

Zephaniah 3:9-17 + 20

The first verses emphasize God's wrath at the people's defiance.

Zephaniah 3:6 - "I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate..."

Zephaniah 3:8 - "...my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation."

The first verse that is part of the haftara reading contains this promise:

Zephaniah 3:9 - "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."

"Consent" here means "shoulder in Hebrew, meaning all will "shoulder" together any burden or work of God, a metaphor that means "with unity of mind."

1 Corinthians 1:10 - "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

This is the opposite of the division of languages and the scattering of the people at the Tower of Babel.

In fact, the thing the Tower builders were striving for - to "make a name" for themselves - is part of what God promises his faithful returning from exile.

Zephaniah 3:20 - "At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD."