

Zephaniah 1:7–16

7 Be silent before the Lord God!
 For the day of the Lord is near;
 the Lord has prepared a sacrifice
 and consecrated his guests.

8 And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice—
 "I will punish the officials and the king's sons
 and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

9 On that day I will punish
 everyone who leaps over the threshold,
 and those who fill their master's house
 with violence and fraud.

10 "On that day," declares the Lord,
 "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,
 a wail from the Second Quarter,
 a loud crash from the hills.

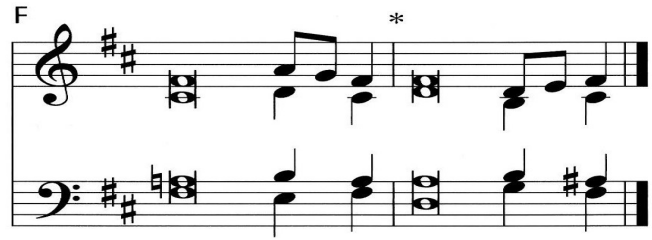
11 Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!
 For all the traders are no more;
 all who weigh out silver are cut off.

12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
 and I will punish the men
 who are complacent,
 those who say in their hearts,
 'The Lord will not do good,
 nor will he do ill.'

13 Their goods shall be plundered,
 and their houses laid waste.
 Though they build houses,
 they shall not inhabit them;
 though they plant vineyards,
 they shall not drink wine from them."

14 The great day of the Lord is near,
 near and hastening fast;
 the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter;
 the mighty man cries aloud there.

15 A day of wrath is that day,
 a day of distress and anguish,
 a day of ruin and devastation,
 a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
 against the fortified cities
 and against the lofty battlements.

**Psalm 90:1–12**

1 Lord, you have been our | dwelling place*
 in all gener- | ations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
 or ever you had formed the earth | and the world,*
 from everlasting to everlasting | you are God.

3 You return | man to dust*
 and say, "Return, O chil- | dren of man!"

4 For a thousand years in your sight
 are but as yesterday when | it is past,*
 or as a watch | in the night.

5 You sweep them away as | with a flood;*
 they are like a dream,
 like grass that is renewed in the | morning:
6 in the morning it flourishes and | is renewed;*
 in the evening it fades and | withers.

7 For we are brought to an end by your | anger;*
 by your wrath we | are dismayed.

8 You have set our iniquities be- | fore you,*
 our secret sins in the light of your | presence.

9 For all our days pass away un- | der your wrath;*
 we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.

10 The years of our life are seventy,
 or even by reason of strength | eighty;*
 yet their span is but toil and trouble;
 they are soon gone, and we | fly away.

11 Who considers the power of your | anger,*
 and your wrath according to the | fear of you?

12 So teach us to number | our days*
 that we may get a heart of | wisdom.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Matthew 25:14–30

¹⁴[Jesus said:] "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"