

The Millennial Remnant

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

The Christian life is promise plus faith. Interesting that if you consider “we” as believers and “good news” as the gospel, here is the gospel for Christians. Will you be the solution for America and walk by faith as Hebrews 4:1-2 suggests?

Zephaniah 3:11a “In that day you will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me;

In that day. All through the Old Testament, there is reference to “that day” which in most cases is a reference to the “Day of the Lord.” That day includes both the Tribulation and the Millennium. We see many descriptions about the transition from one to the other. That transition will be a tumultuous time. The earth will be “cleansed” of all unbelievers, the cosmos diabolicus and Satan. The Bible describes and explains this cleansing from several different perspectives.

Feel no shame. When you commit a sin that shocks you, it is normal to feel shame for what you did. But here, there is a recognition that those deeds are past and taken care of at the cross. Zephaniah has an interesting perspective: this was written prior to the cross but the action described

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

will happen after the cross and after the Church Age. Specific shameful deeds are not named here. They were already named in chapters 1 and 2. Another consideration is that Jesus will not be in heaven as He is currently in the Church Age. He will be again on earth. Listen to Ezekiel. The Lord will supernaturally remove filth from Israel and implant the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Ezekiel 36:26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

A commentator Keil and Delitzsch say the following:

“thou wilt not need to be ashamed of all thine iniquities; because, as the explanatory clauses which follow clearly show, they occur no more.¹”

Your deeds. Could be good deeds or bad deeds from the dictionary. However, in this context, they are bad deeds. It can refer to individual deeds or to a modus operandi. God judges at different times for different reasons. Jesus Christ was judged on the cross for the sins of the world, that is the penalty of sin. In time, people are judged for sins with the purpose of turning them from unbelief to belief. For believers, once they

¹ Keil and Delitzsch, Zephaniah, page 158

The Millennial Remnant
Zephaniah 3:11-13

have been judged with the effect that they have returned to walking by faith, then they should forget that which is past. Others may chastise us and say we should be ashamed. But believers should not hold a pity party because of previous sin in the life. Thieme used to quote from Philippians

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

Philippians 3:16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

Don't let your past failures keep you from moving forward. Acknowledge them and get back into walking by faith. Move forward.

You have rebelled against Me. The verb means to revolt. In this context, Israel had revolted against God. We saw this repeatedly in the book of Judges. Although this word is not used in Judges, indeed, it is not found in the Pentateuch, it includes all the kinds of things that Judges described:

**The Millennial Remnant
Zephaniah 3:11-13**

Judges 2:11 Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals,

Judges 2:12 and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger.

To reiterate, some of Israel's sins from the Tribulation are mentioned in Zephaniah:

Zephaniah 1:4 “So I will stretch out My hand against Judah And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, And the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests.

Zephaniah 1:5 “And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven, And those who bow down and swear to the Lord and yet swear by Milcom,

Zephaniah 1:6 And those who have turned back from following the Lord, And those who have not sought the Lord or inquired of Him.”

You notice that I only included the first half of verse 11 at the start of this lesson. That is because there are two key concepts that need to be explored to better understand verses 11 and 12.

The Millennial Remnant
Zephaniah 3:11-13

Now we come to a description of the transition where God will “remove” and will “leave.” I want to discuss these two words before delving into a discussion of the verses in which they are found in Zephaniah chapter 3.

verse 11 ...I will remove from your midst

verse 12 ...I will leave in your midst

Remove. The basic meaning is to turn aside, depart. Here in Zephaniah 3:11, it is in the causative form, to be caused to depart or turn aside. Hence, to remove. To turn aside is expressed by Moses when he saw the burning bush:

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Exodus 3:2 The angel of the Lord (pre-Incarnate Jesus Christ) appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

Exodus 3:3 So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.”

He was on a path and then deviated (turned aside) because of something he saw. The Angel of the Lord, the pre-Incarnate Jesus Christ appeared to him.

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

After Samson killed an attacking lion, he found a girl he liked. He was on his way to take her when he decided to check the status of the dead lion. He turned aside from his path, he deviated from his originally planned course. Again, the Lord was involved with this as you will see if you go back and read Judges chapter 14.

Judges 14:8 When he (Samson) returned later to take her, he turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion; and behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion.

Judges 10:15 The sons of Israel said to the Lord, “We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day.”

Judges 10:16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer.

They put away. They removed. This is the causative. They were caused to do this.

I am disappointed in the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) here. I don't think the author of the article on this verb did a good job. Certainly, there is a story to be told concerning the use of this verb and God. Sometimes God removes things from Israel as in Isaiah 3:1. Sometimes the people either did or did not remove the idols from the high places. Here in Zephaniah, the point is that God is going to remove something. That will leave a remnant.

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

I will leave. This verb leads us down the path of “remnant.” In elementary school mathematics, division left a remainder. After a meal, there are left overs, the remnant of the dinner.

It used to be, maybe still is, that when a fabric store sells most of the fabric from a roll, a small amount is left, a remnant. Someone who just wants to make a single shirt may be able to buy the remnant cheaply.

In the Bible, a remnant is something or someone or some people who are left over after a removal process. In the two verses (verses 11-12) there is a removal and a leaving. This process will take place at the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium. There are some examples of remnant in the Old Testament that deal with other topics that give a clue to the depth of meaning of this root.

Ruth 1:3 Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left with her two sons.

She was left with. The word here is in the reflexive.

In the Gideon narrative of Judges, God is using a process to reduce the number of fighters available to Gideon so he will know it was God that won the battle and not Gideon and his fighters.

Judges 7:2 The Lord said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, ‘My own power has delivered me.’”

Judges 7:3 Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart

**The Millennial Remnant
Zephaniah 3:11-13**

from Mount Gilead.” So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.

There was a process to reduce or take away, remove people from Gideon’s army. In this case, it was not for a bad reason. In this Judges verse, the verb is also in the reflexive.

Genesis 7:23 Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.

Here again, our study has taken us back to Noah and the flood.

Here is a portion of an article on “remnant” from gotquestions.org:

“A remnant is a left-over amount from a larger portion or piece, whether it is food, material from which a garment is fashioned, or even a group of people. Although remnants could be looked upon as worthless scraps, and many times are, God assigned high value to those of His people whom He had set aside for holy purposes, those He labels as “remnants” in several places in the Bible. To begin, in Isaiah 10 the story is told of the Lord’s judgment upon the Assyrians. In verse 12 God says, “I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes.” He continues in verses 17-18: “The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briars. The splendor of his forests and fertile fields I will completely destroy, as when a sick man wastes away.”

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

“God then relates how His people will turn back to Him as a result of this tremendous display of His strength—His utter destruction of most of Assyria: “In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God” (Isaiah 10: 20, 21). He goes on to assure the remaining Israelites that they need not fear the Assyrians, for soon He will destroy them.”

“There are other remnants—those left over from a larger group—in the Bible, even though the word remnant isn’t used to describe them. Noah and his family were the remnant saved out of the millions on the earth before the flood (Genesis 6). Only Lot and his two daughters survived the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, a very small remnant, indeed (Genesis 19). When Elijah despaired that he was the only one left in Israel who had not bowed down to idols, God assured him that He had reserved a remnant of 7,000 “whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him” (1 Kings 19).”

“God’s sovereign choice as to whom He will save can also be seen in the New Testament: “Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out His sentence on earth with speed and finality’” (Romans 9:27-28). This implies that great multitudes of the Israelites would be cast off. If only a remnant was to be saved, many must be lost, and this was just the point which Paul was endeavoring to establish. While the word remnant means “what is left,” particularly what may remain after a battle or a great calamity, in this verse, it means “a small part or portion.” Out of the great multitude of the Israelites, there will be so few left as to make it proper to say that it was a mere remnant.”

**The Millennial Remnant
Zephaniah 3:11-13**

Isaiah 10:20 Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 10:21 A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

Isaiah 10:22 For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.

Zephaniah 3:11b For then I will remove from your midst Your proud, exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain.

Zephaniah 3:12 “But I will leave (from the root for remnant) among you A humble and lowly people, And they will take refuge in the name of the Lord.

There are two parallel sentences included in verses 11 and 12. They are linked together. I have explained “remove” and “leave” to prepare for understanding what is taking place.

verse 11 ...I will remove from your midst

verse 12 ...I will leave in your midst

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

One other preparation is to look at the word for “from your midst.” In the first sentence, God will remove some from your midst while in the second sentence God will leave among you (literally in your midst) others, specifically, a “remnant.”

From/in your midst has almost the sense of “position in.” Coming up in verse 17 “The Lord your God is in your midst.” That certainly sounds like a version of positional truth. Whereas in the Church Age Jesus Christ is in heaven, during the Millennium, Jesus Christ will have returned to earth and be in the midst of His people.

Here is an insightful comment from the TDOT:

“When a member of a group committed a crime, that crime remained "amid" the group; the entire group was held responsible until exculpated. In the case of an unsolved murder, when the criminal could not be found and the guilt expunged, prayer was addressed to God: "Do not let the guilt of innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel"; i.e., may Yahweh not punish the whole community for the guilt of an individual Dt. 21:8). In Deuteronomy the separation of a criminal from the community is expressed by the formula *bi arta hāra miqqirbeka*, "purge the evil from your midst" (13:6[5]; 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21,24; 24:7; cf. 21:9). The eradication of the evil is a kind of operation on the body politic, keeping the evil from spreading (19:19).”

“Permitting the Canaanites to live "inside" Israel involved the twofold danger of a snare "within" (Ex. 34:12): all Israel could be punished for the sins of a few, and the evil could infect the whole community. The Dtn notion of Israel as a body that can be infected as a whole when one member is ill appears also in Isa. 4:4 and Jer. 6:6.”

“6. God's Presence. Vital for the health and safety of Israel as a body was not just freedom from disease within but above all God's presence within.

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

This notion finds expression both as a petition and as a statement (Ex. 34:9; Dt. 7:21; cf. also Zeph. 3:17 and Ex. 17:7; Nu. 11:20; Dt. 23:15(14]; Jer. 149). God's presence in Israel depended on Israel's obedience; Israel's disobedience resulted in God's withdrawal or punishment (Ex. 33:3). When God is not in the midst of Israel, terrible troubles will come upon them (Dt. 31:17). The two perspectives are complementary: Israel's obedience effects God's presence, without which it cannot survive.”

Keil and Delitsch: a humble and lowly people “...signifies bowed down, oppressed with the feeling of impotence for what is good, and the knowledge that deliverance is due to the compassionate grace of God alone; it is therefore the opposite of proud, which trusts in its own strength, and boasts of its own virtue. The leading characteristic of those who are bowed down will be trust in the Lord, the spiritual stamp of genuine piety. ²”

“In the midst of” in verses 11-12 is the result of a purifying process. Unbelievers will be removed from the midst of Israel leaving a purified people. The sinners are removed and Yahweh, the God of the covenant, who we know as Jesus Christ, will live in their midst bringing unimaginable blessings.

Zephaniah 3:13 “The remnant of Israel will do no wrong And tell no lies, Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths; For they will feed and lie down With no one to make them tremble.”

From the verbiage here in this verse, it appears that the “remnant” of Israel will be spiritually a step or two above what Christians have today. Christians today have the indwelling Holy Spirit with the potential for

² Keil and Delitsch, Zephaniah, page 159

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

the filling/leading/empowering of the Holy Spirit when walking by faith. The Israelite remnant, according to verse 13, will do no wrong!

Do no wrong. The TDOT has this to say about this verb in Zephaniah chapter 3.

“Zeph. 3:1-5 also speaks of Yahweh’s just revenge; Yahweh “does no wrong.” This passage censures the evil deeds of Jerusalem and of its prominent groups (princes, judges, prophets, priests), and extols Yahweh’s just actions in court. Yahweh intervenes for righteousness, quite in contrast to these groups, who do quite the opposite of what their position and vocation demand by exploiting others, putting their own interests first, and falsifying Yahweh’s will (v. 5). Yahweh always acts correctly.³”

So previously the righteousness of God is expressed as “does no wrong.” Here now is the expression of that righteousness in Israel during the Millennium, “do no wrong.”

A key observation is the contrast between the wrong that man does and the righteousness of God.

The inference that can be derived from this is that the remnant will not do unrighteousness. Some conclude that the believing Jews in the Millennium will not sin even though they still have sin natures. In other words, this would imply that not just do they have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but they will constantly be empowered by the filling of the Holy Spirit. It does not say the same thing about non-Jewish believers. Hence, the Jews will be a special people in high regard by non-Jews.

³ TDOT Volume X page 529

The Millennial Remnant Zephaniah 3:11-13

And tell no lies, Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths.

From Keil and Delitsch

“This remnant of Israel, the ἐκλογή of the people of God, will neither commit injustice, nor practise wickedness and deceit with word and tongue, will therefore be a holy nation, answering to its divine calling (Ex. xix. 6), just as God does no wrong (ver. 5), and the servant of Jehovah has no deceit in his mouth (Isa. Liii. 9). What is stated here can, of course, not refer to those who were brought back from Babylon, as Calvin supposes, taking the words comparatively, because there were many hypocrites among the exiles, and adding, "because the Lord will thus wipe away all stains from His people, that the holiness may then appear all the purer." The prophetic announcement refers to the time of perfection, which commenced with the coming of Christ, and will be completely realized at His return to judgment.⁴”

⁴ TDOT Volume X page 529