

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***

*107 East Austin*

*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*

*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**C1204 – January 25, 2012 – -Zephaniah 3.18-20**  
**The Exaltation Of Israel Above All Nations**

The great thing about Zephaniah, and the one thing you want to take with you, is that it is a great little summary of Bible prophecy. If I were to teach a book-by-book class on Bible prophecy I would start with the book of Zephaniah. And the reason I would start here is because it is the major book pronouncing the central theme of Bible prophecy which is the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is the greatest theme of Bible prophecy because it encompasses everything from the revealing of Antichrist's identity to the end of the Millennium and some scholars argue into Eternity. There is no biblical term that captures every other term within it. Terms like the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel, the time of Jacob's trouble, the birth pangs of the Messiah, the kingdom of God, the thousand years, the coming of Christ, all those are included in the day of the Lord. So if you understand the day of the Lord then you have the major piece of Bible prophecy in place and you can start organizing the other pieces within it.

Bible prophecy is not easy. It's like a puzzle. The only difference is that you don't have a box cover to look at. You only have the Bible to look at. So you have to go verse by verse and put the pieces together to see what it looks like. And that means you have to be very careful to put each piece together where it fits so that when you get done the picture that emerges is the Biblical picture.

The first mention of the day of the Lord is in Obadiah. So let's turn to Obadiah, there's a progress of revelation regarding this doctrine. When we talk about progressive revelation we mean that the Bible came to us across several centuries and not all at one time. One of the important rules for proper interpretation is to look at the first usage. That gives the basic shape of the term, the fundamental idea and then as it is progressively revealed the

shape becomes clearer. Obadiah is the first usage, 845BC. The theme of Obadiah is Judgment on Anti-Semitism. Edom in the OT was Anti-Semitic and the first 14 verses deal with the judgment of Edom. Then it was revealed to the prophet in verse 15 that a judgment was coming upon all nations for Anti-Semitism. "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. 16Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed." There's the destruction of Anti-Semitism. And that lays the fundamental idea that the day of the Lord is a day of judgment on all nations. Then if we come to Joel. The theme of Joel is the day of the Lord. Joel is a major prophet on the day of the Lord, he's right up there with Zephaniah. He wrote about 835BC and he amplified our understanding of the day of the Lord. In 1:15 we see his first usage, "Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty." So you can see clearly that it is a day of God's judgment. Everything in the following verses describes it; it involves man, it involves nature, it involves the entire created order. In 2:2 we see some famous words regarding it, "For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near; 2A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations." And it goes on to describe it. Down in verse 11, "The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?" The answer is verse 12, "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments." That is, the only ones who can survive the future judgment of the Lord are those who repent and it has in view the Jewish people. We don't have time to do every reference but if you come down to verse 30 you see a depiction of the day of the LORD, "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes." The great and awesome day of the LORD, when you see it emended with those two adjectives, it describes the day of the Second Coming. So these wonders in the sky and on the earth precede the day of the Second Coming. Verse 32, And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered." That refers

specifically to the Jews who call on His name, the remnant of Israel. This gives you an idea of what this day is like. Then Joel goes into the judgment on the Gentiles when Christ returns. And finally 3:18, you see a blessing aspect to the day of the Lord, so this is a new revelation, this was not known that the day of the Lord would include blessing. Joel says, "And in that day," that's the shortened expression for the blessing phase of the day of the Lord. "In that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk," figuratively speaking of course, "And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Acacias." So the day of the Lord is a day that starts with judgment upon Israel and the nations but ends with blessing upon the believing remnant of Israel.

Then we come to Amos 5. Amos wrote to the northern kingdom and they were arrogant, they thought they were exempt from any day of the Lord type judgments. So Amos gave them a wake up call, verse 18, "Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD," Why would they be longing for it? Because they interpreted Obadiah and Joel as saying that the day of the Lord was a judgment on Gentile nations and blessing on the Jews. So we want the blessing. Amos says, I have news for you, "What purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light." It will be judgment and not blessing, "As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him." The judgment is inescapable. Verse 20, "Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?" Then he goes on to explain why. So then the day of the Lord is for unbelieving Israel, they were not exempt, a day of judgment was coming. And it came through the armies of Assyria in 721BC. That is a past, local day of the Lord that previews the future, global day of the Lord.

Now we come to Zephaniah and he wrote to the southern kingdom. They also thought they were exempt, they were of the house of David, therefore how could they be in the day of the Lord judgment? Well, Zephaniah makes clear that a day of the Lord was coming for them. Verse 7, "Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrates His guests." The sacrifice is the southern kingdom, the guests to eat the sacrifice are the Babylonians. That's a local day of the Lord judgment coming. But the greater future day of the Lord is

verse 14, “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. 15A 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,” and we’ve seen all of this in Joel 2. Notice the extent of this future day of the Lord in verse 18, “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.” That clearly is a terrifying judgment. 2:1 describes the means of escape in that day, “Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without merit, Before the decree takes effect...Before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD’S anger comes upon you.” The first half of the future day of the Lord will be peace for Israel but the second half will be destruction. So before the second half the nation needs to gather and seek Him until the Lord comes and rescues them. Now then let’s come to chapter 3:8, the Lord speaking here to the remnant who does gather, “Therefore wait for Me,” declares the LORD, For the day when I rise up to the prey. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal.” And that’s the judgment of Gentiles nations that the Lord gathers at Armageddon. Verse 9, there are believing Jews and they will be given a new language, “For then I will give to the nations purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder.” This is in the millennial blessing. Verse 10, the dispersed of Israel will be gathered in, “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings.” And it goes in to the judgment of unbelieving Israel where the remnant are separated out and taken into the millennial kingdom. In the millennial kingdom, verse 13, “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.” Verse 14 the Joy, verse 15 the King of Israel, YHWH, in their midst ruling and protecting the apple of His eye. He stands, verse 17 as a victorious warrior and He will lavish His love on His nation Israel. Tonight we come to the last three verses.

In 3:18, Keil and Delitzsch say in their OT commentary, “Every clause of v. 18 is difficult.” Yes difficult, the reading is hard, but perhaps not too difficult, let’s take up the first clause, **I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts**— now the issue here is the participle **those who grieve**

and in the Hebrew it's in the passive voice but translated as active so it should read who are grieved, they're grieved by something not by choice, it's just the nature of the situation. And obviously they were grieved because they were unable to attend the **appointed feasts**. Something has prohibited them from attending these feasts. And the something was captivity to Gentile powers. The northern kingdom went into Exile in 721BC to the Assyrians and the southern kingdom went into Exile in 586BC to Babylon and they can't really go up to Jerusalem when their in Exile to foreign countries. So they grieved.

Now Zephaniah wrote prior to the southern kingdom going into Exile to Babylon but that Exile was on the horizon and one of Zephaniah's purposes is to warn them that a day of the Lord is near upon them if they do not gather without merit before the Lord. However, it is obvious from the context of these final verses that he is speaking of conditions which resulted when both kingdoms had gone into captivity to Gentile powers and spent a long time in captivity and now after the captivity the Lord **will gather those who** were unable to keep the appointed feasts and were grieved over it.

And clearly it is only the godly Jews among the nation, the remnant of believers that were grieved that they were unable to attend the **appointed feasts**. The secular Jews were not grieved at all by their inability to attend. So here we're talking of a gathering of the remnant of Israel. And since there has always been a believing remnant of Jews then this includes all the believing Jews who went into captivity for the past 2,700 years. God will gather them. And therefore since most of them have died this verse presupposes they will all be resurrected. And since we know that the resurrection of believing Jews will occur at the Second Coming of Christ then the time of this gathering is the time of the Second Coming of Christ.

And if you'll turn to Dan 12 I'll show you another reference to this time. Daniel writes later than Zephaniah, he writes from within the Exile and the subject matter in chapter 12 is carried over from chapter 11, the subject is the Antichrist and his program. So we're in the future day of the Lord. And 12:1 says, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise." Michael is the guardian angel of the nation Israel, his assignment is to protect Israel. He will arise, "And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation

until that time;” that’s the judgment phase of the day of the Lord, and specifically, the latter half when Israel is persecuted as never before, “at that time your people [Daniel], everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.” So there will be a rescue of the living Jewish believers when Christ returns. And coincident with this, verse 2, “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.” Many, not all, will be resurrected at this time; the Jewish believers who have died prior to the Second Coming will be raised at this time to enter into the millennial blessing. And a portion of these are the ones Zephaniah says were grieved because they were in Exile and could not keep the appointed feasts.

So then as we think back to Zephaniah 3:18, the subject of the passage is the believing remnant of Jews who were in Exile to pagan nations and who died prior to the Second Coming and were unable to attend the appointed feasts. God says they will be gathered and resurrected for the millennial blessing. As for the appointed feasts they grieved over let’s turn to Exod 34:23 to get a note about them. The nation Israel had several feasts or festivals; some were daily, some were weekly, some were monthly and some were yearly. Only the yearly ones required all the men to gather. And the one’s spoken of here are the yearly feasts. Notice Exod 34:23, “Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.” The purpose of this national gathering was to reinforce unity in the nation around the Lord’s presence. The nation had One Lord and One Law. And therefore to reinforce this positional unity they were to gather three times annually. Now, according to the verse this was required of all males, it was optional for females but women often attended.

Verse 24 reveals one of the road blocks to going up to Jerusalem three times a year, “For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the LORD your God.” In other words, here’s the land of Israel and they’re all settled in the land and yet they’re surrounded by enemies. So then when the word gets out to the enemy that every year all the Jewish males leave home and go up to Jerusalem then the enemies would plan their attack then, that way they can come in and rape and pillage to their heart’s delight. So God promised them in advance, if you just go up to Jerusalem like I’m saying, if you just trust Me and obey by going up three times a year, I’ll

protect your land, I'll protect your homes, I'll protect your wives and children, so don't worry about it, I'm your protector. And history bears testimony to God keeping His promise: "During the whole period between Moses and Christ we never read of an enemy invading the land at the time of the three festivals. The first instance on record is thirty-three years after they had withdrawn from themselves the divine protection by imbruing their hands in the Saviour's blood, when Cestius, the Roman general, slew fifty of the people of Lydda while all the rest had gone up to the feast of Tabernacles, A.D. 66."<sup>i</sup> And then you'll remember, in more recent history when Golda Meir was the Prime Minister of Israel, that on the Day of Atonement, in 1973 the Egyptians mounted a surprise on that day when all the Jews were with their families in celebration and that was the worst attack against the State of Israel. So the enemies have recognized that these holy days of Israel are key moments for surprise attacks and when you see them being attacked on these days, understand the nation is out of it, spiritually speaking, way out of it and God is not protecting them from the invasion itself. He may have given them a victory, but He did not prevent the attack altogether.

So then in Zeph 3:18 we have three yearly feasts being referred too; namely Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. And an interesting thing about these feasts was they were strategically placed by God on the Jewish calendar so they didn't interfere with their agriculture. There are certain times of year when the farmer has a lot of work to do and he can't go running off to Jerusalem when he's got to be in the field. And so God placed Passover...just before the harvest began, Pentecost...fifty days later after the corn harvest but before the vintage and Tabernacles...after all the fruits of the ground had been harvested. So then God was gracious in the OT, go imagine, God was actually gracious in the OT and not just a big meanie. He gave them times and seasons and this enabled the men to go up to Jerusalem for these national gatherings. But the nation rebelled and went into Exile and then they couldn't gather, that's verse 18, God says **I will gather those who were grieved**, the godly remnant who were grieved by their inability to keep the three appointed feasts. And so that includes all and requires them all to be resurrected.

Now the second clause of verse 18, **They came from you, O Zion**; that's probably correct insofar as it indicates that the one's who were grieved were the true citizens of Jerusalem. **They came from you**, that is, they are really

from you, they are the true citizens of Jerusalem, the real McCoy's so far as a Jew is concerned. Not all Jews are true Jews. A Jew is just a physical descendant of Jacob. But a true Jew is a Jew who is a physical descendant of Jacob but also a believer as Abraham believed. And therefore **They came from you**, that is, they're the true citizens or completed Jews, those who have had faith, those who have come before God without good works, without merit and rested solely on the merits that God promised to provide and did provide in His own Son, Jesus Christ. So then, clause two refers to the true citizens of Jerusalem who were grieved in Exile by their inability to gather annually for the three appointed feasts.

Now the third clause of verse 18, *The reproach of exile is a burden on them (her)* is probably a proper rendition of the original idea. The point is that it weighed heavily on the Jewish believers in Exile that they could not return to their country, it was a burden on them. They had to live out among the Babylonians and that's Daniel's generation. They had to live in a very pagan nation with lots of idols. Then they had to live among the Persians and that's Esther's generation, and you know about Haman's Anti-Semitism and his attempt to destroy the Jews in Persia. Then the Jews had to live under the Greeks and the Greeks created no less a monster than the forerunner of Antichrist himself, Antiochus Epiphanes - he took a pig and sacrificed it on the altar in the Temple because he was sick and tired of Jewish culture and they wouldn't get with the Greek culture). Antiochus was on a mission to Hellenize the Jews, we've got to have unity and we can't have unity with all these religious bigots in Jerusalem so I'll put a stake in the heart of their religion, a pig on the temple altar. And that started what we call the Maccabean Revolt. Then they had to live under the Romans. See how this exile was a **burden**? I mean, once they went into Exile they never had religious and political freedom. They had religious freedom so far as the Gentiles permitted it, but not true freedom. For example, how did the Romans keep an eye on the religious practices of the Jews? They built a lookout that overlooked the entire Temple called the Antonia Fortress. The Jews have constantly been under the thumb of Gentile rulers. And whenever they revolted it never turned out so good. A group of Jews called Zealots rebelled against the Romans in AD66 and the Romans under Vespasian and his son Titus came in and destroyed Jerusalem in AD70, they took every stone of the Temple and cast off the Temple Mount; they killed millions of Jews. By AD73 the last Jewish rebel was dead on the top of Masada. Rome



would not put up with rebellion and Rome made an example of the Jews to warn everybody else - if you rebel against us, we're going to crush you. And so when the Jews were crushed, mentally, psychologically they were so dejected and despondent that they just bowed the knee to the Romans. In AD135 they started another rebellion, the Bar Kochba Revolt and that was shut down by Emperor Hadrian and he build a pagan shrine right on the Temple Mount and expelled all the Jews from the land, get out of here, I've had enough of you Jews.

It's been a very rough road. Jews were dispersed into all nations of the earth. After Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire persecution by the Roman Catholic Church began. The Roman Catholics tried to convert them by force and if they didn't convert they were accused of blood libel, brought up on charges, hanged, murdered, ostracized from society, always ostracized to the Jewish ghetto. When they also came under Islamic persecution. Mohammed, for example, tried to convert the Jews but they wouldn't go along with his fake book and so he became a Jew hater. So he converted them by force. It was death or conversion and that's what we call *jihad*, death of the infidel. But surprisingly the persecutions of Islam in the Middle ages were not as severe as those of the Roman Catholics. The Catholics were far worse. They looked at the Jews as the Christ killers and the damned of God.

Then came the Crusades when the Roman Catholics got a keen interest in articles from the Holy Land and so they invaded, killed Jews all along the way, stole various religious artifacts, built churches over traditional sites and so forth. The Jew has been the object of hatred and derision all down through history. And time after time the Jews have tried to amalgamate, I mean, can't we just get lost among the nations, I don't want to be a Jew, I just want to live my life and yet every time the Jew has tried to lose his identity he's failed. France, they really thought they had a place in France. Napoleon Bonaparte was very pro-Jewish. Bonaparte said, "I desire to take every means to ensure that the rights which were restored to the Jewish people be not illusory...to find for them a Jerusalem in France." So Jew friendly were the French that Abraham Furtado said, "We are no longer a nation within a nation. France is our country, Jews. Your obligations are outlined; your happiness is waiting." This was all well and good until the Dreyfus affair in 1894 when false accusations were made against a Jewish captain in the

French Army and their hopes for assimilation were dashed once more.

And you know about Nazi Germany and the Darwinian motivated dreams of a superior Arian race. Over 6 million Jews and probably 6 million other peoples, black, Polish, disabled, you name it, throwbacks of evolution were viciously murdered. The Jews have had a rough time of it. Moved from one place to another place to another place, all trying to find a place where they can just live their life; to Russia, to Spain, to America, no homeland, no roots, no stability, think of it, it's a never-ending nightmare.

Finally they were recognized as a State in 1948. And yet that State was authorized by the UN, so it's not without Gentile permission. The United States was the first to recognize them as a State. The United States has been the most Jew-friendly nation ever, which is probably why we've survived so long. But now that our policies are turning against Israel there are a lot of Jews starting to immigrate out of America.

So then you can see that living in Exile has continually been a v 18 **burden** on the Jew. But the remarkable fact of the story is that they never lost their identity. As Abba Eban says, and this is a remarkable quote. Abba Eban was a famous Israeli diplomat, he spoke before the UN, he was a terrific historian of his nation. He writes, "Normally, a people lives by its geography; the most enduring element in any national history is the ground which nature provides as a home. This is not so with the Jews; and yet they endured. Lacking a political homeland of their own, dispersed among the lands of the earth, they nevertheless took with them into the Diaspora a priceless cultural and religious heritage which ensured a community of spirit and a unity of purpose that were to sustain them despite the loss of their sovereignty. Their loyalty went forth not to temporal rulers, but to an idea, a way of life, a Book. When Israel went into dispersion, its culture already had a coherent character, shaped by the lofty themes and moral imperatives of the Bible."<sup>ii</sup> Eban attributed their existence to the word of God. And ultimately it's the word of God in the Abrahamic Covenant. God is the one who would never let them amalgamate, never let them get lost, down to this present hour He has sustained the Jew, the most hated people on earth.

And I take you through all that so you will now see the contrast in vv 19-20. **Behold, I am going to deal at that time**, that's the future day of the Lord,

judgment phase, **I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors**, that's all the nations that have been Anti-Semites and have crushed and devoured you, God is going to deal with them at that time. God's justice will be meted out upon the nations. And He says, **I will save the lame And gather the outcast**, these are the Jewish remnant, so the believing Jewish remnant in the future day of the Lord will be saved. And He says, **I will gather them. And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth.** Now that right there is a complete reversal of world affairs. No longer will the world be Anti-Semitic but it will be Pro-Semitic. Every nation in the world in this future millennial kingdom is going to be Pro-Semitic. They're going to praise the Jew, they are going to exalt the Jew, the Jew is going to be the number one nation in the world.

Turn to Deuteronomy 26:19, I want to show you this in another passage. In verse 18, "The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; <sup>19</sup>and that *He will set you high above all nations* which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken." There's the future exaltation of the Jewish nation, high above every nation. Here's the Jewish eschatology, this is what the Jewish Messianic thought. "The days of the Messiah...will reveal themselves as follows: The sins of Israel will bring final retribution on the Day of Judgment. This retribution, in the form of wars, destruction, exile, humiliation, and cataclysmic change in the order of nature, will represent the "birth pangs of the Messiah." After the Day of Judgment will come repentance, which in turn will be followed by redemption. At the time of the redemption only a "remnant of Israel" will have survived—a small group of the upright, the blameless, and the humble among the sons of Israel. After the redemption Israel will gain not only political strength to equal that of other nations, but her spiritual strength will surpass that of other nations. Thus will Israel attain an exalted position among all peoples. Material prosperity (improvement and progress) as well as spiritual welfare (human perfection) will accompany the redemption...The political and national hope for the redemption of Israel from bondage and servitude is combined with the dream of universal peace, the vision of an age when Israel, through its own deliverance, will ultimately bring spiritual deliverance to all mankind."<sup>iii</sup> Now isn't that what we believe? Isn't that what the Bible teaches? That's what the Jewish Messianic thought of the Rabbi's was.

Finally, verse 20, **At that time I will bring you in**, that is, at the time of the day of the Lord blessing, the millennial kingdom, He **will bring** in the remnant of Israel. **Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth**, notice the repetition, this is repeated to make it emphatic, for 1,000 years the Jewish nation is going to be supreme and famous **Among all the peoples of the earth**. **When I restore your fortunes before your eyes**, you wouldn't believe this is possible, no nation, never ever has a nation ever been defeated and risen to world power again, never has a nation been removed from its homeland and been restored to its homeland, I don't know of any nation like Israel on the face of the earth. And so this is an utterly unique feature of the nation Israel, their fortunes will be restored. The fallen booth of David will be rebuilt. It's going to be unbelievable but it's going to happen; the remnant of Israel is going to see it happen with their very own eyes.

So in conclusion turn to Jer 29:10 and we want to show one other passage which speaks of this future restoration. Now you can argue and it would be correct, the immediate context deals with the exile to Babylon and the partial restoration at the end of seventy years. These are the books Daniel was reading just before the seventy years expired and the angel Gabriel appeared and gave him an expanded prophecy of Israel's exile and restoration. Daniel was reading verse 10 and looking for the restoration, "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.'" that's the partial restoration that occurred in 516BC, so this was fulfilled. But then verse 11, 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'" By the way, that's not America, that's not Sudan, that's Israel, God has this plan for Israel. Verse 12, "'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup>I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from" Babylon? No, "from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,"" so now the text has gone far beyond Babylon. Verse 10 is the local restoration from Babylon after 70 years, but the prophecy of verse 14, at least by verse 14 and probably before has been expanded to include a restoration from all nations. Which

presupposes an Exile among all nations. And so here we see an example of how the prophets often blended events together into one picture and there's not a clear break between the two prophecies but there are two prophecies. So verse 14 is the stretching out of verse 10, there's a near prophecy and a far prophecy here. Prophecy is like an accordion in the OT, it looks all packed together but then as history unfolds it becomes clearer that it's stretched out. God has a way of doing that and here's one of those places. "I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to' heaven???" No, "back to the place from where I sent you into exile." Well, where was the place from where God sent them into exile? The Promised Land. So where are they going to be brought back to? The Promised Land. We point this out because a lot of theologians who are smarter than God say there is no future restoration of the Jews to the Promised Land. This is the church being gathered we're told. For example, I quote, "And hence we may gather a useful doctrine,--that God in a wonderful manner gathers his Church when scattered, so as to form it into one body..." That's not exegesis, that's eisegesis, that's disregarding the details of the text, where has God driven the church and where are we going to be gathered back to? It doesn't fit the text. What fits the text is that God is going to restore the Jewish nation to her promised homeland, reversing their fortunes. And this has never been fulfilled. But, Zephaniah says, "Thus saith the LORD," therefore it will be fulfilled. And when it is it will be an astonishing moment in world history.

All Gentile kingdoms will be subservient to the Jews and will praise the Jews and progress and blessing unheard of will take place through the Jews.

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<sup>i</sup> Easton, M. (1996). *Easton's Bible dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>ii</sup> Abba Eban, *My People*, 231.

<sup>iii</sup> Abba Eban, *My People*, 245.

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