

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

Introduction

We saw in *Ch. 7* how this delegation of **JEWS** was reminded of what **DISOBEDIENCE** to the **WORD OF GOD** had brought to their forefathers and what it would bring to them if they didn't change.

However, we see now in *Ch. 8* that they are told the **GLORIOUS BLESSINGS** of what **REPENTANCE OF SIN** and **OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD** can bring. The strong rebuke we saw the in the last two messages prepares the way for this positive portion.

GOD'S HOLY NATURE demands that **HE JUDGE** continued **SIN and UNFAITHFULNESS**, but **HIS DELIGHT** is to **BLESS HIS PEOPLE**. It is the same theme seen throughout the **OLD TESTAMENT!** 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 here as a reason to **REPENT** and begin to live **COMPASSIONATE** and **RIGHTEOUS LIVES** from their **HEART**.

Ch. 8 **ENVISIONS** the **FUTURE** but applies the lessons taught by **PROPHECY** to the contemporary scene of the **PROPHET'S** own day.

I. WE SEE THE JEALOUSY OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ZION.

(Vs 1-2)

A new **WORD** from the **LORD** in *verse 1* makes this a new section. Here again, as in *Ch. 7*, the claim is **DIVINE REVELATION**. This **WORD** is not **of** or **from ZECHARIAH**, but rather **from the LORD HIMSELF**. Over *ten times* in this chapter the name **LORD OF HOSTS** occurs and some *twenty-two times* the name **LORD (JEHOVAH OR YHWH)** occurs.

What is written here is guaranteed by the **OMNIPOTENT GOD** and the repetition of **DIVINE NAMES** in these **PROMISES** emphasize the **CERTAINTY** of their **FULFILLMENT**.

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In *vs 2* we encounter the first of ten usages in *Ch. 8* of the **PROPHETIC** announcement, "*Thus saith the LORD of Hosts.*" The repetition of this **DIVINE TITLE**, *the LORD of Hosts*, shows the **DIVINE AUTHORITY** behind the assertion. **(This brings back memories of DAVID standing 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 armies of both the earthly and heavenly realms gives this **WORD!** **HE** was "*exceeding jealous for Zion.*" The word "**JEALOUS**" denotes **color** produced in the face by **deep emotion** - with it becoming *intensely red*, because of **arduous, zealous passion**.

ZION is the place of **SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**. Because the **LORD's love for ZION** is so great **HE** was and 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 here is that **HIS JEALOUSY** is displayed in **PUNISHING** those who hate **HIS PEOPLE**. *(Cf. 1:14-16)*

GOD'S GREAT WRATH had been against **ISRAEL** just prior to the captivity and a warning had just been issued that **HIS WRATH** could turn against the **REMNANT** again if their **WORSHIP** was **NOT SINCERE** or **NOT OUT OF THE HEART!**

In this chapter we see **HIS WRATH** is turned to **PROTECT** and **CHERISH** the **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.”

ZION speaks of the **SPIRITUAL CENTER** of **JERUSALEM**. The basic distinguishing fact about **ZION** was **GOD'S DIVINE CHOICE and PRESENCE!**

ZION also speaks of the **LORD'S REDEMPTION** and the place where **HE** would come as **SAVIOUR!**

But **ZION** is also frequently extended to denote its **RIGHTFUL INHABITANTS—GOD'S PEOPLE—THE JEWS!**

The **FERVENT LOVE** of the **LORD** for **HIS PEOPLE** will manifest itself not only in **HIS WRATH** and **INDIGNATION** against **THEIR ENEMIES**, but also in the **MATURING OF HIS PEOPLE'S PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** with **HIM!**

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

Verse 3 PROPHECIES MESSIAH'S RETURN TO ZION! **HE** had **RETURNED TO ZION** here at this time, but this looks to the **FUTURE!**

FULL RESTORATION of **ZION** is **ASSURED BY THE WORD OF GOD** and will be accomplished by the **ZEALOUS LOVE OF GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE!**

One day **MESSIAH** will **REIGN** in **HIS EARTHLY KINGDOM** because **GOD** will **MANIFEST HIS CONQUERING LOVE BY RETURNING TO ZION!**

What is meant by the **LORD'S RETURN TO ZION?**

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Is it talking about the **RETURN** of the **SHEKINAH PRESENCE OF GOD** which was removed from the **TEMPLE** as recorded by the **PROPHET EZEKIEL?**

Yes, but it means far more also. It means the **SECOND COMING OF MESSIAH IN HIS GLORY!** The **MESSIAH** will return with **GREAT WRATH** and **TRIUMPH** over **HIS ENEMIES!** Because, only the **VISIBLE RETURN** of the **MESSIAH** will finally **FULFILL** many of the **PROPHECIES** concerning **ZION!**

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 “*dwelling*” 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 (ZION)** will cause the exaltation of **JERUSALEM (ZION)**. **ZION** 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 PROPHECIES** 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!**

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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!**

Vss. 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 (the elderly and children) **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 financially, emotionally and spiritually.** **The tragedy of child abuse** be it *sexually, physically, and even mentally from perverted teaching* is taking a **gruesome toll today.** But in that day even these groups most susceptible to being preyed upon will enjoy **unbroken safety and comfort.**

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Because of mankind's **SIN**, 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.

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 Timothy 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 FULFILS** 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 **splendorous, 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** in **HIS KINGDOM!** 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!** *e.g. What the LORD has done in our SALVATION!*

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III. WE SEE THE GATHERING OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

(Vs 7-8)

The **LORD** again guarantees that **HE** will keep **HIS COVENANT** in vs 7 and will gather **HIS PEOPLE** from throughout the whole world. **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** are **HIS!**

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 Zechariah 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 again 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** will **DO** and **BE** what is **RIGHT** and **PROPER** because their heart's desire is a **TRUE** and **RIGHTEOUS** walk!

This is **ALL** made possible under the **NEW COVENANT** provided by the **DEATH, BURIAL, and RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**.

Conclusion

So, this small group of exiles had return 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*" (*Matthew 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 and blessing*.

So the **LORD** uses negative and positive motivation.