

THE DAY OF HIS PREPARATION

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2:1-3; Isaiah 26:20, 21; Malachi 4:1-6; Matthew 24:3-14, 29-31; Luke 21:31

LESSON 457 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Zephaniah 1:14-18

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.

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.

Zephaniah 2:1-3

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

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

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

I The Lord's Wrath

1. The Great Tribulation is near, Zephaniah 1:14.
2. That day will be one of trouble and great distress, Zephaniah 1:15-17; Malachi 4:1.
3. It will then be too late for deliverance, Zephaniah 1:18.
4. We are warned to prepare now to escape that terrible day, Zephaniah 2:1-3; Matthew 24:21, 22; Luke 21:34.

II A Great Day for Those Who Are Prepared

1. Those who fear the Lord and prepare need not fear that day, Malachi 4:2; Isaiah 26:20, 21.
2. John the Baptist (Elias), the forerunner of Christ, came preaching repentance, which is the important message of today, Malachi 4:4-6;

Matthew 17:10-13

¹⁰ And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

¹¹ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

¹² But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

¹³ Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Ezekiel 33:15

¹⁵ *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

3. Christ shall come in His revelation at the end of the Tribulation Malachi 4: 3; Matthew 24: 29, 30.

III Prophecies Concerning the Day of the Preparation

1. Chariots of today and scarcity of forests were prophesied,

Nahum 2:3

³ The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men *are* in scarlet: the chariots *shall be* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken.

Nahum 2:4

⁴ The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.

2. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost was prophesied both for the early church and for the latter days,

Joel 2:22-29

²² Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

²³ Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

²⁴ And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt

anger.

Isaiah 26:20-21

²⁰ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

²¹ For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Malachi 4:1-6

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

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

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

⁶ 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.

Matthew 24:3-14

³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy

wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁷ And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

3. False prophets, wars, love of many waxing cold were foretold as events of the days just prior to Christ's return, Matthew 24:3-14,

Joel 2:22-29

²² Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

²³ Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

²⁴ And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁷ And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

4. These things tell us that our redemption is near, Luke 21:31.

NOTES:

We are living near the close of the day that we refer to as the Day of Preparation. God has sent His Holy Spirit into the world to seek out a Bride for His Son, and the Bridegroom is about to appear. This day began with the opening of the Holy Ghost dispensation on the Day of Pentecost. This "former rain" that was prophesied by Joel came, true to the promise of the Lord, upon those disciples who were in one place and of one accord waiting in the upper room. During the first part of this century we have seen the fulfilment of the latter part of this prophecy in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost again as on the Day of Pentecost. That was the "latter rain" that Joel said would come. It is likened unto the rains that were sent in Palestine so long ago to ripen the grain for harvest. The spiritual Latter Rain is being poured out today, and the Bride is being readied for the soon coming of the Lord back to earth again.

Prophecy Fulfilled

We have seen the literal fulfilment of Nahum's prophecy that "the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." We here in the north-western part of the United States have seen all too vividly that our fir trees have been

coming, and of the end of the world?

⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Matthew 24:29-31

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see

terribly shaken. The forests are becoming fewer every year because of large logging operations. Now loggers are beginning to lift logs out of deep gorges and off high mountains by helicopter. The huge machines that they use to build roads and to drag out logs now literally push their way through the forests until all parts of the mountains know that the fir trees are being "terribly shaken."

Our highways and freeways are a striking picture of what Nahum predicted would come to pass. The speed of highway travel, the terrible accidents with the great loss of life all too completely tell us that the chariots are jostling "one against another in the broad ways." Who would have dreamed a few years ago of the highway system we have today! This indicates the speed of the days in which we live. More is happening now in a week than happened in a year a few generations ago. People are running to and fro and knowledge is being increased. Many people now travel from coast to coast by automobile and return in two weeks' time and call it a vacation trip. One hundred years ago it took several months to make the trip by wagon, and then at the cost of hardship and privation as well as dangers along the way.

Knowledge is increasing at such a rate that few of us can comprehend what we read in the daily newspapers regarding scientific development. It has not been long since the knowledge of the geography of our own country was incomplete, and now man speeds on his way to find out the secrets of the universe. Knowledge increases but man seems never to be able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Considering the population of the world as a whole, spiritual knowledge does not keep pace with the material advances. But those who are preparing to meet the Lord when He comes use the things they see around them as a stimulus to being watchful and prayerful that they might be found prepared when He comes back for His own.

The events we have seen transpire in Palestine during the past few years are another indication that this is the final phase of the Day of Preparation. The Jews who were hunted, persecuted and slain by the millions during World War II now have a nation that we know as Israel. This land God had promised to them; and even though their disobedience brought about their banishment from the land for a time, God's promise that they would finally inherit this land still holds true today. At this writing the fulfilment of some of these promises are yet to be realized, but we all agree that the fig tree has begun to put forth its leaves and we know that summer is nigh. The promises to Israel as well as every other promise that we read in God's Word will prove true. Many of the prophecies concerning the Jews will be fulfilled in the Millennium period; but we believe that all prophecies to be fulfilled preceding Christ's coming, have been fulfilled and the Rapture is at hand.

Abounding Sin

In these last days iniquity abounds everywhere. Almost all authorities agree that the incidence of crime of every kind, as well as juvenile delinquency, is on the increase. Much of it is blamed on the breakdown of moral standards in the home. Many of the things that were thought of as vulgar or indecent a few years ago are accepted now or considered funny. The movies, and of late years television, are bringing things before the people that can do nothing but tear down their resistance to that which is sensual and devilish. The true Christian, who stands against such inroads that the devil is making these days is counted by many as old-fashioned or hopelessly out of date. People may say that these things are here to stay and that we might as well accept that fact and live with it. If we agree with that argument, we

the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Luke 21:31

³¹ So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

might as well say that since the time of Adam sin has been here to stay and we might as well not cry out against it nor try to stop people from following in the ways of sin. That is what much of Christendom is doing; but it is the duty of the true child of God to take a definite stand against sin -- both in living and in preaching.

Waning Love

We read in Matthew 24:12, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." We see in this, too, evidence of the last days before our eyes. Very few Christians would contradict the statement that many people and church denominations that once had the love of God burning in their heart are now cold, disheartened, or outright compromisers when the issues of godliness and true holiness confront them. That has happened and is another proof that the days in which we live are the wind up of the Gentile dispensation. Church membership is made easy, and some people suppose they are Christians just because they have been accepted into the church. This makes church membership without having been born again an actual hindrance to spiritual enlightenment.

In the very days when men should be doing everything possible to make preparation for the Lord's coming, we find that Satan has turned many people's hearts away from a real hunger for God. The religious association is only a society or a means to better acceptance among other so-called Christians. This we see as proof of the fact that because iniquity is abounding the love of many is waxing cold. We will never learn our spiritual lessons by any other than spiritual pursuits. It takes prayer, self-denial and an aligning of our lives to the plain teachings of the Word of God.

False Prophets

Another sign that we are nearing the coming of the Lord is that false prophets are abroad in the land. Some religious leaders are neglecting to brand these enemies of the cross of Christ by their right name. Some ministers seem to think they are branded as un-Christian when they denounce anyone or anything. True ministers of the Gospel are careful to preach a positive Gospel, which shows up sin under any cloak. Some so-called ministers of the Gospel even deny the plain words of the Bible and the Blood that was shed to save them. Some even deny that Jesus is the Son of God and still claim to be Christian. We read in II John 10, 11: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Sometimes it is sinful to be silent. Sometimes it is sinful to fail in obligations to let people know that we stand for all the doctrines of Christ.

The doctrines of Christ are God's doctrines and there is no reason to try to straddle the fence by saying that the Apostle John had reference only to the people who deny "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." To deny that, of course, would shut one off from his only means of salvation, but to deny any other teaching of the Bible is also to deny Christ. False prophets are used of Satan in his plan to occupy people with anything, even religion, to keep them from being among them who are "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).

Delusions

One might wonder how it is possible for people to believe some of the things that are prevalent in these last days. We read the answer to that in II Thessalonians 2:11, 12. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The decision was their own, they had refused to walk in the true way and had shut

their heart's door to the Saviour. Some easier way seemed to them to be more desirable. But do these "easy" ways lead to Heaven? Jesus is the Door and to deny Him or His doctrine is to close the only gateway to Heaven.

World Perplexed

The problems that face the national leaders of today are staggering. True to prophecy, men's hearts are failing them for fear of the awful things that are coming upon the earth. When one tries to read the signs of the times without taking into account Biblical prophecy of what will come, there seems to be no conclusion to draw but one of despair. If the outlook is dark on the horizon we may do as the early Christians did: look up. They had the bright hope within their breast that was not lost, as they had at first supposed when Christ died, but they looked for the return of their Lord. That very hope was a purifying factor in their lives, for they were preparing themselves and preaching to others that they were not to be overly anxious about the things that might come on this earth, nor did they even preach for people to get ready to die -- their message was that people should prepare for the return of the Lord. That is the message of the Church Militant today. We do not despair; we are not discouraged. Our love is not growing cold; but the fervent desire to see the Lord in the clouds as He comes to rapture His people out of this world keeps our hearts alive with keen expectancy. The world thinks something drastic is about to happen, and it is. The Lord is about to come! Have you made the preparation?

QUESTIONS

1. How does the automobile today fulfil prophecy?
2. What prophecy would seem to speak of our freeways of today? of auto accidents?
3. What does "former rain" and "latter rain" mean in Palestine in the natural? In regard to spiritual things?
4. Why do so many people fall for the delusions of the last days?
5. What is to be our attitude toward those who come trying to give us a false teaching?
6. In what way have we seen the fig tree begin to bud?
7. Why is it that so many have grown cold in these last days?
8. What is one of the greatest factors to cause us to purify ourselves?
9. Why is it that some people's hearts are failing them for fear?