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Joy for the Faithful

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
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or Roget's Thesaurus – **June 19, 2016**

Zephaniah 3:9-14, 20

Introduction: Divine judgment is a recurring theme in the Bible. God's punishments, in fact, play a major role in Old Testament history, from the flood in Noah's time to Sodom and Gomorrah, to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Yet, in times of such judgment, God's grace shines brightly. Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8), and he and his family were delivered from the Flood that took the lives of everyone else on earth. Although God could **NOT find** even **ten people** in **Sodom** who were **righteous** (Gen 18 – 19), he graciously **spared** Lot and his family from the destruction that fell upon that wicked city.

Through the centuries, the Lord repeatedly **warned** his chosen people of the **consequences** of their **disobedience** to his **Law**. His gracious warnings were largely ignored. But, even when God's judgment on Judah and Jerusalem was imminent (near). He gave them a **FUTURE HOPE** beyond the coming judgment.

There is **always HOPE** because God is gracious. He freely offers us eternal life, peace, and assurance. He asks only that we **trust** and **obey** Him.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

Thought 1. Yahweh is the God of HOPE, which is based on his WORD, or it's isn't true hope.

Romans 15:13, Now the **GOD of HOPE** fill you with all **JOY** and **peace** **IN believing**, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Hope defined 1680, to anticipate, usually with pleasure); EXPECTATION.

Zephaniah 3:8-9, Therefore **WAIT** ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to **gather** the NATIONS, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them **mine indignation**, even all my **fierce anger**: for **ALL the earth** shall be devoured with the **FIRE** of my jealousy.

For then will I TURN TO the people a **pure (purified) language**, that they may ALL **call upon** the **name (authority)** of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

NOTE: For then - In the order of God's mercies. The **deliverance from Babylon** was the forerunner of that of the Gospel, which was its object. The spread of the Gospel then is spoken of in the connection of God's Providence (foresight, timely care) and plan, and time is overlooked. Its blessings are spoken of, as "then" given when the earnest (first fruits) was given, and the people, from whom according to the flesh **Christ** was to be **born**, were placed anew in the land where He was to be born. Lap.: "The prophet springs, as is his wont (accustomed), to Christ and the time of the **new law.**" And in Christ, **the End (goal)** of the **Law**, the **prophet** ends.

Romans 10:1-4, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might BE SAVED. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being **ignorant** of **God's righteousness**, and going about to establish their **own righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto the **righteousness of God**.

For Christ is the **end (goal)** of the law **for righteousness** to every one **that believeth**.

I will turn - Contrary to what they had before, "to the people," literally, "peoples," the nations of the earth, "**a pure language**," literally, "**a purified lip**." It is a real conversion, as was said of Saul at the beginning 1 Samuel 10:9; "God" (literally) "turned to him another heart." Before the dispersion of **Babel** the world was "of one lip," but that, IMPURE, for it was in rebellion against God. Now it shall be again of "one lip;" and that, "purified." The **purity** is of **faith** and of **life**, "that they way call upon the Name of the Lord," not as heretofore on idols, but that every tongue should confess the ONE TRUE God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in Whose **Name (authority)** they are **baptized**. This is purity of faith. To "call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus" Acts 22:16; Romans 10:13 is the very title of Christian worship; "all that called upon the Name" of Jesus, the very title of Christians Acts 9:14, Acts 9:21; 1 Corinthians 1:2. "To serve Him with one consent," literally, "with one shoulder," evenly, steadfastly, "**not unequally yoked**," but all with **united strength**, bearing Christ's "**EASY YOKE**" and "one another's burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ." This is purity of life. The fruit of the lips is the "sacrifice of praise" Hebrews 13:15.

God gave back **one pure language**, when, on the **Day of Pentecost**, the **Holy Spirit**, the Author of purity, came down in fiery tongues upon the Apostles, teaching them and guiding them "into the whole truth" John 16:13, and to "speak to every one in his own tongue, wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God" Acts 2:8, Acts 2:11. Thenceforth there was to be a **higher unity** than that of **outward language**. For **speech** is NOT the OUTER SOUND, **but the thoughts** which it conveys and embodies. The **inward thought** is the soul of the words. The outward confusion of Babel was to hinder oneness in evil and a worse confusion. At Pentecost, the **UNITY RESTORED** was **oneness of soul and heart**, wrought by One Spirit, whose gift is the one Faith and the one Hope of our calling, in the One Lord, in whom WE ARE ONE, grafted into the ONE BODY, by our baptism Eph. 4:3-6. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/zephaniah-3.html>)

Zephaniah 3:10, From beyond the rivers of **Ethiopia** my **suppliants (worshipper)**, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

NOTE: "The use of **Ethiopia** here is to include the most distant nations of all, Ethiopia being considered as far away as they could imagine."^[24] The dominion of Messiah is universal, with **no RACIAL** or **national distinctions** whatever.

...daughter of my dispersed ... "This expression often means the scattered people of Israel; but the parallels to Genesis 11 suggest that the scattered and confused peoples of the **world** are intended here."^[25] Here again, light from the New Testament clarifies the passage. James addressed the whole New Testament Church as "**The Twelve Tribes** in the **Dispersion**" (James 1:1, RSV).

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/zephaniah-3.html>)

Galatians 3:27-28, For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ. here is **neither Jew** nor **Greek (non-Jew)**, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all **ONE** IN Christ Jesus.

Zephaniah 3:11, In that day shalt thou **not be ashamed** for all thy **DOINGS**, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that **rejoice** in thy **pride**, and thou shalt **NO MORE** be **haughty** because of my holy mountain.

NOTE: ...not be ashamed for all thy doings... transgressed against me,... Because these shall not be continued in, but REPENTED OF, and forsaken; and, besides, shall be **forgiven, blotted out, covered, and remembered no more;** so that they shall not be charged with them, condemned for them, or be confounded before God, angels, and men, on account of them; not but that shame always arises from a true sense of sin; and the more, as it is beheld in the glass of **pardoning love,** which is a branch of true evangelical **repentance,** at least a fruit and evidence of it, Ezekiel 16:63 but then such are not ashamed to appear before God; but can with a **holy confidence stand in his sight,** their sins being pardoned, and their persons justified. This respects the Christian church or churches in Judea, **the few that believed in Christ,** called in a following verse the REMNANT of Israel Zephaniah 3:13, at the time when the generality of the people of the Jews rejected the Messiah, and their city and temple were destroyed, and the Lord turned the pure language of the Gospel to the Gentiles:

...take away out ... them that rejoice in thy pride; the Scribes and Pharisees, and those that adhered to them of the Jewish nation, who rejoiced in those things which that people generally prided themselves in and boasted of; their descent from Abraham; their observance of the rites and ceremonies of the law, and the **traditions of their elders,** and their external **legal righteousness;** and they rejoiced in their boastings of these things, which rejoicing was EVIL; and they, in the pride of their hearts, despised Christ and his righteousness, his Gospel, ordinances, and people, which were the things in which they transgressed against the Lord, and for which they were **taken away** by the **sword, famine, and pestilence,** at the **destruction of Jerusalem:** this is further explained by the next clause:

...shall no more be haughty because of mine holy mountain: the temple; or, "in" it; since it should now be destroyed: the Jews gloried in the temple, and behaved proudly and haughtily on the account of it; reckoned themselves secure, because of that; and trusted and gloried in the sacrifices there offered up, and the services there performed; see Jer. 7:4. (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/geb/zephaniah-3.html>)

Jeremiah 7:4-7, Trust ye NOT in **lying words,** saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. For if ye throughly **amend your ways** and **your doings;** if ye throughly execute **judgment (justice)** between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress NOT the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

Zephaniah 3:12, I will also leave in the midst of thee an **afflicted** and **POOR people,** and they shall TRUST in the **name (honor, authority, character)** of the LORD.

NOTE: The great thrust of the gospel is to "the poor" and the **"poor in spirit";** and the savage persecutions of the early ages of the church were plainly foretold in this prophetic description of the worldly status of God's true followers in the present age. Paul also testified that, "not many mighty ... not many noble were called" (1 Corinthians 1:26). In this is another great hallmark of Christianity and the entire Messianic age. The **humble** character of Christians is contrasted with the general attitude of un-regenerated men. "In contrast to the **proud** and **haughty revelers,** these will be **the afflicted** who have committed themselves to the Lord and are dependent upon his mercy." (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/zephaniah-3.html>)

Matthew 5:1-3, And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, **blessed (fortunate)** are the **poor (distressed)** in **spirit:** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:23-24, And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto **his disciples**, How hardly shall they that **HAVE riches ENTER** into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words.

But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, **how HARD** is it for **them** that **TRUST in riches** to **enter** into the kingdom of God!

Zephaniah 3:13, *The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, NOR speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall FEED and LIE DOWN, and none shall make them afraid.*

NOTE: It is only the "remnant" of Israel that is to have any portion in the kingdom of Messiah; yet, strangely enough, none of the old secular Israel is excluded. There was never any prohibition against all of secular Israel accepting their Messiah; but it is revealed in all the prophets that only "the remnant" **would choose** to participate.

"Lies ... deceitful tongue ..." God's once chosen people had developed the **art of falsehood** and **deceit** into a science in which they were skilled indeed. In utter amazement, Jesus Christ denominated Nathaniel as "an Israelite in whom there is no guile" (John 1:47), which, in context, appears to be an indictment of the whole nation charging them with the very sins mentioned here. **Honesty, straightforwardness, truth-speaking, and lack of deceit** are further hallmarks of Christianity.

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/zephaniah-3.html>)

Matthew 7:13-14, Enter ye in at the **strait (narrow)** gate: for **WIDE** is the gate, and **BROAD** is the way, that leadeth to **DESTRUCTION**, and **MANY** there be which go in thereat: Because **strait (narrow)** is the gate, and **narrow** is the way, which leadeth unto **life**, and **FEW** there be that **FIND IT**.

Zephaniah 3:14, *Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be GLAD and REJOICE with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.*

NOTE: The congregation of Zion, as the Targum; the church of Christ in **Gospel times**, which has great reason to sing and rejoice, because of the **coming of Christ**, redemption by him, and all other benefits and blessings of **grace**; because of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and the numbers of SOULS converted, both among JEWS and GENTILES; especially the church in the **latter day** is here called upon to sing for joy, when **the Jews WILL BE CONVERTED**; to which these words and what follow relate:

shout, O Israel; the ten tribes, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; which shall now return, and **ALL Israel shall be saved**, Romans 11:26 and therefore just cause of shouting, and of keeping a jubilee on that account:

...rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem; the metropolis of the TWO tribes; for now the children of Israel and of Judah shall be together, and seek the Lord their God, and the **TRUE MESSIAH**, and **find him**; and shall embrace him, profess and serve him; which will be matter of great joy; and this will be sincere and hearty, and devoid (empty) of **all hypocrisy**. Several terms are used, describing the people of the Jews, to comprehend them all; and several words to express **their joy**, in order to set forth the greatness of it, as their happy case would require; as follows...

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/geb/zephaniah-3.html>)

Zephaniah 3:15, *The Lord (Yahweh) hath taken away (turn off) thy judgments (punishment), he hath CAST OUT thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD (Yahweh), is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil ANY MORE.*

Thought 1. First, let's understand the "who" that hath taken away the punishment, etc. is Yahweh, God the Father. And since his Son, the Word, has a different name, this is NOT speaking about Jesus (Jehoshua).

Thought 2. Next, from the wording in the first part of Zephaniah 3:15, we know he's talking about the punishment that Israel suffered during the 70 years of captivity, etc. He goes on to say the enemy is "CAST OUT."

NOTE: At the end of 70 years of captivity in Babylon, **Cyrus, King of Persia**, will defeat Babylon and **allow** the **Jews** to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (*Jer. 29:10, Daniel 9:2, II Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-3, 5:13-14*).

Cyrus made the decree in 538 B.C.E. The building of the temple will begin 2 years later (*Ezra 3:8*) in 536 B.C.E.

The **temple** was **destroyed** in **586 B.C.E.** The temple was completed in the 6th year of the reign of **Darius**, King of Persia (*Ezra 6:14-15*). **This would make the completion take place in 516 B.C.E.**

From the time the temple was destroyed, to the time the temple was rebuilt, was **70 years.** (*After rejecting Jesus came*) **Worldwide captivity** and **return.** This period of time would end in **1948.** (Source: http://www.hebrews.com/lul7_8.html)

Thought 3. The last part of the verse says, "the king of Israel, even the LORD (Yahweh), is in the midst of thee: thou shalt NOT see evil ANY MORE." This part cannot be speaking of the time when the "Babylonian Captivity" ended because it says, they would NOT see evil anymore. As we know, they did see evil again when they rejected their Messiah, Jesus, and he was crucified! They went into worldwide captivity and returned in 1948. So, this part of the prophecy is referring to the time of the "new heaven and new earth" found in Rev. 21.

Revelation 21:1, And I saw a **NEW** heaven (sky, air) and a **NEW** earth: for the **first** heaven and the **first** earth were PASSED AWAY; and there was no more **sea.**

New defined 2537, new (especially in freshness [cleanness]).

Revelation 21:2-4, And I John saw the holy city, **NEW Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of **HEAVEN (the abode [home] of God)**, prepared **AS** a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the **tabernacle (habitation [RESIDENCE, house]) of GOD** is WITH MEN, and he will DWELL with them, and they shall be his people, and **GOD** himself shall be WITH THEM, and be their **God.** And **God** shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be NO more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are **PASSED AWAY.**

God defined 2316, the supreme [Highest] Divinity.

Thought 4. In agreement with Zephaniah 3:15, this is speaking of Yahweh, God the Father. In the beginning, Jesus (Jehoshua) was also "a God", like his Father. But, he's the SON of the "Highest."

John 1:1-2, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with **God (the supreme [Highest] Divinity)**, and the Word was **God (a deity [divine rank {position}])**. The same was in the beginning with **God the supreme [Highest] Divinity.**

Luke 1:32, He shall be great, and shall be called the **Son** of the **Highest (the Supreme God)...**

Thought 5. And even though, after his resurrection, Jesus is "a God" AGAIN, he is NOT, and never will be, the "Highest." To be even more clear, AFTER his Father raised him up from the dead, Jesus said that "Yahweh" is also his God.

John 20:17 ...go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto **MY Father**, and your Father; and to **MY GOD**, and **your God.**

Zephaniah 3:16-19, In THAT DAY it shall be said to **Jerusalem**, **Fear thou not:** and to **Zion**, Let NOT thine hands be **slack (faint)**. The LORD (Yahweh) thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will SAVE, he will **REJOICE over thee** with **JOY**; he will **REST** in his love, he will joy over thee with **singing**.

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time **I will undo (execute) ALL** that **afflict thee:** and I will **save her that halteth (limp)**, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and **FAME** in every land where they have been put to shame.

NOTE: He will joy over thee with singing - The conversion of the Jews will be a subject of peculiar delight and exultation to **God (the supreme [Highest] Divinity)** himself! There will be a more than ordinary joy in heaven, when the Jews return to God through Christ. This event cannot be at a great distance; they are as wretched and as ungodly as they can well be. The arms of Christians are open to receive them; and all things are now ready!

I will gather - sorrowful - This may refer to those who, during the captivity, **mourned** for their former religious assemblies; and who were reproached by their enemies, because they could not enjoy their religious solemnities. See Psalm 137:1-9; : "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, **we WEPT**, when we remembered Zion. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a SONG," etc.

I wilt unto all that afflict thee - They who have **PERSECUTED you** shall **be punished** for it. It shows much malignity (disposition [frame of mind] to do evil) and baseness (lowness, meanness) of mind, to afflict or reproach those who are lying under the chastising hand of God. This was the conduct of the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, when the Jews were in adversity; and **how severely did the Lord punish them** for it! And he gave this as the reason for the severity of the punishment.

2 Thessalonians 1:6, Seeing it is a **righteous thing** with God to **recompense (repay)** TRIBULATION to them that trouble you...

And gather her that was driven out - By captivity. The reference may be to renewing the covenant with the Jews, who were considered as an unfaithful spouse divorced by her husband. I will bring her back to my house.

I will get them PRAISE and fame in every land - They shall become a great, a good, and a useful people. And as they are now a proverb of reproach (shame, disgrace), full of base (low, worthless) wiles (trick or stratagem practiced for ensnaring or deception) and degrading selfishness, they shall lose this character, and **be totally changed**; and they shall be as **eminent** (elevated, remarkable) for excellence, as they were before for **baseness** (vileness [extreme wickedness]) in those countries where they had sojourned. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/zephaniah-3.html>)

Zephaniah 3:20, At THAT TIME will I **BRING YOU** again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make YOU a **name** and a **praise** among **ALL** people of the earth, when **I turn back your captivity** before your eyes, saith the LORD (Yahweh).

NOTE At that time will I bring you in - that is, into the **ONE fold**, the **ONE Church**, the ONE "Household of God, even in the time that I gather you." "That time" is the whole time of the Gospel; the ONE "day of salvation," in which all who shall ever be gathered, shall be brought into the **new Jerusalem**. These words were fulfilled, when, at our Lord's first Coming, the remnant, the true Israel, those "ordained to eternal life" were brought in. It shall be fulfilled again, when "the **FULLNESS of the Gentiles** shall be "COME IN," and so **ALL Israel shall be saved**" Romans 11:25-26. It shall most perfectly be fulfilled at the end, when there shall be NO going out of those once "brought" in, and those who have gathered others into the Church, shall be "a **NAME** and a **PRAISE** among all people of the earth," those whom God hath "**redeemed out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation**" Revelation 5:9, shining like stars forever and ever.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/zephaniah-3.html>)