

Zephaniah 3:14-17 – Joy when the Church is Clean and Growing

Delitzsch, Handfuls, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Clarke, JFB, Geneva, Poole, Henry, Expositor, Calvin, Gaebelein, Clarke, Trapp, Gill?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God would reject his Bride and allow her to go into captivity被擄 to severely punished for a while, but he would then restore her, revive 复兴her spirits, protect her, provide for her, and ensure that she propagated生息繁衍 ...even bringing children into his family from all over the world. A great number of people would then worship God. **And all this would happen because the Gospel would be preached and believed, and true repentance would follow.**

Today you will see **how God's bride would rejoice after she is restored** and you will **see how the bride's joy will give God joy!**

Our headings are:

The Requirement: Rejoice

The Reasons: God rescued his Bride

The Result: God himself rejoices

Our goals are: **That you will rejoice in your glorious salvation because you are in a precious place, even in a place that brings joy to your Savior.**

The Requirement: Rejoice

14 **Sing**, O daughter of Zion! **Shout**, O Israel! **Be glad** and **rejoice** with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

1. God called the daughter of Zion to sing, shout, be glad, and rejoice.

The prophet could see this day coming in the future...though Judah had not yet even gone into captivity. He was echoing the sentiments (情绪, 感伤) of the Psalmist (诗人) .

Psalm 107:15 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD **for His goodness (良善)**, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

She would be mocked for generations, but she would have her shame removed so she could **sing, shout, be glad, and rejoice.**

2. Who is the daughter of Zion?

God's bride. This was not referring to a woman born in Jerusalem. (Jerusalem was called Mt. Zion) This was Jerusalem. She was God's bride who believed in the coming Savior who would be a true sacrifice (献祭) for her sins. So Jerusalem/Mt. Zion is the whole church of God.

3. But why was the bride called to sing?

a. Singing and shouting was for praise and adoration崇拜 of her Bridegroom, the one who rescued her from slavery奴役.

b. Singing was for admonition警告, 训诫. God's people were called to sing **so others could hear and be instructed.**

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

c. Singing was for remembrance of God's good works as singing helps to commit things to memory.

4. Lessons:

a. God is gracious, for even before he sent his rebellious bride into captivity, he was already preparing for her restoration (重建). This is the great love of God.

b. And whatever makes the people holy will also make them happy. (Henry)

Proverbs 29:6 By transgression an evil man is snared (陷入网罗), But the righteous sings and rejoices.

What makes man holy? **It is not repentance (悔改).** **It is the blood of the cross that leads to repentance.** There is no repentance without the cross. So you must never take the credit for what God has done through Jesus.

c. What songs are you singing today? Are you singing of the glorious redemption (救赎) of a once rebellious soul? Are you singing of the deep, deep love of Jesus?

d. Sing to each other. Teach each other. Sing to your children. Let them hear "Jesus loves me, this I know!" But singing is also instructive (教导的) . When you sing you are speaking to each other. (Apostle Paul told the churches to encourage and admonish each other with song.)

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The Reason: God rescued his Bride

15 The LORD has **taken away your judgments**, He has cast out your enemy. **The King of Israel**, the **LORD**, is in your midst; **You shall see disaster no more.**

1. Covenant God would take away Judah's judgments (审判) so she had the reason to be joyful.

(The call to praise is accompanied with the cause of praise!)

a. A better translation for "has taken away" is "has buried." God, Jehovah, would bury Judah's punishment! (Note the tense...perfect, as if this were completed already! This tense showed certainty!)

Remember, Judah's punishment **was not justice**, but a fatherly punishment. Justice would mean being sent to hell forever.

Psalms 103:11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; **13** **As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.**

So as the Jews would sing these words, **they would be encouraged.** Look at details how God would take away their judgments.

b. Jehovah would remove the enemy that made his Bride suffer.

"Enemy" is a general word that refers to all kinds of enemies. And God could do it! After all, God is King (V15), emphasizing his power. **He was King over Israel but he had power over all the enemies of the world.** What wonderful power! What a mighty God you serve! God did not say the nations that held his people captive would change their minds. God said that **he would throw them out!** And he did. **When everyone thought Babylon was invincible (不可战胜的), God sent Cyrus, the Persian.** God even called Cyrus his servant and God used him to destroy Babylon.

Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the **LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia**, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

Micah 4:6 "...**I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast (被遗弃的人) And those whom I have afflicted;**

c. Jehovah then would remain with his Bride – a guaranteed of protection from future disaster.

What a comfort! This is a true friend. This is a true Savior. This is a true Bridegroom. He is always near his bride.

16 **In that day** it shall be said to **Jerusalem**: "**Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak.**

2. Covenant God, because he would destroy Judah's enemies, reassured his Bride that she would have no reason to fear.

a. Jerusalem = Zion. "Do not fear" = "let not your hands be weak."(The hand drops when there is fear. Fear makes the hand so slack.)

b. The economy and security of Judah would be so powerful there would be no reason to fear. Judah would not have to fear the **Assyrians, Babylonians, or Persians.** They were merely the instruments of God.

Hebrews 12:12 **Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,**

Judah would rebuild the temple, restore, worship, and ready themselves for the worldwide spread of Gospel. With fear gone, **faith gives strength.**

c. The Bride would be able to go about her work (since her hands would not be weak).

d. What about that phrase "in that day?" When would that be? The fulfillment of this prophecy was not limited to Judah's restoration from captivity. Rather, it refers to life of the church throughout church history, even today.

17 The **LORD** your **God** in **your midst**, The **Mighty One**, will **save...**

3. Jehovah gave another reason Judah should not fear but go about the work he would call her to do: He would be with her!

a. He is Jehovah – covenant God who is near, who never abandons his bride. He is the self-existent God. He is Mighty God. So he is all-powerful. And he is willing and able to save! ("Save" literally means to "deliver.") All this would take place in Jesus!

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

b. God is never idle among his people, so he would constantly be working among them to keep them safe.

4. Lessons:

a. The church's greatest enemies are not Justin Trudeau or Muslim Terrorists. The church's greatest enemy is sin in the leadership and the laity (平信徒) of the church. **When the cause of troubles is removed the consequences of those troubles will be removed. God will deliver his people from their sins – their captivity.** Sin was the reason God's people were put into captivity. So they would be delivered, not with guns, but with blood, the blood of Jesus Christ.

b. Rejoice, the Lord is King – King with all power to protect his people and punish all his enemies.

John 1:49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

If you have any doubts that the Lord will do this, go to his Word that is replete with (充满了) promises.

c. The Lord will always be with you, though you go through the darkest times. It may sometimes seem like you are all alone, but you are never alone. The church is never alone. God will never leave you nor forsake you, though you might leave him. And wouldn't this have meant the world to Judah DURING captivity, knowing that God would help them?

d. Get to work for the kingdom. Don't be lazy. The Lord set you free from your sin and shame, not for your personal indulgence, but for his service. He has given you everything you need to fight. You have his Word and his Spirit.

The Result: God himself Rejoices

17...He will **rejoice over you with gladness**, He will **quiet you with His love**, He will **rejoice over you** with singing."

1. When his Bride is secured and reassured of his presence, his protection, and her propagation, the Bridegroom would rejoice.

Luke 15:10 "Likewise, I say to you, **there is joy in the presence of the angels of God** over one sinner who repents."

Isaiah 62:5...And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, **So shall your God rejoice over you.**

Song of Solomon 4:9 **You have ravished (夺走了) my heart, My sister, my spouse;** You have ravished my heart With one look of your eyes, With one link of your necklace.

2. God would then comfort (quiet) this bride with his love.

He would embrace and reassure his wife of his love. This is quite tender language. A man would do more for his wife than any other person in the world – more than he would do for his own mother or his own children. (Imagine a woman having a miscarriage because of her own mistake. Only her husband's arm around her can quiet her.) This is the ultimate example of love of a bride who caused much harm to herself and her children.

3. God would sing because he is joyful that his Bride would be flourishing (兴盛的) .

Yes, the Bride can make God so happy that he sings songs of rejoicing!

4. Lessons:

a. God earnestly desires repentance of his children who have fallen into sin and he rejoices when they repent and live obediently. This means you can cause God to rejoice when you speak to a brother or sister who is living in sin so that he or she repents. And ministers must call the church to repent. What an awesome gift you have! Are you using it? It makes God sing! You make God sing.

b. More, you can cause God to rejoice and sing when you proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that non-believers repent.

Conclusion:

Judah would be able to rejoice in her restoration. God would remove her shame, live with her, and help her multiply. This would cause her joy. And as she would then live obediently and begin to multiply, God would then rejoice over her, so much so that he would start to sing!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Rejoice over the church's rescue when she falls into sin for the Lord doesn't leave her in her sins. He rescues her. He stays with her. He reassures her of his love. The disaster goes away!

2. How would you rejoice? Sing! Sing well. Sing often. Sing truth. Yes, sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life and liberty! Sing, shout, be glad, rejoice!

3. Tell others of the joy of being a child of God! The truth is, many are depressed. They feel like life isn't worth it. They have tried to live away from God but have become disappointed. They take pills to fake happiness. They need to know that they can be fulfilled and have true joy in Jesus. They need to know their sins can be forgiven. And you have that message! Don't hide it.

Finally: If you have guilt and shame because of your sins, ask God to remove your guilt and shame by forgiving your sins. Tell him Jesus died for your sins. What joy awaits you if you simply do this in sincerity (真诚) !