

9 – ZEPHANIAH AND MODERN TIMES – AUG 1997

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth

First seven Minor Prophets wrote in the Assyrian era, and Habakkuk and Zephaniah wrote at the end of the Assyrian era, and at the very beginning of the Neo-Babylonian era. Nineveh destroyed 612 B.C., the city of Jerusalem went up in smoke then,

Jeremiah was prophesying at the same time.

9th/10th Ab in our August time

Nimrod, Cush some went to the East Hindu Cush, some South into Ethiopia Africa.

Zephaniah 2:12 This is talking about Ethiopians, but this should be seen as the Cushites, not in Africans or Ethiopians, it is actually talking about the Mesopotamian Area. At the very time when the Babylonian were beginning to become the supreme power in the Land under Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon.

Chronologically speaking this prophecy is regarding the whole system that is going to be the one that is controlling the world at the time of the end. Putting the Minor Prophets together with Daniel, and Revelation puts more information on the skeleton.

There is singular individual who will lead the World

Revelation end of 6th chapter and the beginning of the 7th, the Tribulation is the Day of the Lord which begins in the middle of the 7 year period which is divided into two halves of 3½ years.

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.

Josiah was a righteous king who died at 39 years of age, at the battle of Megiddo, the type of Armageddon.

2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord.

Which land? The land of Israel. When? At the Day of the Lord. As we get closer to the time when this will begin to happen, then we shall understand all these prophecies more and more. 3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked: and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord.

All that is pretty severe, and bad enough, but God is also going to force repentance on Judah and Jerusalem, but why?

Because paganism, both physical and spiritual fornication had spread with centres in Dan, at Bethel, in Jerusalem, and God was getting really cross with Judah, and Israel. The Bible chronicles the continuing history of Jacob's children, Israel and including the Jews, and their rebellion against God over millennia which is going to continue right up to the time of the end.

We have as much paganism in our time now as they did back then! Religious people, and even people who are not really religious at all have fallen into the practices of the heathen using the Godless idolatrous practices involved with Easter, Xmas, Halloween and so on as a basis for their "holiday" enjoyment. They think that it is all a bit of harmless fun, but that is not the way God looks at them and He hates all these things with a passion and eventually all will come to realize this.

The original law said, "Thou shall have no gods before me", but Jesus magnified that into "You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and spirit." And not give attention to mindless ancient practices which actually take people's minds away from God.

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 (dark clothed people, dressed in black) with the priests;

The priests who officiated at the worship of the feasts of Baal were called the Chimerim, and to this day the Jews use this term even now to refer to the Christian ministers, not being able to see that they are among the worst offenders! Qui accuse, s'accuse!!

Catholic Church priests, in the Orthodox Christian churches, and even the Protestant ministers traditionally wear black in church. God says His ministers should be clothed in white, and men do the exact opposite as usual.

5 And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, (“OMG” is on everyone’s lips every other sentence these days and they think nothing of blaspheming in this way at all. This despite most who have had any religious training at all knowing that “You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”) and that swear by Malcham; 6 And them that are turned back from the Lord; and those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for him.

Malcham is the name of an angel, the god of the Ammonites. Every newspaper contains “The Stars” with nonsensical rubbish claiming to forecast what will influence people under each of the signs of the Zodiac in their daily lives, and most read them, and even decide their actions based on the cleverly written seductive fiction.

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.

You want a sacrifice with God, and provide a nice meal with God? But do you not see all those Rabbis dressing in black? That is only a minor point you might say and think, but God thinks differently.

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.

The Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem certainly do wear strange apparel or clothing, they all wear black clothes and even black hats! God is interested in outward appearance. The practice of having tattoos has spread to all and sundry. Once only drunken sailors had their bodies decorated with a needle and ink, now it seems there are more people with one or more tattoos, especially now girls it seems, than there are with none. Again, some might say, this is a small thing, surely? No, if you dress to look like a pagan heathen, you will probably be behaving like a pagan, and God does not like that.

Side B

Wherever we look, we see religious priests and ministers dressed in black, especially the Jews in Jerusalem. The Bible does not show our opinion, but it does show how God looks on these things, so we can either respect that or not.

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.

I Samuel 5:5 This explains that those who worshipped Dagon, would jump over the threshold or the crack in the floor in the doorway. So today, there are many superstitious things people do like “knock on wood” or “touch wood and whistle”, cautions about black cats and so on. Steeples are there to identify where the church is, and God does not like towers, so when men built one, He tore it down, and you can trace almost all of them back to pagan worship of some form or another.

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 (in Jerusalem), and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. 11 Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.

12 And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles (no candles then, these were lamps), 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.”

People say that these details are not of any importance, but God says on the contrary.

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.

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.

This did have a relevance as this was written, but it is really emphasised that it mainly for the “Day of the Lord”.

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, 16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the

fenced cities, and against the high towers. 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. 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.

This is right in the middle of the seven year period of the “Day of the Lord” beginning in Chapter 7 of Revelation.

Zephaniah 2:1 Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

Who is the nation not desired? The lowly, the worshippers of the True God are exhorted to seek the Lord.

2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. 3 Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

God's faithful will hide His own people, and protect them. But what about the heather and the nations around and about? Look at verse 4.

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. 5 Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! (Crete) the word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. 6 And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

But after the “Day of the Lord” the Jews will come back.

7 And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.

Then on the other side of the Jordan.

8 I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border. 9 Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. 10 This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts.

This may have happened to an extent in the past, but the intensity of this will be like nothing that has happened before.

11 The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.

Here now are the Ethiopians mentioned but this should be crossed out and Cushites substituted, because here it means the area of Mesopotamia, between the rivers. This is Babylon, the head of Gold mentioned in Daniel 2, which will still be in existence at the coming of Christ, the Stone that will smash the whole image of Daniel into dust and blow it away.

12 Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword. 13 And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. 14 And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall uncover the cedar work. 15 This is the rejoicing city (Babylon) that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! Every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.

What will happen to the remnant of Israel, Zion, and His, God's own city, which had not received correction, or listened to God.

Zephaniah 3:1 Woe to her (Jerusalem) that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! 2 She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God. 3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

4 Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

5 The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. 6 I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.

7 I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.

They STILL were not listening!

8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.

God is going to “clean up” Israel, and give them a pure language like God uses.

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. 11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.

The Jews and Israel will finally get the point, but my hat, six thousand years of ignoring God resulted in untold misery for them, but they never truly repented or turned to God.

12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. 13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. 14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Free at last! No longer under God's judgements.

15 The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. 16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

17 The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. 18 I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. 19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

Anti-semitism, and ill feeling against the Jews and Israel will vanish from the earth.

20 At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.

Amazing promises for the time just up ahead, as Jesus Christ prepares the world for His second advent. Thy Kingdome Come~!