



Zephaniah Wk. 13
The Reversal of Babel Pt 2
By Pastor Jody May 08/02/2026

[CALL TO HEAR]

Zephaniah 3:9-13 ESV

The Conversion of the Nations

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.

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Cush
my worshipers, the daughter
of my dispersed ones,
shall bring my offering.

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.

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

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."

Pastor – "People of God, this is the Word of God."
People – "Thanks be to God."

Pray

Introduction

We took a short hiatus last week from the book of Zephaniah, and I am thankful that Pastor Bill was able to give a summary of what they have been learning in our student program. Because what they are learning together, how to love one another, is essential for the future life of this church. I also



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am here on Wednesdays, so I knew what they were learning, and I knew the impact it has been having on them. And probably like me, God has challenged you in some areas where you can think of others better.

So, briefly let us go back to two weeks ago. We began a new section in Zephaniah where the prophet turns from the dangerous side of judgment on the Day of the Lord, to the blessing that it also brings. We covered just verses 9 – 10 as they are the introduction on a section in the reversal of Babel. We had said that all through Zephaniah that you should have picked up on the theme of Genesis, as if Zephaniah is using it as a guide for the writing of his prophetic poem.

In this first part of the recreation of the world, on the Day of the Lord, He talked about God making a people of pure speech (9). That the curse of Babel, where man was all for himself, God would restore to them a tongue that united them, where they all would call on the name of the Lord, all done by the changing of their heart. In essence 2 weeks back, we did a dive into the theological concept of **regeneration**, and we looked at the first things that happen when God replaces the dead heart of man with a heart of flesh, or the gifting of a spiritual eternal heart.

Today we continue in this reversal of Babel, and we see that those whose speech shall be made pure, that there will also be a further work done in their hearts. The Lord will not only change what comes out of man's mouth, but He is going to change the view that man has about His own life. There are three things that the scripture lines up nicely for us to see that work. **First**, we will see **what the Lord removes from His people**. In the changing of men's hearts God targets something specifically to get rid of first. Secondly, **what the Lord leaves for His people**, as in after the removal there finally will be a people who can love God. Then lastly, **what the Lord gives His people**, after all is said and done on that Day of the Lord, there will be great joy, for His people are given very special gifts.

MP

The Lord removes the proud and preserves the humble, those who trust in His name shall dwell in peace.



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1. What the Lord Removes from His people.

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.

Picking up from where we left off last week. Zephaniah uses a phrase that is repeated 4 times in his work; **"on that day"**; twice in chapter one and twice now here in chapter 3. In chapter 1:9 **on that day** there came *punishment* and 1:10 there came forth a *cry/wail* in response. It is here in Chapter 3 though, as we said last week, that along with judgment comes the blessing of God's correction.

On that day, we discover herein v.11, that God never judges and forgets but He is a God who judges and restores/redeems His people! That theme is continued this week when God remakes His Holy City, as He reverses the curse of Babel. He rebuilds a dwelling place for His name where men will no longer seek to build a name for themselves ([Gen 11:4](#)), but they will seek refuge in God's name alone. We see today, His first action is to remove certain things from it. One is shame and the other is pride.

^{11a} **"On that day** you shall not be put to shame

The LORD had already condemned this adulterous nation for its lack of shame previously in Zeph. There was no guilt in her to be found, no conviction of sin, it is true depravity on display. Therefore, He had gathered them together as a **"shameless nation"** in [2:1](#), and in [3:5](#) points out that her **leaders** were **unjust** and that is why they had no **shame**. So, what the LORD is about to do, **on that day**, is correct both the state of shamelessness and remove those that had no shame. He shall remove both the taint and the source of that specific defilement. But also notice that God doesn't say they are innocent.

^{11ab} because of the **deeds** by which you have **rebelled** against me;



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The Lord is not burying all the wicked things that were done. He is not just sweeping things under the rug. The Lord doesn't place blame on their leaders alone for what the people wanted to do. The Lord is not applying a memory blocker to their minds, so they just forget the rebellious things they had done against God and man. What IS happening though is that despite their sin, God is not going to add the shame of **unresolved guilt** to them. It will not be a shame that leads to death.

Shame though is one of those things that all Christians fight with. We may not all have the same proclivities to a certain sin, nor do we share the same basic temptations as each other. BUT what we all **have in common is the shame** we feel when give into such temptation. There is nothing that stings so bad as doing something you know you shouldn't, then to be made aware of it, or get caught, or you just come to your senses by God's Grace, and then you live with the knowledge you messed up again. That is a good form of a short-term shame/remorse/conviction or a **godly grief** as Paul would call it.

2 Corinthians 7:10 ESV

For **godly grief produces a repentance** that leads to salvation without regret, whereas **worldly grief produces death**.

The feeling of having wronged God, that godly grief, is what drives us to repentance and renewal that leaves regret behind. The fight though is when we allow that sense of shame to fester in our hearts and we start believing that the Gospel really didn't save us from the sin we still do, and it can become a worldly grief that produces death instead of life. A Godly Grief is what we should desire but it only comes first by the receiving of the one that removes our shame of being a fallen individual, a person born into sin.

We know 2,000 years ago on that first Day of the Lord, the incarnation of Christ, He came for the removal of a shame/worldly grief getting us to recognize that we are lost, and we must put hope in Him.

1 Peter 2:6 ESV ([Romans 9:33 ESV](#))



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⁶For it stands in Scripture: [\(Is 28:16\)](#)

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to **shame**.”

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first step of God building His Kingdom on His Son the *cornerstone*. The Father **removes the guilt and shame** of being a rebellious sinner and places the judgment on Him. We know this much don't we, there is a removal of our sin, there is a removal of a condemning shame, but the memory of our sin is slow to fade. Now, in light of Jesus' revelation, and what He did for us, it is what drives us to repentance when we do fall short, our conscious is quickly stirred to turn to Him, and our temporary earthly **shame/godly grief** reminds us of the great work that he has done for us! As Christians we no longer fret over the future judgement on the *Day of the Lord*, but we are concerned when we take for granted the gift of faith/forgiveness, that we have received by grace on this side of it.

What happens though family, and yes, many times in the church, is that people forget the beauty of the Gospel, or they don't truly understand that God's love removes shame along with sin. So, when they are confronted with guilt, they treat it as a **worldly grief/shame**, causing them to run and try to fix it themselves. They try to do more good works, they try to behave better, they try to hide their wrong doings, all to assuage the sense of shame, and therefore they don't seek resolution with others and God. Perhaps they still feel that their entry into heaven is still based on their behavior and not the works of Christ. That's a sign of worldly grief trying to grow in that person's heart. When someone let's that consume them it leads us to that second thing that God is going to get rid of, PRIDE.

^{11b} for then I will remove from your midst
your proudly exultant ones,
and you shall no longer be haughty
in my holy mountain.



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The first part in removing pride is to remove the proudly exultant ones. For the Jew of that day, we are reminded of the rulers of the oppressive city who fed off of the lowly, those that were out for their own gain ([3:3-4](#)). In the church of today these are the wolves in sheep clothing, that pretend they are for the good of the body but instead live off the body. Those that sneak in through the front gate but spark division and dissension as a result of pride. These are the people who sometimes work so hard at trying to show themselves worthy of Salvation/Love/Community but resent others who live enjoying God's Grace in their lives.

Then there is a second action to removing pride. He tells all **that YOU shall no longer be haughty**, prideful, in God's Holy mountain. The Holy Mountain is Jerusalem, the City that sits on a Hill and its' pinnacle is the temple, and it all is to be pointing to God - there is no room for haughty people there, so God will remove all vestiges of pride from its' **individual citizens**. The coming of the Lord establishes a new people in which God has removed their sense of pride, that they can save themselves, that's leftover Babel lineage. In His new dwelling place, the church, He is constantly cleaning out those who hold onto pride and /he is constantly removing the pride of His children. This glorious picture shall be fulfilled in the **final Day of the Lord** when there will be none among the people who compete for recognition or who suffer from shame over sin.

Family I pray you hear this today, that if you are suffering from ongoing shame, it might be that you are looking for a way still to justify yourself in front of the Lord, by your works. There is no place in His house for this continued stance, turn to Him, surrender your guilt to Him, and let the Lord cleanse you from haughtiness, for the **Lord will remove the proud**.

2. What the Lord Leaves with His people.

^{12a} But I will leave in your midst
a people humble and lowly.

The **Lord removes** and now the **Lord leaves** something behind after the coming of the Day of the Lord. On that day He will leave in their midst a



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people who are **humble and lowly**. In the original language it is the *poor and weak*. These are people who cannot take care of themselves, like the rich person or ruler can. It doesn't mean they can't work for a living; it just means they have an understanding that they are dependent not solely on the work of their hands but by the blessings of God.

Folks, please hear me today, money does not mean you are more liked or favored by God, neither is it a sin to be well off, but the presence of wealth in our lives is a calling to greater stewardship and making sure it is not separating us from being dependent on God. Whenever we place more value in having money and making quick decisions based on a bank account rather than in prayer and seeking counsel from God, that is when our wealth is endangering us. That is a warning for all in this church because you may not have much in this room today based on American Standards but based on the World's economy, we have more than most. **Are we humble and lowly people, do we have an understanding that all we have comes from God?**

And here's WHY that is important. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5: "**But blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven and blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.**" The Lord has in store for His people, the humble and the lowly, a full inheritance in the Kingdom of God. For Zephaniah's day these were people used as cattle by their rulers, but in the coming of the Day of the Lord, these people would be included in the royal line. They will have a rightful place at God's table, they will always have a place set out for them, they will always have a home in God's protection, there will no longer be a question on whether they belong or not. **For the humble and lowly, are not judged by what they have but are judged rather by who they know, the Lord!** What are these people known for who are changed by God?

^{12b} They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD,

Zephaniah had already set up this encouragement in chapter 2 when he said.

Zeph 2:3 ESV

³Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land,



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who do his just commands;
seek righteousness; seek humility;
perhaps you may be hidden
on the day of the anger of the LORD.

People who seek the Lord, will be the ones that God is preserving on that day. The connection in these two verses is **the PROMISE on the Day of the Lord**, that seeking humility, to humble oneself in His presence, you shall be delivered!

Example of a people who discovered this - I remember when Heather and I lived in S. Florida, our church was in Wellington, that was horse country back then, Polo fields, people who have multiple homes for seasonal living. I was friends with some people that you would call millionaires. Some of them truly sought refuge in the name of the Lord, they were humble, they were meek, while others were not. Those that sought the Lord diligently, **they all had in common**: like a 3 shirt and two shoe wardrobes and warn cars, and they would be the first to arrive when we had to set up kid rooms at 6 am on a Sunday morning with me. People who have found the Lord are **not so marked by what they have but rather by who they know**, AND they put all their stock not in market values but in the only person that can save them on the future day of judgment, the Lord.

Just remember, humble and lowly people are a people who have been confronted with their pride first, and they have left that behind to embrace Kingdom living first, is that us family? Because there is a final blessing left behind for this humbled person.

3. What the Lord Gives to His people.

13a 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.



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Injustices, lies, and deceitfulness are actually all descriptors of vile sinners in the [Bible](#). These words/sins are used here I believe to show that the vilest of sins has been conquered by God, it has been reversed! That the people who used to do them **no longer** are doing them anymore, the haughtiness of Babel has been conquered! That the actions that lead to the broad path of Hell were closed off to these He redeemed, and He has placed them on the narrow path. God has redeemed His creation to make them like Christ, to image Him. The reversal of Babel is not to have a people that make idols to praise their own worth, but to remake a people that are reshaped in the image of Christ! We can see some of the same wording again from Isaiah, who Zephaniah likes. Isaiah points to the person that imputes to us all this righteousness, He who reverses our sin, getting rid of the unpure speech we do with our mouths, and he shows how he does it!

Isaiah 53:7-9 ESV

- ⁷ He was **oppressed**, and he was **afflicted**,
yet he **opened not his mouth**;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.
- ⁸ By **oppression** and **judgment** he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
- ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was **no deceit** in his **mouth**.

It was the Lord, when He received our just due, **on that day (judgement)**, He opened not His mouth. He **took not** the privilege of being our righteous ruler to get out of Calvary, but he was buried with those who were haughty, the wicked and the rich man. But for our Lord, there was **no deceit in His mouth**. All he said was true, you read that this week in John 18 in His talk with Pilate. Pilate believed in His innocence but still crucified Him as the true King of the Jews. This ruler through His sacrifice instead of using His people for



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personal gain, surrendered His life, as a lamb, for their future Kingdom inheritance. That scene and that picture is what humbles His people, it causes us to repent in godly grief, and it is what causes us to seek refuge in His name alone.

Just to compound on what we learned last time this is all a work of the HS. Pure Speech, the changing of the heart, comes out of a person not just in what he says, but it also comes out in what he does. The person that has been rescued by God is a humbled person, praising the name of the Savior, never putting stock in what He can do, but telling all what has been done for them. It is the total reversal of the Tower of Babel, it is the reversal of the curse, it is the conquering of man's haughty pride!

There is one more thing to mention here this morning. The Graciousness of the Lord, in the Gift of His Gospel, is that the changed person receives three things that will help him remain humble and seeking the Lord.

13b For they shall graze and lie down,
and none shall make them afraid."

When we begin to call on the name of the Lord, here is the Kingdom life you are inheriting now. This is good to know because there are days, we forget this.

- Provision - (pasture for grazing)
- Rest - (causing us to lie down)
- Security - (no more being afraid)

Just as we are taught in Psalm 23 and all the [20+ places](#), as Jesus told us in John 10, He is our good shepherd and His sheep know His voice. That is the picture of the humble seeking refuge in His name. Those that know the Lord like that, one will discover, while they may or may not be rich, they will always have enough for the Lord is - **Jehovah Jireh, He provides**

Life can be hectic sometimes and we know that don't we, but for God's humbled they are a people that will receive rest. They learn to sleep at night



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even when the promise of a new day brings its' own troubles. – **Yahweh Shalom; the good shepherd.**

Then there is the blessing of security. There will always be wars and rumors of war until His return but isn't it good to know, your sense of security is not based in your government or the strength of your hand, as you saw in Daniel this past week. It is all based in God's intervening love on your behalf. –

Jehovah Sabaoth or The LORD our Refuge

The Day of the Lord, on that first incarnation, our Lord claimed from this world, a people who were shaped by the Pride that was found in the construction of the tower of Babel. He bought us back, He gave us new hearts, He paid the price, and He provides. Then on the future day of the Lord we will be rewarded with the sight of seeing our glorious King returning. On that day, all will take the knee for the one that deserves all praise. Praise because we have learned this today.

MP

The Lord removes the proud and preserves the humble, those who trust in His name shall dwell in peace.

[CALL TO OBEY]

1. Put away pride and self-justification.

Because the Lord removes the proud, let us repent of self-exalting pride, self-protection, and self-justification, covering our sin with excuses or religious performance. By doing so we keep shame from hardening into pride. Bottom line family, give to God in prayer that which you don't like to give to Him, and like David show Him your whole heart.

2. Seek Refuge in the Name of the Lord.

The first thing we usually run to when trouble hits is our own skills and reasoning. This week when trials come and they will, take the first moment before reacting, and go to God in prayer and ask that His will not yours be done.



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3. Live as peaceful and truthful people.

Let all our words, our dealings, and our peace show that we belong to the Shepherd. When the world panics remain calm, when the world angers seek peace, and when the world curses you bless them in return.

Prayer

Lord God, we praise You because You are a God who does not judge and forgets, but a God who judges and restores. Thank You for removing the shame of Your people, for casting down our pride, and for preserving the humble who seek refuge in Your name. We confess that pride still clings to us, that we are too ready to justify ourselves, too slow to repent, and too often tempted to trust in our own strength rather than in Your mercy. Humble us, O Lord and continue to grant us a godly grief over sin that leads quickly to repentance and not the worldly sorrow that leads to death.

We pray for those in here, in our homes, and in those places, we frequent that do not know the saving grace and favor of You. Would you please open their eyes to the truth, that the Son can and will remove their shame upon the confession of sin and the receiving of Him as Lord of their life. As you did for us Father, move against their prideful hearts, have mercy on their souls, and bring the lost to life. Continue to grow your people through these acts for thy name's sake. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Luke 22:19-20 ESV

"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

When we partake of the bread of the Lord's Supper it is partaking in Jesus' body, all that He has accomplished for us. It is the admittance that we cannot boast in anything or believe that any of our works brought us to God, but that all the work necessary for Salvation was done by Christ's perfect obedience. Eating the bread is the act of a humble people seeking refuge in the name of



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Jesus alone. Praise be to our Lord who has imputed to us His perfect righteousness.

The juice we drink today is representation of receiving the blood of the New Covenant. That is in God's Covenant of Redemption He removes our sin and shame and, in its place, makes a person where deceit is no longer found in their mouths. These people, through Jesus' sacrifice, have found provision, rest, and security, secured by Jesus' strong hand. He has humbled us through His love, He has conquered our pride through bearing our shame in death. Praise be to our Lord who opened not His mouth while He endured the cross.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand and recites:

LBCF 1689 Chapter 5 Of Divine Providence, Paragraph 5 God Often Disciplines or Tests His Children

The perfectly wise, righteous, and gracious God often leaves his children to various temptations and the sinfulness of their own hearts:

- to discipline them for their former sins, or
- to teach them the hidden strength of the sinfulness and deceitfulness of their hearts,

for the purpose of humbling them. He also does this:

- to lead them to more closely and constantly depend upon him for their support,
- to make them more cautious against future temptations to sin, and
- for other just and holy purposes

15 Therefore, whatever happens to any of his elect is because of his decree and happens for his glory and their good. 16

15. 2 Chronicles 32:25-26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

16. Romans 8:28

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]



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[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that while we were still sinners elected that He would preserve a people for Himself, conquering their pride.

Go in the name of the Son, that while we were still sinners died for us, so that our sin and shame could be removed, making us inheritors of His Kingdom.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, who opens our eyes to the works of the Lord, who causes us to repent in godly grief, now go and share this good news with the world.



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[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

1. What does this passage teach us about the difference between the proud and the humble before God?

2. Why is trusting in the name of the Lord the mark of the remnant God preserves?

3. How does God's removal of pride shape the way we think about repentance and the Christian life?

4. What does it mean for God's people to be a pure and truthful people in everyday speech and relationships?

5. How should the promise of dwelling in peace encourage the church as we live in a troubled world?



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