

Zephaniah

Sunday 12/12/2010

Let us stand up. We have not done this for a while. Let us stand up and do our little reciting here of our creed. This is God's Holy Word, divinely inspired by God, infallible and inerrant. It is my sword to fight the devil and his temptations. It is my comfort in times of trouble. It is my compass for my life journey. It is God's love letter to me personally and my companion every day of my life.

Father, we thank you and praise you today for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for those that have braved the weather to be here today. We pray, Father, that you will have a blessing for us. We thank you for this church. I thank you for the folks that are in it who are committed to the Word of God and to do the little bit that you have us to do as a church. Thank you for the good day yesterday and meeting with Brother Ed and Mike and all that you are doing up there, and for knitting the two churches together, Father. There are going to be some great things out of that. We are just so thankful for all of that. Lord, we are just thankful now and pray you will bless our time in the Word today. Lord, may everyone leave today with what they need. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen. You may be seated.

I. Introduction to Zephaniah

We are moving our way up through the Old Testament. As you know, we have been targeting the Old Testament books of the Bible specifically on Sunday morning, giving you how the Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed in every book of the Bible. Once we finish the Old Testament, yes, we will move right into the New Testament because it carries right along with that. It is a great study.

Along with that, of course, on Thursday night, before we get into our questions and answers, we have been dealing with the outline of each one. I think we just finished Nehemiah last week, and we will be into Esther this next week as we come through that. Your job, obviously, is to get all of this down in your Bible. We are doing this to help you get a context to the Scriptures. I think if you faithfully fulfill this and do this, it will really help you in everything that you are doing with the Bible. We are looking forward to that.

The name Zephaniah means "hidden of the Lord." Christ is typified here, and there are a number of things in this book we are going to try to accomplish today. Christ is typified as our jealous Lord. You will find that in Zephaniah 3:17 and then again in 1 Corinthians 10:22. The book is a pre-exile book. That means it happened or it is written before they go into the captivity of the Babylonian Empire. It is written during the time of Josiah. That will bring us back in your Bible to 2 Kings 22. We have just finished on Thursday night a couple of weeks ago, coming through 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. I have shown you how those books are absolutely imperative for you to get down at some time. It is now not only done that we did it in person, but it is documented on tape that many of the guys have done outlines for it and papered it, which are very good. I always appreciate when people do that because most of you do that much better than I do, and I appreciate that.

II. The Context of King Josiah and the Lost Bible

We talked about Thursday night. This is where Thursday night and Sunday morning are always going to connect each other. We talked about good King Josiah in 1 Kings 22. He is a guy who comes to the throne. He is a guy basically that does what no other king has done. The story goes in the Bible that he goes into the temple and finds the Bible. I think that is quite instructive. Here we have a nation of Israel who are pretending to have everything that God wants them to be, and be God's people, and be God's nation, but they have no Bible. It takes a guy like Josiah to go into the temple and he finds the Word of God.

Then you know what he does? He calls all the leaders of Israel together and he sits down and he reads to them what the Bible says. It is like, "Hello, what happened?" These leaders immediately see that the nation of Israel has gone into deep apostasy. It always just blew my mind how these guys could be part of the nation of Israel and lose sight of the Bible that God gave them and go on for what, two, three hundred years now, pretending that everything is okay when it was not. How in the world did the nation of Israel, who Romans 3:2-3 tells you had the oracles of God, not have the Bible? It was not like they went to a Christian bookstore and bought the Bible. God delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai the Ten Commandments, from which Moses then added to the law, wrote the law, gave it hand of mouth all the way down through the system. Now here we are, they are playing church, so to speak. They still have the temple worship. They have the priesthood in place. They are doing all of the things outwardly, but they do not have a Bible.

The only way to understand that is to look around you today and understand that most churches today do not have a Bible either. When they find the Word of God, good King Josiah, he goes back and he begins to talk to the leaders of Israel, and they enter into a campaign to destroy all the wickedness out of Israel. We looked at this last Thursday night. Eve asked the question out of Genesis which led us to 2 Kings 22. In that chapter is the chapter of how bad it was in Israel. All the filth and ungodliness that they are doing in the name of God, which had absolutely nothing to do with God, all the false gods.

It is easy, it really is. It is easy for you and me today in our Christianity. We read back there, we read about the false gods and we read about the images and we read about the idolatry that went on back there. We just do not equate it today in our lives that we have gods too that take the place of God, do we? We just do not get it because our gods have four wheels and a steering wheel, because our gods have some tangible thing. Our god is not necessarily a big old fat Buddha living in your front room. Our god is not some stone image that you bow down to or you look to. No, because our images are not, and idolatry is not formed on that. We think there is a difference between their idolatry and our idolatry, and it is not. Idolatry is anything you put before the Lord Jesus Christ. It can be your wife, it can be your husband, it can be your kids, it can be your job, it can be your car, it can be your fishing pole, it can be your bass boat, it can be whatever it is. It can be your sewing machine, it could be anything that you put before the Lord. That is why this book, the underlying theme of it that we will get to down the line, is the fact that Christ is our jealous Lord. He gets jealous of those kinds of things. He was jealous of the nation of Israel, and we will talk about why God has a right to be jealous a little bit later on.

Good King Josiah, he goes in and they tear these places up. We studied it Thursday night. They rip and rant and they kill the false prophets. They really get into it and they just destroy everything trying to bring Israel back to God. They found the Word of God, they had the leadership involved, and they tried to bring and turn the nation of Israel around. But it is too late. I also told you Thursday night one of the things that I want to deal with today, and we will move on down the line, this will not be right now but I will come back to it, is why and how does it get to be too late in a person's life? I always thought God was not willing that any should perish. I always thought that God was there as a loving Father. Why is it that some of God's people, forget the unsaved people for right now, why is it some of God's people will get themselves into circumstances and no matter what they try to do, no matter what somebody tried to do for them, they cannot get back? Now you probably think that does not happen. You obviously have not dealt with people very much. You are very shallow in your understanding of human nature and the way God does things. We will talk about that a little bit later on.

III. The Principle of the Remnant

Again, the book is written to God's people, the nation of Israel. Zephaniah, as all the prophets, is trying to get Israel, which are God's people, to see God and what His Word is saying about God's coming judgment. Of course, the judgment here will be Nebuchadnezzar who is going to come down here very shortly and destroy everything.

The main theme of this book, not Christ being portrayed, but the main theme of this book, and this is why I want to get some of this down for you, I want you to leave here today for those of you that want it, and I want you to functionally understand this book a little better. The way that you understand this book will help you understand other things found in this book that will open up the rest of the book for you, the Word of God. You are going to find that the main theme of this book is a great theme that deals with one of the greatest truths in the Bible. We talked about this. I told you I was going to tell you this. It is the concept of God's remnant. A remnant is a very small piece. If you have a remnant of a coat, a remnant of a dress, a remnant of a shirt, it is just a piece of what the old shirt was. That word in the Bible is a tremendous word. It is like most of the key words in the Bible. It always denotes a context. I want you to see that today.

I want to begin reading here in Zephaniah 2. We will pick it up in verse 7 and just follow along here and we will see it.

Zephaniah 2:7-9

And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.

I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.

Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a

perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.

Anytime you find where God is visiting somebody, anytime you find a word, a day of visitation, that is not, most Baptist churches think that is the night you go out and visit people. Of course, that is not in the Bible. That is not true. It is always a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. In some cases, it will spill over into the millennium when God comes to visit. You will find places where it says, "and God visits the reproach of whoever." You will find a phrase, "the day of visitation." You will find it where it uses it like here, "God shall visit them." Here He turns away their captivity. That will always be a context, it will be the Second Coming of Christ. The day God comes to visit the nation of Israel. He does not come to visit you and me. He comes to take you and me out. When He comes to visit the nation of Israel.

A hundred percent of the time, doctrinally in the Old Testament, and even a couple of books in the New Testament, when you find the word remnant, it will always be dealing with the nation of Israel at the Second Coming of Christ. Our great chapters that we came through, we came through the book of Romans. Remember that? I told you that Romans is a systematic layout of what God is really doing. In Romans 9 and Romans 11, you have two great chapters on God coming back and restoring the nation of Israel. In both of those chapters, in Romans 9:27, it talks about in relationship to Israel that only a remnant is going to be saved. In Romans 11:5, it talks about a remnant of Israel will be saved according to the election of God.

You are going to find that the reality of the, and most people do not understand this because most people's concepts of things of the end times. When I talk about the end times, I am talking about the rapture of the church. Everybody knows about the rapture. They understand it for the most part, what it is, but they do not understand how it works. Then you have the tribulation period. There is so much hype on the tribulation period today because everybody knows we are coming toward the end of the world. So everybody thinks about the great apocalypse, and the end of the world, and the devil, and the antichrist, and all that stuff. A lot of books are being written on it. A lot of guys who do not know anything else about the Bible that can make a living off of preaching on prophecy are doing it today. But in reality, most people do not understand what the tribulation is. You find it, the farther you go, the less you find they understand. The marriage supper of the Lamb. Nobody even talks about that today. You see, people want to grab your attention on the big items that are all the "wow" items, but they do not want to get into the details of things like the marriage of the Lamb. The marriage supper of the Lamb. Are they the same? When do they take place? Here we detail all that out. The Second Coming of Christ is obviously a big issue, and most people know about that. But again, they do not understand it. The millennium, that is a big deal, but most people do not understand that.

Most conservative Christians that are saved people, or at least they claim to be saved, they understand Israel's place in all this. I was talking to Ed and Mike the other day, and they were telling me that they had a missionary come through that was a missionary to the Jews. This guy, he actually does not eat anything that is not kosher. He wears Jewish clothes, goofy stuff, because his mindset is he wants to reach the Jews. So he thinks he is back in the New Testament times like Paul. They talk Jewish talk, all those things. Again, they just do not have a clue. If I

wanted to be a missionary to the Jews, you know where I would go? I would not be in America at all. I would head over there to Jerusalem. But you see, it is a little rougher over there, is it not? Here you could be a missionary to the Jews, and you can play the game, so to speak. You want to really meet the Jews where they are at? Go over to Jerusalem. Get out there in the West Bank someplace. Get out there where the action really is. But of course, they are not going to do that.

The reality is this: with all the work that people are trying to do today, and all of the goofy things that people are involved in, and all the people that try to rip you off for money to support what they are trying to do, I love this thing. Most of you have seen it. I just love it. It is funny. I just laugh every time it comes on. How many of you have seen this guy, this rabbi from, he runs a Christian Jewish correlation or something like that, and he is talking about these Jews over in Russia that are way up in Siberia, and he is showing these old wrinkled people who are crying because they cannot, he cannot celebrate Hanukkah, and he tells you that Hanukkah is the festival of lights. He sits there and he has this woman here who looks like she is about mummified, 105, up in Siberia someplace, and she is crying because she cannot do this. He says, "These are Jews of the Holocaust, and they cannot celebrate Hanukkah." Then he looks in the camera and this is my favorite line, "And this should not be." Then he goes on to the next guy, and he talks about him, and he is all wrinkled up like he has been in prune juice for 145 years, and he looks up and he says, "And this should not be." Then he shows you the care package that you get to send them for just \$25. I kind of scoped it out and I froze it on my TV set so I could list all those things. At the Dollar General store, you can get all that stuff for about \$1.98. It is all for them to celebrate Hanukkah. And people, and a little food, but they have to have special crackers, and they have a little seven little candles, and it is all for these Jews up in Siberia. I guarantee you, there are 100 million of God's people who are saved on the way to heaven that are flooding this guy's bank account, trying to help these Jews because they think this guy, because he is the Jewish Christian Coalition. It should be called "con man Christianity." It would go a lot farther in line. Of course, Hanukkah has nothing to do with the Bible. Hanukkah was added in much after the time, in the Babylonian captivity or sometime thereafter. There is no Hanukkah in the Bible. There is no festival of lights. But it shows you how ridiculously inept most of God's people are today to even know, so they get caught into those things and they get caught into those traps.

The truth of the matter is this, folks. At the end of the Second Coming of Christ, when the Lord comes back, the Bible says only a remnant gets saved. That remnant is a very small number. I know that number is in the Bible someplace. I would not hesitate to say that probably at the Second Coming of Christ, barring 144,000 who go out and witness to Gentiles, they do not witness to Jews, they go to Gentiles, you need to understand that. I would probably make a wild estimation guess based on the little bit I know about the Bible that at the end of the Second Coming of Christ in the Valley of Armageddon, with about 200 million Jews today, I would probably say that out of that 200 million or however many there are, probably get killed down and that remnant is somewhere probably close around 7,000 people. That was my estimate based on what the Bible shows you. It is a remnant. This idea that all the Jews are going to, it is a remnant. Can you not read the Scriptures? He tells you over and over. It is a remnant. It is a remnant of the nation of Israel, a very small part of the nation of Israel. Why? Because most of

the nation of Israel is so far in apostasy that it is too late for them. We know that there are some parameters given about the salvation of the tribulation period that have to come into play. It is going to be a very small number.

We had a guy that came to our Bible study here. I have known this guy for probably 40 years. I will not give you his name. You can call him my pet name for him: Mr. Absolute Idiot. That is my pet name for him. This guy is one of the most egotistical guys you have ever met in your life. He believes. He goes to a church, a Baptist church, but he is never part of the Baptist church. He does not support it with his tithes. He is just there. He draws people that are dumber than he is into a little Bible study. He pulls them into his home and he teaches his heresy. He came to our Bible study two times and that was all he could handle. I have known this guy for years and years and years. He told me one of the times that I talked to him on the phone that he was telling me that he was coming over that God had told him that he is to write the books by which the Jews are going to find Christ in the tribulation period. He is busy writing those things right now. He was as serious as a heart attack. He is as serious as I am. I am sure you go to his house, he has these parchment or books or whatever, and he believes by God's design that he is the one that is writing the real truth to the Jews. When you do not have anything going in life, you have got to make yourself be something. Superman is out of vogue and Sergeant Rock is not around anymore so you have got to be somebody so you become a great prophet. "God is using me." How that must make him feel. Every morning he looks in the mirror, "God is using me. The whole nation of Israel is going to get saved by what I write." Of course, that is just ridiculous.

The truth of the matter is this guy would not know enough Bible to put in a blind eye of a blind mosquito. He has not known anything about the Bible. He is so caught up in, he has the most unteachable spirit I have ever met in my life. Of course, this is where you go when you cannot be taught. So now he is holding the torch up for the nation of Israel. The truth of the matter is that he is in the wrong country. They will not come out of America. When that remnant of Israel gets saved, it will be out of the Middle East. He missed that in the Bible. It must be when it was late night writing. It is not going to come out of America. I would say that the average Jew in America is so far removed from what the Orthodox Jew is in reality and God is looking for. It is unbelievable. No, no. You will find the Orthodox Jews not in America. Most of the Jews in America are just token Jews. They have some Jewish blood in them or they are over here but they are mixed with the Gentiles to the point where they are only a Jew from the aspect of their heritage or their mother or their grandfather. When it comes to life and their country club over there in Overland Park and all those places where they hang out where they have all the money, that is basically the kind of Jews they are. They are not the real Messianic Jews, if there is anything called Messianic Jews. But that is the way God always does it.

Now the real key in your Bible is to know that concept of a remnant is taught all the way down through the Bible and man's history, and it is one and the same. I keep telling you that you cannot separate the God of the Bible from the God of history, and the concepts in the Bible are usually true down through history. Certainly it is true with the aspect of a remnant.

➤ Historical Examples of the Remnant

In Genesis 6-9, you have the story of Noah, which we all know. We know that in Genesis 6 the world was very wicked. By conservative estimates, very conservative, most people do not know this, by conservative estimates, they think that Noah's time, in our idea, it is kind of like prehistoric caveman time, and that is simply not true. They think that in Noah's time the earth was very limited. That is not true. Anybody who can just put a calculator and figure up the genealogy of the years and see what we have got there, there probably was at least 7 to 8 billion people on planet Earth, probably twice the population of the earth today. It was probably close to 10 billion people on planet Earth at that particular time. But God only saved eight. You know why? Because God uses a remnant. That concept of the remnant goes all the way through the Bible. I guarantee you that there is probably some connection between that because you take the time of Noah and the Bible says, "as it was in the days of Noah in the Gospels, it shall be as the coming of the Son of Man." That is a connection to the Second Coming and the Jew and the tribulation. Noah is a type of the nation of Israel in some form. But over there, I think it is in Ezekiel, it talks about the fact that the time that Noah is in that ark on that water is some relationship to the time that God deals with the nation of Israel in the tribulation period. I have never figured out the key, never will. Please do not run up to me afterwards and tell me you have. But that is what I am telling you. It is there.

In the book of Judges, all the way through, we have the story of Gideon in Judges 7. Remember Gideon? Gideon was a guy who was one of the deliverers of the nation of Israel. He comes down through there and he is going to fight the Midianites and he has 32,000 men. God says, "Well, you have too many, Gideon." So God cuts him down to take 10,000 right out of the chute. Finally, he has a number of guys left and God says, "That is still too many." So God takes them down to the river down there and gets them to drink. I think this is where everything in the Bible means something, it is incredible. The way that those guys drink the water is how they get picked to be part of the remnant, Gideon's 300. So God took it from 32,000 men down to 300 and then took 300 men with an army that was 40 times their size and defeated them. You know why? Because God always deals with a remnant. That is why. All the way through the Bible. When you look at how they drank the water, you know what you have a picture of? If you are a pastor, you have a picture of that water as the type of the Word of God. You have a picture of how Christians, two different kinds of ways that Christians drink the Word of God and take it in. He picked the ones that drank the Word of God right. Those are little keys in the Bible that when you learn them, you get into the ministry down the line someplace, and you know what they mean? People do not fool you very much. You can tell. I can tell by your study habits, by what you do with the Bible, almost in an uncanny way. I am not a prophet nor am I a son of the prophets. But I can almost tell in an uncanny way what your spiritual life is going to be. First of all, we know that your spiritual life is only based on what you do with the book. You get somebody who, and you get those two guys the way they approach the book. You see God's people doing it this way. Another God's person doing it this way. You know what you have. That is the infallibility of the Word of God.

I told you before, the Bible is the only book in the world that when you begin to read it, it begins to read you. When you begin to study it, it begins to study you. This is why people do not like to be around the Bible. If a person is a Christian, is a dishonest person who wants to have their own

world and wants to play both ends against the middle and pretend they are a nice Christian but yet have what they want to have in the world, the last place they want to be is in a church that is going to hold them accountable with the Word of God. You know why? Because they do not want any accountability in their life. So they do what they want to do in life, and it all comes down to how you drink that water. You take the Word of God in, incredible stuff.

We have in the book of 1 Kings a time when Israel's downfall is going into captivity, around 1 Kings 19 up to 22 where we were. But in 1 Kings 19, at the time when Israel's downfall and they are going into captivity, you have God taking Elisha. Elisha is a prophet and Elisha is going to the nation of Israel, and the nation of Israel is in total complete mental, spiritual breakdown mode. They are absolutely in a disastrous state, and Elisha goes to God, back to God, after he preaches his message, and he is discouraged. I see a lot of pastors like Elisha. I see a lot of Christians like Elisha. They look at the overwhelming things out there, and this is going to fit into where we are going here in just a little bit. They look at the overwhelming circumstances of life and Christianity, and all they ever see is the problems of the thing, and all they ever see is the overwhelming. I have to admit it probably was pretty depressing. But you know what God told him? God told him, and by that He gave probably one of the greatest keys to the Second Coming of Christ, because all of this is the type of the tribulation and coming up to the Second Coming, and Elijah is one of the key prophets in all of that. God looks at him and He says, "You know what, don't worry about it, pal. I still have 7,000 men in Israel who have not bowed a knee to Baal." You know what God told him? "Don't worry, Elisha. I have a remnant." God always has a remnant. I do not care where you go in history, that concept of a remnant doctrinally when you find it in your Bible may always give you 100% of the time the context of the Second Coming or tribulation or somewhere in there. But you are going to find that principle that God does it through a remnant all down through history.

We have been coming through Ezra and Nehemiah, laying those out on Thursday night. We laid out Nehemiah this week, we laid out Ezra last week. What did I show you? I showed you how that when they go into captivity and they spend the 70 years captivity over there, God finally lets them go back. Now you have to remember there are probably 20 million Jews that were either killed, went into captivity, or dispersed all over the Middle East, and they are everywhere. Some of them are up in Assyria now, they are in Samaria now, they are down in Babylon, and they are everywhere. Yet God sends the nation of Israel back, but out of 20 some million people, maybe even more, at least 20 million people, what do we have? Only 49,000 go back. You know what that is? That is a remnant. You know why He only took 49,000 out of 20 million or so? Because the principle is that when the Lord Jesus Christ shows up at the First Coming of Christ, which is going to happen only 400 short years from what is taken place there, the Bible prophesied there had to be a remnant in the land, so He brings them back. That concept of a remnant is in everything you are going to find.

In the early New Testament church, for those of us in church history, we understand this now. In the early New Testament church, when apostasy began to show its ugly face and set in in Bible Christianity, it was a remnant that held the line, was it not? It was guys like the Montanists and guys like the Novatians and Nestorians and the Donatists, they held the line. They were a

remnant when all of Bible Christianity began to go down and go south, just like the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. There has always been, God always has, it is a principle of the Bible and it is a principle in history. God will always have His faithful few, His remnant, that will stay by the stuff no matter how dark it gets or how bad it gets.

In the Dark Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church rolled down through history putting out the lights of God's Word, God had His remnant. We know them today as the Waldensians, the Albigenses, the Lollards, the Paulicians, the Hussites, the Bogomils, the Lombards. They are groups of people who are the remnant that would not roll over to the Roman Catholic Church and give up the Bible that they have and give up all that God had given them, and they were the faithful few that held the line. God always had it.

In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the Prophet Daniel had prophesied in Daniel 7 that communism was going to be one of the great empires, and it tells you back there, if you remember, to liken it to a great bear with teeth and claws, and it was told to devour much flesh. Most people cannot figure out what that is talking about, but it is talking about the rise of communism. Communism may have come into effect with the Bolshevik Revolution around the turn of the century, but communism did not get its foothold until after World War Two. We know it as the Cold War, but after World War Two, communism literally takes over three quarters of the world, and three quarters of the world's continents are now, as we speak today, communist. It started in Europe right after World War Two. It started with East Berlin and West Berlin where they put the Berlin Wall up because after World War Two the Russians had captured much of the land from the Germans. We had captured such, and at the end of the war the Russians put a line down there and they said, "These nations are now going to be under our control," and all those nations went communist. Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Berlin, all of those what we call them West Bloc nations, what does that mean? It means they were blocked by the West, Russia, from ever having any freedom. Romania went, Yugoslavia went, and then it moved from Central Europe in time. It moved down to Central America, and back in the 70s and the 80s we saw it in Nicaragua. We saw it in El Salvador. We saw it in all of those places, and then it moved into South America. Then during World War, right after World War Two, it moved into Korea, North Korea and South Korea. Then it went into China where during World War Two China was our ally under Chiang Kai-shek. After he gets defeated, another emperor comes in and they go communist, and now they are our worst enemy. Korea is the same way. Korea came about the 38th parallel because of the end of World War Two, that is where the demarcation line was, and the North went communist. Then we saw it in Vietnam, and much of the latter part from the 50s on has been us as Americans trying to stop the great Russian bear from devouring all of the nations in America and around the world. Of course, that is what happened. That is exactly what happened.

When those countries went communist, they set up a church state. In other words, the communist state allowed them to have churches, but they also would not allow them to preach any kind of gospel message. The church controlled every pastor. He was told what he could preach and what he could not preach. Most of the churches in those countries folded up. I do not know if you know it or not, but that is where this country is heading whether you figure it out or not. There is legislation in Washington right now to get all the talk radio off the radio air because now it is

going that it is racist, it is going that it is biased, and they say that it is wrong for them to have that on federally controlled airwaves. They are going to make a run for it that they are going to take all of the free speech out of anything that you have, and in time it is going to come right down to the churches if Jesus Christ does not come. Right now you are finding out that if you talk about certain things that 40 years ago you could preach on, now they are labeled as racist. It is their big card today. It is labeled as this or as labeled as that, and it is all because of the fact that they are trying to get away from any truth, any agenda that has anything to do with right or wrong in the biblical sense, and of course that is what they did in these countries. You could have a church. Oh yeah, you could have a church, call it whatever you want, but this is what you preach and this is what you teach.

Of course, God always has His faithful few. So during that period of time, the great underground church movement came into effect. Churches met underground and Christianity flourished in an incredible way in those West Bloc countries. They flourished in the fact that because Christianity always flourishes, it does not flourish when you have the right to sit here today fat and sassy and thumb your nose at God and come all week and then come to church. You know, you are going to get a New Year's party and get blind, stagger and drunk, or go to your New Year's party, get blind drunk, and then come back to church and everybody is fine and you are fine and you and God are okay. It does not flourish in that kind of environment. No, no, no. When it flourishes best is when you go out of church sometime and there are two guys in long leather coats taking your name and your address and your social security number. Then you go to work on Monday and find out you do not have a job anymore, and you get a letter in the mail the IRS wants to meet with you to see if you are doing your taxes. Then it comes at a point where they tell you that you cannot carry your Bible in public anymore. And they tell me that I cannot preach certain messages anymore. You see, that is where the real proof of the pudding is. Right now we just have it all too easy. That does not mean nothing to you now. There is no price to pay for it. "Oh, I pay a price, the computer is broke at work." We all had to think yesterday. "Oh yes, you are paying such a terrible price." "You know all the air conditioners broke, who, we sweltered." Yeah, you are paying a price. There is no price to pay today. You can live your life any way you want to live it and just go do what you want to do seemingly without any penalties and because there is no persecution. That is why I tell you if you ever become a young man to grow up in a ministry, the best thing that happened to you is to get about, if you have 400 people that love you, you have to have 200 that hate you, it balances it out. It is hard to get pious, it is hard to get self-righteous when bullets are zinging by your head and somebody is trying to cut your throat. It is just a good balance. You see how people do not understand that because you do not understand that real Christianity flourishes when it is persecuted. I have no persecution here. We are just like a little Pillsbury Doughboy, we are just having a great little time. We take from God what we want, we tell Him and order Him around like He is our servant, and then we do not get our way, we whine and cry, and when God comes down and tries to correct us, we get mad and change churches. Nice little deal, nice gig.

You are going to find that in the communist countries they went underground and they paid a severe price. Some of the books, I do not know if we have any in the library back there where we have had them in the past, were by a Chinaman by the name of Watchman Nee. Watchman Nee

was one of the greatest devotional writers about his relationship with God. He lived back in the 1940s and in that period of time nobody ever knows what happened to Watchman Nee because he lived in communist China and they took him someplace and he probably died or tortured to death or died in some starvation camp someplace. Nobody ever knows what happened to him, but his writings live on long after he is dead and gone and they have been an inspiration. You know what he was? He was a remnant.

Those of us coming through church history now, we understand the apostasy that has crept into American Christianity in the 1900s, in the 1950s, to where we are at today. Just last week we were together, we saw how the Baptist churches in America that were the mainstay, the Southern Baptist was the biggest, the General Association of Baptist, they were the middle group, and the American Baptist were the smallest group. There were no fundamentalists. They were just those three basic Bible Baptist churches or groups, Southern Baptist being the largest, and they were absolutely the ones that came out of the great awakenings that had started Baptist churches all across this country down south, what we know today as the Bible belt. But we saw now how that they all have gone into apostasy by the 1940s. You go to the American Baptist Church down in Florida and there is a guy down there that you go into his church, a megachurch, six, seven thousand people. In the foyer they have a statue of Jesus Christ and they have a statue of Buddha and they have a statue of Confucius, and you can worship all three of them because they do not have an issue with it. In the 1920s and 1930s, the reason why the Southern Baptist Convention is not worth the powder to blow them to hell today, and I do not care if they are on the liberal side or the conservative side, they are all the same because they allowed it to creep in. About the 1920s and 30s they were teaching the church. They were teaching that the Bible was fables, the story of Adam and Eve was not true, Noah's ark was not true, and they were telling their ministerial students and teaching them all of the Bible was not true, and they have now turned out eight or nine generations of preachers who believe the Bible is not the Word of God. That is what happened. That is what happened.

I have little tolerance with most of God's people today. Now if you are a drunk here today, I can deal with you a lot better than I can with most Baptists. If you are just a good old garden variety sinner that just gets caught up in the flesh of the world, we will get along just fine. But what I have a tough time with is religious piety. What I have a tough time with is God's people who turn their nose up because they do not know what really happened and they take what God has given them for granted. I really have an issue with that. I do not say much about it. You do not hear me preach on about it. I do not even get off on it in Bible today because I want you to have a good appreciation of me and a good memory of me, as good as you can. Once I get going on that, brother, I am just like a vampire bat that is out of blood and I want everything I can get and I just get rabid on it. So I just turn it off a little bit. But it drives me nuts. It just drives me nuts. It bothers me that God's people today have no interest of where their roots are. It bothers me today that God's people could care less the price that was paid. You have a King James Bible in your hand and you hold that Bible and you love that Bible because we talk about it and you have seen from personal time in the Word of God, our Thursday night Bible study one on one and Sunday morning, we have pretty much made the case why the King James Bible is the absolute infallible Word of God, and we all know that it is. But the real tragedy is that you do not know why it is.

You do not have an understanding and you do not realize the greatest probably lesson out of what this section of this message is the fact that today you and I are the remnant. We are the remnant.

The only reason you have a King James Bible in your lap today is because of two men, and only two men. One of them from the first 50 years of the century and the other one for the last 50 years of the century. The first guy was J. Frank Norris who single-handedly broke out of the Southern Baptist Convention and took on the whole convention. He was quite an individual. If you take on the Southern Baptist Convention, you better be something special because that is like taking on all of the mafia and Illuminati and the Mossad and everybody else and trying to survive it. They are the most wicked, demon-possessed group and organization that you will ever meet in your life. They will kill you in five seconds if you threaten what they are trying to do. If you do not know that is true, you have been hanging out in the wrong places reading the wrong stuff. I know you see the little First Baptist Church of Raytown and the First Baptist Church of any place that are all Southern Baptist and a nice guy. I am not talking about that. I am talking about the religious hierarchy that rivals anything that Jesuits ever tried to accomplish and ever tried to do.

Old J. Frank Norris took them on. People will sit down and they will list all J. Frank Norris's sins and all the problems he did. I have no problem with that at all. I understand. I understand. He had his imperfections just like anybody else. Somebody said, "Well, J. Frank Norris did this and did that and I do not follow him." Hey, David took a man's wife, got her pregnant, and killed him. Do you read Psalms? In other words, when you start canceling out somebody because they are human like you, you need to get "idiot" on your forehead. Who does not have problems? Moses killed a man and hid him in the sand. He was the greatest deliverer Israel ever had. In other words, I am not justifying it at all, but I am saying we all have fleas on us, folks. That is just the way it runs. If God used those guys, He might even consider using you and me. But old J. Frank Norris was an atomic power sledgehammer boy that when God needed to break the back of the Southern Baptist Convention and bring that thing out, He did it through J. Frank Norris. J. Frank Norris left it in the 30s and the 40s. He started his own fellowship. He started his own Bible school and he built it on one book: a King James 1611 Authorized Version. I am here as your pastor this morning for one reason. That is that my pastor in Canton, Ohio, Dr. Harold Henninger, was one of Norris's boys that grew up under Norris that transferred it into my life that I might transfer it into you. Without Norris, we would not be here today.

Now I get sick and tired of people talking about J. Frank Norris or this or that, and people hate him and people love him. The bottom line is simply this: without him, you would be in apostasy this morning and you would be having an NIV or an ASV or something else and you would be lost in this gigantic mess. But God always has His remnant. J. Frank Norris died about 19, I do not know, almost around 1950, 46, 47 someplace in there. The second man that took it over was Dr. Peter S. Ruckman. He was born in World War II, got saved back in 1950. God raised him up to hold the line after J. Frank Norris went. You have the same people that rag on him like they do on Norris. You snivel and snot-nosed punk. You do not even know where your bread is buttered on. You take that Bible and you have the audacity to love that Bible and hold that Bible and talk about how sweet that Bible is and how you have the Bible and God gave it to you. And then you

want to badmouth a guy who paid the price for you to have it? Do not get me on it, man. Do not get me going. I have cursed already four or five times this week. I am not pushing the limit on it.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I am saying is this: the concept of a remnant goes all the way through the Bible. If you are a Bible believer today and you have a King James Bible and you believe it and you believe the teachings of it in the New Testament church, then you and I are the last remnant. You are the last remnant. Somebody asked me one time, "Why does God do it that way? Why does He always do it through a remnant?" The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 1:25-29. I will give you this and we will move on to the next section, and I will just tell you it does not get any better. It gets worse as we go on.

1 Corinthians 1:25-29

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

See that thing? Now I am going to tell you something else here. We are going to build this thing on down through here. God wants the honor and glory in everything in your life. I guess that is our biggest failure. My biggest failure, I am sure it is yours. My biggest failure in life is to, and the older I get, the more I see this. I do not really care who is right or who is wrong anymore. I really do not. All I want is for God, whatever the situation is, no matter how bad it is, no matter what it looks like, even if it is not, I just want God to get the honor and glory out. Just do what is right. Just do what is right. Of course, that is what God wants. He wants the honor and glory. That is why He always does it through a remnant. That way you and I cannot take credit for it. That is what got David in trouble back there in Samuel. Remember when he numbered the people? Somebody asked me one time, "Why did God get so upset with David when he numbered the people?" I mean, what was that all about? Well, it was because they were numbering for national pride. They wanted to look at the enemies they had to fight and they were counting up their men to go to war, and they were resting in the number of their men instead of trusting in the power of God. You know why? Because God will defeat it, always has in the Bible, with a remnant. David forgot that. You and I forget it sometimes.

IV. The Second Great Lesson: Revival

The second great lesson here in this book, and remember now we are talking about a revival under Josiah, a temporary revival that does not last. When you look at the second aspect of this

great lesson out of the book, it forms another great spiritual truth. The book shows us how to have and to keep the revival of God in our hearts. He does this by first of all, I think, defining revival.

Christians today are victims of bad definitions, and we have talked about this many, many times. The greatest asset you have today if you just got saved in the last year is the fact that you do not have a lot of the... One of the great advantages that our church has, and this is not totally true but it is mostly true, very few of you grew up in Baptist churches that you were ruined in your thinking. You do not know anything other than this. That is really a plus. We have got some of the older folks that have been in other churches but it did not ruin you. You are smart enough because of your love for God and His Word to see and use it. So that is a good thing. It kind of gives our church a good balance. But the majority of you never grew up in the foolishness of most Baptist churches so you know nothing about it. That is good. You just have a good thing to learn your definition without... It is always hard to get somebody to unlearn something before they have to learn something.

Christians today have bad definitions of salvation. I will be very honest with you, and I have had this conversation with you before. I am just being honest, and this is my own personal opinion based on the remnant concept. I do not really think that most people who claim to be saved today are really saved. They could not be if God's remnant is true in every aspect of the Bible except the church. Now I know that the parallels between the nation of Israel and the church are so clear. But I am going to tell you something. I personally believe this. I think if the rapture happened tomorrow or would have happened last night that most churches, Baptist churches, I am not talking about the apostate, most Baptist churches would have gone on with service this morning and people would have said, "Oh, someone is sick." Not anymore. That is my personal opinion. You know why that is? Because of the remnant concept.

I have had people tell me all the time, "Well, you know," and I am not telling you you are saved or you are lost. I am not telling you that. If you do not know you are saved or lost, that is your problem, not mine. I mean, I know I am saved. Somebody said, "Well, I know the date and I know the time of now and I prayed the prayer." It had nothing to do with being saved. That is the problem. God's people think that because you had a place in your life when you got on your knees and you said a goofy little prayer and you asked God to save you and then you got up and nothing changed about your life, you think you are saved. Well, my Bible says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away and all things become new." How in the world can you be saved now for 20, 30 years and still have that sour attitude you have about the things of God? How? I mean, what happened? Did you just get salvation without the joy? It does not work. It works in your little world because you want it to work. When you get into this book right here, it does not work. It does not work because it is not about a day or a time or a place. It was on a Monday, somebody touched me. It was on a Tuesday, somebody touched me. It was on a Wednesday, somebody touched me. It was on a Thursday, somebody touched me. Oh, it was on a Friday, somebody, it was on a Saturday. It was on a Sunday. I do not know what day it was. It was on a one day somebody touched me. It was on the hand of the Lord. Second verse. Yes, and it did nothing for you because you are still living in sin. Yes, it did nothing for you because you

do not care about the book or anything else. No, it did not affect you. That is the world we are living in today. That is the way it is.

If you claim to be saved and there has not been a change in your life, if you still walk around like you have been baptized in dill pickle juice and you are negative about everything and all you see is the negative and there is no power of God in your life, there is no power of God, there is no conviction of God in your life and you can just go on with your lifestyle, Goodyear is checking oil dipsticks. I suggest you run over there and get yours pulled. I just do not believe it. I just do not. No, that is just me. But I am telling you we have bad definitions. Salvation. Repentance. Nobody understands repentance today. That is part of the problem. Repentance is, and it goes hand in hand with salvation. I think that churches have failed and I think because churches have failed, God's people today are living in an illusion. Because they are taught that you can get saved but there is no mention of repentance which leads you to the idea that you can just continue to live your lifestyle without turning from that lifestyle. You can get saved on Monday and still drink on Tuesday. You can get saved. You just do the same old thing, talk the same old way, and you go to church and you put the Sunday facade on, and you may have been a deacon in somebody's church. You may be in some, but there is no transformation of your life. I am just telling you. Worship is another one, and certainly the one we are looking at right now is revival.

Revival does not come about by any set of meetings that churches have called revival. They have church. You will see them as you drive down the road, "Revival Monday to Wednesday. Come to our revival, Reverend so and so, big revival." We like everything else, we try to program God's Spirit into a revival on our timetable. We do not understand what revival is. Let me tell you what Bible-based Holy Ghost revival really is. Have you ever noticed in the seven years we have been here we have not yet had a revival service? We probably will not ever have one because revival, my friend, is not a service. No more is worship a service, but rather revival is a state of your attitude of heart of what God has done for you and is doing for you in your life right now. Let me say this again: revival is not a service. It is not something you program into your life and you pay God, "We are going to have, we are going to. Now God, I know you were busy down here. So in October from the first to the ninth we are going to schedule a revival. Work it into your schedule." Revival is not a service, but rather a state of your attitude of heart based on what God has done in your life and is doing in your life right now. You do not have a revival in your life. You live in a constant state of revival in your life. Revival comes into your heart when you continually focus on what God has done and is doing in your life.

Now I say that knowing what I am about to say is absolutely true because I have had to work through it in my life. Many of God's people have a tough time in life letting things go. I understand that, totally do. I do. I totally understand that. Many of God's people just have a really rough time letting things that have happened to them go in their life. People are going to hurt you. I know that. People are going to betray you. Trust me. I know that. People are going to turn on you. It is people that you help, you bring them along for a while and then they turn around and they stab you in the back. You are going to buy their kids Christmas. You are going to give them Bibles when they cannot afford it. You are going to pay their ways to canoe trips when they cannot get there. You are going to do everything in the world to try to help them and then they

are going to turn around and let you have it. Welcome to the ministry. They are going to let you have it. You will never experience God's lasting revival in your life as long as you focus on those kinds of things. Why should I, why should you let what man does to us override what God is doing with us and has done for you unless He is not doing nothing?

I cannot speak for you. I really cannot. I would not even presume to speak for you, but I can speak for me. I want to tell you right now in my life, I am the most happy, content, satisfied, joy-filled, thankful man that you will ever find on planet Earth. I am not mad at anybody or anything about nothing. What more, when I look at my life, what more, when I get it away and look at it, what more could a man in life ask for than what I have? I have tons of problems, but ingratitude has never been one of them. I appreciate in my life what people have done for me, but more important than that, I appreciate in my life what God has done for me. I just do not know what more could I ask for. My family is all saved. They all love God. They are all in church. My church that God has given me, even though I understand I do not deserve any of it. I do not deserve this. I do not. But God gave me the best church in the world. The people of my church are the best people that walk on planet Earth. The spirit here is one of Bible truth, Bible spiritual growth. I have the blessings of seeing people saved almost every week. Marriages healed, broken lives put back together. The power of God is over everything that we ever try to do. We have a building. We have money in the bank. We have absolutely no debt and do not owe anybody anything. We are free to do whatever God dictates, to lead us to do by the light of His Word. The best part of it is I get to be part of it, and to top the whole off, for whatever reason, and I will never understand it, I never deserve it, God saw fit to reach down over the banners of the heaven, save my filthy soul, touch my lips with that book, open up my mind and give me His Word. I do not deserve it. I could never deserve it. I do not deserve it today. But He allowed me to look into His mind. What more could a man ask for? What more could a man ask for in life?

That is why New Year's Eve we have got to stop and look at some things and tell God some things and give Him some things. One night we as a church, if we believe that this is God's place and what God is doing, that we totally give back to Him all the honor and the glory that He has given for what He has given us, that we do not rob God of that honor and glory. Revival is what God is doing in your heart and your life right now and you focusing on it that you do not lose it. Now with me recognizing all of that, tell me who is going to take that from me because you do not like me anymore? "Well, I just do not know what I will do if you will not be my friend because you are mad and left because you got your nose bent out of joint because of what you say about this church, slandering, lying." Those things will never take away what God is doing unless you allow them to. When you do, revival is gone because now you are focusing on the negative, not the positive, and some of God's people, let us just be honest, you love living in the negative. You pick up more dirt than a Kirby vacuum cleaner.

Paul said it in Romans 8:35-39. He said it so clearly:

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you lose your revival, it is because you gave it up. Israel had it, they could have got it back, but they did not. In reality, only one thing will take all the things that Paul said cannot be taken away from you, and it is you. Your enemies cannot do it. The devil cannot do it. The world cannot do it. The only one who can throw it away is you. Nobody or nothing will I allow in my life to take the blessings from me of my own personal revival. Maybe you lost yours. That is on you. I am not losing mine, and I will tell you something else while I am telling it to you. I will not allow myself to become a victim of the circumstances of life. Victim status. Oh, that is a great word today. "But I am a victim. I am a victim." The only victim you are a victim of is yourself. I will not allow myself to become a victim. I will not allow the world to paint me to be a victim. I will not run around and whine about being a victim. I am not a victim, but I am the victor. I have got the victory in Christ Jesus, and I will not lower myself to lose what God has given me. The revival in my heart that burns every day of my life. If you want to send yours out someplace and UPS it, that is your business.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is something about the God of the universe reaching down and touching you, pulling you out of the mud in a filthy world and using you to do His work when you do not deserve it. And you are going to let somebody or something in life take that from you. Oh boy, no wonder John said in Revelation 3:11:

Revelation 3:11

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

You are going to let somebody take out of your life. For you and for me, every week it is a new adventure. Every problem it is an opportunity. The secret to a real constant revival in our lives is really simple. Do not focus on the things that you do not have. Always keep focused on the things that God has given you. That is the biggest problem we all face. I never focus on what I do not have. I just always stay focused on what I do have. Being focused on what you do not have will defeat you every time. It will put you in a mental state where you just cannot, you will lose the revival in your life. You will lose it. You will lose it because of the fact that you start looking at what you do not have, looking at the bad side of things, looking at this of it. You will never, never, never keep the revival unless you just let those things go. And you keep focused on the things that God has given you.

1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

I do not hold one thing against anybody on planet Earth or anything that has ever happened to me. You know why? I am not losing the revival in my heart of what God is doing over something that 30 million years from today will not even matter. Oh, we are so fragile.

V. Why Revival Doesn't Last / When It's Too Late

In this book we learn why revival does not last in our lives. We see it in the nation of Israel. In this book, much like our own lives, we see a tremendous principle. Through a temporary revival under Josiah, but it did not stick. I see it just like today in God's people's lives. This is why you can be up for God for a while and then slide right back into the world. I look at some of those things that I see and hear about and I just scratch my head. I am just thinking. I said a little earlier that I think, when I do not think most people, I did not say that, that I do not think most people are saved. I did not say that to scare you. Personally, I think that most of you probably are. Maybe some of you in here that you just played a game very well and you have got so many years under your belt, you can hide it well. I do not know. But I think, please do not go out of here or come running up to me wanting to get saved again. I did not say it for that purpose. I am telling you it is always by a remnant. I cannot tell whether you are in a remnant or not. I am just telling you that is not, you do not base it on, "I had a day in a place in a time." It is through the change. I am just being honest when I see no change, it bothers me. It bothers me. I would be lying to you if I did not tell you that I worry about some of you. I do. I see you come week after week. It is all minimal to you. All minimal to you. You just do the minimum. You give the minimum and you just, to you it is just like, "Well, I have got to go be here so I am going to go." But it bothers me. If Jesus would have come to earth with a determination and tenacity to die for the world that some of you have just coming on Sunday morning serving Him, we would all be in hell this morning. Am I wrong for looking at it that way? I guess I am.

Do you ever ask yourself why some make it and some do not in Christianity? I mean, pick our church. You all get the same treatment. There is no politics here. You know what, you all get the same Bible study. I do not have a Bible study for the smart ones and one for the dumb ones. Thought about it many times but I did not do it. I do not pull any punches with you. I teach everybody the whole counsel. I teach everybody the whole counsel of God. I do not have Sunday school services, one for the fast track and the slow crowd. We have Bible Institute but anybody can get in that if you want to. There is not, "Well, do not check your birth certificate to see how old you are." We do not have, we have all the special classes in the world, everything I do. You have access to me one on one any time you want. There is nobody ever a person came up and said, "Can I meet with you?" "No, I do not think I like you." Not all the way to the street. Why is it that some make it and some do not?

These three little chapters in this book, each one of them have an underlying theme working through it. I want to give it to you today, and it is because it is the key to having revival, and now that you understand what revival is. But it is the key to your own personal revival. So in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and yet you do not find these phrases in here. It is taught all the way through the chapter if you pay attention.

- 1.) Look Within Yourself (Zephaniah 1) In Zephaniah 1, he begins to deal with them, and the little theme that comes out of that is that he is telling the nation of Israel that you need to look within yourself. I do not care where you are at today, what problems you have, what issues you struggle with, or people you struggle with all day long, all week long, all year long, you can blame it on everybody else, but at the end of the day it comes back to the fact that your inability to handle that goes back to your own personal relationship with the Lord. I do not want to tell you. That is why the Bible says that we are to examine ourselves. I examine, and I am not putting myself in any way, shape, or form on a pedestal in any way, shape, or form. Do not misunderstand it. But I have to find myself examining my motives in almost everything that I do because I have to. I have to. You have to look within yourself. I think one of the problems that people have today, and this is true because everything in the world is not real. We live in a world of an illusion. You learn that from Daniel 1 because you had Daniel, the three Hebrew children that were based on the Word of God, and the best that Nebuchadnezzar could produce, which is a picture of the world, was magicians. Magicians, we all know, probably the most famous, David Copperfield, but he does not really do magic. Magicians use illusion. Daniel 1 is a picture of the two issues of life. You have the reality and the truth of the Word of God, or you have the illusion of the world. Just like David Copperfield, I do not know how he does it, but I would like to know how he can make a 747 disappear on a runway. That is an illusion. He did not make it disappear. He can put a woman in midair and levitate her, so to speak, and put nothing on her or nothing on her. She is just floating around there, and people say that that is not magic. That is some kind of an illusion. In other words, no offense to David Copperfield, but in his performance there is absolutely no truth to it. It is all illusion. In your life and my life, many times as Christians, it is all illusion. It is all we want to make it to be. The truth and reality of the Word of God just is not there. It becomes an illusion. I think the biggest problem God's people have today is why they cannot solve their problems. They will not get honest with themselves. That is why he tells the first thing you have got to do to have a revival in your life is you have to look within yourself. Basically, you have to get honest with who you really are. You have to quit playing a game, quit hiding it, quit pretending it is not there. Get out from the David Copperfield lifestyle and get back to the David of the Bible stuff where you deal with it in reality.
- 2.) Look Around You (Zephaniah 2) The second thing in Zephaniah 2, which I think is really good. He talked to them about that. You get this, and I know I am kind of taking a liberty here and paraphrasing out of this chapter, but this is what comes out of it. He tells them in Zephaniah 1 to look within themselves, and then he tells them in Zephaniah 2 to look around them. Look around yourself. You know what Israel could not do? First of all, they were not honest with themselves. They could not look inside. The leaders wanted to do it but they could not do it. The second thing they could not do is they could not dump the negative things in their life and start focusing on the positive. You see, when you look inside your life and you see where you are at, then you want to get all the negative things out of your life. Now negative things may be things that you do. Negative things may be people that are in your life. But you realize that you will never be able to have a revival in your life and focus on a positive when you have negative things in your life that are pulling down the positive. You just cannot. It is impossible. The thing you can is an illusion. I think that you know what,

you want to have revival in your life? Get around people who have revival in their life. That is my suggestion to you. I think some of you ought to have a fun night tonight. You know what you ought to do? You ought to go home about 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, pop some popcorn, get some snacks, maybe order a pizza, and then sit down and take out your cell phone and delete some phone numbers. You will be glad how good it feels. You need to get negative things out of your life. I am just telling you, you want revival? You want really what God has for you? God is not going to give you His blessings when you are so filled with negative things.

- 3.) Look Beyond (Zephaniah 3) Then this third chapter, Zephaniah 3, he goes and lays it out and hits the emphasis on prophecy and he tells them to look beyond. You see, looking beyond puts it all in the perspective. You have got to look within yourself. You have got to look around you, get rid of the weight that starts to easily beset you to keep pulling you down. Then you have got to look beyond. What does that mean? It means that you have got to see yourself in the circumstances you are in openly and honestly. Whatever you are going through right now, whatever your struggle is, whatever situation you find yourself in, God wants to take that and down the line someplace else, use that in your life to help somebody else. Most of the things that I deal with people on are things that I have had to go through in my own personal life. I have had my times of depression. I have had my times of anxiety. I have had my times of failures. I have had my times of defeat. I have had my heart broken so many times that I cannot find all the pieces. You know what? I have been through those things. But I never looked at what it was in the light of "poor me, I am a victim." I always saw it by the grace of God, not because of my me, but I always saw it by the grace of God of what was beyond. That God, there is something that you are going to use out of this scenario, even though I could not imagine what it is. There is something that you are going to use in my scenario right now down the line to get the honor and glory of that I may have to help somebody else if I learn my lessons right now. But it all starts with a revival. It does not start by knowing the time of the day. It starts by having a revival. It starts by you focusing on the personal things in your life that you are going to focus on what God is doing, not the negative. You look within yourself to find out if you have caused some of this. Once you deal with that, then you look around you to say, "You know what? Everything in my life that is not going to help me be better in my relationship with God is going." And then it goes. It goes. If that is relationships, if that is people, if that is circumstances, if that is things, if that is something that you have in your life you are hanging on to, whatever. And it gets deep-sixed. You get it out. You get rid of it. Then you start looking beyond. You see, real revival starts on the inside and changes your heart attitude and then it, through a transformation process, it affects the outside. The change of attitude, it changes the action. Simply put God first in your life in everything that you do and through a continual transformation keeping there.

God as a Jealous God

Lastly, and this will go very quickly, know this: the great unknown aspect of God that was Israel's problem all of their life. It will be your problem and my problem all of our life. It really is the theme of Christ in this book, is God is the jealous God. God will never take second place in

your life and be happy about it. He will not. We say that again. God will never take second place in your life and be happy there. As long as you put Him in second place in your life, you will not be happy there. It is just that simple. God is the jealous God.

He said in Exodus 20:5:

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

He said in Exodus 34:14:

For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

Deuteronomy 4:24:

For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Over and over again God tells us He wants you to love Him supremely. I am telling you we do not. When something or somebody else takes God's place, God gets jealous and your revival goes. Most people think jealousy is a bad thing. But in 2 Corinthians 11:2, there again, bad definitions. Paul says that there is such a thing as a godly jealousy. God has a godly jealousy. Again, redefining words the way they should be. When we come through this book we see all of these attributes. This is why revival did not last. This is why Josiah tried to bring about revival. Revival came temporarily, but it did not last. You know why? Because it was too late.

Let me talk to you about that in closing. When does it become too late in God's life? That sounds like a contradiction of terms. Because God, every song we sing is a tender song. It is about "waiting softly and tenderly." "Jesus is calling." All of those songs that we sing, all the concepts we have in our head about God, never rejecting us. You know what? They are all true. God will never reject you. There will never be a time in your life, if you are here this morning and you are unsaved, there will never be a time in your life when God will not save you. If you are here this morning and you are much like the children of Israel, that you are a long way from God and you have got no revival in your life, let me tell you something. There is absolutely no time that God will not restore you, bring you back and put you back in fellowship with Him. The problem does not lie with God. The problem lies with us.

The longer you and I go in a state of rejecting God, the farther distance you put between you and God, the harder it is to get back. Do not ever think for a minute, we have not even talked about this guy yet, but do not forget the devil. The devil will get in every detail. The devil will work every angle. The devil will not ever, ever, ever miss a trick. He will use your life to destroy your kids. He will do everything he can. If he cannot get your soul in hell, then he will get your kids. If he cannot get them, then he will get your grandkids. He will do whatever he can do because he will not miss the trick. He plays you like a bass fiddle that the farther you get away from God, the more you play this silly little game, the more you extend yourself from God, the harder it is to get back. There are people in this world who clutter their lives up so much. I have dealt with them. I have dealt with them. I have dealt with them to the point where they will never be able to

get back with God. It has nothing to do with God taking His grace from them. It has nothing to do with God holding back and not wanting to do it. It has to do that they have played with God so long, they have deceived themselves to such a degree. It is like a liar. I do not like liars. I just assume you tell me straight up what you did and we will get along just fine. I am not a Baptist so I do not dance. This little Baptist two-step where you just dance around the problem and you do not want to deal with it, I am not much for playing that game. I respect a man or a woman much more if they lay their cards face up on the table and let me know what I am dealing with. But I cannot deal with lying.

I will tell you what, it is like a liar. A liar who continually lies tells so many lies that after a while he forgets what the truth is. You see, you have to record your lies so you tell the same answer all the time. Did you ever notice how you never have to record the truth because it is always the same? It is just like lying. Somebody lies so many years for so long. I have met people who, you see, he said it is raining outside. You know what, I am leaving my umbrella here. Guy said, "What kind of day?" "Oh, it is a beautiful day out." "Give me my umbrella." I do not believe anything he says. There are people like that. Their whole life, they are habitual liars about everything, and people who lie on a continual basis about everything in life, and maybe it is self-image. Maybe they have got to make themselves more important. Maybe they just cannot deal with it. I do not know. But the bottom line is after a while they lose reality of where truth and lies cross. They live in a world that does not exist because the farther you get from God.

I told him Thursday night, that book is God's mind. We are commanded to let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. That is not a suggestion. When you let that Bible affect this mind through that transformation process, you begin to look at things the way I am talking about today. I know it is a process and I know there are ups and downs and bumps and all that. I have got that. But through the steady rendition of the Word of God washing out your mind, putting that book in there. When a man or a woman rejects God's mind and is going to play the game, in essence, what they are saying is this. This is what they are saying: "God, I am smarter than you. I know you split the Red Sea. I know that you killed 186,000 men in one night. I know that you made all the planets by the word of the book. You spoke them into existence and I know all that. I know you brought down fire of Sodom and Gomorrah. I know all that. I know that nobody in the Bible ever got around you. I know that. But I am different. I am different. I am going to get around you." You know what God says to that? "Shoot, you are covered, pal. Let us see you. You are fated. Let us see you get around me." The more you go, the farther you get away from God, the more you play with that mind right there, the more God plays with your mind. Pretty soon you wake up some day, reality is gone, truth is gone. There are so many things in your life, so many bad choices, so many bad relationships, so many bad problems, so many things that now overwhelm you.

The Bible likens it like weight. You have now maybe your frame weight is 150 pounds or 170 pounds, or if you are a lady, 110 pounds. But with all the paraphernalia of life, bad decisions, you weigh a staggering 897 pounds. You rival any fat lady in any circus on planet Earth. There is no shedding that weight. It is true. We call them vanity pounds. You lose 5 or 10 pounds over Thanksgiving or Christmas, pretty much you can lose it. You go into obesity and you get to the

point where, I know a guy that weighed 600 pounds at one time. He went through two of them surgeries to clip off his whatever until he cannot eat. What did they call him? I do not know, clipped off as whatever, I told you. You know what? He still could not do it. Because you know what? It is not about going to have some special new scientific surgery that will make you thin. It is about putting duct tape on your mouth to keep you from doing the thing that makes you overweight, eating the wrong thing. It is the same way with spirituality. The thing that keeps you from growing out obesely with all of the clutter of life that makes you so overwhelmed is to quit making bad choices. The more bad choices you make, the more year we are coming down to 2010, going to move into 2011. You make more bad choices next year than you made last year, you just add to your dilemma. Pretty soon, maybe not, maybe you can do it now, I am just telling you, pretty soon down the line, 10, 15, 20 years, if Jesus does not come, you will never get back. I have met Christians all my life who had the worst relationship with God and could never get back, never get back.

Years ago, I had a Bible study on Thursday night, and we used to run about 6, 700 people there. After, everybody always sits like here, but everybody sits the same place, so you get to pretty much read the faces and read the crowd. For about a month and a half, I watched this kid come in, he sat in the back, came in after we got started, sat in the back, stayed through the end and through the invitation, but as soon as I said amen, he was out of there. I would go down and I would always end in an invitation, and every week he would raise his hand, he needed to be saved. I could see him weeping uncontrollably. Without making a point of reference, I would plead with him to get to the point where he would trust Christ without going back and saying something to him, and he never would. I could never get back to talk to him because he left. Well, after about two months of it, I figured out I was going to do something, because this guy was burning my heart. I would get in the invitation that night, and at the end of the invitation, I had somebody else come up and finish it out, and I left, and I went out and waited for him in the hallway. Sure enough, he came around to that corner and I was standing there. I said, "Hey pal," I said, "Can I ask you a question?" He was crying. He said, "Come to my office, sweet kid." I said, "Look, I have seen you come here week after week after week, and I give the invitation, and I said, you just walk out. It is not that you do not convict it. You break down, you are weeping, and you are weeping now. Why will you not get saved?" He had his head down, he threw his head back and grasped one of them big breaths of air, and he said, "Preacher." He said, "I love coming here." He said, "I love you preaching. But I have got to tell you a story." He said, "About eight or nine years ago," he said, "I got married, and I was not saved. And he said, my wife wanted to go to church, and she was not saved. And she says, she would try to get me to come to church because she had some friends that were going to a church, and she just really wanted to start a family out of, go to church. And we were going to have a kid down the line, and he said, and I just would not ever go to church. And he said, I just had my own world, I had my own thing, I did my own thing, and I just would not go to church. And he said, you know what, two years ago, she was coming home from work, and a drunk crossed the center of the road and hit her head on and killed her, and she went on to eternity." These tears began to run down his face. He said, "Preacher, my wife is in hell today. My little sweetheart wife that I married and I love and I cherish, she is in hell today because she wanted to come to church, but I had my own things in my life, and I would not take her. And preacher, oh," and like a baby, "if you think I am going to

come down and I am going to get saved when I know my wife is in hell, so I can go to heaven when she is in hell, I am not going to do it." Never saw him again, never heard anything of him again, but I guarantee you, classic case, he went so far, he did his own thing, and now he will never come back, he will never get to God.

If you think whether you are saved or you are lost, I know maybe you are saved and the whole nine yards and you are on your way to heaven, but if you think that your life is just around you, if you think there are not people that are watching how you deal with every circumstance in life and how you deal with it, I will not be a victim. I will not be a victim. I will live above the circumstances of this life by the grace of God. Be the victor. Follow the outline. Do not let anybody take the revival that God wants to put in your heart, and if they tend to, dump them. Dump them big time. Pop the popcorn on the way home tonight. Do whatever you have got to do. Do not focus on the negative, you focus on the positive of what God has given you. That is the only answer to real Bible-based, Holy Ghost revival, and revival, this church will never have a revival. We will never have a week where we may have Bible conferences, we will never have a revival, because that is not biblical revival. Right now, today, is all the revival meeting you needed to have. It is all you needed today, with the last hour and 15 minutes. It is all the message you need to decide whether you want revival or not. Now, you say, "Yes, I do," then you know what? You have the outline, you have it better than any. I did not preach on hell, I did not preach on the judgment seat of Christ. I preached on what revival is, and it gave you a model in the Bible of why it did not last with Israel, and why it does not last with you. Now, it is on you. It is on you. You will either take it and do something with it, and get the things out of your life, and make that thing out, or you know what? You will go on to play the game, play the victim, and never be the victor. I will tell you what, he said it, we are more than conquerors through Christ. Do not ever forget that.

Sign up on your way out today, we are going to have us a knockdown Holy Ghost drag out on New Year's Eve. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. Lord, it never gets any clearer than it got today. Lord, these prophets are incredible. These books are just unending with everything that they have that we need to have. I pray Father today that you will take and do the work in the people's lives that need to be done. I thank you for the new folks that have just gotten saved in the last year. I thank you Lord for their tenderness, for their sweetness, and for how they just have that right now. They are living in a state of revival. Lord, do not ever let them lose it. Do not ever let the joy of what God did for them. Do not ever dissipate. But Lord, we are the only ones who can guard against that. Help us Father in all that we do to give you the honor and the glory to praise. Lord, let me just say publicly one more time, thank you. I am far from deserving it. I deserve to be in hell screaming out my lungs. I do not deserve any of this. Certainly your Word. I do not deserve all that you have given me, all that you have made happen in my life. But thank you Father. Thank you for the fact that you have made me the happiest man in the world. I am going to die and go home to be with the Lord tomorrow, as content as I could be, knowing that to the best of my ability, I followed the light that God gave me. Far from perfect. Far from right in everything that I do. But following the light that God gave me, to the best of my ability to do what God wanted me to do. Thank you Lord. In Jesus' name, for His sake

we ask it. Amen. God bless you. You are dismissed. Sign up on the way out. Again for all the rapping.