



THE BOOK OF

Zephaniah

A verse by verse study

Overview of the Book

- Judgment on Judah foretold Ch 1
- Judgment on the Gentiles forewarned Ch 2
 - Specifically judgment for their treatment of ‘God’s people’ (cf Matt 25 “Sheep & Goats”)
 - “My people” x4 / “God of Israel” / “The people of the LORD of hosts” / “The LORD their God”
 - A way of escape from God’s wrath promised!
- The National re-gathering and restoration of Israel promised Ch 3
 - “her God” / “the King of Israel” / “The LORD thy God”

Zephaniah

- Key phrase: “the day of the LORD” 2x
 - Occurs 21x in the Bible
 - Isaiah 2:12; 13:6; 13:9
 - Jeremiah 46:10
 - Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3
 - Joel 1:15; 2:1; 2:11; 2:31; 3:14
 - Amos 5:18; 5:20
 - Obadiah 1:15
 - Zephaniah 1:7; 1:14;
 - Zechariah 14:1
 - Malachi 4:5
 - Acts 2:20
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:2
 - 2 Peter 3:10

צפניה

Zephaniah

- Key phrase: “the day of the LORD”
 - Specifically referenced 12x
 - Chapter 1:7 - the day of Jehovah
 - Chapter 1:8 - the day of Jehovah's sacrifice
 - Chapter 1:9- the same day
 - Chapter 1:10 - that day
 - Chapter 1:14- the great day of Jehovah
 - Chapter 1:15-16- a day of wrath, of trouble and distress
 - Chapter 1:18- the day of Jehovah's wrath
 - Chapter 2:2 - the day of Jehovah's anger
 - Chapter 2:3 - the day of Jehovah's anger
 - Chapter 3:8 - the day that I rise up to the prey, says Jehovah
 - Chapter 3:11- that day
 - Chapter 3:16- that day

Zephaniah

- These prophecies span history, speaking to Israel, at the time of Zephaniah, but also speaking of our time
- *“The whole book makes it clear that Zephaniah looks far ahead of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem on to that dreadful day of Jehovah, the day of His anger and judgment, upon which however will follow the blessing of the millennial reign of peace”.* - Arend Remmers

Law of Double Reference

- *“This law observes the fact that often a passage or a block of Scripture is speaking of two different persons or two different events that are separated by a long period of time.”*



THE BOOK OF

Zephaniah

Chapter 2

Zephaniah Chapter 2

- Judgment on the Gentiles
 - Because of their sins, the nations around Judah would also feel the wrath of God.
 - The other prophets had warned them that judgment was coming (Isa. 14–20; Jer. 46–49; Amos 1–2), but the Gentiles did not repent.
 - God would punish their mistreatment of His people (v. 8; Gen. 12:1–3), their pride (v. 10), and their worship of false gods (v. 11).
 - In His mercy, God calls them to repent

- 1 Gather 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.

Zephaniah 2:1-2

- God gives the gentile nations an opportunity to repent before His wrath falls upon them

³ 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

- The promise – consistent with God's character – to remove the righteous before His wrath falls on the ungodly

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.

5 Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.

Zephaniah 2:4-5

- The Philistines were destroyed...
- But their land (that Joshua failed to conquer) remains a thorn in Israel's side to this day
 - But Gaza the West Bank and Golan heights will finally be Israel's when the Messiah returns

6 And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

7 And the coast shall be for **the remnant** of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.

Zephaniah 2:6-7

- The 'remnant' who survive the Tribulation

8 I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.

9 Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.

Zephaniah 2:8-9

- God divided the land among the nations (Deut 32:8)
- But man's bent is to never be happy with his lot

8 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

9 For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Deuteronomy 32:8-9

“And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten” Gen 46:27

Noah

Shem

Ham

Japheth

Gomer — Ashkenaz, Riphath (Europe), Togarmah.

Magog

Madai

Javan — Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, Dodanim.

Tubal

Meshech

Tiras

Japheth



Noah

Shem

Ham

Japheth

Gomer

Magog

Madai

Javan

Tubal

Meshech

Tiras

Cush

Mizraim

Phut

Canaan

Sidon, Heth, the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgasite, the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite:

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, Sabtecha

Sheba
Dedan

Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) Capthorim.

Ham



Noah

Shem

Ham

Japheth

Elam (Persia)

Iran

Asshur

Arphaxad

Lud

Aram

Uz

Hul

Gether

Mash.

Salah

Eber

Peleg

("Earth Divided")

Joktan

Cush

Mizraim

Put

Canaan

Reu

Serug

Nahor

Terah

Abraham

Gomer

Magog

Madai

Javan

Tubal

Meshech

Tiras

Shem



Noah

Shem

Elam

Asshur

Arphaxad

Lud

Aram

Ham

Cush

Mizraim

Put

Canaan

Japheth

Gomer

Magog

Madai

Javan

Tubal

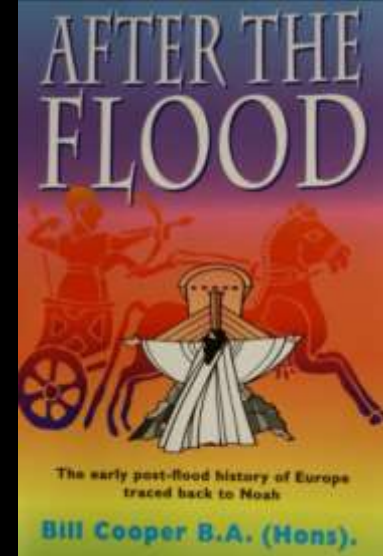
Meshech

Tiras

Noah

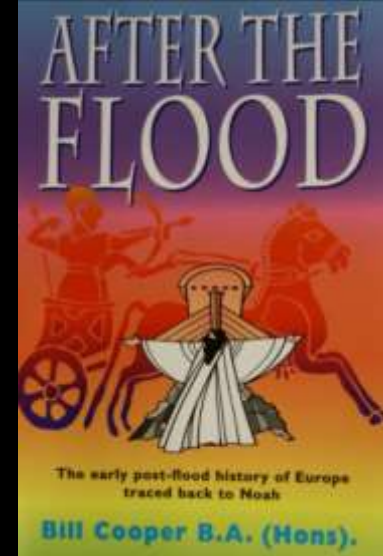


- Dr Bill Cooper
- It is commonly thought in this present age that nothing is worthy of our belief unless first it can be scientifically demonstrated and observed to be true.
- ...it was assumed without further enquiry that nothing in especially the earlier portions of the biblical record could be demonstrated to be true and factual. This applied particularly to the book of Genesis.
- In other words, we were solemnly assured in the light of modern wisdom that, historically speaking, the book of Genesis was simply not worth the paper it was written on.



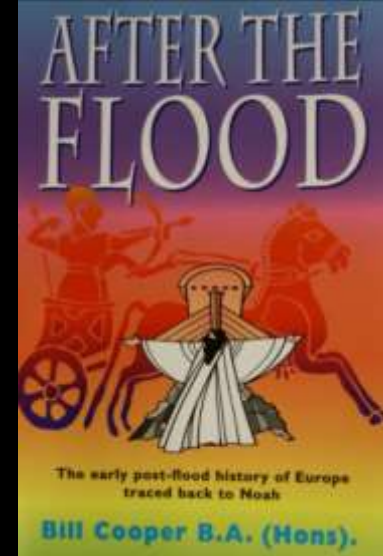
On the one hand I had the Bible itself claiming to be the very Word of God, and on the other I was presented with numerous commentaries that spoke with one voice in telling me that the Bible was nothing of the kind. It was merely a hotch-potch collection of middle-eastern myths and fables that sought to explain the world in primitive terms.

Now, it simply was not possible for both these claims to be valid. Only one of them could be right...



So it was then that I decided to select a certain portion of Genesis and submit it to a test which, if applied to any ordinary historical document, would be considered a test of the most unreasonable severity. And I would continue that test until either the book of Genesis revealed itself to be a false account, or it would be shown to be utterly reliable in its historical statements.

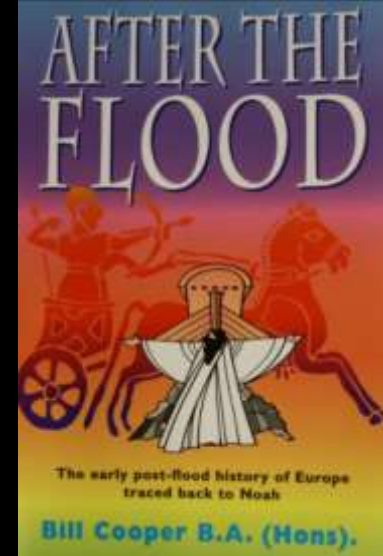
What I had not expected at the time was the fact that the task was to engage my attention and energies for more than twenty-five years...



The test that I devised was a simple one. If the names of the individuals, families, peoples and tribes listed in the Table of Nations were genuine, then those same names should appear also in the records of other nations of the Middle East.

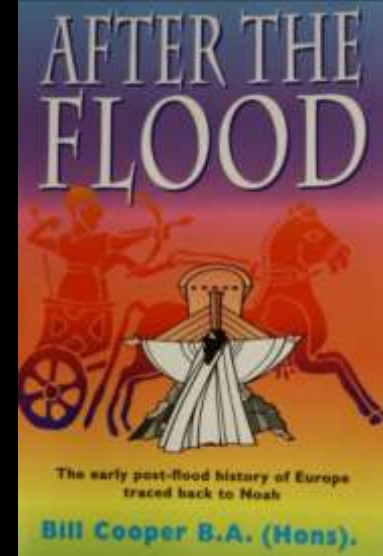
It simply was not realistic to expect that every name would have been recorded in the annals of the ancient Middle East and would also have survived to the present day.

I therefore would have been content to have found say 40% of the list vindicated.



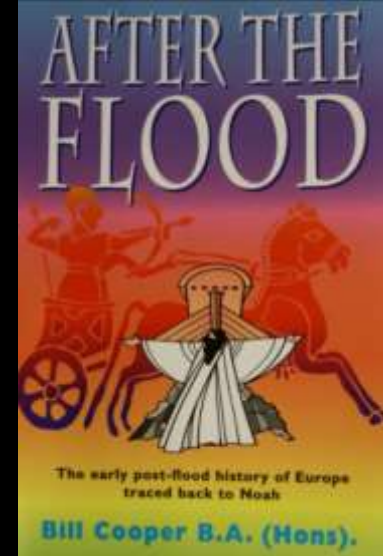
In fact that would have been a very high achievement given the sheer antiquity of the Table of Nations itself and the reported scarcity of the surviving extra-biblical records from those ancient times.

But when, over my twenty-five years of research, that confirmatory evidence grew past 40% to 50%, and then 60% and beyond, it soon became apparent that modern wisdom in this matter was wide of the mark. Very wide of the mark indeed.



Today I can say that the names so far vindicated in the Table of Nations make up over 99% of the list,

...and I shall make no further comment on that other than to say that no other ancient historical document of purely human authorship could be expected to yield such a level of corroboration as that!



10 This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts.

11 The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.

Zephaniah 2:10-11

- “The people of the Lord of hosts” = Israel
- The title tells you this is not a people to mess with!
- All false religion will be silenced

12 Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword.

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

14 And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work.

Zephaniah 2:12-14

15 This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly,
that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside
me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts
to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss,
and wag his hand.

Zephaniah 2:15



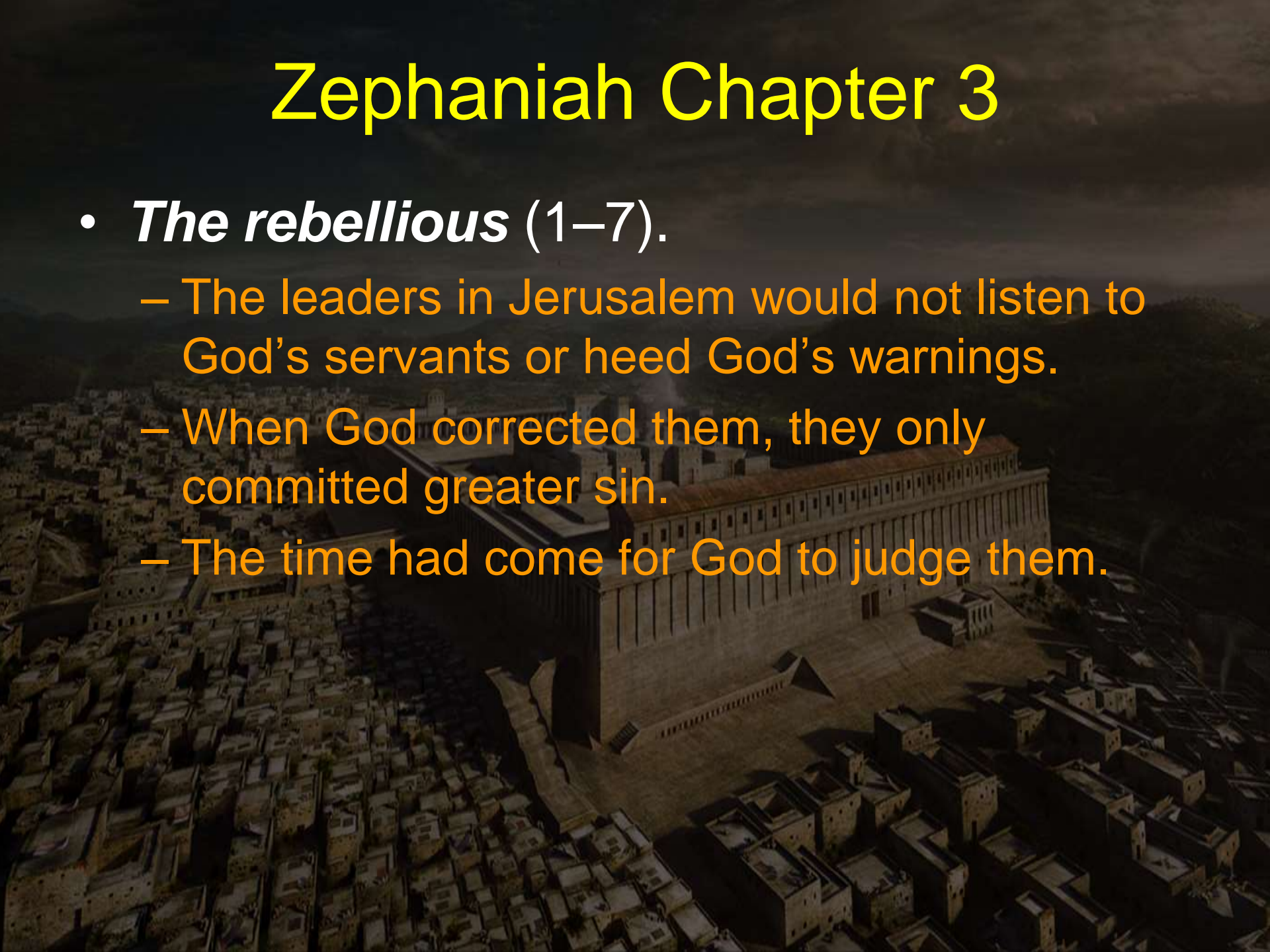
THE BOOK OF

Zephaniah

Chapter 3

Zephaniah Chapter 3

- ***The rebellious*** (1–7).
 - The leaders in Jerusalem would not listen to God's servants or heed God's warnings.
 - When God corrected them, they only committed greater sin.
 - The time had come for God to judge them.



1 Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!

2 She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God.

Zephaniah 3:1-2

3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

4 Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

Zephaniah 3:3-4

5 The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

6 I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.

Zephaniah 3:5-6

- When committing a crime you do not want the Police present!
- Jerusalem was full of injustice... and God says He is standing in the midst and watching everything!
(nothing is hidden that shall not be made known - 1 Cor 4:5)

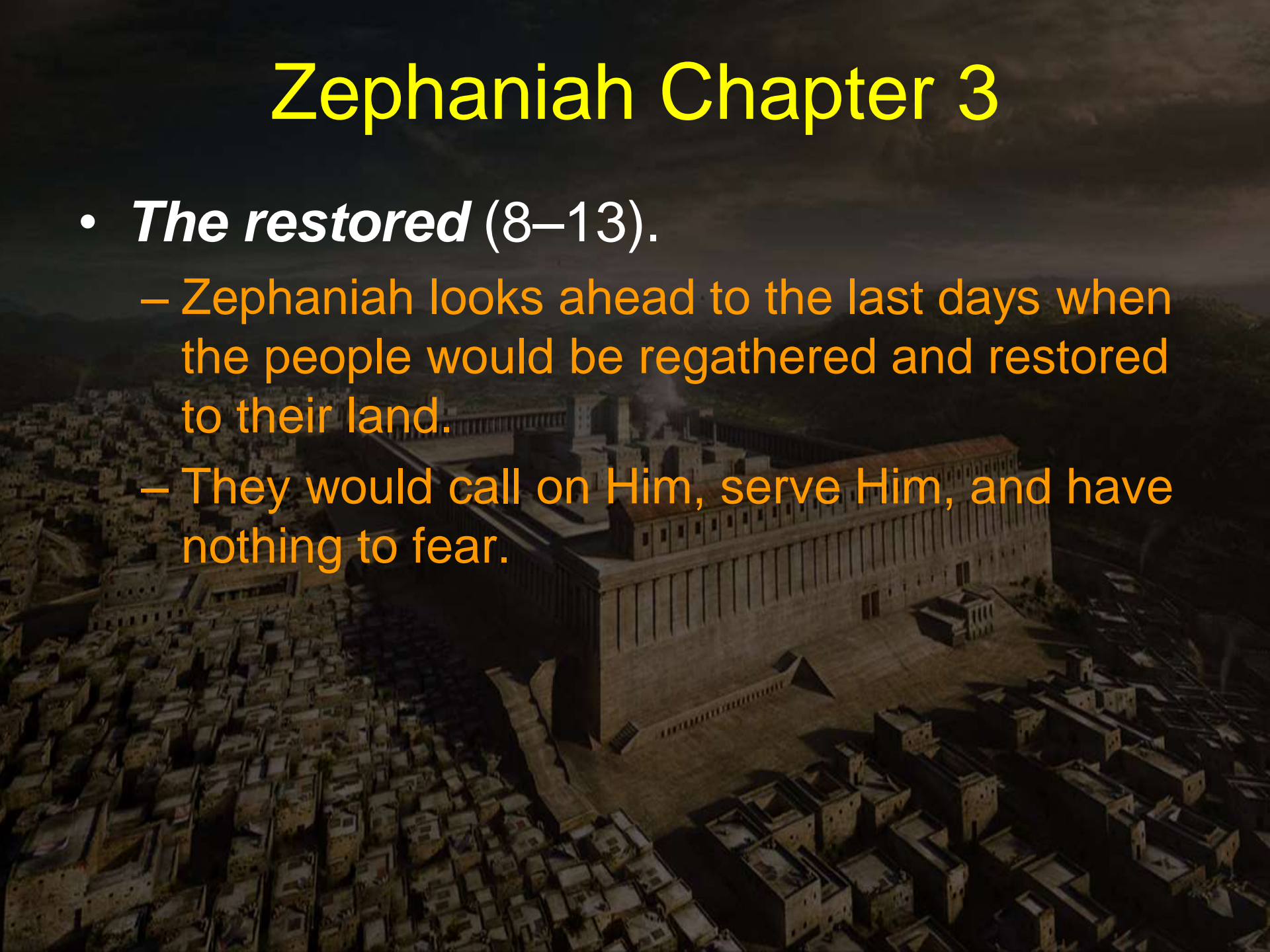
⁷ I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.

Zephaniah 3:7

- It is hard to fathom the depths man can sink to!
- Man is hell-bent on his own destruction...
- ...unless he humbles himself and turns to God

Zephaniah Chapter 3

- ***The restored*** (8–13).
 - Zephaniah looks ahead to the last days when the people would be regathered and restored to their land.
 - They would call on Him, serve Him, and have nothing to fear.



8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

Zephaniah 3:8

- 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
- 32 And before him shall be gathered **all nations:** and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:
- 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Matthew 25:31-33

- 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
- 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Matthew 25:34-36

- 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
- 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?
- 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

Matthew 25:37-39

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them,
Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it
unto one of the least of **these my brethren**, ye have
done it unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand,
Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,
prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matthew 25:40-41

- 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:
- 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.
- 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Matthew 25:42-44

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Matthew 25:45-46

9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.

Zephaniah 3:9

- That which was divided at Babel will be joined together again at Jerusalem!
- Many scholars expect Hebrew will be the 'pure language' that will be spoken universally

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

Zephaniah 3:10

- This may simply be a reference to the dispersed of Judah returning home to Israel...

¹¹ It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His *people who are left*...

Isaiah 11:11

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

Zephaniah 3:10

- This may simply be a reference to the dispersed of Judah returning home to Israel...

¹² He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 11:12

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suplicants,
even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine
offering.

Zephaniah 3:10

- This is another allusion to a gift being presented to the Lord from Ethiopia
- See also Isaiah 18:7
- Does this have anything to do with the strange encounter in Acts 8:25-40?

- 26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.
- 27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
- 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

Acts 8:26-28

Ethiopian Eunuch

- Who was this royal official?
- Why had he been sent on a state visit?
- Why send the Queens chief treasurer?
- Why was he reading the Jewish scripture?
- Why does the Holy Spirit want you to know about this encounter?
- It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

(Proverbs 25:2)

Israel & Ethiopia

- 1st Interaction between the descendants of Shem and Cush is in with the visit of the Queen of Sheba
- This gives rise to the legend of Menelik I
- At the time of the divided kingdom some Jews migrate down to Egypt
- A Jewish community begins to grow

The Mystery of the Ark

Conjecture:

- During the reign of Manessah the Ark was taken by the priests for protection
- It was taken down to Egypt – and placed in Jewish Temple nr. Aswan at Elephantine Island
 - On the boarder of Ethiopia
- In around 400 B.C. This community migrated down to into Ethiopia
- The Ark went to Lake Tanis...

Jewish Temple at Elephantine Island



Lake Tanis



The Mystery of the Ark

Conjecture:

- It remain at Lake Tanis for 800yrs
- In around 400 A.D. It was moved to Axum
- It resides there to this day
- Awaiting...

The islanders claim that eventually, the Ark was taken from them by the King of Axum, and taken to Axum where it has remained to this day. There are more than 20,000 churches in Ethiopia, each one having its own replica of the Ark of the Covenant. If this replica is removed, then they are considered impure. Even the replicas are considered very holy, and it is believed they can heal and bless those who touch them. However, it is almost universally believed by the people of Ethiopia that the original Ark of the Covenant that once stood in the holy of holies in Solomon's Temple, now resides in their temple in Axum. This temple is guarded by armed soldiers, and is completely surrounded by a security fence. People come from all over the country to worship at Axum in incredible celebrations, although they believe they will be struck dead if they actually see the Ark. Even the official Ethiopian web site claims the Ark is in Axum, as the picture of St Mary's



The Biblical Ark of the Covenant rests in this chapel in the courtyard of St. Mary's Church

Church (above) and associate text – straight from the web site show. <http://www.ethiopiaembassy.in/historical-north.htm>

Bob Comuke and others think the Ark was brought to Axum around 400 A.D. - about 1600 years ago, and in a conversation which Comuke recounts with a small, Ethiopian counsel, they stated they will keep the Ark hidden and have no intentions of revealing it to the public. There is only one monk who is allowed to see the Ark; he is considered the life-long "guardian of the Ark" and is apparently a direct descendant of the priesthood in Jerusalem.



This guard is now in its 30th generation in Axum's history, and the present guardian was chosen 'because of his purity'. He will spend the rest of his life as the Ark's guardian and will never leave the confines of the Temple. Incredibly, these people have a supreme indifference regarding letting the world know about the Ark. They don't care if people believe them or not, to them it's irrelevant because they know they have the Ark.

In one of his visits to Axum, Bob Cornuke spoke to an old, Ethiopian priest who had seen the Ark. Along with the present guardian, he is the only, living person who has seen the Ark. One report has said that the acacia wood that was used on the Ark has decomposed; whilst it was covered with gold, it is sunken in, now, and collapsed.

Returning to scripture for a moment, it is significant to note that Jeremiah said: *"And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more"* (Jer 3:16). Which days is the LORD through Jeremiah speaking of? The context of the passages shows that this is to be a time when backsliding Israel have returned to the LORD. If we are to understand this in the light of Zechariah 12:10, it must be referring to the time of the Second Coming. Jeremiah speaks of a time when the Ark will not be remembered, yet at present, Israel themselves still talk of the Ark. Although some Rabbis think the Ark is hidden under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, it is believed by some to be the catalyst that (when it is discovered) will trigger the rebuilding of the Temple on the Temple Mount. If the report of the wood decomposing is true, how interesting that the LORD has already foretold a time when it will be forgotten. It is also provocative that there will come a time when people will stop visiting the Ark. By the process of deduction, are we to conclude that the Ark is being visited for now? Is this yet further support to the conjecture outlined above?

St Mary's - Axum



The Biblical Arc of the Covenant rests in this chapel in the courtyard of St. Mary's Church

Mercy Seat – The Messiah's Throne?



- Made of solid gold – fit for a King!

¹¹ In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.

Zephaniah 3:11

12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

Zephaniah 3:12

- *“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”* Psalm 119:67
- *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.”* Psalm 119:71

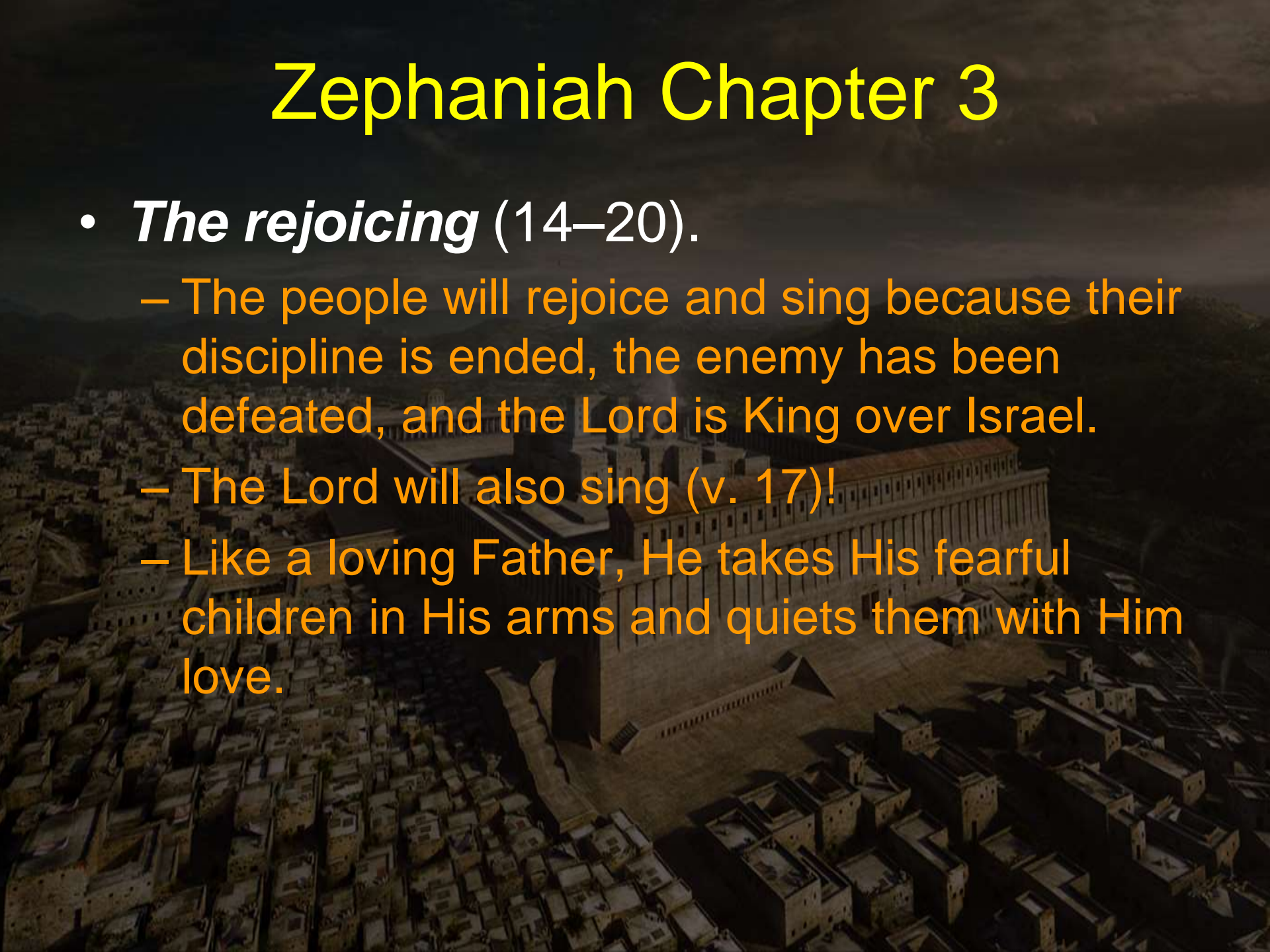
13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Zephaniah 3:13

- *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”* Psalm 27:1

Zephaniah Chapter 3

- ***The rejoicing*** (14–20).
 - The people will rejoice and sing because their discipline is ended, the enemy has been defeated, and the Lord is King over Israel.
 - The Lord will also sing (v. 17)!
 - Like a loving Father, He takes His fearful children in His arms and quiets them with His love.



14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

15 The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy:

the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

Zephaniah 3:14-16

17 The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

18 I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

Zephaniah 3:17-18

19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

20 At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.

Zephaniah 3:19-20



calvary
chapel
portsmouth

www.calvaryportsmouth.co.uk

Good News!

¹⁵ How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Romans 10:15

- This is a quote drawn from Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15