

Zephaniah 3:8-13 – Rejecting, Restoring, and Reviving the Jews

JFB, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Henry, Poole, Handfuls, Armstrong, Trapp, Clarke, Geneva, Delitzsch, Gaebelein, Barnes, Calvin?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: I am sure you are enjoying the holiday season. And you should! But the celebration and happiness of the holiday season will pass. And reality will set in. **You will still see a broken society** held captive by corruption, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, and an obsession with wealth. **You still will see a broken church**. Leadership is weak. Theology is looked on as obsolete. And people just want the church to be crutch to salve their consciences. The future looks bleak. And it is easy to become depressed.

But **there is hope, if you look to the right One**. This was God's promise to the Jews who were soon going to go into captivity for their sins! This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

The Rejection of the Jews

The Restoring of the Jews

The Revival of the Jews

Our goals are: **That you will look to the Lord in repentance so that he will restore his church and bring revival to her in 2019.**

The Rejection of the Jews

8 "Therefore **wait for Me**," says the LORD, "**Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms**, To pour on them (the Jews) My indignation, **All my fierce anger**; All the earth (land) shall be **devoured With the fire of My jealousy**."

1. God urged the Jews to "wait to see" what he would do to the wicked Jewish leaders – their bad prophet, priests, and kings.

He had fierce anger against those who egregiously betrayed him multiple times. **The prophets doubted God would punish the Jews and they caused the people to believe it.** But God had given his people multiple warnings.

Jeremiah 5:11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah Have dealt very treacherously with Me," says the LORD. 12 **They have lied about the LORD**, And said, "It is not He. **Neither will evil come upon us**, Nor shall we see sword or famine.

God had to punish his bride now...for her own good.

2. What would God do to the Jews to punish them?

He would plunder them (they would become his prey, as if they were his enemies). The things the Jews loved more than they loved God, he would take away. God had to destroy their idols.

This judgment was determined by him, so no one could stop him.

3. How would God bring judgment on the Jews?

God would gather other nations to destroy them. These nations were the nations under the Babylonian Empire. (God would then punish the Babylonians for their wickedness, for they had no right to punish God's people.) They **would burn up the land of Judah** – Jerusalem and some towns. God's fiery jealousy would be transferred into literal fires! **“Earth” is best translated “land,”** as it was referring the Judah. The NKJV translators thought God was referring to the whole earth, so translated it “earth.” **This word has over 20 meanings.**

4. Lessons:

a. God is patient with his people, but not forever. The time comes when he says “enough is enough.” Then he must act. Today, God has to act! When we celebrate perversion on our coins...and we legalize the slaughter of children...God must act. God has to reject us. **God will gather the nations and politicians and use them** to punish his complacent people.

b. You, like Jeremiah said to Judah, must take God's punishment and change your ways. Taking up violence against the state is not your prerogative. Submit to unjust authorities unless they force you to break God's law.

c. When all is said and done and the wicked nations (philosophies, religions, political leaders) have done their damage to God's church, God will rise up against them and destroy them.

The Restoring of Worship

9 "For then **I will restore** to the peoples a **pure language**, That they all may **call on the name of the LORD**, To serve Him **with one accord**.

1. God would then return one unique, pure language to his people (so his rejection was not the end of the Jews)!

What is that language God would restore to the Jews? **A language of worship – praise and adoration.** As a result: **The people would no longer worship pagan idols, but would worship the true God** – expressing unity. What a reversal of the confusion of language at Babel! At Babel they would not glorify God together, but after Babylonian captivity, they would.

They would pray...and the Holy Spirit would cause them to pray purely.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also **helps in our weaknesses**. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession...

They would be united in living for God. “One accord” means “one shoulder.” So the people would unite together – carrying 1 log on many shoulders. Or it is like the oxen joining together to carry the yoke so the fields could be plowed.

2. How would the Jews get this pure language?

This would get this language when the full Gospel spreads and the Jews looked to the coming Savior for salvation.

Ezekiel 11:17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will **gather you from the peoples**, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'" 18 "And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. **19 "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,** 20 "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

The impact would be clear...and glorious. And this is what the Lord sent out the apostles to do: Go into all the world!

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia **My worshipers**, The daughter of My **dispersed ones**, **Shall bring My** offering.

3. But worship would not only come from the Jews, though it started with them; all peoples would bring worship to him.

God would use the diaspora– the spreading of his people for idolatry– to bring those nations in the future to him. The Jews of those lands would be used as launching pads for the Gospel. That was why Apostle Paul always started with the Jews when he went into a city to preach. Yes, there always was a praying remnant.

Ephesians 2:13...in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

Specifically, Acts 8 details the Gospel spread to Ethiopia. It is likely that Matthias, the replacement Apostle, went and preached there as well as the Ethiopian eunuch. Many, many Nubians were believers. Caiaphas confirmed this!

John 11:52 and not for that nation only, but also that **He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.**

What offering would they bring? They won't bring meat offerings, but sacrifices of praise and more-their whole selves!

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

So this was pointing to the coming of Christ and the spreading of the Gospel. This was prophesied before Zephaniah.

Isaiah 66:20 "Then **they shall bring all your brethren for an offering** to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, **to My holy mountain Jerusalem,**" says the LORD, "as the

children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

11 In that day **you shall not be shamed** for any of your (evil) deeds in which you transgress against Me; For then I will **take away from your midst Those who rejoice in your pride**, And you shall no longer be **haughty** In My holy mountain.

4. The restored Jews would not be ashamed as when the Babylonians came to enslave them. When sin is forgiven, sin is forgotten, and shame disappears.

Isaiah 54:4 "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, **And will not remember the reproach** of your widowhood anymore. 5 For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name...

All the old hypocrites (the false prophets, priests, and kings) would be gone like the bad people who left Egypt with Moses but never made it to the Promised Land. Then **humility will replace the pride as the stamp on the forehead.**

Psalms 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

These new people would rejoice because the proud Jews were destroyed by God.

5. Lessons:

a. Christ will conquer his enemies – even those that fought against him and his children.

He will do so with the sword for the rebel, or with his Word, to those soft in heart.

Revelation 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

EG: Corinth was one of the worst places, but God conquered many there and they worshipped him.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, **to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints**, with all who **in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord...**

b. When God punishes his bride, he does not kill her! He is full of grace. He makes her hurt for sure, but it is never permanent. He keeps his covenant!

c. Both as an individual and collectively as a church, you might remember your sin, but you will know that the shame of it has been removed, shame before God the

Father. Jesus endured the shameful cross so your shame is removed!

The Revival of the Jews

12 I will **leave in your midst A meek and humble people**, And they shall **trust in the name of the LORD**.

1. The Jews would not only be restored in their worship but they would be revived in their lives. Why?

2. They would be revived because they humbled themselves and they put their trust in the Lord.

This phrase "trust in the name of the Lord," literally translated, is "take refuge in the Lord." This means they would feed on Christ. In worship (above) they would be fed and then grow!

13 The remnant of Israel shall **do no unrighteousness** And **speak no lies**, **Nor shall a deceitful tongue** be found in their mouth; For they shall **feed their flocks and lie down**, And **no one shall make them afraid (terrify them)**."

3. The revived people would then live righteous lives.

This was not a prediction of a sinlessness, but of a prediction of a reformed state;

Psalms 15:2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

Psalms 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

4. How would that righteousness be manifested in the Jewish life?

a. They would love truth and speak the truth.

b. They shall feed their own flocks that truth. This is often a natural blessing from God.

5. As they would love and speak and teach truth with pure lips, their fears would abate and they would be secure.

And the more they were not afraid of the Devil, the less likely they would sin!

Psalms 23:2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness...

6. Lessons:

a. The wicked must not boast about their success, regardless how highly people think of what they do. They are on slippery ground.

Jeremiah 9:23 Thus says the LORD: "**Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom**, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory

in his riches;

b. The godly must feed on truth, believe, and practice it. More, the godly must feed others that truth. This is not only right, **but it is the means of living with confidence and being fearless.**

c. Doing this will guarantee the revival in the family, church, and state! This is the only guarantee. To not do this will result in spiritual tragedy.

Conclusion:

While the Jewish leaders, the prophets, priests, and kings were rejected by God, it did not mean the end of the Jewish nation. Instead, God promised to restore them to a right relationship with him, so they could worship him and bring others in to join.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

a. While the church is weak, it is not hopeless, so pray that God will be pleased to remove those who are misusing their leadership positions, who are protecting themselves and who are plundering the church...even those who are starving the church of truth.

b. Feast on truth. Have a healthy serving of God's Word every day. Hear it carefully explained and applied.

c. Spread this truth so the blind can see his sin and call on the Lord for forgiveness.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, God will conquer you with the sword and send you to hell forever, or he could conquer you with his Word, and grant you eternal life. Let God's Word conquer you, show your sins, show you what Christ has done, and ask him for help to call to him for forgiveness.