

<u>Title:</u>	TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT
<u>Text:</u>	Zechariah
<u>Subject:</u>	<i>Faith in Christ—Taking Hold of His Skirt</i>
<u>Date:</u>	Sunday Morning — December 3, 2006
<u>Tape</u>	Zechariah #44
<u>Reading:</u>	<i>Zechariah 8:1-23</i>

ZECHARIAH 8

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*.

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

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

Ten times in Zechariah 8 God's prophet announces God's determination to save his people with the words, "Thus saith the LORD." In nine of those blessed announcements of determined grace the thing promised appeared to be so contrary to everything the eye man could see that he says, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts," emphasizing the fact that he who made the promise is able to perform it, because he is "the LORD of hosts," the Captain of our Salvation, our God who is a Man of War, the Sovereign Ruler of all the

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

hosts of heaven, earth and hell, whose will none can resist, whose power none can withstand, whose purpose none can thwart, or even hinder.

I want us to look at the prophetic promise given in verses 20-23. — “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; *It shall yet come to pass.*” — It shall yet come to pass because he who rules all shall bring it to pass. He is “the LORD of hosts.” **What shall come to pass?** “*It shall yet come to pass* that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities.”

Now, read the rest of our text, and you will see a great and glorious promise of grace and salvation that only God himself can perform.

(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.*”

Contrary to the opinion of most, this promise has nothing to do with the salvation of the Jews as a nation, except as in a typical sense. The words of this promise cannot be honestly applied to any age except this gospel age. In fact, the ancient Jewish writers unanimously asserted that it is a promise to be fulfilled “in the days of the Messiah.” And they got it right. This promise is being fulfilled around the world in this gospel day, the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

MANY

As it was in the beginning of this age, so it is now, and so it shall ever be, until all God’s elect have been saved by his omnipotent mercy. — Many people shall come out of many cities. How many? Even as many as the Lord our God has chosen in eternal love and ordained unto eternal life, as many as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, purchased with his own

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

precious blood, as many as God the Holy Spirit shall call by his irresistible grace shall come.

“And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD.” — Many shall come to Zion, the city of God. — “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” — Many shall come to pray, to worship and seek the Lord, to call upon the name of the Lord.

SPEEDILY

They will come “speedily,” with willing hearts, knowing that they need his grace, being convinced by God the Holy Spirit that...

- They are sinners who need mercy.
- Christ alone is Righteousness, has righteousness, and can give righteousness.
- That his precious blood alone can atone and cleanse from sin.

“Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law’s demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, else I die.”

They shall come “speedily...to seek the Lord of hosts.” — Not just to seek his blessing, but to seek him. Not just to seek his mercy, but to seek him. They come seeking to know him, whom to know is life eternal.

Now, look at the last for words of verse 21. The prophet Zechariah takes his place with those poor, needy sinners, and says, **“I will go also.”** — None

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

know better than those who have tasted the grace of God how desperately they need grace.

Ye sinners seek His face,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of His cross,
And find salvation there!"

(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.”

The people spoken of here are God’s elect scattered among the strong nations of the Gentiles, who shall come to Christ with willing hearts because they have been made willing by his omnipotent, irresistible grace in the day of his power.

Now, I want us to spend the rest of our time in verse 23.

(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.*”

TEN MEN

Notice that the promise is that “**ten men**” shall come, and “**shall take hold of the skirt**” of one man; but these ten men are said to come “**out of all languages of the nations.**” Obviously, the words must be understood in an allegorical, spiritual sense, not in a literal sense. It is not possible, in a literal sense, for ten men to come out of all the languages of the nations. But, if we understand these ten men to be representatives of God’s elect scattered among all nations, the passage makes perfect sense and is perfectly clear.

- In Acts 2, you will remember, “devout men out of every nation under heaven” heard the apostles preach the gospel in their own language.
- Peter explained that this was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-32).

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

- Then, in Acts 2:21, he quotes Joel as saying, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- The apostle Paul quotes that same passage from Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13, assuring us that it is God’s declaration of grace to chosen sinners scattered among all the nations of the earth.
- Then, at the close of the Book, we see these very people gathered around the throne of God in glory (Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 14:6).

(Revelation 5:9-10) “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

(Revelation 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; (10) And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

(Revelation 14:1-7) “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. (2) And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: (3) And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. (4) These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (5) And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. (6) And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, (7) Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

WHY TEN?

But why does the Lord command his prophet to use the specific number ten to speak of all the hosts of his elect? I am not much for what men call “numerology,” but it does appear specific numbers generally represent specific things in the Word of God.

- Three commonly represents the Triune God.
- Six is the number of man — (666).
- Seven is used to represent grace and perfection.

And the number ten is also used in a clearly distinct manner, representing holiness, justice, fulness, and completion.

- God gave ten commandments (Ex. 34:28).
- He required Moses to make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen (Ex. 26:1).
- The boards of the tabernacle were ten cubits in length (Ex. 26:16).
- On each side of the tabernacle there were ten pillars, with ten sockets, hooks, and filets of silver (Ex. 38:12).
- Boaz called ten elders of the city to bear witness to his redemption of Ruth (Ruth 4:2).
- David, the great type of our Savior slew his ten thousands, just as Christ conquers the hearts of ten thousand times ten thousand by his grace.
- When our Lord Jesus comes again, he will come with ten thousands of saints (Jude 1:14).

I do not suggest that it is an absolute rule, but it seems clear to me that the number ten often represents holiness, justice, fulness, and completion. These ten men out of all languages of the nations represent all those who are saved and shall be saved, the whole election of grace, the whole Israel of God. The church of our God shall be complete. Not one of the elect shall be lost. And they shall be forever complete and perfect in Christ, holy, without spot, or blemish, or any such thing.

THE SKIRT OF A MAN

What does the Lord of hosts tell us that every chosen redeemed sinner shall do? How is it that these fallen sons of Adam come to pray and seek the

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

Lord? How is it that sinners convinced of their sin, knowing that they fully deserve to suffer the fury of God's wrath forever in hell, come to God? **The prophet tells us that these “ten men shall take hold...of the skirt of him that is a Jew.”**

- “**Him that is a Jew**” cannot refer to anyone other than our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David, the Son of God, our Savior, **the only true Jew who ever lived**. — “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly... But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly” (Rom. 2:28-29).
- **His skirt** is his robe of righteousness, the garment of salvation he spreads over his own in effectual grace (Ezek. 16:8).
- There are some in this world, many out of every language of every nation, who **shall take hold** of his skirt. — To take hold of his Christ's skirt, his righteousness is to believe on the Son of God. — “**If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole!**” — There is no other way a sinner can or will seek the Lord, call upon him, and worship him.
- Believing sinners, lay hold of Christ's righteousness by faith, and say, “**We will go with you**.” — (Ruth to Naomi).

I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
There's no other way but this;
I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light,
If the way of the cross I miss.

I must needs go on in the blood sprinkled way.
(There's no other way to God.)
If I would righteous be, and from all sin free,
Then I must be washed in blood!.

So I cast away every work of my own, —
Myself I will trust no more!
Since my Lord called, “Come,” I'm on my way home.
By Christ, He's the opened Door!

The way of the cross leads home,
The way of the cross leads home,

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

It is sweet to know as I onward go,
The way of the cross leads home.

HEARD

Now, watch this. — How were they made willing to come? They lay hold of Christ's righteousness, saying, "**We will go with you: for we have heard.**" — "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

- Heard the Gospel preached.
- Heard the Savior's voice by his Spirit (John 5:25).

(John 5:25) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

(1 Thessalonians 1:4-5) "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (5) For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."

All who come to Christ, keep coming to him, because they taste and see that the Lord is gracious; and, believing him, he is precious to our souls
(1 Pet. 2:1-7).

(1 Peter 2:1-7) "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (3) If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. (4) To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, (5) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."

TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT

What is it that men and women hear in the gospel that conquers their hearts and makes them willing to go to God trusting Christ alone? Look at the last words of our text one more time. — “**We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.**” His name is Immanuel, God with us. We rejoice in that; but it would be meaningless without this, God is with him. It is not that God was with him, or shall be with him, but that **God is with him!** — We have heard God with you! Our Savior’s name is both “**Ithiel,**” God with me and “**Ucal,**” the Mighty One (Pro. 30:1).

- He who is our Savior, our Redeemer, the Lord our Righteousness, is himself God.
- He is God with God and God with me. — He and God are one. And he and I are one!
- In the Covenant
- In the Incarnation
- In all His Obedience
- In the Work of Redemption
- In His Exaltation
- In all His Works of Grace (Eph. 1:3-14)
- And he is the Mighty One, the Mighty God!

Will you come to God by Christ? Will you “take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew” and go with him to God? O Spirit of God cause all here today to hear your voice and trust Christ the Mighty God, who alone can save!

Amen.