

Zechariah 08 - Two More Oracles from God; God's Jealousy for Zion; Prediction of Jerusalem's Restoration; Prediction of Future Blessing

III. Question and answers concerning fasting (Zech 7:1—8:23)

(2) God's answer (7:4—8:23)

(C) Jerusalem's future restoration (8:1-17)

(a) Prediction of Jerusalem's future restoration (8:1-8)

(i) God's return to Zion (8:1-3)

(ii) Peace in Jerusalem (8:4)

(iii) Joy in Jerusalem (8:5)

(iv) Promise of restoration from exile (8:6-8)

(b) Present application (8:9-17)

(i) Courageously rebuild the Temple (8:9-11)

(ii) Trust in God's promise to restore Jerusalem (8:12-15)

(iii) Obey the covenant (8:16-17)

(D) Prediction of future blessings (8:18-23)

(a) Fasts to become feasts (8:18-19)

(b) Jerusalem's preeminence (8:20-23)

Following this denunciation of the people's attitudes and motivations concerning their worship of the Lord, Zechariah's message continues (8:1-8) with an encouraging promise from the Lord to restore the Jewish people, despite their failings, because of his overwhelming protective passion for them. This section revisits the theme of the first three night visions (1:7—2:13). Zechariah relates four specific divine promises: (1) The Lord will personally return to Jerusalem and permanently dwell among His people; (2) His presence in Jerusalem will glorify and sanctify the city; (3) He will convey great blessing, prosperity, peace and security to the population of Jerusalem; and (4) no matter how distantly the Jewish people have been dispersed, the Lord guarantees He will personally return His people to Jerusalem and restore their covenantal relationship with Him by a sovereign act of gracious authority. Regardless of the condition of Israel's covenantal commitment toward Him, His covenantal obligation toward them will not falter.

Zechariah 8

(C) Jerusalem's future restoration (8:1-17)

(a) Prediction of Jerusalem's future restoration (8:1-8)

(i) God's return to Zion (8:1-3)

1 Then the word of the **LORD** of armies came, saying,

1 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying,

1 This is this message from the LORD of the Heavenly Armies:

1 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came *to me*, saying,

- The third of four oracles (Cf. 7:4,8; 8:1,18)

- The introduction of the third oracle lacks "to me" (7:4) or "to Zechariah" (7:8) that were present in the first two oracles. Because of this, it is likely that Zechariah is repeating words he had often spoken rather than expressing a new revelation.

- "...LORD" - Yahweh, occurs 22x in this chapter

2 "The LORD of armies says this: 'I am **exceedingly jealous** for **Zion**, yes, with **greatwrath** I am jealous for her.'

2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.'

2 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'I'm greatly jealous about Zion, and that makes me furious about her.'

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

- "...exceedingly jealous" - God is not just jealous of Jerusalem, He is "exceedingly" jealous. The root meaning of the verb is "to glow or burn".

-- The intensity of this expression communicates God's fury against the nations who mistreated Israel and His desire for His people's undivided affections and consecration. The promises God made to Israel rest on His abundant love for His people.

— God is a jealous God (Ex 20:5), who tolerates no rivals real or imaginary and who is zealous to protect and maintain the allegiance of His people to Himself alone. He is also jealous for His people, He is protective of them against all who would challenge them or claim to be elect alongside them. He is zealous to safeguard their interests and come to their defense.

— A good passage describing God's view Jerusalem is Ezek 16, where God describes a helpless infant lying in a pool of blood just after birth, in a helpless state. God took the infant in, reared her, and she developed into a beautiful woman, who became eligible for romantic love, but she turned into a prostitute.

— It describes God's feelings as Jerusalem turned away from Him to follow false gods

- "...Zion" - a synonym for Jerusalem (Cf. v3; Is 40:9)
- "...great wrath" - God seeks the blessing of His people, but at the same time He must visit those who are Zion's enemies with great wrath
- The same zeal that God carried through His discipline of His people was now burning to restore the covenant bond with them

3 The LORD says this: '**I will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.** Then Jerusalem will be called the **City of Truth**, and the mountain of the LORD of armies *will be called* the Holy Mountain.'

3 Thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts *will be called* the Holy Mountain.'

3 "This is what the LORD says: 'I will return to Zion and I will live in the midst of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem will be called, "The City of Truth" and the mountain of the LORD of the Heavenly Armies will be called, "The Holy Mountain"'

3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

- This verse predicts a tremendous change in the city of Jerusalem upon His return to the city

- "...I will return to Zion" - Ezekiel saw God's glory depart from the temple in judgment (Cf. Ezek 9:3; 10:4,18-19; 11:22-25), and then he saw it returning to the millennial temple for blessing (Ezek 43:1-5).

- "...dwell in the midst of Jerusalem" - Jerusalem is the only city described as God's holy habitation during the millennial kingdom

- To the returnees, this would've been a tremendous encouragement to get back to finishing construction on the temple...because God Himself would live there one day.

- "...City of Truth" - Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth in the millennial kingdom because Truth will live there

(ii) Peace in Jerusalem (8:4)

4 The LORD of armies says this: 'Old men and old women will again sit in the public squares of Jerusalem, each person with his staff in his hand because of age.

4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age.

4 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'There will yet be old men and old women sitting in the parks of Jerusalem, each one of them holding canes in their hands due to their old age!

4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

- When spiritual issues are right in Israel, God always accompanies them with material blessings (Cf. Deut 28:1-14). Spiritual peace will be the forerunner of physical peace.
- Old men and old women sitting in public portrays the fact that wars will not cut off the lives of the young, there will be widespread protection and security, and the population will reach an advanced age.

(iii) Joy in Jerusalem (8:5)

5 And the public squares of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its squares.'

5 And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.'

5 The city parks will be filled with boys and girls. They will play in the city's open parks.'

5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

- Children playing in the streets portrays security and many descendants, long life and abundant offspring. These things are promised for obedience throughout the OT (Cf. Ex 20:12; Deut 4:40; 5:16,33; 6:2; 33:6,24).

— Peace (*shalom*) will be so prevalent that both the old and the young, the most vulnerable in society, will be free to roam about the city square and playing in the streets (Cf. Is 65:20-25).

— When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and the temple, the old and young were lying in the streets dead (Lam 2:21)

(iv) Promise of restoration from exile (8:6-8)

6 The LORD of armies says this: 'If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?' declares the LORD of armies.

6 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?' declares the LORD of hosts.

6 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'It may seem impossible to the survivors of this people, but is it impossible for me?' declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

6 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.

- The returnees are undoubtedly discouraged and doubting that their land, city, and temple could ever be restored to its past glory; things had gotten so bad that they didn't believe it would ever be restored. They believed God's promises here were too good to be true.

— To address this doubt, God asks them if fulfilling these prophecies is too difficult for even Him? This is the same thing God asked Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:14) when they doubted that they could have a child in their advanced age.

— When God announces captivity, it may seem unlikely but that's what will happen. When God announces restoration, it may seem improbable, but that's exactly what will happen.

Zechariah describes conditions so different from what Israel has met and known through the centuries that the remnant in the day of fulfillment may appear skeptical of them. But though these promises may appear impossible with man, nothing is impossible with God (Gen 18:14; Matt 19:26). They dare not limit the power of the Holy One of Israel (Ps 78:19,20,41.) Ours and theirs is the God of the impossible.

7 The LORD of armies says this: 'Behold, I am going to save My people from **the land of the east and from the land of the west;**

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west;

7 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'Look! After having saved my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west,

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;

- This is obviously dealing with something more than just the return from Babylon, as that was only from the east, not from the west

— God is looking into the future and seeing the worldwide *diaspora* of the Jews by the Romans in 70 AD

— Any future millennial blessing for Israel must be predicated and founded upon her restoration and return to the land. Thus, Zechariah prophesies their regathering from dispersion.

- "...the land of the east and from the land of the west" - doesn't not refer to Babylon and Egypt, as some believe, but represents every quarter of the earth. Dispersion and exile by Assyria and Babylon were to the east, but this describes a future and worldwide scattering as confirmed by abundant passages (Cf. Is 11:11-12; 43:5-6; Ezek 37:21; Amos 9:14-15).

— We are only seeing a preview of this today, since Israel became a nation again in 1948. When Zechariah wrote this, all dispersions were to the east. Since that time, most dispersions have been to the west.

8 and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.'

8 and I will bring them *back* and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.'

8 I will also bring them back to live in the midst of Jerusalem. They will be my people and I will truly be their righteous God.'"

8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

- "...I will bring them *back* and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem" - this is the physical restoration of the dispersed Jews back into the land

— "Jerusalem" - represents the entire land of Israel, not just the city, and certainly not the "true church of God" as amillennialism believes. It identifies the place where people will come to worship the Lord.

— The figure of speech here for Jerusalem to represent Israel is a metonymy, where the name of one thing is used in place of another thing associated with it or suggested by it.

- "...they shall be My people, and I will be their God" - this is the spiritual restoration and covenant terminology pertaining to intimate fellowship in a covenant relationship (Cf. Gen 17:7-8; Ex 6:7; 19:5-6; 29:45-46; Lev 11:45; 22:33; 25:38; 26:12,44-45; Num 15:41; Deut 4:20; 29:12-13; Jer 31:33; 32:38; Ezek 37:27; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 21:3).

[Ezek 36:24-28; 37:7-11; Zech 12:10]

ISRAEL'S TWO REGATHERINGS	
THE PRESENT (FIRST) REGATHERING	THE PERMANENT (SECOND) REGATHERING
Return to part of the land	Return to all the land
Return in unbelief	Return in faith
Restored to the land only	Restored to the land and the Lord
Sets the stage for Tribulation (discipline)	Sets the stage for Millennium (blessing)
Adapted from: Price, <i>Jerusalem In Prophecy</i> , 219	

Ezek 36:24-28:

24 For I will take you from the nations, and **gather you from all the lands; and I will bring you into your own land.**

25 Then **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.**

26 Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.**

27 And **I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes**, and are careful and follow My ordinances.

28 And **you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.**

(b) Present application (8:9-17)

The Lord proceeds (Zech 8:9-23) to motivate His people to take heart and finish the reconstruction of the Temple because He is about to reverse their fortunes by showering them with blessings of fertility. The Lord carefully instructs His people to respond appropriately to His blessings by living in covenantal obedience to Him. As a result, each memorial day of mourning within the Jewish calendar will be transformed into a celebratory festival; fast days will be exchanged for feast days. Multitudes of Gentiles from surrounding nations will be attracted to the Lord and will eagerly pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship Him in the Temple alongside the Jewish people. This harmonizes with the application of the first three visions (Zech 2:6-13). The Jewish people, by virtue of their covenant relationship with the Lord, will serve as His mediators and will be granted a position of prominence among the Gentiles. The covenantal promises to Abraham of universal blessing through His seed (Gen 12:3) will at last be fulfilled.

(i) Courageously rebuild the Temple (8:9-11)

9 "The LORD of armies says this: '**Let your hands be strong**, you who are listening in these days to **these words from the mouth of the prophets**, *those who spoke* in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of armies was laid, so that the temple might be built.

9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets, *those who spoke* in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built.

9 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'Be strong so the Temple can be built, you who are now listening to this message spoken by the prophets when the foundation was laid to the Temple of the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

9 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which *were* in the day *that* the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.

- Now comes a word of encouragement to continue the reconstruction of the temple. The Lord told the people to listen to and gain strength from the words of the current prophets,

who were encouraging them to complete the temple project.

- "...Let your hands be strong" - when God reveals His purpose for a person or a group of people, they should not succumb to discouragement but rather be strong in the purpose God has given them (Cf. 2 Tim 1:7)

- "...these words from the mouth of the prophets" - the primary prophets urging the returnees to rebuild the temple were Zechariah (4:9) and Haggai (Cf. Ezra 5:1; 6:14)

10 For before those days there was **no wage for man or any wage for animal**; and for him who went out or came in **there was no peace because of his enemies**, and **I sent all the people against one another**.

10 For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for animal; and for him who went out or came in there was no peace because of his enemies, and I set all men one against another.

10 Before then, everyone was unemployed—even the draft animals—and no one was safe coming or going because of the enemy, because I caused everyone to oppose each other.

10 For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was *there any peace* to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour.

- Before the returnees started to rebuild and do what God said, they had both political and economic problems

- "...no wage for man" - Haggai spoke to the economic problems (Haggai 1:3-6), urging the returnees to look at their ways: they had stopped construction and were using temple materials to remodel their own homes when the temple laid half built. This resulted in severe economic woes.

— They weren't getting ahead in life...no matter how much they made, it all seemed to disappear

- "...nor any wage for animal" - the animals were not earning their keep; crops were scarce, so there was little work for the animals that normally plowed and threshed them

- "...there was no peace because of his enemies" - adding to their political and economic woes, there was internal strife and strife from their enemies. Safety and security were nowhere to be found. The Samaritans (Ezra 4:1-5) were joined by other neighbors (Haggai 1:6-11; 2:15-19) who harassed the small remnant.

— When God's affairs are not cared for, our own affairs fare badly.

- "...I sent all the people against one another" - God was the cause of their economic problems, because the returnee's priorities were wrong. These problems were an outworking of the curses of the Mosaic Covenant (Deut 28:15-68).

11 But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' declares the LORD of armies.

11 But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' declares the LORD of hosts.

11 "'But now I will not treat the survivors of this people as I did formerly,' declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

11 But now I *will not be* unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts.

- But now God is ready to bless their obedience to His command to build. God says that He will treat the returnees differently if they get in line with His priorities. Instead of reaping the covenant curses, they would begin to reap the covenant blessings (Deut 28:1-14).

— The Lord promised to treat the remnant of His people differently in the future than He had in the past (Cf. Haggai 2:19)

(ii) Trust in God's promise to restore Jerusalem (8:12-15)

12 'For *there will be* the seed of peace: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce, and the heavens will provide their dew; and I will give to the remnant of this people all these *things* as an inheritance.

12 'For *there will be* peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these *things*.

12 'For there will be a sowing of peace: the vine will produce its fruit, the earth will produce its full yield, the sky will produce its dew, and I will make the survivors of this people inherit all these things.

12 For the seed *shall be* prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these *things*.

- The earth will now yield its increase; the vine, which flourishes in times of peace, will give its fruit. No longer will the heavens withhold their dew, which is critical in dry areas where there is little rain (Cf. Haggai 2:19).

— The Lord will shower His material blessings upon the remnant, just as He withheld them in the time of disobedience. Moreover, they will be a blessing to the nations instead of their name being used by the nations to utter a curse.

— This verse is nearly a word-for-word quote of the blessings portion of the Mosaic Covenant (Lev 26:3-10; Deut 28:11-12; Cf. Ezek 34:25-27)

Deut 28:13: And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you will only be above, and not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God

which I am commanding you today, to follow *them* carefully,

13 And it will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.'

13 It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.'

13 Furthermore, house of Judah and house of Israel, even though you used to be a curse among the nations, now I will surely save you, and you will be a blessing. Stop being afraid. Instead, grow stronger.'"

13 And it shall come to pass, *that* as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, *but* let your hands be strong.

- Even though the Israelites had been a curse among the nations in the past (Cf. Deut 28:15-68; Jer 24:9; 25:18; 29:22), the Lord would save them and make them a blessing to the world in the future.

14 "For this is what the LORD of armies says: 'Just as I determined to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to anger,' says the LORD of armies, 'and I have not relented,

14 "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and I have not relented,

14 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'Just as I intended to bring harm to you when your ancestors angered me,' says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, 'and I did not relent,

14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

- Verses 14-15 explain God's part in the people's immediate restoration; v16-17 explain Israel's part...

- "For this is what the LORD of armies says" - still the same oracle that began in v1, but is now changing subjects

- "...I determined to do harm to you" - when their fathers provoked the Lord to wrath and persisted in their sinful ways, God was "determined" (purposed) to "do harm" to His people because of the covenant that God and Israel entered into at Sinai.

— But will He not surely do them good when they are obedient, because He delights to bless rather than curse (Jer 31:28)?

— But even the curses in their most severe form cannot cast of Israel as God's chosen people.

— The NT parallel to the blessings and curses of the Mosaic Covenant for the Church Age believer is discipline, as outlined in Heb 12:5-13

15 so I have again determined **in these days** to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. **Do not fear!**

15 so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear!

15 so I have decided at this time to do good things for Jerusalem and for the house of Judah. So stop being afraid.

15 So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.

- Based on the obedience of the returnees, now God has purposed (determined) to bless them, their work, and their land. This is the outworking of the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant (Deut 28:1-14).

— Just as God "determined" to do harm to their fathers (v14), God is now "determined" to do good to Jerusalem and Judah

- "...in these days" - the benefits and blessings God outlines here were for those during the time that Zechariah prophesied, but they are also glorious eschatological promises that illuminate the future for national Israel.

— The benefits that were immediate did not exhaust the full scope of these sweeping prophetic promises, which will come to full fruition during the millennial kingdom

- "...Do not fear!" - the returnees were to not fear that God would be as ready to bless them as He was ready to punish them. God is equally able to do both, depending upon man's obedience.

— Fear is something that should be uncharacteristic in the child of God (Prov 28:1; Rev 21:8)

(iii) Obey the covenant (8:16-17)

16 These are the things which you shall do: **speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace** at your gates.

16 These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates.

16 Here's what you must do: tell the truth to your neighbors, administer true and peaceful justice in your courtrooms,

16 These *are* the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

- God outlines the proper moral conditions that must exist among them (Cf. 7:9-10):
- "...speak the truth to one another" - truth must characterize the dealings of a man with his fellow man
- "...judge with truth and judgment for peace" - they must make equitable judgments which help bring about peace as they administer the Law in their cities
- God is reviewing the covenant violations that caused the original destruction of the temple. These were the areas where they were unrepentant in their rituals around fasting.

17 Also **let none of you devise evil in your heart against another**, and **do not love perjury**; for **all these things are what I hate**,' declares the LORD."

17 Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD."

17 don't plot evil in your heart against a neighbor, and don't tolerate false testimonies, because I hate all these things,' declares the LORD."

17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the LORD.

- "...let none of you devise evil in your heart against another" - they were to keep their hearts from devising evil against one another; private thoughts of evil will eventually lead to public actions (Cf. 7:10).

— Scripture tells us to guard our hearts with diligence (Prov 4:23; Matt 5:21-22)

- "...do not love perjury" - swearing falsely (lying) was a major sin of the day (Cf. 5:3-4), but the godly are to hate any false oath; they are to hate and avoid them.

- "...all these *things* are what I hate"- God is a God of love, but there are certain things He hates (Cf. Prov 6:16-19; Rev 2:6)

(D) Prediction of future blessings (8:18-23)

In case the delegation who came from Bethel (7:1-7) to ask a question to the priests about fasting had thought that their answer would never come, they were mistaken. God, through Zechariah, now deals fully with the issue they raised.

(a) Fasts to become feasts (8:18-19)

18 Then the word of the LORD of armies came to me, saying,

18 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

18 Once again this message from the LORD come to me:

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,

- The fourth and final oracle responding to the question about fasting (Cf. 7:4; 7:8; 8:1; 8:18)

19 "The LORD of armies says this: 'The **fast of the fourth**, the **fast of the fifth**, the **fast of the seventh**, and the **fast of the tenth months will become joy, jubilation, and cheerful festivals** for the house of Judah; **so love truth and peace.**'

19 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth *months* will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.'

19 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'The fasts that occur in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months will be joyful and glad times for the house of Judah, replete with cheerful festivals. Therefore, love truth and peace.'"

19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth *month*, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

- "...fast of the fourth [month]" - the fasting in the fourth month lamented the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 39:1-4; 52:4-5) as a result of the extremity of famine within the walls during Zedekiah's 11th year (2 Kings 25:3-4). This fast also marked the end of Davidic rule in Jerusalem.

- "...fast of the fifth [month]" - the fasting in the fifth month commemorated the burning of the Jerusalem temple by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8-9)

- "...fast of the seventh [month]" - commemorated the assassination of Gedaliah (Jer 41:1-10)

- "...fast of the tenth [month]" - the fast in the tenth month was in remembrance of the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:1; Ezek 24:2)

- The Jews celebrated these fasts every year for 70 years during their captivity, but they never understood the real root of the problem. They mourned the destruction of the temple, but ignored their covenant violations that sent them into captivity to begin with.

— Strict modern Jews will observe these four fasts today. They seemingly died out after the second temple was completed, but their observance was revived after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. When the nation is in peace and prosperity, the fasts were suspended; when they were in trouble, the fasts were reinstated.

— Since 70 AD, the strict Jews have kept the principal fasts of the 17th day of the 4th month; the 9th day of the 5th month; the 3rd and 10th day of the 7th month,; and the 10th day of the 10th month.

- "...will become joy, jubilation, and cheerful festivals" - God is going to take all of Israel's ritualistic, meaningless fasts and turn them into feasts. God will turn their fasting into feasting (Ps 30:11; Joel 2:25).

— When the nation is restored and the millennial kingdom has come, in such fullness of salvation, they will forget all about mourning the destruction of the temple and these other

events and will only have occasion to rejoice in the benefits of God's grace by celebrating the consummation of all of God's promises.

- "...so love truth and peace" - the immediate practical application of this revelation was that the people should love truth and peace (Cf. Lev 19:18,34; Deut 6:5; Ps 31:23; Amos 5:15). They should value these ideals in the present because they were sure to come in the future.

(b) Jerusalem's preeminence (8:20-23)

20 "The LORD of armies says this: '*It will yet turn out* that peoples will come, that is, the inhabitants of many cities.

20 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, '*It will yet be* that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities.

20 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'In the future, people will come, including residents of many cities,

20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; *It shall yet come to pass*, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

21 The inhabitants of one *city* will go to another, saying, "Let's go at once to plead for the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of armies; I also will go."

21 The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go."

21 and they will travel from one place to another place and say, "Let's go quickly to pray in the presence of the LORD and to inquire of the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.' And I will go, too.

21 And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

- The Lord here prophesies that people from one of the world's cities would contact people from another of these cities, and they would plan to go up to Jerusalem "at once" to "plead for the favor of the Lord."

— They would do this eagerly, not out of a sense of obligation (Cf. 2:11; Is 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-5)

22 So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of armies in Jerusalem, and to plead for the favor of the LORD.'

22 So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.'

22 Many people and powerful nations will come to inquire of the LORD of the Heavenly Armies in Jerusalem, and to pray in the presence of the LORD.'""

22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

- The location where Jesus will reside will be in Jerusalem

— During the kingdom, Jerusalem will no longer be viewed simply as the heart of Judaism but as the center of God's dealings with all nations, and as a glorious realization of the ancient promise given to Abraham (Cf. Gen 12:3).

Is 2:2-3:

2 Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And **all the nations will stream to it.**

3 **And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let's go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; So that He may teach us about His ways, And that we may walk in His paths."** For the law will go out from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Zech 14:16-18:

16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of armies, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

17 And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of armies, there will be no rain on them.

18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

23 The LORD of armies says this: 'In those days **ten people** from all the nations will **grasp the garment of a Jew**, saying, "Let us go with you, for **we have heard that God is with you.**"'

23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'

23 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'In the future, ten men speaking all the languages of the nations will grab hold of one Jewish person by the hem of his garment and say, "Let us go up to Jerusalem with you, because we heard that God is with you."'

23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days [it shall come to pass], that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard *that God is with you.*

- This illustrates what Isaiah predicted, that Jerusalem will be elevated above the nations of the earth. Once the millennial kingdom is established, Israel will be the vehicle of blessing to the entire world.

— The Bible doesn't teach that there will be "a" future for Israel; the Bible teaches that Israel is "the" future. Israel will just be one of many nations during the kingdom; Israel will be the preeminent nation in the kingdom.

- "...ten people" - the indefinite use to express a large number; the number ten is often used as a round number suggesting completeness (Cf. Gen 31:7; Lev 26:26; Judges 17:10; Ruth 4:2; 1 Sam 1:8; Jer 41:8).

- "...grasp the garment of a Jew" - the "skirt" or "hem" of the garment of a Jew was very important. Today a serviceman's rank is found on their shoulder or collar; in the OT and the Gospels, it was found on the hem of their garment.

— Taking hold of the garment (skirt or hem) of the Jew is not a desire for help or an indication of inferiority, but an expression of their longing to enjoy the blessings and privileges possessed by the Jew

— This indicates that Israel will be the means of drawing the nations of the earth to the Lord at the time of Messiah's reign of righteousness upon the earth

— There are many examples in both the OT and NT that describe the authority found in the hem of one's garment:

- David cut of the hem of Saul's garment while he was in a cave taking a dump; he immediately felt remorse for doing so because it constituted rebellion against Saul's God-given authority (1 Sam 24:3-6).
- The goal of the Gentile woman with the issue of blood was to simply touch the hem of Jesus' garment (Matt 9:20-21; Mark 5:31)
- The multitudes of sick people in Gennesaret sought just to touch the hem of Jesus' garment to be healed (Matt 14:34-36; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44)
- Jesus' robe at the time of the crucifixion was seamless, which was prized at the time, and why the guards did not divide it but rather cast lots for it (John 19:23-24)
- The temple veil was torn from top to bottom, symbolizing the end of man as high priest; Jesus' hem was not torn because He is our High Priest forever (Matt 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38).

— Amillennialists understand this promise as fulfilled by many Gentiles coming to salvation in the current age through Jewish influences (i.e. the Messiah and the Scriptures). Some amillennialists believe "the Jew" here refers to Jesus.

- "...we have heard that God is with you" - Gentiles acknowledging that Israel is the preeminent nation in the kingdom

[Is 49:22-23]

A major characteristic of Israel's final restoration in the Messianic Kingdom is that they will become the center of Gentile attention. This is described in various passages: Is 14:1-2; 49:22-23; 60-1-3; 61:4-9; Micah 7:14-17; Zeph 3:20; Zech 8:23; see note: **The Center of Gentile Attention** in Ezek 37:23.

Zech 12:3: It will come about on that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will injure themselves severely. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

Zech 14:2-3:

2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be taken, the houses plundered, the women raped, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be eliminated from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.