

The Way to Escape God's Anger
International Bible Lesson
Zephaniah 1:4-6, 14-16 & 2:3
Sunday, June 5, 2016
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“Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger” (Zephaniah 2:3).

God's message through the prophet Zephaniah fits his name, for Zephaniah means “whom the LORD hid” or “whom the LORD sheltered.” God wants people to know how to be hidden, sheltered, and saved “on the day of the LORD's anger,” which may be coming again very soon upon the earth. God sent Zephaniah to help people who were suffering, as many people are today, from political and religious leaders and people who were corrupt, idolatrous, and treacherous. Through Zephaniah, God warned that the day was coming very soon when He would save His people by removing these evil leaders and people from Judah and Jerusalem, and God did so when He sent the Babylonians to destroy the nation and capital in 587

BC and took many of them into captivity in Babylon. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and another day of the LORD's anger against corruption, idolatry, and treachery will soon come upon the earth in order to save His people. Graciously, through Zephaniah and Jesus Christ, God has shown the way to escape that day. First, "seek the Lord and righteousness": Jesus said, "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Second, "be humble and seek humility": Jesus said, "those who humble themselves will be exalted" and "blessed are the meek (or humble), for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 23:12 and Matthew 5:5). Third, "do what the LORD commands": Jesus said, "His commands lead to eternal life" and "you are my friends if you do what I command" (John 12:50 and John 15:14).

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Thinking Further

1. Do you think God still stretches out His hand against evil or disobedient nations today? Give a reason for your answer.

2. What are some of the events in the life of a nation or people that might indicate God's hand is against them?

3. What are some contemporary idols that some who practice going to church might serve?

4. What are some ways Christians can truly "seek the Lord and inquire of Him"?

5. What are some of the efforts God made (and makes) before the Day of the Lord to help people avoid the horrible judgment that He brought (and will bring) that Day?