

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Zephaniah 3:9-14, 20

English Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, June 19, 2016

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 19, 2016**, is from **Zephaniah 3:9-14, 20**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

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Zephaniah 3:9-14, 20

(Zephaniah 3:9) “For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of

them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord.

Through Zephaniah and other prophets, God warned His people to repent or suffer devastating consequences. In ways similar to our day, the vast majority in leadership and those ruled by them refused to repent and trust in the true God. But Zephaniah concluded with words of encouragement for those who repented and the faithful who sadly suffered in a godless and unjust nation. No matter how decadent Judah became, some (a remnant) continued to call on the name of the LORD exclusively and worked side-by-side with other believers. God would purify the lives and lips of those people who knew they were imperfect but trusted in God, even as Isaiah saw himself as a sinner, but God cleansed his lips and made him a prophet (see Isaiah 6:1-7).

(Zephaniah 3:10) From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.

Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, some righteous Jews had moved to Egypt and elsewhere, but many righteous and the unrighteous Jews fled the city and went to Egypt after Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 BC. Zephaniah prophesied that those who were faithful or their faithful descendants would return to Jerusalem someday and truly worship God with their offerings. This was fulfilled the first time with the Jews return from exile in Babylon and other Jews returned from elsewhere (as the many Jews

from many nations who celebrated the Festival of Booths on the Day of Pentecost also illustrates).

(Zephaniah 3:11) “On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.

Jerusalem was put to shame when the Babylonians destroyed the city in 587 BC, but their shame would only last during their 70 years of exile. During this time, God removed the boasters who gloried in themselves, and through Nehemiah and others God restored the city. Jerusalem’s sinful history repeated itself before and after Jesus was rejected, and Christians were martyred until the Romans destroyed the city in 70 AD. Even though Jerusalem is a city rebuilt within a restored nation of Israel, we await the Second Coming of Jesus Christ for the perfect fulfillment of God’s word through Zephaniah.

(Zephaniah 3:12) But I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD,

After the fall of Jerusalem, Babylon took the surviving religious and political leaders into exile and left the meek and humble who trusted in the LORD in the city. These were a remnant, a small portion of people, who obeyed and worshiped the LORD even though the temple had been destroyed.

(Zephaniah 3:13) those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

This prophecy will be made completely true after Jesus Christ returns as He promised. It became partially true after Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to indwell all who will believe in Him. It remains true today, but only partially among all true followers of Jesus Christ. By obeying the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit leads and empowers, believers in Christ are freed from slavery to sin and compulsion to sin; though true believers will sin sometimes until Christ returns. They will find their peace and security in Jesus Christ through all the trials of daily living, evil, and temptations.

(Zephaniah 3:14) Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Zephaniah's prophecy includes these words of hope for the faithful in the future. When Jesus the Messiah returns and separates the sheep from the wolves (or goats) His followers will sing in Jerusalem (Zion). They will be glad and rejoice with all their heart. Today, the followers of Jesus rejoice in their knowledge of Him and the promises that He made about His return when He will make all things new.

(Zephaniah 3:20) At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the LORD.

Many Jews scattered around the world today will continue to come to faith in Jesus the Messiah. When Jesus returns, faithful Christians will be gathered by Christ and believing Jews will be gathered together in Jerusalem, their ancestral home. Believing Gentiles from people groups around the earth will also be gathered there with Christ. God promises that everything believers have lost in this world for their faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him will be restored, and they will be given even more in their lives to come.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What did the LORD say He would do before the peoples called on His name?
2. How did God say the peoples would serve Him?
3. What kind of people did God say He would remove from Jerusalem?
4. What kind of people did God say He would leave in Jerusalem?
5. When will God fulfill His promise in Zephaniah 3:20?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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