

ZEPHANIAH: GOD'S JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION

VII: God's Blessed Restoration Of The World

(Zephaniah 3:9-20)

I. Introduction

- A. Unlike the other Old Testament prophets, Zephaniah had a genealogy of four generations, so he was a man "of prominence and even of royalty." (B. K. C., O. T., p. 1523) He offered the prophetic view of the upper class.
- B. However, upper and lower class prophets **both** wrote of judgment and blessing for God's people in "the day of the Lord," a phrase Zephaniah used more often than any other prophet. (Ibid., p. 1524)
- C. In Zephaniah 3:9-20, God's prophet ended his prophecies of God's judgment on the world with predictions of His blessed restoration of the world in the Messianic Kingdom. We view that passage for our application:

II. God's Blessed Restoration Of The World, Zephaniah 3:9-20.

- A. In the Messianic Kingdom, God will restore the Gentile nations in blessing, Zephaniah 3:9-10:
 1. Zephaniah 3:9 begins with the Hebrew words *ki-az*, "because-then" (Bib. Heb., p. 954), introducing a **reason** for God's Zephaniah 3:8b destruction of the earth out of jealousy for the world's worship.
 2. Thus, at the start of the Messianic Kingdom in Zephaniah 3:9a, God will purify the lips of the world's nations, replacing a "once-defiled speech . . . perverted by the blasphemy of serving idols . . . for true worship" of Himself, Ibid. So, in addition to venting His wrath against mankind's universal idolatry as is taught in Zephaniah 3:8b, another purpose for God's sending the Great Tribulation on mankind will be to correct man's sin of idolatry, to turn the world from worshiping false gods to worship the one true Lord.
 3. The nations will thus call on God's name and serve Him unitedly, "shoulder to shoulder," Zeph. 3:9b NIV.
 4. After their conversion, the most distant of lands, represented here as Cush (southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia) that was the most distant to Zephaniah, will bring offerings to God in Jerusalem, v. 10.
- B. In the Messianic Kingdom, God will restore the nation Israel in blessing, Zephaniah 3:11-20:
 1. Israel will be regathered and purified, Zephaniah 3:11-13:
 - a. The nation will no longer have shame because of all her sins, for God will have removed from the city of Jerusalem those guilty of pride, Zephaniah 3:11.
 - b. In their place will be a meek and humble people who will trust in the name of the Lord, Zephaniah 3:12.
 - c. The saved remnant of Israel will not practice iniquity, speak lies or deceive with their speech, but they will find peace and security in righteousness, Zephaniah 3:13; Ibid.
 2. The nation will be greatly rejoicing in the Lord, Zephaniah 3:14.
 3. Israel will have the secure blessing of her Lord and King, Christ, ruling in her midst, Zephaniah 3:15a,b.
 4. The nation Israel will enjoy great national security, free from Gentile attackers, Zephaniah 3:15c-16.
 - a. Even Gentile nations that had once afflicted Israel will tell the people of Jerusalem not to fear, v. 16a.
 - b. The reference to hands hanging limp "picture despair through alarm and anxiety," but "Israel will lift her hands, symbolic of triumph, because of the Lord's presence . . . and power," v. 16b; Ibid., p. 1534.
 5. Israel will see the Lord rejoice over His people, singing as His people are under His blessing, Zeph. 3:17.
 6. The people of Israel will see many of their countrymen who were scattered and grieving over being unable to participate in the appointed feasts return to the land and their sorrows end when they no longer worship God at their feasts as a burden but rejoice in the privilege of worshiping God in Jerusalem, Zeph. 3:18.
 7. Israel will see God remove her foreign oppressors, gathering his scattered people and giving them "a favorable reputation" before the Gentile nations, Zephaniah 3:19; Ibid., p. 1534:
 8. The nation Israel will see God not only regather her to the Promised Land but grant her honor and praise among all the Gentiles of the earth, ending Israel's national captivity due to judgment for sin, Zeph. 3:20.

Lesson: Following God's severe judgment on the whole world during the Great Tribulation Period, the entire world, including Hebrews and Gentiles, will be transformed spiritually, and in place of sin and its consequential lack of blessings will be righteousness and abundant divine blessings.

Application: (1) Since God will exchange Israel's sense of burden at having to worship Him at Jerusalem's feasts for great joy for the privilege of doing so, since He will exchange Israel's arrogance for meekness, humility and trust in the name of the Lord, since He will exchange her dishonor before the Gentiles for honor upon her being cleansed from sin, may we today repent and confess our sins for blessing to escape God's painful discipline! (2) If we obey the Lord but we see others living in sin, like Zephaniah, may we hope in God's work to disciple them.