***Zephaniah 3:10-20 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones, Shall bring My offering. 11In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds In which you transgress against Me; For then I will take away from your midst Those who rejoice in your pride, And you shall no longer be haughty In My holy mountain. 12I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people, And they shall trust in the name of the Lord. 13The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness And speak no lies, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, And no one shall make them afraid.” 14Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15The 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. 16In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. 17The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” 18“I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, Who are among you, To whom its reproach is a burden. 19Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, And gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame In every land where they were put to shame. 20At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you; For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes,” Says the Lord.***

We’ll finish Zephaniah tonight, examining God’s promise of a Faithful remnant that will return to Jerusalem. The first half of chapter 3 dealt with the coming judgement. Recall that this is being prophesied 25 years or so before Babylon enters Jerusalem. It’s over 100 years before King Cyrus decrees that the Jews can return to Jerusalem. God is the God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He knows the ending from the beginning. We can trust Him. When we can trust in that, life becomes less worry and more worship.

Verse 10 *From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones, Shall bring My offering.*Literally,from within the borders of Ethiopia. Many Jews had been carried to Egypt in an earlier war and sold to Ethiopia as slaves. In the coming war with Babylon, some others fled and went to Ethiopia. By the time of Cyrus, there will be a thriving population there. We recall the story of the Ethiopian and Philip in Acts 8, the Ethiopian reading from the book of Isaiah. God is saying – my remnant will return and bring offerings to my temple. We know that this happens under the Medo/Persian king Cyrus, when he entered into an agreement that returned many Jews from Ethiopia to Jerusalem.

Verse 11 - *In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds In which you transgress against Me; For then I will take away from your midst Those who rejoice in your pride, And you shall no longer be haughty In My holy mountain.* This is a sharp departure from verse 7, where the people remained haughty in spirit and insistent on sin. When God restores His remnant, the remnant will not be ashamed because all the prideful and haughty will be purged and removed. This will be a remnant of worshippers, pure in spirit and focus.

Verses 12 & 13 *I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people, And they shall trust in the name of the Lord. 13The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness And speak no lies, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, And no one shall make them afraid.”*The remnant will be meek, humble, trusting in the name of the Lord. They’ll be righteous and truthful. The people that returned had been stripped of all their worldly confidences. There’s an old saying that goes something like, “We never know that God is all we need until we realize that God is all we have.” Money, health, position – all are meant as tools to be used for God, not as security to replace God. Yet, we forget that. The Jews did in 625 BC and the Americans have in 2021 AD. God reminds us that, only in Him, can we be confident, lying down and no one making us afraid.

Verse 14 & 15 - *Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!**15The 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.**Sing, O daughter of Zion -* Loud and joyful praises to God are called for – for His Mercy endures forever. Notice – Sing, Shout, Be glad, Rejoice! Ungratefulness is a sin. We’re called to repent, but we are also called to Rejoice. People remember repentance but forget to rejoice.  *The Lord has taken away your judgments –* God, through Salvation in Jesus, pays the wages of sin. *He has cast out your enemy –* This can be understood as the Babylonians in the near future and also the bondage of Satan and sin. *The King of Israel, the Lord is in your midst. You shall see disaster no more.* God has returned. The remnant will return. Jesus – God come to earth – will restore relationship between God and man.

Verses 16 & 17 *In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. 17The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”**In that day -* when the remnant returns to their own land - *it shall be said to Jerusalem –* As encouragement – *Do not fear –* Don’t fear, keep peace in your heart. We saw in Nehemiah Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Samaritans working to frighten - *let not your hands be weak.* Satan wants us to be weakened and frightened, for our hands to be weak. The remnant is reminded – trouble will come… don’t be slack in rebuilding the city and temple, and restoring the worship of God. *The Lord* – Jehovah God is *in in your midst, The Mighty One* – God can and will restrain and destroy enemies, and support and protect his own people. *He will save –* God will deliver from fears, and the enemies’ threats. *He will rejoice over you with gladness,* God will greatly rejoice, He will take pleasure in blessing and doing good. *He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”*God will show great love for His people and will find joy in loving them. These promises will be completely fulfilled at the end – we get a glimpse in Revelation 20 with the 1000 year Millennial Kingdom.

Let’s finish verses 18-20 *“I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, Who are among you, To whom its reproach is a burden. 19Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, And gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame In every land where they were put to shame. 20At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you; For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes,” Says the Lord. I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly -* I will bring the remnant back. They will return from dispersion. *To whom its reproach is a burden -* who mourn for the loss of the things of Israel – Nehemiah 1:4 *So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.* Nehemiah grieved for God’s people and their distress. *Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you.* Mark well, I will break the oppressors and judge, particularly the Babylonians. *I will save the lame –* God will save those who are in distress, even in remote areas afar off. I will cause them to have fame, even in those places where they have been scoffed at and held in contempt. *I will appoint them for praise and fame In every land where they were put to shame.* God will appoint praise in place of shame, fame in place of being downtrodden. *At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you; For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes,” Says the Lord.* This is fulfilled as Christ’s church covers the earth and brings Truth to all peoples. Ultimately, Revelation 21 gives us the new heaven and new earth and New Jerusalem – every knee bows, every tongue confesses and the world sees God’s redeemed. May we be a Faithful remnant even as our world turns away, praying, that Christ may find us Faithfully waiting and watching when He returns. ***Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!***