

JOY & JUSTICE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK
OF ZEPHANIAH



Joy and Justice

“A Story of Joy and Justice” – Zephaniah 1:1
February 5, 2023

February Sermon Series

JOY AND JUSTICE		
<i>A Study of the Book of Zephaniah</i>		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
Feb 5	A Story of Joy and Justice	Zephaniah 1:1
Feb 12	Justice: The Day of the Lord is Coming	Zephaniah 1:2-2:3
Feb 19	Justice: Why the Day of the Lord is Coming	Zephaniah 2:1-3:8
Feb 26	God's Joy and Your Joy	Zephaniah 3:9-20
Night of Worship on Ash Wednesday (Feb 22) at 7pm		

Zephaniah in Two Sentences

The prophecy of Zephaniah is a call for God's people to gather in order to repent and seek the Lord because the Day of the Lord (justice) is near and hastening. For those who do so, there will be the joy of salvation from a God who deeply loves you and even sings over you.

Zephaniah in Two Words: _____ and _____

The Day of the Lord

- The Day of the Lord refers to both...
 1. An imminent punishment of Judah and Jerusalem (1:4-13; 2:1-3; 3:1-5); and
 2. A future but hastening judgment of the whole world climaxing in Armageddon (1:2-3, 14-18; 2:4-15; 3:6-8)
- The reasons for this judgment on Judah, Jerusalem, and the whole world include...

Idolatry (1:5a)	Syncretism (1:5b)	Backsliding (1:6)
Apostasy (1:8)	Stealing (1:9)	Violence (1:9)
Fraud (1:9)	Complacency (1:12)	Unbelief (1:12)
Pride (1:16; 2:10,15)	Sin (1:17)	Mistreatment of God's chosen people (2:8-10)
Not listening (3:2)	Not accepting correction (3:2)	Not trusting God (3:2)
Not drawing near to God (3:2)	Rebellion against the Lord (3:1)	Defilement (3:1)
Ungodly leadership (3:3-4)	Injustice (3:5)	

- In order to avert this judgment, God’s people are called to gather (Zephaniah 2:1-3) and...
 1. Be silent before the Lord (1:7)
 2. Seek the Lord (2:3)
 3. Seek righteousness and humility (2:3)
- If God’s people will gather to repent and seek the Lord, then they will be saved from this judgment and will rejoice. God declares a Day in the future when many peoples of the nations (3:9-10) and the remnant of Israel (3:11-20) will be saved from judgment. God calls His people to sing and rejoice by faith because of God’s great salvation and love (3:14-20).
- Most famous verse in this book = Zephaniah 3:17
- Zephaniah’s name means “Jehovah hides” (as in the Lord hiding you from harm and judgment; the Lord protects)
- Zephaniah is the great, great grandson of good King Hezekiah (1:1)

A Story of Joy and a Story of Justice (Zephaniah 1:1)

1. A story of _____ – Josiah

- The times before Josiah: 2 Kings 21:1-7,10-16,19-22

<i>Under Manasseh and Amon</i>	<i>Today in America</i>
Did evil in the sight of the Lord	Do evil in the sight of the Lord
Made altars for false idols	Worship the Oscar statue
Burned his sons as false worship	930,000 babies aborted last year
Fortune-telling, omens, mediums	37 TV shows promoting sorcery
Set up idols in God’s house	Praying to dead saint statues
Ignored and killed the prophets	Ignore God’s Word

- History tells us that King Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah sawed in two (Hebrews 11:37).
- Zephaniah and others preach against these behaviors and of a coming judgment (Day of the Lord), and Josiah leads Judah to repent and change their ways, and the Lord does not send judgment in Josiah’s lifetime (2 Kings 22:1-2,11-13,19-20; 23:1-3).
- Josiah experiences the joy of Zephaniah 3:17
- Do you want joy? Then follow Josiah’s example!

2. A story of _____ – Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah

- A tale of four kings: 2 Kings 23:31-24:4; 24:8-14; 25:7-12
- These are all of the things that Zephaniah and other prophets prophesied (2 Kings 24:2-3).
- This is the Lord’s justice. This is the Day of the Lord against Judah and Jerusalem (Zephaniah 1:4-8)
- Do you want judgment (justice)? Then follow Jehoahaz’s example!

My Applications Today

1. In what ways have I been engaging in the judgment-worthy sins of Manasseh and Amon? Of what do I need to repent?

- Lord, I repent of doing evil in Your sight.
- Lord, I repent of placing more value on Hollywood's entertainment (Oscar statue) with my time and affection and money and enthusiasm that I do on You.
- Lord, I repent of my complicity in the murder of 930,000 babies last year thru direct involvement or thru passively standing by.
- Lord, I repent of my involvement in magic, sorcery, witchcraft, fortune-telling, and other occultic activities.
- Lord, I repent of looking to things or people besides You as my ultimate help.
- Lord, I repent of ignoring Your Word.

2. With God's help and power, I choose to respond to Zephaniah like Josiah rather than like Jehoahaz.

- I choose to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 22:2)
- I choose to act with humble repentance any time I become aware of my violating God's standards (2 Kings 22:11)
- I choose to inquire of the Lord (2 Kings 22:13)
- I choose to regularly go to the house of the Lord (2 Kings 23:2)
- I choose to read God's Word with intent to obey (2 Kings 23:2-3)
- I choose to cleanse my life of idols and immorality (2 Kings 23:4-14)
- I choose to give the first portion of my income back to the Lord through His church (2 Kings 22:3-7)

3. I choose to regularly spend some moments in _____ before the Lord (Zephaniah 1:7)

- Richard Foster: "One reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless. We are so accustomed to relying upon words to manage and control others. If we are silent who will take control? God will take control; but we will never let Him take control until we trust Him. Silence is intimately related to trust."
- Dallas Willard: "Total silence is rare, and what we today call 'quiet' usually only amounts to a little less noise. Many people have never experienced silence and do not even know that they do not know what it is. Silence (can be) frightening because it strips us as nothing else does, throwing us upon the stark realities of our life. In that quiet, what if there turns out to be very little to 'just us and God'? Think what it says about the inward emptiness of our lives if we must always turn on the radio to make sure something is happening around us. Silence is a powerful and essential discipline. Only silence will allow us life-transforming concentration upon God."

- Resource: “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day: A 40-Day Journey with the Daily Office” by Peter Scazzero
- Resource: “One Minute Pause” App

4. I deserve justice, and I choose joy in the Lord

The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing. ~ Zephaniah 3:17

Jesus, I deserve Your just judgment. I have sinned, and I am sorry! I repent! Jesus, You are the Mighty One who has chosen to save me through Your death on the cross and Your resurrection from the dead. I receive this salvation, and I rejoice. Thank You!!

Our Application as a Church – Together, let’s heed God’s voice through Zephaniah by...

- **GATHERING TO REPENT AND SEEK THE LORD** (Zephaniah 2:1-3)
 - A Night of Worship on Ash Wednesday (Feb 22) at 7pm (no children’s ministry)
 - We will seek to do exactly what Zephaniah says including silence, repentance, seeking the Lord, and much worship and rejoicing.
- **FORTY DAYS OF PRAYER**
 - Humbly seek the Lord daily from Feb 22 (Ash Weds) through April 9 (Easter)
 - Opt-in to get a daily prayer text during these 40 days. Look for the text opt-in next Sunday.
 - A weekly Audience of One worship and prayer time in the prayer center (first floor of Ministry Center) every Thursday from 11am to 1pm.
 - A phone prayer blitz on Thursday, April 6, where we will call every household in the church to pray with them on the phone (or by text). We need 150 volunteers who are willing to call (or text) 20 people each. Look for link to volunteer next Sunday.