

SINGSPARATION

What if I were to tell you that God sings?

You'd turn to the Old Testament minor prophet, Zephaniah.

Zephaniah wrote somewhere around 625BC. He was the great-great grandson of King Hezekiah. He prophesied during the days of Judah's last godly ruler, King Josiah. Nahum and Jeremiah were also prophesying.

His ministry may have prepared the hearts of the people for the great revival of 621BC which occurred when the Law of Moses was rediscovered and read during the repair of the Temple. The things that Zephaniah condemned in his messages were precisely the things abolished by Josiah.

Most of the prophecy is a pronouncement of God's coming judgment. He had in mind two judgments, one near and one far:

- The near judgment was the coming of Babylon against Judah. In three waves the Babylonians came, eventually destroying Jerusalem and the Temple.
- The far judgment is called The Day of the Lord. It was the yet future seven year Great Tribulation.

The bulk of the 3-chapter book, from 1:1 through 3:8, is about those two bad days!

The dire nature of the coming Day of the Lord is made clear early in the book:

Zephaniah 1:15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

Zephaniah 1:16 A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.

Zephaniah 1:17 "I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse."

Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.

From 3:9 to the end of the book Zephaniah describes a coming glad day. It looks beyond the return of the Jews in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah to the return of Jesus Christ, after the Day of the Lord, to establish His thousand-year kingdom on the earth.

The atmosphere of that glorious time is expressed in verses fourteen through sixteen of chapter three.

Zephaniah 3:14 Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Zephaniah 3:15 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.

Zephaniah 3:16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak.

The Jews will be singing and shouting. It's the inevitable, appropriate response to what the Lord will have accomplished, namely six things.

1. "The Lord has taken away your judgments." The long time of discipline, the times of the Gentiles which were just about to begin with the invasion by Babylon, would be over. Israel would be restored to their relationship with their God.
2. "He has cast out your enemy." In the context of the Millennium this refers to the antichrist and his false prophet, both of whom are cast into the Lake of Fire, and to Satan, who is bound and cast into the bottomless pit.
3. "The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst." The glory of the Lord would depart from the Temple at the time of the Babylonian invasion and it would not return in any subsequent Temple. But in the future kingdom He would be among them.
4. "You shall see disaster no more." Not only will they be secure, this undoubtedly refers to the amazing changes God will bring to the earth during the kingdom. No more natural disasters!

5. "Do not fear, Zion." It will be a time of total peace and safety.
6. "Let not your hands be weak." They would serve the Lord in strength and with purpose.

While this is most definitely spoken to the Jews of the Millennium, all these things are true for us right now!

1. If you are a Christian then "the Lord has taken away your judgments." You no longer are dead in your trespasses and sins. Jesus bore your sins at the Cross. You have been justified.
2. The Lord has "cast out your enemy." All of them - sin and Satan and death!
3. He promised to be "in your midst," to never leave you or forsake you. This is true of our gatherings but it also reminds us that our very bodies are the dwelling place of God by the Holy Spirit.
4. Disasters continue but you know that all things now work together for the good for those who love the Lord. Trials are to make you better, not bitter. Beyond that you have the promise that the Lord is in Heaven preparing your home.
5. His perfect love for us can cast out all "fear" as we walk by faith.
6. Our hands need not be weak. We are empowered and commissioned to "Go!" sharing Him, serving Him.

If the Jews sang and shouted, how much more should we be people who sing, sing, sing and shout, shout, shout to the Lord!

We're not the only ones singing:

Zephaniah 3:17 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."

I can't comment on God singing over His people. It's a mind-boggler.

What I see here is this. I sing, we sing, for all the good reasons listed and more that could be listed. While I'm singing, while we're singing, God is singing, too. His singing somehow harmonizes with ours to communicate three things:

1. God is the “Mighty One” who “saves.” He goes on saving in that He will finish what He started.
2. “He will rejoice over you with gladness” reminds me that the Lord is not looking to condemn me, or to make me feel rotten, but wants to enjoy a relationship with me.
3. “He will quiet you with His love.” I can be at peace as I surrender to the knowledge He has loved me with an everlasting love and that all His thoughts toward me are of peace to give me an expected reward.

Something happens when we sing because God is also singing. It produces - or at least it can produce - an atmosphere in which my heart receives certain truths about God and His love for me.

Should inspire us to sing!

