

# THE DAY OF HIS PREPARATION

**BIBLE TEXT** : Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2:1-3; Malachi 4:1-6;

LESSON 457 **Junior Course**

**MEMORY VERSE:** "The great day of the LORD is near, It is near, and hasteth greatly" (Zephaniah 1:14).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Zephaniah 1:14-18**

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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,

<sup>16</sup> A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

### **Zephaniah 2:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

### **Malachi 4:1-6**

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **The Present and the Future**

The present time, while Jesus tarries, is man's opportunity to be saved. It is sometimes referred to as "the accepted time" and "the day of salvation." But the end time, when Jesus comes and takes His Bride away, and trouble and suffering is poured out upon the world, is known as "the day of the LORD," and "the great day of the LORD." It is also known as "the day of judgment," "the day of the LORD'S vengeance," "the day of the LORD'S anger," and "the day of the LORD'S sacrifice." This does not refer to a 24-hour day, but a length of time.

#### **A Time of Trouble**

We studied in Lesson 413, Book 32, about the Antichrist, the wicked ruler who shall come into power after the Bride of Christ has been caught up in the Rapture. Zephaniah the Prophet, speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, many years before Jesus was born, told of 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." He says that men "shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD." As blind men grope in the dark, stumbling, falling, unable to escape from trouble, or as caught in a trap, will be those who have sinned against the Lord.

Those who will not now heed the warnings; those who will not now repent of their sins and call upon God for mercy, will suddenly be overtaken in the day of the Lord's anger, a period of terrible trouble.

#### **Mercy and Judgment**

Some people will say, "Oh, but God is love! He is too kind and merciful to send anyone to hell." Yes, God is a God of love **today**, but tomorrow He may pour out His wrath upon those who have refused His love. He is a God of judgment as well as of love. He says, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3).

We must heed the Word of God as it is written; we cannot put up our thoughts or our beliefs above those of the Almighty. The Word of God is filled with statements concerning the indignation of the Lord. That means righteous wrath, or anger, because of unjust treatment or mean action.

Some parents will say to their children, "If you do not do this I will punish you." Then they forget about their words and do not follow through with their orders. But God follows through with His orders. Unless people will repent and turn from their sin He will send punishment upon them.

Certainly the Jews have suffered for their sin and disobedience, and millions have been treated most cruelly and killed. More than a million Jews were killed in the siege of Jerusalem shortly after the death of Christ. Under Hitler's rule, a plot to **wipe out the Jews** resulted in the death of more than six million.

#### **A Thousand Years of Peace**

We shall study in a future lesson about the Millennial Reign of Christ and the saints of God on the earth. During those one thousand years Satan will be in the bottomless pit and peace shall be upon the earth. The saints of God shall rule and reign with

<sup>1</sup> For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

<sup>2</sup> But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

<sup>3</sup> And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

<sup>4</sup> Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

<sup>6</sup> And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Christ. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet" (Malachi 4:2, 3).

Did you ever observe the strong, healthy, carefree, well-fed calves who eat at the stall or stable? Then they run, frisk and leap in the sunny, green pastures with no chains or ropes to hold them back. The Lord says that those who fear His name shall "grow up as calves of the stall." That is only one of the many promises given those who shall have a part in the Millennial Reign with Christ.

### **Elijah's Power**

In Malachi 4:5, we read that Elijah the Prophet shall come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Jesus said of John the Baptist, "This is Elias, which was for to come" (Matthew 11:14). Perhaps this is a double prophecy, and during the Tribulation period Elijah the prophet may be one of the two witnesses who shall prophesy (**Revelation 11:3** <sup>3</sup> And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.)

However, today we should give heed to the ministers of the Gospel who preach (or prophesy) under the Spirit, power and anointing of the Holy Ghost.

The mantle, which Elijah the Prophet wore was symbolic of the Spirit of God. With it he smote the waters of the River Jordan and they parted and he walked over on dry ground. When Elijah went to Heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, his mantle fell from him. Elisha was right there watching and took up the mantle and went back to the banks of the River Jordan. Just as his master had done, he, too, smote the waters; they parted, and he walked over.

Although today ministers of the Gospel who have been baptised with the Holy Ghost do not necessarily wear mantles or certain types of coats, yet they have upon their lives the power of the Holy Ghost, which is to be used for the honour and glory of God. All of us should take **heed** to the preaching of the Word of God.

### **Worthless Money**

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath" (Zephaniah 1:18). Although wealthy men may heap up their millions, still it will not benefit them in those days. James says that their gold and silver is cankered, or decayed. "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days" (James 5:3), he says, and they have lived in pleasure; but in the day of the Lord's anger, the rich men shall weep and howl for their misery.

Money cannot buy a minute of time when the Lord says that time has run out. Only Jesus can ransom or redeem the soul of men. That was the purpose of His coming to this world. We read in Matthew 20:28, "The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many." Oh, that every one would avail himself of this opportunity! "The redemption of their soul is precious" (Psalm 49:8).

### **Seeking the Lord**

The "key" to the lesson is found in the first part of Zephaniah 2. The Prophet says that men should gather before the day of the fierce anger of the Lord come, and seek the Lord. "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger." That is our hope, our refuge, our lifeline.

We know that the Lord spared righteous Noah from the Flood;

He spared Rahab when Jericho was destroyed; He protected the Land of Goshen from the death angel; and we believe that He will once more protect His own from the final destruction in the end of the world. The Lord says, "They shall be mine, . . . I will spare them" (Malachi 3:17). In that day, we shall be caught up "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:17).

But remember that now, before the great day of the Lord comes, "is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by "the day of the LORD"?
2. What other terms are used to describe that time?
3. Tell a little of what happened to the Jews for disobedience.
4. What examples do we find in the Bible of God's sparing the righteous from destruction?
5. Tell a little of the conditions upon the earth during the Millennial Reign.
6. What will take place upon the earth after the saints have been raptured?
7. When is "the day of salvation"?
8. When will it be past?
9. Commit to memory Zephaniah 2:3.