

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Nation of Israel

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Most High Ruleth

Reading:
Daniel Chapter 4

1. Introduction

Israel's (May 2000) withdrawal from Lebanon was greeted with joy, mocking celebrations and blasphemous insults by its enemies. The hated Jews had been, apparently, evicted by their enemies. The Muslim world and other peoples besides rejoiced with undisguised glee. They were one step nearer their ultimate goal of ridding the Middle East of their ancient enemy - **Israel**. However, no one should be in any doubt, but that soon the conflict will resume and Bible prophecy concerning **'all nations being gathered against Jerusalem'** (Zechariah 14) will come to pass. According to the Scriptures, Jerusalem is scheduled to be captured before the **Messiah comes**; and after a 3.5 year domination by Gentile nations, the city will be liberated - **never to be taken again!** It is a stunning picture of Jerusalem's future and it will surely come to pass. Because, have no doubts: **"The Scriptures Must Be Fulfilled!"**

- Revelation 11: 1: *"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*
2: *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the **Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**"*
- Zechariah 14: 1: *"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.*
2: ***For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.***
3: ***Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.***
4: ***And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."***

In affairs involving the matter of **'authority'** the God of Israel wishes to teach mankind certain lessons; one being that **"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will."** He taught this lesson to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon centuries ago. **It is a lesson all politicians would do well to learn and remember.** The lesson is recorded by Nebuchadnezzar himself. He wrote:

Daniel 4: 13: *“I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, **a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;***
 14: *He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:*
 15: *Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:*
 16: *Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.*
 17: ***This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”***

2. Interpretation & Advice

None of the celebrated wise men of ancient Babylon were able to interpret the dream for king Nebuchadnezzar. They were either blind to the truth or too frightened to voice their suspicions that the tree represented king Nebuchadnezzar who would be cut down to size because of his **terrible cruelty** and **pride**. The prophet Daniel was then called and he interpreted the dream. He told king Nebuchadnezzar:

Daniel 4: 25: *“That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, **till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.***
 26: *And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, **after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.***
 27: *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity...”*

Daniel 4: 32: *“And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, **until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”***

Bible students know the story well: Nebuchadnezzar failed to take Daniel's advice and a year later the ‘**seven times**’ (seven year) sentence was implemented. Nebuchadnezzar lost his mind, he became mad and was driven from human society. He roamed the fields and forests of Babylon like a wild animal: naked, unshaven and unwashed. His hair grew like a birds feathers and his nails like an eagle's talons. **He was a sorry sight to behold: untill he learned that Yahweh reigns in human affairs;** that He is on the throne of heaven and His **angel watchers** are keeping a close eye on everything that is done on earth below!

How few people are aware of this stunning fact. That it is not the company boss, the government, the economy, the judiciary or even the **European Economic Community** that is ruling our lives. It is **Jehovah the Almighty God of Israel**. He it is who decides who is given power and raised up; and who is cut down and debased.

Oh Yes! “The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

3. Yahweh’s Day of Wrath

ZEPHANIAH’S PROPHECY:

How does this eternal fact affect us in this 21st century? **How does it concern modern Israel; and its many enemies?** The Scriptures give the answer. The prophecy of **Zephaniah** in particular gives many terrifying details concerning the judgments planned by the LORD God of Israel in the **Day of His Wrath**. **I list a few:**

DEVASTATION ON EARTH AND SEA

Zephaniah 1: 2: *“I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD.*

3: I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.”

THE DECIMATION OF ISRAEL’S ENEMIES

- **The Gaza Strip:** Desolation beyond imagination - genocide! (Zephaniah 2: Verses 4-5)
- **The kingdom of Jordan:** A fate similar to the destruction of Sodom! (Verses 8)
- **Ethiopia:** War and desolation. (Verse 12)
- **Syria:** Drought and famine. (Verses 13-15)

Why will all this happen? (And don't think it's a prophecy of past events; because the prophet goes on to describe scenes which have obviously not yet happened.) The answer is: **because these nations have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD!** In other words they have mocked the people of Israel and vainly thought that they could rid the earth of the Jews!

4. Israel’s God Says:

Zephaniah 2: 10: *“This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of hosts.*

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

5. Devastation of Sinners

Zephaniah 3: 6: *“I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.*

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

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

6. Yahweh Blesses Zion

The LORD God of Israel intends to keep every one of His promises.

- **He intends** To refine His people Israel, be they in the holy land or elsewhere on earth.
- **He intends** To purify us to a degree we can hardly imagine.
- **He intends** To address the insults against His people Israel and **to remove forever all sinners from Zion.**
- **He intends** To live amidst His people Israel and make them a blessing, a praise and a glory throughout the earth!

Remember those words in

Zechariah 14: 9: *“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.”*

• **No more mocking jokes then. No more vicious attacks. No more defeat. No more sin. But joy in the presence of the LORD our God!**

Zephaniah 3: 8: *“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: **for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger:** for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

15: *The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: **the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.***

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

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

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

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

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

What should we do about these facts? In view of these amazing facts what should the people of God do to prepare for these events? Zephaniah gives the inspired answer:

Zephaniah 2: 1: *“**Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;***

2: ***Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD’s anger come upon you.***

3: ***Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’s anger.”***

7. The LORD’S Anger

The Day of the LORD’S anger is fast approaching. World events, especially those in the Middle East, all point to a mighty conflict. There is no time to lose. All believers must awake from their sleep and **spiritually prepare** for that time. It will be a time of testing. Faith will be tested to the breaking point. Social and family breakdowns, weakening health, economic strains and stresses, religious confusion and a host of other problems will engage even the most ardent believers.

This is the time to take stock and spiritually fortify the soul! **Prayer, Bible study, meditation and church attendance** are the vital ingredients in maintaining a strong faith. This is no time for frivolity and half-hearted preparations; no time for worldly pastimes and vain pleasures; no time for forsaking church attendance! **This is serious training time. Don’t waste it.**

8. The Bible Says

- 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.

Can anything be more serious than that warning? I think not. My prayer is that all who hear or read this sermon note will heed the warning and be miraculously hid (protected) in the **Day of the LORD's anger**.

Now when you next read the news or see it on TV and note how the strife in the Middle East is flaring up once again; remember that each conflict takes us a step closer to the **Day of the LORD's anger**. Every insult, every jibe, every mortar bomb, every verbal or military rocket directed against Israel is noted above. **The heavenly watchers are ever alert and nothing escapes them**. Yes, this whole world, especially the **arrogant enemies** of the people of the LORD, are due to learn this eternal lesson:

“That the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

He is well able to abase the proud-hearted and to redeem His people Israel from their enemies. **It will surely come to pass in His time.**

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

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