

## Lesson 110 - CHRIST - RESTORER OF GOD'S REMNANT      *Zephaniah 3*

**(Zeph. 3:1-8)** - Zephaniah prophesied in Judah of God's judgment upon Jerusalem and the nations. The holy city had become "*filthy and polluted,*" a place of idolatry rather than worship of the true God. God assured them that the whole earth is moving toward judgment (3:8; cf. Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27).

**(Zeph. 3:9-13)** - The prophet began to speak of the salvation of God's remnant, elect from all nations, whom God chose and gave to His Son before the world began. These are the justified who are so by His grace based on the redemptive work of Christ Who restores them to His kingdom, gives them spiritual life, and calls them to Himself. They are people of a "*pure language,*" the language of God's grace in the Gospel of salvation conditioned on Christ. It glorifies God, exalts Christ, and humbles the sinner. This language evidences that they "*call upon the name of the LORD,*" which is sinners seeking mercy in Christ, through His blood (3:9). A "*suppliant*" is one who comes with a need, begging to have that need fulfilled. From all over the world, God's people will come begging for mercy in and by CHRIST CRUCIFIED! They will come pleading the blood of Christ, submitting to His righteousness imputed and received by God-given faith (3:10). Verse 11 is not saying that those who come to God in Christ are not sinners and do not need to be ashamed and sorrowful over their sins. But all who stand before God in Christ will not be ashamed in the sense of condemnation and eternal wrath because Christ will bear their sins on the cross and finish the work. He will work out a perfect righteousness for His people which God has imputed to them, and they stand before Him justified (Rom. 9:33; 10:11). And Christ will "*take away*" all who, in their pride, refuse to bow to His sovereign rule and way. The "*afflicted and poor people*" describes sinners under the conviction of the Holy Spirit so as to see their spiritual need and poverty, to see their need of God's grace and mercy in Christ (3:12). They all will be brought to "*trust in the name of the LORD*" (cf. Luke 18:13).

Verse 13 speaks of God's remnant, restored unto Him by Christ, the Redeemer and Restorer. When the Lord speaks of His remnant, it is always His chosen, redeemed, and restored people "*according to the election of grace*" (Rom. 11:5). They "*shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies*" - This is not to say that they are not sinners who yet fall short in themselves and in their works of the perfection of righteousness that can only be found in Christ and His righteousness imputed. It is also not to say that, even as sinners saved by grace, they do not have the capacity to tell lies and sometimes do, which is a remaining corruption of the flesh. But in Christ, their sins and iniquities are not imputed to them and cannot condemn them. By God's grace and power, they have been made "*servants of righteousness*" (Rom. 6:17-18), which means they believe, rest in, and follow Christ for forgiveness and righteousness. They are truthful before God about their sins and that if God were to judge them by their works, they would be condemned forever (Psa. 130:3; Lam. 3:22). They do not speak the lies of false religion and false gospels, but, as they are led by the Spirit, they speak that which is right and truthful concerning how God is just to justify the ungodly, how God saves sinners in and by Christ. They shall feed upon God's Word and lie down in the green pastures of His salvation and His Word in Christ (Psa. 23).

**(Zeph. 3:14-20)** - Here is the song of the remnant of God's grace. This is Zion, the church of Christ, which has good reason to sing from the heart, because of the coming of Christ and the great work He has accomplished for us. "*Jerusalem*" below had brief times of rejoicing, but this is ultimately the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4:25-31; Heb. 12:22-24). The rest of the world is under the wrath of God. But "*the Lord hath taken away thy judgments*" - By the work of

His free and sovereign grace, Christ, our great God and Savior, has taken away our judgments by taking our judgment upon Himself.

*“He hath cast out thine enemy”* - Satan is the great enemy and accuser of the brethren, but on the cross Christ has cast him out (*John 12:31; Rev. 12:9-11; Rom. 8:32-39*).

*“The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee”* - Christ is the heart and life of the church collectively, and He dwells in the hearts of His people by His Spirit and His Word.

*“Thou shalt not see evil anymore”* - This is obviously not speaking of physical Israel, for they saw evil the rest of their days. This is spiritual Israel who are safe in Christ and within the realm of God’s sovereign goodness and protection (*Rom. 8:28*).

*“In that day”* - This is the day of the LORD when Christ would come to redeem and restore the remnant. The LORD shall speak peace to His people and encourage them to continue looking to and following Him. *“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty!”* - CHRIST IS GOD WITH US, and He is omnipotent (*2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25*). *“He will save”* His people from their sins, and He is not willing that any of His remnant should perish but that all of them be brought to repentance (*Matt. 1:21,23; John 10:11-30*). *“He will rejoice over thee with joy”* - As a bridegroom rejoices over His bride, the Lord our God, Jesus Christ, rejoices over His people (*Isa. 62:3-5; 61:10*).

It is His glory to *“rest in His love”* for His elect (*1 John 4:10*). This is His redeeming love that insures the eternal salvation of all the objects of His love and is secured by the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Surety, Substitute, Redeemer, and Restorer of His people, the elect remnant. It is love that brings rest because Christ has finished all the work required to insure the salvation of the remnant (*Isa. 53:10-12; Dan. 9:24; John 19:30; Heb. 4:1-11*).

*“He will joy over thee with singing”* - This last phrase of *Verse 17* begins the song of our Savior as He is exalted and glorified in our salvation by God’s grace in Him. Notice how the LORD makes certain that we understand that salvation is of Him and by Him and not of us and by us. He states this in the six *“I WILL”* statements that follow:

*“I WILL gather ...”* - This is the salvation, restoration, and calling of the remnant unto Himself under the preaching of the Gospel in the power of Christ by the Holy Spirit. These are such as have been made *“sorrowful”* over their sins and who have borne the reproach of sin and depravity so that they have been brought by the Spirit to hunger and thirst after righteousness in and by Christ (*Matt. 5:6; John 16:9-11*). They will bear the reproach of sin and bondage no more because Christ has borne it for them.

*“Behold, at that time I WILL undo all that afflict thee”* - On the cross, Christ dealt with all that afflicts us - sin, Satan, the curse of the law. In time, all enemies will be put down forever and ever.

*“And I WILL save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out”* - Just like Jacob was made lame in order to heal him, so will all spiritual Israel. Just like man by nature is alienated from God as we were driven from the Garden in Adam, we will be gathered together in one (*Eph. 2:12ff.*).

*“And I WILL get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame”* - This *“praise and fame”* is not for ourselves but for the glory of God as we are trophies of His glory and grace in Christ Jesus our Redeemer and Restorer.

*“At that time WILL I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you”* - This refers to Judgment when the remnant will be made known before the whole universe as the people of God and sinners saved by His grace in Christ. *“For I WILL make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD”* - Again, this is our name as we are married to Christ - THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (*Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16*). All praise to the God of all grace and glory in our salvation.