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**C1135 – October 12, 2011 – Zephaniah 1.2-6**  
**The Awesome Judgments Coming**

Let's turn to Zephaniah. I hope you read through this book. It's three chapters and has been called a compendium of the prophets meaning it is a summary of the prophets. The basic message of the OT prophets is that God created history, that there was a time when history was not and God was. History is finite, it has a beginning point and God created history with a plan and a purpose. So what happens in history is not random, impersonal events, they are deeply personal. The prophets reveal God's personal involvement in history and therefore reveal His character. The picture that emerges is rather long stretches of calm interrupted by stark moments of terror. To put it into perspective remember our good/evil diagram. On the top diagram we have God creating history, God is good and therefore He created history very good, there were no problems with history during this period between the Creation and the Fall. Only Christianity can imagine a perfect world, because there once was a perfect world that came from the hands of a perfect Creator. Our world is a distortion of that original world and its imperfection must be evaluated against the original world which means death is not normal, which means mutations and rebellion and frustration and sweat, even the physiological response of sweat is not normal. Aging is not normal, which is why I'm convinced people try to stay young, they're searching for that original world, somehow that is deeply lodged in the consciousness of humanity, the answer isn't plastic surgery of course, but eternal life in a resurrection body. So we have a period of perfect history and we don't know how long that perfect history lasted but when man sinned and the Fall occurred now we have an imperfect history, an admixture of good and evil. And this is part of God's plan; the Fall didn't surprise God. God didn't get shocked the day man rebelled against Him. But God is holy which means He judges sin and so now we have a fallen history, there are good things but there are also bad things and the way God has decided to manage fallen

history is by what we call dispensations. A dispensation is a period of time in which God gives to man a responsibility, a stewardship and each of these is a period when God is giving man grace but as grace is spurned God's holiness looks down and judges. So history has long periods of stability and then God judges all down through fallen history. But this is looking forward to a final judgment that will separate the good out from the evil. The final judgment may come in phases but nonetheless, the general picture is that God will finally separate the good out from the evil.

In contrast to this we have the pagan view of history on the bottom. In the pagan view there is no personal God behind history, history is an impersonal process, it has no beginning and no end, it's not going anywhere, there's no plan or purpose, no meaning to existence, it just goes on and on and on. There are no major interruptions in history so there really is no solution to the problem of evil. Good and evil are eternally mixed together and never shall the twain part. This is really a very depressing view of history.

Whereas the biblical view of history has hope at the end that the problem of evil will be resolved and good and evil will be separated forever. The pagan view of history can never get evil separated out from the good, it's just eternal evil.

Now we are inside the true history which is a mixture of good and evil, but the difference between us and paganism is that this period of mixture is limited, it's bracketed on either end, evil had a beginning and evil will be separated out from the good. The way they are separated out is by means of judgment. This is the concept paganism is at war with. They don't like judgment because judgment implies responsibility to an authority. And they don't want an authority; they want to be the authority. And God lets them think they have authority in the various dispensations, that's a function of God's grace, but when they spurn the grace God finally says that's it and He judges. But the long periods of grace are seemingly the day of man in that it appears that man is controlling whatsoever comes to pass. But then when God judges and interrupts man's plans it is apparent that it is the day of the Lord and He is controlling whatsoever comes to pass.

Zephaniah is charting how this history unfolds and how man is supposed to respond during the day of man, while God's grace is still being offered to

man, during that period man is supposed to respond to God's grace and there is command to do so. The prophets commanded the people of Israel to repent lest God judge. After the cross Paul commanded all men everywhere to repent lest they be judged. So we have a time of grace before judgment.

When Zephaniah wrote they were in a day of grace but they were on the verge of a day of judgment, a day of the Lord. That expression and its shortened forms, "that day," "the day," "at that time" are used over 70 times in the OT and about 10 times in the NT. Now, it is not a technical designation as some scholars insist. Some are insisting that the expression always refers to the future Tribulation. This is not so, as with all expressions, usage is defined by context. And as such we find in Joel and other places that there are past days of the Lord that give a foreview of the future day of the Lord. In other words what God is saying is that, if I have judged sin and evil on a local scale then surely one day I will judge sin and evil on a global scale and resolve this problem of good and evil.

Now Zephaniah goes back and forth between what is now a past day of the Lord and what is still a future day of the Lord. He actually starts in vv 2-3 with the future day of the Lord, a judgment that is cosmic in scale and then in vv 4, 5 and 6 he comes back to the past day of the Lord, a local judgment on Judah and Jerusalem.<sup>i</sup>

So let's look at it, in verse 1 we have the historical situation, **The word of the Lord came to Zephaniah** and he traces his genealogy back four generations to **Hezekiah**, the godly king who is of the lineage of David, who had led the southern kingdom of Judah into reforms a century before. And then he mentions it was **in the days of Josiah** when this revelation came to him. **Josiah** was also of the house of David. So Zephaniah and Josiah are related. And they're sort of a tag team during this period to straighten Judah out. Josiah was the king, Zephaniah was the prophet. Now Zephaniah became a prophet because God chose him to be a prophet. Josiah became king because God chose the house of David and when his father Amon was killed then he was the next one in line for the throne. He was only a boy at the time, just 8 years old. His story is that when he was 16 years old he began to seek the Lord. We aren't told why but evidently God was working in this boy's life and he started to tear down some of the altars of Baal, he started to clean up the Temple and one day while it was being cleaned out one of the

scribes found the Torah. Josiah was now 26 years old and boy, isn't this an interesting time to find the word of God, right in the middle of his reforms? They find it in a pile of trash in the back of a corner, it had probably been trashed back in Manasseh's days, 80-90 years before, and it's been sitting there ever since. A scribe finds it, he's supposed to be an expert in the Torah and yet he'd never read a copy of it, kind of like some of our lawyers today, never even read the Constitution, they don't have time for that anymore. So that's the parallel kind of situation. They take the Torah before Josiah and they read it to him, read the whole thing, all five books and toward the end of Deuteronomy is this great section on the blessings and cursings of Israel. And Josiah, this young 26 year old man, had enough wisdom to say, I look at my country, I see the public health department, I see the education department, I see the agricultural department, I see the population growth rate; this man was up to speed on the state of his country, and as Deut 28 was read he said, aha, that explains public health, that explains education, that explains the agriculture and so forth. He recognized that the Torah was the tool to interpret his country and this man loved his country. He wanted to correct the problems in his country; he wanted the people to return to the Lord God. That was the solution to their problems. So he personally repents, he goes out, calls the whole nation to Jerusalem and he has the Torah read to them. They were supposed to gather every seven years as a nation to hear the Torah read, they hadn't done it for a century, they hadn't done it since Hezekiah's time. So he has the whole thing read to the nation and then he gets up, this young man, and he steps forward and vows in front of the whole nation, I am going to follow this Law, this is the way this country is going, are you going to follow me. Now that is a king, that is one of the boldest and most godly men in the world. He had to stand up there in the face of all the priests of Baal, he had to stand up there in the front of all the priestesses of Asherah, high profile people, people on the inside, people who cut all the inside deals, people that can pull strings, very corrupt people and he stands up and says, this is wrong and that is wrong and it's destroying our country and here's what we're going to do about it. You can imagine that's not going to go over so well, many of these people made lots of money from paganism, their whole livelihood was built on it. So when this guy stands up there and says we're putting you out of business, don't think for five seconds everyone jumped on the train. They probably wanted to jump on Josiah and squash him and I'm sure he knew that. So the guy had to have a lot of guts to get up there and say this. And out of this a lot of them aren't going to follow him.

Some of them will follow him with reservations. And some of them just don't care, they're complacent. You always get these three kinds of responses. And it's those kinds of responses to the word of God that we want to study tonight. The question is are these people going to get with the word of God and avoid judgment? Or not.

Let's start in vv 2-3 because vv 2-3 don't describe the local judgment coming upon Judah if they don't get with the program. They describe the global judgment coming upon the whole world in the last times, they describe what this good/evil diagram depicts down here when good is separated out from evil. And we might ask why? Why does he start with this global catastrophe that is coming? Why doesn't he start with the local catastrophe that is coming upon Judah if they don't get with the word of God. Let's read, verse 2, **I will completely remove all things From the face of the earth," declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup>"I will remove man and beast; I will remove the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea, And the ruins along with the wicked; And I will cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.** Now that's clearly a global judgment that is coming. And that's where he starts his thinking, he starts with the global judgment and then moves to the local judgment in vv 4, 5, 6 and following, then by the end of the chapter he amplifies things again. Why do you suppose he does that? To scare the bejeebers out of them, to get their attention. I don't know about you but when I read that I cringe. The picture is that earth is in complete desolation; there are no men, no animals, no birds and no fish, nothing, all life is cut off. And that's a very scary picture.

Now we might ask, when have we seen anything like this before, not as great, but something almost like this. And the answer is the global flood of Noah, in fact, verse 3 is a loose quotation of Gen 6:7. So let's go back mentally and remind ourselves of this judgment. The flood of Noah is always debated to be local in extent or global. One of the real problems for a local flood is the promise a few chapters later that God will never flood the earth like that again. Well, if God promised to never send a local flood on the earth again I think we've had a few local floods since then. And that means God's promises aren't true. That's one of the problems; another problem is Peter's commentary in 2 Pet 3. In that commentary Peter amplifies our understanding of the Flood, expanding it to having affected the entire cosmos. We've just finished an astronomy study on our solar system at home.

And we discovered some very strange phenomena in our solar system that we don't often think about as Christians. One of those is comets. Comets are basically dirty snowballs, a lot of ice around a rocky core and they're on very unpredictable trajectory. How did they get there? Where did they come from? We know from the nature of comets that they can only make so many circuits around the sun before all the ice has melted off and it becomes an asteroid. So where are these things coming from? The upper limit of comets is about 10,000 years, which puts their production within the last 10,000 years. And what event, in the Christian worldview, has occurred in the last 10,000 years that could have produced comets? There's only 1 event I can come up with and that's the Flood of Noah. When the fountains of the deep burst forth you had this tremendous jet stream of water bursting out of the rocky earth. Did some of that wet, rocky debris shoot all the way into space and form comets? There has to be some explanation in the last 10,000 years. And I'm just pointing out that Peter's commentary, while it doesn't go into detail about comets forming, it does indicate the Flood affected the heavens and the earth. Another thing we found was the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, which are abnormally spaced, there's an unusually large space between them, and in between there is this asteroid belt. We wonder what caused it. One hypothesis is the exploded planet hypothesis. And the idea is that for some reason there used to be a planet there but it exploded. What caused that? Another observation that falls out of this is that when we look at planets and moons most of the craters seem to be on just one side indicating a single event caused most of the craters to form. I don't know all the details but I do know that the Flood affected the entire universe, and not just earth, so that might give your imagination something to work with so far as the extent of the flood. And it might give you something to work with so far as Zeph 1:2-3 since it's a loose quotation of Gen 6:7. "The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." Why was God sorry that He had made them? Because they were corrupted by sin. And when God said that last time he destroyed everything not on the ark, everything that was not taken over in the safety net of God's salvation. Take a look at Gen 7:21, "All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; <sup>22</sup>of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. <sup>23</sup>Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to

creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.” Now what lasting evidence do we have for this blotting out of life? The fossil record. The fossil record is actually one of the scariest things. We’re living in a graveyard, billions and billions of fossils are encased in the sedimentary rock of our earth. If there’s one message the earth proclaims it’s the judgment of God, the judgment of God, the judgment of God. God judges sin, God judges sin, God judges sin. Get right with God before He judges again, get right with God before He judges again.

Now if we turn back to Zephaniah God has wiped out everything on the face of the earth once before in the flood of Noah. He promised to never do that again by means of a flood. Peter says the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire. And he describes it here, **I will completely remove all things From the face of the earth,” declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup>“I will remove man and beast; I will remove the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea, And the ruins along with the wicked; And I will cut off man from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.**

Now I want to take you to some other parallel passages. First, verse 17 at the end of this chapter. “I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung.” That’s a real nice picture. I don’t know if you can imagine the destruction of war, some of the things that happened at Pearl Harbor as the Japs charged into machine gun fire and it just ripped them to shreds, it amazed the American soldiers that they would just come at them head on. They were deeply ideologically driven soldiers and it really bothered the Americans. There would just be masses of bodies lying there, that’s the picture of verse 17. Verse 18, “Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD’S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.” Those are some of the most powerful and terrifying words in the entire Bible. God is making a complete end to the present heavens and earth, it sounds like a total extermination of life from the planet. And the cause, verse 17, they sinned.

Now Isaiah 24. Isaiah writes earlier than Zephaniah, and he writes in verse 1, “Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants.” Tremendous geographical changes, an entire change in earth’s topography. Verse 2, “And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor.”<sup>3</sup>The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. <sup>4</sup>The earth mourns *and* withers, the world fades *and* withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. <sup>5</sup>The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. <sup>6</sup>Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.” There a few men are left, that’s the concept of the remnant, but the earth is totally devastated and again, the cause is man’s sin, they have transgressed laws, violated statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. God’s holiness takes a very aggressive action toward sin.

Now Isaiah 24:17, “Terror and pit and snare Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth.”<sup>18</sup>Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.” Observe the sphere of disaster in that expression, the heavens above, the earth beneath. Verse 19, “The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently.” You want to talk about geothermal energy, the entire earth is being shaken like a rag doll. Verse 20, “The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard And it totters like a shack, For its transgression is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again.” Why again, because of human transgression, the weight of sin upon it reigns down the holy judgment of God.

Now turn to the NT, Matt 24 starting in verse 19. “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!”<sup>20</sup>“But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.” This is all from the Jewish standpoint but nonetheless, verse 21, “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.”<sup>22</sup>“Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”



Notice no life would have been saved, life was saved, but it wouldn't have been if the days of judgment weren't cut short. Walvoord took it and I take it that if this period lasted a single second longer no one would survive. So there is an indication that though all life will virtually be destroyed, the elect remaining will not be destroyed. But still imagine the magnitude of the judgment, this is greater than the Flood and that's hard to imagine because we know the Flood affected the entire universe, and yet this is something grander than that.

Finally 1 Thess 5:2, "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>While they," that's the world, "while they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape." The non-elect will not escape, by the end of the day of the Lord they will be totally destroyed. And not only will they be destroyed but the whole earth will be destroyed. We don't have time to go to the Book of Revelation which gives all the details of the destruction but what we find is global war, global famine, global meteor showers, global thunderstorms, global earthquakes, global destruction of trees and green grass, global destruction of life in the sea, judgment on the sun so it turns up and what I'm trying to highlight is that man and nature are judged. Why man and nature? Why not just man?

So let's go back to Genesis 3 and be reminded of basic categories of thinking. There are two basic categories; there is the Creator and the creation. The Creator-creature distinction. The Creator is not the creation and the creation is not in any way an extension of the being of the Creator. It doesn't emanate from Him. It is distinct from the Creator and made out of nothing. When He spoke for the first time there was a creation. So the Creator-creation distinction. Then if we move inside creation we have the man-nature distinction. Man is not a part of nature, man is not an animal, man is above nature, he is the image of God, nature is not the image of God. And God placed man over nature to have dominion over it, to rule it and to subdue it by being a good steward of nature, bringing it to fruition for the glory of God. So we have God, we have man and we have nature. That is the order of things, with that in mind when man fell by rebelling against God, God cursed nature by causing it to rebel against man. So if we come to verse 17, "Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have

eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you;" there's the direct statement that leads to the principle, as goes man, so goes nature. "In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. <sup>18</sup>"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return." These are all abnormalities introduced because of sin and as man sins more and more nature comes under the weight of sin more and more such that Romans says that all creation is groaning and suffering the pains of childbirth until now, for the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption." As goes man, so goes nature. When man went under the curse of sin, nature was put under the curse of sin to teach man a lesson, to teach man what it means to rebel against God, as we rebel against God so as we go out and try to make nature productive it rebels against us, there is a lesson there.

And it's that principle that is behind the fact that God judges man and nature. Now if we go back and work with Zeph 1:4, having started with the terrifying universal judgment he now narrows the focus to the local judgment of Israel on the horizon. Why? Because they're corrupting everything. Despite the reforms Josiah made and the preaching of Zephaniah look at what is described. "**So I will stretch out My hand against Judah And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** I'm going to judge you. I'm going to stretch out My hand against you. The hand signifies a special work of God in judging, there is a day of the Lord on the horizon for Judah. **And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,** now with this expression and on into the first expression of verse 5, that little section you have the first of three groups in the nation. The first group is who we typically call the Capitulationists, they full scale rejected the word of God, they hated the word of God and that's who he describes first, some of them were worshippers of Baal, there was a remnant of Baal. Josiah had made certain reforms and he was trying to remove Baalism from the land but there was still a remnant, there were people that were not going along with Josiah. **And the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests.** He's talking there of removing the household names of the priests of Baal, removing those family names from existence, terminating family lines by low

fertility rate, by infant mortality, by military defeat, there are all kinds of ways God can terminate a family. **Along with the priests** refers to the unfaithful priests of YHWH, there were those in the house of Levi, the priestly tribe, they had also capitulated from YHWH. They would be erased from history. Verse 5, **“And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven,** these are also clearly Capitulationists, they have capitulated to the surrounding culture. They practiced astrology, they’re worshipping the stars, the zodiac, that kind of thing, that kind of worship God had turned the nations over to (Deut 4:19), it was idolatry. So these are the hardcore idolaters. What is idolatry? It’s simply taking the attributes of the Creator and moving them over to some aspect of creation. That’s what all the other nations did, they were given over to star worship and now Israel had become like all the other nations, they worshipped the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars, they attributed to them the qualities of God, they worshipped them, they burned sacrifices to them, they poured out drink offerings to them (Jer 19:13). So they’re going to be wiped off the planet. So much for the Capitulationists.

Verse 5, middle of the verse, second category, these are the Accommodationists, **And those who bow down *and* swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom,** these are your half-hearted believers, they’ve got one foot in the world and one foot in the word. Oh yes, Jesus is fine but it doesn’t hurt to have some other things in your arsenal just in case Jesus doesn’t work. It’s the Jesus plus crowd. And these people are a dime a dozen. What it is is a denial of the sufficiency of Scripture. The Scriptures are sufficient and the moment you say yeah, but, you’ve already denied the sufficiency of Scripture. The thing most of these believers never understand is that if I say I need the Scriptures, the Scriptures are essential but these other things can help too, I’ve already committed idolatry. They don’t see this, they think the Scriptures plus system is just the best way to do things. But if you do that the Lord looks at you and he says something like this, you bow down and swear to the LORD and swear by Milcom. You’ve got Jesus and Milcom on the same level. And once you’ve done that boy you’re on a path of destruction, you’ve accommodated.

And finally verse 6, this is the third category, these are just Complacent, we’ll call them complacent, they just aren’t doing anything. **And those who have turned back from following the LORD, And those who have not**

**sought the LORD or inquired of Him.** The first group in the Complacency category, have turned back from following the Lord, they had an active Christian life we would say, but now they've stopped growing, they've stopped learning, they're the kind of people that say, I did all that already and I hear this one quite often actually, they've quit the Christian life, they think they've already learned everything they're supposed to learn and so they sort of sit back and try to coast on cruise control. These people God is going to wipe out. They did not persevere to the end. Perseverance, while it's not necessary for salvation, is very important for rewards. And if you're one of these Christians on cruise control, trying to coast on what you did in the past for some Christian organization, I've got another thing to tell you, you're in big trouble. The second group in the Complacency category are **those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him**, and these are the people who've never done anything, they didn't even follow the Lord to begin with, they just kind of sat there, they were happy with their lives the way they were. These are all people who are complacent and the complacency is a killer. This is what we're facing in the Western Church and the reason we're facing it is because of money, because of prosperity, because of stuff, we basically think we have everything we need and when we really go to the Lord and inquire of Him is when we get a little boo boo and then we go crying to the Lord or we lost our Escalade or we're trying to decide which color Escalade to buy, these really difficult decisions. All ridiculous things when you realize that believers a few hundred miles south of us are sleeping on dirt floors and drinking unsanitized water. It's unbelievable the complacency in the Western church, but that's our challenge of the day, that's Satan's strategy in the West, lull believers to sleep and now we plod along and we're extremely weak for it, we're no threat to Satan or his program. He's off spending his energy elsewhere. Us, he already conquered. And the stink of it is that I don't think the church in the West will wake up until there is an economic collapse, a world war on our ground, or something of that nature, until then it is very hard to wake people out of their slumber. As one author said, "Sometimes it is the apathetic and indifferent who are more responsible for a nation's moral collapse than those who are actively engaged in evil, or those who have failed in the responsibilities of leadership."<sup>1</sup> We all like to

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable. (2003; 2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Zep 1:6). Galaxie Software.


point fingers but every one of us knows the most healthy place to point the finger is back at yourself.

So those are the strategies that were being used during Josiah's reign and Zephaniah's prophecy; Capitulation, wholesale rejection, Accommodation, one foot in the world one foot in the word and Complacency, just the I don't care attitude, and all of these were sinful and eroding culture so God says, I'm going to wipe you off the map, I have a day of the Lord scheduled and it came in 586BC when the Babylonians invaded. So that's where we're headed. Bt that's nothing compared to where the world is headed today, the terrifying day that is on the horizon, when God will make a complete end of all the non-elect inhabitants of the whole earth.

- I. Setting (1:1)
- II. The Day of the Lord Judgment/Darkness (1:2-3:8)
  - A. Judgment of All Living Things on Earth (1:2-3)
  - B. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (1:4-13)
  - C. Judgment on All Inhabitants of Earth (1:14-18)
  - D. Seek the Lord (2:1-3)
  - E. Judgment on Israel's Enemies (2:4-15)
  - F. Judgment on Jerusalem (3:1-7)
  - G. Judgment on All Nations (3:8)
- III. The Day of the Lord Blessing/Light (3:9-20)
  - A. Blessing on Gentiles Purified to Worship (3:9-11)
  - B. Blessing on Israel Restored to Kingdom (3:12-20)

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<sup>1</sup> Through this we are to learn that God is holy, that God does deal with sin, that He may wink at it for awhile, but once He has taken care of it, as He has on the cross, then men who reject that solution are going to be dealt with. God has a very definite character, He has certain attributes, and He defines Himself, we don't define God, He defines Himself in His self-revelation in Scripture. He may not be the kind of God we like, He may not be what we imagine Him to be, but if we want to find out who He is we must accept His own self-revelation of Himself in Scripture. And in His Scripture He is said to be sovereign, righteous, just, loving, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable and eternal among other things, but those are given abundant testimony in Scripture and they are central to any kind of accurate description of who God is. And two of these attributes are righteousness and justice which together constitute God's holiness, which means fundamentally He is set apart, He is set apart from sin, God cannot sin, God can't even be tempted by sin. But man is



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sin, so then God's holiness looks down at man's sin and it says judges. He may delay judgment, that's a function of grace and grace always precedes judgment, He may provide escape from judgment through a meeting of His holy demands as He has done through His own Son in the cross, but that finally God will judge men who refuse to respond to His provision in the cross is a necessary adjunct of His character. It is unavoidable and God has made clear that it is unavoidable by judging it in the past.

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