

LESSON TEXT: Zephaniah 1:1--3:20
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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The theme of Zephaniah is The day of the Lord. The prophet uses the phrases, day of the Lord, that day, at that time 14 times in 53 verses. Eight times the phrases are used concerning **judgment**; six times the phrases are used concerning **redemption**. THAT IS THE HISTORICAL THEME OF THE WHOLE BIBLE--JUDGMENT AND REDEMPTION. It is the way God has worked and is working to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. God began judgment in Eden and closes with redemption in Revelation. God works repetitiously in judgments/redemptions with nations and individuals.

In Chicago, David Johnson was on a scaffold 8 stories high, when he heard a snap, and saw his partner fall and felt himself sliding into space. Johnson seized wildly at a hanging cable and found himself perched atop an air-conditioner and quickly slipped through the window unharmed. As for going up again, Johnson said, "That's it for me. I'll never go up again. I've got to find a new trade. It's hard to explain how terrified I was." "My whole life flashed before me," he said. "It was very clear, I could remember when I was a kid. But it happened so fast that I can't remember much of it now."

There are **many** judgments and **many** redemptions in history. Just because Zephaniah repeatedly uses the phrase, The day of the Lord, that day, or at that time does not mean he is referring to the 2nd coming of Christ. In fact, Zephaniah does not refer to the end of the world and the 2nd coming of Christ **at all!**

What happened to Johnson is how God works on individuals and nations to bring them to repentance and redemption. At some point in history, however, there **IS** going to be a **FINAL JUDGMENT AND REDEMPTION!** Primarily the lesson we learn from Zephaniah to call on the name of the Lord (i.e., believe in him and keep his commandments) until he brings history to its consummation and the Lord God is in our midst...rejoicing over us with gladness.

QUESTIONS:

1. How could Jews bow down to Jehovah and worship idols at the same time? 1:1-6
2. What is the sacrifice and who are the guests? 1:7-13
3. Is Zephaniah predicting the end of the world here? 1:14-18
4. How could the fortunes be restored to the humble after such total judgment? 2:1-7
5. When would the remnant God plunder and possess Moab, Cush, Assyria and Nineveh? 2:8-19
6. Why didn't Judah learn repentance from the judgment of God upon other nations? 3:1-8
7. When was God going to change the speech of the peoples? 3:1-13
8. Which Zion is Zephaniah predicting will never again fear evil and be renown in all the earth? 3:14-20

Painted on the inside wall of a little church in Yugoslavia were two verses. Isaiah 55:6 "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near." The other was Matthew 16:24; "If anyone would come After me, he must deny himself and take up his cross And follow men." The juxtaposition of those two Verses, side by side, is very instructive. The Lord may Be found and called upon only when we deny ourselves and "die" to self on our "cross" of repentance and obedience to follow Jesus.

God doesn't just patch---he renews. God doesn't just salve sins--- he saves. God doesn't just reform--- he transforms by the power of his Word.