 3)

Although the city is not named, the mention of the

sanctuary in verse 4 makes it pretty likely that it's talking about Jerusalem. Note that this prophecy was given in a time when the people were actually serving the Lord, not in a time of great evil! I think this is still looking forward to the end times – to the tribulation period.

These sins are very familiar by now, aren't they? These are the same sins that Jerusalem has been guilty of for such a long time. She disobeyed God and refused to be corrected. She did not trust in the Lord and instead put her faith in everything and everyone else. Her leaders were violent and savage. Her judges were unjust and took bribes. Her prophets prophesied lies in the name of the Lord, and said peace was coming when the judgment of God was at hand. The priests did not obey the Lord either. It was all rotten and evil, all the way down. All of this sin polluted the land, and that was going to lead to judgment.

"5 The just LORD is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame." (Zephaniah 3)

God does not sin, and cannot sin, and will never sin. He never fails and His judgment is perfect and just. A city that is wicked and unrepentant *must* be judged for its sins! The Lord cannot let it go unpunished.

Notice what it says at the end of verse 5: one of the characteristics of the reprobate mind is that it is *shameless*. It sins and feels no shame or remorse. It's interesting that one of the judgments God promises to send upon the wicked is everlasting shame (Jeremiah 23:40). It would be better if they felt shame now so that they might repent and be saved. Their lack of shame and remorse is going to destroy them.

"6 I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant."
(Zephaniah 3)

It sounds like the world will be almost completely depopulated by the time it reaches the end of the tribulation. There will be some people left (because the antichrist will have armies that will attack Jerusalem and threaten the Jews which are hiding in Petra) but many areas will be devastated and without inhabitant. Many cities will be leveled and ruined, and some of them will never be rebuilt but will remain desolations forever.

God is telling us all of this *now* so that we will be terrified of what's coming and repent, so we will be spared this awful time! He is *not* telling you so you can go shopping for survival supplies and build a good bunker. It doesn't matter what supplies you have: *you are not going to survive the tribulation*. This is not a time when people survive; it is a time when virtually *everyone* dies. (Revelation 16:20 tells us the tribulation is so bad that even the *mountains* will not survive!) The only way to prepare is to repent *now* and not be on Earth when it happens. People who think they're somehow going to live through this thanks to their trusty survival supplies are idiots. (You're going to survive a demonic invasion? Really? Using what – camping supplies? Are you going to shoot the demons with your guns?) They are ignoring everything God has said about how *unbelievably bad* it's going to be. Even the mighty man will cry bitterly (Revelation 6:15-17)!

The wrath of God is coming upon this world – a terrible, awful wrath, the likes of which the world has never seen before. Flee from it! Don't be distracted by the cares of this life, or the

pleasures you enjoy, or whatever ties you may have to this world. Flee from this wrath with single-minded determination! You have *no idea* how bad your life is going to get when this hits. Don't let the things of this world kill you by distracting you from what really matters.

"7 I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings."
(Zephaniah 3)

Revelation tells us that God after sends His first judgments upon the world during the tribulation, He will send people (and an angel) all over the world to preach the gospel to literally *everyone* (Revelation 14:1-11). It will be obvious to everyone that God is real and is raining down His judgments upon the world (Revelation 6:15-17). Yet in spite of the judgments of God and the command to repent, some people will not fear the Lord. Instead they will curse Him and continue on in their sin (Revelation 9:20-21). God will offer the people of the world forgiveness; some will take it (and be martyred) but many will refuse it.

"8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." (Zephaniah 3)

This is exactly what we saw Joel 3:2, isn't it? God is gathering the nations together into one place so He can pour out His wrath upon them for the sin of enslaving His people and taking away Israel's land. Notice that the Lord says He will devour the world with fire. Lest you think this is just a metaphorical fire, the apostle Peter tells us that during the tribulation the whole world will burn and everything in it will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:7, 10-12).

Wait upon the Lord, for the day is coming when He will return and judge the nations that have come against Israel. Who will be impacted when that day comes? *The entire planet.*

Wait upon the Lord, for He is the one who will do it. These works will be done in His time and by His power.

"9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."
(Zephaniah 3)

I suspect that "a pure language" is a reference to Hebrew, and the people God is talking about are the Jews. This verse is about the time when all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26). It speaks of the moment at the end of the tribulation when Israel will repent and accept Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10-14), and will ask Him to come and save them. Israel will call upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord will come and deliver them from the antichrist.

"10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." (Zephaniah 3)

No matter where the Israelites have been scattered, the people are going to come and bring an offering to the Lord. There is no place too distant for God's hand to reach.

"11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain." (Zephaniah 3)

Israel has long thought that since they had God's holy mountain, and the temple, and Abraham as their father, that those things made them righteous and better than everyone else (Matthew 3:9, Luke 3:8, John 8:39). The Jews thought they didn't need a Savior, but they were very wrong. Jesus condemned them for that line of thinking. Here we see that God is going to remove the proud and haughty from among Israel, and those who are left will be humble. Israel will no longer boast in themselves or seek after self-righteousness.

"12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD." (Zephaniah 3)

Based on verse 13 it seems that this is a reference to the believing remnant in Israel. Since these people are going to go through the tribulation period it seems that they weren't saved until after the rapture. During the tribulation they will be greatly oppressed and very poor, but they will trust in the Lord and He will come and save them. When the Millennium begins they will enter into the kingdom and be greatly blessed.

"13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid."
(Zephaniah 3)

God said in Ezekiel 36:26 that He would give His people a new heart and they would walk in His ways – not for just one generation, but forever. Not only will they seek the Messiah and trust in Him, but they will do what's right. They will not walk in sin, or lie, or be deceitful. They will lead quiet and peaceable lives, and the Lord will not allow anyone to threaten them or make them afraid. That is what life will be like in Israel during the Millennium! It will happen because God will change them, once and for all.

One of the key purposes of the tribulation is to put an end to Israel's sin and rebellion once and for all (Daniel 9:24). We will see the fruits of that in the Millennium.

"14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."
(Zephaniah 3)

Israel is going to have a *lot* to sing about, aren't they? Daniel 9:24 tells us that God set aside 490 years to deal with Israel's sin. The tribulation represents the last 7 years of that time, and when it's over Israel's sin will be gone, her idolatry will

be gone, and the judgments of God will be over. Israel will never again be scattered, or destroyed, or cursed. The Lord will put to death all of Israel's enemies and the Jews will never be troubled with evil again, for the Lord Jesus Christ their King will be in their midst (literally!). In those days God will be their king and will reign over them in person forever. That is definitely the sort of thing that people will sing about forever (as they should)!

"16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. 17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zephaniah 3)

There will be no reason to hold back during the Millennium because God will be in their midst, watching over them and rejoicing over them and protecting them. Jesus will live among them and be their King. This verse tells us that He will sing (which isn't as odd as it sounds – after all, Matthew 26:30 tells us that after the last supper Jesus sang a hymn with His disciples before heading out). Israel, who today is surrounded by enemies who want to annihilate her and by people who try daily to murder her citizens, will no longer have anything to fear ever again from anyone. God will save them once and for all.

These are not promises that Israel has forfeited; they will all come to pass! They have *not* been transferred to the church. They will be fulfilled literally, just as prophecy has always been fulfilled.

"18 I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the

reproach of it was a burden. 19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame." (Zephaniah 3)

In the Millennium God will end the affliction of Israel forever. He will find those who are afflicted and lame and troubled and will heal them and bless them. God will find those who have been driven out of Israel by the antichrist and will bring them back home, to the land where He dwells with His people. God will change every country that has hated Israel so that Israel is praised and given great fame and honor. Israel will no longer be cursed by the world; instead the world will bless her! This will happen because God has promised it and God will do what He has promised to do. He is the one who will bring it to pass (and we will live to see it).

"20 At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD." (Zephaniah 3)

In our day Israel has been gathered into the land, but when the antichrist rises to power he is going to persecute Israel and the Jews will flee. Once the tribulation is over God will regather them one last time, and they will never be scattered again. Israel will no longer be cursed of all nations; instead all nations will praise her! (It's quite a thing to think about, isn't it? Notice how God controls *everything* – even those whom men curse and those whom men praise. *Nothing* is outside of His

power.)

A time of terrible evil is coming. Jerusalem will be punished because God is just and *must* punish sin, but in the end Israel will be saved. God will be glorified and Israel will be given an astounding and glorious future. The nations that attacked Israel and hated her will be destroyed, while Israel will become a praise and be given a great name. This is a recurring theme among the prophets, is it not?

Appendix B: Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Within the church today there is a great deal of debate regarding the subject of end-times prophecy. There are some people who believe that prophecy should be ignored entirely. There are others who believe that prophecy is largely symbolic, and is not intended to be taken in a literal way. There are others, though, who think that prophecy should *not* be "spiritualized". They think that it means what it says and we should take the subject seriously.

This topic is far too vast to be covered in a single paper. In other places I have already discussed why prophecy should be studied, why preterism is false, why amillennialism is an error, and why covenant theology (also known as replacement theology) is wrong. Because of that I am going to focus on just one thing in this paper, and that is the subject of the Rapture.

Today the idea of the Rapture is widely ridiculed. People simply don't believe in it anymore, which is a great tragedy. However, I *do* believe in it. I think that one day, before the Tribulation begins, the Lord will return to Earth and take His Church back to Heaven. This is *not* the same thing as the Second Coming, which happens *after* the Tribulation. The Rapture is a separate event, and is the time when when we will all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. I believe this happens before Israel signs the seven-year covenant with the Antichrist.

There are a number of reasons why I believe this, but let's start at the beginning. After the Last Supper took place and Judas left to betray Jesus, the Lord told His disciples that He was about to leave them. He told them not to be afraid, though, because He had a reason for leaving them:

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it

were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

In other words, Jesus was going away so He could prepare a place for His disciples. Once He finished He would come back and get them so that they could be with Him forever.

In ancient Jewish courtships, after the bride and groom were engaged the groom would leave his bride-to-be and go prepare a home for the two of them to live in. After he completed it he would return for his bride and they would be married. Jesus is doing the same thing for us. It is not for nothing that the Church is called the Bride of Christ.

In verse 28 Jesus tells us where He is going:

John 14:28: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

Jesus is going to His father, and one day He will come back and get the Church. Nothing more is said at this point. This is all very straightforward: Jesus left us to prepare a home for us, and one day He will come back and get us. There is nothing complicated about this.

The next passage of interest is found in I Thessalonians:

I Thessalonians 4:13: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus

will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This passage goes into more detail about the time when Jesus will return for His Church. Without repeating everything the passage says, those of the Church who died before the Lord returns will be raised from the dead – their bodies will be brought back to life. (That, after all, is what "resurrection" means. In order to have a resurrection you must first have something that died, and it then has to come back to life. When we die the only part of us that stops living is our bodies. *That* is what gets raised from the dead when Jesus returns.) After the dead saints have been resurrected, the living saints will be transformed. In an instant they will become immortals, and all that is sinful or unclean about them will be banished forever. Next, everyone will meet Christ in the air, after which we will "ever be with the Lord".

So here we have a picture of what it will be like when Jesus returns for the Church. There will be a resurrection of the dead, a putting on of immortality, and a grand meeting in the air. After this has happened we will "ever be with the Lord". This passage adds a lot of detail to Christ's return, but it doesn't give us any information about its timing. When does this happen in relation to other end-times events? Based on this passage alone

we cannot say, but there are other verses that provide some context for the Rapture.

Incidentally, the word "rapture" comes from verse 17. The phrase "caught up" in Latin is very similar to the word "rapture". For centuries the only version of the Bible that was available was the Latin version, and that is where this word came from. When people speak of the Rapture they are merely speaking of the time when the Church will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air. (This is why it is unfair to say that the word "rapture" never appears in the Bible. It actually does appear in *Latin* Bibles because it's a Latin word.)

There really should be no debate among Christians about whether or not there will be a Rapture. The Bible is quite clear that one day we will be "caught up" (or "raptured") to meet our Lord in the air. The only real question is one of timing – when does this happen? Is this the same thing as the Second Coming that is spoken of in Matthew 24 (which happens after the Tribulation), or is this something separate?

The next passage can be found in I Corinthians:

I Corinthians 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on

immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

This passage also speaks of the resurrection. Those who have believed in Jesus but died before His return will be raised from the dead (meaning, as we said earlier, that their dead bodies will be raised back to life). Next, those who are still alive will be transformed; the mortal will put on immortality and we will be changed. (Some more details about this can be found in the preceding verses, I Corinthians 15:35-49). These teachings are quite clear and are not tied to any particular interpretation of end-times. The verses simply teach that one day the Lord will return and get His church and they will be forever with Him. However, this still does not answer our question: just when does this occur? Does this happen before, during, or after the Tribulation?

First, it should be noted that the Church began on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the Rapture. Before Pentecost there were Old Testament saints, but none of them were a part of the Church. If you will recall, John the Baptist referred to himself as a friend of the bridegroom (John 3:29); he did not consider himself to be a part of the Bride. John was beheaded long before the day of Pentecost occurred, so although he was saved he was not a part of the Church. The

word "church" never appears in the Old Testament, and the reason for this is because the church is a new concept that began after the death of Christ, and not before. There was no such thing as the Church before the day of Pentecost.

As was explained earlier, when the Lord returns at the Rapture He will gather the Church to Himself and the Church will then be gone. Since the Church is being taken to Heaven, they will obviously no longer be on the Earth. It is worth noting that the Church appears in Revelation 1-3, which takes place *before* the Tribulation, but there is no mention of the Church being on Earth in Revelation 6-18, which takes place *during* the Tribulation. There are saints mentioned in chapters 6-18 but they are never referred to as the Church (just as the saints in the Old Testament are never referred to as the Church). *Nowhere* does the Bible speak of the Church going through the Tribulation.

This, however, is not the strongest evidence that the Rapture takes place before the Tribulation. In Luke 21 Jesus says this:

Luke 21:34: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

This passage is one of the strongest evidences for placing the Rapture before the Tribulation. The Lord said that the Tribulation will be a snare to *all* those who dwell on the *whole Earth*. In other words, *everyone who is on Earth will be forced to*

suffer through it. However, the Lord tells us to watch and pray so that we can escape this time of suffering that will afflict *everyone on the entire planet*. If it afflicts everyone on the planet with no exceptions, then the only way to escape it is to not be on the planet. If we should pray so we can escape it, then we must be praying that the Lord will come and get us before it happens! This strongly implies that the Rapture will occur prior to the Tribulation and remove the Church from Earth so that we can escape it.

Some people get upset at Christians who teach a pre-Tribulation Rapture and accuse them of being easy-living Christians who just don't want to suffer or get their hands dirty for Christ. It's worth noting that Jesus *commands* His disciples to pray that we won't go through this period. He *did not want His children to endure it*. Praying to escape the Tribulation is not evidence of a weak will; it is *obedience* to the command of Christ.

There are others who say that "watch and pray" means that only the "worthy" will escape the Tribulation, and all backslid Christians will have to endure it. That is not what Jesus is talking about. The Lord is not going to leave part of His Bride behind for *any* reason. When the Church is complete *all* of it will be brought home. What Jesus is talking about are people who think they are saved but are not. Jesus spent a lot of time warning people to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith. All of those who are saved will be in the Rapture, but not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" is among the saved. That is the point.

1 Thessalonians expands upon this idea of a pre-Tribulation Rapture:

1 Thessalonians 5:1: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of

the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and **they shall not escape.**

4 But **ye**, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

First of all, it's important to note that Paul is talking about the "day of the Lord" (verse 2), which is *not* Judgment Day. The "day of the Lord" is a phrase used throughout Scripture that refers to the Tribulation. (Many Old Testament passages talk about the Tribulation, but that is outside the scope of this discussion.) Paul is warning the Thessalonian church that the Tribulation will catch the lost world by surprise and they will not escape. However, Paul goes on to say that the Church is not in darkness and will *not* be surprised. While the world will be caught up in the Tribulation, the Church will not because *it was not appointed to wrath*. In this context the word "wrath" is not

referring to Judgment Day (since that is not what's being discussed!) but is instead the wrath that God will pour out upon the world during the Tribulation. The world will have to endure that terrible period of time, but the Church will be spared.

In verse 9 Paul mentions the "hope of salvation". This is not salvation from our sins – after all, that is *not* a hope. Christ has already forgiven our sins and paid our debt with His own blood. Besides, Paul is not discussing salvation from our sins. The "hope of salvation" is salvation from the wrath that is mentioned in the first verses of this chapter – *the wrath of the Tribulation*. This passage provides clear, direct evidence that God has not appointed His Church to suffer through the wrath of the Tribulation. Instead He will deliver us from it – and since the Tribulation will afflict *everyone* on the *whole Earth*, He must be planning to take His Church *out* of the Earth before the Tribulation begins. Since the Marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven *before* the Tribulation ends (see Revelation 19:7), that is even more evidence that the Church must be in Heaven during the Tribulation. Since the Rapture is what moves the Church to Heaven, the Rapture must happen before the Tribulation.

Another mention of this same idea can be found in Revelation 3:10:

Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

In this passage, the Tribulation is the hour of trial that will try everyone that dwells upon the Earth. Notice that this passage does not say that the Church will be kept *safe* during this hour of trial, but that *it will be kept from the hour of trial altogether*. Given that the verse goes out of its way to explain that the

Tribulation impacts *all the world* to afflict *everyone that lives on the Earth*, this is more evidence that the Church will not be on the Earth when the Tribulation happens.

Some have said "Oh, that just means the Church will be protected from persecution during that period". If you read the rest of Revelation you will see for yourself how ludicrous that statement is – God gives the beast the power to make war with the saints and overcome them (Revelation 13:7), and the beast kills *millions* of believers. There is no possible way that "being kept safe" is the same thing as "the antichrist will hunt down all of you and behead you". The *Church* is kept safe because it's not on the Earth anymore and so it is out of the antichrist's reach. However, all those who come to Christ after the Rapture are not a part of the Church and are not kept safe. Many millions of them will be hunted down and brutally murdered.

How close are we to the Rapture? Well, the Bible teaches that the Rapture can happen at any moment. For example:

Romans 13:11: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

The salvation mentioned in this verse cannot be referring to salvation from sins, because that was finished when Christ died in the cross. Salvation from sins is *not* something that we are still looking forward to in the future. Paul is speaking of salvation from the Tribulation and being saved from the hour of wrath that will come upon the whole Earth. *That* salvation is "nearer than when we believed". The imagery in these two verses depicts something that is drawing closer and is near at

hand. You can almost hear Paul saying "It won't be long now". Nowhere does he say that it's a long way off or that other things must happen first. It can literally happen at any moment. There are no other signs or events that must take place before the Rapture happens.

James 5 also speaks of this:

James 5:7: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door."

Like Paul, James says that the coming of the Lord is drawing near and he urges us to be patient until Jesus comes. James goes so far as to say that "the Judge standeth before the door". If He is standing at the door then He is very near indeed! Revelation also makes this same point:

Revelation 22:20: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Even Jesus says that He is coming quickly! This can only be true if the Rapture happens before the Tribulation. If the Rapture happens in the middle of the Tribulation then it is always at least 3.5 years away. If it happens at the end of the Tribulation then it's at least 7 years away. In neither case is the Rapture imminent. It is only imminent if it occurs *before* the Tribulation.

The Bible does not say exactly when the Rapture will

happen. What it does say is that the coming of the Lord is drawing near and we should be sober and watch for it. Amen!

Resource 1: Chapter Summary

Zephaniah

Zephaniah 1

- GOD'S WORD, WHICH CAME TO ZEPHANIAH IN THE DAYS OF JOSIAH
- I WILL CONSUME ALL THINGS – MAN AND BEAST, SAYS THE LORD
- I WILL CUT OFF THOSE WHO WORSHIP FALSE GODS
- THE DAY OF THE LORD IS AT HAND; THE LORD HAS BID HIS GUESTS
- I WILL PUNISH THOSE WHO FILL HOUSES WITH VIOLENCE AND DECEIT, AND WHO SAY THAT THE LORD WILL NOT DO GOOD OR EVIL
- THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD IS NEAR; THE MIGHTY MAN SHALL CRY BITTERLY
- I WILL BRING DISTRESS UPON ALL MEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD
- THEIR SILVER AND GOLD WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DELIVER THEM

Zephaniah 2

- SEEK THE LORD; SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MEEKNESS; IT MAY BE THAT YOU WILL BE HID IN THE DAY OF THE LORD'S ANGER
- GAZA SHALL BE FORSAKEN; THE INHABITANTS OF THE SEA COST WILL BE DESTROYED, AND IT WILL BE FOR THE REMNANT OF THE HOUSE OF JUDAH
- MOAB WILL BE AS SODOM, AND THE AMMONITES AS GOMORRAH
- THE ETHIOPIANS WILL BE SLAIN BY MY SWORD; ASSYRIA

WILL BE DESTROYED AND NINEVEH MADE A DESOLATION

Zephaniah 3

- WOE TO THE OPPRESSING CITY! SHE TRUSTED NOT IN THE LORD
- I HAVE CUT OFF THE NATIONS AND MADE THEIR STREETS WASTE
- I WILL GATHER THE NATIONS AND POUR OUT MY INDIGNATION UPON THEM; ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE DEVoured WITH THE FIRE OF MY JEALOUSY
- THEN I WILL TURN TO THE PEOPLE OF A PURE LANGUAGE, THAT THEY MAY ALL CALL UPON GOD AND SERVE HIM WITH ONE CONSENT
- THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL WILL NOT DO INIQUITY
- I WILL MAKE YOU A PRAISE AMONG ALL PEOPLE OF THE EARTH

Resource 3: The Teachings Of The Bible

Zephaniah 1

- Zephaniah was a prophet (v1)
- Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, who was the son of Gedaliah, who was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Hizkiah; (however, the word "son" in the Old Testament can also mean "descendant"; it doesn't always mean direct son) (v1)
- The word of the Lord came to Zephaniah (v1)
- The things that Zephaniah spoke came from the Lord; they were not his own words (v1)
- This prophecy was given to Zephaniah during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah; (Josiah was actually a righteous king who turned to the Lord with all his heart, and who implemented many reforms; he was the king who destroyed the golden calves of Jeroboam) (v1)
- Even though Josiah was a righteous king who served the Lord with all his heart, God sent him a prophecy of total national destruction (v2)
- The righteousness and reforms of Josiah were not going to save his nation from total destruction; God's wrath was going to come against Judah in spite of his righteousness and in spite of the national reformation that took place during his reign (v2)

- The fact that Judah repented during the reign of Josiah was not going to save it from the destruction that was coming; God was still going to destroy Judah (v2)
- God was going to utterly destroy everything in the land of Judah (v2)
- God was going to destroy the nation of Judah (v2)
- There was nothing that Josiah could do to stop the destruction of Judah (v2)
- God was going to remove the people of Judah (v3)
- God was going to remove the animals of Judah (v3)
- God was going to remove the birds of Judah (v3)
- God was going to remove the fish of Judah (v3)
- God was going to remove the evildoers from Judah (v3)
- God was going to remove the stumblingblocks of the wicked from Judah (v3)
- God was going to depopulate the nation of Judah; He was going to remove both its people and its wildlife (v3)
- Even though Josiah was a righteous king who served the Lord with all his heart, God was still going to depopulate the nation of Judah and empty it of life (both people and animal) (v3)
- The wrath of God was not just poured out upon the inhabitants of Judah; its wildlife was also going to be affected (v3)
- One of the judgments that God pours out upon a nation is the destruction and removal of its citizens (v3)

- One of the judgments that God pours out upon a nation is the destruction and removal of its wildlife (v3)
- God was going to stretch out His hand against both Judah and Jerusalem (v4)
- God was going to remove all traces of Baal worship from Judah (v4)
- God was going to remove all of the pagan priests (the "Chemarims") from Judah (v4)
- When God's judgment fell upon Judah there would be Baal worship and pagan priests; Josiah cleansed the land of both of those things during his reign, so this implied that the judgment would not come during his reign, and after his reign was over the people would revert to paganism (v4)
- God hates idolatry; He hates idols and pagan priests (v4)
- God hates the worship of Baal (v4)
- God was going to remove all those who worshiped the stars from their housetops (v5)
- God was going to remove all those who worshiped Him along with idols (v5)
- God requires people to worship Him alone; He hates it when people worship idols as well as Him (v5)
- God hates the worship of the stars (v5)
- God hates the worship of idols (v5)
- God was going to remove all those who turned away from Him (v6)
- God was going to remove all those who have not sought

Him (v6)

- God was going to remove all those who have not inquired of Him (v6)
- In the list of things that God was going to remove, He did not mention removing any of the righteous, or pouring out His judgment upon His saints (v6)
- God commands the people of the nations to seek Him and turn to Him (v6)
- It is an evil thing to turn away from God (v6)
- It is an evil thing to fail to seek the Lord (v6)
- This prophecy has to do with the day of the Lord; this means it is about the seven-year tribulation period, and not about Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem (v7)
- God told Zephaniah to be silent because the day of the Lord was at hand (v7)
- In the day of the Lord, God has prepared a sacrifice; this may be a reference to the Messiah (v7)
- In the day of the Lord, God has bidden his guests; this may be a reference to the raptured church (v7)
- The day of the Lord will happen after the Lord's sacrifice and after the Lord has gathered His guests (v7)
- In the day of the Lord, He will punish the princes of Judah (v8)
- In the day of the Lord, He will punish all those who are clothed in strange apparel (v8)
- In the time of the tribulation the nation of Judah will exist

(v8)

- In the time of the tribulation the nation of Judah will have princes (v8)
- In the time of the tribulation the nation of Judah will have a king (v8)
- In the time of the tribulation the king of Judah will have children (v8)
- The day of the Lord will be a day of punishment for Judah (v8)
- In the day of the Lord, He will punish those who leap on the threshold; (this appears to be a reference to some type of violence) (v9)
- In the day of the Lord, He will punish servants who use violence and lies against their masters (v9)
- God hates it when servants lie to their masters (v9)
- God hates it when servants are violent against their masters (v9)
- God hates lies (v9)
- God hates unjust violence (v9)
- God will punish those who lie (v9)
- God will punish those who are violent against the innocent (v9)
- In the day of the Lord, the fish gate will exist in Jerusalem (v10)
- In the day of the Lord, a noise will come from the fish gate of Jerusalem (v10)

- In the day of the Lord, a howling will come from the second gate of Jerusalem (v10)
- In the day of the Lord, there will be a sound of great crashing from the hills around Jerusalem (v10)
- The day of the Lord will be accompanied by noise in Jerusalem and the surrounding area (v10)
- God tells the inhabitants of Maktesh to howl in the day of the Lord; Maktesh seems to be a place connected to Jerusalem (v11)
- In the day of the Lord, all the merchants of Maktesh will be slaughtered (v11)
- The merchants of Maktesh were silver merchants (v11)
- In the day of the Lord, there will be silver merchants in Maktesh (v11)
- One of the punishments that God sends upon nations is the death of their merchants (v11)
- In the day of the Lord, He will punish all those in Jerusalem who claim that God will not intervene in history to do either good or evil (v12)
- God hates those who claim that He does not intervene in history (v12)
- God hates those who claim that He does not do good or evil (v12)
- It is a wicked thing to claim that God is distant from His creation, and does not do good or evil (v12)
- In the day of the Lord, God will search through Jerusalem with candles to look for evildoers so He can punish them

(v12)

- God hates it when people make heretical claims about Him (v12)
- Because people claimed that God would not intervene in history, God was going to make their houses desolate (v13)
- Because people claimed that God would not intervene in history, God would take away the houses that people had built and not allow them to live in them (v13)
- Because people claimed that God would not intervene in history, God would take away the vineyards that people had planted and not allow them to enjoy its fruits (v13)
- Because people claimed that God would not intervene in history, God would take away their possessions and give them as loot to their enemies (v13)
- One of the punishments that God sends upon people is taking away the things they have built before they have a chance to enjoy them (v13)
- God considers it a curse to take a newly planted vineyard away from someone so that person cannot enjoy its wine; in other words, wine is a blessing and taking it away is a curse (v13)
- The great day of the Lord is near (v14)
- In the day of the Lord, even the mighty man will cry bitterly (v14)
- The day of the Lord will be a day of terrible pain and anguish; even the mighty will not be able to endure it (v14)

- The day of the Lord is a day of wrath (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of trouble (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of distress (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of making things waste (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of making things desolate (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of darkness (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of gloominess (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of clouds (v15)
- The day of the Lord is a day of thick darkness (v15)
- God does intervene in the events of this world; the day is coming when He will pour out terrible wrath upon the world, and send great distress upon even its mightiest inhabitants (v15)
- In the day of the Lord, He will send trouble upon the fortified cities of Judah; in that time the trumpet will sound and an alarm will be raised (v16)
- In the day of the Lord, He will send trouble against the high towers of Judah (v16)
- In the tribulation period the nation of Judah will have walled cities (v16)
- In the tribulation period the nation of Judah will have high towers (v16)
- In the day of the Lord, the fortified cities of Judah and its high towers will not be able to save it (v16)
- The judgments and distress of the tribulation are all the

wrath of God; He is the one who is sending these things upon the nation of Judah; it is all His wrath, poured out upon the world (v16)

- In the day of the Lord, He will bring distress upon the people of Judah (v17)
- In the day of the Lord, the people of Judah will stagger around like blind men (v17)
- The reason that God will send so much wrath upon the people of Judah is because they sinned against Him (v17)
- God punishes both individuals and nations for sin (v17)
- God has reserved the tribulation period as a time of His wrath, when He punishes the people and nations of this world for their sin and their idolatry (v17)
- In the day of the Lord, God will slaughter the wicked and pour out their blood upon the ground in large quantities (v17)
- In the day of the Lord, the ground will be covered with unburied dead bodies (v17)
- Many people will die in the day of the Lord (v17)
- The wages of sin is death (v17)
- Silver will not be able to save people during the day of the Lord (v18)
- Gold will not be able to save people during the day of the Lord (v18)
- The day of the Lord is the day of the Lord's wrath (v18)
- The wrath of the tribulation period is the Lord's wrath; He is the one who is pouring out pain and distress upon the

world (v18)

- God is a jealous God; He hates idolatry and paganism (v18)
- In the day of the Lord, He will devour the whole land of Judah (v18)
- In the day of the Lord, He will make a speedy end to all those who dwell in the land of Judah (v18)
- The reason God is going to pour out His wrath upon the nation of Judah is because He is a jealous God, and the inhabitants of the land have been worshiping false gods and idols (v18)
- The wrath of the tribulation period is a punishment for Judah's idolatry (v18)

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Zephaniah 2

- In the context of an end-times prophecy, God commands a nation that was not desired to gather themselves together (v1)
- The day of the Lord will bring distress upon Gentile nations as well; its scope will include nations beyond Judah (v1)
- The nation that was not desired may be a reference to the raptured Gentile church, since verse 3 mentions the fact that a group of repentant Gentiles will be hidden during the tribulation period and will not have to endure

its pain (v1, v3)

- God commanded this nation that was not desired to seek Him before the day of the Lord came, so that they could be spared from its wrath and would not have to endure it; this seems to be a command for Gentiles to repent so that they can be included in the pre-tribulation rapture (v2, v3)
- In the day of the Lord, He will pour out His fierce anger upon Gentile nations; they will be included in the judgment (v2)
- God says that Gentiles who seek Him now can be hidden in the day of the Lord, so that they will not have to endure that time; this seems to be a reference to the rapture of the church (v3)
- Gentiles have been given an opportunity to escape the tribulation period and be hidden during that time, if they repent before it's too late (v3)
- In order to be included in the rapture you must seek the Lord and seek after righteousness; (in other words, you must repent and be saved) (v3)
- God commanded the Gentiles to seek Him (v3)
- God commanded the Gentiles to seek righteousness (v3)
- God commanded the Gentiles to seek meekness (v3)
- God values meekness; that is a quality that He requires Christians to have (v3)
- God calls out to the meek of this world to repent and seek after righteousness, so that they can be hidden during the wrath of the tribulation period (v3)

- There are some who will be hidden during the day of the Lord, when God pours out His anger upon this entire world; since they will be hidden, they will not have to endure that terrible time (v3)
- God says that the meek of this world have "wrought his judgment"; the word "wrought" means "work" (v3)
- In the day of the Lord, the city of Gaza will be forsaken (v4)
- In the day of the Lord, the city of Ashkelon will be desolate (v4)
- In the day of the Lord, the inhabitants of Ashdod will be driven out at noon (v4)
- In the day of the Lord, the city of Ekron will be uprooted (v4)
- The territory mentioned in verse 4 was possessed by the Philistines in ancient times (v4)
- God pronounced woe upon the inhabitants of the coast by the sea (the nation of the Cherethites) (v5)
- God pronounced woe upon the land that was held by the Philistines in ancient times; in the day of His wrath He will destroy that land and remove all of its inhabitants (v5)
- The nation of the Cherethites was by the sea coast (v5)
- After the day of the Lord, the sea coast will be a dwelling place for shepherds (v6)
- After the day of the Lord, the sea coast will be a dwelling place for flocks (v6)
- After the seven-year tribulation period there will be

shepherds and flocks (v6)

- After the day of the Lord, the sea coast will be turned into a pasture (v6)
- After the day of the Lord, the sea coast will become the territory of Judah (v7)
- The nation of Judah will survive the day of the Lord (v7)
- A remnant of Jews will survive the day of the Lord (v7)
- After the day of the Lord, the remnant of Jews will use the territory of the sea coast as pasture for their flocks (v7)
- After the day of the Lord, the shepherds of Judah will live in the houses of Ashkelon, and will lie down there in the evening (v7)
- In the millennium there will still be evenings and mornings (v7)
- In the millennium people will still live in houses (v7)
- In the millennium people will still lie down and sleep at night (v7)
- After the seven-year tribulation people, God will visit His people and rescue them from captivity (v7)
- God heard the way that the Moabites reproached the Jews, and it angered Him (v8)
- God heard the way the Ammonites reviled the Jews, and it angered Him (v8)
- God is against those who are against His people; this is even true in times when God is punishing His people for their sins (v8)

- God saw the way the Moabites encroached on Judah's territory, and it angered Him (v8)
- God saw the way the Ammonites encroached on Judah's territory, and it angered Him (v8)
- God is against those who take away territory from the Jews; this is even true in times when God is punishing his people for their sins (v8)
- God believes in national borders; He does not believe that nations should be borderless (v8)
- God has given territory to Israel and He is angered when other nations try to take it for themselves (v8)
- God notices when nations oppress Israel, and He punishes them for it (v8)
- The Lord is the Lord of hosts; He has an army of powerful angels at His command (v9)
- God is the God of Israel (v9)
- God said that because Moab oppressed Israel, Moab would be as utterly destroyed as Sodom (v9)
- God said that because Ammon oppressed Israel, Ammon would be as utterly destroyed as Sodom (v9)
- Sodom was utterly destroyed (v9)
- After God destroys Moab it will be a breeding ground for nettles, a place of saltpits, and a perpetual desolation (v9)
- After God destroys Ammon it will be a breeding ground for nettles, a place of saltpits, and a perpetual desolation (v9)
- After God destroys Moab, the remnant of the Jews will

loot their territory and possess it (v9)

- After God destroys Ammon, the remnant of the Jews will loot their territory and possess it (v9)
- Moab and Ammon will be destroyed, but the Jews will not; a remnant of the Jews will survive (v9)
- There are times when God utterly destroys a nation because of its sin, and turns its land into a perpetual desolation (v9)
- The reason God is going to destroy Moab and Ammon and turn their land into a perpetual desolation is because in their pride they reproached and magnified themselves against the people of God (v10)
- God becomes angry at nations that magnify themselves against the Jews (v10)
- God becomes angry at nations that reproach the Jews (v10)
- God becomes angry at nations when they become proud (v10)
- God curses nations that are a curse to the Jews (v10)
- The Jews are the people of God; this is true even when they are rebelling against Him (v10)
- God has not cast off the Jews for their sins; He is still protective of them and against their enemies (v10)
- The Lord will be terrible to Moab and Ammon because they magnified themselves against the Jews (v11)
- God is going to destroy all the idols of this world (v11)
- In the days to come all people will worship the Lord; this

even includes the Gentiles (v11)

- In the days to come even the people on remote islands will worship the Lord (v11)
- God is going to kill the Ethiopians with the sword (v12)
- In the day of God's judgment upon the Gentile nations, God will also punish the Ethiopians (v12)
- In the day of God's judgment upon the Gentile nations, God will destroy Assyria (v13)
- In the day of God's judgment upon the Gentile nations, God will destroy the city of Nineveh and make it desolate (v13)
- In the day of God's judgment upon the Gentiles, God will make the city of Nineveh as dry as the wilderness (v13)
- God punishes cities and nations for their sin (v13)
- One of the judgments that God pours out upon cities and nations is drought (v13)
- God has the power to destroy cities and nations, and He wields that power (v13)
- After God makes Nineveh desolate, the city will no longer be inhabited (v14)
- After God makes Nineveh desolate, flocks will lie down in the ruins of the city (v14)
- After God makes Nineveh desolate, birds (the comorant and the bittern) will roost in the ruins of the city (v14)
- At the time God makes Nineveh desolate, at least part of the city was made with cedar wood (v14)

- Nineveh was a powerful city, but God is going to make it desolate and turn it into a place where only wild animals live (v15)
- Nineveh rejoiced against her enemies, and was so strong that she became careless; however, God is going to destroy the city and make it desolate (v15)
- Nineveh will be so destroyed that all those who pass by will hiss and wag their hand (v15)
- The powerful city of Nineveh will become an object of scorn and ridicule (v15)

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Zephaniah 3

- God pronounces woe upon the oppressing city; this seems to be a reference to Jerusalem (v1)
- God is against cities that are morally filthy and polluted (v1)
- God is against cities that are oppressive (v1)
- God recognizes the sins of cities and punishes them for what they have done (v1)
- God holds cities accountable for their actions (v1)
- The oppressing city did not obey the voice of God (v2)
- The oppressing city refused the correction of God (v2)
- The oppressing city refused to trust in the Lord (v2)

- The oppressing city refused to draw near to God (v2)
- The Lord is against cities that refuse to obey Him (v2)
- The Lord is against cities that refuse his correction (v2)
- The Lord is against cities that do not trust in Him (v2)
- The Lord is against cities that refuse to draw near to Him (v2)
- God requires cities to worship and obey Him; He will punish cities that reject Him (v2)
- The princes of the oppressing city are vicious; God compares them to roaring lions (v3)
- Throughout the Bible God compares people to animals of various types (v3)
- The judges of the oppressing city are vicious; God compares them to wolves (v3)
- God will punish the oppressing city because of its vicious princes (v3)
- God will punish the oppressing city because of its vicious judges (v3)
- God holds princes and judges accountable for their actions; they are not allowed to do as they please (v3)
- God is against princes who are vicious (v3)
- God is against judges who are vicious (v3)
- The prophets of the oppressing city are treacherous (v4)
- God is against treacherous prophets (v4)
- God holds prophets accountable for their actions; they

are not allowed to do as they please (v4)

- The priests of the oppressing city have polluted the temple (v4)
- At the time this prophecy is fulfilled, a temple exists in Jerusalem (v4)
- The oppressing city has a temple (v4)
- God is against priests who pollute His temple (v4)
- The priests have done violence to God's Law; they have abused it (v4)
- God is against wicked priests (v4)
- God holds priests accountable for their actions; they are not allowed to do as they please (v4)
- God is against those who do violence to His law (v4)
- At this time this prophecy is fulfilled, the oppressive city has princes, judges, prophets, and priests, and they are all wicked and oppressive (v4)
- God becomes angry when His holy sanctuary is polluted (v4)
- The Lord is just (v5)
- At the time this prophecy is fulfilled, the Lord is in the midst of the oppressive city (v5)
- The Lord will not do iniquity; He is not an evil God, nor is He is a God who does evil (v5)
- God brings His judgment to light every morning (v5)
- God never fails (v5)

- The unjust are not ashamed of what they have done (v5)
- One of the characteristics of the unjust is that they are not ashamed (v5)
- At the time this prophecy is fulfilled, God has cut off the nations (v6)
- At the time this prophecy is fulfilled, God has destroyed the defenses of the nations (v6)
- At the time this prophecy is fulfilled, God has destroyed the streets of the cities of the nations and has emptied them of people (v6)
- At the time this prophecy is fulfilled, God has destroyed the cities of the nations (v6)
- One of the punishments that God sends upon cities is making them desolate and emptying them of people (v6)
- God has the ability to utterly destroy cities and nations, and depopulate them; this is something God does as punishment for sin (v6)
- If the nations had feared the Lord then God would not have destroyed them, but they did not fear the Lord (v7)
- If the nations had received instruction from God and obeyed Him then God would not have destroyed them, but they refused to receive instruction from the Lord (v7)
- God holds nations accountable for their actions and requires them to obey Him; He will destroy nations that rebel against Him (v7)
- The nations were wicked and rose up early to corrupt themselves (v7)

- God destroys corrupt nations (v7)
- God punishes nations for their sins (v7)
- It should have been obvious to the nations that they needed to fear the Lord and obey Him if they didn't want to be destroyed, but instead of doing that they corrupted themselves, and so God punished them (v7)
- God commands the righteous to wait upon Him, for the day is coming when He will gather the nations and destroy them for their wickedness (v8)
- One day God is going to gather the nations and pour out His fierce anger against them (v8)
- The day of the judgment of the nations is still in the future (v8)
- God has fierce anger against the nations because of all their wickedness (v8)
- God is going to devour all of the earth because of the wickedness of the nations (v8)
- God is a jealous God (v8)
- God has power over the nations, and one day He will use that power to destroy them (v8)
- God has power over this world, and one day He will use that power to destroy the whole world (v8)
- The reason God is going to destroy this world is because of the sins of the nations (v8)
- The saints of God must wait patiently for the day when God will judge the nations and destroy them (v8)
- One day all the nations of the world will speak the same

language; God refers to this as a pure language (v9)

- The languages that the nations speak is a corrupt language; one day God will replace it with a different one (v9)
- God is going to give the nations a pure language so they can all call upon Him; this is a reversal of Babel, which was built in rebellion against God (v9)
- One day all the nations will willingly serve the Lord (v9)
- God is the one who will give all the nations the same language (v9)
- One day God is going to reverse the curse upon languages that God imparted at Babel (v9)
- In the coming era, people will travel from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia to bring offerings to God (v10)
- In the coming era, even people in remote places will fear the Lord and travel great distances to bring Him offerings (v10)
- In the coming era, people will travel to bring offerings to God (v10)
- The people who are beyond the rivers of Ethiopia are called the daughter of His dispersed people; they seem to be related to the Jews in some way (v10)
- In the future the Jews will not be ashamed of their sins against God, because He will take away their shame (v11)
- In the future the Jews will no longer be haughty because the holy mountain of God is in their midst (v11)
- In the future the Jews will no longer be proud (v11)

- God hates pride (v11)
- In the future the holy mountain of God will be in the midst of Israel's territory (v11)
- God is going to remove all those who are proud from the midst of the Jews (v11)
- The joy that the Jews will experience in the coming era of peace and righteousness will not be overshadowed by shame over their past actions (v11)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, God is going to leave an afflicted and poor race of people in the midst of the Jews; this group of people will trust in the name of the Lord (v12)
- In the coming era, a separate group of people who are not Jews will also live among the Jews (v12)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, a remnant of the Jews will survive (v13)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, the Jews will no longer do iniquity (v13)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, the Jews will no longer speak lies (v13)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, the Jews will no longer be deceitful (v13)
- God is against those who do iniquity (v13)
- God is against those who speak lies (v13)
- God is against those who are deceitful (v13)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, God will bless the Jews; they will lie down in peace (v13)

- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, no one will make the Jews afraid; God will give the great peace (v13)
- In the coming era of peace and righteousness, God will protect the Jews (v13)
- God commands the Jews to sing and shout because of the great future that He has promised for them (v14)
- God wants His people to sing and shout because of the promises He has made for them; even though we have not yet received these promises, God still wants us to rejoice over them and praise Him for them (v14)
- It is a good thing to praise the Lord for the promises He has given us, even though we have not yet received those promises (v14)
- It is a good thing to sing and shout to the Lord (v14)
- God commands the Jews to be glad and rejoice with all their heart, because of the good things He has promised to give them in the future (v14)
- God wants us to be glad and rejoice with all our heart (v14)
- God connects the Jews with Jerusalem (v14)
- In the future, God is going to take away the punishments that He has put upon the Jews (v15)
- In the future, God is going to cast out the enemy of the Jews; this "enemy" is singular, which means God has a specific person in mind (perhaps the antichrist or the devil) (v15)
- In the future, the king of Israel will be the Lord (v15)

- In the future, the Lord will be in the midst of the Jews and will reign as king over them (v15)
- In the future, the Jews will no longer experience evil things; that time will be over and done (v15)
- In the future, the city of Jerusalem will no longer have to be afraid (v16)
- In the future, God will command the Jews to work; there will be work for them to do, and God will bless their work (v16)
- The city of Jerusalem will exist in the future (v16)
- God is a mighty God (v17)
- God is going to save the Jews (v17)
- God is going to rejoice over the Jews (v17)
- God loves the Jews (v17)
- God will rejoice over the Jews with singing (v17)
- God is not going to afflict the Jews forever; one day He will greatly bless them and will rejoice over them (v17)
- In the future, when these things are fulfilled, there will be a solemn assembly (v18)
- In the future, when these things are fulfilled, God will gather the sorrowful to the solemn assembly (v18)
- God is going to gather those who were burdened by the evil things that befell the Jews (v18)
- In that day, there will be some among the Jews who were sorrowful (v18)
- In the future, when these things are fulfilled, God is going

to undo everything that afflicts the Jews (v19)

- God will not always afflict the Jews; one day their time of affliction will end (v19)
- In the future, God is going to save the weak and crippled among the Jews (v19)
- In the future, God is going to gather the Jews who were driven out (v19)
- In the past the Jews were put to shame throughout the world; in the future God will give the Jews praise and fame in all of those same places (v19)
- The Jews will not always be put to shame by the nations; one day God will cause the nations to give the Jews praise and fame instead (v19)
- God has the ability to cause people to be praised by others, or to be shamed by others (v19)
- In the future, when these things are fulfilled, God will bring the Jews back to the promised land (v20)
- God is the one who will one day gather the Jews back to the promised land (v20)
- In the future, God will give the Jews a great name (v20)
- In the future, God will cause the Jews to be praised by all nations of the world (v20)
- In the future, the Jews will no longer be hated by the nations; instead the nations will love the Jews (v20)
- The ultimate destiny of the Jews is to be blessed, not cursed (v20)
- The ultimate destiny of the Jews is to be at peace, not

afflicted (v20)

- The ultimate destiny of the Jews is to be loved by all nations, not hated by all nations (v20)

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