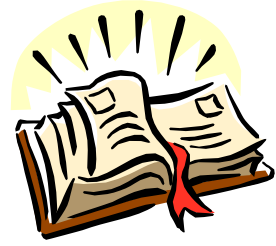


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Zechariah 8.

(2014)

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Zechariah 8.

Topics.

- Thus says the LORD, "I am jealous for Zion."
- Thus says the LORD, "I have returned to Zion and will dwell in Jerusalem."
- Thus says the LORD, "Jerusalem will again be populated."
- Thus says the LORD, "Jerusalem will be marvellous in the sight of God."
- Thus says the LORD, "The LORD will save His people."
- Thus says the LORD, "Judah and Israel will have peace and prosperity."
- Thus says the LORD, "I will bring good to Jerusalem."
- Thus says the LORD, "Joy and gladness will come to Jerusalem."
- Thus says the LORD, "Many nations will come to Jerusalem."

INTRODUCTION: the following introduction is quiet long, but it does help understand the the background of Zechariah, to skip the introduction scroll down to Zechariah chapter eight. As Haggai encouraged the returned Jewish exiles to rebuild the Temple, Zechariah encouraged them to repent and renew their covenant with God. Such spiritual renewal would be necessary for the people to be ready to worship God once the Temple was rebuilt (about 515 B.C.). Zechariah accused them of doing the very things their ancestors had done before the exile. He was concerned about social justice for widows, orphans, and foreigners. As the people endured opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea, Zechariah reassured them of God's abiding comfort and care and that He would continue his covenant with Israel.

The Messianic hope was rekindled during Zechariah's ministry by the ordination of Joshua as priest and Zerubbabel as governor. From Zechariah chapter one through to the end there is a beautiful message of comfort and encouragement for the people of Israel during the era of Zechariah and for those who are rebuilding the temporal Temple of God, but as the visions progress through the chapters the focus slowly shifts from the era of Zechariah and transcends time to a future age where God is building an eternal Temple in the Lord Jesus Christ. The visions then progress to Jesus returning in glory and climax's in the final chapter with Christ reigning from Jerusalem as King over the entire earth and ends with the promise that the Lord would establish his rule over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9).

The historical background: twenty years after untied Israel returned from their seventy years in captivity to Babylon, the Temple was still a blackened ruin and the discouraged people did not see how it could be restored. At this critical moment God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Jews to rebuild the Temple. The prophecies of the two men were delivered almost at the same time. Zechariah gives a series of eight symbolic night-visions, to encourage the Israelites to complete the Temple.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

Thus says the LORD, "I am jealous for Zion."

Zechariah 8:1-2 ----- ¹And the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying. ²"Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.

The common expression throughout this chapter is, "Thus says the LORD" and the focus is the re-building of the temporal Temple of God, but contained within the prophets' prophetic words is an echo of a future and eternal Temple God is building today in the Lord Jesus Christ. This study will focus on both the Temporal and the eternal Temple.

Zion: is the ancient name for Jerusalem, primarily used in poetic and prophetic passages. It can refer to an ancient castle, a fortress or stronghold of Jerusalem or the Hill Jerusalem sits on or the whole city itself and sometimes refers to the Temple of God. By extension the name can apply to the people of Judah and is used figuratively for heaven or the Jewish church, meaning the religious and political aspect of society that is seen as an entity oriented toward politics and government.

Jealousy: Thus says the LORD, "God is Jealous for Zion," in this context Jealousy carries the idea of God loving His people so much He is zealous (actively and unreservedly enthusiastic) to protect and favour them from any hurt and harm. Jealous carries two ideas, one good and one bad. Good jealousy is to be protective, watchful and trusting of someone. Bad jealousy is to be envious, covetous, resentful and bitter.

When God is spoken of as being jealous it carries the idea that God's only desire for His people is for their well-being so His wrath and judgment falls upon any nation that brings harm upon His people and should His own people act corruptly or turn to other gods (i.e., commit spiritual adultery against God) they bring God's judgment upon themselves.

It is very much like a man who is deeply in love with his wife and she betrays him by constantly sleeping with another man. The husband of course is not only going to stop buying her gifts and showering her with presents, but is also going to withdraw any favours he has been giving his wife. Likewise it is with God when his people act corruptly and betray Him by turning to other gods He withdraws his protective, watchfulness, His trust and His blessings.

Added to this the LORD values and protects His name. His name is a name of love, justice, grace, mercy, forgiveness kindness and eternal life, so when people that represent His name act corruptly it brings a bad testimony to His name and turns people away from Him. He desires that everyone should be saved and be granted eternal life so those who act wickedly in His name force Him to act justly to protect His name. The LORD does this by removing His hand of blessing and replacing it with His hand of judgment.

Thus says the LORD, "I have returned to Zion and will dwell in Jerusalem."

Zechariah 8:3 -----³Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain.

I have returned to Zion: means the LORD'S favour will be on the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, but it also carries with it a faint echo of the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

But the majestic and God inspired prophetic words of Zechariah do not end here, but rest only for a moment, once they have accomplished their purpose they transcend this glorious thousand year millennial age and reach their final destination when God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead.

They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Thus says the LORD, "Jerusalem will again be populated."

Zechariah 8:4-5 ----- ⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. ⁵And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.

The Temple of God was finished in a time of peace and multitudes of scattered Jews and their families returned to Jerusalem from the surrounding nations, but there is also a faint echo in this verse of a future age when a little child will be able to play with a wolf, a leopard, a young calf and a lion together, and everyone who does what is right will live out their full years of life in perfect health. The following prophetic verses of Isaiah give us a little glimpse of what this glorious future age will look like.

- The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. (Isaiah 11:6).
- The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," (Isaiah 65:25).
- No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. (Isaiah 65:20).

Thus says the LORD, "Jerusalem will be marvellous in the sight of God."

Zechariah 8:6 ----- ⁶Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it (Jerusalem) is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the LORD of hosts?

The LORD is saying, "If the survivors of the captivity appreciate that Jerusalem is the wonderful city of God and respect the Temple as a magnificent and awe-inspiring sanctuary of the LORD their God, God will favour the city, the Temple and the people.

NOTICE: the LORD is not considering the Temple marvellous because of its ornate appearance, but because the people have a right heart attitude toward God, His laws and His blessings and are not indifferent to what is important to God. Under the Old Covenant the Temple was the hub and centre of the nation and of Jewish life and their faith. If they had a right heart attitude and respect toward the Temple it outwardly evidenced that they also had a right heart attitude toward God and the things that are important to Him.

Thus says the LORD, "The LORD will save His people."

Zechariah 8:7-8 ----- ⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts: behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, ⁸and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness."

These verses apply locally to the Jews that were scattered throughout the surrounding nations when Assyria invaded Israel (the ten tribes) in the land of Samaria, and Babylon invaded Jerusalem (the two tribes).

During these attacks multitudes of Jews fled to the surrounding nations to escape the brutal cruelty of the Assyrian and Babylonian armies. God is saying He is now going to save these scattered Jews from the countries they have fled to and bring them back to Jerusalem as a faithful and righteous people, but Zechariah's prophetic words also echo a future era when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and gathers God's people (Jews and Gentiles) together from all nations of the world. The following verses speak of this glorious new future age to come upon earth.

Jesus said: -

- The Son of Man will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matt. 24:31).
- The Son of Man will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. (Mark 13:27).

Thus says the LORD, "Judah and Israel will have peace and prosperity."

Zechariah 8:9-13 ----- ⁹Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.

¹⁰For before those days (the days the foundation of the Temple was laid) there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in, for I set every man against his neighbor. ¹¹But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. ¹²For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. ¹³And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong."

The LORD tells the people to be encouraged and listen to the prophets (Haggai and Zechariah) that were at the laying of the foundation stone of the new Temple contrasting the people of the era prior to this who made their hearts diamond hard to the words of the LORD'S prophets (Zech. 7:11-12) because of the stubbornness

and rebellion of the people of Israel prior to this generation that is about to rebuild the Temple there was famine and poverty, contention and strife in the land of Israel. God is telling the people of this new generation to be encouraged because there will be peace and He will prosper their land, their cattle and their crops and instead of the nation being mocked and despised they will be a blessing to the surrounding nations. This applies to the era of peace the Jews had when the Temple of the LORD was completed and a golden age for Israel followed. But Zechariah's prophetic words after resting upon this period of time for a moment take up wings and continue to transcend time to the book of Revelations and John's vision of a New Jerusalem coming out of heaven.

The following verses give us a small glimpse of what this glorious period of time will look like.

- Afflicted one (Israel) storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹²I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones. (Isaiah 54:11-12).

Here we are told God will build Israel's foundations and walls with precious stones. As the reader of the Bible travels through Bible prophecy and approaches the end of their journey the visions of the prophets become clearer and more detailed, so it is not surprising that when we arrive at the cul-de-sac of the Book of Revelation we see that John has a clearer and far more detailed vision of Isaiah's prophecy. John in the following verses amplifies what Zechariah is saying.

- I (John) saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:2-4).

Here we see Jerusalem as a Bride adorned for her husband and the dwelling place of God and of man

- Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you (John) the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he (one of the seven angels) carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. (Rev 21:9-11).

Here we see Jerusalem as the Bride, the wife of the Lamb with the glory of God and its radiance like a most rare jewel (i.e., precious jewels). The New Jerusalem is made up of Jews and Gentiles from the Old and New Testament (Rev. 21:12-14) (a Gentile is anyone who is not a Hebrew or a Jew). The Holy City New Jerusalem is built of pure gold clear as glass and every kind of precious stone, jewels, jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst and pearls (Revelation. 21:18-21). All of these precious stones are symbols of how much value God places on those who love and trust Him for their eternal salvation and who when their mortal body is being laid in the grave the Angel of the LORD and those who knew them are able to say that they faithfully endured through the trials and sufferings of life and remained loyal to Christ even unto death.

- I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. (Rev 21:22-24).

Here we see that the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the light of this new and Holy City Jerusalem and that kings and nations of the world will bring their glory into it.

- No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev 22:3-5).

Here we see that the Throne of God and of the Lamb is in this New and Holy City Jerusalem and that there will be nothing in it that will bring harm or hurt to anyone. All of these verses are the ultimate fulfilment of Zechariah's prophetic words, “

- Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. (Zech. 8:3).

Thus says the LORD, “I will bring good to Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 8:14-18 ----- ¹⁴For thus says the LORD of hosts: "As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁵so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. ¹⁶These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; ¹⁷do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD." ¹⁸And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

God purposed to bring disaster against the former fathers of Israel and Judah because they had made their hearts diamond hard against Him. He used Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:8-9) to do this, but now the LORD tells this new generation He has purposed to bring good to Jerusalem. To maintain the LORD'S favour Israel is told: -

- To speak the truth to one another.
- To give help and administer justice and judgments that are true and make for peace.
- Not to think or devise evil in their hearts against one another.
- Not to deceive and lie or make false promises they do not intend to keep.

Thus says the LORD, “Joy and gladness will come to Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 8:19 ----- ¹⁹"Thus says 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 seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace.

The appointed times of Judah's fasting will be times of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts, but they must continue to love truth, meaning, love God and the things that are right, (i.e. justice and doing-good to others etc.), because it is these things that the LORD delights in and which bring all the above blessings.

Thus says the LORD, “Many nations will come to Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 8:20-23 ---- ²⁰"Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. ²¹The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.' ²²Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. ²³Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' "

Because this new generation of Israel listened to God's prophets and responded to their messages, renewed their faith and are willingly ready to build the LORD'S Temple, God is going to prosper the work they do, and multitudes of foreign

nations will desire to go to Jerusalem because it will be obvious that the LORD'S Blessing is on the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

Many nations will come to Jerusalem: (v22) these prophetic words of Zechariah also echo the following two events: -

1. The beginning of the age of God's grace, when God through the Holy Spirit begins to bring Jews and Gentiles from all nations together to become one body in Christ.
 - Both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we (the Jews) hear them (Gentiles) telling in our own tongues (the Hebrew language) the mighty works of God." ¹²And all (Jews) were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:11-12).
2. The end of Christ's glorious thousand year millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords when all nations and kings of the earth bring their glory to the New and Holy city of Jerusalem.
 - I (John) saw no temple in the city (of Jerusalem), for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its (Jerusalem's) light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. (Revelations 21:24).

FOOTNOTE: this chapter shines a light on the truth that the people God loves are those who acknowledge Him and uphold justice and make choices that lead to peace. They are people who do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right and show respect and give help to others when able, these are the people the LORD delights in and the things that bring His favour to an individual and to a nation.

End.