

Title: **"I WILL SAVE MY PEOPLE!"**
Text: Zechariah 8:1-23
Subject: *God's Determination to Save His People*
Date: Sunday Morning — August 20, 2006
Tape #: Zechariah #35
Reading: **Zechariah 8:1-23**

1. Again the word of the LORD of hosts came *to me*, saying,
2. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.
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.
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.
5. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.
6. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.
7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;
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.
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.
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 neighbour.
11. But now I *will* not *be* unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts.
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*.
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.
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:
15. So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.
16. These *are* the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

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

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

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.

20. Thus saith 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.

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.

INTRODUCTION

How often we need **encouragement to believe God!** We are so easily discouraged by the things we see around us and by the evil that rages within us.

How often we need **encouragement to serve him!** We seek to do well, but very quickly grow weary in well-doing. Our hands hang down. Our knees are feeble. And we are easily turned aside from the path of duty.

How often we need **encouragement in the work of the Gospel!** The Church of God is, in this world, the pillar and ground of the truth. **It is our privilege and responsibility to hold forth the light of the Gospel in this dark world.** It is our privilege and responsibility **to preach the Gospel of Christ to this generation.** Our God has put the treasure of the Gospel of his grace and glory in Christ Jesus in these earthen vessels; and we are to carry it into all the world. But there is so **much opposition.** There seems to be so **little interest, so little response, so little fruit, so little success.**

It is ours to evangelize the world, to preach the gospel by every means available to us, to as many people as possible in the days allotted to us. What a great privilege! What a great responsibility! What a great honor! **Yet, like the children of Israel, who were sent back to Jerusalem to build the house of God, we soon grow weary and are easily turned aside from our work by many things.**

How excited those Jews were when they began to clear away the rubbish! Can you imagine **how they must have rejoiced** when they saw the foundation stone laid for the temple, or when they saw the walls beginning to go up? **Then, they began to meet with some opposition.** Some among them began to murmur. Soon, the whole band of laborers, so zealous in the beginning, became faint-hearted, doubting that the work would ever amount to much, even if they finished it. They finally decided that the work of building God's house was just impossible. So they gave it up. **They quit their work and devoted themselves to other things.** No doubt, they intended to return to the building of the temple; but other things kept coming up.

How often I have seen...

- **Once zealous, devoted pastors**, men who were addicted to the study of the Word of God and the preaching of the Gospel, become half-hearted in their labors, addicting themselves to other things! — A Career! — Golf! — Hunting! — Fishing! — Social Work! — Politics!
- **Once zealous missionaries** quit the field, as though God had changed his mind and really intended for them to do something else!
- **Once zealous churches**, churches once known for their determination to spread the Gospel, become isolated, indifferent, and so self-absorbed that they do nothing and give nothing for the cause of Christ, but simply meet together to debate doctrine, defend their creed, and congratulate themselves for their greatness! — No Evangelism! — No Missionary Work! — No Witnessing!
- **Once devoted believers**, once anxious to worship God, hear his Word, and do everything they could to publish it, become lethargic and indifferent to Christ, his glory, and the building of his house!

Zechariah 8 was written in the Book of God specifically to encourage us to go on, to run with patience the race that is set before us, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, to lift up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees. **Zechariah's message in this chapter is all encouragement.** In these twenty-three verses Zechariah is saying, "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*"

SALVATION SURE

In **verses 1-8** the prophet of God tells us that the salvation of God's elect is sure, a matter of unquestionable certainty. The Lord God declares, "**Behold, I will save my people!**"

I readily concede that the passage before us refers, literally and historically, to the great prosperity of Jerusalem after the people were delivered from their Babylonian captivity, when the city and the temple were rebuilt. But if that is all that we see in these verses, we have missed the message of God the Holy Spirit. **That which is written here was written to us and for us.** The whole chapter declares and assures us of God's great grace determined upon his elect in Christ (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4).

(1 Corinthians 10:11) "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

(Romans 15:4) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Eighteen times in this one chapter God our Savior is called, "The LORD of hosts," assuring us that everything here promised is sure, because it is all his work. Everything depends entirely upon his power and goodness. Let's just take a brief look at the things our God promises us here.

LOVING JEALOUSY

(Zechariah 8:1-2) "Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury."

As a loving husband is jealous for (not of, but for) his wife, the object of his ardent love, determined to allow nothing and no one to come between them, so our blessed Savior, **the Lord Jesus Christ, declares that he is jealous for us, his Bride, the Church he ardently loves. He will allow nothing and no one to separate us from him.** — Verse 3...

"Thus saith the LORD." — Don't you love to read those words? Zechariah uses them again and again, to assure us that he is conveying God's message to his people. **Because of his loving jealousy for us, our God and Savior declares,** "*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*" (v. 3; Joel 2:18).

(Joel 2:18) "Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people."

Because of his love for us, our Savior has come to Zion and Jerusalem, his Church, his espoused Bride, his holy city, his holy nation, in mercy and grace, "*to dwell in the midst*" of her, taking up permanent abode with us and in us.

- In the Incarnation (John 1:14).
- In salvation (Isa. 25:9).

(Isaiah 25:9) "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

- Reviving our hearts with grace (Song. 5:1).

He who is the Truth, abiding in his people, makes his Church "**a city of truth**." The presence of Christ makes his Church, "*the house of the living God*," "*the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain*." It shall be exalted in the last days upon the tops of the mountains, and all nations shall flow to it (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-4; Rev. 14:1).

(Isaiah 2:2-4) "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that the mountain of the Lord's house* shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and **he will teach us of his ways**, and **we will walk in his paths**: for **out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD** from Jerusalem. (4) And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

(Micah 4:1-4) "But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that the mountain of the house of the LORD* shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. (2) And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and **he will teach us of his ways**, and **we will walk in his paths**: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (3) And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (4) **But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid**: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."

(Revelation 14:1) "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

BLESSED PEACE

Verses 4 and 5 speak of the blessed peace of God's people.

(Zechariah 8:4-5) "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. (5) And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

Without question, **Zechariah's words here are not to be limited to the Jews' return from Babylon**. He is not here talking about the mere merriment of carnal things, promising joy and peace to old men and women and little children who are lost. **The prophet's words are a promise of spiritual, Gospel blessedness to sinners to whom Christ has come** (Jer. 31:11-17; Matt. 2:17-18).

(Jeremiah 31:11-17) "For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him* that was stronger than he. (12) Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. (13) Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. (14) And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD. (15) Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. (16) Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. (17) And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border."

Matthew 2:17-18 tells us that this prophecy finds its fulfillment in this Gospel day, by the coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ to our souls, to dwell in us. Yes, there is a day coming when our joy and peace will be perfect and without interruption; but even now chosen, redeemed sinners, trusting Christ, walking through this world have "*the joy of faith*" and "*peace that passeth understanding*."

- **Old saints**, stooped with age, still have their Staff, the Lord Jesus, in their hands, and lean heavily upon him.
- **The Church of God is his family, and his quiver is always full**, full of boys and girls, the children of God, "playing and dancing," singing and praising.
- **Children playing in the streets of Zion are representatives of fearless peace**. — There is no war, or danger, where children play in the streets.
- If that is what it is like now, **just imagine what it will be like when our God makes all things new!**

NO DIFFICULTY

It seemed impossible to Israel that the temple and Jerusalem would be rebuilt, just as it often seems impossible to us that our God is building and will build his kingdom and complete it. It seems impossible to carnal reason. So, in verse 6, **the Lord graciously assures us that there are no difficulties with him**. "*With God all things are possible*," even the salvation of our souls!

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

If you will look at the **marginal translation**, you will see that the word "*marvellous*" is really "difficult." The Lord is saying, "Just because you think this is difficult, do not imagine that I do."

We must not judge God by our own measure. Though many things may be difficult (even impossible) for us, there are no difficulties with God. **We should never think of "difficulty" and "Deity" at the same time.** "*With God all things are possible*." **Are you in trouble?** Do you fear that it is impossible for you to be delivered? It is easy for God to deliver you. **Do you feel the weight of your sin, and imagine that it is impossible for you to be pardoned?** Would you look upon it as a miracle; because it seems so marvelous to you? "*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord*." **Between God and man there is infinite difference. Let us never look at our God through the smudged, cloudy glasses of our own feebleness!** — Look at verses 7 and 8.

GOD WILL SAVE

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

Yes, God will save his people. **Again, these verses cannot be limited merely to the restoration of Jerusalem and the regathering of Zion** after the Babylonian captivity. In the days of Zechariah, none of

the children of Israel were in the Western world. Here, the Lord God assures us that by his great power, because of his great love, according to his great covenant he will gather his elect "*from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same*" out every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue (Mal. 1:11; Luke 13:29; Hosea. 2:23).

(Malachi 1:11) "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts."

(Luke 13:29) "And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

(Hosea 2:23) "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God."

TO THE WORK

With such promises and assurances, in **verses 9-15**, the Lord **commands us to get back to the work of preaching the Gospel, gathering his elect, building his house**. We've heard the his Word by the mouth of his prophets. **Our mighty Zerubbabel**, who laid the foundation will build his Temple. He will finish his work with shoutings of, "*Grace! Grace unto it!*" Everything in these verses speaks of the mercy, love and grace of God toward his people in Christ, assuring us that he will accomplish his purpose of grace in the salvation of all his elect.

- So "*Let your hands be strong*" (vv. 9 and 13).
- God will make the work prosperous. He declares, "*I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things*"(v. 12). — All the blessings of grace and glory!

(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*."

Robert Hawker wrote...

"The peace here promised, is, *peace in the blood of the cross*. Before the soul is brought savingly acquainted with this, there can be no real peace to him that goes out, or to him that cometh in. But, when the curse of the fall is taken away by the redemption in Christ Jesus, then is the believer blessed, both in basket and in store. Then, to use the figurative language of this scripture in a spiritual sense, **the vine of ordinances**, and the **increase of bread**, even the bread of life, and **the dew of heaven**, in all the covenant blessings of the promises, will be poured out."

- "*Ye shall be a blessing*" (v. 13).
- God is determined to do well to Jerusalem and to Judah, the people of his choice. — "*Fear ye not*" (v. 15).

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

(Zechariah 8:16-17) "These *are* the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: (17) And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the LORD."

When God pours out his grace upon sinners, making those who were a curse a blessing, working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, good works of mercy and love are sure to follow (Eph. 2:8-10).

"Then all the fruits of the Spirit will be manifest in the life and conversation of the redeemed; and all the blessed effects here spoken of, speaking truth to his neighbour, and executing judgment, will follow. Oh! the glorious consequences of the coming of the Lord Jesus, in the hearts of those who live under his gracious influences!" (Robert Hawker)

JOY AND GLADNESS

The Jews had kept there own fasts of sorrow all the time they were in Babylon, commemorating their captivity. What a sad picture! **Every form of religion invented by men is a celebration of sorrow and bondage!** **Christ sets the captive free;** and when he does everything is "joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts," celebrating and rejoicing in him who is Truth and Peace.

(Zechariah 8:18-19) "And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying, (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."

Faith in Christ gives a perpetual feast (Isa. 25:6-9).

(Isaiah 25:6-9) "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people **a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.** (7) And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. (8) **He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth:** for the LORD hath spoken it. (9) And it shall be said in that day, **Lo, this is our God;** we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, **we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**"

When we are most troubled with difficulties, afflictions and trials, the consolations of Christ most abound, turning our sorrows into laughter. "They that sow in tears shall reap joy." Every tear of grace is a tear of holy joy (Ps. 126:1-6; Rom. 14:17).

(Psalms 126) "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, **we were like them that dream.** (2) Then was our **mouth filled with laughter,** and **our tongue with singing:** then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. (3) **The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.** (4) Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. (5) They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. (6) He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him.*"

(Romans 14:17) "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

ONE JEW

In verses 20-23 The Lord God tells us that many people, from many cities and strong nations, shall come, and come "*speedily*," into his house of his grace, "*out of all languages and nations*," seeking the Lord of hosts and worshipping him, taking hold of the skirt of one Jew, saying, "*We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*"

(Zechariah 8:20-23) "Thus saith 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. (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."

You know who that one Jew is. Don't you? He is the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior, the Son of God who became the Son of Man that he might redeem and save his people!

When the Lord Jesus sends his Spirit to give sinners life in his regenerating grace, he spreads his skirt over his chosen, and says "Live;" and the sinner dead in trespasses and sins lives (Ezek. 16:8).

(Ezekiel 16:8) "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine."

And when he causes the dead to hear his voice, the regenerate soul takes hold of the skirt of his righteousness by faith, and says, "I will go with you, because I have heard that God, in all his fulness and in all the fulness of his grace and glory is in you." — With God's prophet, my heart cries, "*I will go also!*"

Oh may God the Holy Spirit cause you now to take hold of his skirt by living faith, that you may be saved in the Lord with everlasting salvation and worship him forever! Great God of all grace, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem" (Ps. 51:18), for Christ's sake. Blessed Lord Jesus come forth in all the sovereignty of your grace and power, conquering and to conquer, subduing sinners by the scepter of your grace, causing your chosen in this day of your power to gladly 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.*"

Amen.