

The Day of the Lord

Key Verse: “*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 anger.*”
—**Zephaniah 2:3**

Selected Scripture:
Zephaniah 1:4-6, 14-16; 2:3

living, as I have done.”—Gen. 8:21, *Revised Version*

A key point of our lesson is that disregard of Almighty God cannot be tolerated forever. The Lord, through the prophet, refers to a number of evil practices in which Judah, the two-tribe kingdom of Israel, was engaged, and upon which his judgment was come. First, he said, “I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,” along with the false priests, whose very “name” would be blotted out. (Zeph. 1:4) God also said he would cut off “them that worship the host of heaven”—that is, those who worshipped the sun, planets, and stars of heaven, rather than God only.—vs. 5

Verse 5 also speaks of the double-minded—these too

IN THIS LESSON FROM

Zephaniah’s prophecy, we clearly see that very strong language is used concerning the destruction of evil doers and their works. These words, however, should not be understood as wholly literal. To do so would contradict the covenant made with Noah when, following the Flood, “the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake, for that the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing

would be cut off. Such were those who took an oath to worship the true and living God, but also swore “by Malcham,” or Moloch, the god of the Ammonites. (I Kings 11:5,7; Amos 5:26,27; Acts 7:43) Finally, God condemned “them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.” (Zeph. 1:6) These had completely turned away from the Lord and, as demonstrated by their conduct, had proven that deceit was in their hearts.

As the result of the far-reaching extent of sin spoken of by the prophet, we note the thoroughness of the foretold destruction. “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. 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, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.”—vss. 14-16

At the same time as such severe desolations are being predicted, God, through the prophet, provides a message of comfort in our Key Verse to those of his people who still sought “righteousness” and “meekness.” These humble and earnest-minded ones, by continuing to seek the Lord, might escape, he says, the severity of the trouble which was to come. “It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.”

This present evil world, pictured in our lesson by Judah, will also soon pass away. God’s faithful people, however, have the assurance of his presence and care. The Lord promises, “I will spare them,” “hide them,” and “keep them secretly.” (Mal. 3:17; Ps. 31:19,20) Thankfully also, the current time of trouble and destruction will give way to God’s kingdom of peace, joy, and safety. The willing and obedient of mankind will be taught of God, and be provided the opportunity to live on a restored, perfect earth forever.—Isa. 35; Jer. 31:31-34; John 6:45 ■