

Zechariah Chapter 8

Verses 1-23: Continuation of the Subject in the Seventh Chapter. After urging them to obedience by the fate of their fathers, he urges them to it by promises of coming prosperity.

Continuing his response to the delegation from Beth-el, Zechariah contrasted Israel's past judgment with the promised future restoration. In light of past captivity, the nation was to repent and live righteously. In light of promised future blessings, Israel is to repent and live righteously.

The last two messages (verses 1-17 and 18-23), look positively to the future, when Israel will be brought to a place of special blessing and fasts will become feasts.

Zechariah 8:1 "Again the word of the LORD of hosts came [to me], saying,"

This is a new message coming from the LORD.

Zechariah 8:2 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury."

"Jealous" (see note on 1:14). This very strong language expresses the idea that God can't bear the estrangement from His chosen people brought about by their sin, nor can He always tolerate the enemies of Israel.

His love for Israel is so great that He will come in full presence to Israel again and dwell with His people. Ezekiel had the vision of God leaving Jerusalem (Ezek. 8-11), and of His presence returning (Ezek. 43:1-5).

"Zion": The mountain on which ancient Jerusalem was built, which became a name for the city.

"Thus saith the LORD" occurs 10 times in this chapter of Zechariah. This is to stress the promises God made to His people. God loved Zion, as a husband would a wife. He was jealous of her, and did not want anyone attacking her.

Anyone who harmed Zion would feel the wrath of God. "Zion" is sometimes speaking of the physical house of Israel, and sometimes is speaking of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whichever this is speaking of, it is all the same. God is jealous for His church, the same as He is for physical Zion.

Eph. 5:6 "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

Notice, those who are faithful to God are saved from wrath.

Rom. 5:9 "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Zechariah 8:3 "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain."

“City of truth”: A city which is characterized by truth, both in word and in deed (verses 8, 16), because it is ruled over by Messiah who is characterized by truth (John 14:6).

“The holy mountain”: Zion is holy because the King who lives there is holy (Isa. 6:3).

We remember in another prophetic book, that God left the temple just before the Babylonians came and destroyed it. He left through the eastern gate, and He will return the same way.

To some extent, this was fulfilled when this temple was built in Jerusalem. It had a further fulfillment, when Jesus came as Savior. The true fulfillment is when Jesus walks through that eastern gate, and sets up His kingdom of Truth.

2 Corinthians 6:16 "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Rev. 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

Verses 4-5: The most defenseless of society will live in tranquility, peace, and security (Isa. 65:20-22).

Zechariah 8:4 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age."

Though their enemies did greatly molest and trouble them, yet God would come and dwell among them, and so preserve them as long as nature would allow them to live, and increase their children in great abundance.

Isa. 65:20-22 "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner [being] a hundred years old shall be accursed." "And they shall build houses, and inhabit [them]; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree [are] the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

Zechariah 8:5 "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls": Denoting a large increase of inhabitants, in a literal sense; and may spiritually signify the large numbers of converts, of new born babes, who are regenerated by the grace and Spirit of God, and are accounted of by the Lord for a generation.

"Playing in the streets thereof": Being in health and rigor, and in great security. The Targum renders it, "singing" or "praising in the spacious places thereof"; singing the praises of God in Gospel strains.

Saying their Hosannas to the Son of David; rejoicing in the great salvation by Christ. And magnifying the grace of God, and setting forth the glories of it in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (See Matt. 11:16).

In Jerusalem, literally taken, there were various streets, besides the street of the temple, which led to it (Ezra 10:9). Mention is made of others in Jewish writings, as of the upper street, and of the street of the butchers, and of the street of those that dealt in wool.

This shows a time of great peace and joy. Children were thought to be a blessing from God. The children playing in the streets show they have nothing to fear.

Zechariah 8:6 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts."

Men tend to limit God (Psalm 78:19-20, 41), but nothing is too hard for the Lord (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17, 27). "Just because they seem too difficult for you," the Lord asks, in effect, "must they be too hard for Me?"

The things that make God's people happy, also, make Him happy. The people had been in such destitute condition, they could do nothing but marvel at the wonders God performed for them.

Verses 7-8: "East ... west": The context assures that this return speaks of a worldwide regathering at the Second Advent of Christ. The return from Babylon cannot be in view also, since Israel had not been scattered to the west until the diaspora engineered by the Romans in the first century A.D.

Zechariah 8:7 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;"

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold": As being something wonderful, of great importance, and deserving attention.

"I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country": This cannot be understood of bringing those Jews that remained in Babylon, and other places, to their own land,

for Babylon lay north of Judea (see Zech. 6:6). And as yet there were no Jews in the western part of the world.

But now they are chiefly in the east and west, from whence they will be gathered at the time of their general conversion. Though this may refer to the times of the apostles of Christ, and to their ministry in the several parts of the world.

Who went forth, east, west, north, and south, and were the means and instruments of saving the Lord's people, both Jews and Gentiles, wherever they came, from the rising of the sun, to the setting of the same (see Mal. 1:11).

This really has two meanings. The "east and the west" covers the entire world. In the physical, God's people had been scattered and would be brought back to Israel.

Deut. 30:3 "That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee."

In the spiritual sense, this is speaking of God offering salvation to whosoever will of the whole earth.

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

Zechariah 8:8 "And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness."

(See note on Zech. 1:3). This refers to Israel's national conversion, spoken of in (12:10-13:1), and by Jeremiah (32:28-41), and Paul (Rom. 11:25-27).

Notice first in this, they must be His people, and then, He will be their God. This is the act of the free will of man. They must want to be His people, and then, He will want to be their God.

Heb. 8:10 "For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"

Verses 9-17: The practical results of verses 1-8 were laid out for the people. In view of such a glorious future, the people were exhorted to renew their energy toward the building of the temple and toward righteous living.

Zechariah 8:9 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which [were] in the day [that] the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built."

“The prophets”: This refers to Haggai and Zechariah for sure. Possibly there were non-writing prophets also.

This suddenly jumps back to the physical building of the temple in the days of Zechariah. Those who heard the Words of God from the prophet and believed should be strengthened in the knowledge of the promises God had made. They should work hard on the temple to get it built, knowing of these blessings of God.

Eph. 6:10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Verses 10-11: Zechariah recalled the immediate years prior to (520 B.C.; described in Hag. 1:6-11), when their hassles and intrigues with the Samaritans and their love of ease and comfort developed indifference toward building the temple, resulting in divine punishment.

But, since they had begun again to build the temple, God would not treat the people as He had those described (in verse 10).

Zechariah 8:10 "For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither [was there any] peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbor."

"For before these days": That the temple began to be built.

"There was no hire for men, nor any hire for beasts": That turned to any account; the wages earned by the one, and with the other, were as if they were put into a bag with holes, did not prosper with them, or do them any service (Hag. 1:6).

"Neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in, because of the affliction": There was no safety in passing to and fro, nor any peaceable enjoyment of what a man had, because of affliction and oppression by the enemy on every side, and from every quarter.

"For I set all men everyone against his neighbor": Expressive of the internal divisions and contentions among themselves, which are said to be of the Lord, because he permitted them as a chastisement upon them for their sins.

He is reminding them of the terrible situation He has just brought them out of. Their crops would not even produce enough for their own labor, much less enough to hire someone to work for them. They have only begun to be blessed, since they began the construction of the temple.

Zechariah 8:11 "But now I [will] not [be] unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts."

"But now I will not be unto the residue of this people": The remnant brought out of captivity, settled in the land, and now rebuilding the temple.

"As in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts": When they neglected the house of the Lord, caring only for their own ceiled houses (Hag. 1:2).

God will bless them mightily. God removed the curse the minute they began to build the temple. There was just enough to barely get by on before. Now, there is abundance.

Verses 12-13: The richness and comprehensiveness of these promises of prosperity look beyond the historical moment to the time when Messiah reigns in His millennial kingdom. This will be a reversal of (Deut. 28:15-68 and Jer. 24:9; 25:18; 29:22).

Zechariah 8:12 "For the seed [shall be] prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these [things]."

"For the seed shall be prosperous": Being cast into the earth, it shall spring up again, and produce a large increase. Whereas before, though they sowed much, it came to little (Hag. 1:6).

"The vine shall give her fruit": Be loaded with clusters, and produce large quantities of wine; whereas before there was a drought upon the new wine. And where they were accustomed to have fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty (Hag. 1:11).

"And the ground shall give her increase": As usual, meaning of wheat and barley. Whereas before there was a drought upon the corn, and where there used to be a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten (Hag. 1:11).

"And the heavens shall give their dew": Which makes the earth fruitful. Whereas before the heaven over them was stayed from dew, and instead of it were blasting, mildew, and hail (Haggai 1:10).

"And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things": As a symbol of better things inherited by the remnant according to the election of grace. And who have the promise both of this life and that to come. And who, seeking in the first place spiritual things, have all others added to them, convenient for them.

Every seed that is planted will produce now, that the blessings of God are upon them. It will rain at just the right time, and they will have just the right amount of sunshine too. It is God that causes all of these things to happen. He makes the crop produce abundantly.

Zechariah 8:13 "And it shall come to pass, [that] as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, [but] let your hands be strong."

"As ye were a curse": Instead of being execrated among the people, ye shall be blessed. Instead of being reproached, ye shall be commended. Ye shall be a blessing to all the nations round

about. All these promises we may expect to be completely fulfilled when the Jews acknowledge their Messiah.

“O house of Judah, and house of Israel”: The restoration shall be complete, when both Israel and Judah are brought back.

As long as they are obedient to God, they will be tremendously blessed, and will be a blessing to others. When the curse was upon them, the heathen doubted that they even had a God. They must remain strong in the Lord for these things to take place.

Gen. 12:2 "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."

Gal. 3:28-29 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Verses 14-15: The sorrows of past judgment became the pledges of future blessings (Jer. 32:42).

Zechariah 8:14 "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:"

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts": In order to assure them of the truth of what he promised, he observes the fulfilment of what he had threatened, he being as true and faithful in the one as in the other.

"As I thought to punish you": Determined to do it, by suffering them to be carried captive.

"When your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts": By their immorality, idolatry, and contempt of his prophets.

"And I repented not": The Targum adds, "of my word"; of the resolution he had taken up in his heart, and of the declaration of it by his prophets, that he would punish them. This he did not repent of, revoke, change, and alter, but steadily abode by it, and executed it.

God punished them for their unfaithfulness to Him. He did not completely cut them off, because they were His family. They provoked Him to wrath with their idols and false gods. He did not repent of His anger toward them for this serious sin, but punished them.

Zechariah 8:15 "So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not."

"So again": Or "so I am returned" (as in Zech. 8:3).

"Have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah": By bestowing the above mentioned blessings on them; and as Jehovah has thought, so it comes to pass, and as he has purposed, so it stands. Whatever he determines shall be, as for evil, so for good (Isa. 14:24).

"Fear ye not": (as in Zech. 8:13).

He finished with their chastisement; He forgave them, and started all over with them again. His blessings are upon them. They must not fear, but have faith.

Verses 16-17: As always, the promised blessings are connected with obedience to God's righteous standards. Such obedience can only be brought about by the power of the Spirit in the life of one who has been transformed by God's grace through faith. These standards are reminiscent of (Psalms 15:1-5; 24:4; Prov. 6:20-22).

Zechariah 8:16 "These [are] the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:"

"These are the things that ye shall do": Which were duties incumbent on them, and which it became them to perform. Under a sense of the favors bestowed on them, to show their gratitude to God, and that they might glorify him.

"Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor": Not using deceit, prevarication, and lying (Eph. 4:25). And it becomes every man under the Gospel dispensation, according to the gift he has received, to speak, publish, and declare the truth of the Gospel, to the edification of others.

"Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates": That is, execute true judgment (as in Zech. 7:9). Do justice between man and man, without respect of persons. The issue of which will be peace between the contending parties. And this was to be done in their "gates", because there their courts of judicature were kept.

If they are to stay in the good graces of God, they are to deal fairly with their neighbor. In everything they do, they must deal truthfully. If they expect blessings from God, they must bless their neighbor.

Matt. 7:12 "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

Eph. 4:25 "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."

Zechariah 8:17 "And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these [are things] that I hate, saith the LORD."

"And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor" (see Zech. 7:10). Hatred without a cause was a governing vice under the second temple, and Jarchi says was the cause of the destruction of it (see John 15:25).

"And love no false oath": Whereby the character and property of a fellow creature are hurt; nor any vain one, which the Jews were addicted to (Matt. 5:34).

"For all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord": As being contrary to his nature and to his law; and is a reason why they should be hated and avoided by men.

We are what is in our heart.

Matthew 12:35 "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

2 Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

We discovered in an earlier lesson, that false oaths are perjury. They damage the name of God.

Zechariah 8:18 "And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,"

The word of prophecy, as the Targum paraphrases it. Here begins a new prophecy, respecting the abrogation of Jewish fasts, and the calling of the Gentiles.

The LORD brings something else up, that He wants to remind them of. Zechariah keeps reminding them, that these are not his Words, but the Words of the LORD.

Zechariah 8:19 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth [month], and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace."

In addition to the fasts of the fifth and seventh months (see notes on 7:3, 5), two additional fasts were held. In the fourth month they commemorated the breaching of the wall of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:3; Jer. 39:2-4), and the tenth month they remembered the beginning of the final siege of Jerusalem which began (in 588 B.C.; 2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 39:1).

Their fasts in the past had been for others. They had not been happy times with the LORD. The feasts were a time of fellowship with God. It should be a time of joy, not mourning.

2 John 1:3 "Grace be with you, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

Verses 20-22: Israel restored in millennial glory will be the means of blessing to all the world (Isa. 2:2-4; Mica 4:1-5). Gentiles from around the world will make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to entreat the Lord. This signifies salvation of people from all over the world during the kingdom (fulfilling Psalm 122).

Zechariah 8:20 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [It shall] yet [come to pass], that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:"

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass": This is another thing that shall certainly be accomplished.

"That there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities": In the Gentile world; they shall come and hear the word, believe in Christ, and join together in a Gospel church state; as they did at Antioch, Thessalonica, Corinth, and many other places.

Ben Melech says this shall be in the days of the Messiah. And so it has been in the days of the true Messiah Jesus, and will be again in the latter day.

These are people from many countries coming to Jerusalem.

Zechariah 8:21 "And the inhabitants of one [city] shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also."

"And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another": Which shows their concern for the spiritual welfare of each other, their zeal for the honor and glory of God, and their readiness to attend divine worship.

"Saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord": For pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace which shows their sense of need of these things, and that they are only to be had of the Lord. And that their case required haste, and would admit of no delay.

"And to seek the Lord of hosts": By prayer and supplication, as before. The Chaldee paraphrase is, "to seek doctrine from the Lord of hosts"; to learn the truths of his Gospel; to know his will, and be informed of the right way of worshipping him, as well as to seek to Christ for life and salvation.

"I will go also": That is, "this shall say to that", as the Targum supplies it. One shall say to another, and express himself in such language, by way of example and encouragement.

This is a time, when the Gentiles will seek the LORD. This could be the time, when salvation through Jesus Christ is offered to the whole world. The Gentiles actually received His message more easily, than did the Jews.

Rev. 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Zechariah 8:22 "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD."

"Yea, many people, and strong nations": Or, "mighty kingdoms", as the Targum renders it. Even such have embraced the Gospel, and professed the Christian religion. Of which there has been abundant proof since the downfall of Paganism under Constantine.

"Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem": That is, shall attend the public worship of God in the church.

"And to pray before the Lord": Join in public prayer, and other ordinances of the Gospel. This phrase, which is used also in the preceding verse (Zech. 8:21), signifies that the Lord, and He only, is the object of prayer. It is not to be made to a creature, or to an idol made with hands, they had been used to pray to before. But to the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit.

And that this is to be done as in the presence of God, who is omniscient. Who knows all persons and their cases, and what are their ends and views in their petitions to him. And whether these come from a true heart and unfeigned lips. For all things are naked and open unto him, with whom we have to do.

That, under the Gospel dispensation especially, men may come into the presence of God with great freedom and liberty. And pour out their souls before him, and with great boldness and confidence, through the blood of Christ being shed. And a new and living way opened by it, in which they may come and ask in faith whatever they want.

This should always be performed with reverence and godly fear and with all humility and submission to the will of God. And though it may take in all sorts of prayer, and wherever and by whomsoever performed. Either mental or vocal, in the closet or in the family, which is always to be done in like manner before God.

Yet it seems chiefly to design social and public prayer. Which being put up to God in the church, may be said to be before the Lord. It being in the assembly of his saints, where He more especially grants his presence, and shows himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer (see Psalm 65:1).

Galatians 3:8 "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Rev. 15:4 "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for [thou] only [art] holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

Zechariah 8:23 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days [it shall come to pass], that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard [that] God [is] with you."

“In those days”: In the days in which the messianic kingdom on earth is inaugurated (see note on Joel 3:18), the Jews will truly be God’s messengers as originally intended, and will bring multitudes to Christ. The 10 to 1 ratio represents a vast number of Gentiles who will come (Gen. 3:13; Lev. 26:26; Num. 14:22; 1 Sam. 1:8; Neh. 4:12).

Even Jesus came to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. "Ten" symbolizes world government. The world will seek God in the land of the Jew. Jesus started Christianity in the land of the Jew. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah in the flesh. The apostles also were Jews. The following Scriptures let us know that God has saved people from all nations of the world.

Rev. 7:9-10 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" "And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Rev. 21:24 "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

The Messiah, in the midst of millennial Israel, will be the attraction of the world. People, seeing the Jews so blessed in their kingdom, will demand to go and meet the Savior King.

Zechariah Chapter 8 Questions

1. "Thus saith the LORD" occurs _____ times in this chapter.
2. What does that stress?
3. God loved Zion, as a _____ would a _____.
4. Anyone who harmed Zion would feel the _____ of God.
5. Who is "Zion"?
6. Who are saved from wrath?
7. When God dwells in Jerusalem, Jerusalem will be called a city of _____.
8. When had God left the temple in Jerusalem?
9. When is the true fulfillment of The LORD coming back into Jerusalem?
10. The tabernacle of God is with _____.
11. The streets of the city shall be full of _____ and _____.
12. What does this show us?

13. What does from the east country to the west country mean?
14. What must man do, before God will be his God?
15. What should these people, who were brought back from captivity, do?
16. Why had their crops failed to produce?
17. When did God remove the curse from their crops?
18. What natural things will God do to help their crops grow?
19. If ye be _____, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
20. Why had God punished them?
21. Jesus was of the tribe of _____ in the flesh.