

Assurances and Joy For The Faithful

Lesson 3 – June 21, 2026

Bible Basis: Zephaniah 3:9-14, 20

Bible Truth: God's intervention was required to stop the people from rebelling and to return to the Lord with singing.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Sing O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem" (Zephaniah 3:14)*

Lesson AIM - Key Takeaways:

To help us understand how God moves His people from judgment to restoration, forming a humble, purified, and joyful community marked by His presence, His protection, and His transforming love.

Background:

Destruction was coming because Judah had forsaken the Lord. The people worshiped Baal, Milcom, and the starry hosts. Even the priests mixed heathen practices with faith in God. God's punishment for sin was on the way.

Although there had been occasional attempts at renewal, Judah had no sorrow for her sins. The people were prosperous and they no longer cared about God. God's demands for righteous living seemed irrelevant to Judah, whose security and wealth made her complacent.

In today's Lesson, we will see that the Day of judgment will also be a day of cheer. God will judge all those who mistreat his people. BUT He will purify his people, purging away all sin and evil. God will restore his people and give them hope.

Names that matter:

Zephaniah: Author, his name means "The Lord has hidden."

Occupation: Prophet of Judah during the reign of King Josiah

Home: Jerusalem

Family : Descendant of Hezekiah.

Last week we left off our lesson at chapter 8 where the LORD instructed the remnant to wait for Him, don't faint... that is after He's taken out His enemies. Today we start our lesson with hope and restoration.

LESSON: ZEPHANIAH 3:9-10

I. Purification of the Remnant

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.

What's Happening Here (v. 9)?

God promises to “restore pure lips” (or “pure speech”) to the peoples so they can call on His name and serve Him together.

This points to a future moment of divine transformation in which God purifies the speech of the nations. “Pure lips” symbolize sincere, truthful, and God-honoring worship—standing in stark contrast to the deceit, idolatry, and corrupted speech that marked Zephaniah's generation.

This act of restoration reflects God's plan to cleanse and unify His people, echoing a reversal of Babel's confusion (Genesis 11:1–9).

It also aligns with the prophetic imagery of Isaiah 6:5–7, where the prophet's lips are purified by a coal from the altar, enabling him to speak rightly before God.

Together, this reveals a vision of global worship renewed by God's cleansing power.

Teaching Point: God's plan has always included the nations — unity in worship is His goal.

Verse 10:

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

What's Happening Here (vs. 10)?

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers,”

- Cush refers to the region south of Egypt — roughly modern-day Sudan/Ethiopia.
- In the ancient world, this was considered the edge of the known earth.

- So God is saying:
“Even the people from the farthest places will come to worship Me.”
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1. The scattered people are returning

The daughter of My dispersed ones,

The phrase “My dispersed ones” or “My scattered people” refers to:

Israelites who were exiled –

This references us back to Isaiah 11:11 – *“It shall come to pass in that day the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar. From Hannah and the islands of the sea.*

Also **Isaiah 10:10** *“And it shall come to pass in that day the remnant of Israel, And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, Will never again depend on him who defeated them.*

Isaiah 10: 20-21. Those who remained faithful to God despite the horrors of the invasion are called the **remnant**.

2. Worship is being restored

They come bringing offerings — a sign of:

- Devotion
- Gratitude
- Reconciliation
- Renewed relationship

This is a joyful return of worship back to God.

3. The nations are included

This is not just about Israel.

It’s about Gentiles — ***people from the ends of the earth*** — joining in worship.

This fulfills the promise of verse 9:

“All of them may call on the name of the Lord.”

Who were these people? BEYOND THE RIVERS OF ETHIOPIA

Jeremiah 9:16a *“I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known.”*

*This describes God’s judgment through **exile**—a scattering of His people into foreign nations far beyond their familiar borders. The emphasis on “Gentiles whom neither they nor their fathers have known” highlights the severity of the dispersion: God would send them into lands completely unfamiliar, culturally distant, and spiritually foreign. This scattering fulfills covenant warnings (Deuteronomy 28:64) and underscores the consequences of persistent rebellion.*

Jeremiah 52:28-30 – there where 4600 Jews scattered during king Nebuchadnezzar reign.

Why This Verse Is Powerful

Zephaniah 3:10 shows God’s heart:

- He gathers the far away.
Distance doesn’t disqualify anyone.
- He restores the scattered.
No exile is too deep.
- He welcomes the nations.
God’s family is global.
- He rebuilds worship.
Not through fear, but through love.

Teaching Point: No one is too far for God to reach, restore, or bring home.

II. Blessings for Jerusalem (vs. 11-13)

11In 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.

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

13The 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.”

What's happening here (vs. 11)

1. God removes shame (v. 11)

"In that day you shall not be shamed..."

This is God saying:

- *"I'm removing the guilt of your past."*
- *"You won't live under the weight of what you did anymore."*

Why?

Because He is removing the **source** of their rebellion:

"I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride."

These were the arrogant, self-exalting leaders and influencers who encouraged sin. God is cleansing the community from the inside out.

Result:

No more pride.

No more rebellion.

No more shame.

Teaching Point: God restores identity by removing both sin and the shame attached to it.

2. God replaces the proud with the humble (v. 12)

"I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people..."

This phrase indicates a remnant that God will preserve among His people. Throughout the Old Testament, God often speaks of preserving a faithful remnant ([Isaiah 10:20-22](#), [Micah 5:7-8](#)).

This remnant view is crucial in understanding God's plan for Israel and His faithfulness to His covenant promises.

The vision of a remnant is also seen in the New Testament, where Paul speaks of a remnant chosen by grace ([Romans 11:5](#)).

This is a **new kind of community**:

- gentle
- teachable
- surrendered
- dependent on God

And the important part:

“They shall trust in the name of the Lord.”

This is the opposite of the earlier chapters where people trusted:

- their wealth
- their leaders
- their idols
- their own strength

Now their confidence is in God alone.

Teaching Point: God’s true people are not defined by power, but by humility and dependence.

3. God forms a remnant marked by righteousness and truth (v. 13)

This remnant:

- does no wrong
- speaks no lies
- has no deceitful tongue

This is a purified people — not perfect but transformed.

Their speech is healed (connecting back to vs. 3:9).

Their character is healed.

Their community is healed.

4. God gives them safety, rest, and peace (v. 13)

“They shall feed their flocks and lie down,
and no one shall make them afraid.”

This is covenant language — the picture of:

- **security**
- **rest**
- **shalom**
- **God’s protective presence**

Fear was a constant message earlier in the book.

Now God says:

“You will live without fear.”

Teaching Point: Restoration produces transformed character, not just changed circumstances.

III. Rejoicing for the Remnant (v. 14)

14Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

What’s Happening Here?

1. “Sing for joy, O Daughter of Zion”

- This call invites the people of Jerusalem—also called the *Daughter of Zion*—to break into joyful celebration. “Zion” is a cherished biblical name for Jerusalem, the spiritual center of Israel and the location of the Temple, where God’s presence dwelled among His people.
- The command to sing is more than an emotional outburst; it is a prophetic summons to worship in response to God’s coming restoration.
- Their joy reflects renewed hope, redeemed identity, and the assurance that God has acted faithfully on their behalf.

“Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart...”

- This line expands the invitation from Zion to *all Israel*, calling the entire covenant community into wholehearted celebration.

- The joy described here is not shallow or circumstantial — it is the deep, overflowing gladness that comes when God reverses judgment and restores His people.
- The command to rejoice “with all your heart” signals a complete renewal of hope.
- Israel is no longer defined by fear, failure, or exile; instead, they are invited into a future shaped by God’s mercy, presence, and faithful love.

Teaching Point: God’s joy over His people becomes the source of their joy.

IV. Restoration of the Remnant (v. 20)

20At 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.

What’s happening here? (v. 20)

1. The day of restoration

“At that time I will bring you in;”

This is referring the “the Day of the LORD” but not the judgment side. It’s the Restoration side. **Where God will:**

- purifying speech
- gathering the nations
- removing shame
- restoring the humble
- giving peace and safety

This return is:

- physical (back to the land)
- emotional (back to joy)
- spiritual (back to covenant relationship)

It is the undoing of everything judgment scattered.

Why this matters

The Day of the LORD is not just destruction — it is transformation.

So when the text says:

- “At that time you shall not be shamed...”
- “At that time I will deal with all who afflict you...”
- “At that time I will bring you back...”

...it is describing the healing, gathering, restoring side of the Day of the LORD.

- Same “day.” Different message.
- Same God. New outcome.

2. The absolute certainty of God’s promise

“Yes, at that time I will gather you.”

This repeated assurance reinforces the absolute certainty of God’s promise. Throughout Scripture, the act of gathering is a powerful pattern tied to God’s restoration of His people (Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 31:10).

It speaks not only of a physical return from dispersion but also of a deeper spiritual renewal marked by unity, healing, and restored identity.

In a broader biblical text, this gathering foreshadows the ultimate ingathering of all believers in Christ, where God’s redeemed people are brought together under His reign and restored to fellowship with Him.

3. God gives them honor before the nations

“For I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth...”

This promise of honor stands in sharp contrast to Israel’s former shame and exile.

It echoes God’s covenant with Abraham, in which Israel was destined to become a blessing and a testimony to the nations (Genesis 12:3).

Here, God reverses their humiliation by elevating them before the world as evidence of His faithfulness.

Theologically, this points toward the Messianic age, where God’s redeemed people share in the glory of Christ Himself (Ephesians 1:18), becoming living displays of His grace and restoration.

This is stunning.

The people who were once:

- mocked
- oppressed
- shamed
- scattered

...will now be **honored**.

Not because of their greatness, but because of **God's faithfulness**.

The nations will see what God has done and acknowledge His glory through His restored people.

4. God restores what was lost — visibly and personally

“When I return your captives before your eyes...”

This promise speaks first to the literal return of exiles, but it also carries the deeper symbolism of spiritual freedom.

God emphasizes that this restoration will be unmistakable—His people will witness His intervention with their own eyes.

This ties into message of redemption and deliverance, echoing the Exodus and ultimately finding its fulfillment in Christ's liberating work (Luke 4:18).

It is a reminder that God's salvation is both tangible and transformative, restoring what was lost and renewing His people from the inside out.

God is saying:

- *“You will see it happen.”*
- *“You will witness My faithfulness with your own eyes.”*
- *“What was taken from you, I will return.”*

It is restoration you can touch, feel, and celebrate.

5. God seals the promise with His own name

“Says the LORD.”

This closing declaration seals the promise with divine authority.

By invoking the covenant name *YHWH*, the text emphasizes God’s unwavering faithfulness and His binding commitment to His people.

It reminds us that this prophecy is not a human aspiration or wishful hope, but a guaranteed word from the covenant-keeping God whose character does not change and whose promises never fail.

This is the divine signature. The covenant stamp. The guarantee.

When God signs His name to a promise, it is unbreakable.

Teaching Point: God’s redemption turns shame into honor and loss into testimony.

Key takeaways

Zephaniah 3 reveals a sweeping movement from judgment to restoration: God confronts Jerusalem’s corruption and pride, announces a purifying judgment that prepares the way for renewal, and then promises to restore both Israel and the nations. He purifies speech, gathers His scattered people from even the farthest places, removes shame, and forms a humble remnant marked by truth, integrity, and trust. God replaces fear with peace, calls His people into joyful worship, deals with their enemies, heals their wounds, and restores their honor before the nations. The chapter ultimately shows a God who judges to cleanse, gathers to heal, and restores to display His faithfulness, turning shame into praise and scattering into joyful unity.