***Zephaniah***

***Chapter 2***

**Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, 2 before the appointed time**

**arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD**

**comes upon you, before the day of the LORD’s wrath comes upon you. 3 Seek**

**the LORD, all you humble ofthe land, you who do what he commands. Seek**

**righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the**

**LORD’s anger.**

**2:1–3** The prophet’s exhortation to repent. This call to repentance and the later indictment of Jerusalem for refusal to repent (see 3:6–8 and note) frame the series of judgments that illustratively detail God’s acts in the coming day of the Lord (2:4–3:5). (CSB)

**2:1** SHAMEFUL NATION – literally, “that does not grow pale,” which till now has felt no sense of shame. (Kretzmann)

**2:2** *like chaff.* See note on Ps 1:4 – (A simile of the wretchedness of the wicked. Chaff is carried away by the lightest wind, and its removal brings about cleansing by extracting what is utterly useless.) (CSB)

 FIERCE ANGER – Frightening picture of the fire (1:18) of God’s wrath streaming forth from His flared nostrils (cf 2 Sam 22:9). (TLSB)

**2:3** *Seek the Lord.* Even though destruction is imminent, there is still time to be sheltered from the calamity if only the nation will repent. (CSB)

 *humble.* Those who abandon the arrogance of their idolatry and wickedness and humble themselves in repentance before God.(CSB)

 SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS – The only righteousness that counts before God is the Lord’s righteousness, His power to save (Php 3:9). All who humbly trust in Him will be spared on the Day of Judgment. (TLSB)

*Against Philistia*

**4 Gaza will be abandoned and Ashkelon left in ruins. At midday Ashdod will be emptied and Ekron uprooted. 5 Woe to you who live by the sea, O Kerethite people; the word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines. “I will destroy you, and none will be left.” 6 The land by the sea, where the Kerethites dwell, will be a place for shepherds and sheep pens. 7 It will belong to the remnant of the house of Judah; there they will find pasture. In the evening they will lie down in the houses of Ashkelon. The LORD their God will care for them; he will restore their fortunes.**

**2:4–3:8** God’s coming judgment on the nations—including Jerusalem (cf. Am 1–2). (CSB)

**2:4** *Gaza … Ashkelon … Ashdod … Ekron.* See notes on Jos 13:3; Jdg 3:3; Am 1:6, 8. (CSB)

These were Judah’s enemies. (TLSB)

The four Philistine city-states here mentioned are clearly representative of the entire country. (Kretzmann)

Ashdod wasthe chief seat of the worship of Dagon.Since she would be helpless even at midday, so that there would be no need of resorting to a night attack. (Kretzmann)

This prophecy is against the Philistines. They had been greatly harassed by the kings of Egypt; but were completely ruined by Nebuchadnezzar, who took all Phoenicia from the Egyptians; and about the time of his taking Tyre, devastated all the seignories of the Philistines. This ruin we have seen foretold by the other prophets, and have already remarked its exact fulfillment. (ACC)

Ekron will be pulled up by its roots and left to die. (TLSB)

**2:5** *Kerethite.* See note on 1Sa 30:14. (CSB)

The sea-coasts mean all the country lying on the Mediterranean coast from Egypt to Joppa and Gaza. The Cherethites—the Cretans who were probably a colony of the Phoenicians. (ACC)

 *Canaan.* See note on Ge 10:6. (CSB)

Ancient name of the land along the eastern seashore of the Great Sea, stretching from Sidon in the north to Gaza in the south, and reaching inland as far as the Jordan Valley. Philistines lived in the southwest part of Canaan. (TLSB)

 *I … left.* The Lord’s announced purpose. (CSB)

The nation as such to be destroyed.

**2:6** The once-populous Philistine cities will revert to pastureland. (CSB)

Following the destruction of Judah’s enemies, a peaceful, pastoral scene emerges along the seacoast. (TLSB)

 *Kerethites.* See NIV text note. (CSB)

 SHEEP PENS – Stone-walled enclosures for sheep and goats. (TLSB)

**2:7** The faithful remnant of Judah will occupy this land and graze their flocks on it. (CSB)

OT prophets often referred to the remnant of the house of Judah, which would again possess the land following the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. (TLSB)

 *restore their fortunes.* See NIV text note. Here and in vv. 9, 11 the prophet anticipates the ultimate outcome of the day of the Lord, which he spells out more fully in 3:9–20. (CSB)

The members of the Jewish nation that returned from Babylonia were those in whose midst the Lord preserved His Church and among whom He established the Church of the New Testament. So the Messianic idea is brought out even in this connection. (Kretzmann)

***Against Moab and Ammon***

**8 “I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land. 9 Therefore, as surely as I live,” declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, “surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah— a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land.” 10 This is what they will get in return for their pride, for insulting and mocking the people of the LORD Almighty. 11 The LORD will be awesome to them when he destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship him, every one in its own land.**

**2:8** *Moab … Ammonites.* See notes on Ge 19:36–38; Am 1:13. For the hostility of Ammon and Moab toward Israel see Am 1:13–15; 2:1–3. They had often threatened to occupy Israelite territory (see Jdg 11:12–13; Eze 25:3–6). (CSB)

These two nations east of Jordan and of the Dead Sea, were related to the children of Israel, but later became the enemies of God’s people and made known their hostility in bitter blasphemies in proud mockery and scorn. Theyacted violently against the boundary of the Lord’s people, constantly attempting to get into possession of some of Israel’s territory. (Kretzmann)

**2:9** AS SURELY AS I LIVE – This is an oath as certain as the eternal existence of the Lord, who swears it. (TLSB)

 *Sodom … Gomorrah.* See Ge 19. They were used in the OT to typify complete destruction at the hands of God (see Dt 29:23; Isa 13:19; Jer 49:18), and their mention added ominous overtones to the prophet’s description of the day of the Lord. (CSB)

 *weeds.* A symbol of depopulation (see Isa 7:23–25). (CSB)

Moab and Ammon would be completely destroyed, as were Sodom and Gomorrah. (TLSB)

 *remnant … will inherit their land.* See note on v. 7. (CSB)

These events being typical of the destruction of the sinners and the redemption of the Lord’s people. (Kretzmann)

**2:10** *in return for their pride, for insulting and mocking.* In reprisal, the faithful remnant will occupy Ammonite and Moabite territory. (CSB)

**2:11** DESTROYS ALL GODS – They shall have no more sacrifices; their worship shall be entirely destroyed. Idolaters supposed that their gods actually fed on the fumes and spirituous exhalations that arose from the burnt-offerings which they made unto their idols. (ACC)

 *nations … will worship him.* See 3:9 and note. (CSB)

This will be when men from every nation of the earth would be gained for the Gospel-truth, this being a further Messianic feature in this chapter. (Kretzmann)

*Against Cush*

**12 “You too, O Cushites, will be slain by my sword.”**

**2:12** *You too.* Without elaboration, the prophet simply announces God’s purpose against Egypt (see v. 5 and note). (CSB)

 *Cushites.* See NIV text note. Egypt was ruled from 715 to 663 b.c. by a Cushite dynasty. (CSB)

Cush was the ancient name of the territory south of Egypt, later referred to as Ethiopia. (TLSB)

 *my sword.* Probably Babylon. (CSB)

*Against Assyria*

**13 He will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert. 14 Flocks and herds will lie down there, creatures of every kind. The desert owl and the screech owl will roost on her columns. Their calls will echo through the windows, rubble will be in the doorways, the beams of cedar will be exposed. 15 This is the carefree city that lived in safety. She said to herself, “I am, and there is none besides me.” What a ruin she has become, a lair for wild beasts! All who pass by her scoff and shake their fists.**

**2:13** *north.* Although Nineveh was east of Judah, Assyrian armies normally invaded Canaan from the north, having first marched west along the Euphrates. (CSB)

 *Nineveh.* See the books of Jonah and Nahum. Since Nineveh was destroyed in 612 b.c., Zephaniah’s ministry had to be before that date. (CSB)

 *utterly desolate.* Even the site of Nineveh was later forgotten—until discovered through modern excavations. (CSB)

The Hebrew for “desolate” implies that people will be astonished at the devastation. Over 150 years earlier, Nineveh’s destruction had been averted (cf Jnh 3), but this time it would not be spared. (TLSB)

**2:14** WILL LIE DOWN – Proud Nineveh will become a lair for wild animals. (TLSB)

 DESERT OWL…SCREECH OWL – ESV has “hedgehog” instead of “screech owl.” Neither creature is normally a city dweller, which underscores that Nineveh will be abandoned to nature. (TLSB)

 BEAMS…CEDARS WILL BE EXPOSED – All the beautiful cedar paneling of their palaces the Lord has torn away, and it has fallen into decay. (Kretzmann)

**2:15** CAREFREE CITY – The ESV has “exultant.” Nineveh once rejoiced in its power and greatness. Now its beautiful architecture will be exposed to the elements. (TLSB)

 *I am … none besides me.* See Isa 47:10. Assyria’s boast belongs properly to God alone (see Isa 45:5–6, 18, 21). (CSB)

 *has become.* Anticipating Nineveh’s impending destruction. (CSB)

 SCOFF…SHAKE FISTS – ESV has “hisses.” People would show contempt for the site of Nineveh with shrill whistles as they passed by. The city that once prided itself on its own importance will become as object of scorn. (TLSB)