

Commentary on Zephaniah 3:9

by Kathleen Floyd Youngs



Zephaniah 3:9 was given to me as a watchword in the early years of my journey learning the Hebrew language. It took many years for me to understand it as I do today. I will work through this verse in the order that is presented in the Hebrew.

This verse says:

Because then I will turn over to nations a pure lip, to proclaim, all of them in the Name of YaHWeH (HaShaym-The Name), to serve him one shoulder.

Let's take a look at this piece of Scripture starting with the first line... because then I will turn over... this is the word *HAFACH* הפך this word means to turn over (much like flipping), turned around. We can see this as likened to the English language (now a worldwide language) which is read from left to right, being flipped or turned over, returning us to read Hebrew from right to left. If we look at this in the Paleo word pictograph it means behold the mouth is open and allowed to speak. This can indicate how a purer speech for communication in the Kingdom of Light is being turned over.

Next, let's look at who this is being turned over to... the nations. We understand from Scripture that the nations will be called in through the Messiah Yeshua for restoration to the Creator of all, God the Father. The word used here is, *NATIONS- AMIM* עם surprisingly not the word *Gentiles- Goyim*, which refer to pagan nations. I suggest that these *AMIM* nations, are those people who are being called back to God through the Messiah that are dispersed amongst the Gentile nations but belong to the God of Israel having been restored to him in his Son. The Paleo word pictograph for *AMIM* can be interpreted as seeing and understanding the water. We see in the Scriptures the Word of God is often likened to water as in 'the knowledge of God covering the earth like the water; washing with the water of the Word.' When we talk about nations that see and understand the water, we can see how it relates to what is being turned over to them is an understanding of the Word of God...

It is a pure lip is that is being turned over to these nations. This word, *LIP- SAPHA* שפה can be understood as a language. Which we can see the goal of this lip is transformation through the means of proclaiming in the Name of "Yod Hay Waw Hay". This is the memorial or proper Name of Creator. This word, *PURE- B'ROORAH* ברורה means to cleanse, purify, eliminate unfit material, something select or choice. This certainly can be seen as describing the language of God in that Hebrew is a primary language. On the other hand, English is a secondary borrowed language and could be classified as a perverted lip or language thereby unfit to fully express in the unique Hebrew expression of our Creator. Hebrew is the original language of the Holy Scriptures authored by God for the purpose of revealing himself to man and establishing covenant relationship with Him. This is good reason for the lip to be purified.

Now the word, *PROCLAIM- QARA* קרא can be translated as either to proclaim or to read, to summon or to invoke, or an even more ancient translation: to cause a change in direction, which once we look at this contextually we can see where this can be a good fit also. When we read to ourselves, we are proclaiming to our self, into the spirit realm that is within us in our thoughts.

When we read aloud, we are proclaiming to anyone who can hear whether we see them or not and even to our own ears. We see this proclamation is being made to 'ALL OF THEM', I suggest this is a reference to a finished work of unity of those being called to be grafted into the Olive Tree from the nations. In John 17 Yeshua prayed to the father to 'guard them in your Name which you have given me so that they might be one as we are. When I was with them in the world, I was guarding them in your Name which you have given me... There is a unifying work being done in the proclaiming of the Name of the Father.

This takes us then to the next line which I think pulls it all together where it says to serve/work/worship him. This word SERVE/WORK/WORSHIP- AVAD עָבַד which speaks of that which we lay our hands to, that which we offer our life for. When our primary goal in life is to have a relationship with the Creator in his Son, who is the Word of God made flesh, we can see the strength and the goal of this pure lip being turned over to nations for the purpose of unity. His body becoming one as Yeshua prayed for us to be, like he and the father are one.

We see it says to serve/work/worship him ONE SHOULDER...here I think of how the Ark of the covenant was carried by the Levitical priests, upon their shoulder, the four became one in purpose through their service/work/worship and they were unified by the Ark of the Witness, this seat of atonement, the center of all things, the shadow picture of the throne of God where our Messiah offered his blood for our redemption.

In Jeremiah 32:37 it says... I will surely gather my people from all the lands to which I have scattered them...we can see that there is restoration on the heart of our good Father. When we read of Joseph making himself known to his brothers in Egypt when he spoke in the Hebrew language to them, we can see this language being center stage for restoration. Likewise at the turn of the 20th century, when Eliezer Ben Yehuda revived the near dead Biblical Hebrew language for everyday communications (outside of the religious prayer services) we see the crucial role this common national language served in unifying a people who had for the last 1900 years been scattered all over the world. A nation must have a national language, because it identifies and unifies the many members into a nation of one.

As indicated in the Bible, when our Messiah returns, He will regather the lost sheep of Israel, unifying them under the one banner of his universal reign. As we have seen in Zephaniah 3:9, it is also prophesied that one of the primary means he will use in accomplishing this unification is the establishment of a peculiar language, one purified and capable of adequately conveying the meaning we have been searching for all our lives.

In the meantime, we can prepare by learning to read and study the Scriptures in the original language of Hebrew. This understanding will develop in our own hearts and minds and then nurture a deeper, richer relationship with our Creator and His family in anticipation of His return.