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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

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**“GOD’S MAN FOR GOD’S MESSAGE TO GOD’S PLACE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE.”**

**Zechariah 1:1-6**

The prophet Zephaniah, who penned this book, was believed to be a direct descendent from Hezekiah. He prophesied in the urban area. His prophecy was during the reign of Josiah. Perhaps, his prophecy had something to do with the revival in the time of Josiah. Zephaniah was believed to be associated with Huldah, the prophetess, and with Jeremiah. This book is filled with prophecies of Judgment.

***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."***

The word of the Lord came to Zephaniah, God’s man for God’s message to God’s place for God’s people. He was of Hamitic origin, having descended from the lineage of Cush. This is implied in the name of his father, Cushi (Genesis 10:6). This verse pinpoints the time of these prophecies as in the time of King Josiah. This judgment is spoken specifically on Judah, but it is, also, for all the world, God sends warning to those who are not faithful to Him. The prophet’s genealogy shows his royal relationship to Hizkiah (Hezekiah), the godly king of Judah who had died in 686 B.C. Josiah was Judah’s last godly king, during whose reign the Law was rediscovered in 621 B.C. And, as a man of royal lineage, he had insider knowledge of how a righteous kingdom should be managed and what happens when unrighteousness runs rampant throughout a land. Zephaniah had undoubtedly witnessed wicked King Manasseh’s reign and observed how he led the people into idolatry. So, when God gave Zephaniah his message during the days of Josiah king of Judah, Zephaniah fulfilled the role of a kingdom man. He knew whom he believed in and did not have a problem delivering the true King’s message of judgment and restoration to a rebellious people

***Zephaniah 1:2 "I will utterly consume all [things] from off the land, saith the LORD."***

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

The Lord’s declaration of destruction is stunning, leaving no doubt that worldwide judgment will come. Indeed, God will sweep away everything from the face of the earth, an insight that likely reminded Zephaniah’s hearers of a time in the past when God spoke similarly to Noah before the flood (Genesis 6:7). This destruction will be comprehensive: people and animals the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea. And not even a cruise liner could rescue those destined to perish. This is spoken to all the world, as well as to Judah.

***Isaiah 6:11 "Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,"***

God is very angry with the unfaithful. This is speaking of a time when desolation is everywhere. This wrath of God is spoken against man, and all of creation that God had provided for man, as well. God has been very patient with mankind, but this speaks of a time when His patience has run out. Once during the time of Noah, God was sorry that He had ever made man.

***Zephaniah 1:4 "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;"***

***Zephaniah 1:5 "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;"***

The "stretching of God's hand" is showing that His judgment is about to be carried out. The hand symbolizes work. The judgment is against Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He’s going to clean up the land, and he’s starting inside his own house. Judgment of a sinful world always begins at the house of God. Six groups are singled out for judgment: (1) the remnant of Baal; (2) the idolatrous priests; (3) them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; (4) them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham, devotees of a syncretistic worship system; (5) them that are turned back from the LORD; and (6) those that have not sought the LORD. "Baal" is a false Canaanite storm god often worshiped by idolatrous Israelites (Jeremiah 7:9). Chemarim was an honorable Canaanite term for their priests but may translate “idolatrous priests” in Hebrew and is used here to designate non-Levitical priests (2 Kings 18:4–6; 23:4–15). Even the priests were involved in this. The temple of God was located in Jerusalem. They, also, had the law of God to go by, that the heathen world around them did not. Their sins were with full knowledge. They were like an unfaithful wife. They had committed spiritual adultery. Worship of the stars of heaven upon the housetops refers to Sabaism here identified with Malcham. "Malcham" was the national idol of the Ammonites. This Malcham was the same as Molech. God's people had stopped looking to God and started worshipping the false gods of the people around them. The sad thing is that some of them still went through the formality of worshipping God. They included God, as if there were many gods. God will not be God to anyone who has other gods. He will be the only One, or He will not be your God. This practice was introduced by the ungodly king Manasseh (2 Kings 21:3–5) and was associated with the worship of the “queen of heaven” (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17). This is speaking of consulting the stars for answers. We call this horoscope reading today. They worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, rather than God who created the sun, moon, and stars.

***Zephaniah 1:6 "And them that are turned back from the LORD; and [those] that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for him."***

The first part of verse 6 is speaking of back-sliders, when it says that are turned back from God. They are God’s children in relationship but have broken their fellowship with Him. They have become reprobates under strong delusion.

***Romans 1:21-32 (KJV)
21  Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
22  Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
23  And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
24  Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
25  Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.
26  For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:
27  And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.
28  And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
29  Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
30  Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31  Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
32  Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.***

***Hebrews 6:4-6 (KJV)
4  For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
5  And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
6  If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.***

The last part of verse 6 speaks of those who have never sought God at all. They are not interested in hearing about God. They could be atheists, who do not believe God exists.

***2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (KJV)
10  And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
11  And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
12  That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***

In very plain language, in both cases, whether children of God or not, they are the lost. God’s disobedient children and those who were never His children, receive the same eternal judgment. However their consequences are not the same.

***Luke 10:12-14 (KJV)
12  But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.
13  Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.
14  But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.***

***Luke 12:47-48 (KJV)
47  And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.
48  But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.***

**QUESTIONS**

1. Zephaniah was believed to be a descendent from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Where did Zephaniah prophesy?
3. Who was reigning when Zephaniah prophesied?
4. What prophetess was Zephaniah associated with?
5. The judgment is spoken specifically to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. The wrath of God is spoken on man and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. What are chemarims?
8. What is shown by the "stretching of God's hand"?
9. The "hand" symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Where does judgment of a sinful world always begin?
11. Who is "Baal"?
12. What advantages did Judah have over the world around them?
13. Their sins were with full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
14. Who are those who worship the host of heaven?
15. Who was "Malcham"?
16. The first part of verse 6 is speaking of whom.
17. What would you call those who have never sought God at all?

***Zephaniah 1:7 "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."***

The sacrifice that God prepared for all of us was Jesus who was the perfect Lamb sacrifice. He provided salvation to all who would believe.

***Romans 9:20 "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus?"***

God invited the Jews to come to the feast, but they did not. Then God sent to the Gentiles, and offered the gift of salvation to them. God would have His house full.

***Matthew 22:10 "So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."***

***John 1:10-13 (KJV)
10  He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
11  He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
12  But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
13  Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***

***Romans 11:25 (KJV)
25  For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***

1: 7 Scripture frequently speaks of the day of the Lord, a time of judgment for God’s enemies (1: 7-18) and a time of hope for God’s people (3: 9-20). Sometimes, it refers to God’s intervention in history (e.g., Joel 2: 1-11); at other times, it refers to his intervention at the end of history (e.g., 1 Thess 5: 1-5). Zephaniah warns Judah to repent (2: 1) before the wrath of the day overtakes them (1: 15).

***Zephaniah 1:8 "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."***

We see in the following Scripture, that those who try to get to heaven by ways other than those God has chosen have a very hard time.

***John 10:1-5 (KJV)
1  Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.
2  But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
3  To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
4  And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
5  And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.***

Jesus is the way. To Go before God with any garment, other than the robe of righteousness Jesus provides all believers, is dangerous.

***Matthew 22:11 "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:"***

***Matthew 22:12 "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."***

***Matthew 22:13 "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast [him] into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."***

***Matthew 22:14 "For many are called, but few [are] chosen."***

1: 7, 8. In Zephaniah the day of the LORD refers to the impending Babylonian invasion of Judah and to the destruction of Jerusalem. He pictures the victims of this conquest as the princes (nobles), the king’s sons (royalty), and the wealthy who wear imported garments. Zephaniah’s prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C., slew the sons of Zedekiah (Josiah’s youngest son), blinded Zedekiah, and led him captive to Babylon (2 Kin. 25: 7).

***Zephaniah 1:9 "In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit."***

This "leaping on the threshhold" has double meaning. Idolatrous worship of a false god, required that they jump the threshhold, when they entered. The other meaning is applicable to those who enter homes illegally..

***John 10:1 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."***

***John 10:2 "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."***

***John 10:9 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."***

1: 8-9 Once the political leaders heard that there was a whole lot of shaking going on at the temple and that God was the cause of it, they knew he would be coming for them. The king’s sons and his officials were going to be punished for their violence and deceit because the politicians were operating by their agenda and not by God’s. The Lord does not ride on the backs of politicians; he rides on his own glory and righteousness.

***Zephaniah 1:10 "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."***

The fish gate was in the northern wall, and was a gate where the fishermen brought their fish to the market. There was usually a fish market just inside the gate. The army, that came to attack them, would have an easier chance to get in at this gate. We know in some of the other prophetic books, the enemy was supposed to come from the North. This would be the logical gate for them to enter. The enemy will come crashing into Jerusalem.

***Zephaniah 1:11 "Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off."***

"Maktesh" means her that is broken down. This was, probably, a valley that the enemy entered by. This was, possibly, the route the merchant people from the North used to enter the city. They would be the first cut off. Those that bear silver are the wealthier of the merchant tradesmen.

***Zephaniah 1:12 "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."***

"Lees" means settlings. These are a people who have given up on God. They are so complacent they do not believe good, or evil, of God. They are very much like agnostics who have no mind set at all. They have hidden in every conceivable place to keep from being found of those who will destroy. They cannot hide from God. The Light reveals all. They will be found and dealt with. Many of them will die where they are found. No evil-doer can escape the Light of God. They have not directly come out against religion, but they have great doubts in their hearts that God exists. These people believe in luck, not in divine providence.

***Zephaniah 1:13 "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."***

They had trusted in their earthly wealth, and now, that is gone. They built fine houses to live in, but will not get to live in them. They will either die in the attack, or be carried off captives to Babylon. Someone else will benefit from their work.

1: 9–13. Those that leap on the threshold probably are the priests of Dagan who would not step on the place where he had fallen (1 Sam. 5: 5). They may also be creditors who crossed over the threshold of their debtors (Deut. 24: 10, 11). The fish gate was situated on the northern side of the city. It may have derived its name from nearby fish markets that sold catches from the Sea of Galilee. The Maktesh was the part of Jerusalem situated in the Tyropoean Valley. The merchant people (Heb. kena‘an, also a word for “Canaanite”) indicates they transacted their business like Canaanites or Phoenicians.

1: 10-13 The business leaders and merchants who profited from the avarice behind the perverse worship at the temple and the corruption of the administration were going to be the recipients of the Lord’s wrath, too. Nothing of their world would be spared. From the entry into the business area (the Fish Gate) to the business area itself (the Second District) to the houses and vineyards and wealth of the business owners, nothing would be left (1: 10, 13). The writing was on the wall; their place would become ruin (1: 13).

***Zephaniah 1:14 "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."***

Zephaniah has told of all who will suffer under this judgment of God for their sins of idolatry. Now, he emphasizes the nearness of this judgment being carried out.

***Isaiah 13:6 "Howl ye; for the day of the LORD [is] at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty."***

The great day of the LORD could easily be the time of judgment God brought upon Judah by the

Babylonians. It can, also, be the time when God brings judgment upon any people. There is a great day coming in our lifetime that is speaking of the second coming of the Lord. The mighty men will have no more protection than anyone else in the day that God judges them. They are no match for God.

***Zephaniah 1:15 "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,"***

This is certainly speaking of that great day, when the end of the Gentile age comes. It is, also, speaking of that day when the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and Judah.

***Revelation 6:17 "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"***

***Romans 1:18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;"***

***Mark 13:24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,"***

***Zephaniah 1:16 "A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers."***

The trumpet was blown to gather the people, and for war. The high towers were the places where the soldiers tried to ward off the attack. In this day, that will do no good. They cannot fight God.

***Numbers 10:9 "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."***

***I Corinthians 15:52 "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."***

***Zephaniah 1:17 "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."***

They were walking like blind men, because they knew not where to go for safety. There was no escape. They have waited too late to repent.

***Deuteronomy 28:28 "The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:"***

***II Corinthians 4:4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."***

Their blindness is of a spiritual nature. They are worthless, because they have sinned against God, and not repented. Their fate is death, and then hell.

***Zephaniah 1:18 "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."***

They cannot buy off the enemy with their silver and gold. The enemy will get all of that anyway. Fire is a way of purging. They will be purged by the fire of God. The earth will experience the very same thing at the end of the age. The earth will be destroyed by fire. Silver and gold will not be able to help in that day. Those, who trust in silver and gold to save them, will be disappointed. The only safety from the wrath of God is the blood of Jesus.

***I Thessalonians 1:10 "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."***

Those, who put their faith and trust in Jesus, will experience tribulation, but will be saved from the wrath of God. The wrath of God is for the unbelievers.

1: 14-18 The wrath that God unleashed on the Egyptians leading up to the exodus and the awesome power of God displayed at Mount Sinai thereafter was coming to Judah and its capitol city, Jerusalem. Back then, God had told the Israelites through Moses what would happen if they broke their covenant with him (see Deut 28: 15-68). Here, with vivid language, Zephaniah gives terrifying insight into the full scope of the day of the Lord (1: 14). When the Lord’s wrath comes, even silver and gold won’t be able to rescue anyone. God will make a horrifying end of all the inhabitants of the earth (1: 18).

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who was the sacrifice mentioned in verse 7?
2. Who was salvation first offered to?
3. Who is the Way to heaven?
4. What happened to the man who did not have on a wedding garment?
5. What is "leaping on the threshold" referring to?
6. Where was the fish gate located?
7. What does "Maktesh" mean?
8. Verse 12 says, He will search Jerusalem with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
9. What does "lees" mean?
10. What are they really saying, when they say, God will do no good, or evil?
11. What is Zephaniah emphasizing in verse 14?
12. What does the author believe the great day of the LORD to be?
13. What was the trumpet blown for?
14. Who has blinded the minds of them which believe not?
15. Those, who put their faith and trust in Jesus, will experience \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but will be saved from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.