



World Christian Fellowship

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Fast to Feast. Zechariah 8:1-23

When God Turns the Fast into a Feast.

John 13:1, *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

God has always had a tremendous love for His people. Jesus loves His own unto perfection, unto the very limit, unto the extremity of the capacity of love. There is no diminishing of God's love to His children, to His people.

It is unbounded.

It is unlimited.

One of the great truths that Christians have through the years celebrated about the character of God is this aspect of God's love.

If we were to ask the average Christian to name the number one and primary attribute of God, no doubt most of them would say His love.

For God is love.

We are the people of God and that we most excitedly think about the love of God insofar as we experience the wonderful grace that comes because of that love.

When we study the Bible, and we find out that God has always overflowed with love to His people in both Old and New Testament.

God has always manifested boundless love to His children. God's love for His church in the New Testament is more than for Israel in the Old.

Let us examine the concept of God's love for His people Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8, *“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

The love that God had for Israel and the consequence of that love, the calling of Israel, and the deliverance of Israel from out of bondage in Egypt.

Individual love we could see in Solomon.

2 Samuel 12:24, *Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the Lord loved him,*

God has love for the individual person who is in His family.

In the Psalms, there is a great expression of God's love for His people in many places.

Psalms 91, it would be sufficient to assure us of the tremendous love of God.

Psalms 91:1, *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

Isaiah 49:14-16, *But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me."¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.*

God does not forget His children. His love is unending.

Jeremiah 31:1-3, *“At the same time,” says the Lord, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.”* ²*Thus says the Lord: “The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness— Israel, when I went to give him rest.”* ³*The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.*

God again is reaffirming this tremendous love that He has for His people.

Hosea 11:1, *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.*

Hosea 11:4, *I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.*

Hosea 11:7-8, *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.*

Even though you turn your back I can't let you go.

I can't release you.

I love you too much.

Malachi 3:16-17, *Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. ¹⁷ "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."*

God says these are mine.

I will hold onto them. I will crown them as it were.

But if we have learned anything in our study of love in the New Testament, we have learned that love is not just something we but what we do.

1 John 3:18, *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

If God really loves Israel, is it not only God saying He loves Israel, but it is also God manifesting that love in some great acts of love.

This is what Zechariah 8 is all about.

It is all about what God has planned for those He loves in Israel. Zechariah opens the window in the house of Israel so every Jew can look out on the kingdom to see what God has prepared for them that love Him.

In Zechariah's day the Jews had been in Babylon in captivity for 70 years. They were taken there when Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed the city and flattened the temple and wiped out everything. They were taken to Babylon for a 70-year period. This was to purge them once and for all from idolatry.

They had come back to the land under Haggai and Zechariah, they are beginning to finish the building of the temple and the wall and the city.

Many years have gone by, and they are now really at work, finally. God had promised them, through the words of Haggai and the words of Zechariah, that the city will be rebuilt, temple will be restored, the wall will be complete, and they will be restored to their land.

But God has said all through the prophecy of Zechariah that that is only like a token of what God is going to do, ultimately, in the restoration of the nation in the millennial kingdom.

According to the Bible, when God is going to send Jesus Christ back to earth to reign on the earth for a thousand-year period in a literal kingdom. That kingdom will find its concentration and its center in the nation Israel.

There will be a throne set up in the city of Jerusalem and the throne will be occupied by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in His resurrection body. Thousand-year period every promise ever given to the nation will be fulfilled.

Here, all that Zechariah has been saying about the rebuilding of the restoration temple and the restoration city is only a preliminary or a token or only a down payment as it were on the ultimate inheritance that will come in the millennial kingdom.

We see God's love here manifest in this marvellous thing that God is going to do for Israel. His love was seen in bringing them back from Babylon and His love is seen in its most magnanimous manner by seeing what he will do in the millennial kingdom.

Zechariah chapter 8 also is a continuation of **chapter 7**.

In **chapter 7** there was a question asked was is it necessary for us to keep having these ceremonial fasts?"

Because ever since the city had been destroyed and the Babylonians had come in and wiped them out, the Jews had established a whole series of fasts, which were times of mourning and times of sorrow and times of bitterness.

In each of those fasts, they would go without food, and they would weep, and they would wail.

Now that the city was being rebuilt, the temple was being restored, and everything looked great. A group of people came from the town of Bethel to the priest and the prophets, and they said is it necessary to keep on having these fasts now that everything seems to be so rosy.

There is an answer to that question in **chapters 7 & 8**.

- The answer in chapter 7 is negative,
- The answer in chapter 8 is positive.

In chapter 7 there is a negative response insofar as God says to these people who are asking the questions, look I never started the fast to begin with.

Secondly, you have never observed the fasts to Me anyway. It's just been pure ritual.

The way they stated the question at the end of **Zechariah 7:3**, *"Do we have to keep doing this as we have done so many years?"*

We are getting tired of this routine.
They have never done it for God.

Zechariah 7:5-6, *"Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me?'⁶ When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves?"*

It was nothing but ritual religion.

God answers their question with an indictment of their ritualistic approach to religion.

They turned their reality into a ritual.

What happened?

This is the reason they went into Babylon as captives.

They are coming out of Babylon falling into the same pattern that your fathers fell in, and for that reason I had to punish them.

Chapter 7 is a warning against a ritualistic approach to religion. The reason they fasted was so they would never forget the lessons.

They had forgotten them already and turned to very fast, which was to teach them not to forget, into a ritual.

Zechariah 7 is a call to repentance and a call to true worship and to a solemn reminder that the sorrows that they showed in the fast were not really directed toward God. Rather they were ritualistic.

We learn something about love.

Sometimes love responds negatively,

How we correct our children with punishment.

Love reproves.

Love rebukes.

Love chastens.

Hebrews 12:6, *For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."*

When Israel needed it then God had to put it that way. There must be a rebuke.

1 Corinthians 4:14, *I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.*

Love warns, love rebukes, love admonishes, love chastens, love indicts, and love convicts.

God answers their questioning about fasts with an indictment of their improper motive reminiscent of their fathers and the very kind of religion that brought the captivity to start with.

God sure didn't want another generation of spiritual phonies. So, He warned them.

But then in chapter 8, God does the other thing that love does. He gives them.

Love warns and love gives.

It's always been God's way.

It has always been the way of anyone who loved.

We prevent them from falling into that which harms and we give them that which blesses.

In **chapter 8** comes the positive answer to the question about fasts.

God gives them great, incomparable, unbelievable, incredible, and magnanimous promises for the future.

God gives them the ultimate gift, the promises relative to the kingdom.

This is so common in the Old Testament.

We can probably see in many passages where God commonly brings about a prophecy of chastisement and judgment on sin, unbelief, and obedience followed immediately by words of great comfort and great hope and great promise.

This is God's pattern throughout much of the Old Testament. There are two basic divisions to the chapter.

Verses 1-17.

Verses 18-23.

V 1, *"Again, the word of the Lord of hosts came to me saying."*

V 18, *"And the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me saying."*

V 1-17, God gives them the promises of the kingdom.

V 18-23, God tells them the results of that kingdom or the results of that fulfillment of the promise.

The Lord of hosts comes to the prophet Zechariah.

Once, to describe the kingdom and the second time to describe the results of such a thing.

The same authenticating formula that appeared in chapter 7.

Zechariah 7:4, “Then came the word of the Lord of hosts to me saying,”

Zechariah 7:8, “and the word of the Lord came to Zechariah saying.”

In these two chapters, four times there are four different messages.

- Two of them come on the negative wavelength,
- Two of them come on the positive.

- Two of them are to rebuke and warn,
- Two of them are to give and extend comfort and hope.

But in all cases, there is a reiteration that this is from the Lord.

God continually repeats that this is from Him.

V 2, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 3, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 4, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 6, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 7, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 9, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 14, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 19, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 20, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

V 23, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts:*

This chapter is from the Lord!

God continues to repeat that it’s from the Lord.

God who is the Lord of armies.

God is powerful enough to pull it off.

Nothing is too hard, nothing is impossible, and the name of the Lord stands as the pledge of accomplishment.

If there ever will really be a kingdom for Israel?

Zechariah chapter 8 the Lord 10 times says *“Thus says the Lord of hosts.”* I Am able to do it. There is no reason to stagger at the promises of God.

The phrase is used ten times.

Number ten is a number of completeness.

Human beings have ten fingers and ten toes.

Consequently, since year one, have always counted in increments of ten and so ten has always been representative of wholeness or fullness.

What we have here is God presenting the fullness of His program in the millennium for Israel. It's the complete picture.

Incidentally, the name Jehovah appears 22 times in the 8th chapter.

This shows to us very clearly this message is God's!
Here are the ten elements to God's program for Israel and the kingdom.

1. Divine punishment.

V 1-2, Again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, ² "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervour I am zealous for her.'

Here we have the statement that God is jealous for Israel, that He is so jealous. God has real fury about His jealousy.

This is an indication of God's love for them.

***Zechariah 1:14-15,** So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I am zealous for Jerusalem And for Zion with great zeal. ¹⁵ I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; For I was a little angry, And they helped—but with evil intent."*

The same statement again in chapter 8 that God is jealous over Israel.

God is jealous of her with a fury.

Why is God so upset?

Because God has a divine covenant with the people of His love and God has seen the nations, the nation's dent at Israel and oppress Israel and go beyond the bounds that He had prescribed.

Zechariah 1:16, *Therefore thus says the Lord: "I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it," says the Lord of hosts, "And a surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem." '*

God says there is a time coming when my jealousy is going to result in judging your nations that overdid it with Israel.

Genesis 12:3, *I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

In reference to the seed of Abraham, the nation Israel. God says here again, I was jealous.

The Hebrew says, "I will be jealous."

The word jealous, **qinnethi**, means redness of face.

When somebody gets strong emotion, their face gets red. God is saying I burn to do this.

God is saying I will someday literally burn with zeal for Israel. When I can no longer bear the estrangement from My people brought about by their sin, when I can no longer tolerate the efforts of Israel's enemy to destroy her.

Someday My jealousy will reach out in vengeance against those nations that have persecuted My people.

The day when the Lord sets up the kingdom is a day of terrible, fearful judgment on the nations of the world that are unbelieving.

When Jesus comes in His fury out of heaven and destroys the armies of Armageddon and gathers all the Gentiles into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, (place of the judgment), and He separates the sheep and the goats, and He casts the goats into everlasting punishment.

It is going to be a great day of judgment on ungodly nations.

Essentially this is what God is saying here.

I will be! It's future tense in the Hebrew.

I will be jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I will be jealous for her with great fury.

When the Bible speaks of the jealousy of God, it doesn't mean envy, but it is the boundless zeal that comes from a God who loves holiness and hates sin, who loves His own people who are godly and hates the ungodly.

It is the zeal of righteousness.

It is the zeal of love, not envy.

Because Gods love for Zion is so great,
He is jealous on her account and His love against those who oppress her, manifests itself in judgment.

So, God will judge the enemy of His people. We see to begin with then, that the kingdom will start with the judgment.

There was a sense in which this was a great message for Israel, not that they were desirous that people be punished, but they were desirous that God be justified.

They were desirous that the godly people be honoured and the ungodly be chastened.

David prayed many times like that in the Psalms.

Oh God, be vindicated, oh, God, be honoured and judge Your enemies and judge those that are unrighteous in the world.

In **Revelation chapter 6**, under the altar crying out in the tribulation “Oh God how long will You be dishonoured and the unrighteous people exalt. And how long until You avenge the blood of the martyrs?”

The fervent, unchanging love of Jehovah for His people will manifest itself in one day a judgment against the enemies of God.

The first element that God promises them is the divine punishment.

2. Divine presence.

V 3, *“Thus says the Lord: ‘I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of hosts, The Holy Mountain.’*

God says there is a day coming that day I will be back.

This is a fantastic promise.

How overwhelming this must have been to the people in Zechariah’s time, mind boggling.

Why?

Because they had not known the presence of God.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, God had withdrawn His presence from Israel.

Where did God dwell in those days?

He dwelt in his Shekinah glory between the wings of the cherubim in the ark of the covenant.

This was the place of God's dwelling, in the holy of holies in the tabernacle.

This was a simple manifestation to say that I am with you.
I Am in your midst. The glory of God is in Israel.

The only earthy dwelling place God ever had except the garden. When Adam fell, that ended. His glory came back and dwelled in the tabernacle and in the temple.

What happened?

Israel had fallen into terrible sin.

It was a tragic day in Israel. The temple was scarred and marred and people in the temple were worshipping false gods.

Ezekiel, in his vision went into the temple and he saw people bowing down to the sun and worshipping the sun.

- He saw all kinds of gods and creeping things and snakes painted all over the wall of the temple and people worshipping them.
- He saw them worshipping Tammuz, which is another name for Baal.
- He saw all these atrocities in the temple and then, immediately, He saw the glory of God depart.

Ezekiel chapters 9,10, and 11 where Ezekiel watches the glory of God leave. **Ichabod** is written over the nation. The glory has departed is what it means.

The Jews had never known the glory of God again because God had left them before they ever went into Babylon.

In Zechariah's time, the presence of God was nothing more than a memory, because Israel had long ago forfeited the presence of God.

Hosea 5:15, *I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."*

Hosea 6:3, *Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.*

Hosea is saying God will be back.

Zechariah is saying that someday God will return.

Someday the Shekinah will come again.

Ezekiel had a vision of it coming back.

Ezekiel in 9 through 11 had a vision of it leaving.

Ezekiel in chapter 42 had a vision of the glory coming back.

Ezekiel 42:1-3, *Then he brought me out into the outer court, by the way toward the north; and he brought me into the chamber which was opposite the separating courtyard, and which was opposite the building toward the north. ²Facing the length, which was one hundred cubits (the width was fifty cubits), was the north door. ³Opposite the inner court of twenty cubits, and opposite the pavement of the outer court, was gallery against gallery in three stories.*

Ezekiel sees some fantastic facilities of a huge temple. As he begins to look and he begins to see what's going on and he goes through all of this, he sees this marvelous millennial temple.

Ezekiel 43:2, *And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.*

In the future, there is going to be another temple in the millennium and the glory will come back.

Ezekiel saw it leave in his vision and later, he saw it coming back, and this was a great hope for Israel that the Shekinah of God would come back to His temple.

When Jesus came into the world that's what that was.

John 1:14, *“And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.”*

Where did Jesus go first when He began His ministry?
He went to the temple because the text said *“And He shall come suddenly to His temple.”*

The sad part is the glory did come back, and the glory went to the temple.

Jesus, the glory of God in a body, offered Israel a kingdom. But instead of wanting a kingdom, they were part and parcel of executing the king and so, God had to postpone it!

We are still waiting.

Someday Jesus is going to come back and dwell with His people. The tragedy of the story is that the glory came once, and God’s people turned their back on it.

Matthew 23:39, *“You shall not see me anymore till you shall say Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”*

The next time you see Me it will be in My second coming. This is essentially what Zechariah is saying.

The Lord is going to come back.

The word “dwell” means to abide or reside or settle down.

God is going to come back, and He is going to transform Jerusalem into a city of truth.

Do you know the names for Jerusalem in the Bible aren't very complimentary?

In **Lamentations 1:8**, Jerusalem is called the unclean city.

In **Isaiah 1:21**, Jerusalem is called a harlot and a murderer.

In **Revelation chapter 11**, Jerusalem is called Sodom and Egypt.

But there is coming a day when Jerusalem will be called a city of truth.

Why?

Because the God of truth will reside there.

Now it is also called "the mountain of the Lord of hosts."

What does that mean?

Headquarters for the army in the kingdom by which He will rule with a rod of iron.

It's also called the holy mountain.

Why?

Because it is the residence of the holy God.

God is going to come back and going to live in Jerusalem in the kingdom.

We can't believe what ecstasy this could bring to a Jew in Zechariah's time.

God is going to come back.

Divine punishment and divine presence.

3. Divine Peace

V 4-5, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age. ⁵ The streets of the city Shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.’*

The streets are all full of old people and kids.

A picture of millennial peace.

Today in our society we wonder whether we ought to be on the streets. But here the streets are going to be loaded with little kids playing and old people playing with their companions.

The millennial kingdom is going to be populated with loads of old people.

Why?

Because there will be no wars and there will be no calamities. The Bible says if somebody dies at 100, they die a baby. Everybody’s going to live so long because of the peaceful conditions. The whole population is going to be staggering around the city with canes.

No longer calamities that depopulate.

No longer scenes like the Babylonian destruction and the Roman destruction.

Lamentations chapter 2 we read about when the Babylonians came in, they slaughtered the children and massacred the children.

In the Roman conquest in **70 A.D.** some of the people even ate their own children.

Here by the prophet is not any of that is going to happen in the kingdom. Everybody is going to get old in the kingdom. The streets are going to be loaded with old people and children playing without any fear.

No muggings. Christ will rule with a rod of iron. No one person will ever commit two crimes. Everybody's going to get old. Did you ever read in the Old Testament how many times God promised long life?

Exodus 20:12, *"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."*

Deuteronomy 4:40, *You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that [it](#) may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time."*

God says if you obey My standards, you will live long on the earth.

The earth that the Lord gives you forever!

The forever earth.

Which is the forever earth?

Is this the forever earth?

No!

The forever earth is the millennial earth that will be the new earth. That will be the restored earth.

The fulfillment of these promises is primarily kingdom. It is the forever earth that we inherit.

In God's millennial earth, in His glorious eternal kingdom, which the Lord will give forever.

Isaiah 65:20, *“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labour in vain, Nor bring forth children*

for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them.

The kingdom is so wonderful!
A thousand years long.
We are going to be as old as a tree.

Can you imagine what that must have meant to the Jews who were constantly being clobbered and oppressed?

4. Divine Power.

V 6, “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If it is marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, Will it also be marvellous in My eyes?’ Says the Lord of hosts.

God gets upset when people don’t believe that He can really do something. The word marvellous in the Hebrew really means difficult or impossible.

God says if it is impossible in the eyes of the remnant of the people in those days does that mean it’s impossible in My eyes?

Just because they think it’s too tough, is it too tough?

What is incredible and unbelievable to the remnant in the last days isn’t tough for Me at all!

Genesis 18:14 and Jeremiah 22:17 and 23, the very same word is used here in the verb form.

Is anything too hard for Me?

No.

Divine power.

Can you imagine what the Jew is going to think of during the tribulation?

God will never get us out of this mess.

Here we are running through the desert, heading for Edom, the anti-Christ's army chasing us. How are we going to be delivered?

The battle of Armageddon, blood deep as the horses' bridles for 200 miles and it's impossible to get us out of this.

Lord says My divine power will get you out of this.

5. Divine Population.

V 7-8, *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east And from the land of the west; ⁸I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.'*

What is going to happen in the kingdom?

God is going to regather the Jews from everywhere.

Right now, there are approximately **16 million** of them scattered all over the world and when the Lord comes back and sets up the kingdom, He is just going to pull them all together and bring them into Israel.

Is this just referring to the gathering from the Babylonian captivity?

No.

Because nobody from Babylon was gathered from the west. Babylon was directly east.

This says in Hebrew, I will save my people from the land of the rising of the sun and from the land of the going down of the sun.

From one end of the globe to the other is what God is saying. I will regather Israel from the world.

The same phrase is used in **Psalm 50:1, Psalm 113:3, and Malachi 1:11.**

Is God's name to be great only in Babylon?

No, in the entire earth.

Malachi 1:11, *For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering;*

For My name shall be great among the nations,” Says the Lord of hosts.

Among all nations.

God is saying in the millennium I will regather my people from the face of the earth, everywhere and bring them back and bring them to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 43:5-7, *Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; ⁶ I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth— ⁷ Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”*

Get them all back where they belong in My place.

What a wonderful promise.

Jeremiah 32:38-41, *They shall be My people, and I will be their God; ³⁹ then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. ⁴⁰ And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. ⁴¹ Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’*

God says I just want to do them good.
God even says that anger is My strange work.
My normal work is to do good to the people who are My people.
I will do it with My whole heart and My whole soul.

A nation to be saved and a nation to be regathered.

V 8, *They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.'*

God is gathering them for conversion. The nation is going to come to Christ.

Romans 11:26, *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

6. Divine Prosperity.

V 9-10, *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Let your hands be strong, You who have been hearing in these days These words by the mouth of the prophets, Who spoke in the day the foundation was laid For the house of the Lord of hosts, That the temple might be built.¹⁰ For before these days There were no wages for man nor any hire for beast; There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in; For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbour.*

You are hearing these prophets, Haggai and Zechariah be of good courage.

God says you people that have been alive in Zechariah's time and you people that have been alive in Haggai's time, let me remind you of how tough it's been.

There wasn't any money to pay men.

There wasn't any money to provide for animals.

There wasn't any peace.

There was all kinds of conflict, affliction, and people set against their neighbour.

God is describing the hassles of them trying to rebuild that city.

The first group came back with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, and they immediately put up the altar. They began to make sacrifices.

What happened?

They got the foundation laid, but then everything went bad. They had outside enemies, the Samaritans.

Remember Sanballat and Tobiah and the Samaritans were hassling them. They made complaints to the Persians that they were pulling political power plays.

They were having all kinds of problems with politics.

They had inside enemies, because they got back in the land and decided why we should waste our time building the Lord's house when we are living in rubble. Let us build our own house.

Haggai says they wanted to live in paneled houses so, they stopped building God's house, and they started building their own houses. They neglected the work, and they began to fight and argue and hassle.

There wasn't any prosperity.

Things went downhill.

But then in the second year of Darius, a new commitment began in Israel, and they began to work again. They began to work again and then Zechariah wrote his prophecy just as they began the new work and encouraged them and comforted them.

God adds to that by saying that this is only the beginning.

I have got plans for you.

V 11-13, *But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the Lord of hosts. ¹²'For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase, And the heavens shall give their dew— I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these. ¹³And it shall come to pass That just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.'*

The vine will give its fruit.

The ground will give its increase.

The heavens will give their due.

I will cause the remnant of these people to possess all these things.

I will save you and you shall be a blessing.

Don't be afraid. Be of good courage, strengthen your hands.

What is God promising?

Israel have had hard times.

Hard times are going to be over, and you are going to be blessed. I have got prosperity in store for you.

God promises divine punishment, presence, peace, power, popularity and prosperity.

7. Divine Preference.

V 14-15, "For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Just as I determined to punish you When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,' Says the Lord of hosts, 'And I would not relent, ¹⁵So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear.

When God said I was going to punish you then He did.

God didn't change.

God says that how do you know that I Am going to do what I say about the blessing?

Remember what I did when I promised to punish then I did.

God says that He is going to open the fountains of blessing. God is going to bless them so much that they are going to sit there and say I wonder if the Lord will really do it.

When God promised to punish them, He did it. Now when God promise to bless them remember that God did keep the promise to punish.

Based on that integrity one can have confidence that God will bless them.

God says one of the great things that you learn from My punishment is that I keep My word and that stands good for My blessings.

God says I prefer you and to do good to you is My great joy. God is a God of goodness.

Acts 10:38, *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

Jesus was God in human flesh. God is good.

The very sorrows of the past become divine pledges for the promise of the future.

What does the kingdom hold for God's people?

A divine punishment of the enemies which brings about vengeance and righteousness for those who in Christ.

We saw Wednesday Bible study on the **Revelation 6:9-11**.

Divine presence, God will be there.

Divine peace, marvellous tranquility.

Divine power, God will be able to do anything and everything He promises.

Divine prosperity, everything will flourish.

Divine populating, He will regather the whole nation.

Divine preference, He will do good to them because He loves them.

Zechariah closes this chapter by saying, and there are three things that are like results of all of that.

8. Joy.

V 19, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth, The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.’*

God says that I Am going to turn your fast into a Feast.

The fast of the **fourth month** was the fast that remembered the taking of Jerusalem and **the flight of the royal seed**.

The fast of the **fifth month** was the fast that remembered the **destruction of the temple**.

The fast of the **seventh month** was the one that remembered **the murderer of Gedaliah** who was the governor.

The fast of the **tenth month** was the one that remembered **the mourning for the day that the seeds began**.

They had all these fasts and all this weeping and all this mourning.

God says, someday I Am going to take the whole of them and turn them into joy and gladness and a feast.

No more fasts.

God says that is My promise.

There will be in the kingdom pleasure.

Secondly or ninthly in the ten, prayer. Verse

V 20-21, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities; ²¹ The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, And seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also.”*

People all over the world are going to be getting together to go to Jesus.

Jesus Christ going to be on the throne.

This is going to be the new center of attention of the world. The pilgrimages are going to come from every corner of the globe.

The world is going to seek the Lord.

The world conversion is what God is talking about.

Millions of people around the world migrating to Jerusalem to see the glorified Christ and to be converted.

So, the first result of the seven characteristics of the kingdom is Joy.

9. Prayer.

They will pray to the Lord to see Him and be converted.

V 22, *Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, And to pray before the Lord.'*

Delegations from all nations coming to Jesus Christ

10. Prominence.

V 23, *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ' "*

The world is going to take one look at the Jews and say they are the people.

They will get a special favour.

The whole world is going to grab the Jews who are going to be God's emissaries and God's ambassadors.

The Lord is going to be beloved on the day when the Lord fulfills His covenant.

Conclusion:

You know all of this is very wonderful and it's all from God, but **are there any conditions?**

There are some conditions.

V 16-17, *These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbour; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; ¹⁷Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbour; And do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,' Says the Lord."*

V 19b, *Therefore love truth and peace.'*

God says look, all of this is yours, but there is a condition.

The condition is a very simple one, it is honesty.

God names these four things:

- Honesty,
- Justice,
- Love, and
- Trust.

All those are manifestations of true righteousness.

When your lives are right and they manifest honesty, justice, love, and trust, these are the things which you shall do.

When you do these things when you love what I love, then it will come to pass.

God blesses, in response to obedience, His people Israel.
The day that they turn, as Zechariah says and look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as an only Son and the day the stony heart of their flesh is taken out.

As Ezekiel said, and they are given a heart of flesh is the day they are born again. When they are born anew it is then that the kingdom will come.

How do we get that to happen?

It is a work of God which He will do.

This is all wonderful.

I happen to be a Gentile.

What does this have to do with a British or an Indian?

You want to know what it has to do?

The kingdom that belongs to them is our kingdom, too!
It's ours.

If it wasn't, if it was just for their sake, I could get excited.

Do you know why?

Because it teaches me something of the nature of God and the way that God keeps His covenants with His people.

If God is such a faithful, covenant, keeping, loving God with Israel and He is also my God and Saviour, that's the same way He is going to be toward His covenant with me.

But beyond that beloved, we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His son.

We are children of the kingdom also.

The kingdom is our kingdom, and we can also say that *“eye has not seen nor has ear heard the things that God has prepared for them that love Him.”*

What makes it all possible?

How could God do this?

How could God bypass the sin of Israel?

How could God forgive?

How could God restore?

How could God give this to me?

How could He make me a part of such blessing?

The cross!

Did you know that Jesus died on the cross to save the Jews who had lived before He was even born?

It's the cross.

The love of God for His people Israel, and as we think about the fact that we, too, will share the kingdom, will rule in the kingdom, will reign in the kingdom, and will be a part of every good thing God has prepared.

According to **Ephesians 1:3** we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.

We must go back and say one thing made it possible, the cross of Jesus Christ.