

# Book of Zephaniah

by Bob Phillips

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*Bob Phillips explores the themes of judgment, the remnant, and the dangers of misplaced trust in the Book of Zephaniah.*

**Duration:** 1:33:39

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 12:1, Jeremiah 12:14, Malachi 2:1-2, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

**Topics:** "Gods Judgment", "Spiritual Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes the state of Jerusalem and its people, who are in a state of despair and humiliation. The gates of the city are destroyed, the nobles are unable to find water, and the law is no longer followed. Despite this, God expresses his desire to comfort and admonish the people, even in their sin. The speaker also mentions the coming judgment of God, where the entire earth will be devoured, and emphasizes the importance of being silent before the Lord.

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## Transcript

It won't go forth without accomplishing exactly what you see needs to be accomplished. Lord, I open myself up to you. Let your word do a work in us.

Father, let your Spirit, Lord, just be evident among us. Bring this message home to our hearts, Lord. Bring it home to our hearts.

Lord, let it tear down, but let it bring encouragement as well. Father in Jesus' name, we thank you. Lord, we exalt your precious holy name.

Amen. Zephaniah. There's a lot of talk today about a remnant.

A lot of messages being preached about a remnant. There's a kingdom message that's going forth strongly today that teaches that there's not going to be a second coming. There's various forms of the kingdom message, but one part of it teaches there's not going to be a second coming of Jesus.

That simply what's going to happen, and the saints are not going to be caught up to be with the Lord, but what's going to happen is there's simply going to be Christ formed in his body. A mighty army is going to form. There's going to be a witness to the world.

A remnant is going to be here, and that's going to be the army, and they're going to take dominion of everything. I want you to understand that I'm very, very suspicious when I hear a message about all the dominion that we're going to take, and I hear very little about the exaltation of Jesus, because any dominion that we have is in Christ. Now, I believe with all my heart, when I even read the book of Revelation and I read some other things, I believe that God is developing a mighty army of a body of believers.

And I believe that he's developing this body of believers to be a witness to his word. I believe more so than maybe we've ever seen before. As a matter of fact, I believe very strongly that, because when I read the book of Haggai, I understand that there's going to be a greater army walking in greater power than we see in the book of Acts.

I believe that. I believe that's going to happen. But we have to understand something.

They didn't walk in power in the book of Acts apart from Christ. And I think any speaking that's done on dominion... Listen, especially in America, we have such a power-hungry people. We're power-hungry, we're fame-oriented.

It's easy to have a message that talks about how great we're going to be to appeal to Americans, because that's the very thing that's in the heart of America, is to be great. And so you give them a little bit of religion to where they come to Jesus, and then you tell them how great they're going to be, and multitudes will follow that kind of teaching. What I'm saying to you is that I not only see a remnant being formed.

I read my Bible and I see two remnants being born. Two of them. One, I believe, is a small remnant of people.

I look through the Bible as I begin to see the fire that God says he's going to bring to the earth. I see figures, when God talks about his remnant, of a small remnant. When he says only a remnant will return in the prophets, he's talking about a small number of people.

Zachariah speaks of two-thirds being cut off and one-third being purified by the fire. A small remnant. The book of Zephaniah talks about two remnants.

It speaks of both of them and it describes them. I want us to look at that. I want us to see that not only is there a remnant of God that's being formed today, but there's a remnant of Baal that's being formed today.

And I'm telling you, Baal is very much alive. In Paul's day, they had pretty much stopped worshipping Baal as such, particularly in Rome. But it was to the Romans that when Paul cried out in distress for his people and he says, what's going to happen to the nation Israel? What's going to happen to them? What's going to happen to my people? God reminded him of the same thing that he told Elijah when Elijah cried out and said, Lord, I'm the only one on Mount Carmel.

In Romans chapter 11, God said to Paul there are 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal. Baalism has not died. I see Baalism in the prosperity message.

I see Baalism in the kingdom message. And it isn't so much the worship of idolatry is of Baalism. The worship of pleasure and sex is of Baalism.

All of these things were part of Baal worship. Very much alive in our country. Let's begin with chapter 1, verse 1. The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah, son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amoriah, son of Hezekiah in the days of Josiah, son of Ammon, king of Judah.

I will completely remove all things from the face of the earth, declares the Lord. I'll remove man and beast. I'll remove the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea and the ruins along with the wicked.

And I will cut off from the face of the earth, declares the Lord. I'll cut off man from the face of the earth. Now I want you to see how complete that destruction is.

He says, I'm going to have such a destruction come upon the earth that the fish in the sea, the animals on the land and man will be completely wiped off of the face of the earth. Now, can I tell you something? Even though this was spoken by Zephaniah the prophet in the days of Josiah to the nation of Judah, that has never been yet fulfilled. Obviously you can pick up almost any commentary.

Try it and go home and see if you've got one. You pick up almost any commentary and they'll either spiritualize it like it's something that just meant spiritually to Judah, or they will say something like the prophet in his zeal made a mistake and it or that it was a redaction. It was an addition.

My friends, it's not an addition. It's not a mistake. It speaks to the day we're living in right now.

It speaks to the final and coming judgment. I believe it speaks to our generation. And he says in verse 14, let's look at this.

Near is the great day of the Lord. No, my goodness. It's such a destruction that he spoke up in.

Can you say near? How much closer is it right now in the time we're living? Near is the great day of the Lord. Near and coming very quickly. Listen, the day of the Lord.

In it, the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day. A day of trouble and distress.

A day of destruction and desolation. A day of darkness and doom. A day of clouds and thick darkness.

A day of trumpet and battle cry. It's interesting to me because when we hear about the coming of the, of the Lord, that coming day of the Lord, I want you to, you can check this out. You can look at it.

90% of the sermons that I hear today that are spoken on Jesus coming again, glorify out everybody in the church and say, Jesus is coming. How glorious it's going to be to be with him in heaven. Those of you who are saved for all you lost people, it's going to be a day of destruction.

Now, I believe that, but when I read, I don't care if it's in Peter or if it's in the prophets or it's in the words of words of Jesus. When he spoke of the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ, he first spoke to the church and said, it's going to be a day of gloom and darkness. It's not going to be the kind of day you expect.

Yes, it will be for the remnant of those that are being purified. And they're walking in the purifying fires of the Lord to offer up holiness and righteousness to God. Their hearts are being changed, but it won't be to all of those pretenders.

And when he speaks of the coming of the Lord, Jesus, he speaks first to those people who are in church. Now you check out the scriptures and every case he does that. Now notice what he says.

First 16, it's a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner tower. I don't have time to take you through all the scriptures, but you'll find that the fortified cities not only speak of the fortifications literally around the city, but it also has a spiritual meaning. I'm not spiritualizing it.

You can read it in the passages that they're there and Isaiah, Jeremiah and the other prophets. And you'll see, you check it out. It has a spiritual application.

You understand when God says this, it doesn't mean he's just going to come tear down the walls of the city. We don't have any walls on our cities. And yet if the Bible is an eternal book, it not only speaks to those that are behind us, it speaks to us and those that have come before it has a message for us.

When he says he's going to come against the fortified cities, he's speaking right now. He's speaking to the churches. He's going to come against the big super church.

I'm not saying that you can't be a super church and lift up Jesus. You can't have a big church and exalt Jesus. But he's going to come against what we call super churches that are exalting themselves.

The high fortifications that men have trusted in. He says, I'm going to come against them. I'm going to tear them down.

Now he may not literally tear them down, but he's going to leave them desolate and he's going to abandon them. And the high corner towers that we've been trusting in most people today are looking at men and not at God. That's why it's so easy to build a ministry.

If you can exalt yourself enough, if you can do it enough and get the right breaks, you can have one of the most dynamic ministries possible in America. Now there are some men of God that have big ministries, but I'm talking about the fact that we live in a country where we promote people. We exalt and promote men.

And he says, these high corner towers you've been trusting in, I'm going to tear them down. I want to share this with you. I won't turn to have you turn there, but you can check it out.

A curse started way back when God brought the people into the land of the wilderness, taking them to Canaan. And the curse is still with us today. As a matter of fact, Mark, Jeff and I, I'm going to take you there.

Mark Jeff and I was something because we'll be coming back to it frequently. Turn with me to Exodus chapter 20, Exodus 20. So we can get a picture of the remnant of Baal, what he's talking about when he comes against the fortified cities in the high corner towers, Exodus chapter 20, the 20th chapter of Exodus.

God has just given us the 10 commandments. And I want you to see what happens. Verse 18, Exodus 20, verse 18.

And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, speak to us yourself and we will listen, but let not God speak to us lest we die.

Now you read other accounts from this and you'll see that he'd already spoken of to them before they said that they'd heard the voice of God. They heard him speak, but they saw the lightning. They saw the

mountain shaking.

They saw the quaking and they cried out and said, wait, don't let God speak to us. Let's have a mediator. People have been looking for a mediator ever since you say, well, what are you saying that there shouldn't be a pastor? Absolutely not.

But I said this yesterday. I've said again, every true shepherd, obviously there's to be pastors. Ephesians four, God calls pastors a gift from him to the body of Christ.

Evangelists and prophets and apostles and pastors and teachers are gifts from God to the body of Christ. They're in his ordained plan. But no pastor who's really a shepherd after God's own heart, I said it yesterday, wants to be an answer man to tell the people what God's saying.

Not if he's got a real heart. First of all, he knows there's a burden too much for any pastor to carry when he's got to be the answer man for everybody. More pastors have broken under the weight of that than possibly any other way.

But a real pastor wants his congregation to have an active walking relationship with God. We want to know how to get rid of most of the problems in the church. We've got to have godly pastors and godly people.

And that's when the problems will go. That may be simplified to say it. It may say, well, that sounds easy, but that's the only answer.

Now, listen, the people heard and they saw and they said, don't let God speak to us. Moses, you go here for us. And ever since then, we've had a people, a curse, a people who said, pastor, you tell me what the Bible says.

I won't get it for myself. Now, the pastor is the lead and exhort and to teach and to draw them. There's a special anointing on him in order to be able to see insights and draw out to the people.

But he's not to be their answer man. He's not to be their mediator between them and God. They asked for a mediator.

Now, look what they said. Verse 19, they said to Moses, speak to us yourself and we'll listen, but let not God speak to us lest we die. So the people stood at a distance while Moses approached the thick clouds where God was.

Now, I want you to turn with me, Deuteronomy chapter five, Deuteronomy five. Later on, Moses is talking to these same people about that very incident we just read about. I want you to see what God says about the Deuteronomy five, verse twenty three.

Remember, Moses is now recounting what happened and it came about when you heard Moses is speaking to the people. He says, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness. Now, it's very clear they heard a voice, didn't they? I say it's very clear, isn't it? They had already heard God before they ever said, let's not let him speak lest we die.

You heard a voice from the midst of the darkness while the mountain was burning with fire that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribe, your elders, and you said, behold, the Lord. Now, remember, Moses is the one recounting this to the people. Behold, you said, behold, the Lord, our God has shown us his glory and his greatness, and we've heard his voice from the midst of the fire.

We've seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. Now, isn't that interesting? Now, notice what happens now, then why should we die? And where did they get that idea? Why should we die for this great fire will consume us if we hear the voice of the Lord, our God, any longer than we shall die? For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire as we have and live? Well, they just live. They had just heard God speak to them and live.

But now they don't want to hear from God. They want to hear from man. I tell you, no pastor really wants the pastor of people like that.

You know why? Because when they, when people like that, pastor has people like that, when they get tired of what that pastor is saying, they won't go hear another man. The only security a pastor has is in teaching his people to hear from God. Plus, if he's hearing from God and they're hearing from God, they're going to be one together.

Now notice this verse 27, go near and hear all that the Lord, our God says. That's what they told Moses to do. Then speak to us all that the Lord, our God will speak to you and what they say.

And we will hear it then and we'll do it. Now here's a picture of a people who says, if you just don't be army there, you go spend time with the Lord on the mountain, Moses. And then when you come back, you tell us what God says.

It's no problem. When you tell us what he said, we'll accept it. And we'll go do it.

Now look at this. See God's looking at all of this. We're going to see what God saw.

I've been saying this to you for two days now. God sees things differently than man sees things. Man looks at the outward appearance.

God looks at the heart. Now look at this verse 28. And the Lord heard the voice of your words.

When you spoke to me and the Lord said to me, I've heard the voice of the words of this people, which they've spoken to you. They've done well in all that they've spoken. In other words, what they said was right with their lips, but there's a problem.

Here's what God sees. Oh, oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear me and keep all my commandments that it may be well with them and with their sons forever. See, they said, you go here from God, come back and tell us.

And we'll do it. God looks down and he's looking at those people and he sees their hearts. He says, no, no, they won't do it.

They say they'll do it with their lips, but they won't do it. They don't have a heart to fear me. They don't have a heart to fall after it after me.

Now, what I'm saying to you is this, the high quarter towers. That have just wanted to have an exalted ministry, I believe are coming down. The fortified cities are coming down when they come down.

All that have trusted in man, when you trust in the arm of the flesh. And it's coming down. God says in these last times, I'm going to deal with everything that's all the flesh.

I'm going to expose it for what it is. Well, let's turn back to this. Now, can you think of anything worse than finding everything that you've trusted in all your life to crumble right before your eyes? I said, can you think of anything worse? This very thing I'm seeing fulfilled right now.

We're seeing more pastors caught in adultery. We're seeing more pastors exposed for their sins. We're seeing deacons exposed, leaders exposed.

And I'm seeing distress on the faces of the people. They're saying, I've followed this man for years. I've watched this man for years.

How could this be happening? Look what the next verse says. And I will bring distress on men. When? When the fortified cities they've trusted in, when those things that they thought were strong, those things that they thought were going to last.

Did Jesus say, did God say, I'm going to bring a shaking and everything that can be shaken will be shaken. And only those things that cannot be shaken will remain. Well, when he brings it, guess what happens? The stress comes over the whole land.

We're seeing it today. And he says, the stress is going to be there. Now, here's what happens.

Not only do they get the stress, but see, they don't have a relationship with God themselves. They don't know where to turn. They don't know where to trust.

I'm not sure Brother David mentioned it yesterday or not, but if he did, I'll repeat it. If not a particular church that has a pastor that was caught in adultery and the church, a group of a committee came against that adulterous pastor privately that did the right things to try to remove him. There was an outcry in the church and they had a vote and they voted to stay.

We don't care if he does live like that. He preaches good. I know of another place where a man was caught in homosexuality.

The only thing that the majority of the people could say about it was, I sure hate to see him go. I sure love to hear him teach that Bible. You know, why are people saying that? Here's what they've been trusting in man.

They don't have a relationship with God. And so when their high corner towers fall down, they're in distress and they do this. They walk like the blind because they've sinned against the Lord.

They're like blind people. Jesus warned us about it. He said, let the blind follow the blind.

They'll both fall into the ditch. And that's what he's talking about. They don't know where to turn.

They're in distress. Their trust was in the church. It was in the man.

When he falls, distress comes and they're like blind sheep. Now, here's what happens because they've sinned against the Lord and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung. Now, look at this.

Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them. On the day of the Lord's wrath and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of his jealousy. What's God jealous about? James 4 tells us about his

jealousy.

Again, don't turn there, but in James 4, he begins to speak to the Christians and he says to them, says, you pray, but you don't get your prayers answered. You ask, but you don't receive because you ask with the wrong motive to go spend it on your own lusts and your own pleasures. He says, don't you know that the spirit that dwells within you, that God jealously dwells or jealously desires the spirit that dwells within you.

He jealously desires to have communion with you. And then he says to them, you adulterous, don't you realize that friendship, friendship with the world is enmity to God and he who makes himself a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God? That's what this is talking about. God's jealous.

Oh, my, I'll tell you, it's not good to be an enemy of God. And there are more people in the churches, I'm convinced, that are God's enemies than they are his disciples. Now, look what he says.

Here's what he says in the fire of his jealousy. He's going to come the whole earth. How much of the earth? All the earth will be devoured.

Does that speak to the last days? For he'll make a complete end, indeed, a terrifying one of all the inhabitants of the earth. Now, how do things get in such a state as what we just described? And notice what he says. Verse four, I'll tell you what, before I read that, let's go to verse seven.

Be silent before the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is near, for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice and he's consecrated his guests. Now, you know, he speaks of that in the book of Revelation. You know, when he talks about in the book of Revelation, he says, all you birds of the sky, beasts of the field, come and eat.

He says, I've prepared a banquet table. This is not a good banquet. This is not the marriage supper of the land he's talking about.

Let me show you why. Be silent before the Lord God, the day is near. The Lord's prepared a sacrifice.

He's consecrated his guests. Then it will come about on the day of the Lord's sacrifice. Now, this is not the marriage supper that I will punish the princes, the king's sons and all who clothed themselves with what kind of garments, strange apparel or foreign garments.

What does he mean foreign garments? Now, obviously, now listen to me. Obviously, he's not talking about the sinners in the world. Let me ask you a question.

To an unregenerated heart is lost the foreign garment or natural garment? Natural. What about greed and adultery and division and strife, hatred, envy, anger? Are those foreign garments to the world? Are those natural garments? Natural garments. So when he says you've clothed yourself, clothed yourself with strange apparel, foreign garments, he's talking to those people who take the name of Jesus.

And yet clothed themselves not with Christ, but with the foreign garments of the lust of the flesh. He says, I want to have a banquet. I've consecrated my guests and I want to tell you who it is.

It's the power of the darkness. It's his final judgment. Now, notice what's happening.

I want you to again, Mark, Zephaniah, turn with me to Ezekiel 16, 16. I'm not going to read all of the verses here, but follow through with me. Verse one, Ezekiel 16, the word of the Lord came to me saying, now remember, we're going to look at foreign garments or strange apparel.

The word of the Lord came to me saying, son of man, make known to Jerusalem for abomination. And say, thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem, your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanites. Your father was an Amorite, your mother a Hittite.

Now he's speaking historically, but I want you to apply this spiritually also as the prophets speak to us, because we're told they wrote this for our instruction. Our birth, our natural birth was from the Canaanites. Is that right? Now, what I mean by that is somebody outside of covenant with God.

I'm not talking about, you know, your mother and father being Christian or not Christian, but whenever you come into this world, you have to make a choice to follow Jesus with all your heart if you're going to be clothed with his righteous garments. And that's all he's saying here. You are a foreigner.

You're a stranger and alien to the covenant. Now notice this. As for your birth on the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing.

You're not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in clothes. But on the day you were born, you weren't prepared to come into God's family at that moment. You weren't washed.

You weren't cleansed on the day you were born. That has to come with cleansing when you join your heart to Jesus with him as Lord master. Verse five, I want you to see this boy.

Isn't it just like the world? No, I look with pity on you to do any of these things for you to have compassion on you. Rather, you were thrown out into an open field where you were born on the day you were born. Isn't that the way the world is? Again, he's not talking about mothers and fathers.

Let me tell you something. The world loves winners. It'll pick losers to death.

As long as you're winning, you're going to be in good friendship with the world. But even the world, even the world, when you start losing, you're not on top of things. The world kicks you to death.

And what he's saying is you're born into an evil world, this present evil age you were born into. There was nobody, nothing in the world. There was nothing about this world that wanted to wash you or treat you kindly.

There was nothing about this world that wanted to take you as a young babe and care for you. But I want you to know something. Even when God saw us born, he wanted to take us as a young babe and cleanse us.

That's what he's trying to say. He's telling us of his love for his people. Now, look what happens.

Verse six, when I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, live. And I said to you while you were in your blood, live. I made you like numerous, numerous like the plants of the field.

Then you grew up, you became tall and you reached the age for fine ornaments. Your breasts were formed, your hair had grown, yet you were naked and bare. You reach an age where God can begin to

deal and woo that heart.

And a place where he can begin to reveal himself to you. He starts with a young child in a godly home and he begins to woo you. And you come finally to a place where he can put his fine ornaments on you.

Verse eight, then I passed by you and I saw you and behold, you were at the time for love. Isn't that precious? I say, isn't that precious? See, God loved him from the very beginning. He says, now I saw you at a time when I could just begin to pour my love out on you.

And you could understand my love. So I spread my skirt over you and covered your nakedness. And I swore to you and entered into a covenant with you and you became mine.

What a precious picture, declares the Lord. Then look what he does to it. Then I bathed you with water.

I washed off your blood from you and I anointed you with the oil of my Holy Spirit. I clothed you with embroidered cloth and sandals of porcelain skin on your feet. And I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with the silk and I adorned you with ornaments.

I put bracelets on your hands and necklaces around your neck. It goes on and on. In other words, he says, I clothed you with the beautiful robe of my son.

I put the finest apparel on you, you could possibly have. Verse 15, we're talking about a person that's been born again. Verse 15, foreign garments, strange apparel, wooed to God because he loved them, but you trusted in your beauty.

And you played the harlot because of your fame. And you poured out your heart trees on every passerby who might be willing. Now look at this.

And you took some of your clothes and you made for yourself high places. What does it say? Of various colors. Is that what it says in the King James? Of what diverse colors? High places of various colors and played the harlot on them, which should never come about nor happen.

It should never have happened. Again, I hear the same cry for Jeremiah chapter two, verse five. What iniquity have you found in me, says God, that you should turn away from me.

And yet they did. Turn with me to Jeremiah 12. They took God's colors and his ornaments and made for themselves various colors.

Here's what God had to do. Now we're seeing why there's going to be such a destruction that he describes in Jeremiah. Here's why the destruction is coming.

See, not only the people, not only do the people do this, but what about the preachers? What's happened to the preachers? You understand. And I say this, and sometimes this sounds hard. I'm going to show you something in a minute where God looks and blames both.

You absolutely can't. If you are not a preacher, you can't blame a preacher for the problem. And if you're a preacher, you can't blame the people for the problem.

Either one of them is a sin. I can show you that in the word of God. But I want you to understand something.

You know why America is so corrupt, corrupt and polluted? Because the pulpit is so corrupt and polluted. You know why the people are so corrupt and polluted? Because the pulpit is corrupt and polluted. You know how the pulpit got corrupted and polluted? Because that's exactly what the people demanded.

That's what they want. If you don't believe it, there's very few churches you can put a righteous preacher in without either having a church split before there's ever any walk in righteousness and holiness or having run off. An appalling thing has happened in the land.

God's prophets prophesied greed for them own selves and the people love itself. Well, look at this. Jeremiah 12, verse 7, what a statement.

I, God is speaking, I have forsaken my house. I have abandoned my inheritance. I have given the beloved of my soul.

Now in Ezekiel 16, we just read about his love, didn't we? He says, I saw you, you were at a time for love and I took you to myself. The world wasn't going to care for you. The world abhorred you.

But I took you into my arms. I loved you. I bathed you.

And I adorned you. And now he calls you the beloved of his soul. And that's the very thing he's abandoned.

I've forsaken my house. I've abandoned my inheritance. I have given the beloved of my soul, where? Into the hand of her enemies.

Now, I won't turn there. I don't have time to turn there. But for anybody who looks at this, and I've heard this argument, well, but that was Israel or that's Judah.

I mean, we're the church. Well, anybody who says that's never read Romans 11. Romans 11 says, if the root be holy, the branches will be holy.

And then he goes on to say, don't you get lifted up in pride because of what happened to Israel, but you examine your own self, lest the same thing come on you. And he said, if I dealt with the natural branches that way, how much more am I going to deal with the wild olive branch that's been grafted in? And then he says, he says that they can return if they'll be grafted back in. He says, but you, speaking to the church, he said, you better watch your pride.

You better not get lifted up. Behold, both the kindness and the severity of God. Severity to those who walk in rebellion and his kindness to those who claim to that vine.

But that's what he says. In fact, he very clearly says that if you walk in unbelief and rebellion, he says you'll be cut off too. See, and so this very much applies to the church.

And he says, I've given the church, I've forsaken the church. Now understand what we don't, don't understand me. Am I, am I down on churches? No, I have not at all, but I want to show you two remnants.

There's a church within the church. There's a real church. The church of God has some real churches and some phony churches.

Southern Baptist has some real churches and some phony churches. Symbols of God has some real churches and phony churches. And even within those real churches, there's some remnants of bail and there's a remnant of God.

So understand what I say, but he's forsaken. He's forsaken this church. That's wearing various colors.

And notice this. I've given the beloved of my soul in the hand of her enemies. Verse eight, my inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest.

She's roared against me. Therefore I've come to hate her. Why that strong language.

I say that strong language. Look what he says is my inheritance like a speckled bird of prey to me. What that literally says.

I'm not sure what the King James says there, but what it literally says to Hebrew is my inheritance has become like a bird of many colors. I'll tell you something. God planted his people in one nest.

It was the nest of righteousness and holiness. They're all going to be birthed from the same place. They'll be birthed from a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they're to have one color, they're to sing one song, and that's Jesus. And they have become a many colored bird. You know what happens? It's a beautiful illustration.

If you go to an exotic pet shop and you pick out one of those expensive, brightly colored birds, take it outside and turn it loose. It probably won't live more than an hour. You know why? Because the other birds will attack it and kill it.

If it's not in its natural habitat, they'll attack it and kill it. But you know what he says? He says that you're a bird of prey to me. And are the birds of prey against her on every side? He talks about two kinds of prey.

Now, this is important. See, not only are you a colored bird and open to the prey of the enemy as Brother David was mentioned last night, the walls are down. You step out there with any color.

There's only one color. It's going to turn away the enemy. It's the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's bright red and you're clothed with that from the inside out. It turns away the enemy. But if you're a bird of many colors, you're open to the attack of the enemy.

But not only do you become a bird open to the attack of enemy, you also become a bird of prey yourself. He says, I not only see you as being attacked by the enemy, but I see you as destroying others by your many colors. You yourself are a bird of prey.

You're preyed on and you prey on others. Now, you see, when the cup of all of this gets full to where the Lord can no longer bear it at the appointed time, this destruction we just read about in Zephaniah, it's going to be loose and poured out on all the land. I don't think you look.

Now, look what he says. Go and gather all the beasts of the field and bring them to devour. Have you ever seen a time when there's more Christians being devoured than right now? I mean, I want to tell you something.

I get appalled. Now, I hit this hard sometimes, but I do. I get appalled.

You go into a Christian bookstore and the only thing you're going to find there that sells are either books of testimonies about and there is a place for this or the destruction is right at our door. It's there now, but there's going to be a change or we're going to be bypassed. Verse one, chapter two of Malachi.

And now this commandment is for you, O priests, if you do not listen. If you do not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you. And I will curse your blessings and indeed, I have cursed them already because you're not taking it to heart.

How many of you can see the curse on the land? I had lunch and some of the leaders of this conference pouring the heart out. They weren't using these words curse and so on, but they're pouring the heart out about what they saw. The curse on the land.

The curse on the land. I want to say on the land, I'm talking about in the church and it's certainly on our country. That's why when we read Zephaniah, I'm showing you these things to let you know this is why it's coming.

I have to show you something else. Turn with me now that we're in Malachi. I want you to look with me.

Well, I don't want to leave without showing you this part. I want you to see the difference between godly ministers and ungodly ministers. Verse five.

I'm going to read verse three because you're going to see this in just a moment. Behold, I'm going to rebuke your offspring and I'll spread. I want you to see this.

I'll spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts, and you'll be taken away with it. When he talks about the refuse of the feast, you know what he's talking about? He's talking about the religious services. In Isaiah chapter one, he said the people had gotten to the place.

He said, take away the noise of your songs. Take away the abomination of your prayers. Take away your feasts and your festivals and your new moons.

Take them all away from me. I'll not hear you anymore. We've become so arrogant that we don't believe it can happen to us today and we're so blind we don't even see it happening and we don't take it to heart.

We don't mourn for what we think. And it's right here in our midst. And what we see in terms of judgment today is the outcry of God's heart being grieved over the many colored birds.

Now we're going to come to the refuse. It's going to pour on in a moment. I want you to see.

Verse four. You see, but I want you to see this because we're going to get to those two remnants of Baal. As strong as that judgment is, and you'll find this throughout the word of God, is in Zephaniah this way.

He makes one of the strongest words of judgment you can possibly read right there in Zephaniah. And then we're going to see in the moment he not only talks about a godly remnant, and here he is again. He says the curse has come.

I've looked at your religious services. I've looked at the way you're doing things. You've forgotten me days without number.

You've become a speckled bird of prey. You've taken my fine ornaments and garments that I gave to you in love and I clothed you with. You've taken on, you've made various colors with them.

And in spite of that, and he says, you're not taking it to heart. And so the very blessings that I gave your curses, I want to say something I shared this week and yesterday, the Southern Baptist Church is under judgment. But how much more are the Pentecostal churches going to be under judgment? That know the reality of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the anointing and power of God and turn their back on him.

If you've got that blessing, how much more judgments are going to be? But then he turns around and look what he said. Verse four, then you'll know that I have sent this commandment to you that my covenant may continue with Levi, says the Lord of hosts. How many of you remember David's message yesterday morning? The covenant would leave.

I sons of Zadok, Ezekiel 44. Those who didn't go after idols, one group, he left them with idols to stand before and minister to the people, their idols. The other group, he cleansed him.

He said, you can come near my holy thing. One group didn't go after idols. They laid them all aside.

One group went after idols. The group who went after idols, he said, you can't touch my holy thing. So I will leave you right there and minister to the people because that's what they want.

You have to stay models of your heart that they want. And then he turns around and says, but here's another group of Levi, Levi, the sons of Zadok, they didn't go after the idols. He says, I'm going to let them come near my holiest thing.

And they're going to stand and minister to me and before me. But here he says, when all this refuse gets poured out, there's going to be such a separation of these two remnants with one group. I'm going to pour refuse on them.

The other group, I'm going to honor them with my covenant. Verse five, my covenant with him in the midst of all this turmoil, you and I can have this, my covenant with the sons of Levi who don't go after idols. What is it? Life and peace.

My covenant was one of life and peace. And I gave to them, them to him as an object of fear or reverence. So he revered me and he stood in awe of my name.

Now, here's the true priest. Now, look what's going to happen. Ministers of God, I'm telling you, you get your lives right.

Seek after God with all your heart. This is exactly the promise we got before God. Verse six, true instruction was in his mouth.

And unrighteousness was not found on his lips. I read to you in Zephaniah chapter one, the people be confused when the high corner towers and the fortified cities begin to break up. And out of those confused, distressed people that walk around blindly, there's going to be some of them that are going to come running to a minister of Levi who's got no unrighteousness in his lips.

Some of them are going to come. Others are going to still wander into blindness and darkness and go off into deception. God's looking for a man with the heart of David.

True instruction is going to be found in his mouth. Unrighteousness is not going to be in his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness.

And look at this. He turned many back from iniquity for the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge. And I want to say to you, it doesn't just mean ministers.

It does mean the ministers of God. But every one of us is under our God. We've been made a kingdom of priests, a procure your people for the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge.

And men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But as for you, here's the other side. But as for you, these many colored birds, you've turned aside from the way.

You cause many to stumble instead of many being turned back from iniquity. What happens instead of being turned back from iniquity? They're caused to stumble. How? By the instruction.

How many of you see that? I say, how many of you see that? They're caused to stumble by the instruction. Let me say it again. They're caused to stumble by the instruction instead of being turned back from their iniquity.

They're caused to stumble. I want to tell you something. You're going to find a whole lot more passages.

I mean, the weight of balance is far, far more to the side of Scripture that tell a minister that his job is to turn people back from their sin, than it is to teach them how to make wealth, how to have what they want, how to be free from fear. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts. Now, look at this.

Well, I want you to see. Verse 10, God finds this amazing that this would happen to his people. He's absolutely astounded that this could happen.

Verse 10, Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt treacherously and abominations been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah, here's the problem, has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves. We read in Jeremiah 12 that he had forsaken his church, but I told you there's a church within the church.

There's a sanctuary he loves and is married the daughter of a foreign God. There's a Scripture I won't have you turn there, but it's in the first, you'll find it in verses three or four to verse five and six in Second Corinthians chapter 11. Here's what Paul says.

He said, I have a godly jealousy burning in my heart. Just for I fear. That just as the serpent tempted Eve that many of you have been tempted and led astray from the simplicity and the devotion of Jesus.

Simplicity of devotion to Jesus. We've got so many things floating around today. Tell us how we can do this and do that, have this and have that.

And I'm telling you something, it perverts the simplicity of devotion to Jesus with a whole heart. And you know what he says? He says, because here's what's happened to you. You've accepted another gospel that's preached another Jesus and you've picked up a different spirit because you've married the daughter of a foreign God.

Verse 12. Now, look at this. As for the man who does this, may the Lord cut off from the tense of Jacob, everyone who awakens, awakes and answers or who presents an offering to the Lord of hosts.

And this is another thing you do. Now look at this. You cover the altar of the Lord with what? With tears, with weeping and with groaning.

Because why? Because you're mourning and you've taken it to heart and you're mourning over the state of things. No, you're now crying over another thing because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. I want you to see it again right here.

Verse 15. But not one, not one, not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. Is that what the King James says? Is it close? That's why a residue of the Spirit.

Not one who has a residue or a measure or remnant of the Spirit. Well, look with me at Malachi again. I just feel that this is the direction Lord wants us to go and then we're going to go back to Zephaniah.

Look at Malachi chapter one. It's something I didn't share this morning and this is a good place for me to share it. I want you to see this.

Fits in exactly to Zephaniah. Malachi 1. I want you to see something. Verse 10.

All that there were one among you who would shut the gates, the King James I think says doors, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on my altar. I'm not pleased with you, says the Lord, nor will I accept an offering from you. Now, I want you to see what he's saying.

You know what he's talking about? The gates. He's talking about here the gates into the temple, the doors into the temple. You know what he says? Listen to me.

Don't let this pass by. He'd say, I'd rather you shut the thing down and continue going the way you're going. I'd rather you close the doors and continue to offer the sacrifices and offerings you're bringing to me.

I want you to see that word gates, doors or gates. I want you to see what he says about it. This is very important for us to see.

Jeremiah 7. Keep in mind that all we're looking at is why such a destruction has been proclaimed in Zephaniah. Jeremiah 7. Here's why God said in Malachi, He said, I'd rather you shut the gates to the temple. You know, as important, as important as all the offerings were, as important as all the feasts were in the Old Testament, that's not the only place I can show you several places where he says something similar to that.

He said, I'd rather you cut off the offerings. I'd rather you stop giving them than to continue to give them the way you're giving. You know, I don't know what happened.

We think we've got to keep and I'm not advocating you shut your church doors unless God says so. But I want to tell you something, with all the sin that I see rampant in the churches, with all the division, all the strife, I want to tell you something, it wouldn't hurt things as bad as we think it would if we just closed everything up and then everybody that had a remnant of the Spirit came and got before God on their faces and said the doors will open when we get our lives right. We think the whole machinery would fall apart.

And you know what would fall apart? Only that which can be shaken would be shaken. And that which would remain remains. Now, he said, oh, that there'd be one person among you who'd have enough courage to stand at the gate, shut the gate.

I want to tell you something, we don't have to do that. That's why I say I'm not advocating that we do it. There's another way to shut the gates.

There's another way to shut the gates rather than barring the doors is to do exactly what Jeremiah was told to do. Notice what he said. Verse one, Jeremiah seven, the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, stand in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim by this word and say, hear the word of the Lord, all of you of Judah who enter by these gates to worship the Lord.

What do you think it'd be like if the preacher stood at the gate, at the front door of the church and had associates standing at the back doors so they couldn't go into the Sunday school areas first. Stood there and say, before you come in here and worship, I just want to know, are your hands clean to worship the Lord this morning? Is your heart pure to worship Him? Do you realize that's exactly what he told Jeremiah to do? He said, you go place yourself right there in the gate, the place, and when they come in, you shout something to them. Everybody who enters to worship, you tell them this.

Verse three, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, amend your ways and your deeds and I'll let you dwell in this place. But we've got a ministry to protect. I'm not advocating that you go do that.

I hope you understand I did that as an illustration, but I wonder this. I wonder how many of us would do it if we heard God say do it. Well, if you're not doing it from the pulpit, you wouldn't do it at the door.

Amend your ways and your deeds and I'll let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words saying this is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. For if you truly, truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between man and his neighbor, if you do oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place and walk after other guys to your own ruin, then I'll let you dwell in this place.

Verse eight, behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery and swear falsely and offer sacrifices to whom? Bail. We're going to see the remnant of bail in a moment.

Offer sacrifices to bail, walk after other gods, then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name and say we are delivered. Then continue to do all the abominations that you've always done. And don't tell me that this is not New Testament because the next verse says, has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight.

The whole eye, even I have seen it. Now listen to me. Jesus quoted this verse and I want to tell you something.

He also knew what was in verse 10 when he quoted verse 11. He knew the scriptures pretty well and he never took anything out of context. Did he? And you know what? I saw something a couple of years ago that I'd never seen before when he turned over those tables of the money changers.

He didn't just chase the money changers out. The Bible says that he chased out the buyers and the sellers. He chased out those that were selling unrighteousness and he chased out those who were buying

what those were selling had to sell.

And he's doing the same thing today. He chases out the buyers, the sellers, his judgments against the buyers and sellers. That's why I say to you over and over in the Bible, Jeremiah, I won't have you turn there, but Jeremiah, I'm going to have you turn there.

I want you to see it. You can't blame it on the preachers. You can't blame preachers.

You can't blame it on the congregation. Look at Jeremiah 14. Why am I saying this to you? Because nothing is going to change until we stop trying to blame it on one another, to the pope.

The pew stops trying to blame it on the pulpit. The pulpit stops trying to blame it on the pew. And we all get on our faces before God and say, we're guilty.

You know, the number one indictment, the number one indictment that God had against his church in the Old Testament. We just read it Malachi over and over and over. You'll read it throughout the prophets.

I said, what are we doing? Where are we saying? How many of you remember reading that? It's all through the prophets. Ezekiel, you can find it. Jeremiah, you can find it.

Isaiah, you can find it. Malachi, you can find it. When they came, when God brought judgment, there was always a group of people who said, well, God, what have we done? Where have we sinned against you? The only thing that's going to change is when we all get on our face before God and cry out because God has been blasphemed among us.

And there's a shame and reproach that's come to our God. Look at this. Jeremiah 14.

Verse 10. Thus says the Lord to this people. You can later read who these people are.

And they're people who I want you to read verse three with me. Here's the people. First, let's start with two.

Judah mourns her gate languish. Are we talking about the gates or the doors to the temple? The gates languish. You'll find that.

I want to show you a few scriptures. You'll find that expression over and over the gates languish. You know what? Every time that it talks about the gate being in languish or the gates being torn down, it's all because of sin.

And it's the very same thing that Brother David mentioned yesterday when he talked about go and proclaim to my people enough of all your abominations and mark clearly the exits and the entrances. Because what's happened today is that the entrances to God's house have been perverted and the exits have been hidden. We've perverted the way to come and join yourself to Christ.

And we've perverted the way that you lose and are broken off from the vine. We hide it from the people. Now, look what happens.

The gates are languish. They sit on the ground in mourning. The city of Jerusalem is ascended.

Verse three, their nobles have sent their servants for water. And they've come to the cisterns and found no water. And they've returned with vessels empty.

And they've been put to shame and humiliated. I'm telling you, there are people going to conference after conference after conference after conference. I heard Brother David say just recently, because I want to tell you something, it becomes a burden.

It's a burden on my heart, too. And we weep over this thing and go before God and pray and cry out, God, is there any sense in continuing having repentance conferences and going to the pastors when so few are repenting? You know why? Because there's no sense in having a meeting after meeting after meeting if the people don't come and go home with water. And we've got people searching after meetings, but the cisterns and the vessels return empty with no water.

That's why I say to you, why don't we continue having revivals where there's no water just to get excited? I'm not against having those. I'm not against having them. See, it's again, it's not don't blame it on the people who plan the revivals.

Don't blame it on the preachers. I'm telling you something. There'd be water if the people would come with prepared hearts.

It's not always because the man standing in the pulpit doesn't have water to give. Sometimes it's because the vessels are so broken and got holes in them, they couldn't hold the water that comes. But now look what he says.

Verse 10. Thus says the Lord to this people, even so they've loved to wander. They've not kept their feet in check.

Therefore, the Lord does not accept them. Now he'll remember their iniquity and call their sins to account. So the Lord said to me, don't pray for the welfare of this people.

My, what a statement. When they fast, I'm not going to listen to their cry. And when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I'm not going to accept them.

Rather, I'm going to make an end of them with a sword, famine, and pestilence. Now look at this. Jeremiah hears this and I'm telling you, it crushes his heart because he sees the people are going to be judged.

And he cries out and he says, but ah, verse 13, Lord God, I said, look, you can't judge the people like that. He's saying, look, the prophets are telling them, you'll not see the sword, nor will you have famine, but you'll have lasting peace in this place. Let me ask you a question.

Is that happening today? Jeremiah cries out and says, Oh God, don't blame the people because the prophets have led them astray. Don't you see God's answer? Then the Lord said to me, the prophets are prophesying falsehood in my name. I've neither sent them nor commanded them, nor spoken to them.

They're prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility, and the deception of their own minds. Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who are prophesying in my name, although it was not I who sent them, yet they kept saying there'll be no sword or famine in this land by sword and famine, those prophets shall meet their end. God says, I won't judge the prophets, but now look what he says.

The people also to whom they are prophesying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword. There'll be no one to neither them, nor their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters, for I shall pour out their own wickedness on them. He's saying, don't you blame it on the

prophets and don't you blame it on the pew alone? He says, we're all at fault.

Turn with me to Lamentations chapter two, verse five. The Lord has become like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel.

He swallowed up all its palaces. He's destroyed its strongholds that we see in Zephaniah. He's going to destroy the fortifications.

Lamentations is right after Jeremiah chapter two, verse six. He has violently treated his tabernacle like a garden booth. He has destroyed his appointed meeting place.

The Lord has caused to be forgotten the appointed feast and Sabbath and Zion. He has despised the king and priests and the indignation of his anger. Look at this now.

The Lord has rejected his altar. He has abandoned his sanctuary. My God, every prophet, every pastor, every teacher, every evangelist in America ought to be crying out, God spare your people.

Don't abandon us, God. Verse nine, look at this. Her gates have sunk into the ground and he has destroyed and broken her bars.

Her king and her princes are among the nations. The wall is no more. Also her prophets find no vision from the Lord.

Do you see that? Verse 13, here's what God says. How shall I admonish you? To what shall I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I liken you as I comfort you? O daughter, virgin daughter of Zion. God says, I want to comfort you.

I want you to say this. All during this sin, God says, I want to comfort you. I want to find a way to comfort you.

What can I say though to you in your sin? What iniquity are you finding in me that makes me so unrighteous that you don't want to love me? Verse 14, now preachers particularly, listen to me. I told you that God says that he told Jeremiah to stand in the gate and say, amend your deeds and your ways. Why do you commit the sins you commit and come and stand and sit in church and stand before the Lord and cry out Sunday after Sunday and say, we're delivered, we're delivered, we're delivered, and yet worship fails.

And here's what he says. Verse 14, your prophets have seen for you false and foolish visions, and they have not exposed your sin so as to restore you from captivity. Now, is that in your Bible? I say, is that in your Bible? How do you restore God's people from captivity? He says it right there.

You expose their sins. There is no restoration from captivity until our sins are exposed. I want you to understand, I realize very much that this is a heavy message.

And I want you to understand something. I'm not a teacher of gloom and just bad news. But friends, I'm taking very seriously.

See, I realize that many of you are hungry or you wouldn't be here this afternoon. But there's two things that I know. Number one, I know that you and I both still need to be coming before God repenting until we're cleansed and walking in the power and holiness and righteousness of the clothed.

And I'm including myself. Number two, I know that if the hungry ones don't get this message, nobody's going to get it. We hear this cry all the time about it being too hard, not enough hope in it.

Friends, there is no hope to restore us from captivity unless our sins are exposed. And I would say something. We've become we have become a nation of Christians, a body of Christians who just want to be handled with kid gloves.

We want to be stroked. We want to be pampered and we won't be loved on. We don't mind getting a hard message once in a while, but we don't want to hear it too often until we're comforting.

And I'm going to tell you something. I believe in the comforting. I'm with Brother David.

I don't believe anybody ought to leave depressed. But if you let God, if your hopes in Jesus. That's a tremendous hope to know he wants to cleanse me.

He wants to cleanse me. You see how many times we've pointed out in the midst of this. God says, I love you.

I want to cleanse you. But no, it's what he says in Zephaniah. We just saw why this destruction is coming.

Now look with me at verse four. Zephaniah one. So I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And I will cut off the remnant of Babel from this place. Now, see, understand there's two remnants. There's two remnants.

Let me show it to you. Look chapter three. Look what he says.

Verse 12. What I will leave among you, a humble and lonely people, and they'll take refuge where in the name of the Lord, the remnant of Israel will do no wrong. They'll tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths, for they shall feed and lie down, and there's not going to be anything that's going to make them tremble.

Now, when he says there's not going to be any deceit or lies found in their mouths, it's exactly what we saw in Malachi chapter two. If there's no deceit found in their mouth, that means there's true instruction. And what does that mean is going to happen? They're going to turn many back from their iniquity.

See, there is a hope to this message, to those who are letting God cleanse them. Now, back to Zephaniah. I want you to see the remnant of Baal and see who it is.

Zephaniah 1. Here's the remnant of Baal. First thing he's going to deal with. And the names, this is chapter four, verse four, Zephaniah 1. I'll stretch out my hand against Judah and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

I'll cut off the remnant of Baal from this place. And the names of the idolatrous priests, along with the priests. I said this message was from our day, did I not? And I would say something all through the Bible.

I feel why he mentions priests twice. It's because the idolatrous priests are those who went after idols and led people astray. And the priests are those that are the priests and nation that were supposed to be under God, but they're unto the remnant of Baal.

And he's talking about the ministers and the people. Are you with me? He says, I'm going to cut them off. He's going to deal with the priests.

Every person has idols in the heart. Now look what he said. Verse five.

And those who bowed down on the housetops to the host of heaven and those who bowed down and swear to the Lord and yet swear by Milcom or their king. You know, here's who's going to get cut off. He's going to cut off those people that swear by the Lord.

But then when they go home in their private lives, they're bowing down to an idol. They're bowing down to the lust of the flesh. They're bowing down to another master.

They're taking the name of the Lord, swearing that they're following Jesus. Outward they look holy, but inwardly they're ravenous birds of prey. And they've got more than one color.

I'm going to cut them off. Verse six. And those who turn back from following the Lord and those who have not sought the Lord, inquired of him.

Now, that's not two groups. It's one group. See, it's a double sin here.

I talked about it yesterday. Not only have they turned back from following the Lord, but they've never even taken the time to inquire from the Lord where they went astray. They don't think they've sinned.

They think they're walking with God. They think they're righteous and holy. They think they're all right going to heaven.

And they've turned away from single-hearted devotion to Jesus, and they're not even taking the time to say, God wants this emptiness in my life. Verse nine. And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold.

Well, let me explain to you what that means. You'll find it back in Samuel, in first Samuel. You remember when the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant? They captured the Philistines, went in, they defeated Israel, and they captured the Ark of the Covenant.

And I tell you, it's the hardest thing in the world for me to keep from walking. I usually walk when I teach. It's been hard to stand behind here.

Why don't you hear? They took away, and don't let the rain distract you. It'll come another day, but what I'm saying may not. Now listen.

They took the Ark of the Covenant, the Philistines did, and they put it in the house of their God, Dagon. Then the Philistines went to bed at night. They got up the next morning, here was this statue of Dagon that had fallen, and it was fallen over the threshold of the temple.

It was broken in two, and the hands and palms cut off, and it lay on the threshold. Well, immediately the Philistines got the Ark of the Covenant out of that place, and they got rid of it. But now here's what happened.

From that time on, they had developed a policy, and this was carried on by the Philistines and the Ammonites, particularly. And here's what would happen. They would come to the threshold of the temple,

and instead of walking across the threshold, they would leap over the threshold.

They'd jump over it. Later on, you'll find it in Nehemiah 13, but later on, the men of Israel married the daughters of the Ammonites and the Ashdodites. And Ashdod was the place where this practice started.

Literally, what happened was, they adopted the same culture and practice of jumping and leaping over the threshold of the temple, but they lost the meaning. They didn't know why they were doing it. They'd just come, and they'd leap out of custom.

They'd leap out of tradition over the temple threshold. The Israelites did, when they went into their temple. It's a picture.

God says, I'm coming. I'm going to judge every person that's turned from the Lord, not inquired about their sins. I'm going to judge the idolatrous priests and the priests.

I'm going to judge those who swear by the Lord and yet bow down and worship other gods. And I'm going to judge everybody who comes to church Sunday after Sunday after Sunday out of tradition, rote mechanicalism, and not know why they're there to worship the Lord God Almighty. He says, those people are part of the remnant of Baal, who fill the house of the Lord with violence and deceit.

That's exactly what happens. There's so much violence and deceit in the house of God because people go to church out of tradition not to worship God. And on that day, he declares to the Lord, there'll be a sound of a cry from the fish gate.

The fish gate, you'll find he talked about Nehemiah 13. Nehemiah went to cleanse the temple, and he left for a few days. He came back, and guess what happened? The very abominations he found in the house had already crept back in.

And so he sent the merchandisers. You read it carefully. It says they were merchandisers of all kinds of merchandise.

That's exactly what I see in the house of God. All kinds of merchandise. As a matter of fact, you tell me what the world does that the church is not doing in a different religious form today.

All kinds of merchandise. You can find it in God's house. And he says, I'm going to come back.

When Nehemiah came back, now listen to this, he kicked them out. Guess where they were coming in? They were coming in through the fish gate, the merchandising gate.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1237.mp3>

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