

Series: Zephaniah
Title: The Most Beautiful Song in Heaven
Text: Zephaniah 3:17

Introduction:

“Favorite song”

1972 top 40 taped reel-to-reel with Dave Mikesell... transferred to cassette and listened to throughout the week.

- *American Pie, I Can See Clearly Now, You're So Vain (You probably think this song is about you), A Horse With No Name, Rocketman, The Candy Man, Betcha by Golly Wow, The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face, Alone Again Naturally, Everybody Plays the Fool, Lean on Me, and Ben.*
- And you wonder what happened to me?!

A friend I grew up with in church, who also went into the ministry, recently asked the question about what childhood song in church made an impact on your life.

- Too many to mention but it has always been the chorus:
 - To be used of God to sing, to speak, to pray;
 - To be used of God to show someone the way;
 - I long so much to feel the touch of His consuming fire,
 - To be used of God is my desire.

Two weeks ago I brought a message on the Songs of Revelation. It has 10 songs and we went over them.

- They were sung by angels.
- They were sung by the elders.
- They were sung by the saints.
- They were sung by all creation.
- They were sung to the praise of God the Father and to the Lamb.

But there is one more song in heaven that I want to speak on today.

In my opinion it the most beautiful song being sung.

The Most Beautiful Song in Heaven

- It is not sung by anything or anyone who has been created, but is being sung by the Creator Himself
- The competitions to find the best singer, the best voice, the next idol, take place all over the world.
- But if you want to imagine with me the greatest VOICE, look no further. **God is singing!**

It is the Song that God Himself sings.

- That God would be so happy with me that he would break out in song from the throne of heaven, so that the sun, moon, and stars, indeed all of creation itself would pause in their melodies and harmonies to defer to THE VOICE of the Creator. And He singing a happy joyous hymn.
- God did not sing when he spoke all into existence.
 - The angels sang of His creation
 - The children of God sing of His praise over creation.
 - Yet God does not sing over the universe, over the planets and stars, not over any creation in the sky, the earth, or under the earth.
 - The glory of all that exists does not move God, nor brings Him to a place of pure joy that would cause HIM to burst forth in Song

Zephaniah

- It is found in the prophecy written by Zephaniah. I am going to go through this book.
- I want us to consider up front where the story is going to end up.

Look at this verse with me.

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

ESV - ‘...He will exult over you with loud singing’

NIV - *...but will rejoice over you with singing.*

NLT - *...He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.*

Literal Standard Version - *...He delights over you with singing.*

The Author: Poor Zephaniah

- Most people have never heard a message from Zephaniah, and if so, could not recall what the message was about
- Most people have never read it
- It’s hard to find
- It gets confused with Zechariah
- Though being short, it isn’t a very “touchy-feely” passage. It deals with judgment.
- But it also deals with restoration.

Calvary Church with Skip Heitzig · Sep 5, 2019

(http://skipheitzig.com/teachings_search.asp?series=370)

- Illustration – “A severe mercy.”

Through the Judgment comes splendor.

God loves His people and at times must bring them correction. Yet His will is to bless them.

The Lord loves His people and must buffet them in order to bring them to higher blessing -
3:17

The Timing: The Exile

Pre-exilic prophet Zephaniah is the last.

Exile – Ezekiel and Daniel

Post exile Haggai first post, Zechariah, Malachi

The Good yet hated Prophet

Zephaniah is a contemporary of Jeremiah

- Last voice to be heard before the fall of Jerusalem.
- Prophet of the eleventh hour.
- Judah kings
 - Hezekiah – Good
 - Manasseh – Bad
 - Amon – Bad
 - Josiah – Good
- His preaching brought about the reform of Josiah the king
 - A good king in the southern part of Judah
 - Became king at 8
 - At 16, sought the Lord
 - A priest found a copy of the scroll in the temple.
 - He brought reform to worship the Lord.
 - The revival lasted a brief time.
 - Zephaniah brings the message to the king.
 - Succeeding kings turned bad again.

Zephaniah is the great grandson of Hezekiah – probably a distant cousin of Josiah.

TROUBLE FOR THE NATION / LOOKING INSIDE (ZEPH. 1:1-18)

The Day of the Lord Declared (Zeph. 1:1-6)

- I will stretch my hand against Judah - 3
- I will destroy remnant of Baal - 4
 - Sun moon and stars
- Those who worship Moloch (Milcom) - 5
 - Infant sacrifice as worship requirement
 - They swear by the Lord, yet they combine the worship of other gods.
 - **Syncretism** - They combined two opposing worldviews.
 - They also worshipped the stars and astrological signs.
 - USA: 39.6 million people consult daily astrological horoscopes.
 - USA: Three times as many psychics and astrologers as pastors and priests.
 - (Why consult the stars when you can worship the Creator?)

The Day of the Lord Dispersed (Zeph. 1:7-13)

- Cry from the fish gate
 - The north part of the old wall facing the Jordan River and Sea of Galilee
 - The Damascus Gate
 - This northern place was vulnerable and this is where Nebuchadnezzar came through to conquer.

The Day of the Lord Described (Zeph. 1:14-18)

“The day of the Lord” – occurs 26 times in Bible, 18 times in Zephaniah.

- Speaks of God’s direct intervention in the affairs of the world.
- Eschatological – End Times
- Non eschatological –

- Distress on the people
- Darkness and clouds
- Day of wrath
- “A day of the Lord:” a lens through which we can see “THE Day of the Lord.”
 - A dual fulfillment

TROUBLE FOR THE WORLD / LOOKING AROUND (Zeph. 2:1-15, 3:1-7)

The Day of the Lord Earned (Zeph. 3:1-7)

Zeph.3:1-2 ¹ *Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city!* ² *She listens to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord; she does not draw near to her God.*

- The city of Jerusalem – God’s people
- Those who will not listen; those who think they are in the family but are not aligned with God.

⁵ *The Lord within her is righteous; he does no injustice; every morning he shows forth his justice; each dawn he does not fail; but the unjust knows no shame.*

- The Lord within the city of God is righteous.
- His justice is merited.
- He does not fail, and He has no reason for shame.
- Within the camp of God’s people are those who do not listen. They do not trust the Lord. They do not draw near to the Lord. They are rebellious and defiled. The unjust know no shame.

The Day of the Lord Shown: Philistia in the West (Zeph. 2:4-7)

- Nations that gave grief to God’s people
- These nations were used to bring His people to repentance, but they will be judged.
- *For Gaza shall be deserted, and Ashkelon shall become a desolation; Ashdod's people shall be driven out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted. (2:4)*

- Five Philistine cities – Gath (home of Goliath) the only one not mentioned

The Day of the Lord Shown: Moab/Ammon in the East (Zeph. 2:8-11)

- *...Moab shall become like Sodom, and the Ammonites like Gomorrah... (v.9)*

The Day of the Lord Shown: Ethiopia in the South (Zeph. 2:12)

You also, O Cushites, shall be slain by my sword.

- Herodotus 425BC – Ethiopia was associated with all of Africa
- At the minimal – Cush is the horn of Africa.

The Day of the Lord Shown: Assyria in the North (Zeph. 2:13-15)

And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation... (v.13)

- Jonah and Nahum both prophesied against Nineveh (Assyria).
- Nineveh fell in 612 BC.

Isa. 40:15 - Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales...

RESCUE FOR THE NATION AND THE WORLD / LOOKING BEYOND (ZEPH. 3:1-20)

Clearly we are looking at a message given to the people who bear the name of God who are in Exile.

- The Nation is Judah... But the nation is the remnant of all of Israel.
- ‘The nation’ refers to the people who dwell and who will once again dwell in the land.
- God is consistent – These principles apply to you and me as well. Our nation, our land, the people of the land who are the remnant of God’s people.
 - Yes, in the last day of Judgement this is true. We have seen God’s plan through Christ’s words in Revelation.

- There was a blessing given to the recipients of this prophecy and seventy years later some would see the blessing given
- But there may be a present blessing for you and me as we look into this book.

After God's judgement, there will be a blessing for His people.

The Day of the Lord Survived Through Contrition

(Zeph. 2:1-3)

¹ *Gather together, yes, gather, O shameless nation,* ² *before the decree takes effect —before the day passes away like chaff— before there comes upon you the burning anger of the Lord, before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the Lord.* ³ *Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land...*

Gather together

- There is something about the collective being in agreement, in unity
- That we all recognize our need for Him

Seek Him

- Focus on drawing toward Him
- Seek Him first and His righteousness

Be humble

- Meek
 - Peter, "I am a sinful man."
 - Isaiah, "Woe unto me I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips..."

Zeph. 2:3

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord.

Zephaniah – 'The Lord will hide'

When God judges he makes a distinction among those He judges

- *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes 5:9, KJV)*

- I want to be hidden by God from the anger that he has.

The Day of the Lord Survived through Purification (Zeph. 3:8-13)

“Therefore wait for me,” declares the Lord, “for the day when I rise up to seize the prey.” (v.8)

- He will gather the nations
- He will bring His indignation
- This will bring about even the conversion of many nations

Purifying the Worry

- Wait on the Lord
- His timing
- Do not be anxious

“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.” (v.9)

- Ethiopia will be my worshippers – v.10
- The humble will remain – v.12
- The truthful will remain – v.13

Purifying the Speech

- We are to call on His name.
- We are to serve Him.
- We are to be united in our call to love and serve Him.

The Day of the Lord Survived With Celebration

(Zeph. 3:14-20)

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. (v.15)

- Judgments will be removed
- Enemies cleared away

- You will not fear again

Zeph. 3: 16-17

¹⁶ *On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak."¹⁷ The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."*

- He will be in your midst
- He will save you
- He will rejoice over you
- He will quiet you
- He will sing over you
 - in gladness and joy
- Ez 8-10 – prophet saw the glory depart the city
 - This is God saying I will be back

Listen to the song that is being sung by the Creator over you

THE SONG OF THE CREATOR

Do not be afraid, do not give up.

I am right there with you. I am able to save you.

I am so happy to be with you, it fills Me with joy.

Be still in the storm because I love you.

I sing this song over you as a song of gladness and triumphant delight.