

Zephaniah Warned God's People to Repent (Zephaniah)



Dear families,

The Book of Zephaniah serves as a stern rebuke of God's people and a warning regarding a failure to return to Him faithfully. It also serves as a reminder of God's expectation of holiness and a description of what that looks like when faithfully lived out among God's people.

Zephaniah 2:3 offers a call to repentance and a promise of hope for this restoration of the faithful. "Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who carry out what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be concealed on the day of the LORD's anger." Through Zephaniah, the Lord provided a glimmer of hope amidst His stern rebuke and graphic warning. But He didn't stop there. Zephaniah ended his prophecy with more than a glimmer of hope, a promise that likely warmed the weary souls of God's people.

Beginning with Zephaniah 3:9, we find a beautiful picture of God's fully-restored people. It's a remarkable image of faithfulness, satisfaction, joy, and mutual benefit that ignites a desire for this reality. It may even ignite in the reader a desire for what could be called "a return to Eden."

Zephaniah 3 describes an environment of pure speech where all are calling on the name of the Lord. There is also painted a picture of generosity, humility, meekness, joy, singing, celebration, healing, praise, and fortune. Zephaniah also describes an end to failures, arrogance, rebellion, dispersion, lies,

wrongdoing, and fear. Following a terrifying warning for God's people to repent, this wonderful image of restoration leaves the reader with great hope.

The Bible is full of stern reminders of God's expectation of holiness among His people, but it is always chased by a beautiful and redemptive reminder of His promise to restore all things and the hope that this promise offers to those who repent of their wicked ways and hope in Christ.

Spend some time today asking God to work out the message of Zephaniah's prophecy in your own heart, to confront you with His holiness and a rebuke of the sin in your life, and to follow that with a reminder of the hope that belongs to all who trust in Christ for the restoration of their soul—and ultimately, all things in the heavens and the earth.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus will make everything right.
- **Younger Preschool:** Zephaniah told the people about a special day when God will punish sin and Jesus will return. Jesus will make everything right.
- **Older Preschool:** Zephaniah told the people about a special day when God will punish sin and Jesus will return. Jesus will make everything right.
- **Kids:** Zephaniah prophesied about the Day of the Lord—a day when God will judge the world for its sin and Jesus Christ will return. Jesus will make everything like new, and everyone who trusts in Him will be safe.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Younger Preschool:** What is repentance? Repentance is choosing to stop making wrong choices and choosing Jesus.
- **Older Preschool:** What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.
- **Kids:** What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Turn away from your wrong choices. Acts 3:19
- **Younger Preschool:** Turn away from your wrong choices. Acts 3:19
- **Older Preschool:** "Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out." Acts 3:19
- **Kids:** "Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out." Acts 3:19

**** Next week:** We Are to Repent of Sin (Matthew 3)