

The Future Blessings of the Lord's Kingdom Earth

Zephaniah 3:9-20

Zephaniah 3:9-20: *"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. ¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. ¹¹ In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your 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. ¹² I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. 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." ¹⁴ Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more. ¹⁶ In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, "Do not fear! Zion, let not your hands be weak. ¹⁷ The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." ¹⁸ "I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, to whom its reproach is a burden. ¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, and gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you back, even at the time I gather you; for I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I return your captives before your eyes," says the Lord."*

Background Notes

The theme of Zephaniah is "the Day of the Lord." There is an historical aspect to the Day of the Lord as well as a future (eschatological) aspect to the Day of the Lord. In the future aspect to the Day of the Lord, there is both a time of judgment and a time of blessing. Judgment must come before blessing. The time of judgment is the future Tribulation period. The time of blessing is the coming kingdom of Christ on this earth.

In verse 8 of this chapter, the subject was the Tribulation period, the time of God's wrath on this earth. In verses 9-20, the subject is the coming kingdom of our Lord on this earth. This kingdom is known as the millennial kingdom of Christ because it will last for 1000 years, according to Revelation 20:6 - *"Blessed and holy is He who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."*

One thousand years of perfect peace on this earth – it’s hard to even imagine. It will be a great time - and you will be there if you know the Lord Jesus as a Savior! Don’t ask me, “Will there be fishing or golf in the kingdom?” I don’t know! But if there’s golf in the kingdom, I can tell you there are no “three-putt greens”! Seriously speaking, we see in these verses that the kingdom will be a time of great blessing for both Jews and Gentiles.

Doctrinal Points

1. In the future, there will be blessing on the remainder of the Gentiles.

Verses 9-10: *“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. ¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering.”*

The word “**then**” in verse 9 is significant. After the judgments of the Tribulation period, **then** the Lord will restore the nations, composed of all believers coming out of the Tribulation period. Unbelievers will be judged. Those who remain will be believers. They will be restored both morally (v9) and spiritually (v10).

The idea of a “pure language” (v9) does not mean that everyone will speak a new holy language. No, the idea is there will no longer be defiled speech. Worshipers from around the world will come to the New Jerusalem to worship the Lord (v10) from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. Isaiah 66:18 also mentioned this: *“It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues and they shall come and see My glory.”* Also Psalm 68:31: *“Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God.”*

What a wonderful time that will be! In the future, there will be a blessing on the remainder of Gentiles.

2. In the future, there will be blessing on the remnant of Israel.

In verse 10, the people coming up to the New Jerusalem during the days of the new kingdom will include the Jewish believers who were scattered among the nations. This is elaborated here in verses 11-20. Restored Israel will be a purged and purified people (v11). They will be a godly remnant of Jewish believers who are trusting in the Lord. Verses 12-13: *“I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. 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.”*

They will be secure and no longer have to fear (v13&16) and there will be no more disaster (v15). That certainly cannot be said today of Israel - but in a coming day, it will be true. It will be a time of great rejoicing, because the Lord Himself will be here and in the midst of Israel (v15&17)!

The re-gathering of Israel that's described in these verses should not be spiritualized! The Church is **not** the "new Israel"!! The "re-gathering of Israel" is **not** referring to people who are becoming Christians and are being "gathered into the Church" today. **No!** This prophecy refers to the **Jewish** people being **gathered back to the land of Israel**.

This is the re-gathering that is predicted in Deuteronomy 30:2-3 - *"And you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you."*

The return of the Jews to the secular state of Israel today is not the fulfillment of this prophecy. It is only a foretaste of what's to come in the future, when Israel not only returns to the Land but returns to the Lord of the Land. This will be the godly remnant of Israel - the "all Israel" of Romans 11:25-27, *"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."*

In the future, there will be blessing on the believing remnant of Israel.

Practical Application

Let's not forget the *other* meaning of the joy of the Lord.

When we talk about the joy of the Lord, what do we mean? Generally speaking, we mean the joy that the Lord gives us, and rightly so. Do you have that joy today? You can, because it's available for those who believe. If you're not a Christian, listen: if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him as your personal Savior, you will not only have forgiveness of sins (because He died for your sins), and you will not only have everlasting life (John 3:16), but you will also have the joy of the Lord!

The joy of the Lord is available even when you can't be happy because of difficult or devastating external circumstances. Don't mix up happiness and joy. There are times when we may not be happy, but we can still have the joy of the Lord. Why? Because we know the Lord is in control of all circumstances. **Nothing happens by chance!** In fact, it's the joy of

the Lord that can keep you going when times are tough. Nehemiah 8:10 says, “***The joy of the Lord is your strength.***” I trust that you have this joy of the Lord.

But there’s another side or another meaning to the joy of the Lord. It’s not only the joy that the Lord gives us, but it’s also ***the joy that we give Him*** – the joy that we bring to His heart. Luke 15:7 says, “*There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.*” As believers, we can bring joy to the heart of the Lord as we worship Him and serve Him. That’s the joy of the Lord that’s in view here in verse 17: “*The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*”

In the context as we’ve seen, this refers to the joy of the Lord when His people Israel return to Him and are gathered once again to worship Him in the Holy City - but it certainly has plenty of application for us today. Did you ever think of the Lord rejoicing over you - even singing or shouting for joy because of you? That’s the proper application from this chapter. Right now, the Lord is rejoicing over us because we are gathered together in His name. ***We are bringing joy to His heart!***

You may have come to church today out of duty, or to hear the message, or even to experience the joy of the Lord - but there’s more! You’re also bringing joy to the heart of our Lord by meeting together with other believers to worship Him and thank Him – and that’s the other meaning of “the joy of the Lord.”

Let’s not forget the *other* meaning of the joy of the Lord.