

Zephaniah

God in the Midst of Thee

No trifling threat ...

I. The God Who Is

- A. Who He Is
- B. What He Says

II. The Wages of Sin

- A. Hear Mankind
- B. Heed Covenant People
- C. Take Refuge in God

III. The Gift of God

- A. Christ Jesus
- B. To the Nations
- C. Everlasting Peace

... no empty promise.

Children, Listen ...

1. Why does God warn people about the punishment for sin?
2. Do you think most people take what God says seriously?
3. What does God tell His people to do to escape judgment?
4. Sin must be punished. Who took upon Himself punishment for the sins of God's people?
5. Zephaniah speaks of the King being with God's people. Who is our King?

From Distress to Delight

Zephaniah is the Gospel in a nutshell. There is the condemnation of sin, the offer of grace, and a call walk in the ways of the Lord. The prophet holds nothing back in his warning from God about the impending wrath against sinful rebellion and he uses intentionally graphic language to do so. Note that the warning is given to Judah's enemy nations, but it is also given to the covenant people of God! – reminding us that no sinner should presume upon God's mercy heathen or church-ed! All mankind is accursed short of the grace of God – we find that in Zephaniah as well. There is the promise of forgiveness and protection from God's righteous fury given to all who seek refuge in Him. For those who "call upon his name" there is salvation. The structure of this brief Old Testament prophesy should call to mind Romans 6:23 where Paul writes: *the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* There is no sufficient way to atone for the offense of sin of mankind against God outside of the sacrificial substitution of Jesus Christ the Son. Only those who 'hide themselves in Him" through faith can know true forgiveness and reconciliation to God. Have you been "quieted by His love" in Christ Jesus? If so you might be (and should be) amazed by what the prophet writes in 3:17: *The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.* God our Savior is with us AND He thoroughly delights in the saving workmanship of His gracious hands! If you have been delivered from the distress of sin through Christ, delight yourself in Him ... and know that in Christ He delights in you.