

## **Zechariah Chapter Eight**

**Introduction:** This chapter contains promises of various blessings to the people of the Jews; and exhortations to each of the duties incumbent on them; and is concluded with a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. The cause of all the blessings promised is the love of God to them, signified by zeal, or jealousy for them, #Zec 8:1,2. The blessings promised are the Lord's return to dwell in Jerusalem, and the integrity and holiness of that city, #Zec 8:3. The long life of the inhabitants of it, and the plenty of children that should be born in it, #Zec 8:4,5 and, however wonderful and incredible this might seem to some, it was not to the Lord, who was determined to bring his people that were in various distant countries to Jerusalem, and settle them there; and renew and reestablish his covenant with them, #Zec 8:6-8 wherefore the Lord encourages them to go on in rebuilding the temple, #Zec 8:9 and promises them that things would be better with them than in times past; that whereas there had been nothing but penury, affliction, and distress, now there should be great affluence and prosperity, #Zec 8:10-12 and though before they were a curse among the nations, now they should be a blessing; and though their fathers were punished, they should be dealt well with, #Zec 8:13-15 and then they are exhorted to the discharge of several duties mentioned, to which they are induced by the Lord's hatred of that which is evil, and by his turning their fasts into cheerful feasts. #Zec 8:16-19 to which is added a prophecy of the calling and conversion of the Gentiles, which would make for the glory of the Jewish church; who are described by their numbers, being many people, and the inhabitants of many cities; by their association together, to pray to the Lord, and worship him; by their coming up to Jerusalem for that purpose; and by their junction with the Jews, to which they will be encouraged by having heard that God is with them, #Zec 8:20-23.

8:1 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came [to me], saying,  
2 Thus says the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

The beginning of God's word to the prophet to tell all His people that He is with them and will protect them. Some see this as a warning because of the language used of God's being jealous. This isn't true because of the context and the Hebrew word here doesn't have to be a negative use of the word jealousy as if in anger because his loved one has done something wrong.

3 Thus says 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.

God left the nation because of sin and allowed them to go into captivity, now God has returned and will dwell with His people.

4 Thus says 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.

This is a mixed scene because God has said when people are blessed that the old will retain their strength. This scene then is a curse unless we see the context clearly as it is established in the following verses. There is a lesson for us here, do not jump to conclusions and interpret the Scriptures wrongly by jumping ahead of the word unfolding. Read the whole section and get the context before forming your opinions of what God is saying or teaching in a particular verse.

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

This reinforces the idea of old people on canes isn't a curse above, but it shows a picture of rest and peace where old people who cannot defend themselves and children in the same situation are at rest going about their daily routines. This will then reflect back to the opening to help show it isn't an angry jealousy used by God because they have sinned, but of His protective jealousy over that which He has claimed as His won.

6 Thus says 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? says the LORD of hosts.

You people see this happening, my presence in your midst and the rebuilding of the temple and walls as a miracle. Is it a miracle to me? This would be a more literal rendering here. The answer is an obvious no, for this is but a small thing to God and will require no effort to obtain and sustain by God.

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;

There was some remnant of the Jews still in Babylon but that is to the North. This then either refers to God's saving or gathering into Jerusalem the Jews in other parts of the world, or it can be in the time of the Apostles when they will go to these same places bringing salvation to the Gentiles there.

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.

This gives some weight to the people to the East and West being the Gentiles of the day of Christ rather than the Jews then residing there because it is the beginning of calling a people who are not a people spoken of elsewhere in the Bible.

9 ¶ Thus says 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.

This is a message to the people of God in all ages. These Jews faced difficult times and tremendous odds in rebuilding the walls and the temple. They are told to hold fast, don't faint but go about the work God has given you to do. This applies today as the church is hindered on all sides and the spreading of the Gospel is hindered by the very governments established by God to ensure that the word does go to the ends of the earth.

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.

They have been in captivity, they were slaves and were not paid for their work, they couldn't even own and hire out their animals. God caused this to happen to them for a reason, their sins against God. Often we see turmoil, wars, natural disasters and such and are in awe of the power of these to disrupt and destroy and wonder why God allows such. God uses the things of the natural world to warn and chastise His people. Even these things can only happen by God's permission, In other words God is sovereign over all things.

11 But now I [will] not [be] unto the residue of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of hosts.

Speaking to the remnant in Jerusalem rebuilding the temple and how He was their God before they deserted Him and were sent into captivity for this sin. Something is going to change, though God is once more present it will not be like it was before the captivity.

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].

God is saying by grace this remnant will inherit better things than the people of the land before them. This is true of the church and we are reminded that it is God who has been patient through the generations just so that those now coming into the kingdom of God could be saved for eternity. Each generation sees the word of God reach more and more people. While material prosperity is used here, it also has a spiritual side and the increase is in God's kingdom just as it is from the fruit of the land for people in this natural world.

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.

There is a time coming when these people of God as we today will know prosperity speaking of earthly things but even more is the promise here of a spiritual blessing. We are reminded that God blesses us so we can be a blessing the same words God spoke to Abraham. God promises blessing, do not let the situation of the moment rob you of God's blessing.

14 For thus says the LORD of hosts; As I sought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, says the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

God determined to punish Israel for her sins. Once the mind of God has made a decision it will not change. God warned, then God carried out the threat to the people because of their unrepented sins.

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

God made the decision to punish them this way and was true to the threat. Be of good cheer then because surely if God is faithful to punish He is also faithful to keep that which He has promised in way of blessing. God is consistent and doesn't change.

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:

God has always set before man what man is to do. It is not an odd thing, or hidden, but to do this and this to know my blessing. We do not earn the blessing, God gives us our blessings by His grace alone. There is nothing God needs of us and we can in no way ever show how we deserve to be blessed because our debt to God for our salvation is so great that the giving of our bodies as slaves is merely what is reasonable or expected under such circumstances.

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, says the LORD.

Our so-called scholars wrestle with the deeper things of God and argue arcane points of theology. God is more practical and tells us exactly what to do and what to think. God leaves no doubt or reason any should not know what they are to do all the time, glorify God.

18 ¶ And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,

19 Thus says 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.

The fast of the fourth [month]; the month Tammuz, which is our month of June: this fast was kept on the ninth day of the month, on account of the city of Jerusalem being broken up on that day {o}, as it is said, #2Ki 25:3,4 Jer 39:2 52:6,7 and for the breaking of the two tables of the law on that day.

and the fast of the fifth; the month Ab, which is our July, on the tenth of which the city was burnt, #Jer 52:12,13 but the fast on account of it was kept on the ninth day; on which day the Jews say that both the first and second temple were destroyed,.

and the fast of the seventh; the month Tisri, which is our September; on the third of this month a fast was kept on account of the murder of Gedaliah; see #Zec 7:5 and on the tenth day of the same was the day of atonement, which was the grand fast; see #Ac 27:9:

and the fast of the tenth; the month Tebet; which is our December, on the tenth day of which the city of Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar; and this fast was kept on that account, #Jer 52:4.  
This answers the question from Zechariah 7:3 concerning the continuation of keeping these fasts. These fasts were all about gloom and doom or the bad things in the history of the Jews. God says keep them and remember, because these too are of God and because these events had a purpose to chastise God's people and cause them to return to God.

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

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.

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

The time is coming when all these people, even people from great nations will come to God's holy place seeking God. Today with the witness of time in the whole Bible we see this come to pass with the coming of Christ. As noted before a lot of the things in this book relate to Jesus Christ, the Messiah and the first coming of Christ. This people stand in the midst of a ruined city, and God says this is what I have in store for you. Not unlike the New Jerusalem promised to the New Testament saints who looking at the world where they live have all the earthly reason needed to know despair, but God says it is of me, I will do this thing. Therefore from

the darkness the saints can see not a light at the end of that proverbial tunnel but the glowing light of God's own face as their eternal resting place.

23 Thus says 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.

The number ten is significant here because it represents the total of earthly things or earthly completeness. The passage then reads every people of language on earth shall come to the Jews and say we will go with you, that is we will go and worship your God with you. The first Church was Jewish and this promise came into it fullness when Christ founded His church and gave her the power to share the Good news with all mankind.