TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

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THE FATE OF ASSYRIA,AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

IS WORLD WAR II YET TO BE FINISHED
SAINTS YET TO BE DELIVERED?

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION AND PRAYER

We shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," page 180, paragraph one. The reading is based on the scripture which says, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye?"

M.B., pg. 180 – "Even the sentence, 'Thou that judgest doest the same things,' does not reach the magnitude of his sin who presumes to criticize and condemn his brother.... When he thinks he has detected a flaw in the character or the life, he is exceedingly zealous in trying to point it out; but Jesus declares that the very trait of character developed in doing this un-Christlike work, is, in comparison with the fault criticized, as a beam in proportion to a mote. It is one's own lack of the spirit of forbearance and love that leads him to make a world of an atom.... According to the figure that our Saviour uses, he who indulges a censorious spirit is guilty of greater sin than is the one he accuses; for he not only commits the same sin, but adds to it conceit and censoriousness."

Satan is doing his level best to make us transgress in this respect so that we lose out eternally. God has delegated no one to be policing another. Only God through His prophets is to reprove sin, but never to use force of any kind.

Shall we kneel now, and pray for a realization that our duty is not to criticize others or to magnify their faults, but to speak and practice the Truth? Further than that, Brother, Sister, we need not go. The rest is up to our audiences and associates. Let them decide for themselves what is best for both soul and body. Truth need not be poked down the throat.

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THE FATE OF ASSYRIA, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, JANUARY 11, 1947
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Let us turn to Zephaniah 3, and begin with the first verse.

Zeph. 3:1 – "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!"

The antecedent of the pronoun "her" is found in the thirteenth verse of the preceding chapter. In it is seen that the "city" here pointed out is Nineveh, the capital city of ancient Assyria. Now to ascertain whether this Nineveh is actually the capital city of ancient Assyria or of some other Assyria, we shall study the remaining verses of the chapter.

Verse 2 – "She obeyed not the Voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God."

This verse points out the fact that the city and nation here mentioned had the privilege of hearing the voice of Inspiration, of knowing God's Truth, but has failed to take heed – received not correction, trusted not in the Lord, drew not near to her God.

Verse 3 – "Her princes within her are roaring lions;

her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow."

Her princes, being like roaring lions, must be frightful persons who evidently think "might makes right." Her judges are, as it were, evening wolves; that is, they are in business, not to execute judgment, justice, and righteousness, but to catch and tear, to fill their den with prey although they may have more than they know what to do with. "They gnaw not the bones till the morrow."

Verse 4 – "Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law."

In the language of today this verse would read, "Her teachers are light-hearted, not serious and sober-minded; they are trifling; they are of no account; they are treacherous persons. Her ministers, rather than having kept the church clean, have polluted it, and have done violence to the law" (have declared It void).

Thus far is seen that the Assyria of this chapter represents a people who have been well instructed in the things of God, the law and the sanctuary. But instead of obeying the Lord and ruling justly and righteously, they have greatly transgressed, have gone down into sin as deep as any people can possibly go.

Verse 5 – "The just Lord is in the midst thereof; He will not do iniquity: every morning doth He bring His judgment to light, He faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame."

In view of the fact that God is in the midst of them, they must be well informed in the things of God, well aware that in due season He makes known to them His judgment. In view of all these, the only possible conclusion one can come to, is that God's church must be in their midst.

Verses 6-8 – "I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear Me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings. Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy."

The Lord Himself warns that He has cut off nations, that He has made their towers desolate and their streets waste, that He has destroyed their cities and has left no inhabitants in them. He points out that all this He did as an object lesson for future good, so that they as a nation might fear Him and receive instruction, that their dwellings not be cut off. But in spite of these examples, they rise early and corrupt all their doings. So it is that at long last the Lord arises to the prey, gathers the nations, assembles the kingdoms, and Assyria gets her punishment.

From this we see that the Assyria under discussion exists in the time of the end, the time in which the

great and dreadful day of the Lord takes place. This Assyria, therefore, is an antitype of ancient Assyria just as the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is an antitype of ancient Babylon.

Assyria, charges Inspiration, is a rejoicing city that dwells carelessly, that says in her heart, "I am, and there is none beside me." Zeph. 2:15.

At this point let us pause a moment and summarize the characteristics by which this modern Assyria is to be identified. (1) As man looks at things, she is so great that there is none like her. She is well instructed in the things of God. (2) She is oppressive, a hard ruling nation. (3) She has polluted the sanctuary and has declared the law of God void. (4) She has piled up wealth by going after it as an evening wolfe goes after its prey. (5) She harbors the church of God. (6) She exists in the time the Lord is to manifest His power and destroy all the wicked nations. (7) She is an Assyria-like nation, widespread, a nation of conquests.

There is but one people under the sun that answers to all these descriptions, and that people is, of course, the English-speaking people, in whose midst is the church, and from whose midst the Gospel and the Bible flow out to all nations. As clear as language can make it, the burden of the prophet Zephaniah is for the English-speaking Christian world.

God is now saying to Assyria's capital city, "Indeed, you are doing all these abominations, but you will not thus continue long. The time is at hand." Put a stop to your absurdities.

Verse 9 – "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."

Inspiration for certainty declares that after Assyria receives her punishment, and after the wicked are taken out of his church, then will the Gospel be proclaimed in a pure language (in pure Gospel Truth) that whosoever will, may call upon the name of the Lord, "to serve Him" with heart and soul. Then it is that "only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will have a right to proclaim it [Third Angel's Message] when it shall have swelled into the Loud Cry." – "Review and Herald," Nov. 19, 1908.

Verses 10, 11 – "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, even the daughter of My dispersed, shall bring Mine offering. In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against Me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of My holy mountain."

When the Gospel is proclaimed in "a pure language," then even from the ends of the earth God's people will come with an offering to the Lord.

Having removed all who rejoice in her pride the church shall be haughty no more.

Verse 12 – "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

The fact that He leaves in their midst poor and afflicted people is sufficient evidence in itself that the purification of the church takes place before the Millennium, before Isaiah 33:24 is fulfilled and before He sets up the kingdom mentioned therein.

Verse 13 – "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid."

The remnant, those that are left after the purification takes place, shall sin no more. They shall forever thereafter stand without guile in their mouths.
Verse 14 – "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem."

A great day is coming for the righteous, a dreadful one for the wicked. We, therefore, as children of Zion, are encouraged to sing and shout for joy because we have finally come to the time of God's great deliverance.

Verse 15 – "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

Surely these revelations of prophecy should encourage every believer to shout with joy as he realizes that the day in which he shall no more see evil is right at hand, that the Lord is to be his only king.

Verses 16-20 – "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem,

Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

The Lord wants us to know that when He turns away our captivity He will also make us a name and a praise among all the people of the earth. This kingdom of Judah (the church purified and set apart), is therefore, not only pre-millennial, but also probationary. And how glad we ought to be for the privilege to be among the first of the first fruits.

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OPENING REMARKS AND PRAYER

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning with the second paragraph on page 181.

M.B. p. 181, 182 – "...There may be a wonderful keenness of perception to discover the defects of others, but to every one who indulges this spirit, Jesus says, 'Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.' He who is guilty of wrong, is the first to suspect. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart....

"When men indulge this accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with pointing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to compulsion. Just as far as lies in their power, they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right."

We need to pray for power to resist criticizing others than ourselves and thus to get closer and closer to Christ and to abundantly receive of His grace. Never yet have I seen a father or a mother criticize their own son or daughter. When parents hear others criticizing their offspring, then the critics often get into trouble. But those same defendants of their own sons and daughters, often criticize others with the idea that they do it for the good of the ones they criticize. If they actually believe that their criticism is prompted by love to help rather than to wound, and not to bolster their reputation and to cover up sin, then pray tell me why the critics do not give their own children some of it?

Let us pray for the grace of Christ to enable us to treat others as we would have them treat us, rather than to keep ourselves in sin by finding fault with their practice of religion. To watch our own steps is all we can do.

IS WORLD WAR II YET TO BE FINISHED SAINTS YET TO BE DELIVERED? (By Nahum)

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This afternoon we are to study the book of Nahum. The burden of this entire book, three chapters in all, is concerning two separate people. To ascertain who these people are, we shall begin with–

Nah. 1:1; 3:18 – "The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.... Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them."

Plainly, Assyria with her capital city, Nineveh, are the one people.

Now to find who the other people are, we shall read chapter 1, verses 12, 13, and 15 (omitting those parts of the verses which pertain to Assyria).

Nah. 1:12, 13, 15 – "Thus saith the Lord;... Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder... Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows:

for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off."

The people whom God has afflicted (by their dispersion among the nations) and whom He promises to afflict no more, and to break the Assyrian yoke from off their shoulders, are His people, His church – antitypical Judah. They are, therefore, the other people.

The title of God's people, you note, is "Judah." They are counselled to behold the messenger of God who at the fulfillment of this prophecy brings to them good tidings, tidings of peace...the message of the Kingdom of peace (Isa. 11:6-9). The Lord counsels them to be honest with Him, honest in their profession of faith. They are, moreover, assured that at the fulfillment of this prophecy the destroying angels are to remove the wicked from the midst of the righteous. Thus will the wicked be "raptured" away and be no more.

So it is that while Nahum predicts liberation and peace for God's faithful people, he predicts disaster and humiliation for antitypical Assyria (the power which they serve) and for the wicked in the church.

Three verses of chapter two will suffice to show the fate of Assyria:

Nah. 2:6, 10, 13 – "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved.... She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.... Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the

sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard."

Here the prophet predicts that Assyria's capital city will be emptied, and her palace dissolved. Clearly, then, the kingdom of Judah is set up in time of war and turmoil. What additional signs will mark the time? – Let us read from chapter two:

Nah. 2:3, 4 – "The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings."

Since this prophecy meets its fulfillment in the day when the chariots are with "flaming torches"; when they run like lightning; when they jostle one against another in the highways and in the broadways, and since the automotive traffic of today completely and perfectly answers the prophet's description of it, then there is no other conclusion but that the day in which we are now living is the day in which Nahum's prophecy is to be fulfilled.

Now, in view of the truth that we are living in such a period as described by Nahum, together with the fact that preparations for Nahum's war are made during a time of such lightning-like travel, the evidence clearly stands out that Nahum's prophecy is to meet its fulfillment in our day, and that the "Assyria" here in prophecy, therefore, is not ancient Assyria, but another widespread power that exists "in the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9, 10) the time in which its yoke is

removed from God's people.

Moreover, since this antitypical Assyria's fall liberates God's people, and since from then on the wicked no longer pass through their midst, the time and the events are solidly clinched: All these predictions come to pass in the time of the purification of the church, in the Judgment day of the living, during the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
Nah. 2:1 – "He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily."

It is plain to see that the one who dashes in pieces, and who comes before Assyria's face is the one who forces Assyria to prepare, to militarize herself mightily. Her forced military preparations, agitated by him that dashes in pieces, starts Assyria on her downfall.

Now, to find out what happens to the one who dashes in pieces – he who compels Assyria to prepare mightily, we shall read–

Nah. 2:5 – "He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared."

His worthies (his mighty generals) stumble in their walk; that is, they make a mistake as they march on in hope of victory. In view of their disastrous blunder, and in view of the fact that "he that dasheth in pieces" is mentioned no more in Nahum's book, it is evident that by his stumbling he loses the war. Nevertheless, according to the verses that follow in Nahum's chapters, the fall of Assyria is certain.

The question, then arises, if Assyria is to fall, and if the one that starts the war, the "he that dasheth in pieces," is himself to lose out first, then at whose hands is Assyria to fall? For the answer, Let us turn to Isaiah 31, where this same Assyria is again brought to view:

Isa. 31:6-8 – "Turn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited."

Assyria is to fall and to be devoured, but not by the sword of a mean man, not by him who dashes in pieces.

Now the fact that God's people are admonished to turn unto Him against Whom ancient Israel revolted, shows again that Inspiration is speaking to antitypical Israel, to God's people in the Christian era.

Verse 7 – "For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin."

Obviously the prophet is looking down the stream of time, to a time of a thorough reformation, a time in which only those who forsake every sin and embody Truth and righteousness will be left in the church. None others will be found in the congregation of the Lord. Then Assyria shall fall and thus shall her yoke be removed from the neck of God's people.

The Assyrian is to fall because of his wickedness, and because God's people return to Him, because of a thorough revival and reformation.

Verse 9 – "And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, Whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem."

All these calamities overtake Assyria as soon as God's people turn to Him, as soon as they cast away their idols.

What are the Lord's fire in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem for? The answer we shall find in–

Mal. 3:1, 2 – "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap."

The prophecy of Isaiah, along with the prophecy of Malachi, make the subject very simple: According to these prophecies, during the Judgment of the Living and while the first fruits – the servants of God, the 144,000 – stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, the headquarters of the gospel shall be in Zion and Jerusalem."

Now before passing judgment as to whether Nahum prophesies the "World War II" it will be well to refresh our minds by summarizing the main points of the study:

1. Two people are brought to view – the church, and a nation comparable to ancient Assyria, to which the church is under subjection.

2. God's people, Judah, are asked to behold the messenger of God, who at the fulfillment of this prophecy and at a time broiling with war brings them good tidings of the Kingdom of peace.

3. The prophecy is fulfilled in the day of unprecedented motorized vehicular traffic, the day when the chariots (automobiles) are with flaming torches and when they jostle one against another in the broad ways – unquestionably in our day.

4. In this day, "he that dasheth in pieces" wars with this antitypical Assyria. He begins her downfall.

5. Assyria fortifies her power mightily after her enemy comes before her face.

6. On the march to victory, Assyria's enemy – "he that dasheth in pieces" – makes a mistake and consequently falls, loses the war.

7. Assyria, nevertheless, later falls, too, but not by the sword of a mean man.

8. The war, the fast-rolling chariots, and a revival and reformation such as the world has never seen, are signposts of the fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy.

9. When God's people cast aside all their idols, fully turn to Him, then it is that Assyria falls. Then it is that the wicked are removed from the midst of

the people of God, the Assyrian yoke is broken, and the servants of God, evidently the first fruits, the 144,000, stand with the Lamb on Mt. Zion.

Let us now consider the already historic facts:

Hitler made his preparation for war in an era when the chariots were raging in the streets, running lightning-like, and jostling one against another in the broadways; that after the allies Hitler's military might breaking everything in pieces wherever he took his guns then it was that they themselves begun to build gigantic war machines; Hitler stumbled, as it were, by starting war against Russia while he was still engaged in war with Great Britain; although Germany lost the war, yet rather than taking deeper root since the downfall of Hitler, England is instead wearing away, and the crashing sounds of her empire are becoming louder with each passing day; Hitler's war has dashed in pieces the whole world, and new chips and cracks are heard and seen right along – that there are new partisan politics from within and from without in every nation and people.

Since Nahum's description of the city and country traffic at the time his war prophecy is fulfilled perfectly fits the conditions of World War II, we are assured that the war which Hitler began will actually be finished when Assyria falls, and when her yoke is removed from the neck of God's people. From then on the wicked shall no more be found in the congregation of the righteous.

What is the over-all purpose of Nahum's prophecy? It is to enlighten God's people of the signs of the times, to make them aware that "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" is at hand, that the purification

of the church, the "Judgment in the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17) is soon to take place, that the wicked shall not much longer be in their midst, that the redemption of the righteous is at hand, that they must not fail to perform their God-given duties. Indeed, Nahum's prophecy clearly identifies God's people of today under the Assyrian yoke, and points to their liberation.

Most important of all, though, the prophet Nahum plainly tells that all these things take place in our day, and that the fall of Assyria takes place while God's people are turning to Him, while revival and reformation are successfully carried by him who "publisheth peace" (Nah. 1:15). If we, therefore, fail to take hold of the message, and if we fail to reform as it recommends, then it is not possible to survive the day of the Lord.

(For a detailed study of the book of Nahum, study Tract No. 14, "War News Forecast.")

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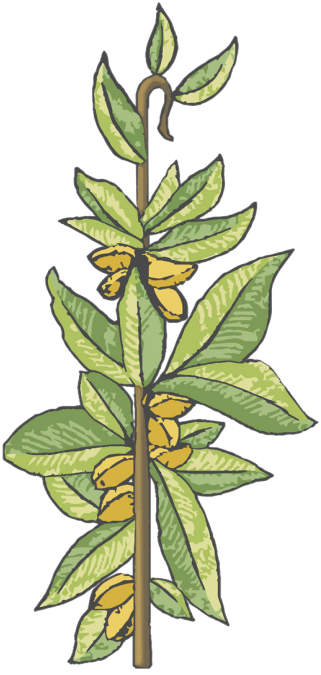

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