

Zephaniah 3:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly,
who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

Analysis

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly (asafeh nuge'ei mi'moed)—The 'solemn assembly' (mo'ed) refers to Israel's appointed feasts (Leviticus 23), celebrations of God's covenant faithfulness. Those sorrowful because they cannot celebrate (due to exile or oppression) are objects of God's special concern.

Who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden (mimekh hayu masa aleha cherpah)—Exiles bore the 'reproach' of Israel's disgrace. Unable to worship at the temple or keep feasts properly, they grieved over covenant violation. God promises to gather these mourners—those who take God's honor seriously. This anticipates Psalm 137's exilic lament and the regathering prophecies of Ezekiel 36-37.

Historical Context

During Babylonian exile (586-538 BC), Jews could not observe temple-centered feasts. Ezekiel's ministry to exiles addressed this trauma. The return under Ezra and Nehemiah partially fulfilled this promise, but ultimate fulfillment awaits the eschatological gathering of believing Israel and Gentiles into God's kingdom (Matthew 8:11, Revelation 7:9-10).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Who are today's 'sorrowful for the solemn assembly'—those who grieve over the church's compromises and cultural captivity?
2. How does God's special attention to those who bear 'reproach' for His name encourage persecuted believers?
3. What does it mean to be gathered by God—what are you longing to be gathered into or restored to?

Interlinear Text

נוֹגֵי	מִמּוֹעַד	אֶסְפְּתִי	קִי וְ	
them that are sorrowful	for the solemn assembly	I will gather	H4480	H1961
H3013	H4150	H622		
מִשָּׁאָה	עַל יְהוָה	חֲרָפָה:		
of it was a burden	H5921	who are of thee to whom the reproach		
H4864		H2781		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 36:24 (Parallel theme): For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Lamentations 1:4 (Parallel theme): The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.