

Zephaniah 3:7-15, 20

The subject of this Haftarah is the holiness of the camp, instructions for which are in the torah reading in Numbers 5.

Jerusalem here is reproached as unholy - rebellious, polluted and full of oppression, disobedient to God and neglectful of His word.

Zephaniah 3:7 - "I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings."

NET has it slightly different:

NET - "I thought, 'Certainly you will respect me! Now you will accept correction!' If she had done so, her home would not be destroyed by all the punishments I have threatened. But they eagerly sinned in everything they did."

Septuagint: "I said, [if you would] only fear me, [then] thou wilt receive ye discipline/ correction"

"their dwelling" = Jerusalem

"howsoever I punished them" - Rashi has instead, "all that I ordained upon her": And all the good that I ordained to bring upon her shall not be cut off from her. -

"all which I committed to them"; the oracles of God, his word and ordinances, his promises, and the blessings of his goodness.

The Targum is, "all the good things which I have said unto them (or promised them), I will bring unto them"

Zephaniah 3:8 - "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."

The "You" He is calling to wait is the faithful remnant mentioned in **Zephaniah 2:3**

Rabbi David Kimchi (1160–1235) says this speaks about the armies of Gog and Magog. But...

Rashi - Therefore, wait for Me, says the Lord, for the day that I will rise up to meet [with you].

or, till I rise "up for a testimony", or witness (as in LXX) of Christ's being the true

Messiah. It could also be translated "forever" or "once and for all."

This means the Resurrection.

The Babylonian destruction here is merged with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, and the "whole earth" = *eretz* - "land" was devoured by the fire of God's jealousy.

- **Matthew 23:37-38** - "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Look, your house is left to you desolate."

Paul addressed this, perhaps recalling this very verse, speaking of the Jews:

- **1 Thessalonians 2:15-16** - "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

Of course this could have a further prophetic, apocalyptic meaning too. "The words seem to be purposely enlarged, that they may embrace other judgments of God also." - *Barnes' Notes*

- See **Zechariah 14:2** - "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." And **Joel 3:9-16**

Zephaniah 3:9 - "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."

"Consent" here means "shoulder in Hebrew, meaning all will "shoulder" together any burden or work of God, a metaphor that means "with unity of mind."

1 Corinthians 1:10 - "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

This is the opposite of the division of languages and the scattering of the people at the Tower of Babel.

In fact, the thing the Tower builders were striving for - to "make a name" for themselves - is part of what God promises his faithful returning from exile (see **Zephaniah 3:20** below)

"a pure lip" - When the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the confusion of languages that began at the Tower of Babel was reversed spiritually - the disciples

speaking in tongues reflected a new unity beyond language and ethnic groupings - no longer Jew or Greek...

The "pure" language was one that had forsaken idolatry.

Restoration

Both Jew and Gentile are pictured worshipping God in holiness and unity.

Zephaniah 3:12-13 - "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. 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."

This is the fulfillment of the commandments for holiness in the camp described in Numbers 5. But it is accomplished in an unusual way - not by self-effort of striving for our own righteousness.

Zephaniah 3:15 - "The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

Targum, Aben Ezra and Jerome: "thou shalt not be afraid from before evil any more."

- **Galatians 3:13** - "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us."

The indwelling Christ becomes our righteousness, and his presence guards and protects the holiness of the camp.

- **John 12:31** - "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

- **Colossians 1:27** - "...Christ in you, the hope of glory"

- **Revelation 21:3** - "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle 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."

The last verse of the Haftarah:

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."

Spiritual captivity and bondage, exile from the truth and from God, will end.