

**November 26**

**Scriptures:** Read Zephaniah 3

**Key Verse:** “The Lord your God is in your midst, the Mighty One, will save...”  
(Zephaniah 3:17)

## **Overview**

After announcing the judgment of the Lord upon the nations, Zephaniah turns to finish his pronouncement of woe upon Jerusalem, which he called “rebellious and polluted” because of her idolatry. She is called an “oppressing city”, because of the way the poor and needy were treated by the predatory princes and judges who are likened to lions and wolves (3:1, 3). They did not heed the many true prophets that God had raised up to declare His word and expose their sin. These prophets warned them to trust in God alone and not in themselves, their worthless idols, nor their foreign political alliances. They were fools because they did “not receive correction” (Prov. 3:11-12; 15:5), nor did they draw near to God; rather, their sin drove them further and further from Him.

The [false] prophets and priests, who had been originally commissioned to help the people draw closer to God, were causing them to drift away from God. The false prophets were “treacherous” because they betrayed the Lord by speaking words in His name that He had not told them. In so doing they deceived the people. The priest’s were no better; they corrupted the Word of God in the Law by twisting its meaning and giving false teachings to the people. Thus they did violence to God’s Word (3:4), as is still done today by many degenerate people. The Lord, however, takes note of all the wrongs and will one day punish those corrupt people who lead others astray.

In contrast to Judah’s unfaithfulness and failure, Zephaniah illustrates God’s faithfulness and the fact that “He never fails” and that His righteousness was still present in their midst. The goodness of God should have put them to shame, for they continually sinned against Him. Because of their hardened and unjust hearts, however, they knew no shame and continued in their injustices, even after God had clearly shown them what His justice demands (3:5). God had done many things in the past for them, such as blessing them, proving His omnipotence, and defeating their enemies. These acts of God’s goodness should have been sufficient to cause them to repent and serve Him, but they did not. Taking another course of action, the Lord used various means of chastisement, including famine, drought, and pestilence, in order for them to call upon Him and recognize their need of Him. Yet even this did not cause them to seek Him. These things were done by God in His mercy, so that the coming destruction might be averted. But it was not to be averted, for the people of Judah eagerly persisted in their sin and rebellion against God (3:6-7).

The righteous remnant, however, would not be subjected to God’s wrath; they are exhorted by the Lord to “wait” for Him. There will come a day of vindication, when God will cast out the enemy, Satan (3:15), and judge all people of every nation, including those who have afflicted His faithful people. At that time, the ones who have remained true and faithful to God will be comforted and honoured before all nations (3:8, 19-20). All the wicked people and the whole

earth will experience God's fiery wrath when he purges the earth of anything that causes people to sin or profanes Him.

"The peoples" in verse nine are the Gentiles, dispersed throughout the world, who will come to the Lord, even from the most remote areas (represented by Ethiopia). They will survive God's judgment and become inhabitants of God's "holy mountain", Zion, because they will have committed their lives to Jesus Christ, having been cleansed by His blood. The Lord will cause them to have a "pure language" of worship to Him, without any erroneous notions, worldly influences, or pride, so that their offering of praise will be in one accord, offered in humility, and made acceptable to God (3:9-10). At that time, the true Israel of God will live blamelessly before Him.

Zephaniah, filled with joy because of the glorious future for God's people, bursts out in a song which further describes the deliverance, restoration, and peace of God that surpasses our present, limited understanding. Zephaniah rejoices that God has taken away the judgment due them, which we know to have been accomplished through the redemptive work of the Messiah Jesus. He also rejoices that the Messiah, "the Mighty One", "the King of Israel", whom Zephaniah calls "the Lord", will bring salvation, peace, and strength to His people; He will forever dwell in their midst (3:14). On that glorious day, it will not only be the Lord Jesus' faithful people who will be rejoicing in Him, but He too will be rejoicing over His people with gladness and singing, as the Bridegroom rejoices over His bride (3:17).

## **Prayer**

Oh Lord, what a day that will be when we (Your bride) finally see You face to face! Make us as white as snow, without spot or wrinkle, that we may truly delight Your heart.