

Minor Prophets  
Zephaniah  
lesson 3

Text: **Zephaniah 2:1-15**

Intro: The day of the Lord and the Gentile nations. Tonight we are going to look at the judgment that God is going to pass on the gentile nations surrounding Israel. QUESTION: what nation in this book is still represented today by name? For instance Egyptians were often times against Israel, and Egypt still exist today, what nation here is still represented today with a similar name? Anyway, the judgment of the nations around Israel begins, but the Lord has already pronounced judgment on the nation of Israel. **I Peter 4:17** “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” God starts with His people, but then He turns His attention to the other nations that surrounded His people. So tonight we are going to look at the nations that surrounded Israel, explore where they are today, as well look at the judgment that God pronounced on them.

**I. The Day of the Lord for the Gentiles, 2:1-15**

A. Judgment Comes,

**i. Starting at the House of the Lord,**

a) As I mentioned in the intro, we must understand that God holds His people accountable for their actions.

- One of the things that separates us from the other nations is, we should know the difference.
  - What are some of the reasons we should know?
    - First, we have the word, The Nation had the word, even if they didn't practice it, they had it. Josiah was trying to restore righteousness to the nation, he found the scroll, and tried to establish the word. As Christians we have the written word that lays out the desire of God, and we will be held accountable for what we do with it.
    - Second, we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to guide us in the truth. The people of the time of Zephaniah, they still had the Holy Spirit, but they also had the Lord that was speaking to them through the prophets:
      - **II Peter 1:21** “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
        - what moved them? The Holy Ghost.
      - Third we have the Assembly of fellow believers, and the church. We have the friendship with other good Christians, as well as the local assembly, and they are two things, we have friends that are part of this church as well as Christians that are not members to help guide us.

b) The Nation of Israel had the same thing, the word, the Holy Spirit Guidance, and the Assembly,

- but they neglected the word,
- they would not hear the Holy Spirit,
- they forsook the Assembling.
  - And as a result God was going to pronounce Judgment.

**ii. After the House of the Lord, the Gentiles,**

a) looking at the things Israel had, Word, Direction from the Spirit, and the Assembly,

knowing that the Gentiles did not have them, would they still be held accountable?

- This is about that poor little person in the deepest darkest part of Africa that never heard the Gospel, of the Native Americans that didn't hear the Gospel.

b) There are two main points to make about how God will bring judgment on the world

- First, Will God Do that Which is Right,
  - **Genesis 18**, Abram in wrestling with God over the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the question concludes with "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right" (**Vs.25b**)
  - we know God will do that which is righteous.
- Second, God's primary characteristic are Merciful and Graceful
  - He extends mercy and grace to "whosoever will"
  - I am convinced there will never be anyone go to a eternal separation from God in Hell or the lake of fire that did not have the opportunity to receive Jesus Christ.
    - **Romans 1**, testifies there is enough evidence in the world to testify of God and to condemn men if they refuse to accept Jesus.
    - One of the problems we have as Christians understanding this, is we know the name of the Redeemer, but we would have to agree, the people of the Old testament never knew who "Jesus" was, but they were saved on the promise of Him.
    - We are saved by "Grace through Faith" **Ephesians 2:8**
    - **Hebrews 11:1** "...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
    - that being said.....

c) What did man receive when he ate of the forbidden fruit?

- Genesis 2:16&17 "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
- **Genesis 3:5** "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, **knowing good and evil.**"
- it is built in man to know good from evil,
  - however if we repress our conviction and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we may seer ourselves to the truth, and there is a word for this... Reprobate mind"

d) So God is going to pronounce judgment on the Gentile Nations, lets look at them,

B. Philistia, **Vs.4-7**

**i. Enemy of the Jewish people,**

- a) according to Amos they took Jews captive and sold them into slavery
- b) they were wealthy people because of the coastal region they controlled,
  - this allowed them to trade and prosper,
  - but because of the judgment they would be mostly wiped away,
  - the only portion of the land that remains today is a place called ...? \_\_\_\_\_
    - Palestine, from the Philistine.

**ii. Places of Philistia,**

- a) Gaza- Strong Fierce Greedy
- b) Ashkelon-Weight, suspend, like an anchor (hold back)

- c) Ashdod- Ravager, oppress, Spoiler,
  - d) Ekron- Eradication, Exterminate
  - e) Cherethites-Executioner, cut, destroy, consume
- C. Moab and Aamon, **Vs.8-11**
- i. Descendants of Lot,**
    - a) **Genesis 19** after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah Lot had children with his children.
    - b) Notice the connection to Sodom and Gomorrah, they would both be wiped off the face of the earth.
      - Both of these nations became the fierce enemy of Israel,
  - ii. Their Names- Mother and Tribal or Troops**
    - a) Moab is simply the feminine form of Father,
    - b) Ammon is the word for troop, or tribe.
  - iii. The Direct Charge against Moab and Aamon, Pride**
    - a) **Vs.10** pride is the enemy of God, what more can we say about pride,
- D. Ethiopians/ Cushite, **Vs.12**
- i. Descendants of Cush.**
    - a) One of the sons of Ham the son of Noah.
    - b) Ham was the child of Noah that was cursed, Genesis 9
    - c) the nation was located on the upper Nile region,
      - some think it went all the way up to Egypt, and included Egypt in this prophecy.
    - d) The name comes from foreign origins
- E. Assyrians, **Vs.13-15**
- i. To Go forward,**
    - a) that is to march straight, advance,
    - b) Assyria was also the descendants of Noah through his second son Shem
  - ii. Nineveh promised to be Destroyed,**
    - a) at this time Nineveh was still thought to be a city that could not be defeated.
      - It wasn't until 612 B.C. That the Chaldeans and Babylonians destroyed the city.
    - b) It speaks of Nineveh being a ruin, a place for beast
      - often what happens to a city, they walls are still partially intact, and it would be used as a place to put up the flocks,
      - remember, Israel is not like Kentucky, we can house cows and horses on the same fields day after day, we have plenty of grass. The middle east doesn't the shepherd would lead the flock from place to place finding food for them.
  - iii. Pride again,**
    - a) Notice the reason for the destruction, **vs.15** they carelessly said in their hearts I am, and there is none beside me.
      - How many people think today the world and all that is in it today revolves around them? Never giving thought to anyone else?

Questions:

Of the Cities Places mentioned tonight, how many are still Here, and by What name?

- Philistia- Palestine, in Israel
  - Gaza- the Gaza strip,
- Ethiopia, Egypt
- Assyria- Syria