

Transforming Daily
“... for the day of the Lord is at hand ...”
Zephaniah 1:7

Zephaniah speaks very clearly to the children of God concerning their need for repentance and the certain consequences if they don't. The Southern kingdom already watched the Northern kingdom suffer the wrath of God allowing them to be led into captivity some 100 years before Zephaniah's writing (depending on what date one gives to the book). The point of Zephaniah's message is for Judah to accept God's Word and turn from their present activities regarding their involvement with other nations. Zephaniah's warning is not a new measure toward the disobedience of God's children. Other prophets have prophesied to them as well as to Israel with respect to the immediate discipline from the hand of God, and a future day of wrath.

As it with all prophecy, there is an immediate fulfillment of the prophet's message and a future fulfillment yet to be completed from the time of the writings. Zephaniah is no different. For Israel and Judah they suffered the immediate discipline of God in the form of captivity and temple/city destruction at the hand of other nations that at one time were to be destroyed by Israel. Israel was led into captivity and subsequently exiled in 722 B.C. Judah suffered the same outcome in 586 B.C. However, even though the Old Testament children of Israel have experienced the immediate results of their disobedience regarding Zephaniah's prophecy, there is yet to be fulfilled the 70th week of Jacob's trouble (most of you will recognize it as the period of tribulation). Zephaniah's prophecy, as well as the prophecies of all the other prophets that preached a message of repentance to Israel and Judah, is still a significant active prophecy in light of Israel's statehood reestablished in 1948 (many history revisionist are refuting the existence of Israel as ever having been a nation in the first place). The completion or total fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecy (given approx. 625 B.C., not A. D., B.C.) is still yet to come. It is generally referred to as the last days or end time prophecy.

Depending on one's eschatological point of view, it is debated as to whether or not the church will go through a literal period of tribulation. Some suggest that the tribulation period is not literal. Others say that the period is literal but the church will not experience the wrath of God because it will be "raptured" either before or in the midst of (before the great tribulation, and the outpouring of the wrath of God) the tribulation. And yet there are still others that believe the church will experience the effects of the wrath of God and be "raptured" at second coming of Christ. Irrespective of all these points of view (and there are more views than just these) God's will shall come to pass. His Word will not return void.

What does it mean for the believer? Should the believer pray that the "last days" come sooner than later? Should the believer look for ways to thwart the end times? In light of what part of Zephaniah's prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, how should the believer live?

The believer should become more fervent in prayer especially for the lost. The believer should become more zealous to win lost souls. The believer should become more diligent to study God's Word, more devoted to their discipleship and for the discipleship of others, and more dedicated to the service and ministry toward believers and nonbelievers alike, as well as, to the praise and worship of God for the day of the Lord is at hand.