

(Through the Bible) Zephaniah & Haggai

by Chuck Smith

Zephaniah's prophecy speaks of the judgment of God and the great tribulation that is to come, but also offers a promise of preservation and protection for those who seek the Lord.

Duration: 1:32:21

Scripture: Zechariah 4:2-3, Zechariah 4:6-7, Zechariah 4:10, Zechariah 4:12, Zechariah 4:14, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the book of Zechariah, specifically chapter four. The preacher describes a vision in which an angel wakes him up and shows him a golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive trees. The preacher emphasizes that the only hope for the world is Jesus Christ and warns against a false savior who will ultimately bring chaos. The preacher also highlights the need for people to consider their ways and turn to God for salvation in the midst of societal sickness and crime.

Transcript

So we turn now in our Bibles to the book of Zephaniah. The opening verse tells us that this is the word of the Lord, which came to Zephaniah, the son of Cushiah, who was the son of Gedaliah, who was the son of Ammariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah. Now, of the minor prophets, we really have very little of their background.

For some reason, we have more of Zephaniah's background than any of them, as he gives his lineage, and he takes his lineage actually back to Hezekiah, who was, of course, one of the great kings of Judah. So, Zephaniah was actually of the royal family, and he prophesied during the reign of Josiah. And Josiah had a fairly successful reign in Judah, especially from a spiritual standpoint.

Under Josiah, there was at least a surface reformation. Now, the fact that he prophesied during the time of Josiah makes him a contemporary to Jeremiah. And so, during the time that the southern tribe of Judah was in the final decline, moving down towards the end of the southern kingdom, towards the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah and Zephaniah were exercising their office as a prophet to Judah at that time.

And the Lord declares in his prophecy through Zephaniah that he will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. Now, in Zephaniah's prophecy, there definitely is the double aspect of fulfillment. There was that fulfillment that was to take place under the destruction that came from Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, but they also looked out to the end.

And Zephaniah looks out to the great tribulation and does prophesy much about the great tribulation, the judgment of God, the indignation of God that is going to come upon this godless age in which we live. And so, the Lord is declaring, I will utterly consume all things from off the land. I will consume the man and the beast.

I will consume the fowls of the heaven, the fish of the sea and the stumbling blocks. With the wicked I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord. This, no doubt, is a reference to the great tribulation period in which the cataclysmic judgments of God are going to fall upon this planet Earth.

And this planet Earth is going to see a turmoil such as it has never seen before or will ever see again. Jesus, speaking of this time, said, And there shall be a time of great tribulation such as has never been before or will ever be again. As the whole kingdom of the animals, fish and man will be affected by the cataclysmic judgments of God.

God is now speaking. He's going to stretch out his hand against Jerusalem and Judah. And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place.

And the name of the Shimmerends with the priests. The Shimmerends were actually the priests that exercised their offices at that time of apostasy. They were the priests in the high places as referred to in 2 Kings.

And so, because of their idolatry there in Jerusalem and in Judah, God was going to turn them over into the hands of their enemies. I've mentioned before, and I think that it is quite significant, that in some of the latest archaeological diggings, Professor Shiloh is seeking to uncover the old city of David. They call it the Hill of Ophel.

And it is right above the springs of Gihom. And that hill that comes down to Gihom and goes up from there and the Pool of Siloam, under which Hezekiah dug his tunnel, above the hill and up the slopes is the old city of Jerusalem that dates back to the time of this prophecy. The city of, or the Hill of Ophel, and really was known as the City of David.

And as they have been excavating on up in recent excavations, these are the ones that created the riots last year. The riots were perpetrated by some of the rabbis, the Orthodox rabbis, who felt that Professor Shiloh was not giving proper regard to the bones that he was uncovering. The Orthodox rabbis have quite a thing on the dead.

And whenever an archaeologist finds a bone, they want to be there and examine it to see if it is a human bone. And if so, then the rabbis give it a blessing before they bury it. Professor Shiloh is a very pragmatic kind of a person.

I have had dinner with him and I enjoyed his company very much. He is the kind of a guy who says, Hey, I don't want anybody trying to govern my digs. And I feel that the archaeology is scientific and I don't think there should be a mixture of this religious aspect with the scientific projects of archaeology.

And so he deliberately ignored the desires of the rabbis. And this is why they had the big strike and the big to-do over there. And it was really a matter of principle, as Professor Shiloh was trying to guard the scientific aspects of archaeology so that it doesn't become a religious kind of a ceremony.

And so when he would uncover the bones, rather than calling for a rabbi, he'd say, Oh, it's a dog bone, you know, just bury it. And so the rabbis discovered what he was doing and hence the big to-do over there last summer in his excavations. However, Professor Shiloh was telling me that as they uncovered the houses that existed, and of course he said it always gives you sort of a sense of awe as you're digging and you're uncovering the rubble and the ruins of the houses and you find the interiors just as they were when they were destroyed by the Babylonians.

And he said that the artifacts that they find within the houses that were destroyed by this Babylonian army as they just came in and just broke the houses down. You see, when they came back from the Babylonian captivity, the place was all overgrown. The houses were all leveled and the place was overgrown.

So rather than at that time uncovering them and rebuilding the houses, they just put more dirt over them and built on top of them. But he said as they were digging in the ruins of these houses, finding them just as the Babylonians had destroyed them, he said they were amazed at the number of little gods that they discovered, the little idols that were in every home. And he speaks of the multitudes of idols and he showed me pictures just table after table full of these little idols that were in these homes of the people in Judah prior to the destruction by the Babylonian army.

And surely that is confirmation of what we read in Jeremiah and what we read in Isaiah as these prophets were warning of the judgment of God that was to come because of the idolatry that existed. Now here again, as Zephaniah is telling of the destruction and the judgment of God that is going to come. There is the mention of the worship of Bel.

So many little idols to Bel, which means Lord, were discovered. The priest, the Shimerim, the priest of the high places and them that worship the host of heaven upon their housetops, which was the practice of astrology, which is an ancient cult going back to the Babylonian period where people imagined that the stars had certain influences over their lives. And so the time that you were born and all feeling that the stars determined your destiny.

Isn't it amazing that in this modern scientifically enlightened age there are those who still look at their horoscopes to determine whether or not they should go to work today. They worship the host of heaven upon the housetops and them that swear by the Lord and swear by Malcolm, which of course is the idol of the Ammonites, which had its equivalent of Molech, and them that are turned back from the Lord and those that have not sought the Lord nor inquired for him. Here they were worshiping all of their idols, but they had forsaken Jehovah and had not inquired of Jehovah.

Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is at hand. The day of the Lord, of course, is again a reference to the great day of God's judgment that is coming. For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice.

He has bid his guest. You remember in the book of Revelation chapter 17, as it speaks of this great day of the Lord's wrath that is coming, that he invites the birds to come and feast on the carcasses of kings and so forth. The great day of the Lord's wrath.

And so he has prepared a sacrifice, a feast. He has bid his guest, which are the birds, the vultures, to come and to eat the carcasses of men. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice that I will punish the princes and the king's children and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.

In the same day also will I punish all of those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that there shall be a noise of a cry from the fish gate and a howling from the second and a great crashing from the hills. Howl, ye inhabitants of Mektish.

That is actually the little area where the shopping, the bazaar, if you go to Jerusalem today, the souks, the commercial place within the city, these long narrow little streets where all of these little shops are on all sides. That's the Hebrew Mektish. It's the place where they did all of their selling.

Howl, ye inhabitants of Mektish. For all of the merchant people are cut down. All they that bear silver are cut off.

And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles and punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. In other words, God is withdrawn. It doesn't matter to God.

We can live as we please. What difference does it make to God? He won't do good. He won't do evil.

People who live as though God did not exist. Now, I think that we look at some people and we are appalled at the brazen declarations that they make of atheism. They are so bold in their speaking out against the things of God, and many times we are shocked at their blasphemies.

But you know, I think that even worse than some of these blasphemous persons are people who say they believe in God, and yet they live as though God did not exist, who never take God into account in any of the decisions of their lives. Now, to me, this is a greater blasphemy than a man who utters oaths with his mouth. If a man says, oh, I believe in God, yes, I believe in God, but he never takes God into account in any of the decision-making processes, never seeks the Lord.

He has the attitude, well, the Lord's not going to do good or do evil. It's that careless attitude concerning God and the things of God. The Lord said He's going to punish those who have settled on their lease.

Therefore, their goods shall become a booty. Their houses a desolation. And boy, as you go and you go through the archaeological digs that Professor Shiloh has made, you see what desolation has become of their houses.

They shall also build houses, but not inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof. The great day of the Lord is near. It is near.

And it hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord, the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath. It is a day of trouble, of distress.

A day of wasteness and desolation. A day of darkness and gloominess. A day of clouds and thick darkness.

A day of the trumpet, the battle trumpet that calls the troops to assemble. An alarm against the fenced cities, against the high towers. I will bring distress upon men that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord, and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He shall make even a speedy riddance of them all

that dwell in the land. And of course, the prophecy here does definitely spread out in the double fulfillment going to the great day of God's judgment that is coming yet upon the earth. Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired.

Now, that not desired in the Hebrew literally means a nation that knows no shame. They were doing shameful things, but they refused to be ashamed. 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, 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. And so the Lord's promise to hide those from the day of His anger when the great tribulation comes upon the earth, just before it comes and what will actually be the final straw, so to speak, will be the desecration of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

Now, prophetically, the temple is to be rebuilt. And when the temple is rebuilt, this man who in the Scripture is known as the son of perdition or the man of sin, the beast, often called the Antichrist, he is going to come to the temple. He's going to stand in the holy place and declare that he is God and is going to demand to be worshiped as God.

And Jesus speaking to Israel, to the Jews at this time who see this manifestation, said to them, and when you see the abomination of desolation that Daniel the prophet spoke about, standing in the holy place, then flee to the wilderness. Now, in the book of Revelation 13, beg your pardon, chapter 12, as John sees, first of all, the woman, Israel, clothed with the sun and the moon and the twelve stars. And then he sees the second wonder in heaven, the great dragon, Satan, who is cast out of heaven.

And he goes to make war against the woman's seed or the remnant of the nation of Israel or the people of Israel. But in the book of Revelation it says that the woman's seed are given wings of an eagle to bear them to the wilderness place where they will be nourished for three and a half years, so that they will not come under the dominion and the control of the Antichrist, but will flee to this wilderness place that God has prepared for them, which according to Isaiah chapter 16 will be the rock city of Petra, where many of the Jews will flee for survival. And God will watch over them and take care of them there.

This also is made mention of in the 26th chapter of Isaiah, the last few verses, where God bears them safely to a place of refuge until His indignation be overpassed or the wrath of God, the judgments of God are over. So here again is the promise of the Lord for those people in that day to seek 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. It is possible that they can be those that will be preserved miraculously by God in this wilderness place where they will be taken care of by the Lord for three and a half years. So that's a yet future experience for the Jews.

It is not the church. The church, of course, will be caught up in the rapture before these things take place. For he said, Gaza shall be forsaken, or Gaza, and Ashkelon a desolation and they shall drive out Ashdod at the noonday and Ekron shall be rooted up.

These are the cities, the major cities of the Philistines, the Gaza, and of course you're reading an awful lot in the last couple weeks about the Gaza Strip and the problems that are going on there right now. Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron. Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Charithites, for 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 and the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks and the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah. Now this is a fascinating prophecy because during the time of the Old Testament, the Philistines were one of the strong and perennial enemies of the Jews. The cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, were the major Philistine cities.

They were in the coastal plains and they were a constant thorn in the flesh to Israel. The tribe of Dan tried to settle in that area, but they found that the Philistines were too strong for them. And so the tribe of Dan went way up in the north part of the land in the upper Galilee region and there the tribe of Dan settled north of Lachish, clear on up near the base of Mount Hermon.

But the Lord is here predicting that the Philistines are going to be destroyed and that these cities will be desolate. They will just be places where the nomadic Bedouins keep their flocks. But then the prophecy goes on to declare the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah and they shall feed thereon.

Now it's extremely interesting that in these days in which we live, these Philistine cities, Ashdod, Ashkelon, have been rebuilt into Jewish communities. And in Ashdod, the Israelis have built their major seaport. And most of the shipping is no longer done out of Haifa, but it's done out of Ashdod.

And as God has declared, this area for years, for over a thousand years, was just grazing land for the Bedouins. But when Israel became a nation again, they began the rebuilding projects and one of the major projects was the rebuilding of this area of Ashdod and the making of this modern seaport and also Ashkelon. And so they have settled in the area now that was once a part of the Philistine territory.

And so this fascinating prophecy of Zephaniah has been fulfilled during some of our lifetime. Some of you kids are still too young. You know, it happened before you were born, but I do remember it.

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

So this, of course, is a prophecy of the rebirth of the nation Israel. I have heard the reproach of Moab, the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people and magnified themselves against their border. Moab and Ammon, of course, had magnified themselves.

They took the West Bank from Israel when Israel became a nation in 1948. King Jordan moved in with his troops and took the West Bank. The Lord here speaks about it.

I know the reproach, how they've magnified themselves against their border. Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab will become as Sodom. That's present-day Jordan.

And the children of Ammon, the capital of Jordan, as Gomorrah. Even the breeding of nettles and salt pits and a perpetual desolation. The residue of my people shall spoil them and the remnant of my people shall possess them.

So, it looks like Jordan is in for trouble with Israel from this prophecy of Zephaniah. Of course, it is interesting that at the present time the strategy of General Sharon, the defense minister of Israel, is to

drive the PLO out of Lebanon into Jordan and make Jordan the Palestinian state. Helping the PLO to depose King Hussein.

And that is the present strategy planned by General Sharon. And it is interesting that Zephaniah speaks much of that taking place 2100 years ago. Oh, more than that.

2600 years ago. This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of Hosts. The Lord said, Touch not My anointed.

Do My prophets no harm. The Lord said He would bless those that blessed Abraham. He would curse those that cursed them.

And so Moab or Jordan is to fall because of their treatment of God's people, the people of the Lord of Hosts. Now it isn't that the people of the Lord of Hosts are so righteous. It's just that God has chosen them.

And because God has chosen them, we should respect them. The Lord will be awesome unto them, for He will famish all the gods of the earth, and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all of the isles of the heathen or the coast of the heathen. Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by My sword.

And He will stretch out His hand against the north and destroy Assyria. And He will make Nineveh a desolation. So at this time that Zephaniah was prophesying, Nineveh was still existing.

It had not yet been destroyed by the Medes and the Babylonians. The flock shall lie down in the midst of her, all of the beasts of the nations, both the cormorant and the bittern, shall lodge in the upper lobbies of it. Their voice shall sing in the windows.

Desolation shall be in the thresholds, for He shall uncover the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am and there is none beside me. That great city of Nineveh.

And there, how has she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in? Every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his head. Nineveh, one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. It took three days to walk through the city of Nineveh from one end to the other.

And yet here's the prophet making this amazing prophecy. It's going to be desolate. Sheep are going to graze there.

In the houses that once existed there, the owl and the bittern will lodge in the thresholds. It'll be a place for the dwelling of wild animals. And as improbable as that prophecy of Zephaniah did seem at that time, yet it came to pass.

And now the Lord speaks against Jerusalem. Woe to her that is filthy and polluted to the oppressing city. She obeyed not the voice.

She received not correction. She trusted not in the Lord. She drew not near to her God.

So, God's indictment against her. She wouldn't listen. She wouldn't obey.

She wouldn't receive correction. She wouldn't trust in the Lord. She would not draw near to God.

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

Her prophets are light and treacherous persons. Her priests have polluted the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law.

Now we find that these are much the same indictments that Jeremiah was bringing against the nation and against Jerusalem in his prophecy. And you remember how Jeremiah had a hard time with these false prophets who were coming to the king and saying, Oh, king, you know, you're going to be pushing the Babylonians all over the place. They won't come near here and all.

And how that they were conspiring against Jeremiah because he dared to stand up and tell the truth. And so here Zephaniah speaks of their prophets are light and treacherous persons. Their priests have polluted the sanctuary.

They've done violence to the law. The just Lord is in the midst thereof and He will not do iniquity. Every morning does He bring His judgment to light.

He fails not, but the unjust does not know shame. I have cut off the nations. Their towers are desolate.

I made their streets waste. That none passes by. Their cities are destroyed so that there is no man, there is no inhabitant.

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 their doings. God intends, actually, that judgment be for correction, first of all.

When we start getting out of line, God oftentimes brings judgment in the form of chastisement into our lives. And the purpose of it is to turn us back to God. But it's tragic that so many people, when God is bringing the rod of chastisement, will oftentimes rebel against the Lord and thus their condition only worsens.

But the Lord said, when My judgments are in the land, and it will cause My people to turn to righteousness and a true child of God, when He begins to see the judgments, turns to God. But here, the Lord speaks of His judgments and how that they just corrupted themselves all the more. Therefore, and now we go out to the future, the great judgment of the nations which is coming.

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. And as we told you, the word indignation in the Old Testament is the equivalent of the great tribulation of the New Testament.

And so here God is speaking of the great tribulation period as He gathers the nations. And of course, gathering them into the valley of Megiddo for the great battle of Armageddon, where I will pour out upon them My indignation, even all My fierce anger, for the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent.

Now originally men all spoke one language. But at the Tower of Babel, as men through tremendous scientific progress were building these communication towers for extra stellar communication, to

communicate with people in space, to learn from those in space. You remember as the Lord looked upon the scene of the building of the Tower of Babel.

He spoke of how the men gathering themselves together had advanced so far in their technology that nothing that they determined to do could be withheld from them. And so in order to thwart man from his devious plans, God brought the confusion of tongues and the separation then into ethnic groups by language throughout the world. Now the day is coming when we're going to speak a pure language again.

I found it quite interesting when our Hebrew guide told us that there were no swear words in Hebrew. If a Jew wants to swear, he has to use English. They have no swear words in Hebrew.

We were in the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus. And we heard this doctor talking in Hebrew. And as he was talking to his colleagues, he let out a series of oaths that I understood in English.

And so I turned to my wife and I said, I guess it is true. The only way they can swear is in English. And of course he got very embarrassed.

But I thought that was quite interesting. A language in which there are no swear words. Perhaps that is the pure language.

But the Lord will turn to the people of pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent or with one voice. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughter of my disperse, shall bring my offering. 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. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. And 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 will make them afraid.

Now notice again the sequence. That's God's judgment, the indignation that is going to come, but followed by the new age, the one language, the restoration of the earth to God's order and God's plan. And of course, going then on into verse 14, the glorious day of the Lord.

The day that the Lord comes and establishes His kingdom upon the earth. Sing, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O Israel.

Be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. For the Lord hath taken away thy judgments. He hath cast out your enemy, the King of Israel.

Even the Lord is in the midst of thee and thou shalt see evil no more. Glorious day when Jesus comes and reigns. The Lord dwelling in the midst of His people once again.

Even as He did when He was upon the earth 2,000 years ago. The Word made flesh and dwelt among us. He was in the world.

The world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came to His own, but His own received Him not. And so, the Lord dwelling in the midst of the people, the rejoicing, the singing, the glory of that wonderful day.

And in that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Don't fear. And to Zion, Let not thy hands be slack. For 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. And so, the attention is drawn now to the Lord in the midst of His people. First of all, His mighty power is made mention.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. And then His work He will save. Really, the world today is in dire need of salvation.

Man has gone just about as far as he can go without destroying everything. Man presently is spending one trillion dollars a year on military weapons. It's bankrupting the whole world.

Our economy is bankrupt. The Russian's economy is bankrupt. Because we are spending so much money in our military budgets, we are bankrupting our world.

A hundred and three billion dollars of deficit spending this year alone. For the defense projects. In fact, we're spending even more than that for defense.

They have asked for one trillion dollars for defense over the next five years. It just boggles your mind. You can't even think in numbers like that.

Even if you wanted to count to a billion, it would take you nineteen years, day and night, counting at the rate of a hundred a minute. A hundred and three billion dollars that they don't have. They're spending.

Now, I don't recommend you go out and write checks on funds you don't have. It's a crime. Punishable by imprisonment.

And yet our government is doing exactly that. Writing phony checks. Actually, they're printing phony money and passing it off on you.

It used to be that the currency was covered by gold. They had gold notes. And then it was covered by silver and they had silver notes.

And you noticed on the old silver notes. It was redeemable in silver. But a few years ago, they called in all the silver notes.

The gold notes, in effect, said we owe you twenty dollars in gold. The silver notes said, in effect, we owe you ten or twenty or five dollars in silver. Now the notes that they give you, the Federal Reserve notes, they're not backed by anything.

So, in reality, it says we owe you nothing. Sad state of affairs. Oh, how the world needs saving.

And unfortunately, government can't save us. In fact, it is government that is burying us. Destroying us.

We can't afford government anymore. Government has become too expensive. And the same is true around the world.

Only one hope for this old sick world. From a sociological standpoint, we look at the sociological sickness of the world. We look at the sociological sickness in the United States.

We see the epidemic crime levels. We see the assaults, the murders, the rapes. No solution, no answer.

We need a savior. Now, there is coming a false savior. A man who is going to have all kinds of novel, new ideas.

Who will seemingly save the economy for a time. Who will solve much of the social evils. Because so many of the crimes involve money.

All of the convenience stores that are robbed every night. The service stations that are robbed. And pockets that are picked and purses that are snatched.

Or goods that are heisted. And it all involves a monetary exchange. A guy rips off your television set and all.

So that he can go and sell it quickly for some money. He gives it to a fence and he gets money. And it's all this thing of money.

So this man is going to come up with a fantastic solution to the social problems. Many of them of crime. By eliminating money completely.

By assigning everyone a mark. Recognizable by a computer scanner. A mark that will be placed in the right hand or in the forehead of everybody.

And no one will be able to buy or sell unless they have this mark. You read this week in the paper where they figure that there is between 80 and 100 billion dollars. Of unpaid taxes every year from people who are skimming off the top.

The government is going to have to do something. And what better thing can you do than to get rid of money. And say alright if you want to buy or sell you'll have to use the mark.

No one buys or sells without a mark. That way they'll know every asset that you have. You won't be able to dispose of them except that mark is used.

And all the exchanging will be done through the use of the mark. Which of course will have your monetary equivalent within the computer bank. Stored within the computer system.

And immediately all of the crimes involving money will be over. You can't hold up. It's all in the computer.

Of course there will be then people who will be developing ways of tapping into the computer and all. But nonetheless it's going to change the crime. And it will take a while for people to figure the new system.

At least three and a half years. So he'll come up with some economic solutions. He'll come up with some sociological solutions.

And all of the world is going to begin to hail this man as its leader. As its savior. The false Messiah.

The Antichrist. He will even befriend the Jewish nation. Make a covenant with them.

Whereby they will be able to rebuild their temple on the Temple Mount. All of these things are in order today. Did you know that the United States government is planning in 1984 to inaugurate a universal number system for everybody in the U.S.? We're moving down.

Towards the line. I read this in the newspaper the other day. But I've known it for years.

Because one of our fellows went back to do secret work. Top classified work in the Pentagon. Seven years ago.

And he thought it was so significant. He said, Chuck, this is top classified. But he said, I feel I've got to tell you.

1984. He said, I've been working on the program back in Washington, D.C. He said, 1984 we've targeted to give a universal number to everyone in the U.S. All the plans are there. And the other day in the paper, someone let the leak out.

So I'm not doing anything that I shouldn't by telling you. How the world needs to be saved. The only hope is Jesus Christ.

This man who pretends to be a Savior, who the world thinks is a Savior, is only going to ultimately plunge the world into the greatest chaos the world has ever known. For three and a half years it's going to look like peaches and cream. Then the cream is going to sour.

And things are going to really go bad. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee. But Jesus is then coming.

He's going to set up his kingdom. He's going to dwell in the midst of the people. What rejoicing.

What singing. What joy in those days. 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. The Lord is going to be singing a love song to you. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly.

Who are of thee to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold at that time. I will undo all that afflict thee.

I will save her that halted. I will gather her that was driven out. I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

At that time I will 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. Sayeth the Lord. And so the future blessing upon the nation of Israel.

In the glorious kingdom age. Closes the prophecy of Zephaniah. Then we go to Haggai.

Who prophesied in the second year of Darius the king. This is not the Darius of Daniel's fame. Who was the Persian general when Babylon fell.

But this is a Darius who came along later in the year 520 BC. And that's about the time of Haggai's prophecy. And they feel that his prophecy covered a period of two months.

Isn't that interesting how that in two months time. The fellow fulfills God's call upon his life. Esther fulfilled the call of God upon her life in two days time.

Remember her uncle Mordecai said. How do you know but what God has not brought you to the kingdom for such an hour as this. This is your moment Esther.

This is why you've been born. This is your purpose for life. And it was all accomplished so quickly.

Here's Haggai a prophet. Prophesying for a period of a couple of months. Now as we get into Haggai.

And Zachariah and Malachi shift gears. Historically. Now we were just in Zephaniah and that was just before the fall in Babylon to Babylon.

He was predicting the judgment that God would bring upon them through Babylon and all. Then during the time that they were in the Babylonian captivity. Daniel and Ezekiel were prophesying to them.

Now the Babylonian captivity is over. Now a remnant have gone back to Jerusalem. And have started building the temple.

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua. But they are hassled by the Samaritans. The people who had inhabited the land during the 70 years that they were in captivity.

The Samaritans first came and offered to help them. They said you're a bunch of mongrels. We don't want your help.

We're able to do it ourselves. So then they began to send letters to the king of Persians. And you better check out these dudes.

They're rebellious. Every their whole history is that of rebellion. And if they build the city.

They're already talking about rebelling against you once they get the walls up and all. And you better stop their building. And so the king of Persia ordered a cease and desist order.

Stop the building. And then through other communications. They said look we have the permission of Cyrus.

We've got the papers that have given us the permission to build. Check the records. They checked it out.

And so the orders came to start building again. But by this time the people had become interested in building their own homes. And they were beginning to settle down in their own places.

And fixing up and making their places luxurious. And they had lost interest in the rebuilding of the temple. So Haggai comes along.

And he is encouraging the people. To get back to work in the rebuilding of the temple. And his prophecies have to do with the encouragement of rebuilding the temple.

So in your books of history in the Old Testament. This prophecy of Haggai takes place during the period of Ezra and Nehemiah. Now if you want extra credit for the course.

Go back and read Ezra and Nehemiah. In conjunction with the last three books. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

And if you read it with Ezra and Nehemiah. You will then fit it in its historic position. So in the second year of Darius.

520 B.C. In the sixth month. In the first day of the month. The second year of the reign of Darius the king.

There came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel. Who was one of the leaders in this movement of rebuilding. The son of Chittiel the governor of Judah.

And to Joshua the son of Josedek the high priest saying. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts saying. This people say the time is not come.

The time that the Lord's house should be built. This isn't the time to do it. There was a procrastination on the part of the people.

Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying. They were saying the time isn't come. And he said is it time for you.

To dwell in your sealed houses. And this house lie waste. Now therefore thus sayeth the Lord of hosts consider your ways.

Now it is interesting how that Haggai. Or the Lord through Haggai is constantly calling the people to consider. You know there are a lot of things that happen around us.

And we never take it into consideration. It seems that we've become very shallow people. You know through our television news.

And through our news magazines. And through all of the media that we have today. We've become extremely broad people.

We know a little bit about everything. Because of all of the glorious media that we now have. Able to condense things down.

And give us a little synopsis of this. And a little synopsis of that. So we've become extremely broad.

We know a little bit about everything. But we don't know much about anything. We're very shallow.

We don't really stop to consider a lot of times. Things that are happening around us. And the Lord is saying hey look take a look at this.

Consider this now. And so Haggai is calling the people to consider their ways. For he said look you have sown a lot of seed.

But you've harvested very little. You don't have enough. You drink.

But you're not filled. You are busy making your clothes. But you are not warm.

And he that earns wages. Earns wages to put it into a bag with holes. Very descriptive isn't it? Remind you of anything you've experienced? You put your wages in a purse that has holes.

Where does the money go? Thus saith the Lord of Hosts. Consider your ways. The second challenge to consider.

Consider this. Times are bad. Your crops are failing.

You don't have enough. There's not enough to go around. Now he said go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house.

And I will take pleasure in it. And I will be glorified saith the Lord. For you looked for much and lo it came to little.

And when you brought it home I did blow upon it. Why saith the Lord of Hosts. Because of my house that is waste.

And ye have run every man to his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew. And the earth is stayed from her fruit.

I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains. And upon the corn and upon the new wine and upon the oil. And upon that which the ground brings forth.

And upon men and upon cattle and upon the labor of the hands. The Lord said I brought the drought. Because you have forsaken my house.

You've allowed my house to lie waste. Because you are putting yourselves first. Now Jesus said that the heathen world, the gentile world.

Is seeking after what it's going to eat, what it's going to drink and what it's going to wear. These are basically the things the Lord has been talking to these people about. And so many people today are working double jobs.

They're both husbands and wives working. Because they're so concerned with what they're going to eat, what they're going to drink and what they're going to wear. Times are tough.

There's not enough money to go around. There seems to be a drought. But the Lord said the reason why.

Is because you have forsaken my house. You've allowed it to be desolate. And so the Lord he said called for the drought.

Now in the New Testament. Where Jesus said these things do the gentiles seek. He said but you seek first.

The kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things shall be taken care of. You see the people had messed up their priorities.

They were seeking themselves first. They were seeking their own luxuries first. And as a result they didn't have enough.

They were seeking to provide for their physical needs. Their clothing, their food, their drink. And they never had enough.

They never had enough. The Lord said look you seek first. My kingdom and my righteousness.

And all these other things will be added. Get your priorities straight. Put the Lord first in your life.

Seek the Lord first in your life. And God will take care of your needs. Now our sinful hearts of unbelief said.

But I don't know how he can do it. But it isn't yours to know how. It's only yours to obey in faith.

And if you obey in faith and put God first. And seek God first. You can be sure.

That his word is true. And all these other things will be added to you. God will take care of you.

God will provide for you. If you put him first. But you know one of the first things to get whacked out of the budget.

Is the Lord's place. It's one of the first things to go. Oh I've got to work this.

I'm going to work on Sunday. I'm going to miss church. But I'll get the tapes.

And I'll catch up on Sunday. And we're putting our own needs. Above the things of God.

God is getting shortchanged. But hey that's a one way street. The more I shortchange God.

The shorter my change becomes. God said look I've called for the drought. Then Zerubbabel.

The son of Sheetal. And Joshua the son of Josedek. The high priest.

With all the remnant of the people. Obeyed the voice of the Lord. And the words of Haggai the prophet.

As the Lord their God had sent him. And the people did fear before the Lord. So they responded to this exhortation of Haggai.

They considered. And they responded. And so Haggai came with a second message.

Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger. And the Lord's the Lord's message to the people saying. I am with you saith the Lord.

Now that was a very short message. But a lot of comforting message. They obeyed and the Lord spoke again and said.

I am with you saith the Lord. That was all the message. And so the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel.

The son of Sheetal the governor of Judah. And the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedek the high priest. And the spirit of all the remnant of the people.

And they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God. And in the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month. And the second year of Darius the king.

Now in the seventh month. In the twenty-first day of the month. The word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai saying.

Speak now to Zerubbabel. The governor of Judah and to Joshua. And to the residue of the people saying.

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory. And how does it look to you now. Is it not in your eyes in comparison.

As of nothing. The temple of Solomon of course was an extremely glorious building. It was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's troops.

Now in the book of Ezra. We are told that as they began to lay the foundation for the new temple. At this time.

The young people. Those who had been born in Babylonian captivity. Those who had never seen the glory of Jerusalem.

During the days. Prior to the captivity. Those who had never seen the glorious temple that Solomon had built.

Those young people were all rejoicing. They were dancing. They were happy.

We're laying the foundations of the Lord's temple. But the older people. Who remembered the glory of Solomon's temple when they saw.

You know how paltry was this. New thing that we're building. They said stood there and wept.

So upon this occasion. Of the older people. Who could still remember the glory of Solomon's temple.

On the occasion of their weeping. The word of the Lord came. Through Haggai.

And who of you is left. Among those that saw this house in her first glory. And how do you see it now.

Is it just really as nothing compared to the first. Yet. Now be strong.

Oh Zerubbabel saith the Lord. And be strong. Oh Joshua.

And be strong ye people of the land saith the Lord. And work. For I am with you saith the Lord of hosts.

So for those who were prone to be discouraged. Because it seemed to be nothing. In comparison with the past.

The Lord encourages them to be strong to continue. And again the promise. For I am with you.

And according to the word that I covenanted with you. When you came out of Egypt. So my spirit remains among you.

Fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts. Yet once it is a little while.

And I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations. And the desire of all nations shall come.

And I will fill this house with glory. Sayeth the Lord of hosts. Now this no doubt is going out now in prophecy.

To the great tribulation period. When God is going to shake the world once again. Actually in the book of Hebrews.

Twelve chapter we read. Where the Lord said. And once again I am going to shake the world.

Like it is never been shaken before. So that everything that can be shaken will be brought down. And only that which cannot be shaken shall remain.

Tell you what. I don't want to be in downtown L.A. when that takes place. Once again God said.

I'm going to shake the world. Until everything that can be shaken will be destroyed. What folly it is for us to put.

All of our energies and efforts and all into the material things. Because they can all be shaken. How we need to be putting our time.

Our energies. Our efforts into spiritual things. For they can't be shaken.

When everything else is shaken and destroyed. That will still last. You have only one life.

It will soon be passed. And only what you do for Jesus Christ is going to last. Everything else that you built for yourself.

Your whole estate or whatever. Is wood, hay and stubble. It's all going to burn.

Only what you have laid up in spiritual store. Is going to be lasting. That ought to speak to everyone of us tonight.

To again consider. God is saying consider. Consider.

Consider. Consider your priorities. What is first in your life? What is taking the prime place in your mind and in your life? After the shaking of the world.

After the destruction of this present material world as it is. Then the desire of nations will come. The glorious coming again of Jesus Christ.

And then the glory of God once again. Filling the temple. The temple of course is described in the book of Ezekiel.

The silver is mine. The gold is mine. Sayeth the Lord of hosts.

And the glory of this latter house. Shall be greater than of the former. Sayeth the Lord of hosts.

And in this place. Will I give peace. Sayeth the Lord of hosts.

So this marvelous prophecy of Haggai. When the Lord returns. The desire of nations.

And the glory of God fills the temple. It is in that place. That the Lord will give peace.

Now in the 24th day of the ninth month. And so now we are two months after the first prophecy. In the second year Darius.

Same second year Darius. Came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying. Thus sayeth the Lord of hosts.

Ask now the priest. Concerning the law. Saying.

If one is bearing holy flesh. In the skirt of his garment. And with his skirt he does touch bread or.

Potage or wine or oil. Or any meat. Shall it be holy.

And the priest answered and said no. Now there were all kinds of laws. That God gave in Leviticus.

Concerning holy and unholy things. And so. There were many ways by which you could defile yourself.

And then anything you touched would become defiled. If you would touch a dead body. Then you would be considered unholy.

And if any if you touched anything else. Then that would also be considered unholy. And so he's asking you know if the priest is bearing this holy flesh.

And with his skirt he touches something that is common. Is the holy flesh then still considered holy. The answer is no.

It is interesting how that the priests and the scribes and Pharisees in the days of Jesus. When they would go down the street would wrap their coats tightly around them. Because they didn't want their coats flaring out and touching some unclean person.

So they were very careful not to let their robes flare around. They might accidentally hit one of you unclean persons. And they would be defiled.

And this is that kind of holiness that Jesus of course spoke so much against. This hypocritical kind of a thing you know. I'm holier than thou don't touch me you know.

And because I'm too holy to touch or be in touch with people. They of course found fault with Jesus. Because he ate with the common people.

He ate with the sinners and the publicans. He would partake of the same soup with them. Or the same bread.

And they found fault with him for that. Now the second question. If one that is unclean by a dead body.

That is if he has touched a dead body. And is thus unceremonially unclean. And if he touches any of these things.

Shall it be unclean? And the priest answered and said yes it would be unclean. He would touch anything being in an unclean state. Then answered Haggai.

So is this people and so is this nation before me saith the Lord. And so is every work of their hands. And that which they offer there is unclean.

So this law of that which is unclean by touching unclean things. There was this mixture trying to mix the spiritual with the material. And the Lord said hey it's all unclean.

Now I pray you consider. And again the calling for the consideration. From this day onward.

From before the stone was laid upon the stone in the temple of the Lord. And since those days were when one came to a heap of twenty majors and there were but ten. One came to the press fat to drop fifty

vessels of the press but there were only twenty.

In other words from these days in which you had your shortages. These days when there wasn't enough to go around. The days before you started this building again of the temple.

Now mark this and consider this. When I smote you with the blasting and the mildew and the hail of all of the labors of your hands. Yet you did not turn to me saith the Lord.

But consider now from this day onward. From this twenty fourth day of the ninth month. Even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid.

Consider now this. Is the seed yet in the barn? Yes. As yet the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate and the olive tree have not brought forth.

From this day the Lord said I will bless you. And so he's saying now look. You've been going through some rough times financially.

You haven't had enough to go around. You've been going through hard times. But it's because your priorities were wrong.

You were putting your needs and yourself first. Put me first. And I'll take care of your needs.

Now as they began to build the temple again. And began to give themselves in the labor for the temple. The prophet came and said now look.

Mark this day. Things are going to change. From here on out you're going to have plenty.

Now you've got your priorities straight. Now you've put God in the place where he should be. First in your life.

And having put God first. God will now take care of you. And God will provide for you.

And such is a universal truth. And a universal law. That knows no time.

That knows no dispensation. Put God first in your life. And God will take care of the rest of the things of your life.

Put the things of your life first. And you're always going to be running short. You'll never have enough.

It is a fallacy of spiritual logic to say. We will start tithing when we have enough money to do so. It's like the fellow says.

I'm going to get married just as soon as I have enough money to do so. He's still a bachelor. And you'll never have enough.

You've got to step out in faith. And now once again the word of the Lord came to Haggai. The fifth time.

The final time. In the 24th day of the month. The same day.

So in two months. All of Haggai's prophecies. I find that very fascinating.

I've been at it for years and years and years. Speak to Zerubbabel. The governor of Judah saying.

I will shake the heavens and the earth. This again is a reference to the great tribulation period. I will overthrow.

The throne of kingdoms. I will destroy the strength of kingdoms. Of the heathen.

And I will overthrow the chariots. And those that ride in them and the horses and their riders. Shall come down.

Everyone by the sword of his brother. In that day saith the Lord of hosts. I will take thee.

O Zerubbabel. My servant. The son of Shittel.

Saith the Lord. And I will make thee as a sign. For I have chosen thee.

Saith the Lord of hosts. Now. In the book of Revelation chapter 11.

John speaks. Of the two witnesses that God is going to send. One of the two witnesses we know to be Elijah.

From the. Last word of the Old Testament. The book of Malachi.

Where the Lord said. Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet. Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children. The heart of the children to their fathers. Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

So Elijah. Preceding the Lord. One of the two witnesses.

There has been an awful lot of speculation as to the identity of the second witness. Some have said Enoch. Because.

He did not die but was translated into heaven. And Elijah did not die. So these two men come to meet their appointment with death.

Others say Moses. Because Moses represented the law. And Elijah represented the prophets.

Those. Spokesman for God to the people. Or to the Jewish nation always.

The law and the prophets speak to the Jews. I've never shared with anybody. My beliefs on this.

I've always given the options that have been spoken of by the. Various Bible teachers. But I personally feel that.

Zerubbabel. Will be the other witness. Because the Lord here declares.

That. When he comes to overthrow the throne and the kingdoms. To destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen.

That I will take the. Oh Zerubbabel my servant. And I will make thee as a sign.

Or I have chosen thee sayeth the Lord of hosts. Now. Not to just.

Dump that on you without anything else. In chapter four of the book of Zechariah. Which we will be getting next week.

So we'll give you just a little insight into next week's. And the angel that talked with me came again. And he waked me as a man that is awakened out of his sleep.

And he said unto me. What do you see? And I said. I've looked and behold there's a candlestick.

Of all gold. With a bowl upon the top of it. And seven lamps thereon.

And seven. Pipes. Are leading to the seven lamps.

Which are on the top of it. And there are two olive trees by it. One on the right side of the bowl.

And the other on the left side. So I answered. And I speak to the angel that talked with me.

Saying. What are these my Lord? And the angel that talked with me. Answered and said unto me.

Do you not know what these are? And I said. No my Lord. Then he answered and said unto me.

This is the word of the Lord. Unto Zerubbabel. Saying.

Not by might. Nor by power. But by my spirit.

Sayeth the Lord of hosts. Who art thou? O great mountain. Before Zerubbabel.

Thou shalt become a plain. And shalt bring forth the headstone thereof. With shoutings crying.

Grace. Grace. Unto it.

So here is Zerubbabel. The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel. Signified in these two olive trees.

With the pipes that lead into the candlesticks. Now. In the book of Revelation chapter eleven.

Where we read of these two witnesses. Beginning with verse three. And I will give power unto my two witnesses.

And they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days. Clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees.

And the two candlesticks. Standing before the God of the earth. And we are told that the candlestick.

Was actually the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel. Saying. Not by might.

Nor by power. And so here. That.

Prophecy. Of Zerubbabel. Is referred to in Revelation.

In context with the two witnesses. Something to think about. Doesn't really make any difference.

But. It's interesting. With all of the speculation.

Throw that into the hopper too. Shall we pray. Father.

How our hearts. Yearn. For the return of Jesus Christ.

How the world so desperately needs. The touch of his love. The experiencing of his grace.

And his saving power. Lord. We see the earth being shaken now.

The kingdoms being shaken. We see the turmoil. The distress.

The perplexities. Oh Lord. How we need.

For your kingdom to come. And your will to be done here on this earth. Lord.

Man. In exercising his own will. Following his own passions and greed.

Has almost destroyed. This beautiful planet that you have created. We've raped its resources.

We've polluted. Its atmosphere and waters. Oh God.

How we've plundered. And ravaged thy beautiful world. Oh God.

How desperately we need your help. How desperately the world needs your help tonight. Come quickly Lord Jesus.

Establish your kingdom. Bring peace and righteousness. Lest man destroy himself.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Shall we stand.

May the Lord bless and keep you through the week. May he increase your understanding. Of his love and of his purpose for your life.

And may he help you as you consider. Your own priorities. They talk about.

The triangle. With a broad base. And that every time you cut off from the bottom of the base.

You're decreasing the size of the triangle. To where. If you continue to cut off.

Ultimately you'll be left with just the apex. Now if all of the things were cut off. From the extraneous under your life.

Until there was only. The apex left. What would be the apex of your life.

What is the top priority. What is that which you hold most dear. If it is anything other than Jesus Christ.

You're not a Christian. He should be the last to go. He should be.

Top. The apex. Of your whole existence.

The Lord of your life. Consider the Lord says. Now consider this.

Now consider this. And. Go ahead and consider your own life.

This week. How much time you're giving to television. And how much time you're giving to your fellowship with him.

How much time you're giving to your. Hobbies. How much time you're giving to him.

Consider yourself. Your life. Maybe there's a reason.

Behind some of the problems you're experiencing. Because your priorities are wrong. You get your priorities right.

And I guarantee. Mark this date. The fourth month.

And the 18th day. And things will change. If you get your priorities right.

God bless you. As you examine your own heart in your life. And examine your priorities.

And as you seek to make things right with God.

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