

Sunday, January 15, 2017

The Day of the Lord – Zephaniah

3. The Day of Wrath – Zeph. 1:4-18

I. A Word to Priests – vs. 4-6

II. A Word to Princes – vs. 7-9

III. A Word to Merchants – vs. 10-11

IV. A Word to the Masses – vs. 12-13

V. A Word through History – vs. 14-18

Take your Bibles and turn with me to Zephaniah chapter 1 for the third message in our series through this minor prophet with a major message about the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. As the prophet ministers to King Josiah we will learn in finishing chapter 1 this morning that the message is narrowed – we started with a warning in verses 2-3 of worldwide judgment and last week we saw how those two verses will be fulfilled in time by the events of the seals, trumpets, and bowls of the Book of Revelation. In judging the world everything will be consumed from the face of the earth with the outpouring of the wrath of God. Now to say that the focus is narrowing, we see that Zephaniah speaks directly to Judah.

Looking now at verses 4-18 we see the direct and specific judgment of God against Judah if they do not repent of their sin and return to Him in obedience. Zephaniah writes the Word from the Lord, “I will stretch out My hand against Judah, And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, The names of the idolatrous priests with the *pagan* priests—<sup>5</sup> Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; Those who worship and swear *oaths* by the Lord, But who *also* swear by Milcom; <sup>6</sup> Those who have turned back from *following* the Lord, And have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him.” <sup>7</sup> Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; For the day of the Lord *is* at hand, For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests. <sup>8</sup> “And it shall be, 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 foreign apparel. <sup>9</sup> In the same day I will punish All those who leap over the threshold, Who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit. <sup>10</sup> “And there shall be on that day,” says the Lord, “The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate, A wailing from the Second Quarter, And a loud crashing from the hills. <sup>11</sup> Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh! For all the merchant people are cut down; All those who handle money are cut off. <sup>12</sup> “And it shall come to pass at that time *That* I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And punish the men Who are settled in complacency, Who say in their heart, ‘The Lord will not do good, Nor will He do evil.’ <sup>13</sup> Therefore their goods shall become plunder, And their houses a desolation; They shall build houses, but not inhabit *them*; They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.” <sup>14</sup> The great day of the Lord *is* near; *It*

*is* near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. <sup>15</sup>That day *is* a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, <sup>16</sup>A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers. <sup>17</sup>“I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse.” <sup>18</sup>Neither their silver nor their gold Shall 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 will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.”

Remember now that Zephaniah gives us a summary of the prophecies from the Lord against Judah. They are being threatened with judgment because of their breaking the covenant, breaking the Law of God through idolatry and also through violation of the Sabbath Laws. The time of their exile in Babylon in fact is tied directly to the number of years they violated the Sabbath Laws and requirements of the Old Covenant. The neglected worship and the feasts, they were not allowing the land to rest, and they were not resting as God had prescribed in His Word. They also were mixing the worship of God with the worship of idols and false gods.

They were facing a severe judgment, a drastic measure God was going to take to remove them from the Land so that it might rest and be restored and to chastise them for the corruption and disobedience that they had allowed and encouraged throughout the nation. As we have already learned, these threats of judgment were fulfilled in the 70 year Babylonian captivity that began in 586 BC. Josiah reigned 640 to 609 BC. So while the cataclysmic cosmic judgments from verse 2 and 3 may still be many years still in the future for us now, the judgment we’ve just read about coming to the nation of Judah was now less than a generation away, about 25-30 years in Judah’s future. That really is not much time in the life of a nation is it?

In making this proclamation against the nation, we see in verses 4-13 that God addresses four specific groups of people. He speaks directly to the priests, the princes, the merchants, and the masses, telling each group how they have sinned, the consequences they are facing, and therefore why they must repent. After this message from the prophet there could be no confusion about who was responsible for the judgment that was coming.

Verses 4-6 give us the message to the priests, “I will stretch out My hand against Judah, And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, The names of the idolatrous priests with the *pagan* priests— <sup>5</sup>Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; Those who worship and swear *oaths* by the Lord, But who *also* swear by Milcom; <sup>6</sup>Those who have turned back from *following* the Lord, And have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him.”

God is bringing judgment upon the religious leaders specifically for their religious customs, their accepted traditions and practices of worship. We learn here that they are doing three things that God said they were not to do and He describes three types of priests.

The first are idolaters. They are supposed to be serving as priests to the Lord God Almighty, King of Creation, and instead are actively worshipping false gods. They have turned away from God all the while claiming to be priests among the people but they are promoting idol worship. Two false gods mentioned in these verses are Milcom and Baal. Now Baal we are (or should be) familiar with, the god of fire and lightening, whose priests served under Jezebel and were confronted and exposed for the frauds that they are Baal are by the Prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel (which overlooks the Valley of Megiddo by the way, har Megiddo). But who is Milcom? That is another name for Molech, the god to which children were sacrificed as they would be placed on his outstretched arms and burned to death in an abominable act of worship.

These false gods were worshipped. The idolatrous priests built altars and places of worship to them throughout the Land. They even set some idols of these gods up in the Temple in Jerusalem – in God’s House. What an abomination.

Now lest we believe that this cannot happen today, it does happen, often. Churches, so-called or self-identified, where men refuse to preach the Word of God and preach instead philosophy, psychology, business methods, motivational self-help messages – messages that reveal a worship of self instead of a worship of Christ. What we as the church are commanded and expected to do in the worship of God and in our daily lives is clearly given to us in the Word of God and not in the mere opinions of men who use ministry as a means of sordid gain.

The Lord through Zephaniah is telling Josiah and the people of Judah that these idolatrous priests are leading the people against God, not in service to Him. Their worship is false, reckless, and sinful. Because of this God promises to cut off every trace of Baal from the Land and not only that, but He is going to remove the memory of the names of these priests. God is going to wipe out their legacy and anything that would serve to remind the people of their devotion to these false gods.

The second type of priests mentioned are adulterous priests. The prophets refer to mixing the worship of God with the worship of idols as committing spiritual adultery, it is the ultimate unfaithfulness, to violate the covenant with God through service and devotion to idols. These perhaps have not turned completely away from God...yet...because they do still promote the worship of God, but they also include idols and blend the worship of multiple gods, probably to appeal to the widest audience. This is ecumenism!

In verse 5 we read about “those who worship the hosts of heaven on the housetops, those who worship and swear *oaths* by the Lord, but who *also* swear by Molech.” Is God not clear about the worship of other gods in the Ten Commandments? Oh, but wait, the people had rejected and neglected the Word of the Lord, remember. Hence the coming judgment.

These adulterous priests are adding the worship of idols to the worship of God. To hear God’s take on worship let’s read Exodus 20, where He wrote in stone with His finger, “2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 “You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. 8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

These first four Laws tell us about God and how He desires to be worshipped. First He says He is the only living and true God and we are to have no other gods. He is not to be the first of many, as if we were to rank the gods in our lives. He alone is God and He alone is to be worshipped as God.

And let’s be clear about what it means to take God’s name in vain. This is not merely to use God’s name as a curse or as profanity. To take His name in vain goes beyond that – it is to claim His name for yourself, saying you belong to Him, but then live in a way that dishonors Him and disregards His Word. Jesus said it this way in Luke 6:46, ““But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” To claim Him as yours and to claim that you are His and then to disobey Him, that is taking His name in vain, taking it in a futile way.

These priests were taking His name in vain, in futility, because they were claiming that He alone is not the only living and true God.

We see also the Sabbath, that foreshadowing of the rest we have in Christ and the rest we

look forward to in eternity in His presence.

Here in this first tablet of the Law, God has told His people how to worship Him. The priests in Judah have not only disregarded these instructions, but they have directly disobeyed them.

We see then there are idolatrous priests, worshipping idols, adulterous priests, being unfaithful and mixing the worship of God with the worship of these idols, and there are apostate priests. In verse 5 they are described as priests “who have turned back from *following* the Lord, and have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him.” These have completely turned away from God. The phrase is literally that they are priests who have turned their back on God. They have walked away. I wonder then why they are even still serving as priests?

This serves as a warning and example to us that we need to be so careful about who we listen to preaching and teaching the Word of God. Those who are unfaithful and disobedient will lead us astray and into judgment.

God begins His warning to Judah by identifying the ways in which their religious leaders are leading them astray. When Josiah realized this when they discovered the Book of the Law in the Temple and read it to him and he saw that it was not enough to tear down the places set up for the worship of idols, but he needed to restore the right worship of God as God commands and expects. They reinstated worship by cleaning and repairing the Temple and then observing Passover, celebrating the deliverance of the people from their captivity in Egypt.

Secondly now in verses 7-9 we see the message to the princes, to the rulers, to civil authorities. We move from the religious customs to the social customs of the day. He begins in verse 7, “Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; For the day of the Lord is at hand, for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.”

After Zephaniah has summarized the failures of the religious leaders, he declares that they people need to be silent in the presence of God. He doesn't mean that we need to quit talking. He is referring specifically to the offering of excuses. Looking at the decay and corruption and sin in the land, before he even gets to the government, he anticipates excuses. But, but but...the people always seem to be able to find a way to justify their sin, no matter how grievous or heinous. But, before they can say anything in reply, Zephaniah says, “Zip it. You have no excuse.”

Notice also, the prophet has not yet told the people that they need to repent. The tone here is that the judgment has already been decided. The sins are so great from so many years of

neglect and rebellion, that judgment is coming. The Day of the Lord is at hand – it is near, it is sure, it is coming. God has prepared the sacrifice and invited guests. We know from Jeremiah that the sacrifice is the people of God being handed over to their enemies to suffer judgment. The guests who have been invited are the Babylonians. God has prepared that evil nation to bring His wrath on Judah, and then later of course Babylon is also warned and judged. But the table has been set so to speak, the people have no excuse, and so they need to prepare for judgment.

Now he goes on in verse 8-9, “And it shall be, 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 foreign apparel. 9 In the same day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit.”

God is holding the religious and civil leaders responsible for the sins of the nation. That is a frightening thought when you look at the sins of our nation...

Those who had the responsibility to proclaim the truth of the Word of God, and those ordained by Him to serve as governmental leaders, the King and princes, the royal family here in David’s line. A quick note, the priests in their ministry represented the people before God, and King Josiah was to represent God before the people by upholding the covenant that the nation had made with the Lord. But now the priests and princes have failed. No one is standing up for the truth of God’s Word in leadership.

He says here that those who are going to be judged are those “clothed with foreign apparel.” This speaks to their taking on the identity, customs, beliefs, and practices of the Gentile nations around them. They are worldly – they look like the pagan nations around them.

What is the danger in loving and pursuing the world, not the world, as in lost men and women, but the world as in the societal system that built on repressing the knowledge of God? What is the danger of worldliness? After all, if you talk and act and look like the world won’t that help you attract them to Christ? Ummm. No.

John tells us in 1 John 2:15-17, “15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Romans 12:1-2 finds Paul saying something similar, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,

which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

We have multiple warnings about worldliness. We are not of the world, though we are in it. We belong to another realm, to another Kingdom. We are a separate ethnicity, remember from Philippians? We are not citizens here. And from 1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

Why should we be different from the world? Because we ARE different from the world. We are a new creation, a new man created in holiness and righteousness, citizens of a new kingdom, the Kingdom of God. Don't be lured away into unfaithfulness and idolatry by the things of the world that appeal to our fallen flesh.

Those who try to look like those who are not God's people are going to be treated by God as if they were not His people! They will be judged. James 4:3-4 tells us in regards to this, “3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Zephaniah continues, “In the same day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.” To leap over the threshold is an obscure phrase. It also appears in 1 Samuel 5 in the account where the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant. They set it up in the Temple of Dagon, one of their false gods, and overnight Dagon had fallen over in front of the Ark. And just as all false gods must be propped up by men, they set the idol back up, but when they came back the next morning Dagon had fallen over and his hands and head had broken off at the threshold of the door to the temple. After that point, in the worship of Dagon, they believed that this had demonstrated that Dagon was not as powerful as the God of Israel, and so they would then refuse to step on the threshold when entering the temple of Dagon. Any time they came to worship at the altar of Dagon, they would jump over the threshold.

We see then that this is a reference to those who are entering into the places of idol worship, they were going to the high places set up for worshipping these false gods. And remember, these are the rulers, the King's family, the governmental authorities, who have no problem going to worship idols. Zephaniah says they will be judged because they fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit – the ways that they worshipped the idols

specifically involved violence and deception. And the threat here, the promise here, is punishment, judgment, all in one day.

The third group he addresses now in verses 10-11 are the merchants and the business customs and traditions of the day. “10 “And there shall be on that day,” says the Lord, “The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate (*the gate that opened up to the market place*), a wailing from the Second Quarter, and a loud crashing from the hills (*the trade routes were going to be destroyed*).”

We forget at times that we are to honor God in our business, don't we? We tend to segment our lives to church, to work, to family, to neighbors. And what gets lost is that whatever we do, we do to the glory of God. We work as unto the Lord.

Because of the corruption in the business practices there was going to be an economic collapse. A literal crash! And he goes on in verse 11, “Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh! For all the merchant people are cut down; all those who handle money are cut off.”

Maktesh was the location of the market. There is going to be sorrow, and weeping, and wailing. There is going to be loss of business, revenue, money, and loss of life! The other minor prophets often address social and economic injustice and the result of these sins was going to be social and economic upheaval in the nation. God was going to judge this segment of the people this way for three reasons.

Amos 5:11 tell us, “Therefore, because you tread down the poor and take grain taxes from him, though you have built houses of hewn stone, yet you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine from them.” The fruit of their labor so to speak was corrupted and therefore they were not going to be able to enjoy the results of their work. They were going to be judged for treading on the poor and needy.

In Amos 8:3-6 we see next that God says, “And the songs of the temple shall be wailing in that day,” Says the Lord God—“Many dead bodies everywhere, they shall be thrown out in silence.” <sup>4</sup>Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land fail, <sup>5</sup>Saying: “When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scales by deceit, <sup>6</sup>That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals—Even sell the bad wheat?” They were cheating people, and abusing people, and devaluing people. Charging too high and giving too little. As an illustration, here is how this happens today: watch the sizes and prices of the things you buy at the grocery store. For example, today an 11 ounce bag of chips may cost \$2.99. But watch. In a few months that bag of chips, still selling for \$2.99, will be 9.5 ounces. It is a known marketing strategy to bolster profits – don't raise the price on the item, just charge the same amount for less!

In Amos we are hearing about those businessmen with scales to weigh out products being bought, they rigged the scales for a wrong measurement. This was the whole attitude of business in Zephaniah and Amos' day.

Micah also addresses this, in Micah 2:1-2, "Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. <sup>2</sup>They covet fields and take *them* by violence, also houses, and seize *them*. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance."

They lie awake at night to think about ways to cheat people! This injustice and abuse and deception is going to result in God bringing economic destruction to Judah.

So because of your religious leaders and their worship practices, your governmental leaders and their social and civil practices, and your merchants and their marketing practices, judgment is coming – the table is set and the invitations have been mailed!

Now in verse 12-13 Zephaniah addresses the masses, the rest of the nation. "<sup>12</sup> "And it shall come to pass at that time *That* I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And punish the men Who are settled in complacency, Who say in their heart, 'The Lord will not do good, Nor will He do evil.' <sup>13</sup> Therefore their goods shall become plunder, And their houses a desolation; They shall build houses, but not inhabit *them*; They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine."

God says about the people that they are being complacent. There is corruption and sin all around them but they just don't care. They are indifferent. They are lukewarm. The people have seen the idolatry of the priests and even joined in and followed their example. They had seen the princes' abuse of power. They had seen the merchants' deception. And they settled into a spirit of apathy. They gave up caring. God's Word and His Ways did not matter to them anymore.

Have you ever been there? You have seen injustice and evil and wondered how or why God allows it to go on and on and on? Have you been to that point where you come to believe it hurts too much, it costs too much, it is just too much work to keep caring? While to us that may be understandable, to God it is detestable!

God says He is going to search Jerusalem with lamps – there will be no place to hide. Those who are complacent are characterized by saying "The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil." In other words, God doesn't care so why should I? Do you see how this is a direct attack on the character and nature of God?

When people adopt this attitude they are in danger of losing everything! God tells them all that they have is going to be taken by others. Some will have built a brand new house and won't get the chance to live in them. They can plant vineyards but will not be around to drink the wine produced. This is an echo of Deuteronomy 28:39, "You shall plant vineyards and tend *them*, but you shall neither drink *of* the wine nor gather the *grapes*; for the worms shall eat them. <sup>0</sup> You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. <sup>41</sup> You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. <sup>42</sup> Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land." This is the curse for disobedience.

God is warning the people, their complacency and their tolerance of corruption and sin will bear fruit, it will have consequences, and they will not be good.

In talking about complacency we see that there are three types of complacency we need to watch out for. The first is procrastination. This is where the people see and recognize sin but put off doing anything about it.

The second is self-indulgence. This happens with those who think that they are not what is wrong with the nation and so they are just going to take care of themselves to the neglect of their neighbors. They find a way to profit from the evil without actually participating in the evil so they tolerate wickedness for personal gain.

The third is a spiritual complacency. It is an attitude that attributes complacency to God and if He doesn't seem to care, why should we bother? This is a slander against God.

God now tells the people just how bad judgment is going to be. Some of this sounds like what we studied last week in Revelation. We see in verse 14-18, "<sup>14</sup>The great day of the Lord *is* near; *It is* near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. <sup>15</sup> That day *is* a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, <sup>16</sup> A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers. <sup>17</sup> "I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse." <sup>18</sup> Neither their silver nor their gold Shall 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 will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land."

What a day! Wrath, distress, devastation, darkness, gloominess. Loss of the nation and loss of life. There will be no way to buy your way out or to escape. We cannot pay to remove the wrath of God – that is why Jesus had to pay it all!

How bad will this day be? How bad? It has been immortalized not only in the Word of God, but in song. The Song of Death. It is a hymn that written long ago in the history of the church. It is believed that this hymn has been translated into more languages than any other hymn ever written in the history of the world. And it is based on Zephaniah 1:14-18.

This hymn has been sung in Eastern Orthodox churches, Anglican, Protestant, and even in Catholic church up until the 1970s, but they stopped using it. Across the spectrum of churches we have this ancient hymn that describes the wrath of God. This hymn has 19 verses, though they are relatively short. It began as a poem, then became a chant, then a hymn. Have you heard of the *Dies Irae*? (de ez ear ay) It means “The Day of Wrath” in Latin. You may not recognize the name, but I promise you have heard the music and probably the lyrics in Latin.

Some of the most famous musicians in the history of the world have composed music for this piece. Mozart wrote one of the most recognized. And the music with or even without the words has so been a part of our history that it is written into movies and plays at dramatic points where evil is being confronted or the death of a character is near. And what astonishes me, though it probably shouldn't, is that most people do not even know the significance when they hear the music or the words being chanted or sung. You have heard this tune if you have watched Star Wars, It's a Wonderful Life, The Lord of the Rings, and many more.

When we neglect church history we lose sight of these things that have been passed down through the church for generation after generation to remind us of the truth of God's Word and the link we as the people of God share even with those in Judah who were about to be judged! For each of us there will be a day of death, but for those who repent of their sin and trust Christ, the Day of Wrath will never come!

Listen then to this truly historic hymn, the *Dies Irae*:

1 Day of wrath! O day of mourning! See fulfilled the prophets' warning, Heaven and earth in ashes burning!

2 Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth, when from heaven the Judge descendeth, on whose sentence all dependeth.

3 Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth; through earth's sepulchers it ringeth; all before the throne it bringeth.

4 Death is struck, and nature quaking, all creation is awaking, to its Judge an answer making.

5 Lo! The book, exactly worded, wherein all hath been recorded: thence shall judgment be awarded.

6 When the Judge his seat attaineth, and each hidden deed arraigneth, nothing unavenged remaineth.

7 What shall I, frail man, be pleading? Who for me be interceding, when the just are mercy needing?

8 King of Majesty tremendous, who dost free salvation send us, Fount of pity, then befriend us!

9 Think, good Jesus, my salvation cost thy wondrous Incarnation; leave me not to reprobation!

10 Faint and weary, thou hast sought me, on the cross of suffering bought me, shall such grace be vainly brought me?

11 Righteous Judge! For sin's pollution grant thy gift of absolution, ere the day of retribution.

12 Guilty, now I pour my moaning, all my shame with anguish owning; spare, O God, thy suppliant groaning!

13 Thou the sinful woman savedst; thou the dying thief forgavest; and to me a hope vouchsafest.

14 Worthless are my prayers and sighing, yet, good Lord, in grace complying, rescue me from fires undying!

15 With thy favored sheep O place me; nor among the goats abase me; but to thy right hand upraise me.

16 While the wicked are confounded, doomed to flames of woe unbounded call me with thy saints surrounded.

17 Low I kneel, with heart submission, see, like ashes, my contrition; help me in my last condition.

18 Ah! that day of tears and mourning! From the dust of earth returning, man for judgment must prepare him; Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!

19 Lord, all pitying, Jesus blest, grant them thine eternal rest. Amen.

The terrors of judgment suffering the wrath of God for sin cannot be comprehended rightly apart from an understanding of the absolute holiness and righteousness of God. We have offended God with our sin and unless we turn in repentance from sin to Christ in faith we will suffer this day of wrath. The world knows it! The world has been warned. So has the church. Are you ready? Are you ready for the day of wrath? Only those found, whose life is hidden with God in Christ will be able to stand at that day.

Let us pray.