

Zephaniah 1:12-18

There were so many cases of my college classmates failed their exams and they were surprised. They thought they would do very well before the test, and stopped their studies or not pursue deeper understanding on the subject. In fact, they might lose some of their knowledge of what they have learned weeks ago. I often held a cautious position and studied daily whereas they were complacent. Complacent can be defined as self-satisfaction on one's situation without aware of the potential danger or defect. Today, we are going to focus on the topic of complacency through the book of Zephaniah.

Zephaniah is a minor prophet book in the Old Testament. Zephaniah is a prophet and he has royal lineage where one of his forefathers is King Hezekiah which was a good Judah king (Zep. 1:1). This book was written around 640-609 BC. That time period was under bad Judah kings, and the nation was filled with sin like idolatry, violence and deceit (Zep. 1:9). This book proclaimed God's message of judgment and hope to a people that had gone astray. Zephaniah mentioned the Day of the Lord more than any other book in the Old Testament. Thus, it clearly stated the assurance of fulfillment on prophecy that Judah would fall to Babylon, and the eventual judgment and restoration of all humanity in the future ("double prophecy").

1) Search your heart

Zep. 1:12 started the topic on complacent. I remembered I learned this statement years ago "You don't know what you don't know!". This statement helped me to be careful of not being too proud and too complacent. There are things that we don't know or not aware of, but we are blind to that awareness. The first part of the verse is about "search". God knows everything but used the word "search with light" means to be made known of what's deep in one's heart. No sin will escape His punishment; sinful people in Judah those days as well as today. We need to constantly be alert and search for our hearts. Are we complacent and no longer pursue of God - His will and His holiness? Are we like the people in Judah where we treat our material goods and positions as our security? Holy Spirit can help us to truly search our hearts during prayers and quiet Bible study time.

2) Characteristic of complacent attitude

Verse 12 described those people that are complacent are like wine left on its dregs. In making good wine, the liquid has to be refined by pouring it from one vessel to another, separating the wine from the dregs so that the lower portion does not thicken and becoming bitter. Christians can be complacent where they settled back to their own old way of life that is living in a sinful nature. Their spiritual hearts are hardened as they are so focused on their daily worldly issues. They ignore God and lack of spiritual awareness. Seeking and serving God are their last priorities if in their priority list at all. The later part of verse 12 states “The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.” This reflects those people are complacent which they loss their awareness of the spiritual truth and God’s righteous judgement on sin.

3) The danger and consequence of complacent

Verse 13 and 18 describe the danger and consequence of complacent. Those people in Judah were focused on their physical possessions as their idols. They even obtained them with sinful tactics similar to what’s described in verse 9. Verse 13 states that the houses they built will not shelter them, and vineyards they planted would not provide them drinks. Verse 18 gives a similar description that their gold and silver can not save them at the day of the Lord’s wrath. It would be too late when God places His judgement and punishment on them.

In conclusion, complacent and unresponsive to spiritual calling is danger. we need to constantly seek God and search our hearts. Pray to God and let the Holy Spirit examines us. We should not be proud and thinking everything is fine as is. We need to avoid the state of complacency like the dregs in wine such that our old sinful nature takes control. Are we “worshiping” our possessions, jobs & achievements, hobbies or physical enjoyment? May God refreshes us daily so that we are not still and slide back to our old selves. Romans 12:2 states “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Moreover, we need to abide in Him as stated in John 15:4 so that we can bear spiritual fruits. May God help us!