

# BERKSHIRE COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

## BULLETIN

06/04/2023



### God's Mercy or God's Wrath?

*"I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests, those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those who bow down and swear to the Lord and yet swear by Milcom, those who have turned back from following the Lord, who do not seek the Lord or inquire of him"*

**(Zeph. 1:4-6).** What a stark warning posed to those who have divided

loyalties.

Zephaniah is considered one of the "minor prophets" and is not that well known. In fact, he is so "lost" among his peers, that a study by a friend has shown that most people do not believe Zephaniah is one of the books of the Bible. That is a shame because he had an important warning for Jerusalem and Judah during the reign of King Josiah – a warning that may well be appropriate for us today as well. Like many of his contemporaries and indeed prophets before, the message was in fact the utterances of God. They were instruments of the Lord's divine revelation and were to be taken seriously.

Those words, sometimes encouragement, sometimes instruction, and sometimes, as in our text today, a warning, were meant to impact His chosen people in a constructive manner. In many cases, the warning was meant to remind the Israelites that their disobedience would lead to terrible consequences. Consequences that would, however, return them to dependence on God. Now, they did not have to suffer the ill effects of their disloyalty if they turned from their evil ways, but if they did not, they would surely pay for their indiscipline and would not be able to escape on their own. But as noted, there was a way out - should Israel choose to turn to God, things would look up, so to speak.

**Zeph. 3:14-15,** *"Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil."* As I was reading the book of Zephaniah last night, I could not help but think of how appropriate both the warning and the encouragement are to the saints today, especially in America. Of course, it applies to Christians everywhere, but since I am not familiar with the situation in each country, I will address only the USA today. Despite that, I am sure most Christians can relate to this message to one degree or another.

All over this country, there are so-called Christians; half-hearted believers who profess one thing and then do completely the opposite. They attend church regularly and "swear" by God, proclaiming their loyalty to Him, but no sooner do they exit the building than they swear allegiance to their other gods. Music, movie and sports stars, radio and Television personalities, and numerous other gods split their devotion, but sadly for them, God is aware of their disloyalty, and it is something He will not tolerate.

In fact, God says it best in **Ex. 20:5**, “*You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God...*” Each must decide who they will serve. **Matt. 6:24**, “*No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*” And every person or nation should understand the consequences of their choice. God’s mercy or God’s wrath? It would seem like an easy decision, would it not?

Just as God was addressing the Israelite nation, so too could He be addressing our nation today. A Country where over 70% of the population state a belief in God, but only 36% attend church regularly should listen carefully to the words of Zephaniah. Things are no different now than they were then. It should be though. We have the written word, churches in virtually every town, or at least within easy reach of them, and we have both Television and the Internet to spread the word to practically everyone in the country. We should be a nation of Christians, but we are not. We are like Israel – bowing down to God and our other gods, thinking we can fool Him. Or worse, not even caring and turning from Him altogether. Now, there is good news, though. Just as God promised restoration for Israel, so too does He promise the same for us. All we need to do is turn from our evil ways and return to Him. He is waiting and He is patient, but we better do so before He allows us to suffer the consequences of our defiance of His commandments.

<u>AM ORDER OF WORSHIP</u>	<u>PM ORDER OF WORSHIP</u>
<u>ANNOUNCEMENTS</u> - Cleve Stafford	<u>ANNOUNCEMENT</u> - Cleve Stafford
<u>SONG</u> - 200 - Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah	<u>SONG</u> - 237 - His Grace Reaches Me
<u>PRAYER</u> - Emmanuel Twumasi	<u>PRAYER</u> - Jason Floyd
<u>SONG</u> - 203 - Hallelujah, What a Savior	<u>SONG</u> - 238 - Holy, Holy, Holy 1,2,4
<u>COMMUNION</u> - Douglas Roy John 6: 53-58	<u>SERMON</u> - The Holy Spirit “In your Life”
<u>SONG</u> - 197 - Have Thine Own Way, Lord	<u>SONG</u> - 255 - I AM Resolved 1,2,4
<u>SERMON</u> - The Origin of Sin	<u>COMMUNION</u> - Douglas Roy
<u>INVITATION SONG</u> - 234 - Higher Ground 1, 2, 4	<u>INVITATION SONG</u> - 272 - I Have Decided to Follow Jesus
<u>CLOSING PRAYER</u> - Dylan Stafford	<u>CLOSING PRAYER</u> - Dylan Stafford



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS**



Please silence your phone by placing it in airport mode.

We ask all visitors to please pick up a visitors card and fill it in.

- Bulletins are on the fireplace table and sermon notes are inside when available.
- Please put your offering in the provided envelope (don't write anything on it)..
- There is a flyer for a men's retreat on June, 16-17 on the fireplace table.
- We will be hosting a preachers meeting in June or July.
- If you look on the back of the visitors card you will see space to right a prayer request if you have one - feel free to do that and hand it in to us so we can pray about it.



## **PRAYER REQUESTS**



- Prayers for Matt to feel better soon.
- Continued Prayers for Melinda's mom Isabel du Toit who is still undergoing Chemotherapy.
- Prayers for all our service people wherever in the world they have been deployed to.
- Prayers for Tiffany and Stacey to feel better soon.

## **PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

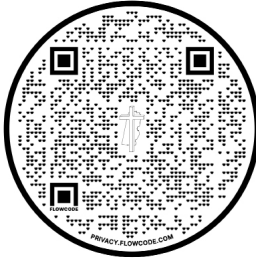
- Praise God for our sponsors.

## **BIRTHDAYS / SPECIAL OCCASIONS**



**June - 2 - Cleve Stafford**  
**22 - Tiffany Tarmey**

Sunday morning Bible Class - 9:00AM (Ephesians)  
 Wednesday Evening Bible Study - 7:00PM (Genesis)  
 Personal Bible Study (Convenient time)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Word Search



Word List

- |         |           |          |         |
|---------|-----------|----------|---------|
| ADAM    | CHOICE    | DIVINE   | EDEN    |
| EVIL    | FALLOFMAN | FREEWILL | GARDEN  |
| GENESIS | GOOD      | IMAGE    | LUCIFER |
| NATURE  | ORIGIN    | SATAN    | SIN     |
| SINLESS |           |          |         |