

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
PRESENT ENCOURAGEMENT FROM GOD-PART 2
ZECHARIAH 8:9-17

Introduction

The **PROPHECY** we looked at in *Zechariah 8:1-8* will only find its **FULFILLMENT** in the establishment of **CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN** on the earth.

Now we know that their hearts could be encouraged by the **MESSAGE OF THAT TIME TO COME** just as ours are! But just like us, the **LORD'S** people needed some **ENCOURAGEMENT** to help them in the days they were living! Here we see that the **LORD** did have a **WORD** to help the **PEOPLE OF ZECHARIAH'S** generation!

We see here that the **LORD** gives them **HIS ASSURANCE** that **HE WILL** indeed **RESPOND TO THE REPENTANCE OF THEIR SIN** and **THEIR RENEWED OBEDIENCE TO HIM AND HIS WORD** and that **HE HAS PURPOSED A NEW TIME OF BLESSING FOR THEM!**

Last time...

I. WE SAW THAT THE LORD SPOKE OF BOTH THE PRESENT AND THE PAST. (Vs. 9-10)

This remnant was to survey what had been accomplished since they undertook to OBEY GOD'S VOICE. For there was a great contrast between the time before they took up the work of the TEMPLE and the conditions of life since they HEARKENED TO THE VOICE OF GOD THROUGH HIS PROPHETS.

They were to continue in their RENEWED OBEDIENCE to GOD'S WORD and bring this good work to conclusion.

II. WE SAW THAT THE LORD PROMISED RENEWED FRUITFULNESS. (Vs. 11-12)

GOD had terminated their former harsh conditions and informed them here of HIS dramatic change of attitude toward them!

The improved conditions that the restored remnant had been experiencing since they sincerely set themselves to the task of building GOD'S TEMPLE, were only a pledge of the greater blessings that GOD was promising them!

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Since they had HEEDED THE PROPHETIC WARNINGS, REPENTED, and taken up the work of rebuilding, GOD would BLESS them in all their ways!

Again, it is not human effort or even nature's effort that makes for our prosperity! Our prosperity is the GRACIOUS GIFT OF GOD!

III. WE SEE THE LORD'S NEW PURPOSE FOR HIS PEOPLE. (Vs. 13-15)

The **RESTORATION** of their **COVENANT BLESSINGS** is summed up in *verse 13*.

The **LORD** reversed their fortunes. They had been a **CURSE** among the **NATIONS** because they had **BROKEN THE COVENANT** and inherited the **CURSE** of *Deuteronomy 28*.

But now, because of their **RENEWED REPENTANCE** and **OBEDIENCE**, **GOD** would **ACT TO RESTORE** them, but that is not an end in itself.

HE would **SAVE THEM** and as a result they "*shall be a blessing.*" The **LORD'S** people had a specific role to perform. They would be **BLESSED** by **GOD** so that they will be able to **FULFIL THEIR PROPER FUNCTION**.

We will see this theme is expanded on in **8:20-23** in terms of their **MISSION** to the **NATIONS**.

History proves that from the time of the **GREEK PERSECUTION** to the **ROMAN DISPERSION** and numerous other **JEWISH PERSECUTIONS** down through the centuries that they have never been considered a **BLESSING** except for this short period when they were making sacrifices for the **PERSIAN KING DARIUS** and his sons (*Ezra 6:10*).

The only **FULFILLING** of this **BLESSING** that the **REMNANT** became was that out of this community came the **MESSIAH**.

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HE was the **SEED** through **WHOM** all the **NATIONS** would be **BLESSED** (*Gen. 12:1ff*). It is because of **JESUS CHRIST WHO** came from the **JEWS** that we count them as **BLESSING** us!

It is obvious that this **PROMISE** was intended for **ZECHARIAH'S** generation but there is a **GREATER FUTURE FULFILLMENT** included here implied by the statement, "*It shall come to pass.*"

We know that because of **UNBELIEF**, by and large, **ISRAEL** has been set aside by **GOD** for a period of time (*Romans 11:1-10*) although even during this time of the **GENTILES** there is still a **BELIEVING REMNANT of ISRAEL**.

We know that even so, there will again be a time of **FUTURE BLESSING** for them according to *Romans 11:11-32*. This will happen when they are **SAVED** through inner **SPIRITUAL and MORAL REGENERATION** by **BELIEF** in **JESUS CHRIST** as **LORD** and **SAVIOUR**. Because only **HIS SALVATION** can **CONVERT THEM** [or any one] from a **CURSE** into a **BLESSING!**

Again we see the admonition, "*fear not.*" Don't you know that the memory of these calamities they had been **CURSED** with must have stalked them like a persistent nightmare!

But the negative **COMMAND** prepares the way for the positive one, "*but let your hands be strong.*" When the **HEART** is **WEAK THROUGH FEAR**, the hands cannot be **STRONG!**
2 Timothy 1:7—"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Their pathway to **BLESSING** and usefulness was by way of **OBEDIENCE** to the task at hand. They were called on to be **ACTIVE** in the **DUTY** presently assigned to them!

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Then, in expectant **FAITH**, they would see how **GOD** would use their **OBEDIENCE** to further **HIS PURPOSES**. The grand **PROMISE** of **BLESSING** was to encourage their willingness to be immediately **ACTIVE**.

In the same way, we today are to get a glimpse of **GOD'S GRACE** and the **PURPOSE** that **HE** has for us **IN CHRIST JESUS!** **HE** wants to **STRENGTHEN** us both in our **INNER** and outer man. **HE** has given us both a **SURE HOPE** and a **CERTAIN FUTURE!**

Verses 14 and 15 show **GOD'S** redetermination to do **ISRAEL** good. But first we have the review of the past in *verse 14*.

This was the result of **DELIBERATE PLANNING!** It was not a rash striking out or a natural change of circumstances, but a **PURPOSED ACT** for the **PUNISHMENT** of wayward **ISRAEL** and **JUDAH**. What happened to them was not merely accidental. Their **CALAMITIES** were explainable **CALAMITIES**.

GOD'S former **PURPOSE** was to do harm - not **MORAL** or **SPIRITUAL EVIL**, but merely temporal or physical disaster to inflict **HIS CHASTISEMENT!**

It was the **AFFLICTING** of a **DISOBEDIENT, SINFUL** people by allowing **CALAMITIES** to overtake them according to **HIS ALL WISE PURPOSE!** It was so that **HE** might **BRING BACK** a **REPENTANT REMNANT**. **GOD** was **FAITHFUL** in carrying out **HIS** threat as well as **FAITHFUL** in **FULFILLING HIS GOOD PROMISES!**

GOD says here, "*I repented not.*" **GOD** fulfilled the 70 years of captivity **HE** said would happen!

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As the contrast with **ISRAEL** being made a "**CURSE**" and subsequently a "**BLESSING**" in *verse 13* so the same comparison is equated by the conjunction "**As**" used in *verse 14*. **GOD'S** earlier **PURPOSE** to punish them was past, **HIS PRESENT INTENTION** was to do them good!

The certain fact of the past harm is now used to give assurance to the future good **GOD** has planned in *verse 15*.

"To do well unto" is the opposite of *"to punish."* *"To punish"* means to **AFFLICT** or **PUNISH** for the **SINS OF DISOBEDIENCE**. *"To do well unto"* signifies to **BLESS** for **FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE**. (*To cause or purpose good.*)

The **LORD** had again come to a determined conclusion, but now it was a matter of **doing them good**. As history proved when **GOD PURPOSED HARM** to them, it came about! And just as certain was **GOD'S PURPOSED GOOD** for the future!

Jeremiah 31:28; 32:37-42

Again we see in *verse 15* the admonition, *"fear ye not."* **GOD'S PEOPLE** were not to be saddened or disheartened any more for **GOD** was now speaking comforting words to them.

They were to walk forward in **FAITH TRUSTING** in the **LORD'S PROVISION** and **PROMISES!** Walking in **GOD'S RENEWED PURPOSE FOR HIS PEOPLE**.

IV. WE SEE GOD IMPLEMENTING HIS WORD OF BLESSING.

(Vs. 16-17)

In *verse 16* they were called on to **PRODUCE FRUIT** in keeping with **REPENTANCE**. Sounds a lot like the preaching of **JOHN THE BAPTIST!**

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Luke 3:8—*"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."*

So, here we have the **OBEDIENCE** which is illustrative of those who will receive the **PROMISED BLESSINGS OF GOD!** **PROMISES** of immediate **BLESSING** and **FUTURE GLORY** are to be responded to with **FAITHFUL SPIRITUALITY** and **MORAL CONDUCT**.

BLESSINGS are for the **REPENTANT** and **OBEDIENT**, not for the **UNREPENTANT** and **DISOBEDIENT!**

We've seen how that in *7:9-10*, that these things had previously been set forth and this repetition is to again challenge his hearers to **FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE**, especially those who were just going through the outward motions of religion.

Now that they were aware of the good things which the **LORD** would bring to pass because of **HIS PURPOSE** to do good to them, we read *"These are the things that ye shall do."*

They were to be as *James 1:22* tells us to be, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."*

GOD'S PURPOSED BLESSING should have drawn out their **LOVE FOR HIM!** **LOVE** is not a noun or just a feeling, but it is an **OBEDIENT ACTION!**

John 15:10—*"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."*

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First, they were to deal strictly in TRUTH. A **BLESSED** man deals **TRUTHFULLY** with his neighbor. *“Truth”* was to control not only their **LIPS** but also their **HEARTS!**

Matthew 12:34—“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

Second, they were to render HONEST and PEACE PRODUCING decisions. These were court or judicial decisions that result in **PEACE** because of the **HONESTY** of their **WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING.** The **TRUTH** and **DISCERNMENT** were to be rendered that **RESOLVES** and **SILENCES** the litigation. *“In your gates”*, describes the place just inside the city gates where public court was frequently held.

The two positive injunctions of *verse 16* are balanced by two negatives ones in *verse 17.*

Third, they were not to IMAGINE or DEVISE EVIL AGAINST ONE ANOTHER.

OUTWARD SIN and **DESPICABLE BEHAVIOR** begin in the **HEART!** If they would **GUARD THEIR HEART** in this respect, then their **BEHAVIOR** would be acceptable.

Fourth, they were not to tolerate a false oath or perjury.

This is speaking of an **oath of falsehood**, the giving of **false information regarding another.** An **oath of falsehood** is an abhorrent sin. It is characterized by **DECEPTION** and **LYING** which **DECEIVES, BETRAYS, and FALSIFIES!**

Again, if our **GOD** is a **GOD OF TRUTH** (and **HE IS!**), then we must be **PEOPLE OF THE TRUTH!** The verse closes with a summary to bear in mind that **GOD “hates”** these evil **SINS** of **INJUSTICE** and **FALSE OATHS** to man or society.

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Note that it is not merely said, *“That is wrong”*, but that **GOD HATES** them! (*Cf. Proverbs 6:16-19*)

What **GOD HATES, HIS PEOPLE** who expect to continue enjoying **HIS BLESSINGS**, are likewise to **HATE.**

Conclusion

The enjoyment of **GOD’S COVENANT BLESSINGS** is never independent of **FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE** on the part of the recipient. For **GOD’S PEOPLE** there is a **DIVINELY** decreed link between **BLESSING with OBEDIENCE**, and **CHASTISEMENT with DISOBEDIENCE.**

JERUSALEM will indeed become the *“city of Truth” (v. 3)* when its inhabitants are **TRUTHFUL** and when **TRUE JUDGMENT** is rendered. But because the **JEWS** have not rendered **TRUE JUDGMENT** in regard to **WHO** the **MESSIAH** is they have been downtrodden among the **NATIONS** down through the centuries!

Today we look at the **JEWS** and sense that they do seem to be *“contemptible”* among the **NATIONS.** Last century when **STALIN’S COMMUNISTS** took over **RUSSIA** an estimated eight million **JEWS** were murdered, and when **HITLER’S NAZIS** took over **GERMANY** an estimated six million **JEWS** were killed. In this century even in their own country they are harassed and murdered and have no peace in the streets or in their hearts.

But one day the **LORD** will reverse their **FORTUNES** and **TRANSFORM** them from a **CURSE** into a **BLESSING.** **HE** will do this for the **REPENTANT REMNANT** who come to **HIM** in **REPENTANCE** and **FAITH** unto **OBEDIENCE!**

We became **CHILDREN OF GOD** through repentance and faith. But, do we have the blessings of **GOD** on our life as a **CHILD OF GOD?** Did you know that if we are living a life of disobedience that **GOD’S** chastisement is sent our way to bring us back to the place of blessing? **GOD** so much wants to bless us! Why not get in the place of **HIS** blessing?