

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

ZEPHANIAH CALLS TO REPENTANCE

International Sunday School Lesson for June 11, 1950

Memory Selection: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye will be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—Zephaniah 2: 8.

Lesson Text: Zephaniah 1: 12-18; 3: 16-20

Zephaniah is one of the minor prophets about whom little is known. The prophecy, in the first chapter and first verse, states that the prophet was the great-great-grandson of Hezekiah and this seems to indicate that he was of royal birth. He shows in various ways that he knows the ways of the royal family and the court, for he condemns them for imitating foreign manners of behavior and dress.

Zephaniah spoke at a time when wise and courageous leadership was needed in Judah. The people had become careless in their religious duties and many of them had taken up the practices of idol worship. More serious was the fact that many of the people were forsaking the ways of God altogether. The prophet saw all this and determined to lead his people to an understanding of what their sins meant.

The prophet condemned the leaders of worship for mixing the worship of Jehovah with that of Baal. To Zephaniah this was as bad or worse than turning away from God. Many of the people had become cynical, claiming that God would do nothing even if they were doing wrong. This was their excuse for entering into all kinds of evil practices.

Zephaniah denounced the wrongs which he saw, from the rulers who were aping the styles and social practices of foreign nations to the coldly indifferent who did not care what they did. It took real courage for him a descendant of the royal family himself, to tell the members of the king's household of their sins. It always takes courage to tell people about their wrongs, but it is one of the duties of God's people to help their fellow men to a better, more godly life.

As the "chosen people of God," the people of Israel had been the recipients of special favors from God. Now they seemed to forget their precious heritage in the promises made to Abraham, Jacob, Moses and others of their great men. Zephaniah felt that this was worse than the invasion of enemies. It meant a loss of their character as a righteous people and, as a consequence, he felt sure they would be terribly punished. He pictured a day of judgment which was terrible to contemplate and urged the people to repent, and turn back to their old ways of pure worship, in the hope that Israel might be saved from destruction.

A careful reading of the prophecy of Zephaniah, with his recounting of the conditions of the times and the manners of the people, will, to the thoughtful reader bring out a striking similarity with conditions of our times in our nation. We, as Americans, have a heritage which we should cherish with every ounce of energy in our being. But our people are in danger of the same punishment that was meted out to Israel for practicing the same evils, the paramount evil being an evidence of "forsaking the worship of God altogether."

During this series of lessons, we have seen how the prophets stood as guardians of true religion in their time. Their words come down to us as warnings against similar evils of our day. Shall we ignore these warnings and check up on ourselves before it is too late?

It is true that modern religion does not place enough emphasis on the act of God's justice and the inevitability of judgment for sin. We are too prone to think of sin as a disease which can be cured by some form of therapy, much as we heal the ill of our body. But sin cannot be expiated in that way. The way of repentance is still the only way to rid the world of sin, whether it be on the part of an individual or a nation.

Real repentance, such as Zephaniah was asking for, does three things to a person: It brings him cleansing for past wrongdoing; it turns his steps in a new direction with a new purpose, and it gives him new power for achieving that purpose. Bulwer-Lytton declares: "There is a future left to all men, who have the virtue to repent and the energy to atone."

GO TO SOME CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY

THE CHURCH FOR ALL... ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Day	Book	Chapter	Verses
Sunday	I Samuel	3	1-10
Monday	Micah	4	1-5
Tuesday	I Kings	8	36-61
Wednesday	Luke	12	13-21
Thursday	Luke	14	7-11
Friday	Psalm	40	1-8
Saturday	Colossians	3	20-25

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They might not bring down the house at Carnegie Hall. But they'll win an encore at Vacation Bible School.

There is the kind of singing in which spirit and enthusiasm count. When you're singing "Jesus Loves Me" a few flat notes don't matter.

Even after these happy weeks at Vacation Bible School they won't be ready for a Metropolitan audition. But their young lives will be richer in the qualities that make for happiness and moral health.

Our boys and girls deserve the opportunities which our churches offer them. They need the goodtimes and helpful training that have made Vacation Bible School an American tradition. Encourage your youngsters to attend!

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Duling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Harold C. Turner, Pastor
Church services at 3:00 P. M.
Christian Union, 7:30 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. R. Byerly, Pastor
Church services first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
E. B. Edwards, Pastor

First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:30 P. M.

Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:30 P. M.

Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:30 P. M.

Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:30 P. M.

Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church at 7:30 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
E. R. Meekins, Pastor
Church School, 11:00 O. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Carl Bjork, Pastor
Sunday School, 11 A. M. every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 3 P. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. E. G. Willis, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
Carl J. Yew, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Morning worship—11:00 A. M.
Youth Fellowship, 6:30 P. M.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
G. M. Singletary, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:30 A. M. on first and third Sundays and 2:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.
Church services, 3:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
Ben O. Merritt, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
E. T. Jilson, Rector
Holy Communion, 9:00 A. M.
Every Sunday except first Sunday at 9:00 A. M.
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Prayer and Sermon, 11:00 o'clock.
Holy Communion first Sunday at 11 A. M.

BERRA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor
Bible School 10:30 A. M., except first Sunday, at 10 A. M.
Morning worship on first Sunday at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first Sunday at 7 P. M.

CHAPPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
A. H. Outlaw, Pastor
Sunday School, 2 P. M. every first Sunday.
Church Service 3 P. M. every first Sunday.
Sunday School at 11 A. M. every second, third and fourth Sunday.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Go