

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Zechariah*

*Message 17 God Promises Prosperity*

*August 25, 2013*



Moses & The Brazen Serpent by Anthony Van Dyck Cir 1620

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

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**The Book of Zechariah**  
**Message Seventeen**  
**God's Promise to Prosper Israel**  
August 25, 2013  
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Painting by Sharlene Lindskog-Osorio

## GODLY PROSPERITY

Zechariah 8:9-17

*<sup>9</sup>Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets that were in the day that the foundation of the house of Jehovah of hosts was laid, even the temple, that it might be built. <sup>10</sup>For before those 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 adversary: for I set all men every one against his neighbor. <sup>11</sup>But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith Jehovah of hosts. <sup>12</sup>For there shall be the seed of peace; the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these*

things. <sup>13</sup>And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, 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. <sup>14</sup>For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: As I thought to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I repented not; <sup>15</sup>so again have I thought in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. <sup>16</sup>These are the things that ye shall do: speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; <sup>17</sup>and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah (ASV 1901).

## GOD'S PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN TRUTH

### Zechariah 8:9

<sup>9</sup>Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets that were in the day that the foundation of the house of Jehovah of hosts was laid, even the temple, that it might be built (ASV 1901).

While the prophet receives messages that have a far term fulfillment such as Israel's Millennial blessings this instance sees God assuring and encouraging the post exiles to persevere (*Let your hands be strong*) for they will be facing many trials and difficulties in restoring Jerusalem. Let your hands be strong is an idiomatic expression "Be of good courage" (Judges 7:11; II Samuel 2:7; Ezekiel 22:14, etc.) The Supreme Head of the celestial army says to Zechariah to be strong in the continuation of the rebuilding of the Temple. But this phrase of encouragement in a more general sense refers to doing, individually and corporately (All Israel), the will of God *in all things*. For He alone is the source of true courage. In this passage God is making reference to prophets and the reconstruction of the Temple.

God's Word came through the prophets that were in Jerusalem during the laying of the Temple foundation two years earlier in 520 B.C. What He is saying to the Jews now is; Zechariah and Haggai must be listened to regarding His comforting Words as He gave His message through them before. The Temple must be built. They will only be successful if they listen to and heed His Word. These are God's Words to Haggai affirming this.

### Haggai 2:2-4

<sup>2</sup>Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying, <sup>3</sup>Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes as nothing? <sup>4</sup>Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the

*high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith Jehovah, and work: for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts (ASV 1901).*

#### REMINISCING OF FORMER TIMES

Zechariah 8:10

*<sup>10</sup>For before those 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 adversary: for I set all men every one against his neighbor (ASV 1901).*

God is now contrasting the days that are now (516 B.C.) with the earlier efforts at rebuilding the Temple. The first time they began these efforts was in 536 B.C. During the former times there was economic and social chaos. The distress the people experienced was severe unemployment coupled with high inflation (Haggai 1:6, 9-11; 2:15-19). In those times of high unemployment even the beasts of burden such as oxen were not being used. They still had to be fed to keep them alive and there was a cost to that. With no employment there are no wages being paid. Haggai said that even when some meager work could be found the wages had little value in an inflated economy. He characterized the situation as though they put their earnings into purses with holes in them so the money immediately fell out (Haggai 1:6). Here God says that He was the cause of all those issues as He *I set all men every one against his neighbor*. We must continually be reminded in our circumstances that God is in control of all things even the economy and levels of employment. He knows better than anyone how to adjust our circumstances to inflict enough pain or discomfort so that we turn our hearts toward Him. Not only was their no work and high unemployment but there was an oppression of the enemy too.

He removed their peace until they turned to Him in obedience. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah discuss the hostility of the Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites and the Ashdodites against those who were trying to rebuild the Temple in 536 B.C. God brought these invading groups against the Israelites during the Temple rebuilding and later against those who labored on the walls of Jerusalem. In addition to the aforementioned border nations used to attack Israel but also there was an expedition of Cambyses The Mede to Egypt during this same time. Those troops who were Persian went right through Jerusalem on their way to Egypt and must have added to the distress. These were the conditions of the times *before* their obedience to God in the resuming of the Temple work. When nations or individuals neglect to do the Word of God, He will visit them in judgment and they will experience much distress. If an individual or a nation stays as close to the obedience of God's Word as possible they will realize a diminishing of their hardships.

#### GOD IS CHANGING THE TIMES FOR THE BETTER

Zechariah 8:11-13

*<sup>11</sup>But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith Jehovah of hosts. <sup>12</sup>For there shall be the seed of peace; the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these*

things. <sup>13</sup>And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, 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 (ASV 1901).

The Lord is now giving us the extent of the blessings He will bestow upon Israel. He will cause their work now to produce plentiful harvests with plenty of rain with abundant vintage, and no one shall spoil them because these are gifts, which come from God's blessings. Because the Jews turned away from their former disobedience to Him the blessings will flow to them. So now the droughts they experienced will be taken away as well as the economic problems of unemployment and inflation. The restoration of their agriculture is central to the economic problems. "For there shall be the seed of peace says the Lord." The literal translation of this is the "seed sowing of peace." This Hebrew phrase "kee serah hahshalom." כִּי־זָרַע הַשְּׁלוֹם is God's reference to the absence of war so that agricultural pursuits may resume. When there are times of war crops are destroyed or they never get planted due to the military campaigns, which require the land for battles as well as moving troops and armaments over the fields. So now there will be peace with abundant crops, wine and rain as well as a reversal of the Israelites fortunes.

Both Judah and Israel came back from the exile together in 539 B.C. This incorporates all Israel as a reference to a unification of the two major regions, which parted under the civil war in approximately 931 B.C. As God says, "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" He is making a near term and far term reference to their complete blessings under King Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom. With peace Israel is to look forward to a future without alarm. This of course is predicated upon Israel's obedience to God's Word. But Israel has been a curse upon the many nations that persecuted them in the world. How then can the seed of peace upon them be reckoned knowing their history? All these calamities fell upon them when they did not accept Jesus their Messiah at His first advent. They will accept Him at His Second Coming and He will usher them into the Millennial Kingdom. The statement affirming the necessity of the Jews to believe that He is their Messiah is crucial to understanding why they don't have full blessings now and won't until they say to Him the words spoken here by Jesus and recorded by Matthey.

Matthew 23:39

*For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord (KJV)*

Once they make this declaration in a corporate manner (All Israel) the peace and prosperity these passages speak to in their long-term prophetic meaning will be realized. Ezekiel makes this clear.

Ezekiel 37:11-26

<sup>11</sup>Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of

*your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup>And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it and performed it, saith Jehovah. <sup>15</sup>The word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying, <sup>16</sup>And thou, son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: <sup>17</sup>and join them for thee one to another into one stick, that they may become one in thy hand. <sup>18</sup>And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? <sup>19</sup>say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions; and I will put them with it, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand. <sup>20</sup>And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes. <sup>21</sup>And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: <sup>22</sup>and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; <sup>23</sup>neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>24</sup>And my servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them. <sup>25</sup>And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. <sup>26</sup>Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. <sup>27</sup>My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>28</sup>And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore (ASV 1901).*

The transformation at the end of the Great Tribulation will be because they will finally be experiencing the redemption offered mankind in their Messiah. It is only Jesus who says to Zechariah, "so will I save you." Yes there is a near term prophesy for the clearing of obstacles so the Jews can rebuild the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. God will rescue Israel from her enemies. But for Israel to be fully transformed and enter the Millennial Kingdom there must be belief in Jesus and a spiritual transformation. This is but a foreshadow of the blessings they will finally experience characterized by Ezekiel in the Millennial Kingdom under the government of King Jesus.

## GOD PROVIDES HIS COMMANDS FOR BLESSINGS

Zechariah 8:14-17

*<sup>14</sup>For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: As I thought to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I repented not; <sup>15</sup>so again have I thought in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. <sup>16</sup>These are the things that ye shall do: speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; <sup>17</sup>and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah (ASV 1901).*

The Lord says I did evil to your ancestors because of the way they sinned and provoked me to wrath. He says that He did not back away from His need to Judge their sin. That is over for now (518 B.C.) and Israel can look forward to blessings if they are obedient to Him and walk in His ways. They should not worry as long as they are in obedience. Specifically God is highlighting positive behavioral attributes He wants to be followed. He wants them to speak truth to others and be at peace with them as well. The inclusion of the term “your gates” references their governmental decrees as shown in Deuteronomy and elsewhere.

Deuteronomy 21:19

*<sup>19</sup> then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place (ASV 1901)*

So this section is directed to the entire nation of Israel to be disseminated through the government. This section closes with the negative attributes He does not want them to pursue. He concludes with “*and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah*” No one should harbor evil intents toward another believer and carry false statements to another in the believing community. These were things that were in direct contradiction of the Torah itself (Exodus 20:16). All these things He hates, says Jehovah. If God hates something we should too. It is never appropriate to harbor hatred and lies toward another genuine believer in the Body of Christ or any body else for that matter. But God is especially jealous for us to follow His will in our dealings with other believers.

NEXT WEEK: THE PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM

**Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**

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