

The Gathering of the Nations

Zephaniah 3:8, 9 *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. 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. 10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.*

John 7:24 *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

We are naturally inclined to view everything according to appearances. Here we are instructed by our Lord to look past the appearance of what is taking place around us to the **reality** as found in the Law, Psalms and the Prophets.

Let us open with a **rhetorical question** to which all Christians should know the answer. Why would God allow a tyrannical administration to now rule, not only here but world-wide?

First, God is accomplishing His sovereign will in heaven and earth; He raises up and puts down rulers according to His predetermined plan, and no one can say, *what doest thou?* (Dan 4:35)

Second, Acts 2:23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: (the Lamb **was** slain from the foundation of the world. Rev 13:8.)*

All human history was established in the mind of God even before the worlds were formed. Without the Christian faith in the Predestining God of Scripture Who controls all history, even professed Christians can be left without hope. *From the foundation of the world*, all history has revolved and will continue to revolve around Jesus Christ, and His sacrifice for **his people**. (Isa 53)

Question: Can one be a Christian apart from believing that God **is who and what He claims to be, the Predestining God who controls all history for His own glory?**

Third, God's word reveals that the purpose of history is to subdue all the earth under the feet of Jesus Christ through the preaching and teaching of the everlasting gospel of Christ. (Ps 110:1, Matt 22:44, Mk 12:36, Acts 2:34, Heb 1:13, 10:13.) Furthermore, He will not come again to this earth until His enemies have been subdued by the preaching of the Gospel. (1 Cor 25:25)

Fourth, all the events that take place in history are **to conform** those whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundations of the world. That is, all history is

working **to conform** the Elect to the image of Christ. (Rom 8:28ff., Eph 1:11-13, 1 Pet 1:2, &c.)

“The Preacher” said, *there is nothing new under the sun.*

Thus, distressing times like ours are not dissimilar to the various times spoken of by the Prophets, such as Habakkuk and Zephaniah. Our attention today is on Zephaniah who speaks of *the last days*, showing us that his prophecies look forward to the *last days*. He prophesies of great and glorious things for the New Israel of God. (Gal 6:16) He speaks of the *City of God* which was sought by the saints of old in Hebrews chapter 11. These prophets speak of glorious things that are beyond our capabilities to grasp in our day of apparent hopelessness. So, we must say, *by faith we understand.*

Those who study all scriptures in their context have found that the prophets of old clearly spoke of a victorious church in the *last days*.

Zephaniah is a little book in the minor prophets. He was the last of the minor prophets to prophesy before the Babylon captivity. Habakkuk and Zephaniah both cover the same line of thought, with Zephaniah picking up where Habakkuk leaves off.

At the end of Zephaniah, we come to chapter 3:8-20, where we are given a clear reference to the New Testament Gospel Church. Though Zephaniah’s message was to old **Israel under the Old Covenant**, he spoke of the new **Israel of God under the New Covenant** that is defined by Paul in Galatians. (Heb 8:8, 13, 12:24) The new **Israel of God** is the city the saints of old sought by faith in Hebrews 11.

So, let us examine Zephaniah’s **Old** prophecy with the **New** eyes of God’s Spirit that now dwells in the church.

3:8 tells us that the Lord will gather or assemble all the kingdoms of the earth. His purpose is to exercise His fierce indignation, His anger and his devouring fire against them. The time frame of His gathering the nations for judgment is given in **Zephaniah 3:9-13**. It is the time between Christ’s **first advent and His second advent**, the age in which we now live. The promise is that the Lord will bless Zion, which is the *city of the Great King*. His blessing brings about the song of rejoicing, Zephaniah 3:14-20.

Is v. 8 being fulfilled right before our eyes? Are we not seeing all the nations of the world uniting together in their rebellion against God? The nations that once were leaders in the Christian world, *e.g.*, Britain and the U.S., are now officially at war against the Lord and His Anointed, Jesus Christ.

All nations under the sun today are doing all they can to remove Christianity and Christian liberty, and many times with the support of the self-professed Christians. (Ps 2) The enemy has worked hard for many years to remove the Christian spirit and character from every area of

society, and Christians have financed that effort through apostate self-professed Christian institutions, apostate churches and through the antichrist education system.

It appears that the wicked are successfully raging against the Lord, which leads Christians to say, “Woe is us. We sure hope the Lord comes back before things get much worse.” However, Scripture soundly condemns and pronounces serious judgment against any escapist mentality.

Quoting Matthew Poole (1624-1679):

...The prophet therefore affectionately exhorteth and presseth them [the Jews of his day] to repentance, Zep 2, by examples of those he mentioneth, whose impenitence, added to their sins, ruined them. By promises, and encouragements to expect mercy upon their hearkening to his counsel, **he foretells the coming of the Messiah, the calling of the Gentiles, the preserving of a remnant of them amidst all the troubles and wasting judgments that should follow them, and a return out of captivity, with the re-establishing them as the church and people of God; which promise closeth his prophecy**, and for which he calls on them to be thankful to and rejoice in their God, who in the midst of their sins, and his wrath for those sins, yet remembered his own mercies and covenant for them.

That is, Zephaniah sums up his prophecy by foretelling the coming of the Messiah, the calling of the Gentiles, the establishing of the **Gospel Church**, and the preservation of His people during the time of God's wrath against the apostate nations that exist during the *last days* in which we live. Through Zephaniah, God reminds us of His mercies and of His eternal covenant with the Son, Jesus Christ, to bring all nations under the Son's authority; that promised conversion comes to the nations after His judgment of the nations. (See *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, ch 7, “**Of God's Covenant.**” Copy provided upon request.)

Let us quickly look at **the context of this glorious promise found in 3:8-13:**

In chapter 1, God pronounces judgment against the whole world for their sin. He includes judgment against His people, Judah, which He fulfilled with the Chaldeans. He gives the reason for His judgment against Judah: they are attempting to serve, or to please both the Lord and **Malcham, the antichrist State**. His promised destruction is upon all people for their sin, yet He is more explicit as He exposes the sins of His people under the Old Covenant.

The Lord calls the beasts of the field to feast on the dead bodies that will result from His judgment—bodies of all classes of men, from the **highest to lowest**. These are the bodies of those who were confident that things would continue as they were, so there was no need to turn to the Lord in repentance. Then Zephaniah speaks of the great day of judgment of which the Lord spoke, and of its nearness. It will be a day of judgment against sin and wickedness primarily against His people, but will include all the rebellious nations of the world. Their silver and gold will not deliver from His wrath.

In chapter 2 and following the threat of His wrath in chapter 1, the Lord issues a call to repentance and turning to Himself. We see that He takes great care to include the total of the known Gentile world within His judgment against sin. He shows that His judgment is **total judgment**, not just in a corner of the world. **No nation will avoid His judgment.** It does not matter where the sinner might hide, God's judgment will reach the furthest island.

Job 34:22 *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves..* (See Ezekiel 39:6 also.)

The rich and powerful of our day understand the evils that they have intentionally released upon the world, and they have made preparation to avoid the results of that evil. Zephaniah 1:12 assures us that **the ungodly can hide** to the best of human ability, yet he will be found. The sinner can build strong, fenced houses with high walls, but all those preparations will not protect him from the judgment of God.

Zephaniah 1:18 tells us that it does not matter how much silver and gold is stored up for that day of the Lord's wrath, it will be useless. **NOTHING apart from repentance and faith** will deliver those who rebel against God from His wrath.

The wicked in their pride are confident that *The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.* Yet at His predetermined time, God **will gather together the nations of the world** that are conspiring against the Lord and His Anointed; He will then pour out His fierce anger upon those involved in the world-wide effort to remove His laws and His people from the face of the earth.

His faithless people see the situation as hopeless. They are overwhelmingly outnumbered by the huge multitude of the antichrist crowd that is pooling all of their resources to oppress His people, and overthrow the kingdom of God. Every world-wide resource, education, religion, media, financial institutions, science, all advertising, are united in the effort to overthrow the Lord.

The united effort by all the antichrist entities of the world to remove Christianity has not gone unnoticed by the "Captain of the Lord's Host." He says in **Zephaniah 2:8, I have heard** what the enemies of My covenant people are doing.

2 Kings 19:16 *LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes,* (There are a great number of pleas throughout Scripture for the Lord to hear and come to the aid of His people who are in distress.)

Assuring His people that He knows the efforts of the wicked against them, He makes a promise against those who are hostile toward His people:

Zephaniah 2:9 *Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts (His "battle" name), 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.*

As **Surely** as the Lord lives, the hostile enemies will be overturned by the Lord. Zeph 2:9 tells us that their possessions will be turned over to **the remnant of my people**. (**Pr 13:22** *the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.*)

The pagan world shall be converted when God breaks their pride:

Isaiah 26:9 *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

Zephaniah is consistent in his call for a total world-wide judgment against ALL SIN, the sins of the heathen and of His people alike. The world-wide judgment results in the righteousness of God being exalted. (Cf. Rom 1:18-21 & chap 2.) Jeremiah chapter 7 and following as well as 1 Peter 4:17 tell us that the problem is in *the Lord's house*, and the solution must start there.

As the world, including the apostate religious world, is purified by the fire of God's judgment, it will enjoy the full mercies of the Lord.

In Zephaniah 3, the Lord resumes His threats against apostate Jerusalem. He calls her filthy and polluted from her head down, *i.e.*, her princes, judges, prophets. He warns her of destruction, but she refuses to hear and turn back to her God. Midst the promised destruction, the Lord has left a remnant, the "poor and afflicted." (**Matt. 5:3**, *blessed are the poor in spirit*, and **Mk. 12:37**, *the common people heard him gladly*).

Our passage under discussion is Zephaniah 3:8-13

V. 8, *Therefore wait ye upon me....* The people refused to turn to God; they refused correction; they refused to obey His word. The result is that they have nothing but destructive punishment in store for them. Though **the thrust of Zephaniah's** message is toward the Lord's people, the message of judgment includes **every nation** under the sun. God promises His wrath against sin, regardless of where it is found. However, in chapter 2:3, He has a faithful remnant, to whom He promises protection. **"By faith wait, and I will judge your adversaries who are the enemies of My Kingdom."**

Isaiah 40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

When the previous prophet, Habakkuk looked around, he saw the total apostasy of God's people. He saw the total anti-god activities of the heathen, yet they seemed to be prospering. He

asks, "What is the use of remaining faithful?" God tells Habakkuk to write down what he has seen. God tells him that when the time is right, He, God will move against world-wide wickedness. The purpose of writing it down is so God's faithful people can read it and continue in the face of the total apostasy. **The just must live by faith, and patiently wait for the appointed time when God will overturn evil.**

In our text, the prophet Zephaniah says the same thing. **In 3:8, the Lord promises** that the day is coming when **He will gather** all of the antichrist nations together in order to pour out His *fierce anger* upon them.

There is a **significant call** to God's faithful remnant of both Habakkuk and Zephaniah. As they see the wicked taking over the world, **they must not lose hope**. Rather, they must patiently wait on the Lord and remain faithful in the work of the Lord that has been uniquely assigned to that individual as he faces the total world-wide apostasy. His people are called to unwavering faith that when His time is right, His fierce anger will be poured out against **all the conspirators** of Psalms 2.

First: "Just wait and watch as I judge all nations."

Second: "Just wait and watch as their pride is destroyed, their hardness of heart broken and then see their conversion."

Third: "Just wait and watch as I cause my people, the New Mount Zion to be exalted," v. 19. (Identified in Hebrews 12:22, 23.)

Zephaniah 3:8 gives us a glimpse of the Lord's actions which take place in His **unknowable** realm. **Divine Providence gathers all nations** that have forgotten Him in order to deliver them into hell. (Psalms 9:17, 50:22.) How many times in the Old Testament did God put in the hearts of several pagan kings to unite together to attack His people for the purpose of destroying those kingdoms in one battle? (*Cf.* Josh 10, 1 Kg 20.)

3:8 implies three things that are required before the Lord turns the nations to a pure language that will call upon His name and serve Him in v. 9:

V. 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.

First, there is to be a united conspiracy of all the antichrist nations of the world to overthrow the Lord and His Anointed.

Second, their united goal is to remove all the restrictions of the law-word of God and eradicate all who seek to faithfully follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Over the centuries, the wicked have used mass torture and murder to remove all opposition, so nothing is beyond the scope of their imagination and actions, including depopulation efforts by whatever means they can devise.

Third, the Lord's judgment and wrath must come against the world-wide revolt before world-wide righteousness can be exalted:

Isaiah 26:9 *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

Hence, v. 8, **the warfare against God's Kingdom must be world-wide**. The implication is that God's people must become a world-wide reproach, much like they are in the Marxist, Muslim and Hindu nations today, before God's wrath is poured out upon the wicked. Yet through all of this, **Zephaniah 2:9** says that those who seek righteousness, **that is, the faithful remnant**, will be preserved, exalted and given the possessions of those who conspired against God's authority over them.

Zephaniah 3:9 *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.*

V. 9 is one of many promises that all nations shall be subdued to the Son according to 1 Corinthians 15:23-25 before the end of time. Note that v. 9 is built on the foundation of v. 8.

Zephaniah 3:9 *For then...* That is, after He has assembled the conspirators of this world together and dealt with them in His fierce anger.

Zephaniah assures us that the Lord's fiery wrath is against all who *have done violence to the Law*, whether they are of His covenant people or of the peoples of the world. (Zeph 3:4, 8. A supporting passage is Isaiah 19:23-25) The result will be the conversion of the nations, and the people of Zion will no longer be despised, and the name of the Lord's people will be a praise among all people of the earth, Zeph 3:9-20.

Zephaniah 3:8-9, repeats **Isaiah chapter 42**, where we are told that in God's fierce anger and judgment against the law breaker, God will exalt His law. As He exalts His law, the people of the law will be both protected and exalted.

Are we seeing the start of the Lord's world-wide and total judgment against unrighteousness where He breaks the pride of the lawless and exalts the apparently small number of His people as foretold in Zephaniah 3:8-9?

Through the use of technology and for the first time in history since Nimrod, we have upon us the ability to gather all the peoples of the world to war against the Lord and His people.

Technology is now available to trace every living being upon earth. In addition, with the nanotechnology in the "vaccine," it is now possible for the wicked to control every person who has willingly submitted to the shot.

The wicked are moving quickly to accomplish their goal of total control which demands unqualified worship of the Beast/State with serious consequences if that obeisance is not made. The Lord tells the Beast/State to *kiss the Son*, or it will be ground into fine dust.

Though the efforts to overthrow the kingdom of God appear to be succeeding, we must *Judge not according to the appearance*. Rather, we must look to the *righteous judgment* as promised by Prophets, e.g., Zephaniah, for they assure us of God's righteous judgment against those who fail to "*kiss the Son*." Though we may not see His judgment in our lifetime, it will come against all *who have done violence to the law* of God. Whether they be religious leaders under the name of Christianity, civil leaders or men of great wealth and power, all who have worked to remove the ***bands*** and ***cords*** of God's law have His wrathful judgment against them. They shall be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Acts 4:26 *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

It is Divine Providence Who is moving the whole world to unite with a single purpose against the Lord and His Anointed, the Gospel Church. Zephaniah reveals God's purpose behind that uniting—**that he might overthrow them** in His wrath. The result will be world-wide righteousness.

The small book of Zephaniah tells us of the *end time* or *the last days* victory that has been promised to the Son and tells of the exaltation of His church. So let us be faithful to the death if needed as we stand against the united efforts of the nations of the world to remove the restrictions of God's law-word.

Let us **remember and rejoice in the promise of Zephaniah 2:1-3**. As all the nations gather together in their efforts to overthrow God, we have a promise placed right in the midst of all of their effort—God promised, and He still promises, to keep a faithful remnant. Money cannot hide the wicked; holes in the rocks cannot hide them; military strength cannot hide them. The only thing which can preserve a faithful remnant in the day of His fierce anger against all nations is His grace and mercy toward those who love Him and keep His commandments. (Ps 3:3, 28:7, &c.)

So, by faith, let us even REJOICE as we see the uniting of the nations in their conspiracy against the Lord and His Anointed. His Word explains what is going on. His purpose is **that he might overthrow them** in His wrath. **Let the church of Jesus Christ sing the song of rejoicing found in Zephaniah 3:14-20.**

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. 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. 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. 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.

We do not rejoice because a supposed “rapture” is close at hand to remove us from the mess we have made. Rather, we rejoice because God’s judgment is moving against those who refuse to glorify God as God. God has given to those who believe and trust His word the promise of protection in the increasingly troubled days ahead. That promise is in Zephaniah 2:3, *seek ye the Lord*, and is repeated by our Lord and Matthew 6:33, *seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.*

Great days lie ahead for the faithful remnant, the poor and despised of this world. We may be living in the day prophesied of by Zephaniah 3:8-20, or that day may be a great distance away. Regardless, we understand that today the Lord is the One Who is uniting the nations against Himself. The Lord is the One who is giving them the power to wage war against His church. By faith we understand that the Kingdom of God is expanding, and the conspirers are uniting to their own destruction.

Revelation 6:16. As the wicked cry out for the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, we can rejoice and be glad, for we will know that our Redeemer lives, and our redemption draweth nigh.