

## 12 Prophets - Zephaniah Part 6

Gather together, yes, gather, O shameless nation, **before the decree takes effect** —before the day passes away like chaff— before there comes upon you the burning anger of the LORD, before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the LORD.

**Seek the LORD**, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; **seek righteousness; seek humility**; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD.

For Gaza shall be deserted, and Ashkelon shall become a desolation;  
Ashdod's people shall be driven out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted.

Woe to you inhabitants of the seacoast, you nation of the Cherethites! (This is the Gaza strip on the coast)

The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines; and I will destroy you until no inhabitant is left.

And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures, with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks.

The seacoast shall become the possession of the remnant of the house of Judah, on which they shall graze, and in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.

For the LORD their God will be mindful of them and restore their fortunes.

"I have heard the taunts of Moab and the revilings of the Ammonites, how they have taunted my people and made boasts against their territory. Therefore, as I live," declares the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Moab shall become like Sodom, and the Ammonites like Gomorrah, a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste forever. The remnant of my people shall plunder them, and the survivors of my nation shall possess them."

This shall be their lot in return for their pride, because they taunted and boasted against the people of the LORD of hosts.

The LORD will be awesome against them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth, and to him shall bow down, each in its place, all the lands of the nations.

You also, O Cushites, shall be slain by my sword. And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the desert. Herds shall lie down in her midst, all kinds of beasts; even the owl and the hedgehog shall lodge in her capitals; a voice shall hoot in the window; devastation will be on the threshold; for her cedar work will be laid bare.

This is the exultant city that lived securely, that said in her heart, "I am, and there is no one else."

What a desolation she has become, a lair for wild beasts!

Everyone who passes by her hisses and shakes his fist.

[Zephaniah 2:1-15](#)

We begin to look at chapter 2 of Zephaniah which begins with a call to repentance and change before the time of reckoning comes.

The opening verse of chapter 2 on the face of it looks like a call to assembly and in the majority of translations as with the ESV the words used imply this if we take it on a very surface understanding. However, what is the purpose of the gathering? Does the interpretation really convey the full meaning?

The Hirsch translation begins the passage in the following manner:

*"First clear away the stubble, and clear away the stubble from others"*

The Artscroll translation says the following:

*"Improve yourselves and improve each other"*

In both instances “gather” seems quite weak comparatively.

The word in use here in the Hebrew is “qashash”:

## H7197

קָשַׁשׁ

qâshash

kaw-shash'

A primitive root; to *become sapless* through drought; used only as denominative from [H7179](#); to *forage* for straw, stubble or wood; figuratively to *assemble*: - gather (selves) (together).

### Total KJV occurrences: 8

What is key to gaining the true meaning is also the tense used, that it the hitpael form being reflexive. That is to understand that the first gathering is the gathering of oneself. Then, when the nation gathers, collectively there is a recognition of the need to repentance to withstand the judgment of the reckoning of HaShem.

The Jewish commentators speak in the following manner:

Hirsch:

*Unless a field is cleared of stubble, crops cannot be gathered in. It is in this sense that the prophet says:*

*“You believe that you can already reap the harvest of your lives, but you have not yet sown – you cannot sow at all! First you must clear yourselves, your surroundings, your whole circle from ‘the stubble’ of your past, so that you can hope for a new future, O, you people who so erroneously imagine yourselves at the goal of your lives”*

Rashi:

*“Gather and assemble together and align your deeds with the will of the Creator”*

Radak:

*“Seek out your faults and gather them together so that you may eradicate them. Afterward do the same for others.”*

Abarbanel:

*“Accept upon yourselves the afflictions due for your misdeeds, until you will be like straw that has been beaten and refined.”*

Put into the context of verses 2&3, we see that the return to the ways of HaShem are not guarantees but they are encouragements to recognise that this reassessment is potentially the only way in which we are hidden from the full wrath of HaShem’s judgment.

To put it into a more up to date understanding, these verses speak to the words of the Peter on the day of Shavuot and the response of the people at that time.

*On hearing this, they were stung in their hearts; and they said to Kefa and the other emissaries, "Brothers, what should we do?" Kefa answered them, "Turn from sin, return to God, and each of you be immersed on the authority of Yeshua the Messiah into forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh! For the promise is for you, for your children, and for those far away — as many as Adonai our God may call!" He pressed his case with many other arguments and kept pleading with them, "Save yourselves*

*from this perverse generation!" So those who accepted what he said were immersed, and there were added to the group that day about three thousand people.*

Acts 2:37-41

As the second chapter of Zephaniah unfolds we see that the judgment that falls upon the nations of men are those who do not seek out the truth of HaShem's word or the truth of the destiny and responsibility of His people. Even with a firm belief in their own righteousness and security, this understanding is a false hope.

The message of Zephaniah is that all the existing structures that have been relied upon will collapse in order for the stubble to be removed and the lands cleansed. This is a disaster for those who are contrary to the Torah and are humble enough to follow HaShem's instruction.

Within the context of those who follow Yeshua as Messiah, the sticking point for the world today whether they accept as the Messiah of Israel and HaShem. This is the first hurdle that many need to get over. But once past that point, then the ongoing relationship is still dependent upon a willingness to follow, keep, walk and act in accordance with the commandments of the Torah, not for the sake of salvation but as a sign of love for the Father and His Messiah.

**"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.**

John 14:15

**Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."**

John 14:21

Everyone who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God?

1 John 5:1-5