


Note

Zephaniah – Part 1 of 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	Job Elihu	Job
About 2000 BC Era of Patriarchs	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC Era of prophets	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC Era of princes	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC Era of priests	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther
	Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah	Isaiah
	Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah	Jeremiah
	Jeremiah	Lamentation
	Ezekiel	Ezekiel
	Daniel Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar	Daniel
	Hosea	Hosea
	Joel	Joel
	Amos	Amos
	Obadiah	Obadiah
	Jonah	Jonah
	Micah	Micah
	Nahum	Nahum
	Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Zephaniah 	

Summary

Zephaniah - Part 1 of 1.....3

The prophecies of Prophet Zephaniah came almost a century after Prophet Isaiah during the reign of King Josiah. Although King Josiah was bringing much reformation under his reign, the consequences of King Manasseh's reign had caused much corruption in Judah. They were immersed in pagan practises and were defiling the Holy and righteous worship to Yahweh. Although they had the law and the Torah with them they were far away from the Holy living that God had commanded them to follow. God's repeated warnings were not obeyed and now God's wrath was upon them.

We see in chapter 1, the imminent judgement over Judah. In chapter 2, we see the judgement against the nations and in chapter 3 of the book, we will see the future of Jerusalem. The major theme of this book is the coming day of Yahweh with major emphasis placed on the judgement of sins, especially the sin of idolatry. Zephaniah also like prophet Isaiah ends the book with the message of redemption. We see Yahweh's unending, everlasting love for His people. Although God brings judgement because of the immeasurable amount of sin, He also shows His faithfulness by bringing restoration to His children who humbles themselves and seeks His divine mercy.

Transcript

Zephaniah – Part 1 of 1

Today, we come to a very obscure book called Zephaniah. In fact, many of the minor Prophets are very obscure. Now, Zephaniah was a Prophet to the Southern Kingdom, one of the 'last chance' prophets. There had been 70 years of silence since the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah warned the Southern Kingdom. He did such a good job, that King Manasseh, the most evil King ever in Judah, sawed him in half. He was martyred. After Isaiah was martyred, there was silence from God for 70 years. So Zephaniah pops into this scene. Some of the things you're going to read sounds like a repetition to you and me, because we just read the other prophecies very recently. But if you think back, it is a 70 year gap between Zephaniah and any previous prophecy. So if it sounds like repetition to you, it is not to them. It was new to them. Now, if it sounds like repetition to us, why do I need to read it? The truth is, the Jews were warned and warned about their sins, but they never got the message.

Sins sometimes become so much a part of your life that you don't quite get it that you are sinning. And when we read it as Christians, we need this repetition, because there are a lot of things that we do and think it is normal. Our materialism, our choosing to hear what we like to hear from God, are all woven into our Christianity that we need repeatedly to be told. And maybe by the grace of God, one day, our eyes will be opened. For some of the Jews, their eyes were opened through these Prophets. Not all, the vast majority just didn't get it.

Now, Zephaniah was part of the royal family. You see his genealogy in Chapter 1, verse 1. He, basically uses poetry, very intense poetry. Being the 'last chance' Prophet, he preaches apocalyptic types of messages, very shocking images of God's justice, and of course, of God's love too. Its good if you can read or listen to the NLT, the New Living Translation which gives you quite a good feel of this book, or the Message. I would suggest you listen to it first, especially when it's read in a dramatized form, like the NLT. After you get a feel of it, then you can read whatever version you feel comfortable with. Though these books appear obscure, actually in the book of Revelation, there are actually 400 references to the Old Testament; and Revelation is our destination. A lot of it is from Zephaniah, so though it's

obscure to us, actually it is something very beautiful, especially about the New Jerusalem.

Please mark up the three sections. Basically, Chapter 1-Chapter 2:3 is the judgment on Jerusalem. The chapter divisions are quite poorly put here. Chapter 2:4 second part to Chapter 3:8 is judgment on all nations, and surprisingly, Jerusalem also added into it.

The third division is Chapter 3 verse 9 to the end, and that's the hope for all nations, including the Jews. Now, why is Jerusalem added as all nations. Let's understand the big background. This prophecy was given during the time of King Josiah. King Josiah was a reformer King. But the problem was, he came too late. The corruption in Judah in Jerusalem was so bad after King Manasseh, it was literally the road of no return. Corruption had become part of their life. Manasseh worshipped all the gods of the Canaanites, and promoted sex in religion. He even offered his own sons as human sacrifices. So, this corruption of taking other foreign religions to become part of their religion become woven into it. So at the end of it all, when God judges all the nations, in the second part of Zephaniah, He judges Israel as part of it. They are just the same, no real difference except in identity.

Now this sounds very familiar to me. Now, if I look at Christianity today, and I'm studying missiology, they always say one third of the world is Christian. Missiologists like to say, We need to preach to the other two thirds of the world which are not Christian. One third is already Christian. But to me that is kind of a horrific statement because the so-called Christian nations are so pagan. You know, most of the pornography, the corruption, the oppression, the violence, comes from the 'Christian' nations. And the Missiologists consider that as Christian.

So, Israel had become like that. God had sent them to the promised land because it was the worst place of all. God was going to use his chosen people to eliminate the filthiest spot on Earth, the promised land to cleanse that land of Canaanite religion and then replace the filthiness of the Canaanite religions of the promised land with the light of God's truth. But when they went in and they were told to cleanse, they didn't cleanse, they slowly compromised and took their pagan gods, built little shrines, worshipped the sun, the moon, got involved in the sex religions and their practices and soon you couldn't tell the Jew from the Canaanites, except they were circumcised. They had an ID card. Their identity was their

circumcision. Today, 30% of the world have an ID. They are Christians. And they fool everybody that they are Christians, but anybody with two eyes in his head, and a little brain in his skull will know that some of the worst corruptions emerge, the worse oppressions, the worse immorality emerge from the “Christians.”

I hope you get the point here. So this is why we have to repeat and read God's attack on this corrupt nation that carried His name, because you and I also carry the Christian identity. But we have to examine as we hear all God's judgment to the people who carry His name, how we are also like that. And when I read it, I see myself in it. So, I hope you will begin to see when all these minor prophets repeat, repeat repeat, its not just for some ancient people with a very clear practices. It is for you and me. God didn't leave these minor Prophets there for historical purposes. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and it is for our correction. I hope we read it as not; Oh, this is interesting; Wow, I saw something new today! No, I saw myself today, in the light of His word. I saw the holiness of God and the filthiness of myself.

Since it's a very short book again, we can run through as a kind of a quick Bible study.

Let's look at Chapter 1:2

“I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.

Verse 3:

“I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the rubble with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.

Verse 4:

“I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

Verse 5:

those who bow down on the roofs to the host of heavens, those who bow down and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom,

Now, I hope you will see this - I will, I will, - actually Zephaniah is describing the Babylonian invasion. Nobody saw the hand of God, they saw the hand

of the Babylonians, and yet the Babylonians are not identified at all in these verses, their names are not even mentioned. And yet we know God is describing the Babylonian destruction. What is this purpose? Why is it God says, I will, I will, I will, actually the Babylonian said did it. The reason is very simple. God is saying, I used the Babylonians. I warned you, I used the Philistines, I used the Moabites, I used other nations to warn you, punish you, not to destroy you but you never listened. So now, I will use the Babylonians to do the job, but actually, I am the one behind it. I hope you begin to see that in many events of the world-it's not a virus, it's not some corrupt guy up there, a bad leader, but it is God behind all these things. God uses instruments, God uses agents. But he is the mover of history. So here, we see the utter sweeping away, apocalyptic speech. Imagine everything, men and beasts, birds and fish. I mean, I don't think the Babylonians really destroyed the fish. They did destroy the animals, they destroyed the trees because as I said, Babylonians have a scorched earth policy. They destroyed everything in their conquest, as to warn you. If you ever resist me, nothing will be left, men, beasts or plants. So, this is an apocalyptic message against Jerusalem.

Now, I want you to notice a few little things. It says here that,

Verse 5: (it talks of the priests)

those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those bow down and swear to the LORD, and yet swear by Milcom,

Now, please note this, they never denied they were children of God, they carried the same ID. We are God's people. Yes, we swear, we are God's people. And the same time, we also worship the god of prosperity, the god of whatever else.

Now, I hope you understand that these were not people as you and I would say, "in our mind" not God's people, they were God's people. They themselves identified, others identify them, like Missiologists identify Christians, but honestly, they really worship the host of heaven.

You know more Christians trust the horoscope, than trust the Bible. More "Christians" again, please allow me to use the inverted commas. They check the horoscope more in the morning to see how the day will go, than the Bible to guide them. The host of heaven decides their fortunes. I am a Leo, I am a Capricorn or whatever. That's why my character is like that. Christians talk like that, it's not God who gave them all this. It's the stars,

depends on which “star” they were born under, they actually know the power of the stars more than the power of Almighty God. You know who looks at horoscopes? Christian nations, so-called Christian people.

Verse 6:

those who have turned back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD or inquire of him.”

Most “Christians” have an ID, but if they need help, the last thing to do is to inquire of the Lord. What you mean by inquire of the Lord? The word of God-God speaks to us through the word. Now 99% of Christians have no clue what God wants them to do. They always say Pastor, what do you think God wants me to do? I said, you read the bible, the bible will tell you. But how to figure out? I always say if you know your father well, you spent time with your father, you know what the Father wants you to do. You don't need to say, Dad, do I kick the football with my left foot or right foot? Dad, should I eat this or eat that? You don't have to, if you know your Dad well enough, you know 99% of the time exactly what he likes and what he doesn't like. If you read the Bible, you have a feel of your God, you will know. But if you just pick sayings from your Father here and there, you will just do what you want to do. They never inquire of God. Pastor, how do you know they don't inquire of God. They don't bother to read God's word. 90% of Christians never read through the Bible. 50 year old Christian never read through the Bible. Never! They have 10 versions of the Bible on their table but never read through them. One book here, one book there and a whole bunch of memory verses. This is the sad situation.

Now, look at Verse 7:

Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.

Verse 8:

And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice – I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

On that day, I want you to notice that word, day, day, day, 23 times. What do you mean by the day - the Day of Judgment. That's a long period of warning and it comes to a point. The day of the LORD means the time of reckoning. So you see that 23 times, this is the 'last chance' Prophet. So he's going to say, the day has come.

Look at verse 8:

And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice – I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

Verse 9:

On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud.

What you mean by foreign attire? Many of the Jewish pastors or priests, prophets have now become more like the priests of the Canaanites. The Canaanite priests have certain robes and style of doing things. And now, the Jewish pastors and prophets seem to be more like Canaanite in their style. Actually, if you look at the pastors today, they look more like Hollywood people-their style. It's almost a foreign style. The hair style, the dress style is actually more Hollywood. It's more the entertainment industry rather than God's ministry. It's a foreign look. And they leap over this thing-this is actually a pagan practice. But it's basically they like the style of this Canaanite, more impressive looking religious people, rather than the Jewish prophets, like Zephaniah who didn't dress very fancy and look very fancy. I hope you're getting a little bit of the feel of this.

And why did they do all that?

Verse 9:

and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud.

All this is for obvious purpose. What do entertainers do? They want to get your money. Why do motivational speakers go up there, they want to get paid. So they are going there to make money out of you.

Verse 10 onwards describes the attack of Jerusalem. So very, very sad, all the sad things and what God will do and how the goods are plundered, etc. So that is the whole of Chapter 1.

Let's move on to Chapter 2. So when you read this, there are gems but because of the poetry, you need to pick it up. Better to listen to poetry. It's not reading the newspaper. You need to sense what the writer is trying to get at.

Chapter 2:1

Gather together, yes, gather, O shameless nation, (Judah, his nation)

Verse 2:

before the decree takes effect - before the day passes away like chaff - before there comes upon you the burning anger of the LORD, before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the LORD.

The day again. So we see here, God's warning that this time it's over. I wouldn't use little guys like Ammon and Moabites to warn you. I'm going to whack you. This is the burning anger of the LORD, not the warning anger that we get. In fact your father said, I'm angry, you stop it, stop it, I told you to stop it. And then you go on and on and then the cane comes up. And you know, you're going to get it from your dad. Enough!

So this is the warning, but in the midst of this warning,

Verse 3 says:

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD.

Always remember, the best way to come back to God is to humble yourself. The past is over, can't change it. Your present-humble yourself, always do that. People say, Pastor, you don't know my past. I don't care. I don't need to know. I only need to know your present. What you should do? Ask for mercy from God. Only people who know they are wicked will ask for mercy. How many Christians will ask for mercy from God? Mostly you think you're okay. Don't need mercy. You ask for help, you ask for good results for your kids, you ask for success in your job. Why? I am a good guy, ask for mercy? Very rare. I have heard prayers, congregational prayers for years. Hearing a Christian shout, 'God have mercy on us' is so rare. It almost freaks people out to pray that kind of prayers because we are good guys. We don't know how compromising we are in our lives.

So we see here how you can come back. And then as I said, the second part is about judgment on the nations but it includes judgment on Israel because Israel now is no different. You can't really tell except of the ID card or in the Jewish case, you check if he is circumcised or not, whether he is Jew or not. That's all. Every other behaviour, speech, everything about him is no different, maybe worse.

Then in Chapter 2, verse 13 and of course we have heard this before: And he will stretch out his hand against,

So up to Chapter 2 is all about judgment against the nations, judgment against the Moabites, against the Ammonites, the Philistines, and so on. Why? Because they have taken advantage of God's children. We've seen this in previous studies of the minor Prophets. These people who took advantage of the Jews when they were being punished (God use the Babylonians to punish the Jews), they were going to be judged. Remember this, they are still God's children. And when you take advantage of God's children, you will pay a price.

And God is a jealous God. Remember that. Don't touch. Don't say anything against the Jews. I will be absolutely be careful about that they are still God's people. There are a lot of Jewish jokes. Don't indulge in that. If you read the Bible, you will be aware of that. Many Christians are not aware of that because they don't read the Bible.

And then it says in verse 13:

And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the desert.

Verse 14:

Herds shall lie down in her midst, all kinds of beasts; even the owl and the hedgehog shall lodge in her capitals;

Now you and I have heard Assyria, Nineveh, Jonah cried out against it. But for the people of those days to think that Nineveh would disappear from the face of the earth is shocking. If I were to tell you that New York City would be a total wasteland where cows and jackals and wild animals will walk, you will say, are you mad? Nineveh was like that. It was a massive city. Apparently, the walls were 10 storeys high, almost hundred kilometers. The walls were 30, 40 feet thick. That's 10 meters thick. How do you destroy that? It disappeared. In fact, for hundreds of years, people thought there was no such city, it couldn't be found. And some archaeologists, about 100, 200 years ago, discovered some ruins and lo and behold, that is Nineveh. But it disappeared from the face of the earth. Can you imagine New York disappears from the face and people say there's no such city as New York, can't be found. You say, are you mad?

Zephaniah, you've got something wrong with your head to dare say that. He said it, and many prophets said it. But you and I don't even know where Nineveh or Assyria. I know Syria but Syria is not Assyria. Many people say the Bible says Assyria, is it Syria? No, no, it's a different place. Syria is Damascus, not Nineveh.

Then Chapter 3 verse 1:

Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city!

Who is being judged with the nations - Jerusalem - rebellious.

Verse 2:

She listens to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the LORD; she does not draw near to her God.

Here we go again, these are Israelites, these are Jews. They listen to no voice. They had the Torah, they had the law, they have not read it. It's locked up in some cabinet; nobody read the scrolls, the kings never read it. Nobody knew what was inside. You know, today many religious people don't know what the Bible is, you say but pastor, they go to Bible school. I tell you, I've been to enough Bible schools to tell you, people know a lot about the Bible. They don't know the Bible. They tell you about the origin of the Bible and tell you about the authorship. They'll tell you about who wrote this. And you know, Zephaniah was a son of who, but you asked them what is the Bible? What does the book of Zephaniah say, and they go but, but, but. It doesn't mean you go to Bible school, you know anything in the Bible. You know about the Bible, you go round and round reading books about the Bible, but not reading the Bible. I'm sorry, I have to say this. And I know enough Bible schools to tell you this.

Chapter 3 verse 2:

She listens to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the LORD; she does not draw near to her God.

How do you trust in the Lord? Is it some quaint obscure thing. You trust His word. That's what it is. If you believe God, then you believe His word. If you believe God is the best, then His word is the best. If you believe God is good, then His word is good. Jesus is the Word. You say, I love Jesus, but you don't love the word. What are you talking about? But I know some verses, yes, okay, is that the Word, or is that some verses.

Verse 3:

Her officials within her are roaring lions;

You want to make money I always said to people, religion is the best way to make money.

Continue Verse 3:

her judges are evening wolves that leave nothing till the morning.

Religions are the best way to make money. You don't need to be smart. You don't need a lot of capital. You just need to have no conscience, that's all. You need to have a lack of something-lack of the fear of God.

People say what's the best business you never go out and never be retrenched? The religion business. Communists thought they could get rid of religion and God, they can't. Man by instinct always fears things, he needs to seek God and goes through priests to seek God. And these people take advantage of all these people who know they need God. They are ravening wolves.

Chapter 3:3

her judges are evening wolves that leave nothing till the morning.

Verse 4:

Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men; her priests profane what is holy; they do violence to the law.

What you mean by violence to the law? They twist and turn the Word of God. Taking verses out of context, that is to do violence to the law.

Verse 5:

The Lord within her is righteous; he does no injustice; every morning he shows forth His justice;

In spite of all that, God is still faithfully showing forth His justice.

Continue verse 5:

each dawn he does not fail; but the unjust knows no shame.

The word of God is there everyday for you, free, take, follow, live, but they don't want it. So here we see the sad state of the Jews, the Jewish church, if I may use that.

Chapter 3:6 (They can't be corrected.)

“I have cut off nations; their battlements are in ruins; I have laid waste their streets so that no one walks in them; their cities have been made desolate, without a man, without an inhabitant.

Verse 7:

I said, “Surely you will fear me; you will accept correction.

You see when God punished them, there was almost nothing left, the 10 tribes are gone. There was left one little city, Jerusalem; almost every other city had been attacked. I thought in all that warning, you would have taken thought about how God is so angry with us, you'd better do something.

But no, it says verse 7:

I said, “Surely you will fear me; you will accept correction.

after all the punishment I gave you, after all the warning but they didn't. So here we see the anger of God.

And then finally in Chapter 3:8

“Therefore wait for me,” declares the LORD, “for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

God said Enough! This is what you are going to get. And then the Babylonians came in. Everything that is said here in this poetry came to pass. Nothing was left. God poured out his indignation on Jerusalem and all the surrounding nations, using the Babylonians to do his job. Now if it ends there, that's the end of it.

But thankfully in Chapter 3 verse 9, is a sudden change of poetry here. For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord.

Verse 10:

From beyond the rivers of Cush, my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.

Wow, suddenly a change. This is like after the destruction, is it the end? No, after the destruction, is a purification. The junk is taken away, the temples of Baal, all those who want to worship the stars, the horoscopes and all the false priests who line their pockets and all those who didn't care a hoot about God are gone. And then a new generation comes in with a new heart. It seems it did not said specifically, but you sense the total change.

Verse 11:

“On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.

Verse 12:

But I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

New people in a new kingdom in New Jerusalem. Wow, of course in other prophecies, you see God has given them a new heart. He speaks of the effect- their speech is changed, their heart is no more haughty, their heart is humble before God. They trust God, they know the hope is in God.

Chapter 3:14

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Verse 15:

The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

Verse 16:

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

Verse 17:

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

Wow! Who is going to rejoice on that day? God, He will exult over you with loud singing. Look at that.

Chapter 3 verse 17, who's going to do the singing that day? The church choir? No, God is going to sing over you with loud singing. God is the singer, God is musical, God is emotional. Did you know that, all you scholars?

This verse is amazing to me. In heaven, the new kingdom, He will be in our midst, rejoicing. It's not you go up there. It's like, let's have some more Bible studies. We will be rejoicing, emotions will be overflowing with joy.

Verse 18:

I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

Verse 19:

Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

Verse 20:

At that time, I will bring you in, at that time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD.

So, we see here the poetry of it, all the judgments-apocalyptic, the joy-exultant. This is the poetry of Zephaniah. Not so common in Isaiah, for example. You can sense it, except if you read it, then of course you wouldn't sense it.

So what did you learn from this little obscure book? God's judgment is scary, His justice, God's rejoicing is amazing. What is God's justice for? To destroy? Eradicate us? No, to cleanse us, prepare us for it. All the proud,

all those who are not turned to him- no more. All those who humble themselves -Lord, I'm a sinner, have mercy on me, Thank you for Jesus Christ who died for my sins, have mercy on me God, wash me, cleanse me, I receive Jesus as my Saviour. Let me tell you, you will be in God's world, you will be in the midst of God's people with God rejoicing over you with singing. In this life, chastening, a lot of chastening, justice, judgment. But for what purpose? Why does the Father keep warning? Other people don't warn me, my Father warns me. Other people don't discipline, my Father disciplines me. Why? He wants me to be ready for His blessings.

Today we have a kind of bizarre Christianity. Pick up a verse from the Bible, and on this earth we are happy, happy, happy. No, not the Bible I read. God judges His people to cleanse out all the filth, the pride and the arrogance, because he's preparing us for a time of great rejoicing, and you know how to be prepared? To be humbled, and to be cleansed, to get right. He is preparing us as we humble ourselves before the cross, as we humble ourselves to the Word of God. God, guide me, prepare me for that beautiful kingdom where I will be with my God forever. You have to be prepared by first trusting the Lord, that's called justification; and by knowing his word and obeying His Word, that's called sanctification.

May all this judgment not look like, Why God? God has a purpose. The book has an ending. It's called the kingdom-New Jerusalem, and God is preparing you for that place.

May God bless you.