

Message #4**Zephaniah 1:14-18**

About ten years ago, in 2013, Zac Barnett took an acoustic guitar in his bedroom and started working on an idea for a song that would make people in this world feel happy and feel positive. He said he was listening to most of the rock songs and they were so dark and negative. So he wrote “Best day of My life.” It is a catchy tune. This is going to be the best day of my l-i-i-i-fe.

About 55 years ago, back in 1968, a music group known as the Rascals recorded a feel good song called “It’s a Beautiful Morning.” It was written as a song of hope and positivity about a beautiful day. It is so positive that it is still loved today years later. It makes people feel good.

About 2,600 years ago, in 625 BC, Zephaniah penned a lyric we could call “the great day of the LORD.” It is not a feel good song or lyric. It is a lyric designed to warn people that they need to be right with God.

When the day of the LORD hits, it will not be “the best day of anyone’s life” and it will not be a “beautiful morning.” The description of this day is deadly and scary.

Here is one of the most graphic descriptions of the Day of the LORD in the entire Bible. When we analyze what is here it is obvious that the totality of what is described here has not happened yet.

Although there may be pocket areas that have experienced a portion of what is described here, there has never been a time when the whole world and all inhabitants have experienced this.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD WILL BE A TIME WHEN GOD IS GOING TO POUR OUT HIS WRATH ON THE ENTIRE WORLD.

God wants people knowing about this. He wants them sensing the sights and sounds of what this will be. People who are wise will see to get into a right relationship with God now because once this happens, it will be too late.

Now the facts of what is called “the Great Day of the LORD” are specific. This is, as one commentator said, a “very dramatic text”. This is what God wants His people to know about this future time. There are 27 facts specifically mentioned:

FACT #1 – The Great Day of the LORD is near. 1:14a

This fact is mentioned twice. This is repetition for emphasis. The word “near” (qarov) is one that refers to the fact that something is rapidly approaching and will be here in a short time (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 742-743).

For Jerusalem and Judah, the first wave of Babylonian assault occurred about 20 years after this in which many captives were taken and the final wave about 38 years after this when Jerusalem was completely destroyed.

From this we conclude that God sends a series of preliminary devastating judgments against a place before the final annihilation. This Great Day of the LORD judgment has still not hit completely, but the clock is ticking.

FACT #2 – The Great Day of the LORD will come quickly. **1:14b**

The word “quickly” (mahar) means to bring something about fast. It means to cause something to come in a way that will be hastily executed (*Ibid.*, p. 454).

By Zephaniah using these terms, he wants people to realize that judgment is on the way and it will come fast and furious. The moment is rapidly approaching.

Now God’s time of rapidly approaching and our time are two different things. A day with the Lord is as a thousand years to us. But when God uses this kind of language, He does want people to think in terms of this day as coming soon.

When this day of the LORD judgment hits it will be in rapid fire sequence and there will be no let up. It will be an all-out assault on the whole world.

FACT #3 – The Great Day of the LORD will have a warrior crying out bitterly. **1:14c**

The word “warrior” (gibor) refers to a strong, mighty, high ranking military leader (*Ibid.*, p. 158). It may be used of a warrior who is a good warrior and it may be used of one who is an evil warrior.

We think this is an agent of God announcing this and not an evil agent. Evil agents don’t tell people the truth and God’s agents do.

What this warrior is doing is “crying out bitterly.” The word “crying out” refers to a very loud and clear warrior voice (*Ibid.*, p. 718). The adverb “bitterly” (mar) means this is a very sad, sorrowful, violent and fierce message (*Ibid.*, p. 505).

This time will be announced. It will not be a quiet moment. We know in the book of Revelation that there will be many announcements made out of Heaven to this earth that humans will hear. Especially as the final 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation begin, many heavenly warrior type of announcements will be given.

FACT #4 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of wrath. **1:15a**

The emphasis of the word “wrath” is the outpouring of anger wrath (*Ibid.*, pp. 604-605). So this will be a time when God is Personally and specifically pouring out His anger on this world and everyone in it.

FACT #5 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of trouble. **1:15b**

The word “trouble” carries with it the idea of making things miserable by taking things away and emptying things by some enemy or adversary (*Ibid.*, p. 653, 718).

When one gets in trouble, one typically looks for a way out. When this hits, there will be no way out.

FACT #6 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of distress. **1:15c**

The word implies a deep distress because one is the prey to be captured (*Ibid.*, pp. 500-501).

FACT #7 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of destruction. **1:15d**

The word “shoah” indicates that this will be a time when God causes things to be laid waste. The word was used to refer to houses that fall down with a crashing noise (*Ibid.*, p. 797). God will literally demolish everything.

FACT #8 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of desolation. **1:15e**

The word refers to a storm that crashes and hits and destroys things and leaves things desolate (*Ibid.*, p.807)

FACT #9 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of darkness. **1:15f**

The word refers to a darkness that is an adversary and that makes things miserable (*Ibid.*, p. 312).

FACT #10 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of gloom. **1:15g**

A day of darkness in which the light is gone (*Ibid.*, p. 71).

FACT #11 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of clouds. **1:15h**

The context of this is gloomy dark clouds that are hovering over the earth.

FACT #12 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of thick darkness. **1:15i**

This speaks of a very black darkness.

FACT #13 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of a battle cry trumpet. **1:16a**

In Revelation there are a series of judgments that describe the wrath of God.

There are seven seal judgments which contain seven trumpet judgments and the seventh trumpet judgment contains the seven bowl judgments. All of them are wrath judgments. If we specifically focus on the Trumpet judgments, we conclude that the worst part of the time of wrath will be the final 3 ½ - 4 years.

FACT #14 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a judgment against fortified cities. **1:16b**

We learn in Revelation 16:19 that when God is pouring out His wrath, “the cities of the nations fell.” He will bring down the cities of the world.

FACT #15 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a judgment of tall towers and buildings. **1:16c**

God wants people realizing that when He pours out this judgment, He will topple the tallest buildings in the world.

FACT #16 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time when God brings distress on men. **1:17a**

God will sovereignly cause everything on this earth to bring distress on all people. Everything He will do will be with that goal in view. There is a description in Revelation of God causing 100 pound hailstones to fall from the sky and kill people (Rev. 16:21).

FACT #17 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time when men will walk like the blind. **1:17b**

Literally things will be without light and so dark that people will just sit in pain (Rev. 16:10).

FACT #18 – The Great Day of the LORD is a judgment time because of sin. **1:17c**

Now you would think that if God is pouring out judgment on people they would say we need to turn from our sin and turn to God. That is not what happens. In fact, here is the reason why God will do this. People have sinned against God and they will not repent, so God reaches a point where He says that’s it. I’ve seen enough and I have had enough.

God gives people many opportunities to turn from their evil ways and if they don’t do it, there comes a point when He says that’s it. You will experience My judgment.

FACT #19 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time when God will pour out people’s blood. **1:17d**

People don’t like this, but here is the reality of it. When God pours out His judgment, people die.

FACT #20 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time when God will destroy people’s bodies.
1:17c

We learn in Ezekiel 39:12-14 that when this judgment occurs and Jesus Christ returns, it will take all the people who live in the Promised Land, seven months to bury dead bodies.

FACT #21 – The Great Day of the LORD will not be escapable for the rich with their money.
1:18a

It is very foolish to trust in money because at the judgment of God, that means zero.

FACT #22 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a time of God’s wrath. **1:18b**

People do not like this about God. But this is the truth about God. He is a God who has a wrath side and a wrath day in which He will pour it out.

FACT #23 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a judgment against all the earth. **1:18c**

No one will escape this. When this judgment hits, no one will be immune, even if one lives in the mountains or on some island (Rev. 16:20).

FACT #24 – The Great Day of the LORD will feature the fire of God’s jealousy. **1:18d**

God is a jealous God. In that perfect jealousy, He burns with fire.

FACT #25 – The Great Day of the LORD will feature a complete end of everything. **1:18e**

Nothing will be overlooked and no one will be overlooked in this judgment.

FACT #26 – The Great Day of the LORD will be a terrifying day. **1:18f**

We face intimidating and terrifying things in life, but nothing that is equal to what is described in these verses.

FACT #27 – The Great Day of the LORD will impact all the inhabitants of the earth. **1:18g**

No one will get away unscathed.

The Great day of the LORD will not be the best day of anyone’s life. Here is the big question from Zephaniah’s day and in our day.

Do you believe this? If anyone reading this or listening to this back in Zephaniah’s day really believed it, they would have immediately sought to be right with God. Most didn’t. So most were, in fact, destroyed.

How about now? Do you believe God is going to do this? If you do, you will immediately turn to the Lord.

If you will right now turn to faith in Jesus Christ and commit yourself to understanding and applying God's word, this this truly is "the best day of your life."