

# The Adultery of Syncretism

Zephaniah 1:1-18



# **Syncretism?**

The assimilation or merging of differing religious beliefs or practices into the worship of Yahweh.

# Zephaniah 1:1-3

The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi,  
son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah,  
in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah:  
“I will completely remove all things from the face of the earth,”  
declares the LORD. I will remove man and beast;  
I will remove the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea,  
And the ruins along with the wicked;  
And I will cut off man from the face of the earth,”  
declares the LORD.

# Zephaniah 1:4-6

So I will stretch out My hand against Judah  
And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,  
And the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests.

And those who bow down on the housetops  
to the host of heaven, And those who bow down  
and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom,

And those who have turned back from following the LORD,  
And those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him.

# Zephaniah 1:7-9

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests. Then it will come about on the day of the LORD'S sacrifice that I will punish the princes, the king's sons and all who clothe themselves with foreign garments. And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold, who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit.

# Zephaniah 1:10-13

“On that day,” declares the LORD, “There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, and a loud crash from the hills. Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar, for all the people of Canaan will be silenced; all who weigh out silver will be cut off. It will come about at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are stagnant in spirit, who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good or evil!’ Moreover, their wealth will become plunder and their houses desolate; Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit them, and plant vineyards but not drink their wine.

# Zephaniah 1:14-16

Near is the great day of the LORD,  
Near and coming very quickly;  
Listen, the day of the LORD!

In it the warrior cries out bitterly.

A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress,  
a day of destruction and desolation,  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness,  
a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities  
and the high corner towers.

# Zephaniah 1:17-18

I will bring distress on men so that they will walk like the blind,  
Because they have sinned against the LORD; and their blood  
will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung.

Neither their silver nor their gold will be able  
to deliver them on the day of the LORD'S wrath;  
and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy,  
for He will make a complete end,  
Indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth."

# Big Idea

God is a rightly jealous God and will rightly pour out His wrath upon all who refuse to turn and follow Him alone and worship Him alone.

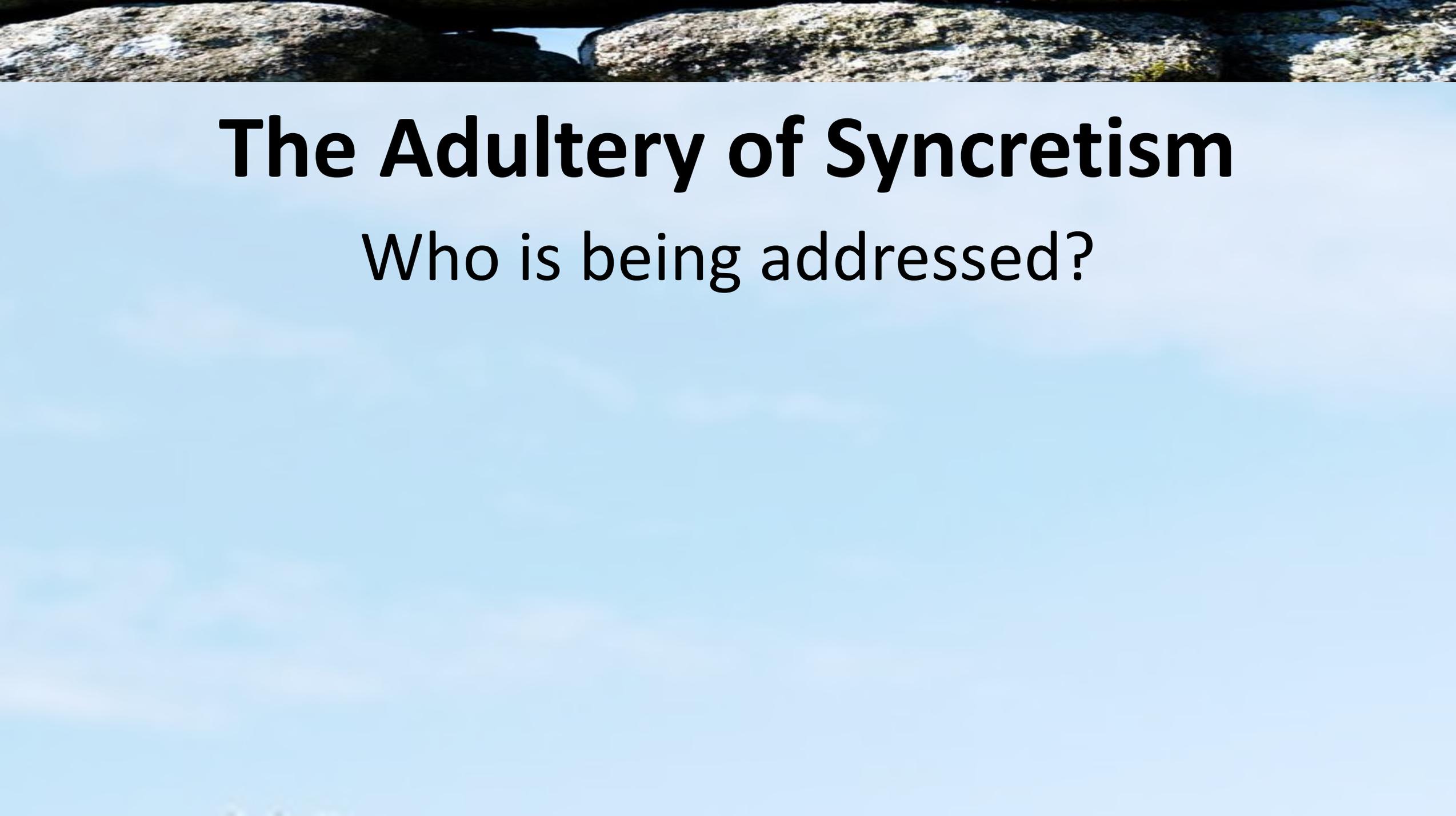
**Exodus 34:14**

...for you shall not worship any other god,  
for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God

**Deuteronomy 4:24**

For the LORD your God is a consuming fire,  
a jealous God.

Since He is the only true God and the only  
source of life and the only source of good,  
it is right that He be jealous.



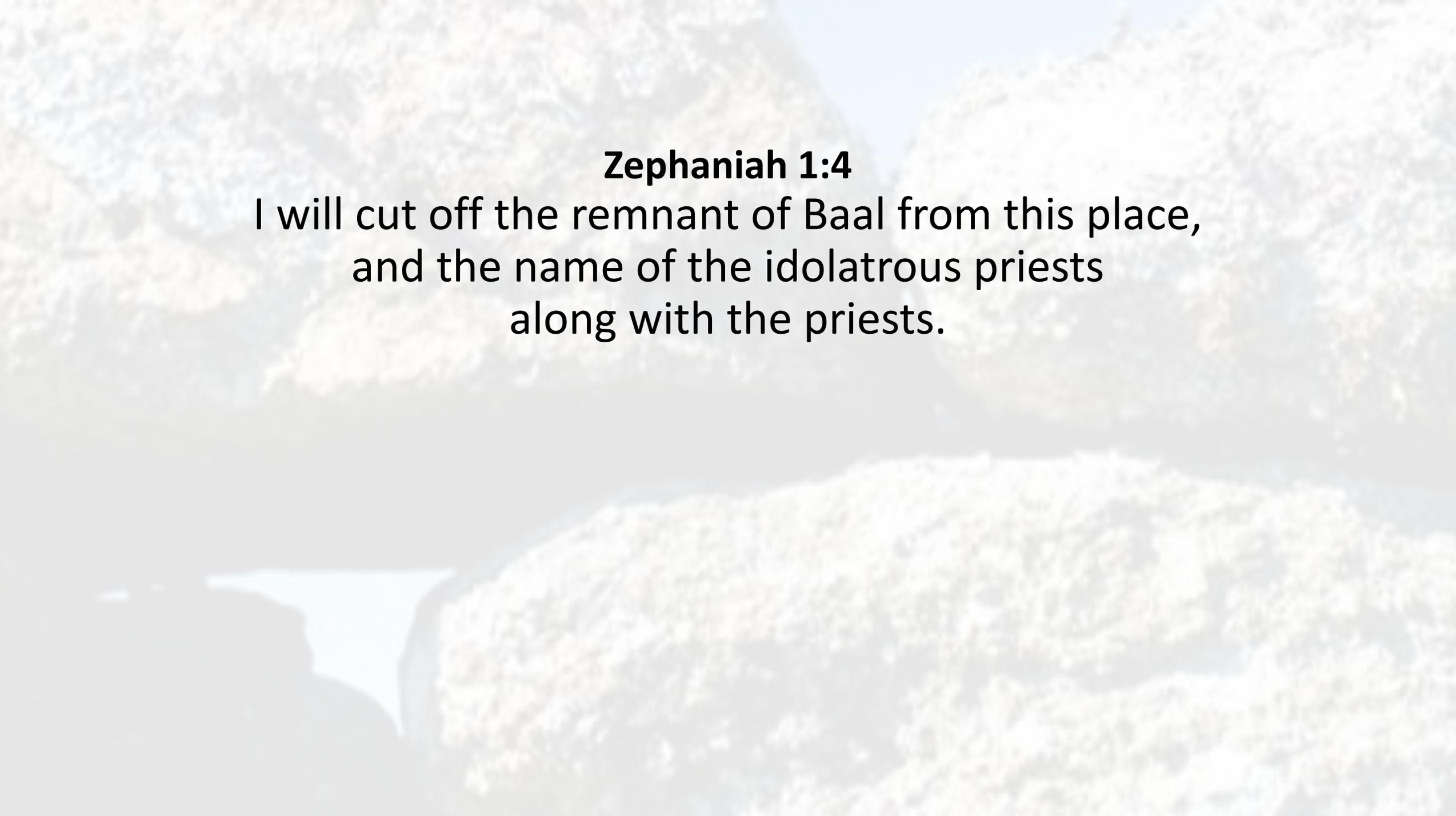
# **The Adultery of Syncretism**

Who is being addressed?

**Who is being addressed?**

The priests





**Zephaniah 1:4**

I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,  
and the name of the idolatrous priests  
along with the priests.

Zephaniah 1:4

I will cut off the remnant of **Baal** from this place,

and **the name of the idolatrous priests**

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## **Zephaniah 1:4**

I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,

and **the name of the idolatrous priests  
along with the priests.**

### **Zephaniah 3:4**

Her priests have profaned the sanctuary.  
They have done violence to the law.

How might we profane the sanctuary?

How might we do violence to the law?

# Who is being addressed?

The priests

The prophets



## **Zephaniah 1:6**

I will stretch out my hand against...

...those who have turned back from following the LORD,  
and those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him.

**This was a job of the prophet!**

**Zephaniah 1:6**

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## **Zephaniah 3:4**

**Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men.**

# This was more than just neglect!

## **Zephaniah 1:6**

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and those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him.

## **Zephaniah 3:4**

Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men.

**Jeremiah 14:14**

Then the LORD said to me,  
“The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name.  
I have neither sent them nor commanded them  
nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you  
a false vision, divination, futility and the deception  
of their own minds.

**What are the prophetic voices saying today?**

# Who is being addressed?

The priests

The prophets

**The princes**



## **Zephaniah 1:8**

Then it will come about on the day of the LORD's sacrifice  
that I will punish the princes, the king's sons  
and all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.

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foreign garments.**

## **Deuteronomy 22:11-12**

You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.  
You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners  
of your garment with which you cover yourself.

Zephaniah 3:3

**Her princes within her are roaring lions,**  
her judges are wolves at evening;  
they leave nothing for the morning.

How are our leaders behaving?

# Who is being addressed?

The priests

The prophets

The princes

**The profiteers**

## **Zephaniah 1:10-11**

“On that day,” declares the LORD,  
“There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate,  
a wail from the Second Quarter,  
and a loud crash from the hills.

Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar,  
for all the people of Canaan will be silenced;  
**all who weigh out silver** will be cut off.”

## **Jeremiah 22:17**

But your eyes and your heart are intent only upon your own dishonest gain, and on shedding innocent blood and on practicing oppression and extortion.

**What is the profit motive producing today?**

**Has this touched the church?**

# Who is being addressed?

The priests

The prophets

The princes

The profiteers

**The people**

**Zephaniah 1:4**

So I will stretch out My hand against Judah  
And **against all the inhabitants** of Jerusalem.

**Zephaniah 2:1**

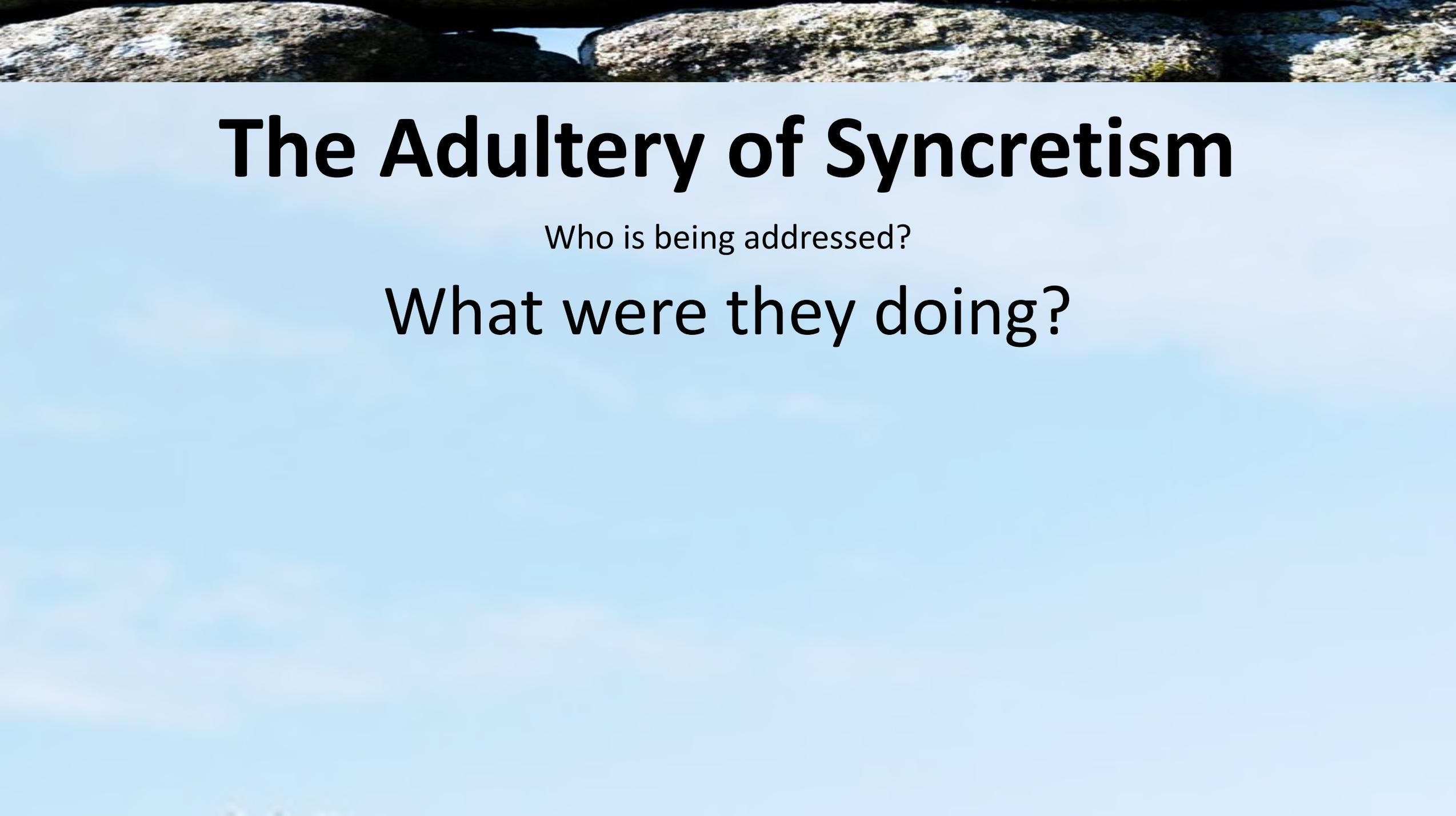
Gather yourselves together, yes, gather,  
**O nation** without shame.

**Zephaniah 3:1**

Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled,  
**The tyrannical city!**

The corruptions of the priests,  
the deceptions of the prophets,  
the entitlements of the politicians,  
and the enticements of the profiteers  
will all fall to the ground if the people  
will pursue righteousness.

Remember *self-governance* is the foundation of righteousness because it is people who lead, and it is people who follow.



# The Adultery of Syncretism

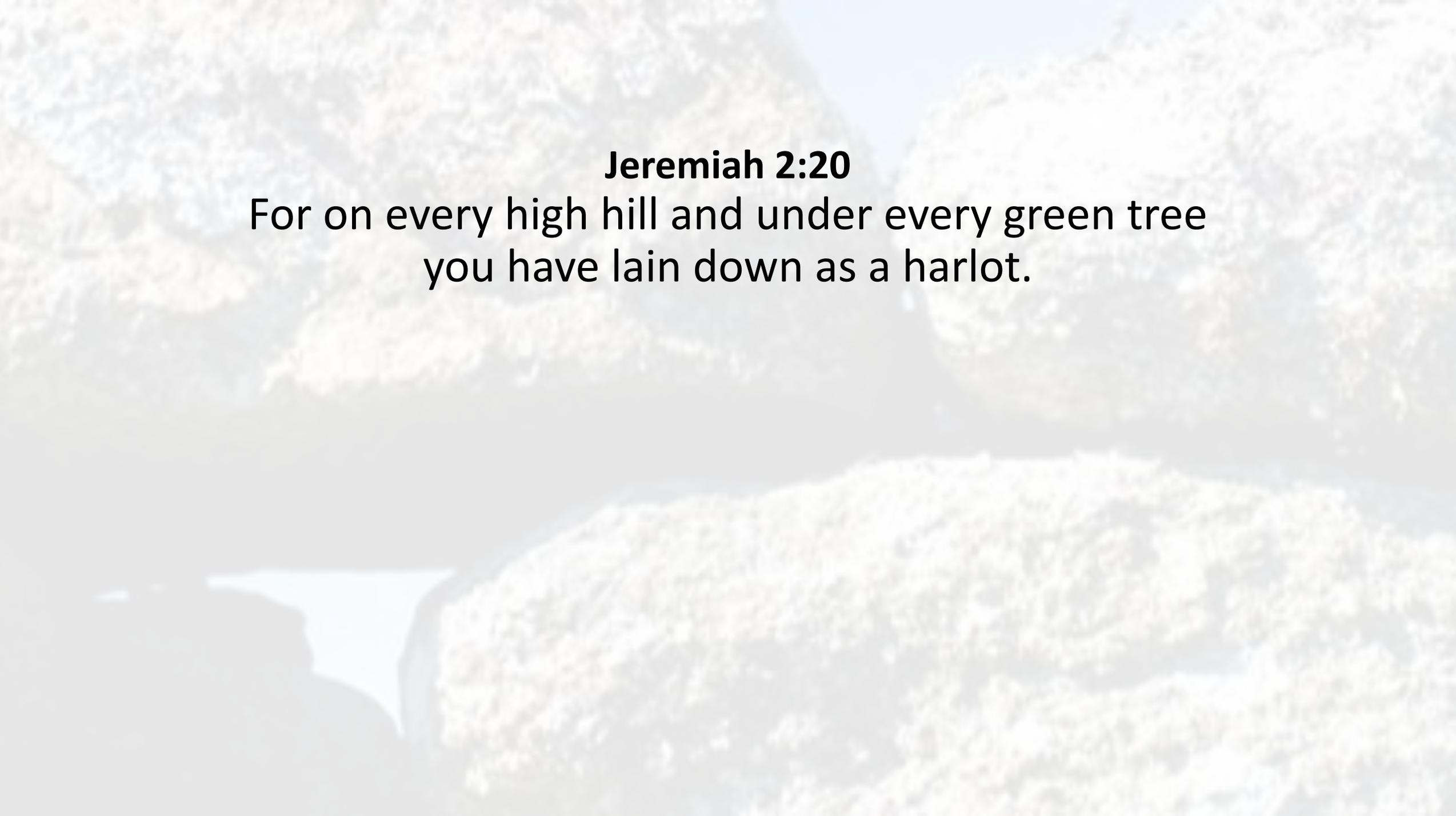
Who is being addressed?

What were they doing?

**What were they doing?**

**They were committing  
spiritual adultery.**

[They were bringing pagan gods  
into their spiritual house.]



**Jeremiah 2:20**

For on every high hill and under every green tree  
you have lain down as a harlot.

## **Zephaniah 1:4-5**

So I will stretch out My hand against Judah  
and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,  
and the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests.

And those who bow down on the housetops to the host  
of heaven, and those who bow down and swear to the LORD  
and yet swear by Milcom.

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# This is the adultery of syncretism!

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of heaven, and **those who bow down and  
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and yet swear by Milcom.**

# This is the barbarity of syncretism!

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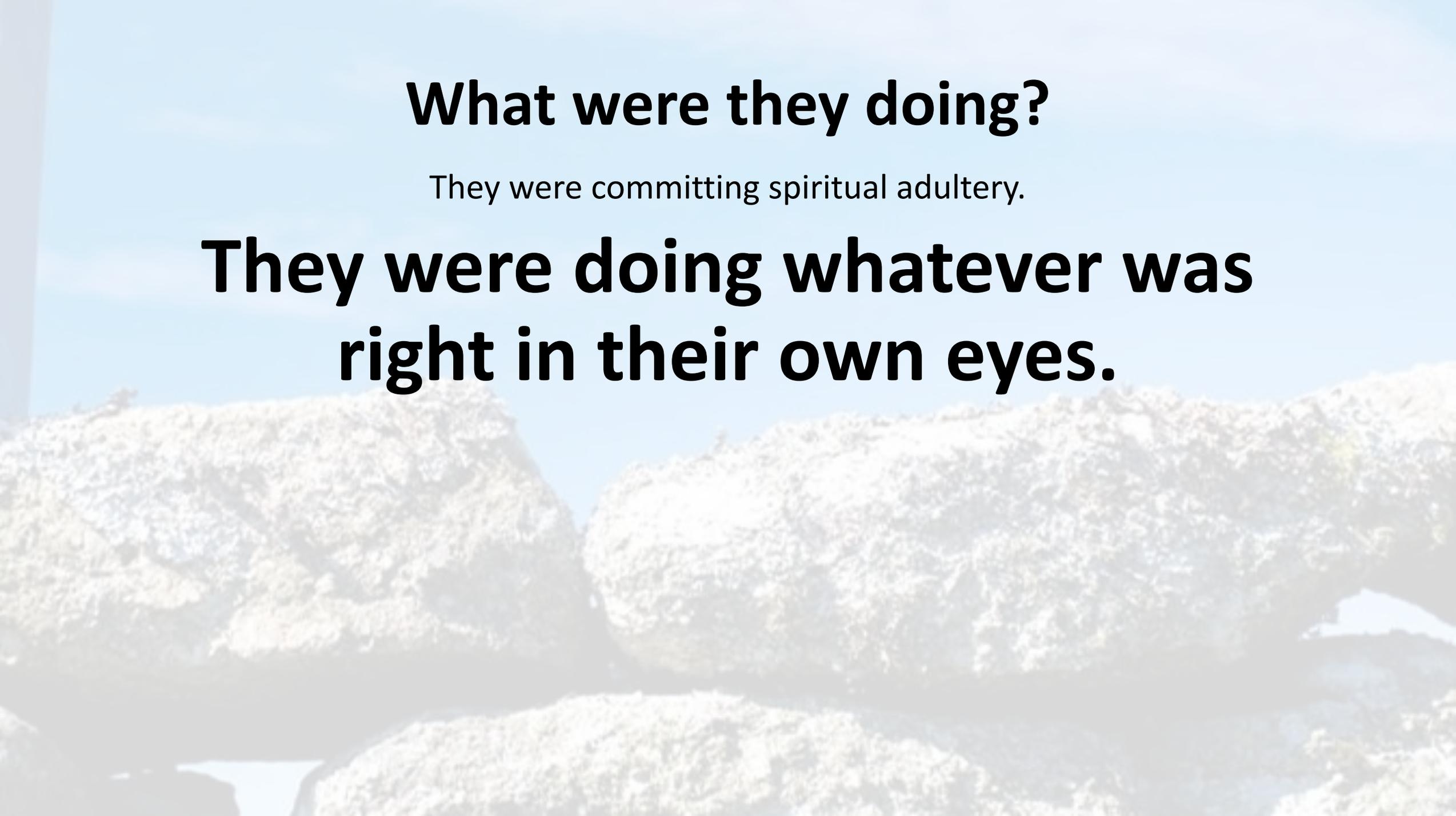
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of heaven, and those who bow down and swear to the LORD

**and** yet **swear by Milcom.**

Surely, we're more civilized than these  
child-sacrificing barbarians, right?



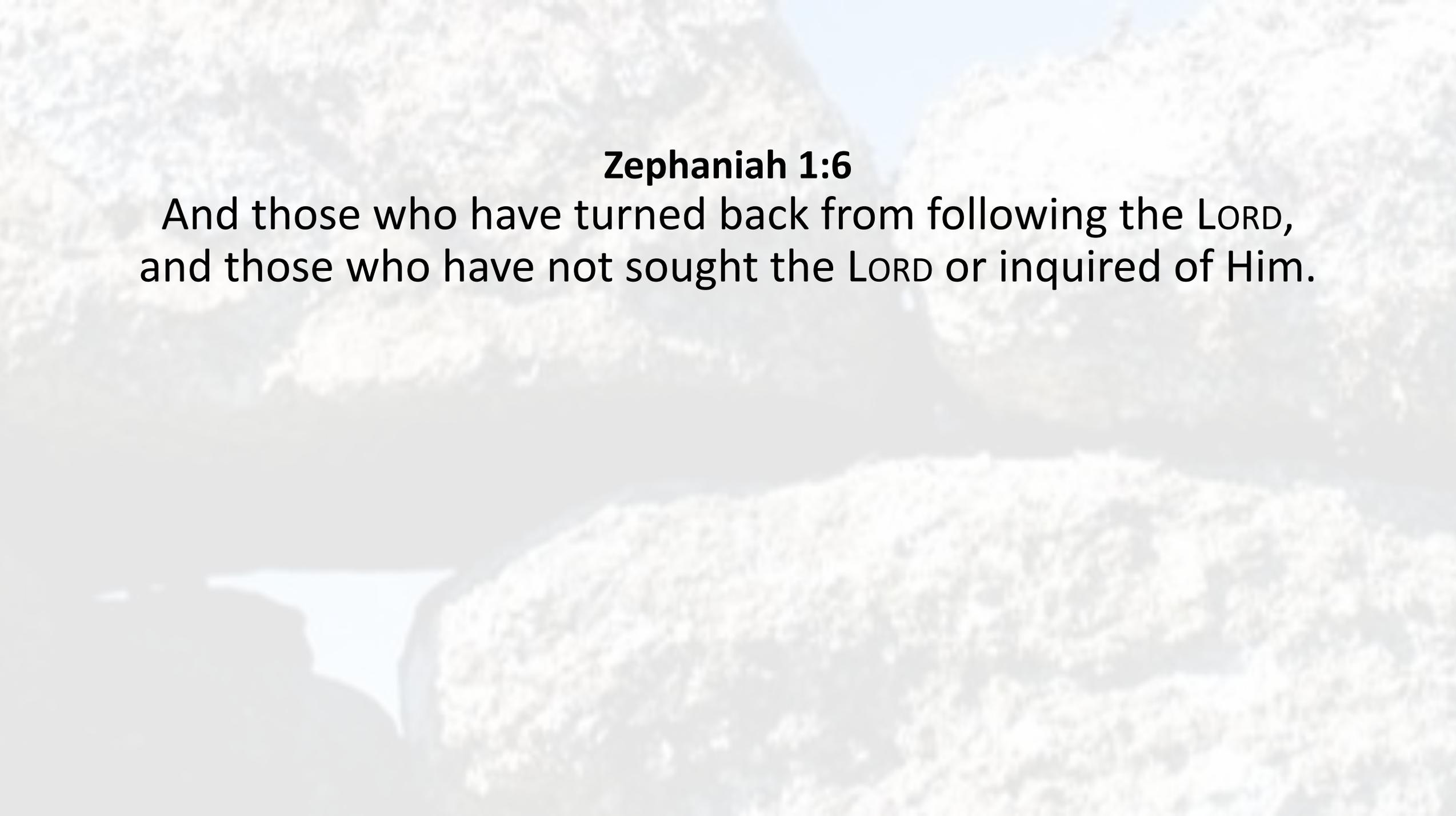
**What were they doing?**

They were committing spiritual adultery.

**They were doing whatever was  
right in their own eyes.**

**Deuteronomy 12:8**

You shall not do at all what we are doing here today,  
**every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes.**



**Zephaniah 1:6**

And those who have turned back from following the LORD,  
and those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him.

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and those who have not sought the LORD **or inquired of Him.**

Though the “prophets” spoke,  
the people weren’t really interested  
in the LORD’s voice.

**2 Timothy 4:3-4**

The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;  
but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate  
for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.

# What were they doing?

They were committing spiritual adultery.

They were doing whatever was right in their own eyes.

**They were dismissing genuine  
prophetic instruction.**

## **Zephaniah 1:12**

I will punish the men who are stagnant in spirit,  
who say in their hearts,  
“The LORD will not do good or evil!”

# Hardened in their indifference!

Zephaniah 1:12

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**Revelation 3:15-16**

I know your deeds, that you are **neither cold nor hot**;  
I wish that you were cold or hot.  
So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold,  
I will spit you out of My mouth.

## **Zephaniah 3:1-2**

Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled,  
The tyrannical city!  
She heeded no voice, she accepted no instruction.  
She did not trust in the LORD,  
She did not draw near to her God.

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What were they doing?

What will the LORD do?

**What will the LORD do?  
He will pour out His wrath  
in judgment.**



## **Zephaniah 1:14-18**

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Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD!  
In it the warrior cries out bitterly.  
a day of wrath is that day,  
a day of trouble and distress,  
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Against the fortified cities and the high corner towers.

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will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD'S wrath;  
and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy,  
for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one,  
of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

## **Deuteronomy 28:49 and 52**

The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand...

It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you.

Though this was written to Judah and  
Jerusalem more than 2600 years ago,  
God does not change.

**What was detestable to Him then  
is still detestable to Him now!**

# What will the LORD do?

He will pour out His wrath in judgment.

**He will redeem His remnant.**



### **Zephaniah 3:12-13**

But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people,  
and they will take refuge in the name of the LORD.  
The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies,  
Nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths;  
For they will feed and lie down  
with no one to make them tremble.

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For they will feed and lie down  
with no one to make them tremble.

# Conclusion:

The LORD's judgment *will come!*

Are you taking refuge in the  
name of the Lord?

**Acts 4:12**

And there is salvation in no one else;  
for **there is no other name** under heaven that has  
been given among men by which we must be saved.