

Our Reasons for Rejoicing

Zeph. 3:14-17 *Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 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. In that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear Zion; let not your hands be weak. The 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."*

On that first Sunday that we call Palm Sunday we read that a great multitude had come to the feast, and when they heard that Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' And they gave to Him this title, "The King of Israel!" It was on that day that Jesus entered Jerusalem, sitting upon the foal of a donkey as had been prophesied by the Prophet Zechariah, "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech. 9:9)*" We are told that on that particular day, the disciples did not understand these things; but it was only after Jesus was glorified, that they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. (cf. Jn. 12:16) In other words, the people crying out "Hosanna to the Lord, The King of Israel" were no doubt expecting Jesus to overthrow the Roman armies and once again establish the earthly throne of David.

This is why the two disciples on the road to Emmaus were so dejected for they were hoping that this one whom they thought, would, - as the Messiah redeem Israel; that is, as to their thinking, He would have thrown off the yoke of Rome. However, our Lord opened up to them what the Bible really said about the Messiah. Jesus was to be crucified; He would provide a covering for sin.

Here in Zephaniah, we find one of those promises fulfilled by our Lord. Zephaniah here promises that at the end of the exile God will bring back a remnant of those who have been truly converted. They will not be as those of Isaiah's day men, that is, men of unclean lips, but will be a people of pure language. That will not be rebellious, proud and arrogant but will be a weak and humble people. A people that will not trust in their own abilities, but in the power of God. Amongst the returning exiles we know them as the Ezras and the Nehemiahs. Later in time, they will be the Josephs, the Marys, the Elizabeths, the Zechariahs, the Simeons, and the Annas. Then as God establishes the church in the New Testament, they will be the Matthews, the Peters and the Pauls and the converted Gentiles. Zechariah calls them the "remnant" of the returning exiles, for even among those who return there will be those that are not the Israel of God, as Paul will point out in his letter to the Church at Rome, that "*not all who are of Israel are Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham.*" (Rom 9:6-7) As Jesus said of those who rejected Him, "*I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.*" Then went on to say, "*If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.*" Finally proclaiming that they were of their father the devil. (cf. Jn. 8:37.39.44)

Now in this study from Zephaniah we shall consider the following. 1. We find here a call to rejoice, but the question is; who is the Zion to whom the call for rejoicing is given? 2. What are the comforts or causes for rejoicing?

- A. To whom is this call to rejoicing given? - *Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!*
1. This Israel, this daughter of Jerusalem, of Zion, is none other than the church of Jesus Christ, which will be composed of both Jew and Gentile
 2. Gentiles are included for we read that in every nation God will give them fame and praise - *For I will give you fame and praise **among all the peoples of the earth*** - Zeph. 3:20
 - a. It is not that all nations will consider them famous
 - b. Rather they will be precious in God's sight
 3. This proclamation is given to a heavenly not an earthly kingdom
 4. The Zion spoken of here is more fully revealed to us in the letter to the Hebrews

*Heb 12:22-23,24 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are **registered in heaven** . . . to Jesus the Mediator of the **new covenant**.*

Phil. 3:18 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

B. What are the comforts or causes for rejoicing?

1. The Lord has taken away your judgments, your condemnation
 - a. Those who make up Zion were guilty and worthy of God's judgment
 - b. The charge is against the whole of mankind

Rom 3:9-12 For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable.

*Rom 8:1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus.*

2. As a result of our condemnation we were under the penalty of death but God *has cast out your enemy*

1 Cor 15:54-57 "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The King of Israel, the Lord, was in their midst
 - a. The King who was high and lifted up, whom Isaiah beheld was in their midst
 - b. It was the promised King of Israel, lowly, riding on that foal of a donkey that day

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech. 9:9)

*Phil 2:5-8 Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider His equality with God something to be retained, but **made Himself of no reputation**, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

4. God Himself would appear in their midst - *The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One will save.*
 - a. Had they known they would not have crucified "The Lord of glory" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:8)
 - b. Scripture makes it clear, Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh"

1 Tim 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

- c. God has indeed turned back our captivity, he has delivered us from the penalty of our sin

CONCLUSION: This passage speaks of none other than our Lord Jesus Christ

He is the King of Israel

He was indeed God in our midst

He has indeed taken away our condemnation having

2 Cor 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

That is why Zephaniah could say "*In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak."*" (v. 16)

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your judgments; He has cast out your enemy.