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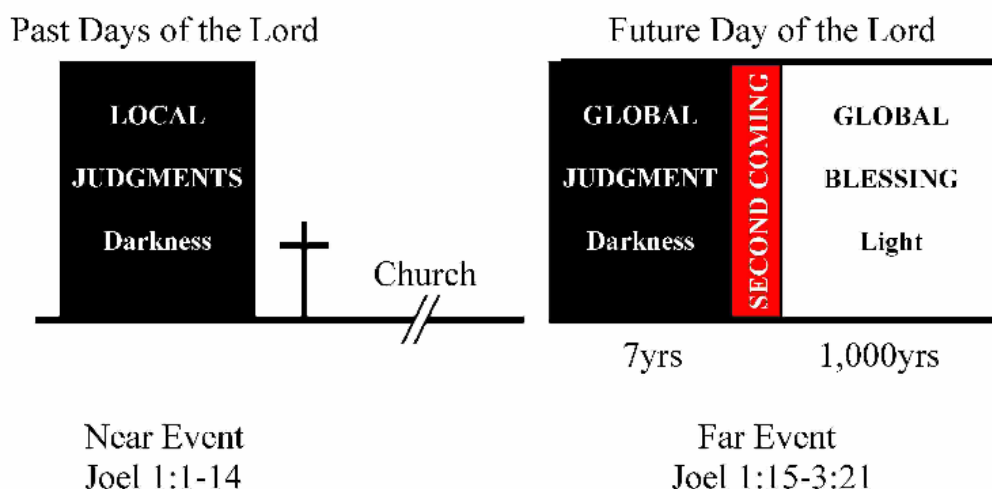
C1137 – November 16, 2011 – Zephaniah 1.14-18
The Terrifying Judgment Coming

Alright, we have been out of Zephaniah for three or four weeks so I want to review the theme which is the day of the Lord. Then we will turn to the actual text and finish up the past, local day of the Lord coming upon Judah and then turn to the future, global day of the Lord that still looms on the horizon and how it's arrival is imminent and the NT presents it as still imminent and then the practical response which is to repent today before that day arrives.

Again, let's define the day of the Lord so we're clear what we're talking about. The origin of the expression "the day of the Lord" arose from the popular concept in the ancient Near East that a really great warrior king *could* consummate an entire military campaign in one single day. The Scriptural authors picked up this concept and applied it to YHWH, the great warrior King who could judge His enemies in a single day and save His own. So the day of the Lord has two aspects, a judgment aspect and a salvation aspect.

This chart is actually based on the prophet Joel. Joel is the first prophet to give a systematic overview of the day of the Lord. Notice I didn't say He's the first to mention the day of the Lord, the first to mention it was Obadiah, he pronounced judgment on all anti-Semitic nations. But Joel is the first to give a systematic analysis of the day of the Lord and pronounce judgment on sinners and ultimate blessing on believers.

JOEL: DAY OF THE LORD



The scheme we learn from Joel and the same scheme we learn from Zephaniah who mentions the day of the Lord 24 times is that there are Past Days of the Lord, days of judgment near in time to when these prophets wrote that are local in scale. For example, the locust plague that Joel predicted to come upon Judah was a local judgment; it was a day of darkness because locusts covered the land blocking the sun and it caused tremendous economic fallout. So that's an example of a past day of the Lord; they are local in scale, they are days of darkness, they extend often for more than one day and they are terrific judgments. But these past days of the Lord are merely foreviews or previews of the Future Day of the Lord which is much greater. See the Future Day of the Lord, over on the right side of this chart, is global in scale, it is complete darkness upon the face of the whole earth, there are actually times during this judgment when the whole sun will be darkened, men will tremble with fear and it will be the end of this world as we know it. That's the judgment phase, it lasts for more than 7 years and the very last day of the judgment phase is known as the Day of the Second Coming and then you have the blessing phase that lasts a thousand years. Some people think it extends into eternity, but this diagram sums up what we've said.

Having said that, that's a systematic analysis of the day of the LORD, after all the data in Scripture has come in. But if we go back and put ourselves in their shoes and try to look at it from their vantage point they had Obadiah, they had Joel, they had Amos, they had Isaiah but they didn't have all that we have. That's what we call progressive revelation, that is, the word of God

was revealed over a long period of time, it didn't just drop out of heaven complete, it took centuries to write. So if you lived in Zephaniah's day and you talked about the word of God, the Scriptures, what were the Scriptures to an Israelite in Zephaniah's day? It was every canonical book revealed up to Zephaniah. So their Scriptures did not include Daniel or Ezekiel or Zechariah or Malachi, those books hadn't been revealed yet. So their Scriptures were a shortened version of our OT, and what we're doing here is just asking, from their vantage point what could they have understood? And if we can understand that then we can understand the impact it was supposed to have on them.

So in the 7th century BC they have some revelation about the day of the LORD from Obadiah. Obadiah taught that the day of the LORD was coming upon anti-Semitic nations, that is, nations that hate and try to destroy the Jews. God will hate and destroy but when He destroys them He will rescue the Jews and bring them into blessing. So they knew of judgment and blessing. But the Jews who had this information concluded that they had a free ticket into the blessings of the kingdom, all Gentiles will be judged, all Jews will be blessed. But that wasn't so because the only Jews that believe will be blessed. So Amos came along, he received the prophetic call and he warned the northern kingdom of Israel, who were a bunch of unbelievers, that they would also face a day of the LORD. That is now a past day of the Lord, it happened in 721BC when God scheduled the Assyrian's to come in as His instrument and judge. When we come to Zephaniah's day he addresses the southern kingdom of Judah, the northern kingdom was already in Exile. Zephaniah tells them that God has scheduled a day of the Lord for them too. This had to shock them because these people thought they had a free ticket. Why did they think they had a free ticket? Because they were of the house of Judah, the chosen house of Israel, and they had Jerusalem, the chosen city of God. That was their mentality and it betrays the fact that they were spiritually stupid; they believed that just because we are the house of Judah and we have the city of Jerusalem that God will never judge us in a day of the Lord. But now Zephaniah reveals in verse 7 that they were mistaken. **Be silent before the Lord GOD!** Shut up he says, this is like a parent trying to say something to his kid while the kid is flapping his tongue. Shut up and listen to Me the Lord says, **For the day of the LORD is near, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests.** We said this is the first use in Zephaniah of **the day of the LORD** and so this is

what set us off on a study of that great doctrine. And there are three or four things we can learn here. First of all, just as a reminder, this is written to the southern kingdom of Judah, the northern kingdom had already gone into Exile, so this is a **day of the LORD** scheduled for the southern kingdom. Second, notice who has prepared the sacrifice - **the LORD**. And who is the **sacrifice**? Judah. His own people, His own tribe, the tribe that will one day, according to Gen 49:10, rule the entire world. So make no bones about it, God is pretty upset with them. Third, there's someone else involved, there are **guests**. The Lord **has consecrated His guests**. Who are the guests? There's imagery here. See the procedure was to go down to the temple and offer sacrifice. Some of the meat would be food for the priests who got a portion because of the work they did at the temple; they didn't have time to go be IRS agents. So the picture comes from temple imagery, except this time Judah is the sacrifice and it turned out that the Babylonians were the priests who were going to get to eat them for lunch. So this is a military destruction. The fourth thing, the most difficult one is that this lunch is said to be **near. the day of the LORD is near**. And we dealt with that word **near** last time because it is used again in verse 14, it's used a series of times. And English speaking people get a wrong idea from the word, most commonly that it refers to something that's going to happen soon in time, you know, like next week. The problem with that is the things in verse 14 were written 2600 years ago and they still haven't happened. And you can say, well, it's near from God's perspective, fine, but everything is near from God's perspective so that doesn't help. That approach doesn't work and I took you through several other approaches people have tried, rapid, quick, etc.... My approach and what this term really means is imminency. There are two terms in the Hebrew and two corresponding terms in the Greek and they both refer to imminency. The OT and NT are completely consistent on this.

So what do we mean by imminency? Most of you have heard that term with respect to the rapture, the rapture is imminent we say. Well what does that mean? It means it can come at any moment, that there are no prophesied events that *must* occur before the rapture occurs, some prophetic event *may* occur before the rapture but none must. The point being that if an event is imminent then you can't put it in a sequence, you can't say, well A has to happen, then B, then C, and then the Rapture can happen. Why not? Because there are no signs. The rapture is a sign-less event. If it could only happen after A, B and C happened then A, B and C would be signs and rather than

looking for the rapture I'd be looking for A, B and C. But that destroys imminency. The whole point of imminency is that there are no signs at all pointing to when it's going to happen. And what's the lesson of imminency? God says I'm not going to tell you all the sequence of things because I want you to be prepared today. People always want to wait till they see signs to get prepared. God's way is get prepared today, that way when it happens you'll already be prepared.

And what's being said here in verse 7 is that **the day of the LORD** is imminent for Judah. And if you scan down to verse 10 you see very clearly this is a local day of the Lord for Judah, we have gates mentioned that are around Jerusalem, in verse 12 Jerusalem is mentioned explicitly, so this is all a local judgment, a local day of the Lord for Judah and in particular Jerusalem.

People say, well, then verse 14 is just continuing this discussion of this past **day of the LORD** for Judah because it also says it's "near...near and coming very quickly." So it all must be the same event. Wrong, the term "near" doesn't mean it's coming soon in time, it means it can come at any time. It's much easier looking back on this passage to see v 14 goes into a different **day of the Lord** and not the one that came upon Judah because of the context. You always go to context. And you notice one difference right off the bat in verse 14, this **day of the LORD** is called **great**, so I guess you could say of the one in vv 7-13 is not so great, by comparison. Two, we see in v 18 that this **day of the LORD** is the end of the present earth, the whole thing is going to be destroyed and everybody is going to be killed. And three, there's nothing about Jews, it's all about men, men, men. So the context indicates that **the day of the LORD** described in vv 7-13 is just a local preview of **the great day of the LORD** that is described in vv 14-18. It's given to teach a lesson.

Now with that said last time we didn't finish the local day of the Lord coming upon Judah in vv 7-13 so we want to pick up in verse 8 with the politicians. Everyone loves politicians right? Well, God loves them so much that when He judges He's going to start with them, that ought to clear the air. Verse 8, **"Then it will come about on the day of the LORD'S sacrifice"** again we don't know when, we just know that it will come. And when it does God says, **I will punish the princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.** Now you have the princes and these

men are in the royal house but they're not on the throne, they serve in high administrative positions. Then you have **the king's sons** and verse 1 told us the king was who? Josiah. So these are Josiah's sons. And they're all wearing this foreign clothing. What's all this about? Well, they were dressing like pagans, following the pagan styles of the day which translated means you supported pagan religion. It would be something like contributing money to a pagan organization or promoting it, buying their products and then going out and advertising it. And this was going on in the royal house; Josiah's boys did this, so it had permeated the top levels of Israeli administration. They were running around wearing pagan clothes. You wonder, like I do about a lot of the people in Washington, just whose team are you on anyway?

Now Josiah had four sons, they would all have been young kids at the time of this prophecy but when they grew up they would wear pagan clothes, supporting pagan religion. The first son of Josiah was Jehoahaz, he was taken captive to Egypt and he died there (2 Kgs 23:34). The second one was Jehoiakim and the Egyptian Pharaoh made him king in place of his father Josiah. He was a puppet king, he did whatever Pharaoh said; then King Nebuchadnezzar came up with the Babylonian armies and made him his puppet. Then he rebelled and Nebuchadnezzar said, I don't think so and he sent his army in and squashed him, that was 605BC, the first deportation of Judeans into Exile (2 Kgs 24:1-6). That's when Daniel went into Exile. Then you had Josiah's third son, Jehoiachin come to the throne. He was a puppet of Nebuchadnezzar but after 8 years he rebelled and Nebuchadnezzar shut him up and took him into Exile in 597BC, the second deportation of Judeans (2 Kgs 24:8-16). That's when Ezekiel went into Exile. Finally the fourth son Zedekiah came to the throne and he was a puppet but after 9 years he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and by this time he had had it with these rebels so he sent his armies to destroy Jerusalem completely. Zedekiah escaped but they chased him down, took him to the town of Riblah, passed sentence on him, took his sons and slaughtered them right in front of his eyes, then they plucked his eyeballs out, so the last thing Zedekiah ever saw was his sons being executed, then they took him in chains to Babylon in Exile, that was the third deportation of Judeans (2 Kgs 25:1-7). And I think Jeremiah went in that one. So the deportation took place in three phases and I just point out so we're all clear, all three deportations are part of this day of the Lord. So the day of the Lord is not just one day, in this case it was over 20

years (2 Kgs 24:20). And the Lord started His judgment with those in the high political administration who were hot for pagan religion anyway.

Now before we go to verse 9 there's one political person missing. Can anyone guess who is absent from verse 8? The king. Where's Josiah? Why isn't he going to be judged? Because he was already prepared, he was a godly man. We read six weeks ago that the Lord told him that because he humbled himself that he would be spared the judgment by an early death (2 Kgs 22:19, 20; 2 Chron 34:27, 28). See Josiah is an example of a person that gets raptured because he was removed before the judgment came. He was a prepared, godly king. So his absence from this list is striking but it's confirming the earlier prophecy. God said he'd be spared this judgment. And I might point out, sometimes it's not bad to die early, especially if this kind of destruction is going to happen to the country you love.

Now verse 9 we come to the religious people, this is the next group on God's hit list. **“And I will punish on that day all who leap on the *temple* threshold, Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit.**

Now that's probably one thought, it sounds strange, like a bunch of hoodlums having a party at the temple, but observe first of all that *temple* is not in the original text, it's in italics so that is added by the translators, it just says all who leap on the threshold and really it says leap *over* the threshold. If you've ever seen a society in chaos you've seen this, maybe a few months ago when in Britain you had chaos in the streets and people were doing a lot of what? Looting, they'd run down the streets and literally leap into stores, grab what they wanted and take off. That's the picture here, they're looting, literally leaping into peoples' homes and stealing what they want and taking it down to **the house of their lord**, which is the Hebrew word *Baal*, **lord** or **master** is *Baal*. Baal was a fertility god that had come into Israel through the Canaanites. So they were filling the house of Baal with things they stole and Zephaniah says this is **violence and deceit**, it was unjust gain used to propagate pagan religion. So God is going to judge the political crowd and the religious crowd, they were all supporting pagan religion. There's only one true religion, the religion of the Creator and the creature. Everything else is pagan.

Verse 10, **“On that day,”** and here we're shifting to the corporations and businessmen that got wealthy off of paganism. **“On that day,” declares the**

LORD, “There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, That was a gate on the northern side of the city, the fishermen came into the fish market through that gate and that’s where they sold the fish. There are going to be cries of horror at that gate, apparently that’s the gate Nebuchadnezzar’s army is going to enter through. Then **A wail from the Second Quarter,** Jerusalem was divided into quarters then as it is now, and at the time the Second Quarter was NW of the Temple, so as the army moves into the city they’ll take the Second Quarter. **And a loud crash from the hills.** That’s the never ending stream of Babylonian soldiers coming from every direction on the hills surrounding Jerusalem. The whole point is that the city of Jerusalem is going to destruction.

Verse 11, **“Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar, For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off.** Clearly the business tycoons, this is white collar crime. He mentions the **Mortar.** The Mortar was a place that if you’ve been to Israel it’s one of the major landmarks in Jerusalem called the Tyropoeon Valley or the “Valley of the Cheesemakers.” As you look at Jerusalem from the south you can see three depressions and the one running right down the center is the valley of the cheesemakers, it runs right next to the Temple mount on the West side, this is where the market was, this is where daily business took place. And he’s telling the businessmen in that valley to wail **For all the people of Canaan will be silenced.** Now he doesn’t mean Canaanites did business practices there, he means Jews carrying out Canaanite business practices, carrying out economic and business practices that were based on Canaanite religion, thus violating God’s standards of economics and business in the Mosaic Law. **All who weigh out silver will be cut off.** And the cutting off means killing them, but it has been suggested and I think it’s an interesting suggestion, that the word **mortar** earlier in the verse is suggesting the way they’ll be killed, they’ll be ground up into dust like something crushed by a mortar and pestle. But the point is that all the corporations, all the businessmen and all the pagan philosophy underneath their business practices would be utterly destroyed. The Jews loved it. God hated it.

Verse 12, and here we come to another group of people, the people who are completely without a clue, they don’t see any plan or purpose for history, they’re just plodding along in life. They are most people, people who sleep in on Sundays, materialist types, hedonist types, don’t care much about

anything at all; they tend their garden, drink their wine, build their houses, it's just vanity. Verse 12, **"It will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,** now picture this, this is YHWH and He's going around with a flashlight through the city looking for these people, searching them out. I mean, where are you going to hide from someone who's everywhere? It's like Adam hiding in the garden. But see, sin blinds us to who God is. Adam was so blinded by one sin that he had already re-engineered his view of God to the point that he thought he could hide from God. Now what do you think 25,000 sins will do. So these people are hiding. God says I'll search you out, I see you right there, you can't hide from me. And he says, **And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!'** So He's specifically looking for these people that didn't care about anything, they didn't go out and fight the Babylonians, they were self worriers, maybe God exists, maybe he doesn't people, people that just hide in a corner. And I find it interesting that it's these people the Lord says, you aren't going to escape because I myself am going to come looking for you and expose you. Verse 13, **"Moreover, their wealth will become plunder And their houses desolate; Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit them, And plant vineyards but not drink their wine.** All their hard work building houses and planting vineyards will come to nothing because the Babylonians are going to take everything. And they did. Now we don't have time to go into this first destruction of Jerusalem but this is one of the worst days in Jewish history. Every Jew knows about the 9th of Av when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians just as they know about the second 9th of Av destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Romans. Those two destructions of Jerusalem and the Temple occurred on the same Hebrew day on the Hebrew calendar but separated by 655 years. So the 9th of Av has become known to the Jews as "the saddest day in Jewish history." It was that day that the holiest city, Jerusalem, the only city where God chose to put His name and the Temple, the holiest site in Judaism were destroyed.

But it had become so corrupt and so sinful that God's holiness looked down and said, you guys are my next sacrifice. I don't see why I'm keeping you around, I've been patient, I've given you grace, I've sent you prophets, you killed the prophets. I sent you the word of God, you burned the word of God, there's nothing in you people worth saving so I'm going to smash you. And He did. The Babylonians came in and had a big feast on the 9th of Av.

Now in verse 14 we have what may look like a continuation of this destruction. But as I said earlier there are textual indicators that it's not, we find the first one in verse 14, **Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly.** There are your two Hebrew words for imminency, **near** and **quickly**. They're both pointing to preparedness, we should be prepared because a) we don't know when this judgment will come and b) when it comes it will come so quickly that there won't be time to prepare. So preparedness is the goal of these kinds of passages.

Now I would argue that what follows has never happened in world history. This is a day unlike any other. However, it's the prior day of the Lord described in verse 7-13 that previews it, that looks forward to it. See, there's a pattern to history and while history may go on and on sort of lulling you to sleep suddenly God breaks in and disrupts man's activity and alters world history forever. So just as God broke in and disrupted Judah's sinful activity so there is a time when God is going to break in and disrupt all men's sinful activity and totally alter world history forever. It will be so altered that it will be a new heaven and a new earth. And the day that destroys the present heaven and earth is described in vv 14-18.

Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly. The point is God is not going to tell us when it's coming, it's imminent! It was imminent in Zephaniah's day and it's still imminent today. To see this turn with me to the NT, 2 Pet 3 because I want to show you that Peter understood Zephaniah to be unfulfilled in his day and still out ahead of him. Verse 3, "Know this first of all," so this was of chief importance to Peter, "that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." Now this is a statement of being lulled to sleep by uniformitarian processes, the same things happen in nature, there are no major disruptions. Peter says in the last days mockers will come saying this, making fun of the second coming of Christ because the Second Coming of Christ would be quite a disruption. But these mockers get so accustomed to the same things day in day out, the same processes that they speculate from their grand experience that it has always been this way and will always be this way. Therefore, no Second Coming. Now in the early 1800's when Hutton and Lyell came along

with the new geology, the gradualist scheme of millions of years that rejected the catastrophic flood geology, that the theologians in that day said 2 Peter 3 was being fulfilled before their very eyes. They said, hey, look, Peter predicted this, now it's coming to pass. Verse 5, "For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water," that's creation week, he's saying God formed a heavens and earth out of water, this was universe 1 described in Gen 1. But then he says verse 6, "through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water." That's the global flood of Noah, it was a global judgment. So you have the first heavens and earth from the time of Creation in Gen 1 to the Flood in Gen 6, 7 and 8. Heavens and earth are Hebrew metonymy for universe. So universe 1 was made out of water and destroyed by water. Verse 2 we see universe 2, our universe, "But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." God said there would be no more global flood and He gave us the rainbow in the sky as a sign. But that doesn't mean that universe 2 is secure. Universe 2 is reserved for fire, our present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, the one from Gen 9 to this moment. Verse 8, "But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." What's the point there? The point is that hey, we don't know when the present universe is going to be destroyed, but don't count on it being a long time from now because that's not how God counts time. Verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." And the point there is what? How will the day of the Lord come? Like a thief. Well, how does a thief come? When you least expect him, under cover of darkness, you can't see any signs of him coming, if you did you'd capture him. So the whole point is that hey, we don't know when this present universe is going to be destroyed. It's imminent. Verse 11, the practical application, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" You know, be prepared today because today is the day of grace but judgment may fall.

Zephaniah didn't know when that day was coming. Peter didn't know when that day was coming and you and I don't know when that day is coming. It hasn't come yet but it is coming. It's imminent.

Now to see that the day of the Lord is imminent again turn to 1 Thess 5. This is Paul. We've seen Peter, now we see Paul. We won't turn to Mary. We could make it Peter, Paul and Mary but you'd know I was jerking your chain.

Alright, 1 Thess 5. "Now as to the times and the epochs," that's a change in kingdoms, and you better believe that when the future day of the Lord comes there is going to be a change in kingdoms. All Gentile kingdoms are going to have run their course and a Jewish kingdom headed by a Jewish King is going to replace them. Now as to this topic Paul says, "brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come" how? "just like a thief in the night." What did Peter say? It will come like a thief. So it's the same teaching, it's imminent. Verse 3, "While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" That's the world, they'll be crying out that they have achieved the ultimate, global peace and security, "then" Paul says, meaning 'at that very moment' sudden destruction will come upon them like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they will in no way escape!" It's a very serious text. The world is headed for destruction and it can come at any moment, it is imminent, just as the rapture is imminent. There is dual imminency in the Bible, from Zephaniah's day the future day of the Lord coming upon unbelievers has been imminent; from Paul's day the future Rapture of believers has been imminent, meaning that these two events are two sides of the same coin. As the church is raptured then the day of the Lord comes upon the world. We will escape but they will in no way escape. Josiah escaped, his sons did not escape. Be prepared.

Now let's go all the way back to Zephaniah. I wanted to show what was critically important, that the future **day of the LORD** is imminent. That's verse 14, **Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen**, you know, pay attention, a Qal imperative, a command, **Listen**, like verse 7 where he used the Qal imperative, Be silent. So now, **Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly**. Now usually you think of the women and children crying out bitterly, but this is the **warrior**. Now the **warrior** is highly trained, he's put through excessive situational training so he won't cry out under distress. He is put through extreme environment training; hot weather, cold weather, wet weather, no

food, no water, no sleep, so he's tough, he doesn't cry, he doesn't whine, but the day of the Lord environment is so terrible that he **cries out bitterly**. So it's obviously a period of extremely intense anguish. Matt 24 tells us there is no period like this in the history of the entire world.

Verse 15 and now we see a description very similar to Joel 2:2 and Amos 5:18-20. So he's picking up those prior prophets. **A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness** ¹⁶**A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers.** ¹⁷**I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind,** It's all out war between YHWH as the great warrior king and sinful men on earth who are at enmity with Him. And He is going to cleanse the earth of them. It's not going to be a contest. It's going to be a one-sided all out victory. Christ is a man of war and people don't like that picture of Christ, they want a man holding a lamb and Christ is that but that's only one side of Christ. Christ is a warrior wearing blood drenched garments in Isa 60 and Rev 19. And if you read the Book of Revelation you will find wrath, you will find destruction, you will find darkness, you will find clouds, you will find trumpets, you will find fortified cities like Babylon being destroyed, you will find men under great distress hiding in the rocks. All this is spelled out in detail in the Book of Revelation.

Verse 17b, and here's the reason why? If you want to know what's wrong with the world it's not socialism, it's not Marxism, it's not Darwinism and it's not the Federal Reserve, those are all symptoms of the core problem which is man. Man is sinful, yes these things are sinful, but they're merely outworkings of the sinful hearts of men, vain imaginations. Man trying to re-create the universe to be something other than it really is. Man is desperately trying to re-engineer the universe so as to be independent of God. So turn to Ps 2 because I want to show you that this is the ultimate aim of man.

Ps 2, this is what is in the heart of man, rebellion, a desire to be autonomous, a desire to be independent of God, to take over the creation and dictate the nature of creation, to dictate the terms of knowing. Everything must be defined by man or re-defined so that the creation is effectively a safe place to sin, this is the desire of the sinful heart of man. Look at verse 1, "Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing?" ²The kings of the

earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed,” So they literally are trying to take on the God of the universe and His Son, “saying, ³“Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!” That’s what the world wants, independence from God, let us rip ourselves away from God so that we are independent, we want to be God, we want to dictate. Verse 4, “He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.” You know, this is a joke to Him. “Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, ⁶“But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.” ⁷“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ That word begotten means heir, Christ is heir of all things; he’s the heir of all God’s creation, that’s why you can become a co-heir with Christ. Verse 8, “Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹“You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’ ” Now that’s what Christ is going to do to sinful men and it’s not a pretty picture. Those who want independence will get destruction, like pottery is broken He will shatter them. Verse 10, “Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. ¹¹Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. ¹²Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled.” Notice the uncertainty as to the timing, “may soon be kindled.” It’s the same thing we’ve seen over and over and over. “How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” See, it’s always the same lesson, get right with God or lose royally. He dictates the terms and you either adjust to Him and enjoy His blessing or you reject Him and perish. And friend you don’t want that. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

So all this, if we go back to Zeph 1:17 is because of sin. Man was designed to trust God, to walk by faith and to be a good steward of the nature resources God gave him. But man sinned in the garden in Adam, we all sinned in Adam and nature was corrupted by man’s sin. God cursed nature because of man’s sin. He made it rebel against us to teach us what it is to rebel against Him. Nature is full of lessons that teach the same thing over and over *ad nauseum*, you are a rebel against God. We have corrupted the earth. Some men have a desire to correct the earth from its corruption by sustainability, by making regulations against mining the earth for it’s resources because they think that earth is a living organism and that man is part of the earth, that all is

one great spirit and this great spirit from which all is derived should be worshipped. Now this is the great lie of the environmental movement that is proselytizing for the hearts and souls of men. James Cameron's movie Avatar portrays men having dominion over nature as evil and sinful and those who become one with nature as saviors and heroes. Friend, it's this great idolatry of Oneness that so corrupts the earth, it's the worship of the created rather than the Creator who is to forever be praised. God is angry about that. They are the ones who by their philosophy are sinning and corrupting the earth. And finally God will say that is enough, I have held back my extreme anger for so long, I have held back the breath of my nostrils but now I am going to cleanse the world by judgment. Verse 17c, **And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung.** Verse 18, **Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them,** wealthy people tend to use their money to buy themselves out of situations. God says no amount of money will buy you out of this situation. Why not? Because God doesn't need your money, He already owns everything. So bribes are a joke. **On the day of the LORD'S wrath;** alright, that's another expression for the day of the Lord judgment, this phase on our chart that is called darkness, it's a day of God's **wrath.** Then we see the results, **And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy,** God is jealous, He's jealous to take back what is rightfully His, the entire creation that He bought and paid for and to cleanse it and to rule it. **For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.** Perhaps the most terrifying statement in the entire Bible, the utter annihilation of all sinners on the earth, Christ will have a total victory, He is the great warrior King who will destroy His enemies in a single day, on the day of His Second Coming He will make an end, indeed a terrifying one. And the lesson to take away, preparedness. Are you prepared, the day of the Lord is near, the date is set, it's imminent. Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life? If not you better do it now because judgment is imminent. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

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