

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 0 0] Well, it is our intent today to complete the prophecy of Zephaniah, who is very frequently confused with Zechariah, but they are two entirely different individuals, and one of the things that separates them is that Zephaniah is a pre-exilic prophet, whereas Zechariah will be one of the post-exilic prophets, that is, after the exile. So those last three in the Old Testament, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, comprise the revelation that God has given to the people of Israel after the Babylonian captivity, when they have come back to the land of Israel, at least as many as came back, and it provides a different kind of emphasis than what was there before the captivity, which is understandable.

So if you'll turn, please, to Zephaniah, Zephaniah chapter 3, we will plan to conclude the book, if we may, and thus you have a number of questions or comments to share, which you are entirely welcome to do, then we will move on. So the theme changes, beginning with verse 8, because the last leg of the plan and program of God is depicted and is going to be realized, and that is very broad across the whole system of theology and eschatology, and that is the blessing, the restoration, the time of refreshing that will come from the Lord that Peter was talking about in Acts chapter 3. It has to do with God restoring all things. It has to do with the broken and ruined world and ruined nation of Israel being fixed, and not only fixed, but finally fixed, and forever fixed, and permanently fixed. And frankly, that's what we all long for, and if we don't, we should.

We recognize that we live in a broken, fallen world that is in bad need of repair, and that is precisely why the Lord Jesus Christ came. And in his first appearance, he paid the price for the right to claim the prize in his second coming, and that's precisely what he will do. So if you'll turn, please, to that chapter 3, we read beginning with verse 8, and prior to this time, it is all pretty much devastation and destruction. But here the thing is changing.

He says, therefore, verse 8, wait for me, declares the Lord, for the day when I rise up to the prey.

And the prey, of course, is P-R-E-Y, not P-R-A-Y. It is talking about the vengeance of the Lord being exacted upon those who have opposed him. And he says, indeed, my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them my indignation, all my burning anger, for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of my zeal. This is devastation with a capital D.

[3 : 4 0] This is the Almighty pulling out all of the stops of accumulated wrath and ire of the Almighty and dumping it on the nations that have opposed him. And while we're in the neighborhood, if you'll come back just a few pages and keep in mind what he says here, that my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, and come back just a few pages past Haggai to Zechariah, Zechariah chapter 14.

And by the way, when we get to Zechariah, and it isn't very far off, we'll be there by the first of the year, I suspect. It is intensely prophetic. So in that prophecy that is upcoming, we will see spelled out in considerable detail what is in store for planet earth in general, and for the nation Israel in particular, Zechariah in his visions and prophecies is absolutely stunning. And you will find it to be so.

So I would ask you to turn to Zechariah chapter 14, if you would please. This is the last chapter in the book of Zechariah. And here's what we read, which is actually a reinforcement of what we have just read in Zechariah chapter 14 and verse 1. Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you, and that is speaking of Israel, the spoil taken from Israel, will be divided among you. For, or because, I, the Lord God himself, I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then, the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. And this is, this is in accord with Revelation 19, when Christ returns to rescue the remnant of Israel that I believe will be holed up in Petra, and he will arrive there, and they will then look upon him whom they pierced, and they will mourn. It will be Israel in national repentance for their ancestors having rejected Yeshua HaMashiach as their Messiah, and they will repent, and they will cry out for the return of Jesus to the earth. And it will be a fulfillment of what Jesus said when he walked out of the temple after having cleansed it the last time, and he said, you will not see me again until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And that's exactly what that remnant will be saying, and they will cry out for the return of the Messiah, and in verse 4, in that day, and the that day of verse 4 is, I believe, identical to the day that is mentioned in verse 1, in that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west. Now the Mount of Olives ordinarily is thought of as running north and south, and indeed it does because the Mount of Olives is on the high precipice, the ridge that runs all along Jerusalem on the other side, and in between, you've got Jerusalem here on the east, and the Mount of Olives on the west, and, and I'm sorry, reversed, Jerusalem's on the west, the Mount of Olives is on the east, and in between them is a huge deep rift that is called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Sometimes it's also called the Kidron Valley, and there is a stream that runs right down through it, at least when there is water in it, and it's, it's a wadi, it's the brook Kidron, and it is that brook that Jesus and his disciples will cross over when they leave the upper room the night that he is betrayed, and they go down the one side and cross over the brook Kidron, and come up on the far side up to the Mount of Olives, and that's where Gethsemane is, where he will spend that last night before he is arrested, and if this is the precise area to which our Lord is going to return, and this is where the battle is going to take place. It will not be the battle of Armageddon, but it will be the final battle, and we pointed out before that Armageddon is way up to the north, and that is in the land of Galilee, actually, that is where the armies of the earth are going to be staged, from all over the earth, headed by the Antichrist, they will march south, Christ will be in Petra with his remnant, and they will march north, and they will clash there in the Kidron Valley, right in front of the walls of

Jerusalem, and that is where the carnage will take place, and Christ will devastate the enemy with what Revelation 19 describes as the sword that proceeds out of his mouth, and that is the spoken word of Christ, and this is exactly what he is talking to and talking about here in Zechariah 14 and verse 4, and this, I just can't imagine this, because what's going to happen? The Mount of Olives actually isn't a mountain, it's a mountain range, it's a mountain range. Gary, do you have a comment?

[10:12] Okay, it's a mountain range, and it runs, of course, north and south, and it goes, this great rift is part of what is known as the African rift. It runs all the way down into the continent of Africa, and it is that area that is also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It just goes by a couple of different names, but it's the Valley of Jehoshaphat, it's also the Hinnom Valley, and that will be where this carnage is going to take place, and this mountain range, you remember Jesus was in Gethsemane, where there was a garden, and Gethsemane is just one small area of the whole range of mountains that is referred to as the Mount of Olives, or the Mountains of the Olives, and it is, of course, lined up north and south, but this enormous earthquake that is going to take place, that Zechariah is talking about, is going to split the mountains, and divide them so that the split is going to be east and west, and it appears that it's going to go, and it won't have too far to go, all the way down to the Mediterranean, on the west, and then how far it goes beyond that, east we do not know, but there's going to be an enormous earthquake that will result in a cleavage of that mountain range, and the text goes on to say, it will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain, or probably should read half of the mountain range, will move toward the north, and the other half toward the south, and you will flee by the valley of the mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel, yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him, and it is going to be quite a time, and if you look down at verse 8 then, it will come about in that day, and this is all talking about the same day as verse 1 of chapter 14, and verse 4 of chapter 14, that day, for it will be a unique day, which is known to the Lord neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light, and it will come about in that day, that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, the other half toward the western sea, it will be in summer as well as in winter, and the Lord will be king over all the earth in that day, the Lord will be the only one, and his name the only one, and the other changes go on, and we'll have to reserve that for when we get to Zechariah, but I just wanted to point out to you that this is tied in with the passage in Zephaniah that we are now considering, and then he continues by saying in verse 9, then I will, and I want you to notice this phrase,

I will, I will, I will, it is the Lord God who is speaking, and he is totally in charge of this situation, he will not be dependent upon anything that men or armies do, this is going to be solely at his discretion, and we will see this, I will, I will, repeat it a number of times, look at it if you will, verse 9, then I will give to the people's purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord to serve him shoulder to shoulder, and these people with purified lips, this is not going to be Israel in general, this is going to be that remnant of Israel, that small group that will have, by this time, will have returned to a true faith in the God of Israel, and they are going to be very key in this last day, they will be the people with the purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord to serve him shoulder to shoulder, from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, which is North

Africa, my worshipers, my dispersed ones, will bring my offerings, and that day, you will feel no shame because of all your deeds, why? Because God's forgiveness will be intact, and the shame and the disgrace that accompanied it will be gone, because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against me, then here's another I will, then I will remove from your midst your proud exalting ones, and you will never again be haughty on my holy mountain, and that holy mountain, of course, is the mountain of Zion, where the temple of God is concerned, and when he says you will not be haughty, the opposite of haughtiness is humbleness, humility, and it will be a genuine characteristic of them at that time, and then he says, but I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the Lord, the remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, that remnant is the small percentage of Jewish survivors from the onslaught of the Antichrist, and the price that is put upon the head of all the Jews throughout the world, these will be the survivors, and they are referred to as the remnant, the remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths, you know, that's kind of like our Congress today, well, we'll move right along, okay, for they shall feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble, this is talking about a genuine sustained peace, the likes of which Israel has never known, shout for joy, oh daughter of Zion, this is something to celebrate, this is what the world has long looked for, this is what Israel has pined away for, shout in triumph, oh Israel, rejoice and exult with all your heart, oh daughter of

Jerusalem, the Lord has taken away his judgments against you, he has cleared away your enemies, and he did that as a result of the conflict there from the valley of Jehoshaphat, the king of Israel, the Lord is in your midst, you will fear disaster no more, and by the way, Israel's feeling, fearing disaster now, Gaza Strip is lobbing rockets over into Israel again, and there will be retaliation for that, and of course it's the result of Israel taking out the latest leader of Hamas, and how they were able to target him and eliminate him is part of the Israeli capability now, that's the technology, etc., and they of course are responding with showering with rockets and so on, and I would not be surprised if what there is not a, at least an in part invasion or incursion of the army of Israel into Gaza, to settle things down, and probably to arrest a bunch of people and so on, that's the typical response, what happens.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst, you will fear disaster no more. In that day, and there's that phrase again, it will be said to Jerusalem, do not be afraid, oh Zion, do not let your hands fall limp, the Lord God is in your midst, a victorious warrior, he will, here's another of those expressions, he will exult over you with joy, he will be quiet in his love, he will rejoice over you with shouts of joy, I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feast, they came from you, oh Zion, the reproach of exile is a burden on them, behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors, and this will be, once again, the armies and the nations of the

[19 : 45] Antichrist, who has marshaled all of them against him, I will save the lame, and gather the outcast, and I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth, at that time, I will, bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together, indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

What an incredibly victorious, happy ending is in store for Israel, and it is all a picture of God's amazing grace, it's where sin abounded, certainly it abounded in Israel, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, this is nothing more than a demonstration of the ultimate benevolence and forgiveness and restoration of the Lord God of Israel, and all of it comes, not because of, but in spite of, Israel's rejection and disobedience of their king over 2,000 years ago. Remarkable passage of scripture, and what we have just shared with you is really reiterated a number of times throughout the Old Testament, this is just one of them, and we'll see others in Zechariah, and of course Isaiah is loaded with this, and so is Jeremiah and the new covenant, and so on. So there is a bright day coming for Israel, and because it will be a bright day coming for Israel, it will be a bright day for the world, and the time is coming when 10 men, 10 men will take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, and will say, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is among you, and they will come to Jerusalem to worship just like the Jew does, it will be the restoration of the planet, Satan will have been bound for a thousand years, the Antichrist will have been decimated, and it will be peace and prosperity on the earth for the millennial reign of Christ, and wow, what a time, what a day that will be.

Questions or comments, anyone? John? In verse 9, the King James said, then will I turn to the people a pure language that they may call upon the name of the Lord, and show them as one of the saints, and it says pure language.

Now, in 1948, when the Jews formed their nation, they all went back to Israel, they some of them spoke Russian, and they spoke in the...

Yiddish, yeah, mm-hmm. Yeah. This guy named Ben Yehuda, there was a street named after him in Jerusalem. Yeah. He had the idea, we need to have our own language, and so he came up with the Jewish language, Yeah.

[22 : 58] And they speak it today in Israel. You're right. Absolutely. It is, it is not, you're so right. Another name for the Jewish language is Biblical Hebrew.

That is the actual language that is spoken in Israel today. That is the main language there, just like English is the main language here. And this pure language is, it's hard to believe that it is anything but Hebrew.

And in 1898, it was, yes it was. Anyway, Theodor Herzl.

Theodor Herzl, H-E-R-Z-L, Jewish patriot, was one who spearheaded the restoration of the nation of Israel in 1988, and they called a conference, and it was a very significant time.

And in some ways, he is referred to as the father of modern Israel, and you've got to understand what an incredible miracle this is, because there is no nation, no nation on the face of the earth that was ever reduced to nothing, and no statehood, and no recognition of statehood for 2,000 years, and then be resurrected and come back into being again.

[24 : 36] That has never happened to any other nation on the face of the earth. But it has happened to Israel. And Theodor Herzl was one of the prime movers of that.

And Ben Yehuda was one who was instrumental in insisting and lobbying for, out of all of the possible languages, of settling on Hebrew.

And it was through his efforts that the plan was adopted, and Hebrew has become the official language. And there is in Israel today, in Jerusalem, Ben Yehuda Street, and named, of course, in his honor.

And it's, it's, it's, it is just, I tell you, it is, there, there is simply no human explanation for the survival and the thriving of the state of Israel.

There's no human explanation. It is a God thing. And anyone with one eye half open ought to be able to see that. Joe? Joe? Yeah.

[25 : 39] You know, because we see there was only a remnant that was left, you know. There were a lot of Jews, just believing Jews, that they were destroyed, you know, with the rest of the world.

Yeah. In the war. It was only, and of course, I think then that's also a picture for the church, too, how the church is going to be in the same situation. And God used Israel as kind of a pattern, or this is why he's dealing with people as a whole.

That's true. Because they were sinful, too. The Jews were just, they had a sinful heart. They were, nature was just like us. They were no different. They got a sinful nature. And so, I see that the same thing happened when the rapture comes.

It's only going to be kind of a remnant, you know, I think, in terms of the population of the world. Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. There is a parallel there. I'm glad you pointed that out. There is a parallel there.

And this is exactly what Paul meant when he wrote to the Romans and said, they are not all Israel that are Israel. What does that mean? They are not all Israel that are Israel.

[26 : 43] That means out of the whole conglomerate that is referred to as Israel, there is only an element that is true Israel.

And they are those who have that connection with the God of Israel. And it is the same way in Christ. Let me put it this way, fellas.

They are not all Christians that are called Christians. We've got these large bodies, one in general called Protestantism, and one in general called Catholicism.

And those two great bodies, so far as the world is concerned, comprises what is known as Christianity. But within Protestantism, there are a whole lot of Christians who are not Christians.

And within Catholicism, there are a whole lot of Christians who are not Christians. There are true born-again believers in the Catholic Church.

[27 : 44] But there's a huge number of them that are just into churchianity, not Christianity at all. And the same is true with what is called Protestantism.

Out of our major denominations, including non-denominational churches like my own, there are those who are true believers who have a real relationship to Christ.

And there are those who are just along for the ride. They're not committed. They're not true believers. They've never been born again at all. And yet, if you ask them if they're a Christian, oh, yes, yes, I'm a Christian.

And many of them don't even know what a Christian really is. So there is a remnant there. There's a remnant everywhere. And there is a remnant in ancient Israel. And old Elijah thought he was the only one, you know.

I'm the only one left that is true to you. And the Lord said, no, wait a minute. Wait a minute, Elijah. I know you're depressed and you're down in the dumps and all the rest of it. But I want to advise you, I have 7,000 out there that have not bowed the knee to Baal.

[28 : 47] Well, now 7,000 out of the whole population of Israel, it wasn't very many. And Elijah's probably thinking, where are they? I'd like to see. But 7,000 were still, they would be considered the remnant of Israel then.

And in Judah and in Israel, the 12 tribes, there were those who were faithful to the Lord. There were those who were part of the apostasy. And it's always been that way. Yeah, Joe. And then this remnant, this is going to fulfill Abraham's, the covenant to Abraham.

Finally, he's going to be fulfilled, the end of it. They're going to be priests to the rest of the world. Amen. And like you mentioned, about the 10 men grabbing the coats of the Jews, they're going to be the priests to God.

They're going to lead those. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. Now, I want you all to envy Larry here.

Look at his breakfast. Ooh la la. Hey, you know, you know, you might be starting something here. Do you want to say something even better than this?

[30 : 01] Who would have thought a coconut cream pie for breakfast? I'm telling you. You got your priorities, right? You had that first, you know you got it for the day. You did good. You might be a trailblazer, really.

Thank you. Okay, guys. Enjoy your day in the breakfast.