

01 March 2026

The Day of the Lord¹
How can We Respond To The Lord's Judgement?
Lesson Text: Zephaniah 1:1-6,14-16, 2:1-3
Black History Article Below Daily Bible Reading

Aim for Change

We will **IDENTIFY** what the day of the Lord is, **RECOGNIZE** the relationship between righteous living and one's responsibility to God, and **REPENT** and reaffirm our faithfulness to God."



Keep In Mind

“Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, who have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.”
(Zephaniah 2:3 21CKJV)

¹ Banks, Melvin, Precepts for Living: Principles for Living in an Unhinged World (2025-2026) UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.).

In Focus

Jordan sat on the porch with his friend Trey. He couldn't stop talking about the new album he had just streamed. It was made by his favorite rapper, and he had already memorized many of the lyrics.

Trey listened for a while. "Seems like he's confused. I can't figure out whether he's a Christian or not."

"Yeah, he believes in all spirituality. He likes to quote from different stuff because he does his own research. He talks about how we will all be one with the universe when our "conscience is elevated at the end of the world. It makes sense." Jordan proceeded to recite some of the lyrics that promoted the mixture of religious views of the end of the world.

Trey thought for a second. "But what does that mean? What does he do when those teachings conflict?"

"I don't know."

"I don't think you should base your beliefs on what rappers say. We don't know what they're like in their private lives, and all either one of us knows about some of those religions is from this guy. I would read my Bible instead of trusting a song about something that important."

The Lord will judge the world. Seek the Lord wholeheartedly and walk in His ways. How are you currently seeking the Lord?

Lesson Text
Zephaniah 1:1-6,14-16, 2:1-3

1The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

2 “**I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the land,**” saith the Lord.

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.

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 Chemarim with the priests,**

5 and them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops, and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Milcom,

6 and them that are turned back from the Lord, and those that have not sought the Lord nor inquired for Him.

14 The great day of the Lord is near; it is near and hastened 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 waste 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 fortified cities and against the high towers.

Chapter 2,

1Gather 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, who have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.

The People, Places, and Times

Zephaniah: Zephaniah was born during the long reign of Manasseh, an evil king who reigned for fifty-five years. His ministry, however, took place mainly during the reign of Josiah, the grandson of Manasseh. Josiah was a godly king who instituted sweeping reforms and commanded that idols be destroyed.

Zephaniah prophesied after Israel had been taken captive by Assyria. His was one of the last prophecies given to Judah before being carried into exile in Babylon. Before him, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had all prophesied about the coming Day of the Lord.

Host of Heaven: The term “host of heaven” refers to the celestial bodies. Ancient people believed that the stars and heavenly bodies in the sky formed an army. This army guided the fate of nations and controlled the destiny of individuals. This is why the sun, moon, and stars were some of the first objects of idolatry and continued to tempt the Israelites. God condemns this type of worship (Deuteronomy 17:2–5).”

Background

“At the beginning of the book of the same name, Zephaniah prophesied God’s coming judgment because of the idolatry that had filled Judah and Jerusalem. Zephaniah dealt with this particular aspect of the unfaithfulness of God’s people in major detail. Many of the practices condemned by the prophet anticipate the reforms of King Josiah in 622 B.C.

Zephaniah started giving a sweeping vision of what would happen on the Day of the Lord when everything would be consumed. This picturesque description of God’s wrath will serve as a bookend to chapter two, which is more encouraging and offers hope. In the midst of judgment, God’s people were encouraged to repent and seek Him.”

In Depth

1. **Judgment is Coming (Zephaniah 1:1–6):** Judgment is coming for the people of God. Even the City of God, where the Temple stands, will feel His wrath. This first section of Zephaniah’s prophecy indicates that humanity is responsible for the earth’s condition. In verses 1–3, the Lord promises to send judgment to the whole world. His judgment will include everything, even animal life, and the land.

This judgment will also fall on those with divided loyalties. On Zephaniah’s day, the people of Judah swore allegiance to God and Molech. Not only is the Lord displeased by

their half-worship, but He will impose the same punishment on Judah as on idolaters. The very names of the Chemarims, the priests of Baal, will be erased from memory. Those who worship the heavenly bodies would also be destroyed. Those who worship the Lord and Molech will be judged for their unfaithfulness.

Verse 6 speaks of those who used to worship the Lord but no longer do. Zephaniah proclaims that these, too, will be destroyed. Judgment will come on all classes of people, and all who worship the sun, moon, stars, and other gods will be consumed.”

2. The Day of the Lord Is Near (Zephaniah 1:14–16): The Day of the Lord is described as terrible when the Lord’s wrath will be poured out. Even mighty men will cry like children.

Zephaniah describes the Day of the Lord as gloom, darkness, distress, trumpets, and battle cries. This indicates military invasion and alludes to Babylon’s invasion of Judah in 597 B.C. The attack will be directed at Judah’s defenses, which will fail that day.”

Zephaniah prophesies the Day of the Lord, the ultimate judgment of the earth. He also refers to the immediate judgment of Judah, called the “voice of the day of the Lord,” which will come before the Day itself. It will be a terrible day when even the strongest will be distressed and enraged. Judah will experience the Lord’s judgment, and the full impact will be released on all creation at the last judgment.

It will be a day of trouble and distress for all sinners and ruin and desolation for all creation. The animals and the land will be wiped away. In verse 17, Zephaniah describes how the people will grope like the blind. Their blood will be poured out, and their bodies will rot on the ground. Rich and poor alike will suffer the same fate (v. 18).”

3. Repent and Seek the Lord (Zephaniah 2:1–3): Zephaniah urges the people of Judah to gather together and repent while there is still time (v. 1). The fierce fury of the Lord is set to descend on them, but they can repent and turn from their wickedness. Judah needs to humble themselves and seek the Lord earnestly and collectively. Refusing to seek the Lord is one of the causes of judgment (1:6). Now, Judah must seek the Lord once again, pursuing righteousness and doing what is right by following the Lord’s commands. Judah must live humbly, submitting to the Lord in everything. To be saved, Judah must show humility or meekness. Humbly seeking the Lord would cause Him to spare them.

Liberating Lesson

“Sin is destructive. Not only does it affect the individual and their relationship with God, but it also affects others, sometimes on a large scale. On the prophesied Day of the Lord, all creation will suffer judgment. Like the Lord’s prophets and disciples, we are called to preach the Gospel of God’s grace. We should call people to repent, turn from their wicked ways, and seek the Lord. We should boldly proclaim God’s message: His punishment of sin and abundance of grace.

As in the past, the Lord has promised judgment for sin. He will not let sin go unpunished. The Good News is that Jesus took the punishment for every believer. We are to warn people of the consequences of sin and proclaim salvation in Christ.

Application for Activation

Spiritual complacency is widespread in our society. Many say they are Christians, but their lifestyle and worldview do not reflect Christian beliefs. Many also take elements of various religions and mix them with Christianity. God’s Word states that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Believers must be careful not to add other false religions, teachings, or practices (e.g., Islam, Buddhism, New Age, numerology, etc.) to the Gospel.

As believers, we must take seriously the teachings of the Lord and endeavor to please Him in all we do. We must turn away from sin and follow God wholeheartedly. Spend some time reading the Bible and praying. Seek the Lord with all your heart. Seek His guidance and meditate on His goodness.”

Take Aways

Closing Prayer

Christian Season: LENT
Season Color: PURPLE



Daily Bible Reading

Monday: Lamentations 4-5, Psalm 75:6-10

Tuesday: Ezekiel 1-4, Psalm 76:1-6

Wednesday: Ezekiel 5-8, Psalm 76:7-12

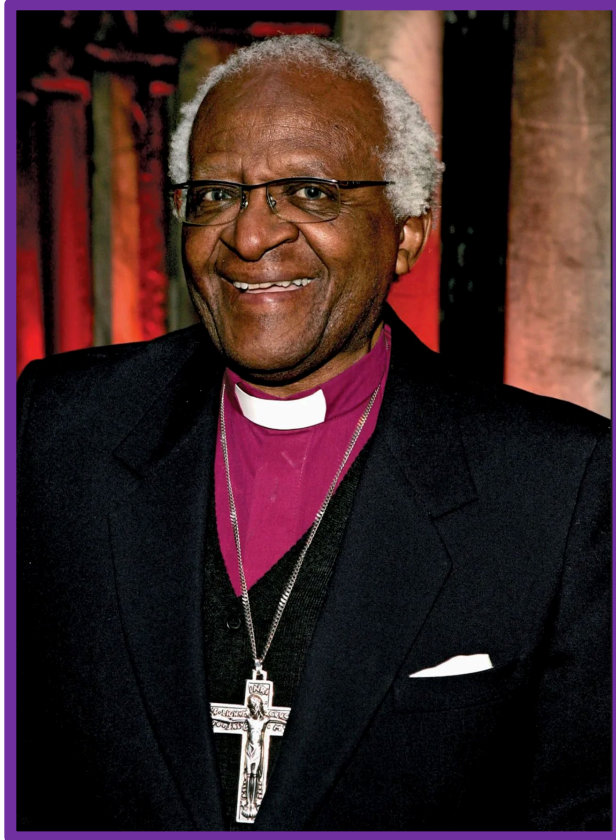
Thursday: Ezekiel 9-12, Psalm 77:1-6

Friday: Ezekiel 13-15, Psalm 77:7-12

Saturday: Ezekiel 16-17, Psalm 77:13-20

Sunday: Ezekiel 18-20, Psalm 78:1-8

FOR OUR ENLIGHTENMENT NOT PART OF THE LESSON



Desmond Tutu

Born October 7, 1931, [Klerksdorp](#), South Africa—died December 26, 2021, Cape Town) was a South African [Anglican](#) cleric who in 1984 received the [Nobel Prize](#) for Peace for his role in the opposition to [apartheid](#) in [South Africa](#).

Tutu was born of [Xhosa](#) and [Tswana](#) parents and was educated in South African mission schools at which his father taught. Though he wanted a medical career, Tutu was unable to afford training and instead became a schoolteacher in 1955. He resigned his post in 1957. He then [attended](#) St. Peter's Theological College in [Johannesburg](#) and was ordained an Anglican priest in 1961. In 1962 he moved to London, where in 1966 he obtained an M.A. from King's College London. From 1972 to 1975 he served as an associate director for the [World Council of Churches](#). He was appointed dean of [St. Mary's](#) Cathedral in Johannesburg in 1975, the first Black South

African to hold that position. From 1976 to 1978 Tutu served as bishop of [Lesotho](#).

In 1978 Tutu accepted an appointment as the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches and became a leading spokesperson for the rights of Black South Africans. During the 1980s he played an unrivaled role in drawing national and international attention to the [iniquities](#) of [apartheid](#). He emphasized nonviolent means of protest and encouraged the application of economic pressure by countries dealing with South Africa. The award of the 1984 Nobel Prize for Peace to Tutu sent a significant message to South African Pres. [P.W. Botha](#)'s administration. In 1985, at the height of the township rebellions in South Africa, Tutu was installed as Johannesburg's first Black Anglican bishop, and in 1986 he was elected the first Black [archbishop](#) of [Cape Town](#), thus becoming the primate of South Africa's 1.6 million-member Anglican church. In 1988 Tutu took a position as chancellor of the University of the [Western Cape](#) in [Bellville](#), South Africa.

During South Africa's moves toward [democracy](#) in the early 1990s, Tutu [propagated](#) the idea of South Africa as "the Rainbow Nation," and he continued to comment on events with varying combinations of trenchancy and humor. In 1995 South African Pres. [Nelson Mandela](#) appointed Tutu head of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), which investigated allegations of [human rights](#) abuses during the apartheid era. On October 7, 2010—his 79th birthday—he began his retirement.