

May 3, 2020

“Prophesying Restoration”
Lesson 1 of Unit

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Intro

Zephaniah was a prophet in the 7th Century BC, probably a descendent of King Hezekiah. This background would help him understand the importance of leadership, and what its absence could do to Israel.

Zephaniah is writing before the nation was carried away to Babylon. Rather than the warnings that occur earlier in the book, today's passage is dealing with God's restoration of that remnant that have sought Him. It is a celebration of the end of captivity.

Read Zephaniah 3:14-20

1. What things does God tell Zion / Israel to do in vs. 14? What is our usual mood when we do these things? What does that suggest about what is going on in the people's lives?
2. What is one specific way God has cared for you in the past? Perhaps a song of gratitude for God would be appropriate at this moment!
3. The terms “Daughter” and “Israel” in vs. 14 are used as endearments, as loving expressions. Who might God be saying this to? (What have these people done for God to use such endearing terms with them?)
4. What was the punishment he gave which vs. 15 is referring to, and what was its purpose? Why does God take away the punishment he gave to Israel for their disobedience?
5. How and why would “The Lord...is with you” from vs.15b be encouraging to the people?

6. Does the last part of vs. 15 mean that nothing bad will happen to the remnant people again? Why or why not?

7. In vs. 16a, what does the phrase “In that day” seem to suggest about the timing of what happens in vs. 14-15? Why might God have used that phrase?

8. Read Is. 35:3-4. What does the image of limp hands in vs.16b seem to suggest?

9. In vs. 17, what reason does God give the people not to be afraid? What image of God might help the people here?

10. What two ways does God show His love toward His people in vs. 17?

11. Verse 18 has given translators some challenges. Who appears to be being removed and why? What might that suggest about these removed people? What is it that is causing the burden, the reproach? (Feel free to use any resources you have to find some answers for these. This would have been a great area of discussion if we were together!)

12. Verse 19 deals with some specific elements of God displaying justice. What specific things will He do? How do these actions show God’s justice?

13. What phrase is repeated in vs. 19-20? How and why is God going to do this for the restored people?

Application: This passage reminds us that God is the one who corrects, and He is the one who restores. Today's verses should also remind us of Jesus, and the truth that His death and resurrection allowed us a restored relationship with God. We eagerly await "that day" when God sets all things right for eternity. In the meantime, we are reminded by Paul that "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Prayer: Father God, thank You for the way You care for us. Help us to see the ways You are present in our lives, and the ways You are restoring Your kingdom in us and around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.