

# Zephaniah 3:17 Commentary

PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT Zeph 1:1-3:8				PROPHECIES OF BLESSING Zeph 3:9-20	
JUDGMENT IN THE DAY OF THE LORD				SALVATION IN THE DAY OF THE LORD	
DAY OF WRATH & ANGER				DAY OF JOY	
JUDGMENT ON JUDAH				RESTORATION FOR JUDAH	
Judgment & Doom				Joy & Deliverance	
Divine Judgment on Judah Zeph 1:1-18		Invitation to Judah Zeph 2:1-3	Sure Doom of Nations Zeph 2:4-15	Sure Doom of Jerusalem Zeph 3:1-8	Kingdom Promises to Remnant Zeph 3:9-20
JUDAH			NATIONS		REMNANT
God's Wrath on Judah			God's Woes on Nations		God's Will for Remnant
Sin		Hope	Desolation		Restoration
KEY WORD: "The Day of the LORD" Zeph 1:7, 14 See key words & marking key words		KEY WORD: "Seek the LORD" Zeph 2:3	KEY WORD: "Woe" Zeph 2:5, 3:1		KEY WORD: "The LORD is with you" Zeph 3:15NIV, Zeph 3:17NIV
Sin		Offer of Salvation	>>>		Salvation
"I will utterly consume" Zeph 1:2KJV					"I will save" Zeph 3:19KJV
Key Verses: Zeph 1:4, Zeph 2:3 Judgment: Zeph 1:14-18 Restoration: Zeph 3:14-17					
Theme: Judgment and doom are certain unless there is repentance. Only repentance will bring hope and restoration. Time: 630BC (640-612) To: Judah & the Nations					

**Background:** To accurately interpret the famous passage in Zephaniah 3:17, we must first take a moment to examine the **context**, for context is "king" regarding accurate **Interpretation**.

**When was Zephaniah written?** [Zephaniah](#) prophesied during the reign of [godly King Josiah](#) (640-609BC), most likely in the latter portion of his reign (between 640-630BC). Others suggest that Zephaniah's prophecy occurred earlier were a significant influence of the godly actions of King Josiah who became king in 632BC at age 16, when "he began to seek the God of his father David and in the twelfth year (age 20, 628BC) he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the [high places](#), the [Asherim](#), the carved images, and the molten images (idolatry)" (2Chr 34:3). "In the eighteenth year of his reign (age 26, 622BC), when he had purged the land and the house" (2Chr 34:8), the book of the was discovered in the house of the LORD (2Chr 34:14) which led to significant reforms which lasted for only a short time (For more excellent historical background read 2Ki 22:1-23:30, 2Chr 34:1-35:27). Recall that the Northern 10 Tribes (often referred to as "Israel") had fallen and been taken into exile by [Assyria](#) in 722BC, over a century before the fall of Judah and Jerusalem (586BC) of which Zephaniah prophesied. Zephaniah also prophesied the destruction of [Nineveh](#) (Zeph 2:13) which occurred in 612BC. (For more on the historical setting of Zephaniah read 2Ki 22:1-23:30, 2Chr 34:1-35:27)

**MacDonald** - Believing scholars are divided as to whether he wrote before or after the great revival of 621 B.C. If before, his prophecy likely helped bring about the spiritual awakening. But several details, such as quoting the newly rediscovered law, would suggest a date after 621. Since Zephaniah 2:13 shows that Nineveh was still standing, a date before that city's destruction in 612 B.C. is called for. Hence the book was probably written between 621 and 612 B.C. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**By Whom?** Zephaniah (Zeph 1:1 note genealogy goes back to godly king Hezekiah). His name means "**Jehovah has hidden**" (sheltered, concealed, treasured, stored up). One writer suggests that the idea of hidden derives from the fact that he was likely born to godly parents in the time of [Manasseh's](#) evil rule during which he "shed very much innocent blood." (2Ki 21:16).

**To Whom?** Judah and Jerusalem (Zeph 1:4) Although the immediate audience was Jewish, clearly the truths of this prophecy (especially in Zeph 3:9-20) are applicable to every believer of every age whether Jew or Gentile. As **John Piper** reminds us "even though the amazing promises of this section relate most directly to the converted and restored people of Israel (Zeph 3:10 **Ed**: "dispersed one" - see notes below), nevertheless it is a necessary implication of the prophecy that the blessings promised flow out beyond the bounds of Israel and include us who through faith in Christ become Abraham's seed and heirs of the promise (Galatians 3:29). ([The Lord Will Rejoice over You](#))

**What is the structure?** In very general terms, from the preceding chart it is clear that most of the book deals with judgment (Zeph 1:1-3:8), but even in the midst of these "earth shaking" prophecies of God's righteous wrath against Judah, there is a beautiful prophecy of future restoration, a prophecy that will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of the Messiah, Who alone is Mighty to Save the believing remnant of the Chosen People.

**What are the Key Words or Key Phrases in Zephaniah** (**See** key words & marking key words)

- **Day of the Lord** (see **another discussion of this Day**),
- **remnant** (Zeph 1:4, 2:7, 9, 3:13, cf Zeph 3:12 "I will leave" - see notes below),
- **nations** (plural - Zeph 2:11, 3:6, 8),
- **destruction/destroy** (Zeph 1:15, 2:5, 13),
- **desolate/desolation** (Zeph 1:13,15, 2:4, 9, 13, 14, 15, 3:6),
- **midst** (Zeph 2:14, 3:11, 15, 17),
- **Woe** (Zeph 2:5, 3:1),
- **Seek** (Zeph 2:3),
- **Anger** (Zeph 2:2, 3, 3:8),
- **Wrath** (Zeph 1:15, 18),
- **Indignation** (Zeph 3:8);
- **Gather** (Zeph 2:1, 3:8, 18, 19, 20);
- **Earth** (Zeph 1:2, 3, 18, 2:3, 11, 3:8, 19, 20).

**Why? What is Zephaniah's purpose?** Given the fact that Zephaniah mentions the **Day of the Lord** (see **another discussion of this Day**) Day of the Lord more than any other OT book, clearly this is a key subject. That Day begins with prophecies of great destruction, not only involving Judah, but eventually involving the entire earth (cf Zeph 1:1, 4, 1:18, 2:10). Zephaniah stated that the Day of the LORD was "near" (Zeph 1:14), would be a time of wrath, trouble, distress, etc, (see full description in Zeph 1:15-16) and would come as judgment on sin against Jehovah (Zeph 1:17), but that it would be followed by blessing of His very presence in the midst of His people (Zeph 3:17). (See [Theology of Zephaniah in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

"If anyone wishes all the secret oracles of the prophets to be given in a brief compendium, let him read through this brief Zephaniah."—Martin Bucer (1528)

**Outline - from William MacDonald**

## **I. GOD'S DETERMINATION TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT (Zephaniah 1)**

- A. On All the Earth (Zeph 1:1-3)
- B. On Judah and Jerusalem because of Idolatry (Zeph 1:4-6)
- C. The Day of the Lord under the Figure of a Sacrifice (Zeph 1:7-13)
  1. Guests-Judah's Enemies (Zeph 1:7)
  2. Victims-Wicked People of Judah (Zeph 1:8-13)
- D. The Terror of the Day of the Lord (Zeph 1:14-18)

## II. JUDAH IS CALLED TO REPENT (Zeph 2:1–3)

## III. THE DOOM OF GENTILE NATIONS (Zeph 2:4–15)

- A. The Philistines (Zeph 2:4–7)
- B. The Moabites and Ammonites (Zeph 2:8–11)
- C. The Ethiopians (Zeph 2:12)
- D. The Assyrians and Especially the City of Nineveh (Zeph 2:13–15)

## IV. WOE PRONOUNCED ON JERUSALEM (Zeph 3:1–7)

- A. Disobedience, Unresponsiveness, Unbelief, Impenitence (Zeph 3:1, 2)
- B. Greed of the Princes and the Judges (Zeph 3:3)
- C. Levity and Treachery of the Prophets and Sacrilege of the Priests (Zeph 3:4)
- D. The Lord's Presence in Judgment (Zeph 3:5–7)

## V. MESSAGE OF COMFORT TO THE FAITHFUL REMNANT (Zeph 3:8–20)

- A. Destruction of Wicked Gentiles (Zeph 3:8)
- B. Conversion of the Remaining Nations (Zeph 3:9)
- C. Restoration of Dispersed Israel (Zeph 3:10–13)
- D. Rejoicing over the Second Advent of Christ (Zeph 3:14–17)
- E. What God Will Do for His People (Zeph 3:18–20)

### A FUTURE AND

### A HOPE

(Jer 29:11)

**Warren Wiersbe** explains why the Jewish prophets consistently ended their books with a message of hope for the people of Israel...

(1) **To begin with**, hope is a great motivation for obedience, and the prophets wanted to encourage God's people to submit to God's will and do what He commanded. God's covenant blessings come to His people only when they obey His covenant conditions.

(2) **A second reason** is the prophets' emphasis on the faithfulness of God. The Lord will keep His promises and one day establish the kingdom (**Ed**: This question was ever in the heart of every pious Jew - Acts 1:6, cf the prayer in Mt 6:10-note, Lk 11:2); and since God is faithful to keep His promises (1Cor 1:9, 10:13-note, 2Cor 1:18, 2Th 3:3, Heb 10:23-note), we ought to be faithful obeying His Word. If we obey, God will be faithful to chasten; if we confess, He will be faithful to forgive (1Jn 1:9-note).

(3) **Finally**, the closing message of hope was an encouragement to the **faithful remnant** in the land, who were true to God and suffered because of their devotion to Him (**Ed**: God always has His "7000" who have not bowed to Baal [Ro 11:4-note], cf Simeon - Lk 2:25 and Anna - Lk 2:36, 37, 38). It's difficult to belong to that "company of the committed" who stand true to the Lord and His Word no matter what others may do or say. Knowing that God would one day defeat their enemies and reign in righteousness would encourage the believing remnant to persist in their faithful walk with the Lord. (**Be Concerned**)

### DIVINE WRATH

### CONSUMMATED

ZEPHANIAH 3:8

Zeph 3:8 "Therefore **wait** for Me," declares the LORD, "For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.

**Wait for Me** - Jehovah issues a command to **wait**, but the question is "**To Whom?**" While we cannot be definitive, in the context it could be those who seek righteousness and humility in Zeph 2:1-3. The fact that Jehovah will exert His sovereign power to "gather nations, to assemble kingdoms" (cf repeated allusions to the global aspect of this prophecy - Zeph 1:2, 3, 18, 2:3, 11, 3:8, 19, 20) clearly requires a future fulfillment and parallels John's description of the gathering of the nations of the world at [Armageddon \(see discussion of this campaign\)](#), in preparation for the final great conflict (see Rev 16:14-16-note). Notice the vivid synonyms that describe the LORD's attitude in "**the day**" - indignation, anger, (zealous) fire. This Day of Jehovah will have a two-fold effect, bringing judgment on the nations that have rejected His gracious offer of eternal life in Christ (and for their treatment of Israel - see Joel 3:2b) and purification for the **God fearing remnant** (cp Ro 11:26-27-note).

**NET Note** - The second person verb form ("*you must wait patiently*") is masculine plural, indicating that a group is being addressed. Perhaps the humble individuals addressed earlier (see Zech 2:3) are in view. Because of Jerusalem's sin, they must patiently wait for judgment to pass before their vindication arrives.

**For - term of explanation. What is he explaining?** He is explaining why they must wait. They must be patient for the day when Jesus avenges His cause.

**The day when I rise up** - When is this day? The context helps us, explaining that it will be a day when Jehovah gathers nations and assembles kingdoms and that this would involve the entire earth. This is clearly at the Second Coming of Jesus.

**John MacArthur** - The prophet transitions from the historical invasion of Judah by Babylon to the future day of the Lord. He speaks of the **Great Tribulation**, when the LORD will gather all the nations for judgment (cf. Joel 3:1-2 ["For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, "I will gather the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land."], Joel 3:12-17; Zec 12:2, 3; 14:2; Mt 24:21). The **faithful remnant**, presumably the meek of Zeph 2:1-3, are exhorted to **wait** in trust for Him to carry out His judgment. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Witness** (Lxx = marturion/martyrion - see **martureo**) - This is a description of Jehovah testifying or taking the witness stand (so to speak) against His enemies, a concept of which is common in the Old Testament (Mic 1:2; Mal 3:5; Jer 29:23). Some versions like ESV render the Hebrew here as plunder or seize, picturing the LORD avenging Himself against His enemies.

**To pour out on them** - Who is **them**? In context them signifies the **nations** and **kingdoms**, in short the Gentiles.

As noted in the table above Zephaniah 1:1-3:8 prophesies darkness and gloom associated with the **Day of the LORD** when God pours out His wrath on Judah and Jerusalem and then on the entire world. Zephaniah 3:8 is in a sense the climax of the pouring of His wrath, after which the tone changes to one of hope and restoration for those who place their faith in the Messiah, both Jews and Gentiles. As Matthew Henry says Zephaniah 3:9-20 propounds "precious promises...to the people of God, for the banishing of their griefs and fears and the encouraging of their hopes and joys."

**Zeal** (07068)(**qin'ah**) means ardor, zeal, jealousy. Zephaniah 1:18 uses this same word describing the time when "all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His **jealousy**."z

**Qin'ah** - 41v - Nu 5:14f, 18, 25, 29f; 25:11; Deut 29:20; 2Kgs 10:16; 19:31; Job 5:2; Ps 69:9; 79:5; 119:139; Prov 6:34; 14:30; 27:4; Eccl 4:4; 9:6; Song 8:6; Isa 9:7; 11:13; 26:11; 37:32; 42:13; 59:17; 63:15; Ezek 5:13; 8:3, 5; 16:38, 42; 23:25; 35:11; 36:5f; 38:19; Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Zech 1:14; 8:2. **NAS Usage:** anger(1), envy(1), jealousy(24), passion(1), rivalry(1), zeal(14).

## DIVINE RESTORATION COMPLETED ZEPHANIAH 3:9-20

**Zeph 3:9 "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the Name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.**

**For then:** Note the conjunction "**then**" which is a strategic **expression of time** -- always be alert to this word asking "**What happens then?**," or "**When is then?**", etc, especially in prophetic passages. **Then** often (usually) marks some event next in the order of time and thus helps establish sequence of prophetic events. In this case, the dark times of God's judgment (Zeph 3:8), will give way to a new day, a new age for mankind, as Jehovah promises a great conversion at His Second Coming.

**The peoples** - The phrase "**the peoples**" describes the believing "remnant" of Gentiles who will be blessed during this time of restoration. So even though Zeph 1:2-3 says the wicked of the world would be cut off, not all be cut off. While Zephaniah is primarily addressing the Chosen People, the Gentiles are in no way excluded from this glorious time of restoration which will ultimately be consummated in the **Millennial Reign of the Messiah on earth**.

**ESV Study Bible** - God the judge is also God the gracious. He intends that the nations (**Ed**: The Gentiles) should turn to him (Zeph 3:9-10), as well as His own people (**Ed**: Referring to those in Israel who turn to Him) (Zeph 3:11-13).

**Give** (NAS translation) is not the best translation of this Hebrew word (haphak) which is a word (ESV = "I will change") which describes a turning around, a turning away, a transformation, total change, this turn being manifest not as a slow, progressive change, but as a sudden, radical break with the past (compare repentance - **metanoia**). The **Septuagint** translates haphak with the verb **metastrepho** which means to turn around, to cause something to change in its state or condition, as in turning something to its opposite state. In this case unregenerate men and women are given the gift of regeneration, the gift of new hearts (cf God's promises in Ezek 11:19-note, Ezek 18:31, Ezek 36:26-27-note)! In short this clearly describes conversion of the Gentiles by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9-note)!

**I will give them purified lips** speaks of them being born again (regenerated, entering into the New Covenant) for out of the mouth comes that which fills the heart (Mt 12:34-37, Lk 6:45, cf Isaiah 6:5-note, Hos 2:17). The only way to have **purified lips** is to have a purified ("**circumcised**") heart!

**Call on the Name of the LORD** - This is something only someone with a "new heart" would even desire to do, for no man seeks after God (see Ro 3:11-note, cf Ro 8:7-note, Isa 9:13-note, Isa 31:1, see also Ge 4:26; 1Ki 18:24; Jer. 10:25; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Ro 10:12, 13)

**Shoulder to shoulder** - It is interesting that the Lxx uses the noun **zugos**, which is strictly speaking a crossbeam, the yoke that was used to control two working oxen who worked best when they pulled in unison. Beloved, this phrase is a beautiful picture of the coming day when born again Jews and Gentiles will worship and serve the Messiah side by side, in one accord. Oh, what a glorious day it will be! Maranatha!

**Zeph 3:10 "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My dispersed ones will bring My offerings.**

**My dispersed ones** - Could refer to either Gentiles throughout the world or the Diaspora, the dispersion of the Jews, or both.

**My worshipers**: Born again Jews and Gentiles

**Comment**: The truth of God's offer of redemption to both Jews and Gentiles is seen in a number of other Old Testament passages (Isaiah 2:2-4-note; Micah 4:1-4-note; Isaiah 11:9-note; Isaiah 19:23-25; 49:5-6)

**Offerings (minhâh)** refers to voluntary "gift" offerings (cf. Lev. 2) which is made over an above the regular offerings and thus is expressive of deep gratitude to God.

**Zeph 3:11 "In that day you will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me; for then I will remove from your midst your proud, exulting ones, and you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain.**

**In that day** - **Pause, ponder and query this expression of time**. **In that day**, in context the **day** when Messiah returns to turn an upside down world, right side up! In short, the **Day of the Lord**!

**You will feel no shame** - While this could refer to both Jews and Gentiles, the reference to "My holy mountain" might favor this as reference primarily to the Jews who come to faith in Messiah.

**For then** - Pause and ponder and query this **expression of time**.

**I will remove from your midst your proud**- See Isa 2:12-18.

exulting...haughty - Israel had the Law and yet choose to rebel.

**My holy mountain** - The central, most strategic and important site of the world in that day, the place where Messiah rules and reigns His kingdom in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4-note; Micah 4:1-4-note; Isaiah 11:9-note).

**Zeph 3:12 "But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the LORD."**

**I will leave** (a remnant) ([07604](#))(**sha'ar**) means to remain, be left over. Lxx = hupoleipo = to leave remaining, leave behind or be left behind. Clearly this Hebrew verb **shaar** speaks of the **remnant**, and in this verse does refer to the believing Jewish remnant. Three times Zephaniah speaks of a remnant being saved (Zeph 2:3, 2:7, 3:12-13) and twice he mentions their return from captivity (Zeph 2:7, 3:20).

**A humble and lowly people** - In contrast to the proud, exulting...haughty in Zeph 3:11.

(Jas 4:6) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

**Humble** ("afflicted" KJV)([06041](#))(**ani** from **anah** = to be bowed down or afflicted [Dt 8:3]) means the poor, afflicted, humble and primarily refers to someone suffering some kind of disability or distress. (Lev 23:22) The Lxx translates **ani** with **praus** which means gentle, meek, not overly impressed with a sense of one's self-importance. Compare Jesus' promise in the "beatitude" in Mt 5:5-note "Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth."

**Lowly** ([01800](#))(**dal**) means low, weak, poor, thin. Lxx = **tapeinos** = means low, not high, not rising far from the ground. It speaks of one's condition as lowly or of low degree. It described what was considered base, common, unfit, and having little value. It pictures one brought low, as for example by grief. Tapeinos is descriptive particularly of attitude and social positions. This is who the Messiah came to redeem and deliver from bondage!

**Adam Clarke** - In such a state will the Jews be found when they shall hear the universal call, and believe in Christ Jesus. Indeed, this is the general state of the Jews in the present day/

**Will take refuge** - Hebrew = **hasah** = seek or take refuge (literally under a tree - Jdg 9:15), in Zion (Isa 14:32), in Jehovah (2Sa 22:31), under His wings (Ru 2:12, Ps 36:7, Ps 57:1, Ps 61:4, Ps 91:4). Louw-Nida says hasah pictures one going "to a place where one will find safety, rest, or comfort, implying the place of refuge is a place to be trusted to keep one safe." Their action of "taking refuge" in Jehovah's Name is tantamount to an expression of their trust in Him. We don't take refuge under a roof that we think is going to collapse and leave us unprotected or even hurt! **Nahum** writes

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble (Which Nahum describes in Nah 1:1-6, etc), and He knows those who take **refuge (hasah)** in Him.

**Name of the LORD** (See **Why Should You Study His Names?**) - His Names depict His great character and glorious attributes. See the encouraging study on the **Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Summary**

**Jehovah** = God's covenant Name. He is faithful to keep covenant forever and ever. Amen

Three qualities of the redeemed - humble, lowly, trusting.

**Zeph 3:13 "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; For (always pause, ponder and query this term of explanation) they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble."**

**Remnant** - Hebrew = **sheerith** (from **shaar** = to remain, be left over, used in Zeph 3:12) = rest, residue, remnant, remainder (see comments on Zeph 3:12). These are the Jews who are saved by the Deliverer (Ro 11:26-27-note) and who will enter into the **Millennial Kingdom**.

**Do no wrong** (like their Lord in Zeph 3:5 = do no injustice)...**no lies...deceitful tongue** - Their lives will match their lips, their profession of faith in Messiah. They would speak truth with no deceit. These were sins of which they had been guilty. How is it they now do not commit these sins? Jeremiah 31:33 explains...

"But this is the **covenant** (New Covenant - Jer 31:31-32 - notice the covenant is with Israel and Judah, not just Israel, so clearly this is not spoken to the Church which some take as "Israel" today, but to the united nation, Israel and Judah. No where is the Church ever called "the house of Judah" - literal promises MUST be interpreted literally. You do not have to be a dispensationalist to interpret Scripture literally!) which I will make with the house of Israel after those days (What days? The full fulfillment will be in the last days, the time of **Jacob's distress**, Jer 30:7, the **Great Tribulation**)," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (cf Ezekiel 36:27-note which explains that they will then

have a "new power," the indwelling Holy Spirit Who gives the desire and the power to obey the Law on their heart - cp Php 2:13-note).

**Kaiser** aptly remarks - Those who attempt to place this prediction somewhere within the present historic process will find that they have an impossible task, for it will exceed all constraints of language to make it fit our present world. This must be a day when our Lord has returned and our lips, hearts and lives have been drastically changed!

**Adam Clarke** - O what a change! And then, how different shall they be from their present selves! Iniquity, lying, and deceit shall not be found among them! A Jew once said to me "Tere are shome of you Christians who are making wonderful efforts to convert the Tshews (Jews.) Ah, dere ish none but Gott Almighty dat can convert a Tshew." Truly I believe him. Only God can convert any man; and if there be a peculiar difficulty to convert any soul, that difficulty must lie in the conversion of the Jew.

**The will feed them and lie down** - This picture is common in prophecy (Is 49:9; Mic. 7:14; Jer. 50:19; Ezek. 34:14).

**No one to make them tremble** - Micah alludes to this same time of future peace and security in Israel (Mic 4:4).

**No one to make them tremble** (see Isa 17:2, 54:14, Jer 30:10, Ezek 39:26) - This speaks of the security of these redeemed Jews in the age to come (**Millennial**) which is in marked contrast to Israel's status in this present age.

**Zeph 3:14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!**

Zephaniah 3:14 to Zeph 3:17 is a message of encouragement from Zephaniah. In Zeph 3:18 to the end the message is from the lips of Jehovah Himself (Note the last words of the book are "Yahweh has spoken!")

The tone of Zephaniah 3:14-20 is so radically different that some doubt whether Zephaniah actually penned these words. However this pattern of the promise of the Lord's presence and protection is not unique to Zephaniah, but is seen in passages such as Isaiah 57:7-10, Isaiah 54:1-8.

(Zech 2:10) "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold **I am coming** and **I will dwell in your midst**," declares the LORD. (Ed: This is Jehovah Who is Jesus - He will dwell in their midst at He promises in Zeph 3:15, 17! Lord, hasten that glorious Day! Amen)

(Zech 9:9-10) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! **Behold**, your **King** is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey (First Advent).<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth (Second Advent).

**McComiskey** notes that "J. Smith (Zephaniah, p. 261) reports that few defend Zephaniah's authorship of this passage, mainly because threat gives way to promise." **Statements such as this are one of the primary reasons you need to be careful reading the commentaries (even the one you are reading now!). It is the height of arrogance to question that the Holy Spirit would inspire Zephaniah to write a note of hope at this juncture. Carry out your own inductive Bible study, so that you will be able to wisely comment on the commentaries!**

**Shout** (Sing = KJV, NIV) (**ranan** = give a ringing cry, translated "**sing**" by KJV, ESV)...**shout** (rua = raise a shout, give a blast)...**rejoice** (samach = rejoice, be glad)...**exult** (alaz = be jubilant) - Four "staccato-like" **commands** which is a call for the people of Israel to acknowledge the great blessing and boundless joy over their restoration! Beloved, while this is addressed directly to Israel, all believers will participate in this divine utopia, something mankind has been searching for throughout world history. It has finally arrived, for the King has taken His throne and begins His righteous rule.

**NLT Study Bible** - The cumulative effect of these commands emphasizes that God's people will one day experience unsurpassed joy.

**Shout** (Sing) ([07442](#))(**ranan**) means to give a ringing cry. It can refer to a cry of lamentation (Lam 2:19), awe (Lev 9:24), or joy (Ps 96:12). The type of the cry must be determined by the context joy, exaltation (Isa 12:6; 24:14; Jer. 31:7) praising the Lord (Isa 26:19; 35:2; 52:8; Jer. 31:12; 51:48, Ps. 5:11; 67:4; 81:1; 90:14; 92:4; 149:5). An absent cry can be an indication of God's judgment (Isa. 16:10). God makes a widow's heart sing for joy (Job 29:13), causes nature to shout for delight (Ps. 65:8) and commands the righteous to shout for joy (Ps. 32:11). In some context it is a cry of distress (Isa. 65:14; Lam 2:19). Finally, ranan can be cry of encouragement, exhortation or instruction (Pr 1:20; 8:3).

**NAS Usage:** cries(1), cries of joy(1), cry aloud(1), joyfully sing(2), rejoice(1), sang(1), shout for joy(16), shout of joy(1), shout joyfully(4), shouted(1), shouts(1), sing for joy(18), sing aloud(3), sing aloud for joy(1), sings(1).

**Vine** - "to sing, shout, cry out." Found in both ancient and modern Hebrew, this word is used in modern Hebrew in the sense of "to chant, sing." It occurs approximately 50 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, with about half of these uses being in the **Book of Psalms**, where there is special emphasis on "**singing**" and "**shouting**" praises to God (see below). **Ranan** is found for the first time in Lev. 9:24 at the conclusion of the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. When the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice, the people "**shouted**, and fell on their faces." **Ranan** is often used to express joy, exultation, which seems to demand loud singing, especially when it is praise to God: "Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 12:6). When Wisdom calls, she cries aloud to all who will hear (Pr. 8:3). To shout for joy (Ps. 32:11) is to let joy ring out!

**Ranan** - 52v - Lev 9:24; Deut 32:43; 1 Chr 16:33; Job 29:13; 38:7; Ps 5:11; 20:5; 32:11; 33:1; 35:27; 51:14; 59:16; 63:7; 65:8; 67:4; 71:23; 81:1; 84:2; 89:12; 90:14; 92:4; 95:1; 96:12; 98:4, 8; 132:9, 16; 145:7; 149:5; Pr 1:20; 8:3; 29:6; Isa 12:6; 16:10; 24:14; 26:19; 35:2, 6; 42:11; 44:23; 49:13; 52:8f; 54:1; 61:7; 65:14; Jer 31:7, 12; 51:48; Lam 2:19; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:10.

(Ps 5:11) But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them **eversing for joy**; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

(Ps 20:5) We will **sing for joy** over your victory, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

(Ps 32:11) Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And **shout for joy**, all you who are upright in heart.

(Ps 33:1) **Sing for joy** in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright.

Notice how appropriate it is that this call for joy immediately follows (Zeph 3:13) the cleansing of their sins (an "emancipation proclamation") and the silencing of their fears of insecurity. This reminds us of the effect the knowledge that our sins against a Holy God have been removed, forgiven...

A Psalm of David. A Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! 2) How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit! (Ps 32:1-2-[note](#))

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, **but** (always carefully observe this **term of contrast**, as some reveal a striking change of direction!) he who confesses and forsakes (cf repents, not just words from one's lips, but a change in one's heart, resulting in a change in direction of one's life!) them will find compassion. (Pr 28:13-note)

**This is a great passage for those of us who love "Praise and Worship"** - The **Millennium** will be a time of shouting (singing) with joy! John Phillips comments that "We have a God who is happy as well as holy. He loves to hear us sing. One of the greatest books of the Bible is Psalms, the Hebrew hymnbook; it is full of joyful song. Only a redeemed people can really sing. The first song in Scripture was sung by Israel when, having been put under the blood and brought through the water, they stood on the other side of the Red Sea, which had swept their old enemies away; Ex 14:30-15:1 records, "Thus the Lord saved Israel.... Then sang Moses and the children of Israel." In the millennial kingdom Israel-redeemed, regenerated, and regathered home-will sing. Oh, how they will sing! The sobs and anguish of centuries will be swept away in song. They will rejoice because the enemy is gone.

This call for great joy reminds one of the **Year of Jubilee** ([see also ISBE article](#)), where **jubilee** is the Hebrew **jowbel**, the joyful shout or resounding blasts of trumpets marking this time of celebration as lands were returned to their original owners and slaves were set free from bondage. The Year of Jubilee begins with the blast of the **Shophar** on the Day of Atonement each fiftieth year. ([Listen to the wonderful words of Michael Card's great song Jubilee](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** has a sermon comparing **Zeph 3:14 and Zeph 3:17** - The very words seem to dance with joy. But more remarkable than this is the parallelism between the two verses. Zion is called to rejoice in God because God rejoices in her. She is to shout for joy and sing because God's joy too has a voice, and breaks out into singing. For every throb of joy in man's heart, there is a wave of gladness in God's. The notes of our praise are at once the echoes and the occasions of His. We are to be glad because He is glad: He is glad because we are so. We sing for joy, and He joys over us with singing because we do. It is to be noticed that the former verse of our text is followed by the assurance: 'The Lord is in the midst of thee'; and that the latter verse is preceded by the same assurance. So, then, intimate fellowship and communion between God and Israel lies at the root both of God's joy in man and man's joy in God. (Read the full sermon = [Zephaniah 3:14, 17 Zion's Joys and God's](#))



**Shout in triumph** - The Lxx translates rua with **kerusso** which pictures the proclamation like a town herald would cry out. "In triumph" is not in the literal Hebrew but is added by the translators for effect.

**Matthew Henry** - After the promises of the taking away of sin, here follow promises of the taking away of trouble; for when the cause is removed the effect will cease. What makes a people holy will make them happy of course.

**With all your heart** - Let it emanate from deep within your soul. With all that is within you. With your whole being. Holding nothing back. Oh, "happy day!" **You may be downcast, despairing, depressed, or disillusioned this day, but look up dear one, for a new day is dawning, a day of righteousness and truth and justice in the presence of the Righteous One Himself, the long awaited and longed for Messiah. Hasten that glorious day, Lord God, when our morning is turned into dancing!** (Ps 30:11, Eccl 3:4)

**Daughter of Zion** - 28x = Personification of Jerusalem (and therefore the populace, the Jews or Israel, cf Jer 6:26 "daughter of my people") = 2Kgs 19:21; Ps 9:14; Isa 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 37:22; 52:2; 62:11; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; Lam 1:6; 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:22; Mic 1:13; 4:8, 10, 13; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:10; 9:9; Matt 21:5; John 12:15. **Daughter of Zion** does not refer to the Church as some older commentaries state (Albert Barnes). Clearly this is a Jewish prophet speaking to Jews and to spiritualize a passage that can with normal reading can easily be interpreted literally is poor hermeneutics.

**F B Meyer** (1847-1929) - Not a dispensationalist but one who rightly divided the Word of Truth, ascribing literalness to passages which could and should normally be interpreted in such a manner. Thus it is not surprising to read Meyer's comment "These words were primarily addressed to the **daughter of Zion**, to Israel the chosen people; and they undoubtedly foreshadow blessings which are yet to be realised. Ten times over in this chapter God assures His people of what He will most certainly do on their behalf. But a much wider circle than the chosen race may appropriate the blessed comfort of these words."

**Daughter of Jerusalem** -7x - all except Lam 2:15 also have the phrase Daughter of Zion = 2Kgs 19:21; Isa 37:22; Lam 2:13, 15; Mic 4:8; Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9

**NET Note:** "Daughter of..." = This phrase is used as an epithet for the city and the nation. "Daughter" may seem extraneous in English but consciously joins the various epithets and metaphors of Israel and Jerusalem as a woman, a device used to evoke sympathy from the reader. **Constable** adds - "The phrase **"daughter of"** is a way of referring to the citizens of Zion (Jerusalem) as the children of the city. Children born in any city are the children of that city in a metaphorical sense as well as the children of their physical parents in a literal sense."

**Adam Clarke** - Here is not only a gracious prophetic promise of their (Israel's) restoration from captivity, but of their conversion to God through Christ.

**Willmington** - They'll be moved out, then he'll move in. Once the Promised Land is rid of God's enemies, God himself will resettle his people there and dwell among them. It will be a time of healing, peace, and joy. The restoration of Judah following the Babylonian captivity was only a partial fulfillment of this promise. Its ultimate fulfillment will come when Jesus returns to earth and establishes his millennial kingdom. (Willmington's Bible Handbook)

**With all your heart** (Heb = leb; Lxx = kardia) - Our **heart** is the source of our emotions, the very center of one's personality, the "control center," if you will, of our lives. The prophet exhorts his readers to "hold nothing back!" This is to be a whole hearted time of rejoicing. O, what a day it will be! The next verse explains why Zephaniah commanded Israel to sing with such joyful shouting.

**Zeph 3:15 The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more.**

**The LORD has taken away** - Indeed, no one else could have accomplished this task but their Messiah!

**Has taken away** - Hebrew = **sur** = turned aside or away (removed); **Lxx** = **periaireo** = take away from around some one, which pictures God's **judgments** (Heb - mishpat = judgments; Lxx - adikema = a completed act of deliberate wrongdoing) as previously continually surrounding them! This Greek verb was used of casting off the anchors of a ship, allowing it freedom of movement (cf Acts 27:40). **Periaireo** is used in Hebrews 10:11 describes the picture of futility in which "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never **take away** (periaireo) sins." So here in Zephaniah, the judgments are taken away, ultimately because the penalty of their sins is paid in full (See **TETELESTAI – IT IS FINISHED! PAID IN FULL!**) by the Messiah's substitutionary, sacrificial, satisfactory (propitiatory) death on Calvary.

**Kaiser** on "**has taken away**" - Zephaniah uses the "prophetic perfect tense" since he views the events he describes as being so

certain that they may be spoken of as having already been accomplished (cf. Is. 40:2). Since God has forgiven Jerusalem's iniquity and totally removed any resulting guilt, there will no longer be a need to use any of the nations as instruments of His judgment. The nations too will be cast out.

**Cleared away your enemies** - The Hebrew verb **panah** (06437) means to turn. Along with the first verb "taken away" (sur) serve to reiterate God's work to set His people free. The idea of sur is the removal of the source of their stress and the idea of panah emphasizes their enemy being sent away. The Septuagint translates "cleared away your enemies" as He "has **ransomed** you from the hand of your enemies," where the verb **lutroo** depicts the payment of a price to set captives, slaves or prisoners free. Ultimately the "price paid" was the precious blood of the Lamb (1Pe 1:18-19-note). And thus the reason for such great jubilation in Zeph 3:14.

**His judgments against you** - This speaks of the condemnation of the city of Jerusalem because of the evil behavior of the Jewish leaders (see a description of the evil, especially Judah's idolatry = Zeph 1:4-9, Zeph 3:1-7). Here Zephaniah is saying there will come a day when Jehovah will cease punishing His rebellious people (the nation of Israel).

**The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst** - Judgments taken away and enemies removed, in a sense, leaves a "vacuum," one which is filled by Messiah Himself, Who will reign in Jerusalem as the true King He should have always been. Finally, the day of His "coronation" has arrived! Recall when Israel had desired a king like all of the other nations (1Sa 8:5) and yet had rejected God as their King (1Sa 8:7, 10:19, cp Jdg 21:25-note, Pr 29:18-note). He gave them what they desired but their human kings generally fell far short of an ideal monarchy (Read 1Sa 8:10-18). One role of a king is to protect his people and fight their enemies, something that will only be fulfilled for Israel when Messiah reigns as her rightful Monarch and this is why they "**will fear disaster no more.**"

**Read parallel passages** that also describe this great future day when Messiah returns to reign in Jerusalem - Isa 35:10, Isa 51:22 Isa 60:18 Isa 65:19 Ezek 39:29 Joel 3:17 Am 9:15 Zec 14:11.

**King of Israel** (see the King's rejection in 1Sa 8:7; Isa 9:7-note, Isa 44:6, Zech 14:9, "Jehovah will reign over them in Mount Zion = Micah 4:7-note) - Some Jews such as Nathaniel recognized Jesus even in His first coming, not only as "the Son of God" but also as "the King of Israel." (Jn 1:49). However, when Jesus returns triumphantly in Revelation 19:11-16-note, He returns as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16-note) and all (both receivers and rejecters) will recognize His majesty and His right to rule and reign (cf Rev 1:7-note, Php 2:9-11-note). **Play Third Day's song [King of Glory](#).**

Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC, **the King** departed from Israel's **midst**, leaving His abode in the Temple in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 8-11). The prophet saw "the glory of the LORD of Israel" was still present in the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 8:4-note), But in Ezekiel 9:3-note "the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the Temple," and "the Temple was filled with the (**Shekinah glory**) cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the (**Shekinah**) glory of Jehovah." (Ezek 10:4-note) "Then the glory of Jehovah departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD'S house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them." (Ezek 10:18-19-note). "Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the (**Shekinah**) glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. The (**Shekinah**) glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city (Mount of Olives, prophetically significant = Mt 24:3; Acts 1:10-12; Zech 14:4)." (Ezek 11:22-23-note) And so Ezekiel envisions that terrible day when the **Shekinah glory** of God finally left His Temple and His city, abandoning it and leaving it to destruction by the wicked Babylonians. There is fascinating "play on words" in this description of Jehovah's departure, for in Ezekiel 8:4 we read "The God of Israel was there" which parallels the final words of the book of Ezekiel which prophecy His return with the great promise that "the Name of the city from that day shall be 'THE LORD IS THERE!'" (Ezekiel 48:35). We know this Name as **Jehovah Shammah (see study)** which is the Name of the King of Israel, Jehovah (Jesus)" Who will be in their midst one day! **Maranatha! In anticipation of this great and glorious day, let us worship the King in spirit and in truth by singing along with Robin Mark....**

#### [One Day — by Robin Mark](#)

To you, oh Lord will all the earth give glory  
No other name will share the glory due  
No kingdoms rise and nations mock your mercy  
One day they'll stand and worship only you

Chorus

Every knee will bow down, every tongue sing out loud  
You are the Lord of earth and heaven  
Every hand will be raised  
in the thunder of praise

You are the King of all creation  
They'll say: One day, one day

**Zechariah** prophesies of the great **day** when Israel will see the return of the ...

**Sing for joy** (**ranan**, a command; Lxx = *teron* = to delight, to cheer, to cause to rejoice, to be made happy or delighted, to have pleasure - **present imperative in middle voice** - reflexive sense = make yourself happy or delighted continually!) and **be glad** (Heb = *samach*; Lxx = *euphraino* = **present imperative in middle voice** - reflexive sense = make yourself happy or delighted continually!), O daughter of Zion; for behold (Pay attention!) **I am coming** (Jesus is coming) and **I will dwell** (**shakan** = to settle down, abide; translated in the **Lxx = kataskenoo** [see related verb *episkenoo*] = pitch My tent, tarry, take up My abode) **in your midst**," declares the LORD. Many nations (Heb = *goyim* ~ Gentiles) will join themselves (The Lxx is even more vivid using *katapheugo* picturing the Gentiles as fleeing for refuge in Jehovah in that future day!) to the LORD **in that day** (An **expression of time** - Ask "What day?" Context answers this question.) and will become My people (Gentiles will become His people). **Then** (**expression of time**) I will dwell **in your midst**, and you will know (Heb = *yada* = to know and can convey an intimate knowledge; Lxx = *epiginosko* = know by experience, faith become sight in that day when the peoples behold the Glorious One, King Jesus!) that the **Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts** (In context this refers to God the Father) has sent (Lxx = *exapostello* - used in Gal 4:4 of God sending Jesus in the fullness of time the first time, but this passage ultimately refers to the second time) Me to you. (Zech 2:10-11)

[Jamieson comments](#) on "many nations ... joined to the Lord in that day"—The result of the Jews' exile in Babylon was that, at their subsequent return, through the diffusion of knowledge of their religion, many Gentiles became proselytes, worshipping in the court of the Gentiles (1Ki 8:41). Cyrus, Darius, Alexander, Ptolemy Philadelphus, Augustus, and Tiberius, paid respect to the temple by sending offerings [Grotius]. But all this is but a shadow of the future conversion of the Gentiles which shall result from Jehovah dwelling in Jerusalem (Ps 102:15, 16; Php 2:10, 11). (Ed: [Jamieson in Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) is one of the more literal and therefore one of the more accurate pre-1900 commentaries. Matthew Henry while wonderfully devotional is not the best source to read for interpretation of the OT prophecies. If they speak of the Messiah he is accurate, but for some reason if they are spoken to or of Israel, he generally replaces Israel with the Church [[See The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation and Allegorizing and Spiritualizing the Truth](#)]. Jamieson generally reads the OT promises given to Israel literally and thus generally avoids the error of so many older commentaries [and a large number of modern one!] who replace Israel with the Church. See [What is replacement theology?](#) or [Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry](#))

**In your midst** (cf Dt 7:21, Isa 12:6, repeated in Zeph 3:17) - Previously sin, sinners and unrighteousness had been in their **midst**, but here the Sin Bearer, the Righteous One is in now in their **midst**! Radical change motivated by God's radical love for sinners! Jesus in their midst "as the sun in the centre of the universe, to diffuse His light and influence upon every part." Amen! (M Henry)

**In your midst** - This specific phrase occurs 30x in 29v - Ex 33:3, 5; 34:12; Lev 20:14; Deut 7:21; 16:11; 17:2; 23:16; Josh 7:13; 24:23; Isa 12:6; Jer 29:8; Ezek 7:9; 22:7, 9; 26:15; 27:27; 28:22; 47:22; Hos 11:9; Mic 6:14; Nah 3:13; Zeph 3:15, 17; Hag 2:5; Zech 2:10f; Luke 17:21; Acts 2:22

**Kaiser** - No longer will He be present only in His **Shekinah glory**, or as the **Angel of the LORD**; indeed, He will personally reside in Jerusalem "in [their and **our**] midst." Therefore, "you shall see disaster no more" (Zeph 3:15d). The personal presence of the Lord shall render ineffective all the powers of evil and harm.

**Adam Clarke** - They (Israel) have never had a king since the death of Zedekiah, and never shall have one till they have the King Messiah to reign among them; and this promise refers to that event."

**Zeph 3:16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp.**

**In that day** (cf Zeph 1:9, 10, 3:11) - Whenever you encounter an **expression of time**, pause and ask at least "**What time is it?** You may (will) be pleasantly surprised at how your Teacher the Spirit will honor your pausing to ponder by giving you illumination and insight that heretofore you had never had on that passage. As the Coca Cola commercial used to say "It's the pause that refreshes!" In context, **that day** refers to the **day** when God takes away His judgments against Israel and has cleared away her enemies. Has

that **day** occurred yet? As this comment is being written the nation of Iran appears to be covertly developing nuclear weapons and has repeatedly threatened to annihilate Israel. The Palestinians persist in failing to acknowledge Israel as a sovereign nation. Surely that day when the King is in her midst and she has no reason to fear (Zeph 3:15) or be afraid has not yet come to pass.

**Do not be afraid** - When the Lord Himself is present, there is no reason to fear. Anti-Semitism will be no longer!

**John Phillips** writes that "The Jew will no longer be persecuted, fearful, hunted, and haunted by the possibility of betrayal and brutal treatment. He will no longer be characterized as "the wandering Jew.""

**Hands fall limp** - Implying they had indeed "fallen limp" from fear, for fear "paralyzes" us emotionally and physically, so that we are unable to properly function (cf 2Chr 15:7, Isa 13:7, Neh 6:8-9, Ezek 7:17). We see this same pattern of exhortation following divine discipline (as in Zeph 3:1-8, cf Heb 12:5-11-note) in the letter to the Hebrews 12:12-13-note.

**Kaiser** - "Weak" or "slack hands" indicated despair, disheartenment, and lack of involvement.

**Zeph 3:17 "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.."**

#### RELATED RESOURCES:

- [MIGHTY TO SAVE \(Part 1\)](#)
- [MIGHTY TO SAVE \(Part 2\)](#)
- [MIGHTY TO SAVE \(Part 3\)](#)
- [EL GIBBOR - MIGHTY GOD](#)
- [Zephaniah 3:17 The Savior Resting in His Love – C H Spurgeon](#)
- [Zephaniah 3:14. 17 Zion's Joys and God's – Alexander Maclaren](#)
- [Zephaniah 3:17 The Pleasure of God in the Good of His People – John Piper](#)

### FIVE PERSONAL PROMISES FROM THE MIGHTY WARRIOR

**NET** Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God is in your midst; he is a warrior who can deliver. He takes great delight in you; he renews you by his love; he shouts for joy over you."

**CSB** Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God is among you, a warrior who saves. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will bring you quietness with His love. He will delight in you with shouts of joy."

**ESV** Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

**NIV** Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

**NKJ** Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

Below are passages that parallel the thought of Zephaniah 3:17. In context the passages speak primarily to the nation of Israel. However, the truths in these passages are applicable to every blood bought, heaven bound saint of the Living God. The fact that they Lord God would delight, take pleasure in and/or rejoice over you should cause us to bow low in wonder and adoration and motivate to give ourselves fully as living sacrifices to such a gracious, loving Father Who expresses such kind emotions toward us who are so undeserving.

Deuteronomy 28:63 "And it shall come about that as the LORD **delighted** over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will **delight** over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you shall be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.

Deuteronomy 30:9 "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD **will again rejoice** over you for good, just as He **rejoiced** over your fathers;

Psalms 149:4 For the LORD **takes pleasure** in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation.

Isaiah 62:4 It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My **delight** is in her," And your land, "Married"; For the LORD **delights** in you, And to Him your land will be married. 5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom **rejoices** (Heb = gil, Lxx = **euphraino**) over the bride, So your God will **rejoice** (Heb = gil, Lxx = euphraino) over you.

Jeremiah 32:41 "I will **rejoice** over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.

## **PROMISE #1 THE LORD YOUR GOD IS IN YOUR MIDST**

**The LORD your God is in your midst** - Note the personal possessive pronoun "your!" If Scripture did not say God was our God, we would not dare even hope for such a thing! And yet Jehovah is our God, because of our covenant relationship with His Son.

**In your midst** - Note the repetition of this incredible truth. In Zeph 3:15 we saw that "The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst." (What was the effect? "You will fear disaster no more.") He is among you, with you, in you. What better place could He be present, then in their midst! Beloved believer, we do well to apply this truth to ourselves when fearful, adverse circumstances threaten to cause us to faint from worry and dread (cf even brave warriors - Zeph 1:14). Our Mighty Warrior is within us (Col 1:27b-note), in His Temple, our physical body, manifesting His presence by His indwelling Spirit (1Cor 6:19-20-note), the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9-note, 1Pe 1:11-note), the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7, Php 1:19-note) and greater is He Who is in us than he who is in the world (1Jn 4:4).

**The LORD - Jehovah** - In context this refers to **Jesus** (see **Jehovah = Jesus**). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates "**LORD**" with **kurios**. which is the Name of the one to whom a person or thing belongs. Jesus is Kurios, the Master, the sovereign One Who possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. This is good news if His is our Friend (Jn 15:14, 15), but bad news if He is our enemy!

**O Palmer Robertson** - Now the prophet moves into the "**holy of holies**" by a rapturous description of the love of God for His people. This verse is the John 3:16 of the OT. The love of God for his own people is not a soft, sentimental emotion that has no strength to act on behalf of its object. For this God who loves is Yahweh. He is God. He is a mighty hero who saves. The term for mighty hero (**gibbôr**) frequently refers to a warrior who overpowers his enemies. The Lord goes forth as a "warrior" who marches against his foes (Isa. 42:13). (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)

Remember that the context of this great passage is the tumultuous, terrible Day of the LORD, when God's wrath is poured out on a world which has rejected His Son and His offer of free salvation. And so in the prior passage the prophet exhorts them "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp." Zephaniah 3:17 is the reason they do not need to fear nor faint. Jehovah is there for the rescue and is a mighty Warrior, which refers to Messiah at His Second Coming when He crushes all opposition and evil-doers and delivers those who are His by grace through faith.

**F B Meyer** refers to Zephaniah 3:17 as "**a cluster of grapes**" commenting that "These words were primarily addressed to the daughter of Zion, to Israel the Chosen People; and they undoubtedly foreshadow blessings which are yet to be realized. Ten times over in this chapter God assures His people of what He will most certainly do on their behalf. But a much wider circle than the Chosen Race may appropriate the blessed comfort of these words (cf 1Pe 2:9). Twice over in this paragraph we are told that the Lord, the King of Israel, is in the midst of His people (Zeph 3:15, 17). This is an indisputable fact. He is in the midst of His Church, so that it shall not be moved. Well would it be if each Christian were to devote some portion, however brief, in each day, to meditation upon this marvelous fact. "The mighty God, the King, is in the midst of me. I am God-tenanted, God-possessed. The High and Holy One who inhabits eternity has taken up His abode in my heart." And this marvelous indwelling--more wonderful than if an angel were to indwell an ant or a humming-bird--is not dependent on frames or feelings or anything at all in us; but endures through all our changes and fluctuations unto the eternal ages. But if the mighty God is indeed in us, why is there so much weakness and failure in our lives? Alas, the answer is not far to seek--we have limited the Holy One of Israel. What now shall hinder us ridding ourselves of all which has hindered Him from doing His mighty works, so that He may do that which He so much loves, and which we so much need? Then we may expect Him to accomplish the four blessed "I wills" of this precious verse (Zeph 3:17KJV).

**Midst** ([07130](#))(**qereb**) means midst, middle, interior, inner part, inner organs, bowels, inner being. **Qereb** is the center or inner part of anything, but especially referred to the inner organs of the body (Ex 29:13), including the heart (1Sa 25:37, Jer 23:9, Ps 39:3, 55:4) and the psychological center (1Ki 3:28, Ps 94:18, Jer 4:14), man's inner being (Zech 12:1). David prays "renew a steadfast spirit within (qereb) me."

**TWOT** adds that **qereb** "denotes the internal. It can represent the inward part(s) of human or animal bodies, or of groups of people,

or of social structures (e.g., a city). It frequently functions as a preposition "in the midst, among" (Hab 3:2; Num 14:13 - **Ed**: This could be the sense of qereb in Zeph 3:17). Our word is used parallel to lēb (heart, Jer 9:8 [H 7]), nepeš (soul, Isa 26:9), and various other internal organs (frequently as seats of various psychological functions).

It is interesting that the **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **qereb** with the phrase "*en soi*" meaning "in you." This would seem to convey the truth that not only is Messiah in their "midst," but He is "in them," in the believers, which is what Paul says in Col 1:27b. It is a fascinating thought to consider. Indeed, if Christ is our life (Col 3:4) even in this present life, how much more will He be when He returns to all things right!

**Qereb - 209v in NAS** - among(62), body(1), devoured\*(2), entrails(20), heart(1), herself(1), inner thought(1), inside(1), inward feelings(1), inward part(1), inward thought(1), inwardly(2), middle(2), midst(81), within(35), within our land(2), within their land(2).

Gen 18:12; 24:3; 25:22; 41:21; 48:16; Exod 3:20; 8:22; 10:1; 12:9; 17:7; 23:25; 29:13, 17, 22; 31:14; 33:3, 5; 34:9f, 12; Lev 1:9, 13; 3:3, 9, 14; 4:8, 11; 7:3; 8:16, 21, 25; 9:14; 17:4, 10; 18:29; 20:3, 5f, 18; 23:30; Num 5:27; 11:4, 20f; 14:11, 13f, 42; 15:30; Deut 1:42; 2:14ff; 4:3, 34; 6:15; 7:21; 11:6; 13:1, 5, 11, 13f; 16:11; 17:2, 7, 15, 20; 18:2, 15, 18; 19:10, 19f; 21:8f, 21; 22:21, 24; 23:14, 16; 24:7; 26:11; 28:43; 29:11, 16; 31:16f; Josh 1:11; 3:2, 5, 10; 4:6; 6:25; 7:12f; 8:35; 9:7, 16, 22; 10:1; 13:13; 16:10; 18:7; 24:5, 17, 23; Judg 1:29f, 32f; 3:5; 10:16; 18:20; 1 Sam 4:3; 16:13; 25:37; 1 Kgs 20:39; Job 20:14; Ps 5:9; 36:1; 39:3; 46:5; 48:9; 49:11; 51:10; 55:4, 10f, 15; 62:4; 64:6; 74:4, 11f; 78:28; 82:1; 94:19; 101:2, 7; 103:1; 109:18, 22; 110:2; 138:7; 147:13; Prov 15:31; 26:24; Isa 4:4; 5:8, 25; 6:12; 7:22; 10:23; 12:6; 16:11; 19:1, 3, 14, 24; 24:13; 25:11; 26:9; 29:23; 63:11; Jer 4:14; 6:1, 6; 9:8; 14:9; 23:9; 29:8; 30:21; 31:33; 46:21; Lam 1:15, 20; 3:45; 4:13; Ezek 11:19; 22:27; 36:26f; Hos 5:4; 11:9; Joel 2:27; Amos 2:3; 3:9; 5:17; 7:8, 10; Mic 3:11; 5:7f, 10, 13f; 6:14; Nah 3:13; Hab 2:19; 3:2; Zeph 3:3, 5, 11f, 15, 17; Zech 12:1; 14:1

## PROMISE #2 HE IS MIGHTY TO SAVE

**He is mighty to save** (transliterated = Gibbôr yôšîʿ) - A victorious warrior (NAS), a Warrior Who can deliver (NET), a Warrior Who saves (CSB), a mighty one who will save (ESV), The Mighty One, will save (NKJV). The translates it as **dunatos sosei** (literally "powerful He will save").

Why is He **mighty to save**? Moses answers...

For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty (gibbor), and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. (Dt 10:17-18)

**Mighty (01368)**(gibbor cp related verb gabar = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong, brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. Mighty man (cp "mighty [gibbor] men of David" - 2Sa 23:8).

Peter experienced His saving power when he was sinking down (Mt 14:30)...

Why did'st thou look at wind and sea?  
Have faith," said Christ, "and look to Me;  
I'll take thy hand, I'm mighty to save,  
Trust thou in Me; we will walk the wave,  
Together, we'll conquer the sea.

**Vine** - In the context of battle, the word is better understood to refer to the category of warriors. The gibbor is the proven warrior (eg "valiant warriors [gibbor]" Josh 1:14)...The Septuagint gives the following translations: **dunatos** ("powerful; strong; mighty; able ruler") and ischuros (see studies of related words - **ischus** and **ischuo**) ("strong; mighty; powerful").

**Save (03467)**(yasha' or [y;]; see also **yeshua** from which we get the Name **Jesus**) is an important Hebrew verb which means to help, to save, to deliver, to rescue. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of yasha' as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger. **Yasha'** is used many times as a title for God = 2Sa 22:47; 1Ch 16:35; Ps 18:46; Ps 24:5; Ps 25:5; Ps 27:9; Ps 65:5; Ps 79:9; Ps 85:4; Isa 17:10; 62:11; Mic 7:7.

In the future Day of the LORD, when Israel's hope seems lost because of the overwhelming force gathered against her, "the Sun (Son) of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings," (Mal 4:2-note) and He will deliver all Israel (all that believe in Messiah = the remnant) (Ro 11:26-27-note). (Now take a moment to worship our indescribably majestic Lord God with Robin Mark's wonderful song [Days Of Elijah](#)[/FONT>

Behold He comes riding on the clouds  
Shining like the Sun at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the Year of Jubilee  
And out of Zion's hill Salvation comes. [/FONT>

**F B Meyer** - As God took the side of His people against their foes, and will do so again in the final struggle, when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4), so will He take our side against our sins. He has saved us from the penalty of sin. He will also save us from its power (cf Ro 6:11-14). Your foes may be numerous as the devils in hell, strong and wily; but He will save. Your temperament may be as susceptible to temptation as an aspen leaf is to the wind; but He will save. Your past years, by repeated acts of indulgence, may have formed habits strong as iron bands; but He will save. Your circumstances and companions may be most unfavorable to a life of victory; but He will save. Difficulties are nought to Him; the darkness shineth as the day.

### **PROMISE #3** **HE WILL TAKE GREAT DELIGHT IN YOU**

**He takes great delight in you** (NIV, NET) - "He will exult over you with joy" (NAS); "He will rejoice over you with gladness," (ESV).

Those two words "**over you**" (repeated in the last phrase of Zeph 3:17) are simply incomprehensible. As **Palmer** asks "How could the Sovereign Creator concentrate His whole being in the love of a temporal creature of dust? How could the Holy satisfy Himself contentedly in the loving contemplation of the unholy?" I would propose that one aspect of the answer is that we are in an indissoluble, immutable covenant with the Son of His love, we are **in Christ** and the Father forevermore will see us not as unholy sinners but as saints in His Son (Mt 3:17). There is nothing in us that explains the reason for the Father's love. Ultimately, His love reflects His incomprehensible, transcendent nature and that nature (cf 1Jn 4:16, 1Jn 3:1-note) will forever be manifest to us as love! **Palmer** adds "So the prophet describes a love of God exceeding all human imaginations. "Remember the silence of Jesus, and expound this text thereby," says C. H. Spurgeon."

Play **F. M. Lehman's** great hymn that attempts to put in words some of the mystery of...

#### [The Love of God](#)

The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.  
It goes beyond the highest star  
And reaches to the lowest hell.  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,  
God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled  
And pardoned from his sin.

Refrain...

O love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure—  
The saints' and angels' song.

When hoary time shall pass away,  
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;  
When men who here refuse to pray,  
On rocks and hills and mountains call;  
God's love, so sure, shall still endure,  
All measureless and strong;  
Redeeming grace to Adam's race—  
The saints' and angels' song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry;

Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.

## PROMISE #4 HE WILL QUIET YOU WITH HIS LOVE

**He will quiet you by His love** (ESV, cf NIV, NKJV) (He will be quiet in His love - NAS) (He will calm all your fears - Patterson) -

The **NET** Bible translation ("He renews you by His love") follows the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, which translates "**quiet**" with the verb **kainizo** (cf **kainos** = brand new, of a kind never seen before!) and means to make new or to renew. God does not want to give you a piece of His mind. He wants to give you a piece of His heart! No wonder Paul prayed for the Ephesians to somehow begin to comprehend such incomprehensible love, asking the Father ...

would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

**Wiersbe** on "**He will be quiet in His love**" - The Hebrew phrase has been variously explained: "He will quiet you with His love"; "He will be silent in His love" (i.e., not bring up your past sins); "He will renew you in His love"; "He will renew your love for Him"; "His love for you will make everything new." Perhaps it all means the same thing: A new and deeper relationship with God will bring peace and joy and make all things new.

**Palmer** - The mutuality of the loving response of Redeemer and redeemed is seen in the fact that some of the same terms used in the admonition to his people now describe the response of God himself to his people (cf. Zeph 3:14, 17). Zion is exhorted to sing (*rānnî*); he rejoices with singing (*rinnāh*). Jerusalem shall rejoice (*śimti*); he delights over Jerusalem with joy (*śimtāh*). The whole scene depicts a grand oratorio as God and his people mutually rejoice in their love for one another...To consider Almighty God sinking in contemplations of love over a once-wretched human being can hardly be absorbed by the human mind...Almighty God, quiet in his love. God the mighty savior, quietly contemplating, contented in his love for you....Other passages that speak vividly of God's rejoicing in the love of his people include Isa. 62:4-5; 65:19; Jer. 32:40-41. Cf. Luke 15:7, 10. Each of these passages deserves extensive contemplation.

'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty,' Zephaniah tells us. 'He will rest in His love' (Zephaniah 3:17). Thus, concerning the storm you may be going through even now or perhaps will face tomorrow, the Lord is not wondering if you're going to make it. He's resting in His love. He knows He's going to see you through. Therefore, if Jesus is at rest, you can rest as well. -- A Day's Journey: 365 Daily Meditations from the Word

**Quiet** (02790)(**haras/charash**) means to be silent, be still, be quiet, dumb, speechless, mute or deaf. The picture is of a person remaining still or silent (Ge 24:21, 2Ki 18:36).

**Patterson** - The verb **haras/charash** has been explained variously as (1) keeping silent about or covering up people's sins (Rashi), (2) God's silence due to the overwhelming depths of His love (Keil 1954), (3) God's preoccupation with planning Israel's good (Nowack 1922), (4) God's resting in His love (Laetsch 1956), (5) a means for the believer to cultivate peace and silence in his heart (Luther), (6) God's singing out of the joy of his loving concern (O'Connor 1980), and (7) God's refraining from bringing accusation of wrongdoing against Jerusalem (Ben Zvi).

**F B Meyer** - The margin suggests an exquisite alternative, "He will be silent in His love." Of old the Psalmist said that his soul was silent in its calm expectancy for God's salvation. Here we are told that God is silent in His brooding tenderness. All the deepest emotion is silent. When we are told, then, that God's love will be a silent one, we know that it is too intense, too deep, too infinite to find expression. It will break silence presently; but in the meanwhile be still, and know that God is love.

Jesus, I rest in Thee,  
In You myself I hide  
Laden with guilt and misery,  
Where can I rest beside?  
It is on Your meek and lowly breast  
My weary soul alone can rest."

You Holy One of God!  
The Father rests in Thee.



And in the savor of that blood  
which speaks to Him for me.  
The curse is gone- through You I'm blest,  
God rests in You- In You I rest.

The slave of sin and fear,  
Your truth my bondage broke,  
My happy spirit loves to wear  
Your light and easy yoke;  
Your love, which fills my grateful breast,  
Makes duty joy, and labor rest.

"Soon the bright glorious day  
The rest of God will come,  
Sorrow and sin shall pass away,  
And I shall reach my home  
Then, of the promised land possessed,  
My soul shall know eternal rest.

**Scotfield** on "**His love**" - A love too great for words. For the LORD's own, His final word is not of anger, as with the unbelieving nations, but of love, as expressed in this beautiful verse. When it comes to His people, chastised and forgiven, the LORD rests His case in love and rejoicing.

**Spurgeon** in "**A Sermon for the Present Time**" on Zephaniah 3:16-18 wrote...

I do not know any Scripture which is more full of wonderful meaning than this. **He shall rest in his love,** as if our God had in his people found satisfaction. He comes to an anchorage: he has reached his desire. As when a Jacob, full of love to Rachel, has at length ended the years of his service, and is married to his well-beloved, and his heart is at rest; so is it spoken in parable of the Lord our God. Jesus sees of the travail of his soul when his people are won to him; he has been baptized with his baptism for his church, and he is no longer straitened, for his desire is fulfilled. The Lord is content with his eternal choice, content with his loving purposes, satisfied with the love which went forth from everlasting. He is well pleased in Jesus—well pleased with all the glorious purposes which are connected with his dear Son, and with those who are in him. He has a calm content in the people of his choice, as he sees them in Christ. This is a good ground for our having a deep satisfaction of heart also. We are not what we would be; but then we are not what we shall be. We advance slowly; but then we advance surely. The end is secured by omnipotent grace. It is right that we should be discontented with ourselves, yet this holy restlessness should not rob us of our perfect peace in Christ Jesus. If the Lord hath rest in us, shall we not have rest in him? If he rests in his love, cannot we rest in it?

My heart is comforted as I plainly see in these words love unchanging, love abiding, love eternal: "he will rest in his love." Jehovah changes not. Being married to his people, "he hateth putting away." Immutability is written on his heart. The turtle-dove, when he has once chosen his mate, remains faithful throughout life, and if the beloved dies, he will, in many cases, pine away with grief for her, for his life is wrapped up in hers. Even so our Lord hath made his choice of his beloved, and he will never change it: he died for his church, and so long as he lives he will remember his own love, and what it cost him: "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" "He will rest in his love."

The love of God to us is undisturbed: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding," dwells with his love: he is not disquieted about it, but peacefully loves, and is never moved. The calm of God is wonderful to contemplate: his infallible knowledge and infinite power put him beyond fear or question. He sees no cause of alarm as to his redeemed, nor as to the cause of truth and the reign of righteousness. As to his true church, he knows that she is right, or that he will make her right. She is being transformed into the image of Jesus, and he rests in the full assurance that the image will ere long be complete. He can carry out his own purposes in his own way and time. He can see the harvest as well as the sowing; therefore he doth "rest in his love." You have seen a mother wash her child, and as she washes its face the child perhaps is crying, for it does not for the present enjoy the cleansing operation. Does the mother share the child's grief? Does she also cry? Oh, no! she rejoices over her babe, and rests in her love, knowing that the light affliction of the little one will work its real good. Often our griefs are no deeper than the cry of a child because of the soap in its eyes. While the church is being washed with tribulations and persecutions, God is resting in his love. You and I are wearying,

but God is resting.

"He shall rest in his love." The Hebrew of this line is, "He shall be silent in his love." His happiness in his love is so great, that he does not express it, but keeps a happy silence. His is a joy too deep for words. No language can express the joy of God in his love; and therefore he uses no words. Silence in this case is infinitely expressive. One of the old commentators says, "He is deaf and dumb in his love," as if he heard no voice of accusation against his chosen, and would not speak a word of upbraiding to her. Remember the silence of Jesus, and expound this text thereby.

Sometimes also the Lord does not speak to his people: we cannot get a cheering word from him; and then we sigh for a promise, and long for a visit of his love; but if he be thus silent, let us know that he is only silent in his love. It is not the silence of wrath, but of love. His love is not changed, even though he does not comfort us.

"His thoughts are high, his love is wise,  
His wounds a cure intend;  
And though he does not always smile,  
He loves unto the end."

When he does not answer our prayers with his hand, he yet hears them with his heart. Denials are only another form of the same love which grants our petitions. He loves us, and sometimes shows that love better by not giving us what we ask than he could do if he spoke the sweetest promise which the ear has ever heard. I prize this sentence: "He shall rest in his love." My God, thou art perfectly content with thy church after all, because thou knowest what she is to be. Thou seest how fair she will be when she comes forth from the washing, having put on her beautiful garments. Lo, the sun goes down, and we mortals dread the endless darkness; but thou, great God, seest the morning, and thou knowest that in the hours of darkness dews will fall which shall refresh thy garden. Ours is the measure of an hour, and thine the judgment of eternity, therefore we will correct our short-sighted judgment by thine infallible knowledge, and rest with thee.

## PROMISE #5 HE WILL REJOICE OVER YOU WITH SINGING

**He will rejoice over you with singing** (He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy-NAS) - "He shouts for joy over you." (NET); "He will exult over you with loud singing." (ESV); "He will delight in you with shouts of joy." (HCSB); "He will take great delight in you." (NIV)

**Maclaren** - We are often told that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is a stern and repellent God, and the religion of the Old Testament is gloomy and servile. But such a misconception is hard to maintain in the face of such words as these.

**F B Meyer** - It is much to hear a lark sing, as if its throat must be torn by the torrent of melody; more to hear a child sing as it comes down a woodland path in spring, checkered with sunlight falling on blue hyacinths and yellow primroses; more still to hear an angel sing, as the lone messenger of God breaks into melody to cheer himself on some distant journey from the Home of Song; more still to have heard our Saviour sing in the days of His earthly ministry, when He joined His disciples in the Jewish Hallel (Mt 26:30, Mk 14:26): but what will it not be when the great God Himself breaks into song, to celebrate an accomplished work, an emancipated world, a redeemed race, a Bride won for His Son!

**Rejoice** ([01523](#))(**gil**) means to be glad, be joyful, be in "a state of an attitude or feeling of favorable circumstance. This joy may be expressed in song, shouts, or even joyous shrieks and calls." (Swanson) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **rejoice** with the verb **euphraino** which means in active voice to make glad or cheer up someone (eg, used in Ps 19:8 of God's precepts rejoicing the heart), but as used here in the passive voice means to be merry, to rejoice, to celebrate, to be jubilant (Acts 2:26). For example,

**Gil** - 44v - 1Chr 16:31; Ps 2:11; 9:14; 13:4f; 14:7; 16:9; 21:1; 31:7; 32:11; 35:9; 48:11; 51:8; 53:6; 89:16; 96:11; 97:1, 8; 118:24; 149:2; Pr 2:14; 23:24f; 24:17; Song 1:4; Isa 9:3; 25:9; 29:19; 35:1f; 41:16; 49:13; 61:10; 65:18f; 66:10; Hos 10:5; Joel 2:21, 23; Hab 1:15; 3:18; Zeph 3:17; Zech 9:9; 10:7. **NAS Usage:** cry(1), exult(1), glad(3), rejoice(38), rejoiced(1), rejoices(1).

Isaiah records a promise to Israel, but applicable to all God's children...

"As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you." (Isa 62:5b)

**Shouts of joy** ("with loud singing" ESV) ([07440](#))(**rinnah** from **ranan** = to give a ringing cry, shout with joy [Zeph 3:14, Job 3:7, 20:5, Ps 63:5], moan, yell) describes a ringing cry, a joyful cry, joyful singing (2Chr 20:22). In some contexts **rinnah** is a pleading, a cry

communicating some request (1Ki 8:28). Sometimes **rinnah** is a shout or loud communication of warning (1Ki 22:36). **Rinnah** can be a cry of joy at the destruction of the wicked (Pr. 11:10; Isa 14:7)

**Rinnah** - 33v - 1Kgs 8:28; 22:36; 2Chr 6:19; 20:22; Ps 17:1; 30:5; 42:4; 47:1; 61:1; 88:2; 105:43; 106:44; 107:22; 118:15; 119:169; 126:2, 5f; 142:6; Pr 11:10; Isa 14:7; 35:10; 43:14; 44:23; 48:20; 49:13; 51:11; 54:1; 55:12; Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:12; Zeph 3:17 **NAS Usage**: cry(12), joy(2), joyful shout(1), joyful shouting(9), joyful singing(1), rejoice(1), shout of joy(3), shouts of joy(3), singing(1). Here are some representative uses of **rinnah**...

For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But **ashout of joy** comes in the morning. (Ps 30:5)

The sound of **joyful shouting** and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. (Ps 118:15)

Those who sow in tears shall reap with **joyful shouting**. (Ps 126:5)

**John Piper**: Can you imagine what it would be like if you could hear God singing? Remember that it was merely a spoken word that brought the universe into existence. What would happen if God lifted up his voice and not only spoke but sang?...When I think of the voice of God singing, I hear the booming of Niagara Falls mingled with the trickle of a mossy mountain stream. I hear the blast of Mt. St. Helens mingled with a kitten's purr. I hear the power of an East Coast hurricane and the barely audible puff of a night snow in the woods. And I hear the unimaginable roar of the sun 865,000 miles thick, one million three hundred thousand times bigger than the earth, and nothing but fire, 1,000,000 degrees centigrade, on the cooler surface of the corona. But I hear this unimaginable roar mingled with the tender, warm crackling of the living room logs on a cozy winter's night. And when I hear this singing I stand dumbfounded, staggered, speechless that he is singing over me. He is rejoicing over my good with all His heart and with all His soul (cf. Jeremiah 32:41)! ([Zephaniah 3:17 - The Pleasure of God in the Good of His People](#))

**Wiersbe** - Our God is a "singing" God. God the Father sings to the Jewish remnant entering the kingdom (Zeph 3:17). God the Son sang at the close of the Passover Feast, and then went to the garden to pray (Matt. 26:30). He also sang after His triumphant resurrection from the dead (Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:12). God the Spirit sings today through the hearts and lips of Christians who praise God in the Spirit (Eph 5:18-21).

**M Henry** - He is....mighty, is almighty, is able to do all that for us that we need and can desire...O the condescensions of divine grace! The great God not only loves his saints, but he loves to love them, is pleased that he has pitched upon these objects of his love. He will joy over them with singing. He that is grieved for the sin of sinners rejoices in the graces and services of the saints, and is ready to express that joy by singing over them. The Lord takes pleasure in those that fear him, and in them Jesus Christ will shortly be glorified and admired."

As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride (cf. Isa 62:4), the Lord will exult over His people with gladness and song, resting in quiet ecstasy over His people in whom is all His delight (cf. Dt30:9; Isa54). This is a love too great for words.

**Henry Morris** - Except for the time when Jesus sang a hymn with His disciples at the last supper (Matthew 26:30), this is the only place in the Bible where we read of God actually singing. This beautiful verse also reveals Him as a mighty God, a saving God, a loving God, a rejoicing God and a resting God. The great millennial kingdom age will be a time of joy and singing and a time of resting, even for God.

**Scotfield** - For the LORD's own, His final word is not of anger, as with the unbelieving nations, but of love, as expressed in this beautiful verse. When it comes to His people, chastised and forgiven, the LORD rests His case in love and rejoicing.

**Keith Mathison** - Stop and consider this for a moment. The Lord God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Holy One of Israel, rejoices over the remnant. He exults over the faithful with loud singing. Loud singing! Rejoicing! This is not Aristotle's "Unmoved Mover." This is not the abstract god of the philosophers. This is our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this God, the living God, rejoices over His faithful remnant with gladness and loud singing. Does this remind you of any New Testament passage? Consider the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The father in this parable, who represents God, sees his prodigal son returning home, and what does he do? He runs to him, embraces him, and kisses him. This was not something a dignified, elderly Jewish man did at the time. Jesus tells us there is joy in heaven when a sinner repents (Luke 15:7). It is not only the angels who rejoice. God rejoices as well. Zephaniah 3:17 vividly reminds us that our Father in heaven is not some distant deist god who cares nothing for us. It is a picture of profound and deep personal love, the kind of love that would sacrifice all for our sake. The kind of love that did sacrifice all for our sake. To Him be all glory, honor, and power. (Tabletalk)

**Spurgeon** - The last word is, however, the most wonderful of all: **'He will joy over thee with singing.'** Think of the great Jehovah

singing! Can you imagine it? Is it possible to conceive of the Deity breaking into a song: Father, Son and Holy Ghost together singing over the redeemed? God is so happy in the love which He bears to his people that He breaks the eternal silence, and sun and moon and stars with astonishment hear God chanting a hymn of joy. Among Orientals a certain song is sung by the bridegroom when he receives his bride: it is intended to declare his joy in her, and in the fact that his marriage has come. Here, by the pen of inspiration, the God of love is pictured as married to his church, and so rejoicing in her that he rejoices over her with singing. If God sings, shall not we sing? He did not sing when he made the world. No; he looked upon it, and simply said that it was good. The angels sang, the sons of God shouted for joy: creation was very wonderful to them, but it was not much to God, Who could have made thousands of worlds by His mere will. Creation could not make Him sing; and I do not even know that Providence ever brought a note of joy from Him, for He could arrange a thousand kingdoms of providence with ease. But when it came to redemption, that cost Him dear. Here He spent eternal thought, and drew up a covenant with infinite wisdom. Here He gave his Only-begotten Son, and put him to grief to ransom His beloved ones. When all was done, and the Lord saw what became of it in the salvation of His redeemed, then He rejoiced after a divine manner. What must the joy be which recompenses Gethsemane and Calvary! Here we are among the Atlantic waves. The Lord God receives an accession to the infinity of His joy in the thought of His redeemed people. "He shall rejoice over thee with singing." I tremble while I speak of such themes, lest I should say a word that should dishonor the matchless mystery; but still we are glad to note what is written, and we are bound to take comfort from it. Let us have sympathy with the joy of the Lord, for this will be our strength.

**Warren Wiersbe ([Old Testament Words for Today](#) - highly recommended)** - We need not fret, for God sees what is coming. The prophet writes about two future "days" that relate to the Jewish people: a judgment day when the nations will attack Jerusalem (Zeph. 1:1–3:7), and a joyful day when the Lord will rescue his people (Zeph 3:8–20). "Do not fear," the Lord says to them, for he is with them to deliver them (Zeph 3:16). We can depend on his love, for it will never fail. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). As the psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). Our God not only saves, but he sings. In our text we see God the Father as a loving parent, holding a troubled child in his lap and singing the child to sleep. Imagine! The Father tenderly holds us and soothes our troubled heart. In Matthew 26:30, we find God the Son singing at the Passover feast before going to the garden to pray and then to Calvary to die. We also find Jesus singing after his resurrection victory (Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:12). The Holy Spirit sings in and through God's church when we assemble for worship and are yielded to him (Eph. 5:18–21). There are times in the Christian's life when nothing seems to bring peace. Circumstances are pressing, people are too busy to listen, and even our prayers seem ineffective. That's the time to be silent before the Lord and let him sing you into peace. Don't try to explain it, because God's peace "surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7); just enjoy it. But there is even more. The Lord not only sees what is coming, saves us from judgment, and sings to us, but he rejoices over us. We can make God happy! Parents cherish those times when their children bring great joy to their hearts because of some act of spontaneous obedience and love or because of something very special the children have done just to please them. It isn't enough to simply know God's will and do it; we must also do it to please him. Jonah finally got to Nineveh and delivered God's message, but his attitude was all wrong. He hated the people to whom he was preaching and finally went outside the city and pouted, hoping God would destroy it (Jonah 4). Jesus said, "I always do those things that please Him" (John 8:29). The Father wants us to "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him" (Col. 1:10). God told the priests in Malachi's day, "I have no pleasure in you" (Mal. 1:10). Our living should be like our giving, "not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). "He will be quiet in his love" is another way to translate our text. People who constantly tell us they love us can be as irritating as those who rarely tell us, but where our love is growing deeper, it is expressed in silence as well as in speech. When the Lord is not speaking to us or doing things for us, he is still loving us; and the "silent love" can be enjoyed just as much as if not more than spoken words. Babies who cannot speak express love to their parents, and parents can express and tell their love to their children even when they are silent. Call for silence in a worship service and people become nervous. With longtime friends, there is a silence of communion that says more than words, and this includes God's silent love for us. Is the Father rejoicing over us?

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,  
In those who hope in His mercy. Psalm 147:11

**Zeph 3:18 "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts (cp La 2:6) -- They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them.**

**I will gather** - Jehovah Who had chastised Israel and caused the nation to be exiled and then dispersed throughout the nations, will in the end **gather** them together. **John Phillips** says "True Israelites-the believing remnant who will have been scattered, hiding, living in fear for their lives during the days of the antichrist, and grieving over the termination of the temple services-will be gathered home."

**Appointed feasts** - Attendance at the Tabernacle was required of all men for three festivals each year (Ex 23:14-17): Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:15); Harvest or Pentecost (Lv 23:15-23); and Ingathering, or Booths (Lv 23:34-43). The godly remnant would **grieve** while in exile, for they would have no Holy Temple at which to celebrate their appointed feasts.

**I will** (one "I am") - Jehovah is speaking and promises 6 times (including "I am" Zeph 3:19) in Zeph 3:18-20 that He will bring about a miraculous restoration of Israel.

**The reproach of exile** - The fact that the Jews were cast out of their "promised land" was a source of scorn, contempt, disapproval, disgrace.

**Reproach** (02781)(**cherpah** from **charaph** = to reproach) means disgrace, contempt (dishonor) (1Sa 11:2), scorn, taunt, slur as when harmful and/or insulting words are spoken (Ps 69:10). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **maseth** with the noun **oneidismos** which means reproach, which is an expression of rebuke or disapproval. To insult, abuse, disgrace. The idea in some context (Ro 15:3, He 10:33, 11:26, 13:13) is that the insult or reviling represents unjustifiable verbal abuse inflicted on someone. In other contexts it describes justifiable disgrace or reproach (1Ti 3:7).

**Isaiah** offers a similar hope filled prophecy...

He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the **reproach** of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. (Isa 25:8)

**Vine - Reproach** has a twofold usage. On the one hand, the word denotes the state in which one finds himself. The unmarried woman (Isa 4:1) or the woman without children (Ge 30:23) carried a sense of disgrace in a society where marriage and fertility were highly spoken of. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile brought Judah to the state of "reproach" (Da 9:16). On the other hand, the disgrace found in a person or a nation became the occasion for taunting the oppressed. The disgraced received abuse by the words spoken against them and by the rumors which were spread about them. Whatever the occasion of the disgrace was whether defeat in battle, exile, or enmity, the psalmist prayed for deliverance from the "reproach" (Ps. 119:22). The verbal abuse that could be heaped upon the unfortunate is best evidenced by the synonyms found with **cherpah** in Jer 24:9 (reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse.) Several prophets predicted that Israel's judgment was partly to be experienced by the humiliating "**reproach**" of the nations: (Jer 29:18; cf. Ezek 5:14). However, the Lord graciously promised to remove the "**reproach**" at the accomplishment of His purpose: (Isa. 25:8). The Septuagint translations are: oneidismos ("reproach; reviling; disgrace; insult") and oneidos ("disgrace; reproach; insult"). ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#))

**Cherpah** - 72v - Gen 30:23; 34:14; Josh 5:9; 1 Sam 11:2; 17:26; 25:39; 2 Sam 13:13; Neh 1:3; 2:17; 4:4; 5:9; Job 16:10; 19:5; Ps 15:3; 22:6; 31:11; 39:8; 44:13; 69:7, 9f, 19f; 71:13; 74:22; 78:66; 79:4, 12; 89:41, 50; 109:25; 119:22, 39; Prov 6:33; 18:3; Isa 4:1; 25:8; 30:5; 47:3; 51:7; 54:4; Jer 6:10; 15:15; 20:8; 23:40; 24:9; 29:18; 31:19; 42:18; 44:8, 12; 49:13; 51:51; Lam 3:30, 61; 5:1; Ezek 5:14f; 16:57; 21:28; 22:4; 36:15, 30; Dan 9:16; 11:18; 12:2; Hos 12:14; Joel 2:17, 19; Mic 6:16; Zeph 2:8; 3:18. **NAS Usage:** contempt(1), disgrace(5), reproach(60), reproaches(2), scorn(3), shame(1), taunting(1).

**A burden to them** - Generally a literal burden is something carried or borne with labor and difficulty and figuratively as used here it refers to that which is oppressive or worrisome.

**Burden** (04864)(**maseth** from **nasa** = to lift, carry) an uprising, an utterance, a burden, a portion (Ge 43:34). Maseth refers primarily to something that rises up or is lifted up -- e.g., smoke in a smoke signal (Jdg. 20:38, 40); hands in a sacrifice of praise (Ps 141:2). Figuratively, maseth indicates a reproach lifted up as a burden, thus causing hardship and/or distress (Zeph 3:18).

**Maseth** - 13v - Gen 43:34; Jdg 20:38, 40; 2 Sam 11:8; 2Chr 24:6, 9; Esther 2:18; Ps 141:2; Jer 6:1; 40:5; Ezek 20:40; Amos 5:11; Zeph 3:18. **NAS Usage:** burden(1), cloud(2), gift(1), gifts(2), levy(2), lifting(1), portion(1), portions(1), present(1), signal(1), tribute(1).

**Wycliffe** - Jewish people have not been able to enjoy their religion in the countries of their dispersion because of the **reproach** heaped (**Ed:** cf idea of a "burden") upon them by their heathen neighbors (cf. Ps 137)

**Zeph 3:19 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors, I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth."**

**Behold** - This Hebrew word "hinneh" directs the reader to give special attention to the text. **Spurgeon** adds that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanical books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation.

**At that time** - Remember whenever you encounter an **expression of time**, always pause and ponder, asking to what time is the writer referring? In this context, it is the last days, the Day of the LORD, the time when God finally and fully eliminates all of the enemies of Israel (and of God).

**I will save (deliver, help)** ([03467](#))(see **yasha'**) - The Messiah, the Mighty Warrior, Christ Jesus, Who alone can accomplish this deliverance.

**John Phillips** - Israel's afflicted people will be like a flock of lame and footsore sheep, but their Shepherd will come to guide them home. When He comes, the Jews will be able to sing Psalm 23 as it has never been sung before.

**I will save the lame** - There is a parallel passage in Micah 4 where Jehovah promises...

I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion (cf Zeph 3:15) from now on and forever. (Micah 4:7-**note**)

**I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth** (this truth is so significant it is repeated in Zeph 3:20) - Israel is today despised and hated by the nations of the world, but in this future day of restoration, she will receive praise and renown from the world! This supernatural transformation will be the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise to the Chosen People in Dt 26:18-19. In that day **at that time** the promises to Israel in Isaiah will be fulfilled...

The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate. 3 You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 4 It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; but you will be called, "My delight is in her," And your land, "Married"; for the LORD delights in you, and to Him your land will be married....And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa 62:2-4, 7)

**John Phillips** - There is hardly a country on earth where Jews have not been insulted, vilified, hated, and persecuted. But in the millennial age, their management of public affairs will be so brilliant, their love for the Lord will be so personable and convincing, their influence and power will be so obvious, and their wisdom, insight, and skill will be so beneficial that all nations will hail them and welcome them-especially the nations that have cursed them and ridiculed them most.

**Zeph 3:20 "At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD**

**At that time...at the time**- Again we find an **expression of time**, which begs the question as to the what time to which the writer referring? Again, the context is the last days, the Day of the LORD, the time when the King (Messiah) returns and He finally and fully eliminates all of the enemies of Israel and fulfills His promises to the Chosen People to **gather** them **together** and **bring** them **in** to their land, the promised land which Israel had never fully occupied (Ge 15:18). In the last days they will full occupy the land Jehovah had promised to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Gather** (Zeph 3:18, 19, 20) - Although Zephaniah uses different Hebrew verbs, this is clearly a repeated thought in this "restoration" section of his prophecy. Today, Israel is a continual source of international contention. They are constantly blamed for the horrible lot of the Palestinians (and to be fair, they probably desire some of the blame, but not all!) When the King (Zeph 3:15) returns, Israel will be re-gathered into their land. It is tragic, sad, amazing how one can be so wedded to a "system" of theology that they fail to read passages such as these literally and fail to see (or acknowledge) that these are speaking of the literal nation of Israel who has been scattered and maligned for over two millennia. Zephaniah is not speaking of the "re-gathering" of the Church (eg, in [Wesley's Explanatory Notes](#) on Zeph 3:20, he ascribes this section to the church! John Calvin takes a similar non-literal approach.), but of the future regathering and restoration of Israel, something that has not happened. Yes, Israel is back in the land, but they are hardly there in **renown and praise** (which is emphasized in this last section)!

**Renown and praise** (Repeated in Zeph 3:19) - Usually Scripture speaks about praise that should be brought to God, but here we see the praise that God will bring to His people! God is the Giver (James 1:17). Israel did not merit this **renown and praise**. This is "maximum grace!"

**Wiersbe** - Where once the Jewish nation brought shame and disgrace to God's name and were poor witnesses to the Gentiles, now Israel will bring honor and praise to the Lord their God and reveal to the Gentile nations the glory of His name. Israel will receive honor from the Gentiles and give the glory to the Lord. The state of Israel was "born" on May 14, 1948, but that event, significant as it is, was not the fulfillment of God's promise to regather His people and restore their fortunes. That promise will be fulfilled in the

end times, after the Jews have experienced the Day of the Lord and been prepared to see their Messiah. But God's promises will be fulfilled, and God's people Israel will be restored and bring worldwide glory to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Morris** - For thousands of years, including today, the name Israelite or Jew has been a reproach and a byword in all nations. In the day when the Lord will "turn back your captivity," however, it will not be a reproach but "a praise!"

**Comment** - To reiterate a previous point - If these passages are not interpreted literally and in their historical context, and instead are spiritualized or allegorized, they will not be interpreted accurately. Many of the older commentaries prior to 1900, replace Israel with the Church, so that the clear promises in Zephaniah 3:9-20 that relate to the nation of Israel are given instead to the Church. For example, Matthew Henry (who is a wonderful devotional writer in my opinion) commenting on Zephaniah 3 said "The church shall be as honorable as ever she had been despicable." Even Keil and Delitzsch are more literal than Henry writing "For although the promise retains its perfect validity in the case of the Christian church, which is gathered out of both Jews and Gentiles, and will receive its final accomplishment in the completion of the kingdom of heaven founded by Christ on the earth, the allusion to the Gentile Christians falls quite into the background in the picture of salvation in Zephaniah 3:11-20, and **the prophet's eye is simply directed towards Israel**, and the salvation reserved for the rescued the *elect of Israel* .

**Renown** - More literally this reads "'I will make you into a name and praise among all the peoples of the earth." Here the word "name" carries the nuance of "good reputation." (NET Note)

**When** - Another **expression of time**. Israel's renown and praise will be consummated before the world when the believing Jewish remnant is gathered back into the land of their fathers, never to be dispersed again.

**Restore** (07725)(**shub** 948x in OT) means to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **shub** with the verb **epistrepheo**, which means means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. In English restore means to bring back to or put back into a former or original state after depletion or loss. Keep the context in mind -- Israel (the Northern 10 tribes) had already been exiled in 722BC. Judah would soon be exiled (586BC). And eventually the Jews would be dispersed throughout the entire world. But a day is coming (at that time...at the time) when she will be brought back to the land God had originally promised the patriarchs. **Recall the theme of Zephaniah** - Judgment and doom are certain unless there is repentance. Only repentance will bring hope and restoration. God grants the Jewish remnant this repentance in the last days.

**Before your eyes** - "Incredible as the event may seem, your own eyes with delight shall see it. You will scarcely believe it for joy, but the testimony of your own eyes shall convince you of the delightful reality (cp Lk 24:41)." (Jamieson)

**John Phillips** - The book of Zephaniah begins with a king and ends with a King. The prophet referred to a past king (his kinsman Hezekiah), a present king (his distant cousin Josiah), and a promised King. Hezekiah and Josiah were both good kings and both had bad fathers and evil sons; both failed, in spite of their sincere efforts, to bring the Hebrew people back to God. Hence the Hebrews needed another King, a King of kings (Rev 19:16), not just another king of the Jews. Earnestly hoping for the coming of this King, Zephaniah put down his pen; and earnestly hoping that this King will come soon, we ponder what Zephaniah penned.

**Says the LORD** (Yahweh has spoken. Zeph 3:20HCSB) - This is a solemn vow by God to do as He has promised. These are the last words of Zephaniah's prophecy. Beloved child of God, Jehovah the Self-existent One, the Unchangeable One, the Ever-living One has said it and thus He will do it! Amen!

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**J C Philpot - Zephaniah 3:17** - What a mighty God we have to deal with! And what would suit our case but a mighty God? Have we not mighty sins? Have we not mighty trials? Have we not mighty temptations? Have we not mighty foes and mighty fears? And who is to deliver us from all this mighty host except the mighty God? It is not a little God (if I may use the expression) that will do for God's people. They need a mighty God because they are in circumstances where none but a mighty God can interfere in their behalf. Why, if you did not know feelingly and experimentally your mighty sins, your mighty trials, your mighty temptations, and your mighty fears, you would not want a mighty God. This sense of our weakness and His power, of our misery and His mercy, of our ruin and His recovery, of the abounding of our sin and the superaboundings of His grace—a feeling sense, I say, of these opposite yet harmonious things brings us to have personal, experimental dealings with God; and it is in these personal dealings with God that the life of all religion consists. O what a poor, dead, useless religion is that in which there are no personal dealings with God—no calling upon His holy name out of a sincere heart; no seeking of His face, or imploring of His favour; no lying at His feet and begging of Him to appear; no pitiable, lamentable case for Him to have compassion upon; no wounds or sores for Him to heal, no leprosy to

cleanse, no enemies to put to the rout, no fears to dispel, and, I may almost say, no soul to save! And yet such is the religion of thousands. They draw near to God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him, and whilst they outwardly say, "Lord, Lord," they inwardly say, "This man shall have no dominion over us." If you differ from them, and want a God near at hand not afar off, a mighty God in the very midst of your soul, of your thoughts, desires, and affections, you may well bless Him for the grace which has made you to differ, and thankfully bow your neck to sufferings and trials, as means in His hand to bring you and Him together. (Ears from Harvested Sheaves.)

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#### **A W Tozer - Emotion on a High Plane—Zephaniah 3:17 -**

Now the Bible teaches that there is something in God which is like emotion. He experiences something which is like our love, something that is like our grief, that is like our joy. And we need not fear to go along with this conception of what God is like. Faith would easily draw the inference that since we were made in His image, He would have qualities like our own. But such an inference, while satisfying to the mind, is not the ground of our belief. God has said certain things about Himself, and these furnish all the grounds we require. The LORD 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. (Zephaniah 3:17) This is but one verse among thousands which serve to form our rational picture of what God is like, and they tell us plainly that God feels something like our love, like our joy, and what He feels makes Him act very much as we would in a similar situation; He rejoices over His loved ones with joy and singing. Here is emotion on as high a plane as it can ever be seen, emotion flowing out of the heart of the heart of God.

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#### **J. R. Miller, "Daily Bible Readings in the Life of Christ" 1890 How dear we are to Christ!**

"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home!" (Luke 15:4-6) He does not drive the poor weary sheep home. This is not the way of the gentle shepherd. He stoops down and lifts it up, and lays it on his own shoulder and carries it back. There is a wonderful lesson in this little touch in the picture — let us be sure that we understand just what the words say.

We all know that Christ carried our sin when He went to the cross. We know, too, that we may cast our burdens upon Him. But here we learn that Christ wants to carry, not our sins only, not our burdens and cares only — but we ourselves! The shepherd took up the sheep itself and laid it upon his shoulders!

Jesus does this "joyfully". Can this be true? Has Jesus really interest enough in any human being on this earth — to be concerned by his wandering, and joyful by his recovery? The thought overwhelms me!

We can understand a shepherd's rejoicing when he bears home a sheep that has been lost. We can understand a mother's joy when her lost child is brought to her door. But that the heart of Jesus rejoiced when He finds us, and joyfully puts us on His shoulders — seems too amazing to be true! Yet here the word stands!

**Then listen to Zephaniah:** "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing!" (Zephaniah 3:17)

How dear we are to Christ!

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**A W Pink** - What a marvelous statement is that in Zephaniah 3:17: "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with his love, He will rejoice over you with singing." The great God will yet say, "I am satisfied: here will I rest. This is My inheritance that I will live upon forever, even the glory which I have bestowed on redeemed sinners." Surely we have to say with the Psalmist, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me—too great for me to know!" (Ps 139:6). May Divine grace enable us to walk worthy of our high calling. (From [Comfort for Christians: God's Inheritance](#) - [See the Index for the 16 Articles such as "No Condemnation," etc](#))

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#### **Octavius Winslow** - God Resting in His Love - "He will rest in his love." Zephaniah 3:17

From his book - [GRACE AND TRUTH](#)

It must be the mournful acknowledgment of every spiritual mind, that, after all the clear revealings of truth, and



the deep teachings of the Holy Spirit, our views of what God is in Himself, of what He is to His people, and, we may add, of what His people are to Him, fall so far below what they ought to be. May not this disproportion of our conception of their magnitude and preciousness be traced, in a great measure, to the deficiency of our faith in the plain matter of fact statements of God's word? We stumble at the very simplicity of the truth. Take, for illustration, that single declaration- "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The most unhesitating, simple belief of this, shall we say, matter of fact, yet astounding announcement- faith just receiving it without any qualification, or demur, exactly as it is found in the Bible- will teach us more in one hour of what God in Christ is to a poor penitential believer, than a century of human teaching. The truth is, we do but half believe the word of God. We doubt, we hesitate, we reason, we cavil, we add to it, and we take from it- we receive just so much as we can understand, and reject just so much as is not palatable or clear; and the sad consequence is, God reproves our unbelief by leaving us for a season to the effects of our unbelief.

But although we believe not, yet He remains true to every jot and tittle of His revealed truth. The imperfect credence which we give to its statements cannot invalidate His promise, nor alter the word that has gone out of His mouth. In the midst of all our slowness of heart to believe, and insensibility of heart to love, "He abides faithful." There, more immovable than the rock of the ocean, more impregnable than the battlements of heaven, firmer than the pillars of the universe, our God, our own covenant God abides, for "he will rest in his love."

In conducting these pages to a close, what theme of holier, tenderer interest, what view of God more elevating, soothing, and sanctifying, could we with greater appropriateness leave upon the mind of the pious reader, than 'God resting in His love'? May the Holy Spirit impart to us an enlightened view and a personal possession of this truth.

The perfection in which God is described as resting is, His love. That He should rest in this, and not in His holiness, or His wisdom, or His power, conveys the most exalted view of its transcendent excellence, and of His own ineffable delight in it. For what is God's love? It is not so much a perfection of His being as it is the essence of His being, for "God is love." It would seem as impossible to separate love from God, as to separate God from Himself. In resting in His love, He rests in Himself. Here, then, is one of the most sublime conceptions of God ever presented to the human mind. The great, Eternal God resting- from no exhaustion nor weariness- in His love. What infinite satisfaction with, and what inconceivable delight in Himself, does this Divine posture express! There is not, perhaps, another view of God in the Bible which sets forth this truth with such vividness as this.

In resting in His love towards His saints, He must rest in the Son of His love. "God was in Christ." It was only in Christ that the Divine perfections employed in saving man could meet, and harmonize, and repose. But one object could reconcile their conflicting interests, maintain the honor of each, and unite and blend them all in one glorious expedient of human salvation, as effectual to man as it was honoring to God- that one object was God's only and beloved Son. The essential dignity of the Son of God was such, that all agreed that the rebel sinner should live if the Divine Savior would die. Divine justice- vindicating holiness, and sustained by truth- pursued the victim of its vengeance until it arrived at the cross. There it beheld the provision of mercy, the gift of love- God's dear Son, suspended, bleeding, dying in the place of the sinner, "giving himself a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor"- and justice was stayed, stood still, and adored. It could proceed no further in arrest of the rebel- it had found full, ample, perfect satisfaction, and returned, exclaiming, "it is enough!" and God rested in His love.

Yes! Jesus is the rest of the Father. Listen to the declaration which He loved so frequently to repeat- "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." With what holy satisfaction, with what fond complacency and delight does He rest in Him who has so revealed His glory, and so honored His name! How dear to His heart Jesus is, what mind can conceive, what language can express? Resting in Him, delighting in His person, and fully satisfied with His work, an object ever in His presence and in His heart, the Father is prepared to welcome and to bless all who approach Him in the name of His Son. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand." And again, "The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me." Therefore Jesus could say, "Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you." Behold the Father resting in His love- resting in the Son of His love- resting in the gift of His love. Approach Him in the name of Jesus, and ask what you will, "he will give it to you."

God rests in the people of His love. It had been no selfishness in God had He loved Himself solely and supremely, to the exclusion of every other object. He might have remained eternally happy in the

contemplation of His own glory, delighting in His own infinite excellence, and resting in His love to Himself. But this would have been almost impossible. Himself essential Love, the infinite ocean of benevolence, it would appear that He could not rest in the abstract contemplation of His love, but must have other objects upon whom to lavish, and with whom to share it. It pleased Him, therefore, of His own free unconditional choice, to take out of the fallen race of man, a church, a people, whom He, "loved with an everlasting love," and had elected in Christ their Head. "According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him; in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved." "The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are his." They are a people for the most, part hidden from the knowledge of the world, and but few in number.

How few there are among the many professing Christ, who yet know anything by experience of the great and wondrous life of faith! Only they who are taught by the Spirit the plague of their own hearts can possibly know it. How few there are who appear to possess vital religion in their souls! How few choose Christ with His cross! The great mass of professors are aiming to separate Christ and His cross! They would sincerely bear the name of Christ, and be accounted as the followers of Christ, and do something for the cause of Christ, but they hide His cross, they are ashamed of His cross, they shrink from His cross. Christ and His outward lowliness, Christ and His poverty, Christ and His humiliation, Christ and the world's despising, form no part of their creed nor their religion. But Christ and the world, Christ and the popular voice, Christ and the slavery of sin, Christ and an unhumbled spirit, Christ and a love of money, and ease, and self-indulgence, make up the religion of vast numbers who yet profess, and call themselves Christians. Awful fact! How forcibly does it remind us of the solemn words of Jesus, "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Let us, in view of this solemn truth, search our hearts, and ask the searching of God's Spirit; and in ascertaining the real state of our souls, let us take nothing for granted, rest not in past experience, nor in gifts, nor usefulness, but be satisfied only with the present, inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, God rests in the people of His love. They are precious, inconceivably precious to His heart. He keeps them as the apple of His eye. In their own view, they may be vile, polluted, worthless; but seen by Him in Jesus, He can, and He does say, to each one, "You are all beautiful, my love, I see no spot in you." Resting in Jesus, the Son of His love, He rests in His people, the objects of His love. He may afflict, and chasten, and rebuke, and try them, and permit them to be severely assailed; He may even hide His face from them for a little moment, and speak harshly to theirs, like Joseph to his brethren: He may disturb their resting-places, and scatter their creature mercies to the wind- nevertheless, you saints of God, "The Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over you with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over you with singing."

Nor will He be satisfied until He has gathered them all around Him within His house in heaven- Jesus presenting to Him the whole body, 'a glorious Church,' exclaiming, "Behold, I and the children whom you have given me." Then, and not until then, will the joy of the Lord over His Church be full. Then, and not until then, will His rest in the people of His love be complete.

God rests in the manifestation of His love. Even in our fallen state, with our impaired affections clinging to us, like the green ivy around a splendid ruin, we can understand something of this feeling. If love exists, where is the heart that can conceal the affection? It must, in some mode or other, express the sentiment it feels. If revealed only to God, the heart must unburden itself of its hidden, trembling emotion. But how delightful is the expression of affection! The parent feels it when he presses his little one to his fond heart. The mother, when she clasps her infant to her thrilling bosom. The friend, when he communes with his friend. But if this principle be so strong, and its expression so delightful, in such a nature as ours, all of whose affections are so sinful and selfish, what must it be in God!

Conceive, if it is possible, what must be the holy delight of God's heart in lavishing its affection upon His people; what must be the joy of Christ when He comes and manifests Himself to His saints as He does not unto the world. A benevolent mind delights in the exercise of benevolence. God is infinitely so. Infinite, therefore, must be the satisfaction of His heart, intense the delight of His soul, when He sheds abroad His love in the hearts of His people, when He draws near in the day that they call upon Him, and manifests Himself as a loving, tender, faithful Father. "You meet him that rejoices and works righteousness, those that remember you in your way." Since, then, the Father delights to unlock the springs of His love, and to fill the heart to overflowing, take your poor, timid, doubting heart, and place it beneath those springs, that it may be perfect in

love, and, perfected in love, all slavish fear will be expelled.

God rests in the immutability of His love. It is a love that knows no change in its character, and no variation in its degree. There never has been a period in which the love of God in Christ towards His people has been more or less than it is at this moment. It must have been great before conversion, because then it was that He gave His only begotten Son that they might live through Him. Then, too, it was He sent His own Spirit to regenerate their minds, and to make them new creatures in Christ Jesus. If He thus loved them before conversion, when they were yet sinners, do you think, dear reader, that His love can be less since conversion? Impossible! God rests in the unchangeableness of His love towards His saints. Nothing can move Him from it. Nothing can disturb His repose.

When He set His heart upon His people, He foresaw and foreknew all that was in them. He knew when they would revolt, when they would start aside like a broken bow, when they would stumble and fall. He knew all their waywardness, and folly, and ingratitude. "I knew that you would deal very treacherously," says God. And yet He loved them. Acquainted with their sin, does He not chasten it? and in chastening, does He withdraw His love from them? Listen to His own words- "If my children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail." What language can more strongly set forth the Lord's determination to correct the departures of His people, while yet resting in the unchangeableness of His love towards them?

The marginal rendering of the passage, which we have thus been briefly amplifying, is exceedingly beautiful and expressive: "He will be silent because of His love." Divine wrath is silent because love has hushed it. Divine justice is silent, because love has satisfied it. Sin is silent, because love has condemned it. Satan is silent, because love has vanquished him. God's love has silenced every voice but own. When an accusation was brought against a poor sinner in the presence of Jesus, and He was called upon to adjudicate in the case, it is recorded that He, "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." He was silent, because of His love!

And have we no accusers? Ah, yes, many and just. Conscience accuses, and Satan accuses, and sin accuses, and the world accuses- but Jesus accuses not; He is silent because of His love. They condemn loudly, fiercely, justly, but He never condemns. "And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground." Still not a word of condemnation breathed from His lips. He had been wronged, He had been sinned against, His own holy law had been broken, and the witnesses, many and malignant, are there to testify in truth against the sinner- but Jesus is silent, and silent in His love.

"Some write their wrongs in marble- He, more just,

Stooped down serene, and wrote His in the dust;

Trod under foot, the sport of every wind,

Swept from the earth, and blotted from His mind;

There, buried in the dust, He bade them lie,

And grieved He could not keep them from the Almighty's eye."

What sweet repose is here for the saints of God! Does God rest in His love? Then the believer in Jesus may rest in it too. Does Infinity find repose here? Then may a poor finite creature. Does Immanuel rest in it? Then may I, resting in Immanuel. If it is enough for Jehovah, surely it is enough for the people of Jehovah. Our dear Lord's exhortation harmonizes with this truth. "Abide in me." "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; continue in my love." Beloved reader, come and rest in this love- Jesus invites you to its blessed repose. Are you weary, tossed with tempest? Is there sadness in your spirit, sorrow in your heart, a cloud upon your mind? Is some crystal cistern broken, some fragrant flower withered, some fond and pleasant mercy gone? "Come," says Jesus, "and rest in my love- rest in the reality of my love- rest in the depth of my love- rest in the tenderness of my love- rest in the deathlessness of my love!"

O blessed rest! Poor, heart-broken sinner, weeping penitent, weary, laboring soul! What do you need? Mercy? It is in Christ. Forgiveness? It is in Christ. Acceptance? It is in Christ. The silencing power of love? It is in Christ. A reconciled Father, a pacified God? He is in Christ. All that you need is in Christ. Draw near, then, and rest in His love. The Father rests in Jesus- His justice rests in Jesus, His holiness rests in Jesus, His truth rests in Jesus- His power rests in Jesus- and in Jesus you too may rest! God rests in His love towards you,

because He rests in the Son of His love. And in the Son of His love your weary, jaded, trembling spirit may find full and eternal repose.

And whatever your present circumstances are, be the severity of your Father's dealings what it may, ever remember that He still rests in His love. Judging of Him by providences rather than by promises, your faith may become unhinged from this truth. But the standard by which you are to form your views of God's character is the same by which you are to judge of your own- His word. That word declares that He rests in His love, that He now rests in it, that He rests in it at the present time, and therefore He rests in it at the moment that His providences in your history are the darkest and most lowering. When to your view all things seem against you- when even God Himself seems against you, then is He resting with infinite satisfaction and delight in the love with which He has loved you from everlasting. And when all the mighty wheels of His providence are rapidly revolving, when event follows event, and convulsion succeeds convulsion; when your spirit is agitated, and your heart is alarmed, and your whole soul is awe-struck and appalled at the wonder-workings of His power, then is God calmly, serenely resting in His love towards you- unmoved, unruffled, unobscured by the things which convulse the universe.

If God thus rests in His love towards us, how jealous ought we to be of the fervor and fidelity of our love to Him! Ah! how inconstant, and wavering, and restless have been our affections! How little have we rested in our love to Christ! Other objects have attracted us away from it, and we have been as changeable as the wind, and as unstable as the sea. But let us watch over this holy affection, apart from which God takes no pleasure in our sacrifices or services. Let it be our aim to yield up whatever rivals Christ. He sacrificed all for the love He bore us; let us sacrifice all that He requires for the love we bear Him. Jesus is worthy- O how worthy- of our deepest, strongest, most self-consuming affection. And God, who gave us His Son, asks nothing in return but that we give Him our heart. Let His love, then, constrain us to a more unreserved obedience, to a holier walk, to a more ardent, inseparable attachment to Him, to His people, and to His cause.

Let us, in this day of easy and abounding profession- this day of papal encroachment, and of popish imitation- this day of exaltation of human authority above the word of God- this day of error, of rebuke, and of blasphemy- this day of rapid and of excited action- this last, solemn dispensation of the world- the events of which are rapidly ushering in the coming of the Son of man- let us, under the influence of more simple faith, and more fervent love, and brightening hope, 'go forth unto Jesus outside the camp, bearing his reproach,' resting amid our conflict and our toil, where the Father rests- where the sinner rests- where we may rest- in Jesus!

Jesus, I rest in Thee,  
In You myself I hide  
Laden with guilt and misery,  
Where can I rest beside?  
It is on Your meek and lowly breast  
My weary soul alone can rest."

"You Holy One of God!  
The Father rests in Thee.  
And in the savor of that blood  
which speaks to Him for me.  
The curse is gone- through You I'm blest,  
God rests in You- In You I rest."

"The slave of sin and fear,  
Your truth my bondage broke,  
My happy spirit loves to wear  
Your light and easy yoke;  
Your love, which fills my grateful breast,  
Makes duty joy, and labor rest."

"Soon the bright glorious day  
The rest of God will come,  
Sorrow and sin shall pass away,  
And I shall reach my home

Then, of the promised land possessed,  
My soul shall know eternal rest."

READER! "May the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ Be with Your Spirit. Amen."

## **Mighty to Save!** **James Smith, 1860**

"The LORD your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with his love, He will rejoice over you with singing!" Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord Jesus is not only a Savior — but he is **"mighty to save."** He saves from sin. He delivers out of trouble. He redeems us from the hands of our enemies. He has delivered his people in all ages; he delivers them now, and he will deliver them until deliverance is no longer needed. It cannot be wrong to trust in him, for it is impossible for him to fail us, his word is promised, his heart is in the work, and he gets great glory by it. As we must employ him or perish, be saved by him or be lost forever, let us consider this representation of him a little.

MARK HIS QUALIFICATIONS. His power is omnipotent. Nothing can for a moment match with it. To still the fears, and draw out the confidence of his people he asks, "Is anything too hard for me?" He can do whatever he will — and do it with ease too.

His blood is infinitely efficacious. It cleanses from all sin, and every sinner who believes on him. It made an infinite atonement for sin, when he shed it on the cross. It retains all its virtue and efficacy at the present moment, and it will do so forever.

His gospel is just adapted to meet our case. It is good news — glad tidings. The good news of a free, full, and everlasting pardon of all sin. The glorious glad tidings that peace with God is made, and that he desires us to be reconciled to him. It proclaims that all debts are cancelled, all demands met, and all supplies provided, for all, and every sinner that believes in Jesus, be he who, or what he may. He has the fullness of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit quickens the dead, sanctifies the unholy, teaches the ignorant, speaks peace to the troubled, and fits the most depraved for Heaven. That Spirit which enlightens the darkened understanding, subdues the stubborn will, elevates the earth-bound affections — also purifies the guilty conscience, and makes us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Jesus cannot fail in anything he undertakes, as the prophet predicted, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." He never failed in any case he ever yet undertook, and he never refused to undertake any case that was put into his hands.

He is as gentle as he is powerful, and works gently, though with omnipotent energy. The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench; but will strengthen the one, and raise the other until it flames.

He is as gentle as the morning ray, or the evening breeze.

He comes down like the silent dew, or the gentle shower.

He is like the lamb feeding in the pasture, of which no one need to be afraid.

His intercession is constant and prevalent. He makes intercession for the transgressors. He advocates the cause of the sinful, the vile, and the unworthy. The Father always hears him, and awards salvation to every one for whom he pleads.

He has every qualification necessary qualify him to be "mighty to save."

OBSERVE HOW HE HAS PROVED IT. What kind of sinners has he saved? Every kind of sinner — but especially the very worst. The greatest sinner under the Old Testament was Manasseh, and Jesus saved him. The chief sinner under the New Testament was Saul of Tarsus, and Jesus saved him. The greatest sinner will not be found in Hell — but in Heaven; a trophy of grace, a miracle of mercy! The vilest sinners conceivable, have been saved by the Lord Jesus. No sinner can apply to him now — but a greater sinner has applied to him, and been saved by him before.

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief!" 1 Timothy 1:15. The greatest sinner has been saved already; and this is an encouragement for all who feel themselves desperately wicked, to come to him and be saved by him.

What multitudes he has saved. The preeminence of Jesus will appear, in the number saved, the character of those he has saved, and the way in which he has saved them. None can be too vile to be saved by him. No number can be too great to be saved by him. Multitudes, multitudes, have been saved by this mighty Savior!

How completely he has saved them!

Canceling every sin.

Answering every demand.

Replying to every charge.

Removing every stain.

Making each one as righteous as himself — and as pure as himself. Each one will be a credit to him, and reflect forever the glory of his saving grace.

How Satan trembles before him. He did so in the days of his flesh, and cried out, "I beseech you torment me not." He does much more so now, as he is seated at his Father's right hand, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world — but also in that which is to come. Every fallen spirit must . . .

obey his word,

bow to his authority,

and do his bidding.

How the idols of the heathen have fallen before him. Once in the history of Israel, Dagon fell before the ark; but a thousand times in the history of the church, have the idols fallen before this mighty Savior. And they will continue to do so, for "the idols he shall utterly abolish," and set up his kingdom on their ruins.

He still pledges himself to save — to save all that come unto him, for his word is pledged, that he will never cast out. To save all that come unto God by him, to the utmost, and for evermore, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.

Any sinner who will, may be saved by Jesus. Every willing sinner shall be saved by Jesus. He can save, for he is mighty. He will save, for he is love. He has a fullness of saving grace. All he has ever given to the millions whom he has saved, has only been the overflowings of the fountain. As all the water taken from the ocean has not diminished it, for it is still full; so all the grace that has been received from the fullness of Jesus has not diminished it, for it is a fullness of grace still. That fullness of grace he has for sinners, for you, reader, if you need it, if you desire it, if you ask it; and he would sooner exhaust the whole of it, if exhausted it could be, than allow you to perish, however vile you are, if willing to be saved by him.

Lost sinner, try this Mighty Savior. You need salvation. You need just such a Savior. He is exactly suited to you — he can save you. He can save you now. He will save you. He will save you today. Try him. Try him at once!

His blood will cleanse you from all sin.

His grace will render you acceptable to God.

His Spirit will renew your nature.

He will make you fit for Heaven, and take you there.

Believer, trust this Mighty Savior. Trust him and fear not. Trust him . . .

with your soul,

with your body,

with all your concerns,

for earth and for Heaven,

for life and for death,

for time and for eternity!

Trust him to work in you, to work for you, to work with you. Trust him to save you with an everlasting salvation, and he will not disappoint you.

Backslider, return to this Mighty Savior. You have wandered from him. You have basely sinned against him. You deserve to be banished from his presence forever. But he is willing to receive you back, to blot out your sins, to accept your acknowledgment of guilt, and to restore unto you the joy of his salvation. Backsliding soul, come back, come back to Jesus, and be happy!

Let us all unite to speak well of this Mighty Savior, and to recommend him to others. He deserves this at our hands. He desires this of us. He bids us go, and tell others, that he has saved us, and is willing to save them — that he has been a Mighty Savior to us, and will be a Mighty Savior to them, if they come to him.

Let us tell the worst, the vilest, the most hopeless cases, that Jesus is not only Mighty to save — but Almighty, and that he will put forth his Almightyness in them, rather than let them perish, if as guilty, vile, lost, and ruined — they apply to him, heartily willing to be saved by him. O sinner, come, come, come to Jesus, and prove what a Mighty Savior he is, in your own experience!

### **Look to Jesus When in Trouble**

Look to Jesus, when in trouble,  
Let Him always for thee care;  
Cast thy burden on the Savior  
All thy griefs He came to bear

#### *Refrain*

*Look to Jesus! look to Jesus!  
See Him hanging on the tree!  
Through His death, He came to save us;  
See Him dying there for thee!*

Look to Jesus, when the billows  
Rush o'er thee, a mighty wave;  
Lift thy hand and soul to Heaven,  
Christ Himself will quickly save.

#### *Refrain*

Look to Jesus, when temptations  
Lure thee from the narrow road,  
Touched with all thy human feelings,  
He will bear thy heavy load.

#### *Refrain*

Look to Jesus, when in trouble,  
When by sin and sorrow pressed;  
Don't reject His precious promise,  
Come to Me, I'll give thee rest.

#### *Refrain*

## **ZION'S JOY AND GOD'S** **by Alexander Maclaren**

Zephaniah 3:14, Zephaniah 3:17

What a wonderful rush of exuberant gladness there is in these words! The swift, short clauses, the triple invocation in the former verse, the triple promise in the latter, the heaped together synonyms, all help the impression. The very words seem to dance with joy. But more remarkable than this is the parallelism between the two verses. Zion is called to rejoice in God because God rejoices

in her. She is to shout for joy and sing because God's joy too has a voice, and breaks out into singing. For every throb of joy in man's heart, there is a wave of gladness in God's. The notes of our praise are at once the echoes and the occasions of His. We are to be glad because He is glad: He is glad because we are so. We sing for joy, and He joys over us with singing because we do.

### **I. God's joy over Zion.**

It is to be noticed that the former verse of our text is followed by the assurance: 'The Lord is in the midst of thee'; and that the latter verse is preceded by the same assurance. So, then, intimate fellowship and communion between God and Israel lies at the root both of God's joy in man and man's joy in God.

We are solemnly warned by 'profound thinkers' of letting the shadow of our emotions fall upon God. No doubt there is a real danger there; but there is a worse danger, that of conceiving of a God who has no life and heart; and it is better to hold fast by this-that in Him is that which corresponds to what in us is gladness. We are often told, too, that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is a stern and repellent God, and the religion of the Old Testament is gloomy and servile. But such a misconception is hard to maintain in the face of such words as these. Zephaniah, of whom we know little, and whose words are mainly forecasts of judgments and woes pronounced against Zion that was rebellious and polluted, ends his prophecy with these companion pictures, like a gleam of sunshine which often streams out at the close of a dark winter's day. To him the judgments which he prophesied were no contradiction of the love and gladness of God. The thought of a glad God might be a very awful thought; such an insight as this prophet had gives a blessed meaning to it. We may think of the joy that belongs to the divine nature as coming from the completeness of His being, which is raised far above all that makes of sorrow. But it is not in Himself alone that He is glad; but it is because He loves. The exercise of love is ever blessedness. His joy is in self-impartment; His delights are in the sons of men: 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' His gladness is in His children when they let Him love them, and do not throw back His love on itself. As in man's physical frame it is pain to have secretions dammed up, so when God's love is forced back upon itself and prevented from flowing out in blessing, some shadow of suffering cannot but pass across that calm sky. He is glad when His face is mirrored in ours, and the rays from Him are reflected from us.

But there is another wonderfully bold and beautiful thought in this representation of the gladness of God. Note the double form which it assumes: 'He will rest'-literally, be silent-'in His love; He will joy over thee with singing.' As to the former, loving hearts on earth know that the deepest love knows no utterance, and can find none. A heart full of love rests as having attained its desire and accomplished its purpose. It keeps a perpetual Sabbath, and is content to be silent.

But side by side with this picture of the repose of God's joy is set with great poetic insight the precisely opposite image of a love which delights in expression, and rejoices over its object with singing. The combination of the two helps to express the depth and intensity of the one love, which like a song-bird rises with quivering delight and pours out as it rises an ever louder and more joyous note, and then drops, composed and still, to its nest upon the dewy ground.

### **II. Zion's joy in God.**

To the Prophet, the fact that 'the Lord is in the midst of thee' was the guarantee for the confident assurance 'Thou shalt not fear any more'; and this assurance was to be the occasion of exuberant gladness, which ripples over in the very words of our first text. That great thought of 'God dwelling in the midst' is rightly a pain and a terror to rebellious wills and alienated hearts. It needs some preparation of mind and spirit to be glad because God is near; and they who find their satisfaction in earthly sources, and those who seek for it in these, see no word of good news, but rather a 'fearful looking for of judgment' in the thought that God is in their midst. The word rendered 'rejoices' in the first verse of our text is not the same as that so translated in the second. The latter means literally, to move in a circle; while the former literally means, to leap for joy. Thus the gladness of God is thought of as expressing itself in dignified, calm movements, whilst Zion's joy is likened in its expression to the more violent movements of the dance. True human joy is like God's, in that He delights in us and we in Him, and in that both He and we delight in the exercise of love. But we are never to forget that the differences are real as the resemblances, and that it is reserved for the higher form of our experiences in a future life to 'enter into the joy of the Lord.'

It becomes us to see to it that our religion is a religion of joy. Our text is an authoritative command as well as a joyful exhortation, and we do not fairly represent the facts of Christian faith if we do not 'rejoice in the Lord always.' In all the sadness and troubles which necessarily accompany us, as they do all men, we ought by the effort of faith to set the Lord always before us that we be not moved. The secret of stable and perpetual joy still lies where Zephaniah found it-in the assurance that the Lord is with us, and in the vision of His love resting upon us, and rejoicing over us with singing. If thus our love clasps His, and His joy finds its way into our hearts, it will remain with us that our 'joy may be full'; and being guarded by Him whilst still there is fear of stumbling, He will set us at last 'before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy.'



## THE SAVIOUR RESTING IN HIS LOVE

A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 31ST, 1901, DELIVERED BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,

On a Thursday Evening, early in the year 1859.

**“He will rest in his love.”—Zephaniah 3:17.**

ONE of our sweetest hymns commences with this verse,—

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

Well might the poet have put that question, if he had risen up from reading this third chapter of the prophecy of Zephaniah. O people of God, open your ears and your hearts while Jehovah thus speaks to you by the mouth of his ancient prophet, “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 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. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord 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.” The words are very simple, but the promises they convey are so weighty that the verses roll along like the triumphant periods of a jubilant poem. The truth of God, even when told in the simplest words, is very much akin to the loftiest poetry; and I might, without the slightest hesitation, declare that there never was any poem, composed by human intellect, which could match for a moment, in the sweetness of its notes, the succession of precious promises which God here proclaims in the ears of his chosen ones.

We cannot, on the present occasion, enter into the wondrous depths of the promises here revealed. We should need, indeed, a long period of time before we should be able to explain them; and, possibly, the whole of life will scarcely be sufficient for us fully to realize these great truths in our own experience. We will, therefore, at once turn to the few words I have chosen as my text “He will rest in his love,” and we shall consider these words as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as relating to his divine and matchless love, which he hath manifested toward his people in the wondrous works of grace which he has accomplished for them and in them.

“He will rest in his love.” This short sentence is capable of several interpretations, and each view we take of it has in it something extremely delightful.

### **I. Here is, first of all, THE DOCTRINE, THAT CHRIST WILL KEEP EVER FAITHFUL TO THOSE UPON WHOM HE HAS SET HIS HEART'S AFFECTION.**

The love of human beings is a fitful and flickering flame; it may be set, for a season, with apparent constancy upon a certain object; but you can never tell how long it will remain steadfast. However firm, however true, and however fervent it may seem to be, and even really may be, yet trust it not so implicitly as to come under that ancient sentence, “Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.” Trust not too much to any friend whom you may have; put not all your confidence in any man, for the best of men are but men at the best, and the firmest of men are subject to the infirmities and the frailties of their race. But God's love is no flickering flame; it does not flare up for a little while, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and then die out in darkness; it is not to be set forth by the image of a fool's mirth, which lasts but for a little season. It begins, it waxes vehement, it diminishes not, but it grows from strength to strength, till what seemed at first to be but a single spark, becomes a mighty flame, and what was a flame becomes like the beacon-lights of war, and what was but as a beacon becomes as the sun itself, in the fierceness of its heat and in the majesty of its goings.

There are some who teach that Christ's love may be set upon a man, and yet that it may afterwards be removed from him. Where, then, remains the comfort of God's people if their teaching is true? But, thank God, it is not true; for the promise of the text is that Jesus “will rest in his love.” If their doctrine is according to the Scriptures, where is the value of Christ's affection at all? In what respects can he be said to stick closer than a brother? How can it be true that many waters cannot quench his love, neither can the floods drown it? If these men are right, must not the apostle Paul have been wrong when he declared that he was persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in the whole of creation should ever be able to separate the saints from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord? Shall we imagine that the apostle was mistaken, and suppose that this erroneous teaching is the truth of God? Shall we turn

away from the positive testimony of Holy Scripture, and believe the falsehoods of men in its place, especially when that Scripture is itself so full of consolation to God's people that, if it can ever be proved to be untrue, they may put their hands upon their loins in agony of woe, and go to their graves full of misery and despair?

But, beloved, ye know right well that Jesus Christ's love, when once it has engraved your name upon his hand and his heart, will never suffer that name to be erased. Ye believe, and ye believe aright, that he who has a portion in the heart of God has an eternal portion. He who can claim for himself a share of the Father's love, of the Son's redemption, and of the Spirit's care, need never be afraid that all the thievish hosts of hell shall rob him of his divine inheritance. For look ye here, brethren, what is there, to separate you and me from Jesus Christ's love, which has not been tried already?

Can sin ever make Jesus cease to love me? If so, he would have ceased to love me long ago. If there be any iniquity that I can commit that would divide me from Christ's love, methinks that I should have been separated from him long ere this; for, in looking back upon my own life, I am compelled, with shame and confusion of face, to fall upon my knees, and confess that he has had a thousand reasons for thrusting me out of doors if he had chosen to do so, and he might have framed millions of excuses if he had resolved to blot my name out of the book of life. He might have said, "Thou art unworthy of me, and therefore I will be unmindful of thee."

Further, if Christ had intended to cast us away because of our sins, why did he ever take us on? Did he not know, beforehand, that we should be rebellious, and did not his omniscient eye see all our sins, and detect all our follies? Are we ungrateful? He knew that we should be. Are our sins extremely heinous? He knew how heinous they would be. He could foresee all; every spot that was to be upon us, was upon us, before his omniscient eye, when he chose us; every fault that we should commit was already committed in his estimation. He foreknew and foresaw all; yet he chose us just as we were. If he had intended to abandon us, and cast us away, would he ever have accepted us at all? If Jesus meant to divorce his bride, foreknowing all her faults, would he ever have espoused her? If he determined to cast away his adopted child, since he knew that child's unfaithfulness, would he ever have adopted him? Oh, think not, beloved, that Christ would have done all that he has done for nothing, that he would have come from heaven to earth, and have even gone from the cross to the grave, and allowed his spirit to descend into the shades of Hades, on a bootless errand! Would he not have started back, and said, "I know my bride will prove to be unworthy, therefore I will not espouse her"? But since he has espoused her, and has put the red ring of his own atonement on her finger, and has hitherto been faithful to her, what shall ever constrain him to divorce her? What can ever induce him to cast from his bosom her whom he died to save? It must be true that "he will rest in his love," for he has hitherto rested in it, though he has had much to mourn over in his chosen ones.

Our sin, then, has not divided, and, we believe, never shall divide us from the Saviour's love. What remains? Will sorrow ever separate us from our Saviour? Can tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, separate us from the love of Christ? Nay, for all these things do but make the Saviour manifest his love to us the more. If Christ loves his people well in prosperity, he never loves them any the less in their adversities. Do you believe that Christ loves his children when they are arrayed in purple, and that he will forsake them when they wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented? If so, ye know not the heart of Jesus. He loves his people well enough every day; but if he sees them stretched upon the rack, and about to die for his sake, if it be possible, the infinity of his love must then surpass itself. Well said the apostle, when he had mentioned all these sufferings and pains, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Sin and sorrow, therefore, are perfectly incapable of rending us from the heart of Christ, for he must, "he will rest in his love." And this truth will seem all the more plain and clear if we just pause a moment, and think of our relationship to God the Father and to God the Son. Is not every Christian God's child? And did you ever know a true father who hated his own child? You may have known such a father, but it was unfatherly for him to hate his own son. Have you known a father who has cursed his son, and driven him forth from his home, and declared that he was not his child? You may have known some men of that kind, or you may have heard of such unnatural creatures; but, mark you, the father's curse could not unchild his child;—he was still his father's son, even when he was cursed by him. Not even the foulest words that ever came from the most embittered heart could ever take away that child's right to call that man his father; a child is a child for ever if he is once a child, and a father is a father for aye if he is once a father.

Now, beloved, in the usual course of nature, we find that men will do anything for their children that they possibly can do. Here is a poor creature, born into the world, nearly an idiot;—it has not its senses right, it is nearly blind and deaf, and its parents know that, even if they can bring it up, it will always be a trouble to them; yet you see with what studious care the father and mother endeavor to save the poor child's life. While others say, "If it were to die, it would be a happy release," both father and mother feel that they would be losers by its death. "Ah!" said one good old divine, "if a father could have a child that had lost eyes and ears, and feet and hands, though he could not breathe in a natural fashion, though he could not feed without some extraordinary means for the digestion of his food, even then his father would do his best to keep him alive; and so surely shall it be with that great Father, who, when he speaks of himself, and of us, always puts his Fatherhood far higher than ours, as Christ did when he said, 'If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?'" And truly I may say, if an earthly father does not wish to lose his child, if he would endeavor to save his child's life

though it was loaded with ten thousand diseases, how much rather shall our Father who is in heaven see to it that none of his little ones shall perish, but that every one of them shall be preserved!" Do you not see that, because we are God's sons, we are, therefore, Jesus Christ's brothers, and "he will rest in his love"?

But there is yet another thought, for we have a relationship also to Christ, and therefore "he will rest in his love." We have never yet heard of a man who hated his own flesh. Strangely wicked as it is, we have heard of men who have hated their flesh in the mystic sense of the marriage tie, and who have driven their wives from them with all manner of brutality and cruelty. She whom the husband promised to cherish and to nourish, he has driven away, yet he has never thus treated his own flesh; the man may have become cruel and unnatural towards her who is his own flesh by marriage, but not towards his own literal flesh. Now, Jesus Christ has taken his people into such a connection with himself that they are nearer to him even than the wife is to the husband; they are as near to him as our own flesh and blood are to our own head. What will not a man do to save his hand, or the least member of his body? Would he ever cease to care for even the feeblest portion of his frame? No; men are generally careful enough of their own flesh and blood; much more, therefore, will our Lord Jesus Christ protect the members of his mystical body, for we are his fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And will Christ lose his own fulness? Shall his body be dismembered? Shall the head become a bleeding head, and the trunk become a corpse? Shall any one member be left to die, to burn, to be destroyed? Oh, no! As surely as we are brought into this relationship with Christ, so surely are we saved beyond any hazard. This is one meaning of the text, and most consolatory to the tried, tempest-tossed child of God.

## **II. I think, however, that there is another very sweet meaning to it; that is, CHRIST HAS LABOURED IN HIS LOVE, AND HE NOW RESTS IN IT.**

Let me draw a picture for you. Here is a man, who loves his hearth, and his home, and his country, and his Queen. The sound of battle is heard in the land, so he girds his sword upon his thigh, and marches forth to defend all that is dear to him. He fights, he struggles, his garments are stained with blood, and he himself is wounded. It is love—love of his own safety, and of his family, and of his country, that has made him fight so bravely. And now that the deed is done, he comes back to his home. The foe has been swept from the white cliffs of Albion, and the land of liberty is still free; Britons are not slaves. The man retires to his house, and you see how quietly he sleeps, how joyously he sits down under his own vine and fig tree, none daring to make him afraid. With what joy does he now look upon the faces of those whom he has defended, and upon the home for which he has fought! What satisfaction does it give him to know that the honour of his country is still unstained, and his land is still the home of the free! Now he rests in his love; that which made him fight, now gives him joy; that which impelled him in the day of battle to do great deeds of heroism, is its own sweet reward. Now he rests because the battle is fought, the victory is won, and he, therefore, rejoices in the very love which once caused him to labour.

Now see the Lord Jesus Christ laboring in his love. Love fetched him from his throne in heaven; love disrobed him of his glories; love laid him in Bethlehem's manger; love led him through this weary world for three-and-thirty years; love took him to Gethsemane; love oppressed him till he sweat great drops of blood; love made him the great Standard-bearer in the fight; love made him stand erect, the focus of the war, when the storm gathered round his brow, and every arrow of the foeman found a target in his heart; love made him—

Calm 'mid the bewildering cry,  
Confident of victory;"—

love made him bow his head, and give up the ghost, that he might redeem his people from their sins. Now, he is more than conqueror, he rises to heaven, and he rests in his love. Oh, what a wondrous rest that is! If rest be sweet to the labouring man, how much sweeter to the bleeding Man, the dying Man, the crucified Man, the risen Man? If rest be sweet after toil, how sweet must be the rest of Jesus after all the toils of life and death, the cross and the grave! If victory makes the soldier's return joyous, how joyous must have been the return of that conquering Hero who has led captivity captive, and received gifts for men! Truly doth our Lord Jesus "rest in his love."

Do you not see that the very thing that drove him to labour, now makes a pillow for his head? That which made him strong in the day of battle makes him joyous in the hour of victory, and that is the love which he bears to his people. For, lo! as he sits down in heaven, he thinks within himself: "I have done it, I have finished the work of my people's redemption; not one of them shall ever perish; no drop of the hail of God's vengeance can fall on them, for it has all fallen on me. I have been smitten, I have borne the curse; and, now, they cannot be cursed, they are delivered." And then his holy mind roves on in meditation: "I have taken away the curse, and I have given them the blessing; I have brought many of them to know and love me; and, in due season, I will bring all the rest; they shall come that are ready to perish, for I must have every one of my blood-bought sheep with me for ever. They shall be blessed on earth, and by-and-by I shall have them where I am, and they shall feed in these rich pastures; they shall lie down where the wolf cannot come, and where desolation cannot enter. The time shall come when I shall have their very bones resuscitated, when their flesh, that has lain in the dust, shall live again to be with me; so shall they all, every one of them, body, soul, and spirit,

regain all the inheritance that they had lost, and, with all that double portion which I have gained for them, share the spoil, and wave the palm, and be more than conquerors, through what I have done for them." This thought gives sweet rest to the Saviour, who once laboured here below, and who now, in heaven, "rests in his love."

**III. I find that Dr. Gill gives this as one of the meanings of the text, for he is always noted for giving a great variety of meanings to a text; and, sometimes, nobody knows which is the true one.** When he is going to explain a passage of Scripture, he says, "It does not mean this, it does not mean that, and it does not mean the other." Probably, nobody ever thought it did mean anything of the kind. After he has mentioned several things which it does not mean, he mentions some that it may mean, and then, last of all, he tells us what it actually does mean. He says our text means, "HE SHALL SOLACE HIMSELF IN HIS LOVE."

There is something very sweet in love; whether it is sweeter to be loved or to love, I know not; but, certainly, when the two experiences meet together, they are like two noble rivers which have flowed through a rich and fertile country, and then combined to make some great lake, or inland sea; then are they broad waters indeed. Now, Christ sees our love; the love which he has put into us meets the love which he has poured out towards us; and in both of these he finds a sweet solace. He solaces himself in love; this it is that cheers and comforts him. Some men, when they would be cheered on earth, drink the wine which stirs their blood; some men find comfort in company, and the noisy, thoughtless talker makes them glad; others, when they would be solaced, turn to books; these are their joys. Others, when they would be satisfied, chink their gold, look over their mortgages, their estates, their bonds, and things of that kind; and some men there are, who in this world have nothing sweeter for solace than the love of those who are near and dear to them. The man who loves his home and his family, and finds his little earthly heaven around his own hearth, is one of the happiest men I know. Treasure that thought for a moment, and think of Christ as taking delight in his family.

I never yet heard that Christ rests in his power. He has great power; see what he has done. He has built the heavens; he has stretched out the earth, and he upholds the clouds with his might: but he never rests there. I know, too, that he has great wisdom: he knows all things in the ages past, in the time present, and in the centuries yet to come. He can unravel mysteries, and foretell all things, yet I never heard that he rested in his wisdom. There is a great crowd of angelic spirits, ever waiting in his courts above, and he, as King, sits in the very centre of them all, and before him principalities and powers cast their crowns; but I never heard that he rested even in their homage. No; our Lord Jesus Christ is like the man who loves his family; he rests in the midst of his own beloved ones,—his spouse's bosom, the place where he hears his children cry, where he listens to their prayers, the door at which he receives their thanksgiving, and bestows his blessing, the house where they wait on him and he waits on them, where they commune with him, and he communes with them;—that is the place where he rests. He rests in his love, in the midst of the objects of his love; there it is that he finds his own eternal satisfaction, the solace of his heart.

Is not that a sweet thought? It has ravished my soul, while turning it over, to think that Jesus Christ should ever find his rest among the poor sons of men. Long ago, it was said of him, "His delights were with the sons of men," and now that is his rest, too. Oh, how pleasant it is for us to know that our Lord will not sleep anywhere but in the house of his beloved, and 'neath no other tree will he recline but beneath the trees of his own right-hand planting! It is very easy for me to say of Christ, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons;" but it is surprising that he should ever say the same of me. I can say of him, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste;" but it is wonderful for him to say the same of me, or to turn to some poor saint, and say to him, "O soul! thou art weary, but thou art my rest, and I am thy rest; thou art sick, but thou art my health, and I am thy health; thou art sad, but thou art my joy, and I am thy joy; thou art poor, but thou art my treasure, and I am thy treasure; thou art nothing, and yet thou art my fulness, and I am thy fulness! Oh, what a host of precious thoughts we can meditate upon here! We have started a whole covey of sweet things, and we might profitably stand still, and admire them. It is not merely one sweet thought, but many that are included in this one precious truth, "He will rest in his love." He never rested till he found that all his love was given to us, and he never will rest completely till all our love is given to him.

**IV. The Hebrew conveys to us yet another idea. In the margin, we read, "HE WILL BE SILENT IN HIS LOVE."**

Why is this? What can silence have to do with love? One old divine thinks that Christ means, by this expression, to say that his love is so vast that it can be better heard by his saying nothing than by his attempting to express it. What a great deal Christ has said, in the Scriptures, about his love; and yet hearken, O spouse of Christ, the love that he hath not spoken is ten times more than anything he has yet said! Oh, yes; there is much love which he has brought out of the treasure-house, and given to you; but he has much more like it in that divine heart of his. Some drops of his love you have already received, but those bright clouds on high, those storehouses of his grace, contain treasures of which you have never yet even dreamed. When you read one of the promises, you say, "Ah, this is indeed precious!" Yet, recollect that what our Lord has revealed in his Word is not a tenth of what he has not said. He has said many rich things, but there are richer things still. He has not said them, he cannot say them, because they are unsayable, they are unutterable, they cannot be declared; at least, not at present. When you get to heaven, you will hear them; you cannot hear them here.

You know that the apostle Paul said, when he was caught up to the third heaven, he heard words which it was not lawful for men to

utter. Perhaps he then heard more of the Saviour's love, as though Christ said to him, "I tell you this, but you must not tell it to anyone else; it is not lawful to utter it down below. I have made you a great vessel, and you can hold this revelation; but as for the rest, they are only little vessels; do not tell them any more, it would burst them; do not expose them to too great a heat of love, it would consume them;—they would die if they knew more,—they cannot understand more. I have told them so much of my love that, if they only understood all I have told them, they would not be able to live on earth, their hearts would burst for joy, and they would be obliged to flee to me above. Therefore I tell them no more, for they cannot bear it." So that, you see, there is great preciousness in this rendering, "He will be silent in his love;" as if he could not say it, therefore he would not try to say it, he would just leave it alone. One poet, after praising God with all his might, finds that he can go no further, and winds up thus,—“Come, then, expressive silence, tell his praise.” That is just the meaning of the text, as if Christ would say, "I have said a great deal, but my people cannot understand; I will say no more; I shall only now say, 'Come, then, expressive silence, tell my love.' ”

There is, however, a meaning that is, perhaps, even more correct. "He will be silent in his love," may mean that he will be silent about his people's faults; from the connection of the text, it looks like this. "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." It looks as if he meant to say he would be silent about their sins. There stands Christ in heaven to-day, pleading for his people. Listen! He says nothing to accuse them. Satan may accuse, but Christ never will. The good that his people do is magnified, and multiplied, and perfected, and then presented before the throne; but as for the sins of his people, he has cast them behind his back, and all he says concerning those sins is this, "I behold no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel; my anger is turned away from them; I have blotted out like a cloud their iniquities, and like a thick cloud their sins." Sometimes, love makes a man silent. If you hear anything said against one whom you love, and you are asked, "Is it not so?" you say, "Well, I am not compelled to bear witness against one whom I love, and I will not do so." You know that our law does not demand of a wife that she shall give evidence against her husband; and, certainly, the Lord Jesus Christ will never give any evidence against his spouse: "He will be silent in his love." If he were called upon to say, "Has thy spouse sinned?" his declaration would be, "I am the Sin-offering on her behalf. I am her Substitute; I have been punished in her stead. I can say, 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.' " There will not be a word of accusation from him. She says of herself, "I am all black." He will not deny it, but he will not affirm it. He says, "There is no spot in thee;" and he goes on to say that she is all fair in his sight. O glorious silence! "He will be silent in his love." So am I inclined to believe it will be at the last great day, when the books shall be opened. Christ will read out the sins of the wicked recorded against them; but, as for the sins of his people, "he will be silent in his love." I sometimes think that it will be so, though I cannot speak with authority. "No," he will say, "upon you be the curse,—you who lived and died without washing in my blood in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; but as for these my people, they have had their sins blotted out; and I will not read what is obliterated; I will be silent in my love."

## **The Pleasure of God in the Good of His People**

**March 1, 1987**

**John Piper**

**Zephaniah 3:17**

**The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a Warrior Who gives victory;  
He will rejoice over you with gladness,  
He will be quiet in His love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.**

### **The Setting for the Book of Zephaniah**

According to Zephaniah 1:1, "The word of the Lord came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi . . . in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah." Josiah had begun to reign in Judah about 80 years after the northern kingdom of Israel had been swept away by the Assyrian invaders.

During those 80 years the southern kingdom of Judah had not learned the lesson of the northern kingdom, and sank deeper and deeper into sin and rebellion against the law of God.

In the 18th year of Josiah's reign Hilkiah the priest found in the temple a copy of the book of the law that had been ignored for decades. When he read it to the king, Josiah was broken. He humbled himself before the Lord and rent his clothes and wept (2Kings 22:19).

Over the next 13 years Josiah led an amazing reformation in Judah based on the law of God. He renewed the covenant between

God and his people (2Kings 23:3). He took all the vessels of Baal and Asherah out of the temple and burned them in the fields of Kidron (2Kings 23:4). He deposed the idolatrous priests (2Kings 23:5). He broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes (2Kings 23:7). He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun (2Kings 23:11). And he reinstated the Passover that had been ignored since the days of the judges (2Kings 23:22).

These were the days of Zephaniah according to Zeph 1:1. So when we read this little book, we can picture it as part of the call for reformation that Josiah was pursuing. No doubt the prophet and the king teamed up to try to draw the people back to God. How did Zephaniah preach? What kind of preaching does God inspire when his people are in need of revival and reformation?

### **A Warning About the Coming Wrath of the Lord**

All of Zephaniah 1 is a warning to Jerusalem and a prediction of the coming day of the Lord in wrath. Zeph 1:2–4,

"I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth," says the Lord. "I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. I will overthrow the wicked; I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth," says the Lord. "I will stretch out my hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests."

#### **Why was God's wrath so kindled?**

Zeph 1:8: the officials and king's sons were arrayed in foreign attire, wanting to be like the other nations who knew not God.

Zeph 1:9: servants were filling their masters' houses with violence and fraud.

Zeph 1:12: men were thickening upon their lees—they were like the sediment at the bottom of stale wine, saying in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill." God has ceased to be a practical reality in their lives.

### **A Call to Repentance**

Then in Zeph 2 the first warning is followed by an earnest call for repentance. There may yet be hope, at least for those who repent. Zeph 2:1–3:

Come together and hold assembly, O shameless nation, before you are driven away like the drifting chaff, before there comes upon you the fierce anger of the Lord, before there comes upon you the day of the wrath of the Lord. Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his commands; seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the wrath of the Lord.

Even if the humble in the land can't avert the final wrath of God, they may at least perhaps be hidden themselves when the terrible day of the Lord comes.

### **A Warning to the Surrounding Nations**

Then in Zeph 2:4–15 Zephaniah cries out the woes and warnings not just over Judah and Jerusalem, but also over the surrounding nations of the world.

On the west are the cities of Philistia, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and the tribe of the Cherethites (Zeph 2:4–7).

On the east are the lands of Moab and Amon (Zeph 2:8–11).

On the south are the Ethiopians (Zeph 2:12).

And on the north is the terrible Assyria (Zeph 2:13–15).

**Judgment is coming on the whole surrounding world.** And Zeph 2:10 probably sums up best the reason: "This shall be their lot in return for their pride, because they scoffed and boasted against the people of the Lord of hosts." The root cause of worldwide judgment is human pride.

### **One Last Indictment Against Jerusalem**

But lest the people in Jerusalem gloat over the judgment of the nations Zephaniah comes back to them and in Zeph 3:1–8 gives one last indictment of Jerusalem. Zeph 3:1–2:

Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city! She listens to no voice, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God.

### **An Amazing Shift**

Then, at the end of his indictment, as so often in the prophets, comes an amazing shift. Along side the destruction of his wrath, God puts the re-creating power of his love. It seems that in spite of the worldwide outpouring of his wrath, God is going to do two great acts of mercy described in Zeph 3:9–20.

## 1. The Promise of a Global Awakening

He is going to cause a global awakening so that people from all the nations turn to him. Zeph 3:9:

Yea, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord.

In other words God will not be content merely to destroy the nations of the world. He aims to be Lord over the nations. How can this be? Look how Zeph 3:8 ends and how Zeph 3:9 begins:

For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all the heat of my anger; in the fire of my jealous wrath all the earth shall be consumed. 9) For then I will give the peoples purified lips that all of them may call on the name of the Lord, to serve him shoulder to shoulder.

How will God pour his indignation on the nations and consume the earth with his jealous wrath, and at that very time purify nations so that they call on his name and serve? This is a picture of worldwide judgment and worldwide turning to God.

Zephaniah doesn't work out the details for us. Perhaps he pictures the judgment of God as an extended series of catastrophes over a period of time that come to climax in the final destruction of all unbelievers. And perhaps during this extended time of judgments God also works among the nations of the earth to purify a people for himself through the preaching of the gospel so that he will indeed have a people for himself from all the tribes and tongues and nations (Revelation 5:9).

No matter how God intends to do these two things we must affirm what the prophet affirms: God will not be denied a people to call on his name and to serve him from all the nations of the world. And so he himself is going to change them and give them a heart and lips to call on his name. That is the first act of mercy described in Zeph 3:9–20, a global awakening with people from all the nations calling on the Lord and serving him.

## 2. The Promise of Revival and Purification

The other act of mercy in these verses is the revival and purification of his people Israel. He is going to remove the proud and leave only a people who are humble and lowly, who trust in the name of the Lord. Zeph 3:11–12:

On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain. For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall take refuge in the name of the Lord.

In other words, not only is God going to create a people for himself from all the nations of the world, but he is also going to purge and purify his people Israel (cf. John 11:52). He will eliminate the proud and he will keep for himself a humble and lowly people.

So the judgments and the wrath announced in Zeph 1 and Zeph 2 are not the last word in Zephaniah's prophecy. The last word is the promise of a worldwide turning to God and a revival of true faith among his people Israel.

## A Brief Look at Ephesians 3:4–6

Now before we look at the spectacular promise of Zeph 3:17, let's look for a moment at Ephesians 3:4–6. The reason for this is that in the Old Testament the question about how the converts from the nations and the converts in Israel relate to each other is not clearly answered. How do you and I stand as Gentile converts to the God of Israel? We are sort of johnny-come-lately's in this affair. Do we share in the full blessings of Israel?

Paul calls this a mystery, which means that it was not clearly revealed at the first. What is the answer given in Ephesians 3:4–6?

When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

The answer is that through the Gospel we Gentiles have come to believe on Jesus. And through Jesus we have become full-fledged members of God's people: fellow heirs along with believing Jews of the promises of God.

## The Spectacular Promise of Zephaniah 3:17

So now we go back to Zephaniah. And when we read Zeph 3:17, we know that it refers not only to all believing Jews but also to all Gentiles who have become heirs of the promise through faith in Christ, the seed of Abraham.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love [literally: be silent in his love]  
he will exult over you with loud singing.

From this amazing verse I get the title of this morning's message: "The Pleasure of God in the Good of His People." God does not do you good out of some constraint or coercion. He is free! And in his freedom he overflows in joy to do you good. He exults over you with loud singing.

### **What Would Happen If God Sang?**

Can you imagine what it would be like if you could hear God singing? Remember that it was merely a spoken word that brought the universe into existence. What would happen if God lifted up his voice and not only spoke but sang! Perhaps a new heaven and a new earth would be created. God says something almost just to that effect in Isaiah 65:17-18,

Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth . . . I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

When God spoke at the beginning, the heavens and the earth were created; perhaps at the end, the new heavens and the new earth will be created when God exults over his people with loud singing.

When I think of the voice of God singing, I hear the booming of Niagara Falls mingled with the trickle of a mossy mountain stream. I hear the blast of Mt. St. Helens mingled with a kitten's purr. I hear the power of an East Coast hurricane and the barely audible puff of a night snow in the woods. And I hear the unimaginable roar of the sun 865,000 miles thick, one million three hundred thousand times bigger than the earth, and nothing but fire, 1,000,000 degrees centigrade, on the cooler surface of the corona. But I hear this unimaginable roar mingled with the tender, warm crackling of the living room logs on a cozy winter's night.

And when I hear this singing I stand dumbfounded, staggered, speechless that he is singing over me. He is rejoicing over my good with all his heart and with all his soul (cf. Jeremiah 32:41)!

### **Can You Feel the Wonder of This?**

Can you feel the wonder of this today? That God is rejoicing over you with loud singing?

#### **"I Am Too Guilty"**

"No," you say, "I can't, because I am too guilty that God should rejoice over me."

But will you not believe Zeph 3:15: "The Lord has taken away the judgments against you!"

Can you not, then, feel the wonder that the Lord exults over you with loud singing today?

#### **"I Am Surrounded by Enemies"**

"No," you say, "I can't because I am surrounded by enemies, and obstacles beset me on every side."

But will you not believe Zeph 3:17: "The Lord is a warrior who gives victory"; and Zeph 3:19: "Behold, at that time I will deal with your oppressors"; and Zeph 3:15: "He has cast out your enemies"?

Can you not, then, feel the wonder that the Lord exults over you with loud singing?

#### **"God Feels Too Far Away from Me"**

"No," you say, "Still I can't because he is a great a holy God and I feel like he is far away from me."

But will you not believe Zeph 3:15: "The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst"; and Zeph 3:17: "The Lord, your God, is in your midst"? He is not far from you.

Can you not, then, feel the wonder that the Lord exults over you with loud singing?

#### **"I Am Enslaved to Shame"**

Still you say, "No, because I am enslaved to shame. I have been endlessly belittled by my parents (cf. Zeph 2:8, 10). I have been



scoffed at and threatened and manipulated and slandered. Inside this cocoon of shame even the singing of God sounds faint and far away and indecipherable."

But again I ask, Will you not believe the promise at the end of Zeph 3:19: "I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth"?

Can you not, then, feel the wonder that the Lord exults over you with loud singing?

### **"How Can God's Joy in His Own Name Apply to Me?"**

And now you say, "Almost I can let go and feel this unspeakable wonder that God exults over me—even me with loud singing. But there remains one obstacle. You have said that God loves his own glory above all things. You have said that God takes pleasure in his own name. How then am I to imagine that he should be interested in me? How does the joy that God has in his own name apply to me?"

If that is your last obstacle, then make ready to sing! For the answer is given clearly in Zeph 3:12. If you knew that God delights in his name above all things, and if you wanted to be folded into that joy and be a part of the pleasure of God yourself, where would you go? Where would you seek refuge?

Zeph 3:12 gives the answer: The Lord says "For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord." Here is the connection between God's delight in his name and his delight in you. When you take refuge in his name, he exults over you with loud singing.

If you seek your own glory among men, truly you have your reward on the earth. If you exalt your own name among men, truly you have your reward on the earth. If you bank on your own righteousness, truly you have your reward on the earth.

But if you humble yourself and seek the glory of God above all things, and if you hide your name in the name of God, and if you clothe yourself with the righteousness of his Son, then your heavenly Father who loves his name above all things will reward you beyond all imaginings and exult over you with loud singing.

So put aside all pride and boasting in self today. Take refuge in the name of God. Bank your hope on the righteousness of Christ and not your own. And let yourself awaken to the wonder that the Lord, the King of kings, rejoices over you with gladness and exults over you with loud singing.

### **For further study see:**

Micah 7:18;

Psalm 35:27; 149:4;

Jeremiah 32:37–42;

Deuteronomy 30:9;

Isaiah 62:5; 65:19.

(Mic 7:18) Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.

(Ps 35:27) Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; And let them say continually, "The LORD be magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant."

(Ps 149:4) For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation.

(Jer 32:37-42) "Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. 38) "They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39) and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. 40) "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. 41) "I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. 42) "For thus says the LORD, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.

(Deut 30:9) "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again

rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;

(Isa 62:5) For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.

(Isa 65:19) "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

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