

A reading from Zephaniah chapter 1 verses 1 through 6 and chapter 3 verses 15 through 18. You can find the reading on page 788 in your pew Bible.

The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

“I will utterly sweep away everything
from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.

“I will sweep away man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds of the heavens
and the fish of the sea,
and the rubble with the wicked.

I will cut off mankind
from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.

“I will stretch out my hand against Judah
and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal
and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,
those who bow down on the roofs
to the host of the heavens,
those who bow down and swear to the LORD
and yet swear by Milcom,
those who have turned back from following the LORD,
who do not seek the LORD or inquire of him.”

The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

“Fear not, O Zion;

let not your hands grow weak.
The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.
I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please join me in praying Psalm 80.

Leader: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.

**People: You who are enthroned upon the cherubim,
shine forth.**

Leader: Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
stir up your might and come to save us!

**People: Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!**

Leader: O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

**People You have fed them with the bread of tears
and given them tears to drink in full measure.**

Leader You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh among themselves.

**People: Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it
was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

Leader: Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

(allow them time to stand)

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.**

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.