



Lesson 10 May 2nd, 2020

A Vision of Restoration

Study Scripture – Zephaniah 3:14-20

Background Scripture – Zephaniah 1-3

Key Verse:

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.

Zephaniah 3:19

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had a toothache or some problem that made you suffer and which would not go away? Have you ever been in a situation when you ate a piece of fish that tasted so good but a little bone got stuck in your throat and you tried to get it out but couldn't? You knew that you should not have swallowed that piece of fish so fast without checking carefully for bones. Your parents had warned you over and over again to be careful what you do.

How would you feel if you tried and tried to get out of this terrible trouble but you failed and you felt that hope is **scarce**?

How would you feel if when you are in this situation someone crashed into the middle of your life and made you know that he or she was there to help?

How would you respond to this offer?

How would you feel?

Would you reject the offer or would you welcome your Saviour with open arms?

But some people would be so embarrassed and pretend that they didn't want the help trying to pretend that they could get the bone out of their throat by themselves.

Well, some people in the nation of Israel found themselves into a bad position from which they could not save themselves and a prophet named Zephaniah came to them in the midst of their trouble and gave them some guarantees that God would make His presence known and God's presence would bring both judgment and joy.

They had made a bad mistake and because of that there would be distress and gloom. There would be much pain.

But God, even though He would allow pain to come to them because of their sins and misbehaviours He was so kind and loving that even though they had made mistakes which had brought trouble to them God had made a resolution to save His people and rescue them.

So we see two important aspects of God's nature. When you do wrong and do not follow His commandments there would be a time of trouble which will be more painful than a toothache or a fish bone stuck in your throat which you cannot get out. This will always happen because of God's divine judgment for the sins of the people, the rulers, and the priests or preachers and pastors.

But God knows that we cannot stand this kind of trouble for too long and so He promised to call on us so that with His presence we will have joy and a great celebration.

God promised Israel that the time would come when there would be an arrival of God's presence bringing celebration and joy, reversing judgment and bringing in massive amount of mercy that would lead to a new life. So we read in our Study Scripture there would be a time of singing and great happiness when God's presence was there. Verses 14 to 15 tells us:

***“Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem.
The LORD has taken away your judgments,
H has cast out your enemy
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst.
You shall see disaster no more.”***

So now God will bring joy and happiness to His people.

There will be no more punishment, no enemies to abuse them and there will be no disasters. There will be no troubling things like toothaches, bones stuck in their throat that they cannot get rid of, and people mocking them.

The reason for this is because God will be right there in the middle of everything. He will be beside them.

Remember now that we too are children of God. We are God's people. So even though we will have some trouble and heartache and some punishment when we do not follow the Commandments of God there will be a time when God will come and be right there in the middle with us and He will protect us.

What is even nicer is that the prophet Zephaniah told them that not only would they rejoice, celebrate, sing, and do a lot of the things that happy people do when God renews them in His



love, but God would not only save them but the Mighty God would rejoice with them and will even join in singing with them.

So the people of Israel had something magnificent to look forward to. The presence of God would make sure that they would not be afraid of anything. He would bring justice. God would help the poor. He would bring together with Him those that the people had thrown out. God would save the people who were lame and suffering. God would change things so that they would not be ashamed but everybody all over the Earth would praise them.

And best of all God would join them in singing with them and celebrating with them.

So ask yourself the question, what would happen when God interrupted the problems in your life? How would your world change?

What are you afraid of that you want God to take away from you?

Are you facing some injustice like bullying?

Are some people not treating you right and giving you what you deserve?

Hope is not scarce.

The Day of the Lord will bring joy and it will be a time of celebration for all of us who accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour and let Him give us the power we need and lead us in following the Commandments of God.

