

“HE WILL REJOICE OVER YOU WITH SINGING”

Zephaniah 3:17

September 15, 2013

Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

The Setting for the Book of Zephaniah

- According to [Zephaniah 1:1](#), we know the background of the Prophet and the time period of his prophesying.
 - He was from royal blood.
 - He prophesied during the reign of Josiah.
 - Josiah reign in Judah 80 years after Israel had been swept away by the Assyrian invaders.
 - Judah had not learned from the rebellion of their northern neighbors.
- In the 18th year of Josiah's reign Hilkiah the priest found in the temple a copy of the book of the law that had been ignored for decades.
 - When he read it to the king, Josiah was broken. (Luther)
 - He humbled himself before the Lord and rent his clothes and wept ([2 Kings 22:19](#)).
 - Over the next 13 years Josiah led an amazing reformation in Judah based on the law of God.
 - He renewed the covenant between God and his people ([2 Kings 23:3](#)).
 - He took all the vessels of Baal and Asherah out of the temple and burned them in the fields of Kidron (23:4).
 - He deposed the idolatrous priests (23:5).
 - He broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes (23:7).
 - He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun (23:11).
 - And he reinstated the Passover that had been ignored since the days of the judges (23:22).

So when we read this little book, we can picture it as part of the call for reformation that Josiah was pursuing.

No doubt the prophet and the king teamed up to try to draw the people back to God.

A Warning About the Coming Wrath of the Lord

All of chapter 1 is a warning to Jerusalem and a prediction of the coming day of the Lord in wrath.

Zephaniah 1:2-4 (NIV) ²"I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. ³"I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. ⁴"I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. I will cut off from this place every remnant of Baal, the names of the pagan and the idolatrous priests--

Why was God's wrath so kindled?

Verse 8: the officials and king's sons were arrayed in foreign attire, wanting to be like the other nations who knew not God.

Verse 9: servants were filling their masters' houses with violence and fraud.

Verse 12: they were like the sediment at the bottom of stale wine, saying in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill."

God has ceased to be a practical reality in their lives.

A Call to Repentance

Then in chapter 2 the first warning is followed by an earnest call for repentance. There may yet be hope, at least for those who repent.

Zephaniah 2:1-3 (NIV) ¹Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, ²before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's wrath comes upon you. ³Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.

A Warning to the Surrounding Nations

Then in 2:4–15 Zephaniah cries out the woes and warnings not just over Judah and Jerusalem, but also over the surrounding nations of the world.

On the west are the cities of Philistia, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and the tribe of the Cherethites (vv. 4–7).

On the east are the lands of Moab and Amon (vv. 8–11).

On the south are the Ethiopians (v. 12).

And on the north is the terrible Assyria (vv. 13–15).

Judgment is coming on the whole surrounding world. And verse 10 probably sums up best the reason:

Zephaniah 2:10 (NIV) This is what they will get in return for their pride, for insulting and mocking the people of the Lord Almighty.

The root cause of worldwide judgment is human pride.

One Last Indictment Against Jerusalem

But lest the people in Jerusalem gloat over the judgment of the nations Zephaniah comes back to them and in 3:1–8 gives one last indictment of Jerusalem.

Zephaniah 3:1-2 (NIV) ¹Woe to the city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled!

²She obeys no one, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God.

An Amazing Shift

Then, at the end of his indictment, as so often in the prophets, comes an amazing shift.

Along side the destruction of his wrath, God puts the re-creating power of his love.

- It seems that in spite of the worldwide outpouring of his wrath, God is going to do two great acts of mercy described in 3:9–20.

1. The Promise of a Global Awakening

In other words God will not be content merely to destroy the nations of the world. He aims to be Lord over the nations.

Zephaniah 3:8-9 (NIV) ⁸Therefore wait for me," declares the Lord, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them-- all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger. ⁹"Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

This is a picture of worldwide judgment and worldwide turning to God.

Perhaps he pictures the judgment of God as an extended series of catastrophes over a period of time that come to climax in the final destruction of all unbelievers.

Perhaps during this extended time of judgments God also works among the nations of the earth to purify a people for himself through the preaching of the gospel so that he will indeed have a people for himself from all the tribes and tongues and nations ([Revelation 5:9](#)).

Revelation 5:9 (NIV) And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Perhaps it is an answer to Habakkuk's prayer that we ran across: **Habakkuk 3:2 (NIV)** Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; **in wrath remember mercy**.

Or a continued fulfillment of Mich's prophecy: **Micah 7:18 (NIV)** Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but **delight to show mercy**.

The point is, God will not be denied a people to call on his name and to serve him from all the nations of the world. And so he himself is going to change them and give them a heart and lips to call on his name.

Trans- That is the first act of mercy described in 3:9–20, a global awakening with people from all the nations calling on the Lord and serving him.

2. The Promise of Revival and Purification

The other act of mercy in these verses is the revival and purification of his people Israel. He is going to remove the proud and leave only a people who are humble and lowly, who trust in the name of the Lord. Verses 11–12:

Zephaniah 3:11-12 (NIV) ¹¹On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never

again will you be haughty on my holy hill. ¹² But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the Lord.

In other words, not only is God going to create a people for himself from all the nations of the world, but he is also going to purge and purify his people

He will eliminate the proud and he will keep for himself a humble and lowly people.

How does God intend to accomplish a people called his own?

Paul calls this a mystery, which means that it was not clearly revealed at the first.

Ephesians 3:4-6 (NIV) ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

It is explained by Paul in: **Romans 3:29-30 (NIV)** ²⁹ Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

And again in: **Galatians 3:7 (NIV)** Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.

The Spectacular Promise of [Zephaniah 3:17](#)

So now we go back to Zephaniah. And when we read 3:17, we know that it refers not only to all believing Jews but also to all Gentiles who have become heirs of the promise through faith in Christ, the seed of Abraham.

Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

God will rejoice over you with singing.

We have a lot of love songs where individuals are singing over another:

Lionel Richie Penny Lover Lyrics

*Penny lover, don't walk on by
Penny lover, don't you make me cry
Can't you see girl, who my heart's beating for
You're the only girl that I adore*

*The first time I saw you
Oh, you looked so fine
And I had a feeling
One day you'd be mine
Honey you came along and captured my heart
Now my love is somewhere lost in your kiss
When I'm all alone it's you that I miss*

*Girl a love like yours is hard to resist
Oh, Oh, Ooh, Ooh, Oh*

*Penny lover, my love's on fire
Penny lover, you're my one desire
Tell me baby could this be true
That I could need someone, like I need you*

Or maybe you want me to sing, "I Got You Babe"

Can you fathom God singing over you?

God is with you.

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place
I can feel His mighty power and his grace
I can hear the brush of angel's wings
I see glory on each face
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

"God is mighty to save."

Micah 7:19 (NIV) You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Hillsong - Mighty To Save Lyrics | MetroLyrics

Everyone needs compassion
A love that's never failing, let mercy fall on me
Well, everyone needs forgiveness

The kindness of a Savior, the hope of nations..
Savior, He can move the mountains
my God is mighty to save, He is mighty to save

God will delight in you.

Psalms 147:11 (NIV) the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Delight translates a wonderful word in Hebrew, one of the love words of the Old Testament.

- It means- show or feel elation or jubilation.
- It is not love as a judicial determination, or a covenantal responsibility.
- It is a statement that God seeks and enjoys you.
- God's face brightens in a smile at the thought of you.
- God rescues us because he is thrilled with us, he delights in our company.

Good parents love to impress their delight upon their children, don't they?

- They do everything they can to create in the child a sense of worth and beauty, to pass on to the child a sense of the enthusiasm they feel for her or him.
- A child who is loved is likely to be free, confident, and joyful.

Pam purchased a cassette of a song for each of the grandchildren. It went like this:

My songs are for Ava, She's quite a gal.

My songs are for Ava, because she is my pal.

“God will quiet (silence) you with his love.”

- You will not need to ask for a thing, because you will be full and content.
- You will be blessed beyond words.

1 John 3:1a (NIV) How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1. Everyone
2. Forever
3. Better is one day
4. Mighty to save
5. Surely the presence of the Lord. (new song) (Offering)
6. I love your grace.