

The Message of Zephaniah for Christian Men Today

MEN OF THE CHURCH:

God is coming. Are we ready for Him?

A SOLEMN WARNING
A SERIOUS CALL,
AND AN AMAZING HOPE

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

www.ailbe.org

“And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men
Who are settled in complacency,
Who say in their heart,
“The LORD will not do good,
Nor will He do evil.””

- Zephaniah 1.12

Looking up?

There is nothing “minor” about the message of the Minor Prophet Zephaniah.

Zephaniah preached during the reign of King Josiah (Zephaniah 1.1). At that time, it seemed as if “the good old days” were returning. The people of God were prosperous (v. 18). Changes were being made which, on the surface, seemed to indicate that the favor of the Lord was returning to Jerusalem. Old ways were being rediscovered, old practices restored, and old hopes renewed. Things definitely seemed to be looking up (cf. 2 Kings 22, 23.1-25).

But it was all merely superficial and temporary. God saw beyond the surface of things. He saw into the hearts of the men of Jerusalem, and He determined a course of action, appropriate to what He observed (cf. 2 Kings. 23.26, 27).

Things may have been looking up, but the men of Jerusalem were not.

Though they participated in the outward forms and practices of religion, their hearts were ruled by idols of convenience of one kind or another (Zephaniah 1.2-6). They were not walking in the ways of the Lord, and they were not seeking Him (v. 6). In their hearts, in the depth of their souls, they didn’t really believe that God mattered, or, at least, that He could do anything to improve or undermine their settled ways.

Outwardly prosperous and faithful, the men of Jerusalem in Josiah’s day had become complacent. They were like the dregs in a bottle of wine, settled, useless, and waiting to be spewed from the mouth of the Lord (cf. Revelation 3.14-21).

Their complacency in matters of faith had allowed all manner of compromise to leach into the household of faith (Zephaniah 1.7-11). In spite of their feelings of faith and renewal, the people of Jerusalem looked more like the people of the surrounding pagan nations than the royal priesthood and holy nation God had saved them to be.

And God laid the blame for this squarely at the feet of the men of Jerusalem, the men of the Church.

Coming in judgment

Consequently, God was coming to search them out, single them out, and call them out for discipline.

A Solemn Warning to the Men of the Church

The essence of that discipline would be to make them see the complete destruction of everything they held dear, and to know, as they watched with broken hearts and shattered dreams, that they, the men of the Church, were responsible. They were to blame for this fearsome visitation of God.

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a ministry of Kingdom seekers, men devoted to realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God. Our ministry is to men. Our work is to encourage revival within the men of the Church, renewal in their churches, and awakening in our society and culture. We are devoted to reaching, stirring, awaking, equipping, and deploying men for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom.

Reaching them now, for revival, before the Lord reaches them in wrath.

For be sure, brothers, God is coming. And He is coming in judgment.

Are we ready?

Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together,
O undesirable nation,
Before the decree is issued,
Or the day passes like chaff,
Before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you,
Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you!
Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth,
Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility.
It may be that you will be hidden
In the day of the LORD's anger.

- Zephaniah 2.1-3

A call to prayer

God is not unjust. He has not forgotten His precious and very great promises to us, His people, nor the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. And Jesus, Who ever lives to intercede for His people, neither forgets nor neglects us before the throne of grace (Heb. 7.25).

God is eager to restore to His people all the blessings of His covenant and favor (cf. Zephaniah 2.6-9; 3.9-10). But He insists that we seek Him. Now. Together. In prayer.

“Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together...before the decree is issued.” It's not too late for the Church to escape the coming judgment of God.

And for the men of the Church to avoid the shame, embarrassment, and sorrow of seeing everything they hold dear taken from them.

A Solemn Warning to the Men of the Church

But we must seek the Lord. Seek Him together in prayer.

We must, that is, return to the path of restoration at precisely our weakest point – prayer. Failure to pray is where we have departed from God. Taking up the work of prayer is the way we must return.

For all kinds of reasons, Christian men don't pray as they should. Zephaniah's words went unheeded in his day. As a result, the people of Jerusalem were carried away into captivity. Their nation was ruined. Their temple was destroyed. And everything familiar to and loved by them was taken away.

All because the men of Jerusalem would not heed God's solemn warning and turn to Him in prayer together.

A serious call

The terrible fate that befell the men of Zephaniah's day doesn't have to be our fate today.

If men begin praying together, God promises to stay His hand of judgment and restore the blessings of His people.

If men will pray.

If they will pray together.

At The Fellowship of Ailbe we are issuing a serious call to the men of the Church to seek the Lord together as a movement of men in prayer. We are asking God to raise up thousands of men who will pray daily for revival, renewal, and awakening, beginning in their own lives. We're seeking men who will encourage and join with other men to pray, and who will gather groups of men – by twos, threes, tens, or more – to uphold the justice of God, seek righteousness and humility, and plead with God to stay His hand of discipline and extend His hand of mercy once again.

Which Church?

Of which Church are you a man, O man of the Church?

The Church of Josiah's day? Settled? Complacent? Untrusting? Indifferent to the prophet's call to seek the Lord in prayer?

Or the Church of today, compromised, complacent, poised for discipline, and desperately in need of men who will pray?

And might you be one of those men who, like Zephaniah, sees the need, hear God's call, and, following the example of Christ Himself, seeks the Lord and calls others to gather with you in seeking Him for revival, renewal, and awakening in our day?

If not you, who?

Join the movement

Already men have begun taking up Zephaniah's serious call to seek the Lord in prayer. Using a little booklet entitled, *If Men Will Pray*, men are committing to a 30-day intensive discipline of prayer, joining with other men to seek the Lord according to His Word, and to foment a movement of men in prayer to bring revival, renewal, and awakening in our day. From that beginning they move on to more consistent and effective daily prayer, leading others to join them in the movement, and organizing groups of men to pray for revival

A Solemn Warning to the Men of the Church

You can make a difference, O man of the Church. Join us at The Fellowship of Ailbe in this movement of men in prayer. Go to our website, www.ailbe.org, and order two copies of *If Men Will Pray* – one copy for you, and one for a prayer partner you will recruit into this movement of men in prayer.

Join us. Become part of a movement of men at prayer who look to this glorious promise of God as they plead with Him day by day:

The seacoast shall be pastures,
With shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks.
The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah;
They shall feed their flocks there...
For the LORD their God will intervene for them,
And return their captives...
For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language,
That they all may call on the name of the LORD,
To serve Him with one accord...
I will leave in your midst
A meek and humble people,
And they shall trust in the name of the LORD...
Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart...
The LORD has take away your judgments...
In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear;
Zion, let not your hands be weak.
The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.”

- Zephaniah 2.6, 7; 3.9, 12, 14-17

A truly glorious promise, indeed, and an amazing hope! If men will pray.

If you, O man of the Church, will pray.

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith. We are helping many to know more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God, and we invite you to join us in this high calling.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

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