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Zephaniah 3:11-20 In that day you shall not be ashamed for all your doings in which you have transgressed against Me; for then I will withdraw from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall never again be proud in My holy mountain. (12) I will also leave in your midst a poor and weak people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah. (13) The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies, and a deceitful tongue shall not be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. (14) Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. (15) Jehovah has turned off your judgments; He has cast out your enemy. The king of Israel, Jehovah, is in your midst; you shall not fear evil any more. (16) In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not! Do not let not your hands droop, Zion. (17) Jehovah your God is mighty in your midst; He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy; He is silent in His love; He rejoices over you with joyful shout. (18) I will gather the afflicted ones from the appointed place; they were from you, a lifting up of reproach over her. (19) Behold, at that time I will deal with all those who afflict you. And I will save her who is lame, and gather her who was driven out. And I will give them for a praise and for a name in all the land of their shame. (20) In that time I will bring you, even in the time that I gather you; for I will give you for a name and for a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, says Jehovah.

God judges but God also restores.

God's aim is to build a safe and loving world: "for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Where even the "poor and weak people" (verse 12) and the lame and the rejected (verse 19) are safe and have no need to fear.

In order to produce a safe world there needs to be a change in attitude "and you shall never again be proud in My holy mountain" as well as in moral character: "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies,.." It is evident that a good world cannot be established where people are proud or iniquitous or full of lies and deceit. These things must go! A good world is not achieved simply by having more advanced technology – it also requires good people with good hearts. For it is out of the heart that evil proceeds (Mark 7:21-23) – and so the gospel, with its power to change the human heart, is the necessary foundation for a truly functional society.

In God's new order sin is forgiven and the Devil is bound, "Jehovah has turned off your judgments; He has cast out your enemy." The judgments are turned off, sin is forgiven, we have passed from death to life, and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and who walk according to the Spirit (Romans 8:1).

God also gets rid of the power of the Devil and delivers us from being assailed by Satan “He has cast out your enemy”. God will not condemn us and Satan is not allowed to.

“The king of Israel, Jehovah, is in your midst; you shall not fear evil any more. “ We are not just forgiven then left alone to fend for ourselves –God comes into our midst in the name of Jesus and in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit:
Matthew 18:20
For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
Acts 2:1-4
And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And when God is truly in our midst we shall not fear evil anymore:
Revelation 21:3-4
And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And when God is with us He rejoices over us and loves us and enjoys us as His children. “ In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not! Do not let not your hands droop, Zion. (17) Jehovah your God is mighty in your midst; He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy; He is silent in His love; He rejoices over you with joyful shout.”

It can be depressing when we look at our spiritual flaws and weaknesses and lack of achievement. We feel dejected and sag inside and to us God declareth: “Fear not! Do not let not your hands droop, Zion. “ Do not let it get to you! Do not let your sin and failure cause you crippling shame so that you fail to rejoice in God. Forgiveness should outrun shame and overtake its effects: “In that day you shall not be ashamed for all your doings in which you have transgressed against Me”.

God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all – which means that He has a totally positive and enthusiastic attitude. He rejoices over us: “God is mighty in your midst; He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy; He is silent in His love; He rejoices over you with joyful shout.” God is enthusiastic about His sons and daughters!

Though we may feel rejected and sinful and judged and be weak and lame and poor –yet God still rejoices over us. God takes the poor, the weak and the meek and builds them into His community and causes them to inherit the earth.

God will remove our affliction and make even the weakest person to become famous and honored –literally “a name and a praise”: “Behold, at that time I will deal with all those who afflict you. And I will save her who is lame, and gather her who was driven out. And I will give them for a praise and for a name in all the land of their shame. (20) In that time I will bring

you, even in the time that I gather you; for I will give you for a name and for a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, says Jehovah."

God is good, and God will restore us and build us into a safe and loving community which he will indwell and where He will rejoice over us and love us and be mighty in our midst.

Blessings,

John Edmiston johned@aibi.ph

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