

May 03, 2020



# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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## Prophesying Restoration Zephaniah 3:14-20

### Lesson Background and Introduction

Zephaniah was a prophet in the southern kingdom of Judah in the seventh century BC. His lineage suggests that he may have been of royal blood (see Zephaniah 1:1). The prophet is primarily concerned with Judah's continued rebellion against God (see 2 Kings 22:1-23:28). The prophet's warnings to Judah carried weight given the fact of the deportation of the northern kingdom (Israel) by Assyria in 722 BC. Zephaniah's prophecy presents us with a sharp change of theme beginning in Zephaniah 3:9, as restoration of a remnant takes center stage. The Lord promises that the "afflicted and poor shall trust in the name of the Lord" (3:12), untroubled by those who are proud and haughty. The remnant can freely celebrate captivity's end. The final words of the book of Zephaniah remind us that restoration requires the power and willingness of God. He and He alone is the one who has the power to make restored relationship with Him possible. That's why Zephaniah's promise of restoration for the Old Testament remnant is relevant to us yet today: it foreshadows our restored relationship to God through Christ. Christians have been delivered from the captivity of sin; yet we still live in a world that is mired in that captivity. Therefore the fullness of our deliverance is yet to come. We trust God to keep His promise in that regard because He has, among other things, "also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 1:22). Although God's kingdom is not yet here in its fullest sense, His continuing work of restoration is guaranteed by the presence of His Spirit. Let us therefore celebrate these grand realities! As we do, we can affirm with Paul "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

**Rebuilding the Ruins** - The Book of Zephaniah presents two themes: judgment and deliverance. The first part deals with the consequences of the people worshiping other gods, the violence in the society, large-scale dishonest dealings, leaders abusing their power, and everyone ignoring the warnings of God's prophet. Despite the disobedience, God promised to bring them back from exile. He would preserve a remnant, forgive their sin, and restore their loss. Renewal, repair, rebuilding—this is what God does. Zephaniah described a restored nation and a renewed Jerusalem affirmed by God. The picture is of Israel rejoicing. Why? The Lord lifted the chastisement afflicted upon them by their enemies. It's like the hug after the spanking. For a season, it seemed as if the Lord had deserted His family. However, now He reminded them of His presence.

**God's Compassionate Singing** - The Father invited His children to relax in the lap of His compassion. He also introduced a new way to perceive Him, He was singing over His offspring. He was so delighted with their repentance He burst forth musically describing His indescribable love.

**Hallelujah** - God removed the sorrow, the burden. This not only describes the remnant's return to Jerusalem but also foreshadows the end of the age as well. God has fought off Israel's enemies, and they enter into a time of exuberant praise. It is an incredible time. During the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish people were unable to celebrate their feast days. However, once back in Jerusalem, the feasts and sacrifices were restored, and the celebrations began. Zephaniah's message started with tragedy and misfortune. But God turned things around when the congregation obeyed and chose to draw close to the Lord. They realized true joy and happiness is in God, not those things outside of Him that break His heart. God's joy is being in the midst of restoring His children to Himself, bringing the prodigals—any prodigals—home. That is what He still loves to do.

*(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)*

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**  
Because the Lord is the God of restoration and forgiveness, those who humbly come to Him are never without hope

**PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:**  
Lord, help us not to ignore the signs that restoration is needed in our lives

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**  
*Will You not revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You*

(Ps 85:6 NKJV)

*(from "Our Daily Bread", July 30, 2019)*

**Series: Justice and the Prophets**

**UNIT: Called to God's Work of Justice**

**NEXT WEEK**

**Promising Peace**  
(Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17)

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **Restoration through God Being with Us (Zeph 3:14-15)**

*God being with us should result in rejoicing (14)*

- Rejoicing over God's righteousness (Ps 32:11)
- Rejoicing over God being our strength (Hab 3:17-19)
- Rejoicing in the Lord (Phil 4:4-5)
- Rejoicing with trembling and fear (Ps 2:11)
- Rejoicing over God's trustworthiness (Ps 33:21)
- Rejoicing before God (Ps 68:4-6)

*God being with us through His deliverance (15)*

- Deliverance from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:10)
- Deliverance from troubles (Ps 34:19)
- Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)
- Deliverance from temptations (1 Cor 10:13)
- Deliverance from evil attacks (2 Tim 4:18)

### **Restoration through God Delighting in Us (Zeph 3:16-17)**

*Delighting by overcoming fear (16)*

- Fear is overcome because Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33)
- Fear is overcome because there is a reward for overcoming (Rev 2:7)
- Fear is overcome because of being born of God (1 John 5:4-5)
- Fear is overcome because in Jesus, Christians are more than conquerors (Rom 8:37)
- Fear is overcome because Christians do not have a spirit of fear, but of sonship (Rom 8:15)
- Fear is overcome because godly love drives out fear (1 John 4:18)

*Delighting by loving (17)*

- A love that we cannot be separated from (Rom 8:38-39)
- A love that surpasses knowledge (Eph 3:17-19)
- A love that sent Jesus into the world (1 John 4:9)
- A love that prompted Jesus to give Himself for us (Eph 5:2)
- A love that God gave us first (1 John 4:10)
- A love from God that allowed us to be called His child (1 John 3:1)
- A love that prompted God to give His only Son (John 3:16)

### **Restoration through God Gathering Us (Zeph 3:16-17)**

*Gathering those who sorrow (18)*

- Sorrow that will be wiped away (Rev 21:4)
- Sorrow that we will be rescued from (Rom 7:24-25)
- Sorrow that will be replaced by joy (Isa 35:10)
- Sorrow that will be turned into praise (Isa 61:3)
- Sorrow that will not be felt again (Isa 65:19)

*Gathering those who have been oppressed (18)*

- Gathering of the oppressed into God's refuge (Ps 9:9)
- Gathering of the oppressed into God's righteousness (Ps 103:6)
- Gathering of the oppressed into God's justice (Ps 146:7)
- Gathering of the oppressed and the rebuking of the oppressors (Isa 1:17)
- Gathering of the oppressed into God's protection (Ps 12:5)

*Gathering to return His people to Him (20)*

- God returns those who are with Him (Matt 12:30)
- God returns through His angels (Matt 24:31)
- God returns like a winnowing fork (Luke 3:16-18)
- God returns multiple flock (John 10:16)