

Seek the Lord " Who Gives Us His Grace"

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and go to the book of Zephaniah.

Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah. I was debating how to split these last few verses up. I decided to split it up into three different messages. So nine to 10 and the next time 11 to 13. And then last 14 through 20.

So I think it ends up being nine weeks. So I'm adding a week, so sorry. I was just thinking through verses nine and 10 and just what this is teaching us.

I thought, no, we need to just hang out here for just a little bit. And then look at 11 through 13 and then we can jump into 14 through 20 and finish off Zephaniah.

[1:06] So that's the plan. So we'll see if that sticks. Zephaniah chapter three, verses nine and 10. Just two verses this morning. Page 668.

And that black Bible in the chair in front of you, 668. Zephaniah three, verse nine and 10. It says this. And this is Yahweh speaking.

For then I will give or change to the people's purified lips that all of them may call on the name of Yahweh to serve him shoulder to shoulder.

From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my worshipers, my dispersed ones, will bring my offerings. It was the battle of Helm's Deep in Tolkien's second book, The Two Towers, in the trilogy, The Lord of the Rings.

It was that battle at Helm's Deep. In contrast to the movie, the elves did not come to their aid. It was just the men underneath Theoden.

[2:16] Their end was near. They would all be killed. The orcs, Herkai, were there. But as a valiant, last valiant effort, Aragorn and Theoden rode out with Theoden's men behind him and they blew the horns of Helm's Deep and it ricocheted off and fear came upon the orcs and they were pushing down upon those orcs in Eruk-hai and then he came.

Gandalf was there. It was Gandalf. Hope had come. I think it was Aromir and Aragorn were having a conversation.

Aragorn was talking about how we must hang on to hope and hope had come. They were all saved. Many orcs fled in fear and others were slaughtered.

And so you see this principle. When all seemed lost and in total despair, hope comes. And that's what you see from our passage today.

In this case from our text, there's so much despair. I mean, starting in chapter 1, verse 2, I will completely remove all from the face of the earth, declares Yahweh.

[3:47] Judgment. Judgment. The day of the Lord. Seek Yahweh. Here comes His judgment upon the nations. Here comes His judgment upon Judah.

Ba-choo, ba-choo. When all seemed, there was total despair and loss. Then comes grace.

Grace breaks in. Seek Yahweh, the God of judgment and discipline, salvation and blessing, who gives us, us, His grace.

us, us meaning Gentiles. I don't think there's any Jews in here. Facente's half Jew, but none other than that. There's no Jewish people in here.

We're not Jews. We're Gentiles. He gives us His grace. This, these two verses are talking about worldwide conversion by God's grace.

[4:44] grace. He gives us His grace. God gives grace, not just to Judah, but to Gentiles, to us.

What is grace? Grace means undeserved favor, unmerited favor. That's what grace means. You didn't deserve it.

You didn't do anything to merit it. It's called grace. It's undeserved. It's unmerited.

It's the favor of God. A different expression of the love of God. So when things look bleak, God's gracious salvation and blessing breaks in, and He saves people from all over the world. That's what these two verses are about. This is exciting news. God does not leave us separated from Him.

[5 : 52] Us, meaning Gentiles. He does not leave us separated from Him. Or even His people, for that matter, Judah. He brings us near by the blood of Christ who broke down the wall.

Christ broke down the wall. We'll look at that in a moment. He broke down the wall. He came to our aid. He showed us His grace.

We'll see it transforms us so we'll be a people who worship Him. Grace. God's grace. You know, this principle where all seemed lost in total despair, but then hope comes in, grace comes in, salvation comes.

This is seen in Jesus. It's seen at the cross. It looked bleak for Him. Total defeat. Like complete failure.

Without hope, this guy is hanging on this cross. This is not victory. No, it is. It's victory. It's success. Because when Jesus was raised from the dead, God's salvation and blessing was sealed in Christ Jesus.

[7 : 10] God shows His grace ultimately in Christ our Lord. So, starting in chapter 3, verse 9, the rest of chapter 3, it relays future events where Yahweh would bring worldwide conversion and restore His people to their land.

So there's, by way of reminder, I'll talk about this in just a few moments, there's this initial fulfillment and then greater fulfillment. So God is righteous.

He's just and holy. We've seen that. But He's also loving and compassionate and gracious. He would show it to Judah.

He would show it to the whole world. A huge, shocking turn of events happens here. It just turns. A totally brand new thing would take place and it would be fulfilled initially and then later on in the future fully in a greater way.

And what is this thing that was fulfilled? Numerous Gentiles are saved. Numerous Gentiles are saved. Yahweh is not only a God of judgment and discipline but also salvation, restoration, vindication, blessing, grace.

[8 : 43] grace. He loves to give grace. He's a generous God. As Moses told us, wrote it down for us when Yahweh appeared to him, he saw his back.

The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in covenant love, forgiving thousands. That's the first thing that Yahweh says about himself.

He loves to give grace. Yahweh would bring his salvation to Judah and all the nations of the world. He's a God of judgment and grace.

Showing his grace to the nations of the world, none of us deserve it. No one. So as again, as I said this a few moments ago, this looks forward not merely to what would happen after Jesus' resurrection in the church where Jews and Gentiles would become one.

We're gonna look at that in a few moments. But it also looks into the future at the millennial kingdom when the nations of the world would come and worship Yahweh. So you have this initial fulfillment and then a greater fulfillment in the future.

[10 : 02] Zephaniah just sees this happening in the future. He didn't see that there was this initial and then later. He didn't see that. He just sees it all at the same time. The day of the Lord would bring the destruction of the heavens and the earth by the fire of God's wrath.

We've seen that but it's also prelude to the millennial kingdom and the new heavens and the new earth. So again, just by way of reference, you know, we, chapter one, verse two of Zephaniah, he'll remove all from the face of the earth.

Chapter one, verse 14, near is the great day of Yahweh. Near, quickly, listen, the day of Yahweh. Chapter two, verse four, Gaza abandoned, desolation, driven out, uprooted.

Chapter three, verse one, woe to her, the rebellious, defiled, tyrannical city. Chapter three, verse eight, for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of my zeal.

Things looked bleak. Judah was rebellious, defiling, tyrannical. The nations were wicked.

[11 : 18] People refused to repent. Yahweh would judge them and bring his judgment upon all the nations and then at this dark hour, Yahweh gives grace, verse nine.

For then, I will give to the people's purified lips. The word here, give, literally means turn or turn around or turning away, transformation even.

Total change. So this indicates a huge, radical change. The people needed a radical change of heart in order to worship Yahweh and that's where God's grace breaks in.

For then, I will change. I will transform. They need a radical change of heart to worship Yahweh in the way He intended and the way He declared.

He would break in to bring His long-awaited redemption. Yahweh loves to show His righteousness but especially His grace.

[12 : 42] He showed favor by transforming this people and notice it says transform to the people's purified lips. Pure.

So this outward purity is a result of this change of this transformation. So His grace comes in and there's a change.

He punished the nations and His people as a way to purify them and thus He would purify their lips having changed their hearts and notice purified lips the word lips it reminds us of something.

It reminds us of the Tower of Babel. There in Genesis chapter 11 verse 1 through 9 Yahweh created many languages as an act of judgment.

Since humanity collectively and in unison they rebelled against their creator because what did they want to do? They wanted to make a name for themselves.

[13 : 48] But now these peoples notice the word peoples after this purifying judgment discipline the same nations were addressed above experiencing His hand of anger would now experience His salvation they would work in unison not to go against and rebel against the Lord but to worship the Lord.

You're going to see that in a moment. God's work of redemption would impact the Gentile nations they would be saved. That's why we sang that song May the peoples praise you.

It coincides perfectly with this. So Yahweh gives grace. We actually saw one result actually the result is a purified lips but notice it says here from the text in order that all of them may call on the name of Yahweh to serve Him shoulder to shoulder what are the results now of God's grace?

Result number one people worship Yahweh. Verse 9 in order that all of them may call on the name of Yahweh at the inauguration of the age to come which happened at Pentecost Yahweh would bring one language again so that in unison all the peoples of the earth would worship and praise His name making much of His name instead of themselves pride would be replaced with humility because notice he says all of them may call all on on the name of Yahweh this radical amazing God wrought change grace would bring about a huge result they would all call upon the name of Yahweh to call upon Him means to worship Him and depend on Him that's what it means so all may call on the name of

Yahweh every nation tribe people and language would stand before the throne those from every nation from every tribe from every people language would sing worthy is the lamb who was slain this may this verse may come to your mind from Revelation chapter 5 verse 9 Revelation chapter 5 verse 9 says and they sang a new song saying worthy are you to take the book and to break its seals for you were slain and purchased for God with your blood from every tribe and tongue and people and nation excuse me you made them a kingdom and priest to our God and they will reign upon the earth this is what this looks forward to looks forward to this they would acknowledge that what Yahweh had revealed about himself and how the people needed to depend upon

[16 : 57] Yahweh so they give reverence humble worship of Yahweh the true God that's the first result of this change this transformation as they have these purified lips they're going to give worship praise and show their dependence upon the one whom they are rebelling against all the nations live according to God's word and will all come to worship and serve Yahweh a vast amount of people from all the nations of the world tribe tongue people nation so the first result people worship Yahweh second result people serve Yahweh in unison look again verse nine to serve him shoulder to shoulder people serve Yahweh in unison what we see here is that they would be united in their love and devotion to the

Lord they would all serve him together in unanimity Gentiles would worship Gentiles would serve Yahweh alongside of Israel as one writer put it with one voice shoulder to shoulder said there would be one people of God united in their love and worship and serving Yahweh alone and this is what God has done in us today he gave us his grace that's why we gather together we gather together to celebrate his grace to us in Christ we're so thankful he's been so gracious to us we're amazed that

he would show us this undeserved favor so what's the results of his grace this transforming grace where he gives them these purified lips purifies them people worship

Yahweh people serve Yahweh in unison and third one there's only three from the text people thank Yahweh they thank him look at verse 10 from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my worshipers the daughter of my dispersed ones literally will bring my offerings look at this even people far beyond Cush or Ethiopia will be part of God's gracious work of salvation that's what this means when Zephaniah says this he's talking about nations from far beyond Ethiopia from far reaches of the earth this represents those from distant lands so from the far reaches of the earth Yahweh would call from Gentiles those to be his people so there be one people of God notice he says my worshipers they would bring

Yahweh their offerings worshiping and honoring him alone offerings of thanks they would pray only to Yahweh they would depend only on Yahweh they would worship Yahweh alone and they would give thanks to Yahweh alone they would express deep gratitude to Yahweh so thankful that he shown them his grace notice he says my dispersed ones literally the daughter of my dispersed ones listen these are God's people scattered throughout the world that's what this means this is what Jesus meant when he said he had other sheep not of this fold John chapter 10 Jesus says this 10 16 and I have other sheep which are not of this fold I must bring them also and they shall hear my voice and they shall become one flock one shepherd it's talking about Gentiles so

Zephaniah is looking forward to this with Gentiles they're going to become my worshipers these dispersed ones scattered throughout the world God's people they're going to come and give thanks to Yahweh that's the result of his grace and this prophecy about redemption reaching the Gentiles this is spoken about elsewhere in the Old Testament and we're going to look at some of these so get your Bible handy this prophecy about redemption reaching the Gentiles is spoken about elsewhere in the Old Testament we read from Isaiah chapter 2 together so that's one verse Isaiah chapter 11 verse 9 Isaiah 11 verse 9 they will not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea

[22:13] Isaiah chapter 19 Isaiah chapter 19 verse 23 Isaiah 19 23 in that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians in that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria a blessing in the midst of the earth whom Yahweh of hosts has blessed saying blessed is Egypt my people and Assyria the work of my hands and Israel my inheritance look at that you see there's this connection the salvation coming to all to all the different peoples of the world Isaiah chapter 49 49 5 and 6 and now says

Yahweh who formed me from the womb to be a servant to bring Jacob back to him or that Israel might be gathered to him for I am honored in the sight of Yahweh and my God is my strength he says it is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel I will also make you a light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth this is what it's talking about this salvation that comes to the Gentiles Jeremiah chapter 31 Jeremiah 31 another place is spoken about Jeremiah 31 verse 6 for there shall be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim shall call out arise let us go to Zion to the Lord our God Micah chapter 4 this is very similar to what we read in

Isaiah chapter 2 Micah chapter 4 starting in verse 1 it will come about in the last days the mountain of the house of Yahweh will be established as the chief of the mountains and be raised above the hills and the peoples will stream to it and many nations will come and say come let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh and to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us about his ways that we may walk in his paths from Zion will go forth the law even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem and it continues on verse 3 and 4 this is the salvation that comes to the Gentiles and last one more that I have up there for you Zechariah chapter 14 verse 16 Zechariah not Zephaniah Zechariah 14 16 then will come about any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the king Yahweh of hosts and to celebrate the feast of booths this was the mystery it's spoken about here throughout the Old Testament that the Gentiles would come in the Gentiles would be saved but it was a mystery Paul talks about this we're going to look at it in a few moments this was a mystery it was told Gentiles would be saved but how they would be saved was a mystery but notice Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 3 Ephesians 3 verse 4 5 and 6 he says by and by referring to this when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it

has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit what's the mystery that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel it's through the gospel through Christ we're made one we're part of this so we can see how this passage in Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 9 and 10 how an initial fulfillment to place started in Acts 10 up to today because Paul says again in Ephesians he says in chapter 2 verse 14 verse 13 in Christ Jesus you who were formerly far off and brought near by the blood of Christ for he himself is our peace who made both one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in his flesh the enmity the law of commands and ordinances that in himself he might make the two into one new man establishing peace and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross by it having put to death the enmity in verse 18 for through him we both have our access in one spirit to the father this is what

[27 : 45] Jeff and I was talking about this initial fulfillment the Gentiles a vast number of Gentiles have come into the kingdom and there's by the way there's a hardening of the Jews of Israel to the gospel ever try talking to a Jew about Christ their own Messiah nothing to do with it most a vast number of Gentiles have come into the kingdom of God abolishing this division between Jew and Gentiles now there's one people of God obedient to Yahweh God giving thanks to him united as one because of who Jesus is and what he has done God was so gracious by sending his son he should have condemned us he came Jesus came he died he rose the call then is to repent and trust Christ if you're here you don't know Christ or listening to this message come and he'll save you that's the gospel and that's why we gather because we're so thankful that

God has shown us his grace and yet this also looks forward to the day in the future when the great and final fulfillment of the day of the Lord will take place and Yahweh would bring salvation to not just Jews but Gentiles and these nations would flood in and give thanks to Yahweh it's looking forward to this in the millennial kingdom so it's both initial fulfillment and then future fulfillment it's doing both they would all be united as one people of the Lord it's all grace it's all because of his grace God is righteous just and holy yes but he's also loving compassionate he's gracious he was showed to Judah he was showed to the whole world he brings us near by the blood of Christ who broke down the dividing wall this is exciting news this is wonderful news for us we were at one time separated from God and he brings us near by Christ he does not leave us separated we're brought near by the blood of Christ so when things looked bleak God's gracious salvation and blessing breaks in when he saves people from all over the world that's why we gather together we gather together to celebrate that God has shown us grace grace and then what happens is we say he's shown us his grace so we should show each other that same grace right that's why the body of Christ we're ministering and caring for one another putting behind our own preferences and ministering and showing grace to each other and then we speak this grace to this world we say come and experience

God's grace like we've experienced this grace this is the outcomes for us God gives grace not just to Judah but the Gentiles to you he's giving you grace aren't you so thankful let's thank him stop and we thank you Jesus father spirit so thankful for your grace your grace transforms us so be a response of worshiping you serving you thanking you because we were not worshiping you we were definitely not serving you and we definitely were not thanking you we worshipped ourselves we served ourselves we thanked ourselves that's been replaced that's been changed that's been transformed by your grace we're so thankful take this time if you would just these few moments to thank

Jesus the father spirit thank him that they've shown you grace grace tell God you're so thankful you've shown grace and you know you don't deserve it look at your past week our sin is ever before us and yet his grace pours out on you the more we sin the more he pours out his grace take these few moments and relish in the grace of the gospel filling your mind with this great truth of God's grace would you do that now if you you you you you you you