

Our Great Salvation | Zephaniah 3 | 3/22/15

- Judgment and discipline for the Israelites | Zephaniah 3:1-2
 - Zephaniah began with God making it clear that both the world and the Israelite people were going to be held accountable for their actions.
 - That to live a life continuously in sin was not going to go unpunished.
 - That while God is a patient God He still will hold his people accountable for their actions. Especially if they never accept God's correction and discipline.
 - This was the case for the people of Israel
 - **Read Zephaniah 3:1-2**
 - God reveals 4 things that were the root causes for their impending judgment.
 - Lack of obedience
 - One who repeatedly disobeys and has no respect for God.
 - They did not accept their discipline or correction.
 - We all know that discipline is distributed by God to correct His children so that they will turn from their evil way.
 - However in this case the people were not accepting their discipline. So instead of learning from their mistakes and repenting, they just buried themselves even deeper in their sins.
 - God had desired that the Israelites would have learned from the mistakes of others. For the judgment He gave upon others in the world.
 - Zephaniah 3:6-7
 - Because of the judgment that God had bestowed upon others in the world, surely the Israelites would have seen what would happen.
 - Surely they would learn from the mistakes of others.
 - Surely they would accept the correction of God so that their dwelling place would not be cut off.
 - However this was not the case and they became even more corrupt.
 - Christians must also learn from the mistakes of others.
 - Christians must accept the wisdom from other Christians who have been down that path.
 - **God says to the Christian: "surely the Christian would learn from the mistakes of other Christians?"**
 - God's next response will then be one of two things:
 - They did not learn from the mistakes of others and instead became more corrupt.
 - My wise and faithful servant has learned from the mistakes of others and has returned to me.
 - Christians must accept the discipline and correction that God gives us. He isn't doing it because He enjoys causing us pain. He does it out of love so that we can be righteous.
 - Hebrews 12:11
 - "No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have been trained by it."
 - Ultimately God does this to bring about change in our lives.
 - They did not trust God.
 - The most important thing for an Israelite and for the Christian is to put their trust in God.

- **To not trust God is to not have faith in God for who He is and what He can do.**
 - If one does not trust God then that individual does not believe in the truths of God and what He says He will do.
 - You cannot have faith, if you lack trust.
 - They drew away from God.
 - Instead of drawing nearer to God they drew away. Instead of trying to live an obedient life and accepting their discipline so that they would correct their actions and change their ways, they instead drew further away from God.
- Unfortunately Christians can find themselves in the same position as the Israelites.
 - We would be wise to examine our hearts to be sure we are not going down any of these paths.
- **What can we do to prevent ourselves from falling into the same pitfalls that plagued the people of Israel?**
- A call to repentance, a call to restoration | Zephaniah 2:1-3
 - ***Read Zephaniah 2:1-3***
 - God's Word to the prophet was certainly full of judgment and warnings. But we also see that God has not left us without any hope. God's Word also contains God's call for repentance and the promise of restoration.
 - While the Israelites were still going to be held accountable for their actions, God still desired their repentance.
 - This is no different for the Christian. If we have been caught up in our sins and have been disobedient, God also desires our repentance.
 - God loves His children and He desires more than anything for their repentance and to restore a broken relationship
 - We can do this by seeking out God
 - Zephaniah 2:3
 - Regardless of what is going on in our lives weather things are going great and we have lots of joy, or if perhaps we are in a time of sadness and trials.
 - **We must always seek the Lord. We must seek righteousness and humility.**
 - Which is the opposite of what our sin desires which is evil and selfishness.
 - We must abandon our sinful ways and if we do this God is just to forgive, to show us His mercy and compassion.
 - Isaiah 55:7
 - "Let the wicked one abandon his way and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, so He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will freely forgive."
 - Deuteronomy 30:1-3
 - God has promised restoration
 - God promised restoration for the Israelites and likewise for the Christians.
 - The wrath of God is not what God has intended for us. Instead God wants us to obtain salvation.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10
 - "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we will live to together with Him."
 - Christians must come to our senses
 - As Christians we must come to our senses and realize that we must not take God and His desires for our lives for granted.

- That we do not have a free pass on life to sin as we please that we must strive to live a holy life, one that is filled with the spirit.
 - We must acknowledge our sins, our wrongdoing and always strive to live the life that God has called us to.
- This call of repentance is critical for the lost.
 - As we ultimately talk about the Day of Judgment where God will judge the entire world, the call for repentance and faith in God is most critical for the lost.
 - Those in the world who have never had true saving faith in Jesus Christ will be judged and will receive the eternal punishment of suffering in Hell for an eternity.
 - Revelations 20:15
 - “And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”
 - This of course why God has called every single one of us to be a witness.
 - It is our responsibility to bring the Gospel to the world.
 - While it is not our responsibility to save them as only God can do that.
 - God has called us to share the gospel. Which once received by the sinner, the Holy Spirit will cultivate true saving faith in the unbeliever.
 - Romans 10:17
 - Romans 10:14-15
 - So that we can share God’s truth with the world so that everyone can hear the Gospel and have an opportunity to become children of God.
 - Because all who call upon His name will be saved and therefore will not receive his wrath.
 - Romans 10:13
 - “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
 - **When you see responsibility that we have as Christians to share the Gospel and when you see the promised judgment upon the world. Does this give you a burden to be a witness to others?**
- Patience for God’s judgment on the world. | Zephaniah 3:8
 - ***Read Zephaniah 3:8***
 - God returns to His judgment, the ultimate Day of the Lord where God will judge the whole earth.
 - It is at this time where God will enact perfect and holy judgment upon the world and He will wipe out all of the evil and sin.
 - Zephaniah 1:1-3
 - Revelations 16:1
 - “Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.”
 - But those that have turned to God in repentance and have faith in Jesus Christ will not have to suffer.
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10
 - God’s righteous judgment will count the Christian (those who believe in Christ) worthy to enter the kingdom of God. The Christian will be rewarded with eternal rest (Heaven).
 - God’s righteous judgment will take vengeance on those who afflict God’s children and also towards all who deny Christ.
 - God calls for patience. God WILL pour out His wrath upon the evil of the world.
 - We may want God to judge the world know because of the evil that is here.
 - However God has called us to be patient to wait for Him. Because God also desires that should come to repentance.

- 2 Peter 3:9
 - “The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but **is patient with you**, not wanting any to perish **but all to come to repentance.**”
 - Wait for me...because Christ will return.
 - The Bible is full of prophecies in the Old Testament that have been filled. The Old Testament (and the New) also contains prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled.
 - This is one of those. The return of Jesus Christ is a promise made by God that He will keep.
 - Acts 1:9-11
- Restoration of pure speech and unity among the Christians | Zephaniah 3:9
 - **Read Zephaniah 3:9**
 - In the time of God’s fulfilled restoration God will restore pure speech to the Christians and they will all serve God with a single purpose.
 - We can already see the workings of this in the lives of all Christians.
 - Having the Holy Spirit living within us we can see the proof of God working in each of our lives in both our pure speech of the heart and also the unity that God desires for the Christians.
 - All those who believe and call upon the name of the Lord will be of one speech
 - Our first thought here might be that it would relate directly to the language that we speak. That God will bring the one language back as it was before the tower of babel.
 - While I would imagine this is true in Heaven
 - However if we think about speech here being something deeper, if we think of it being the speech that comes from our heart.
 - **If we think about it there is only one tongue in faith and it resides in the heart of the Christian.**
 - Christians may speak different languages in speech that is audible to the ear, but we all speak the same language and have the same tongue of faith that resides in our hearts.
 - The day of Pentecost
 - The disciples received the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues. They were speaking the Good News of Jesus Christ in the native languages of those around them.
 - Regardless of what the sounds were that came out of their mouths they all heard the same message in their hearts.
 - Acts 2:4-8
 - Acts 2:11
 - Scripture tells us that the words that come from our mouth originate from the heart. Regardless if this is for good or for evil.
 - Luke 6:45
 - “A good man produces good out of the good storeroom of his heart. An evil man produces evil out of the evil storeroom, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.
 - Who we really are, our true character resides in our heart. This is why true faith comes from the heart.
 - Everyone who is saved and has the Holy Spirit living within them ultimately speaks the same tongue of faith.
 - Our hearts have been cleansed because of the blood of the lamb, because of our faith in Christ for what He has done.

- **With the heart of a Christian we all call on the name of God and serve Him with a single purpose.**
 - Christian unity is vitally important in the eyes of God. In fact Jesus prayed for it.
 - John 17:11
 - “I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your name that You have given Me, **so that they may be one as We are one.**”
 - It has always been God’s desire that we work together in unity because we are all part of the body of Christ.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13
 - “For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”
 - While we will never achieve perfect speech or unity like we will have when God restores us fully in Heaven. We can certainly strive to obey God and live as close to that as we possible can.
 - **Why do you think it’s important to God for Christians to be of one speech and to come together in unity?**
- All those who come to Christ will have their sins forgiven. | Zephaniah 3:10-13
 - ***Read Zephaniah 10-13***
 - **These verses paint a picture of the restoration of God’s people. A restoration for those who have called out to God.**
 - During this time God would bring all of His people who were dispersed and bring them together.
 - They would no longer have to worry about their past sins and mistakes because God would forgive them.
 - In the time of restoration those who had not turned to God will be removed and those that are left will be the meek and humble, those who love God.
 - The picture of God’s forgiveness for the Christian
 - As Christians we can see how the Word’s of God that were spoken long ago to Zephaniah are coming true through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
 - Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies because he spoke directly about His future coming.
 - Christ died for the sinners
 - Romans 5:6-9
 - Forgiveness is available to all.
 - Romans 10:13
 - “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
 - As was stated by the prophet Joel forgiveness of sins and salvation is not limited to a few people.
 - Joel 2:32
 - “Then everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved, for there will be an escape for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the LORD promised, among the survivors the LORD calls.”
 - God is faithful to forgive all of our sins
 - Regardless of all the wrong we have done in our lives, regardless if God has had to hold us accountable or discipline us.

- Those sins no matter how wrong cannot prevent us from receiving the grace of God if we truly repent.
 - 1 John 1:9
 - “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- With forgiveness God will never remember our sin
 - Jeremiah 31:34b
 - “...For I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin.”
- The truths of our great salvation is a reason to rejoice | Zephaniah 3:14-17
 - ***Read Zephaniah 3:14-17***