

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
ZION'S FUTURE-THE CITY OF TRUTH
ZECHARIAH 8:1-8

Introduction

We've seen in chapter seven how this delegation of God's people have been told what disobedience to the Word of God had brought to pre-exiled Israel and what it would bring to them.

In chapter eight however, they are told the glorious blessings of what repentance and obedience to the Word of God would bring. The strong rebuke we saw the in the last two messages prepares the way for this positive portion.

God's nature demands He judge continued unfaithfulness but His delight is to bless His people. It is the same old theme throughout the Old Testament that where there is obedience there will be blessings and where there is continued disobedience there will be judgment.

The incentive of future blessings is held out to them as reason to repent and live a, compassionate and righteous life from the heart.

Chapter eight envisions the future but applies the lessons taught by prophecy to the contemporary scene of the prophet's own day.

I. THE JEALOUSY OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ZION. (1-2)

A new word from the Lord in **verse 1** makes this a new section.

Here again, as in chapter seven, the claim is divine revelation. This Word is not of, or from Zechariah, but from the mouth of the Lord. Over ten times in this chapter the name Lord of Hosts occurs and some twenty two times the name LORD (*JEHOVAH OR YHWH*) occurs.

So wonderful are these promises, so outstanding are these blessings that are prophesied here that the doubtfulness of man refuses to accept them. So, every single one of them was guaranteed by the omnipotent God and the repetition of divine names in these promises emphasizes the certainty of their fulfillment.

In **verse 2** we encounter the first of ten usages in chapter eight of the prophetic announcement, "*Thus saith the LORD of Hosts.*"

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The repetition of this divine title, *the Lord of Hosts*, shows the Divine authority behind the assertion. (Reminiscent of David before Goliath) *1 Samuel 17:45*—"*Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.*"

The One Who has controlled the armies of both the earthly and heavenly realms gives this Word!

He is "*exceeding jealous for Zion.*" The word "*jealous*" denotes color produced in the face by deep emotion - becoming intensely red, an arduous, zealous passion. In fact our English word *jealous* is from the Latin word *zelus* - *zeal*.

Zion is the place of spiritual leadership. Because the LORD's love for Zion is so great He is *jealous* on her account. The zeal of His strong love for Zion's welfare leads Him to come to her rescue when enemies afflict her! His *jealousy* comes with great *fury* (hot, heat or wrath). The thought is that His *jealousy* is displayed in punishing those who either hate Him or His people.

Exodus 20:5-6—"*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*" (Reiterated Deuteronomy 5:9)

Repentance will cause a distinct change in the direction of God's wrath. His great wrath had been against Israel prior to the captivity and a warning had just been issued that it could turn against the remnant if its worship was not sincere or not out of the heart! (7:14).

Now we see the wrath is turned to protect and cherish a remnant of Israel! God will not allow anyone or anything to disrupt His desire to see them blessed! (**Ezekiel 36:5-7**)

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Nahum 1:2—"God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies."

So we see the contrast of past, the present, and the future is made.

Zion speaks of the spiritual center of Jerusalem. The basic distinguishing fact about Zion was God's divine presence.

Zion was also used to describe the place of the LORD's future redemption and where He would come as Saviour!

But the name of the place is also frequently extended to denote its inhabitants.

The fervent love of the LORD for His people will manifest itself not only in His wrath and indignation against legalistic religion and an oppressive world system but also in the maturing of personal relationship with Him!

II. THE RESULTS OF THE LORD'S RETURN TO ZION. (Vs 3-6)

Verse 3 prophesies Jesus' return to Zion.

Full restoration of Zion is assured by the Word of God and will be accomplished by the zealous love of God for the God ruled ones.

One day Jesus Christ will reign in His earthly kingdom for God will manifest His conquering love by returning to Zion!

What is meant by the Lord's return to Zion? Is it talking about the return of the Shekinah Presence of God which was removed from the Temple as recorded by the Prophet in Ezekiel 9:3; 10:4-18; 11:22-23?

Yes, but it means far more also. It means the second coming of Christ in His glory.

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The Messiah will return with great wrath and triumph over His enemies! Because, only the visible return of the Messiah will fulfill these (**1:16; 2:10**) and other prophecies concerning this time (Ezekiel 43:2-5, Hosea 5:15; 6:3).

Not only will the Messiah's return bring His kingdom but it will also cause His divine presence to *dwell* in Jerusalem. The Hebrew word translated " *dwell* " here means "*to settle down, abide, remain, reside.*" The Lord will establish His presence "*in the midst of*" Jerusalem. His return and dwelling in Jerusalem will cause the exaltation of Jerusalem. She will become the governmental capital and religious capital of the Millennial Kingdom when our Priest-King returns.

Notice the impact of the LORD's presence with His people! Jerusalem will then be known as the City of Truth! Why? Because the God of Truth will be in her midst! *Zephaniah 3:13* prophesies that the inhabitants will no "*longer do iniquity, nor speak lies.*"

'*Truth*' refers to what is certain and dependable. The LORD is the God of Truth, and so His word and laws are also truth, or true!

Consequently, truth should also characterize those who have put their trust in God and pattern their conduct after His standards.

The mountain of the LORD of Hosts or Mount Zion will be called the Holy Mountain. Because God's presence separates it from all other mountains. It is set apart because true holiness has sanctified it! 'Holy' also indicates it will be set apart for divine use or service!

The LORD's presence with His people will sanctify the city and the mountain, effectively transforming the way His people live, not just in an outward ceremonial respect as the people did before, but in inner reality also! This is, of course, begun with the indwelling of the Spirit in the church (Jn. 14:23; 2 Cor. 6:16). It will find its final fulfillment in the New Jerusalem, where God lives with His people (Rev. 21:3)!

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Revelation 21:27—“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Verses 4 and 5 here depict the peace, prosperity, and security of the renewed Jerusalem’s inhabitants.

When spiritual issues are right, God generally attends them with physical blessings. The establishing of [spiritual] peace with God will be the fore-runner of social peace.

So here is a beautiful picture of peace and security in the restored and flourishing Jerusalem as a result of Messiah’s return. At long last peace will come to Jerusalem so that even the more helpless and dependent extremes of the age scale will suffer no anxiety or abuse. Those unable to take care of themselves illustrated by those that need a cane to walk and by children engaged in care-free abandon will not be taken advantage of so that they may sit or play peacefully in the streets.

Today in so many places the aged are victimized by evil people both financially, emotionally and spiritually. The tragedy of child abuse be it sexually, physically, and even mentally from perverted teaching is taking a gruesome toll. But in that day even these groups most susceptible to being preyed upon will enjoy unbroken safety and comfort.

The prophet Zechariah gave us a picture of the elderly feeling perfectly safe outside their homes, and he portrayed children enjoying themselves at play in the streets of Jerusalem.

Because of the sinfulness of mankind, the prospect of safe streets will not be fully realized until Jesus Christ establishes His rule over the earth. But that doesn’t mean we should sit back and do nothing. We should do what we can to make our communities as safe as possible.

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We can support and vote for officials who will provide us with good laws. We can cooperate with law enforcement agencies. And we can pray for our governmental leaders, *“that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness” (1 Tim. 2:2).*

What makes people good Christians will also make them good Citizens. So we should fulfill our responsibilities as Christian citizens.

Verse 6 looks forward to the day when God realizes all the seemingly impossible dreams and hopes of His Word.

Another result of the earth’s restoration will be the exemplification of Divine power. Does it seem to be impossible that any place, much less Jerusalem, should be so splendid, serene and secure? But just because it seems too difficult for us to imagine, does that mean it is impossible for God to bring it about?

So many concerns we have today about ourselves, our Churches, our nation, and our world look for more than man’s ability to rectify. But the Lord is able to bring that which is seemingly impossible to reality!

So even what may seem too difficult a task for us today will be accomplished by our Lord then! The things which are naturally impossible are not supernaturally impossible! When we look away from human improbabilities and natural impossibilities to the almighty covenant keeping God we will not stagger through unbelief at even one of His promises!

I trust that each of you have personally experienced the supernatural power of the Living God, the Creator of the universe, because of the One who was dead and is made alive is supernaturally residing in your life!

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III. THE GATHERING OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE. 7-8.

The Lord again guarantees that He will keep His covenant in **verse 7** and will gather His people from throughout the whole world.

God is going to save His remnant people. Those people who by their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior have come to be His people. He is going to save the saved by delivering them from their tribulation and persecution among the lost peoples throughout the earth. He will deliver them from a situation of peril to one of safety.

He will gather them from exile, bondage, and dispersion!
The wording "*from the east country, and from the west country*" embraces the entire world. He will not forget even one of those who have claimed Him for their own.

In **verse 8** the Lord promises a restoration of the covenant bond that links Him and His people together.

The allusion is probably to Jerusalem not so much as the actual residence of all the people (yet the city will be without walls or boundaries as Zech. 2:4 states), but as the place where God would bring them to worship and learn.

It may be as in times past when the tribes from all parts of the land went to Jerusalem for the great festivals. The restoration of favor and blessing is seen in the covenant words, "*They shall be My people and I will be their God.*"

So it is not merely a physical restoration but mainly a spiritual restoration. They will never leave or forsake Him in reference to duty and God will never leave or forsake them in reference to salvation.

This restored remnant are those who are truly His people so that He is to them truly their God. The relationship of the Remnant will be as it ought to be or as it says "in truth and righteousness"

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The relationship will no longer be just ritual or pretense but His people do and be what is right and proper because their heart's desire is a true and righteous walk!

This promise of forgiveness and restoration has been extended to all of God's people where ever they may be found. He invites them to come to Him and experience the renewal of a covenant relationship under the new Covenant provided by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Conclusion

So, this small group of exiles had return from to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and city. The struggle for survival and the opposition from neighbors discouraged them. They needed to take hope in the belief that God Himself would one day reign and bring in a age of peace and prosperity.

Just like them we need to remember that our God is all-powerful. He can do anything! When we confront a seemingly impossible task, remember and believe that, "**with God all things are possible**" (Mt. 19:26).

There is great contrast between chapter seven and chapter eight.

In one is the warning of wrath and the other the protection of wrath.
In one was the removing of blessing and the other the full restoration of blessing.

The purpose of both is the same, repent and live righteously. In chapter seven, God's people are to repent and live righteously in light of punishment and here they are to repent and live righteously because of the promise of future restoration.

So God uses negative and positive motivation.