

Vigilant to Glorify God

MEMORY VERSE: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways” (Haggai 1:7).

“You should make no delay, but closely search your own heart and die to self daily.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 336.

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 92-96. (At the bottom of this page)

1. TWO CLASSES

Sun, Mar 8

a. Describe the complex scene soon to take place. Zephaniah 1:14-18.

Zephaniah 1:14-18

The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. **15** That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, **16** A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. **17** And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. **18** Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

“Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated.

Zephaniah thus describes the true state of this class and the terrible judgments that will come upon them.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 270, 271.

“[Zephaniah 1:2, 3, 8–18 quoted.] There will be a series of events revealing that God is master of the situation. The truth will be proclaimed in clear, unmistakable language. As a people we must prepare the way of the Lord under the overruling guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is to be given in its purity. The stream of living water is to deepen and widen in its course. In all fields, nigh and afar off, men will be called from the plow and from the more common commercial business vocations that largely occupy the mind, and will be educated in connection with men of experience. As they learn to labor effectively they will proclaim the truth with power. Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 96.

2. CARE AND PROTECTION

Mon, Mar 9

a. What is the key to God’s protection in the coming crisis? Zephaniah 2:1–3, 15; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Zephaniah 2:1–3

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; **2** Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD’S anger come upon you. **3** Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.

Zephaniah 2:15

This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

“God requires His people to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. All those who are indifferent and excuse themselves from this work, waiting for the Lord to do for them that which He requires them to do for themselves, will be found wanting when the meek of the earth, who have wrought His judgments, are hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 619.

“In the day of the Lord, just before the coming of Christ, God will send lightnings from Heaven in His wrath, which will unite with fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrible streams of lava, destroying gardens and fields, villages and cities; and as they pour their melted ore, rocks and heated mud into the rivers, will cause them to boil like a pot, and send forth massive rocks and scatter their broken fragments upon the land with indescribable violence. Whole rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed, and there will be dreadful eruptions and earthquakes everywhere. God will plague the wicked inhabitants of the earth until they are destroyed from off it. The saints are preserved in the earth in the midst of these dreadful commotions, as Noah was preserved in the ark at the time of the flood.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 82, 83.

b. In contrast to those having a merely shallow profession, what characterizes God’s faithful believers? Zephaniah 3:1–4, 12, 13.

Zephaniah 3:1–4

Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! 2 She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. 3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. 4 Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

Zephaniah 3:12, 13

I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. 13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

c. How does Zephaniah reveal the great hope for—and the mission—in behalf of God’s faithful people in all parts of the world? Zephaniah 3:14–16.

Zephaniah 3:14-16

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. **15** The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. **16** In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

“All heaven takes an interest, not only in the lands that are nigh and that need our help, but in the lands that are afar off. The heavenly beings are watching and waiting for human agencies to be deeply moved by the needs of their fellow workmen who are in perplexity and trial, in sorrow and distress.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 459.

3. COMFORT FOR THE FAITHFUL FEW

Tue, Mar 10

a. What descriptions unveil the depth of God’s love for His children—and how we are to reflect it? Zephaniah 3:17; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

Zephaniah 3:17

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

2 Corinthians 1:3, 4

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; **4** Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

“[God] will bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love. (Song of Solomon 2:4.) ‘If thou wilt walk in My ways,’ He declares, ‘I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by’—even among the holy angels that surround His throne. . . . And heaven and earth shall unite in the Father’s song of rejoicing: ‘For this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 206, 207.

“The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking

our destruction. Have we not reason to be thankful every moment, thankful even when there are apparent difficulties in our pathway?

“The Lord Himself is our helper. ‘Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.’ ‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.’ Zephaniah 3:14, 17. This is the testimony the Lord desires us to bear to the world. His praise should continually be in our hearts and upon our lips.

“Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. As we seek to turn men from their self-indulgent efforts to secure happiness, we must show them that we have something better than that which they are seeking.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 63, 64.

b. Describe further God’s tender care for His children persecuted for their refusal to violate His law of liberty. Zephaniah 3:18-20; Ezekiel 9:3, 4.

Zephaniah 3:18-20

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. **19** Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. **20** At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 9:3, 4

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; **4** And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

“Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done’ in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are

represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 267.

4. CONSIDERING OUR WAYS

Wed, Mar 11

a. When Haggai was called as a prophet, what was going on—and what should we learn from this situation? Haggai 1:1–4.

Haggai 1:1–4

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, **2** Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built. **3** Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, **4** Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

“The expression, ‘This people say,’ is significant. In the hour of their opportunity, the Israelites had not shown themselves willing. Prompt obedience is expected of those whom the Lord chooses and leads. Pleas for delay are a dishonor to God. And yet those who choose to follow their own way, often frame ingenious excuses in self-justification. Thus the Israelites declared that they had begun to rebuild, but that they were broken off in their work because of the hindrances devised by their enemies. These hindrances, they reasoned, were an indication that it was not the proper time to rebuild. They declared that the Lord had interposed difficulties to reprove their hot haste. This is why, in a communication through His prophet, He referred to them not as ‘my people,’ but as ‘this people.’

“The Israelites had no real excuse for leaving their work on the temple. The time when the most serious objections were raised, was the time for them to persevere in building. But they were actuated by a selfish dislike to encounter danger by arousing the opposition of their enemies. They did not possess the faith that is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. They hesitated to move forward by faith in the opening providences of God, because they could not see the end from the beginning. When difficulties arose, they were easily turned from the work.”—The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1175.

b. What appeal is made to those distracted by worldly interests? Haggai 1:5-10.

Haggai 1:5-10

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. **6** Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. **7** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. **8** Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. **9** Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. **10** Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

“A striking illustration of the results of selfishly withholding even freewill offerings from the cause of God was given in the days of the prophet Haggai. . . . The Jews undertook to rebuild the temple of the Lord; but meeting determined opposition from their enemies, they discontinued the work.”—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 527.

c. How did the remnant obtain victory in heart and action? Haggai 1:12, 13.

Haggai 1:12, 13

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. **13** Then spake Haggai the LORD’S messenger in the LORD’S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.

“[The remnant] dared not disregard the repeated warning that their prosperity and the blessing of God were dependent upon their entire obedience to the instructions given them. As soon as they decided that they would do the words of the Lord, His messages of reproof changed to words of encouragement. O how merciful a God we have!”—SDA Bible Commentary [E.G.White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1176.

a. Explain God's plan for the second temple that was to be built. Haggai 2:6-9.

Haggai 2:6-9

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. 9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

“After the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar it was rebuilt about five hundred years before the birth of Christ by a people who from a lifelong captivity had returned to a wasted and almost deserted country. There were then among them aged men who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple, and who wept at the foundation of the new building, that it must be so inferior to the former. The feeling that prevailed is forcibly described by the prophet: ‘Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?’ Haggai 2:3; Ezra 3:12. Then was given the promise that the glory of this latter house should be greater than that of the former.

“But the second temple had not equaled the first in magnificence; nor was it hallowed by those visible tokens of the divine presence which pertained to the first temple. There was no manifestation of supernatural power to mark its dedication. No cloud of glory was seen to fill the newly erected sanctuary. No fire from heaven descended to consume the sacrifice upon its altar. The Shekinah no longer abode between the cherubim in the most holy place; the ark, the mercy seat, and the tables of the testimony were not to be found therein. No voice sounded from heaven to make known to the inquiring priest the will of Jehovah.

“For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God given by Haggai had been fulfilled; yet pride and unbelief blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet's words. The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah's glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily—who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. The ‘Desire of all nations’ had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 23, 24.

- 1. In the soon-coming crisis, how can I be a power for good in God's hands?**
- 2. Why is meekness an essential trait to seek in these last days?**
- 3. What characterizes all who are hid in the day of the Lord's anger?**
- 4. What tends to make me lose track of the greatest priority in life?**
- 5. Why was the simpler, humbler temple built in Haggai's day so glorious?**

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 92–96.

While at Loma Linda, California, April 16, 1906, there passed before me a most wonderful representation. During a vision of the night, I stood on an eminence, from which I could see houses shaken like a reed in the wind. Buildings, great and small, were falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theaters, hotels, and the homes of the wealthy were shaken and shattered. Many lives were blotted out of existence, and the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified. (9T 92.3)

The destroying angels of God were at work. One touch, and buildings, so thoroughly constructed that men regarded them as secure against every danger, quickly became heaps of rubbish. There was no assurance of safety in any place. I did not feel in any special peril, but the awfulness of the scenes that passed before me I cannot find words to describe. It seemed that the forbearance of God was exhausted and that the Judgment day had come. (9T 93.1)

The angel that stood at my side then instructed me that but few have any conception of the wickedness existing in our world today, and especially the wickedness in the large cities. He declared that the Lord has appointed a time when He will visit transgressors in wrath for persistent disregard of His law. (9T 93.2)

Terrible as was the representation that passed before me, that which impressed itself most vividly upon my mind was the instruction given in connection with it. The angel that stood by my side declared that God's supreme rulership and the sacredness of His law must be revealed to those who persistently refused to render obedience to the King of kings. Those who choose to remain disloyal must

be visited in mercy with judgments, in order that, if possible, they may be aroused to a realization of the sinfulness of their course. (9T 93.3)

Throughout the following day I pondered the scenes that had passed before me and the instruction that had been given. During the afternoon we journeyed to Glendale, near Los Angeles; and the following night I was again instructed regarding the holiness and binding claims of the Ten Commandments and the supremacy of God above all earthly rulers. (9T 93.4)

I seemed to be in an assembly, setting before the people the requirements of God's law. I read the scriptures regarding the institution of the Sabbath in Eden at the close of the creation week, and regarding the giving of the law at Sinai; and then declared that the Sabbath is to be observed "for a perpetual covenant" as a sign between God and His people forever, that they may know that they are sanctified by the Lord, their Creator. (9T 94.1)

Then I further dwelt upon the supreme rulership of God above all earthly rulers. His law is to be the standard of action. Men are forbidden to pervert their senses by intemperance or by yielding their minds to satanic influences, for this makes impossible the keeping of God's law. While the divine Ruler bears long with perversity, He is not deceived and will not always keep silence. His supremacy, His authority as Ruler of the universe, must finally be acknowledged and the just claims of His law vindicated. (9T 94.2)

Much more instruction regarding the long-sufferance of God and the necessity of arousing transgressors to a realization of their perilous position in His sight was repeated to the people, as received from my instructor. (9T 94.3)

On April 18, two days after the scene of falling buildings had passed before me, I went to fill an appointment in the Carr Street Church, Los Angeles. As we neared the church we heard the newsboys crying: "San Francisco destroyed by an earthquake!" With a heavy heart I read the first hastily printed news of the terrible disaster. (9T 94.4)

Two weeks later, on our homeward journey, we passed through San Francisco and, hiring a carriage, spent an hour and a half in viewing the destruction wrought in that great city. Buildings that were thought to be proof against disaster were lying in ruins. In some instances buildings were partially sunken in the ground. The city

presented a most dreadful picture of the inefficiency of human ingenuity to frame fireproof and earthquake-proof structures. (9T 94.5)

Through His prophet Zephaniah the Lord specifies the judgments that He will bring upon evildoers: (9T 95.1)

“I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord.” Zephaniah 1:2~3. (9T 95.2)

“And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit....” Zephaniah 1:8~9. (9T 95.3)

“And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.” Zephaniah 1:12~13. (9T 95.4)

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Zephaniah 1:14~18. (9T 95.5)

God cannot forbear much longer. Already His judgments are beginning to fall on some places, and soon His signal displeasure will be felt in other places. (9T 96.1)

There will be a series of events revealing that God is master of the situation. The truth will be proclaimed in clear, unmistakable language. As a people we must prepare the way of the Lord under the overruling guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is to be given in its purity. The stream of living water is to deepen and widen in its course. In all fields, nigh and afar off, men will be called from the plow and from the more common commercial business vocations that largely occupy the mind, and will be educated in connection with men of experience. As they learn to labor effectively they will proclaim the truth with power. Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come. (9T 96.2)