

A&P Bible Church | Weekly Study Zechariah 7 & 8

The book is one of consolation and hope, beginning with a call to repentance and concluding with prophecies concerning the return and reign of Christ.

Zechariah predicted more about Messiah than any other prophet except Isaiah. Prophecies concerning His first coming include Zech. 3:8; 9:9, 16; 11:11-13; 12:10; 13:1, 6; and prophecies to be fulfilled at His second coming include 6:12; 14:1-21.

Thank you to Yeshua Elohim Bible Church for their online Study Bible - visit www.yebc.net for more!

Throughout the week continue to look through the scriptures, think through the questions, and apply the Word to your life. Email any questions during the week to Brandon & Travis at ap.brandongarcia@gmail.com & ap.travisjohnson@gmail.com.

MONDAY

There are many today who claim to have the gift of prophecy, they call themselves prophets & prophetesses - but what is prophecy? Got Questions is going to help us out here today!

To prophesy is simply to speak prophecy. *Prophecy* is the noun, and *prophesy* is the verb. *Prophecy* at its most basic definition is “a message from God.” So, to prophesy is to proclaim a message from God. The one who does this is, therefore, a prophet. Although foretelling is often associated with prophecy, revealing the future is not a necessary element of prophecy; however, since only God knows the future, any authoritative word about the future must of necessity be a prophecy, that is, a message from God.

In the Old Testament, there were prophets who simply spoke their divine messages to a king or to the people (e.g., Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha). Later, there came a series of “writing prophets” whose messages are preserved in Scripture (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, and Malachi). Quite often the prophets would preface their utterances with words such as “thus saith the Lord” (KJV) or “this is what the Lord says” (NIV). The point is that God had communicated something to the prophets, and they were speaking directly for Him. “For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

According to Deuteronomy 13, there are two signs of a true prophet. First, he must not direct people to follow other gods. Second, whenever the prophet says something about future events, those events must come to pass. If the prophet promotes the worship of false gods, or if his predictions fail to come to pass, then he is a false prophet.

God would often give the prophet a message about something that would happen in the short term, to give him credibility on the more long-term message. For instance, Jeremiah told the leaders of Judah that the nation would be conquered by Babylon. But another “prophet,” a charlatan named Hananiah, stood up and said the Lord had given him a different message, and claimed that Jeremiah was not a true prophet. Jeremiah told Hananiah that within a year he, Hananiah, would be dead, and within the year he died

(Jeremiah 28). The fact that Jeremiah could so accurately predict the future should have given his other words more credibility.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist proclaims that the Kingdom of God and the Messiah are on the scene, and he identifies Jesus as that Messiah. John is often called the last of the Old Testament prophets. In the rest of the New Testament, prophets are not mentioned very much. It seems that apostles fulfilled the prophetic role, as they spoke directly and authoritatively for God, and their words are preserved today in Scripture. Ephesians 2:20 lists the apostles and prophets as being the foundation of the church, with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone. Obviously, before the canon of Scripture was complete, God may have communicated directly to people on a more regular basis. Prophecy is listed as one of the gifts of the Spirit (see Romans 12:6-8).

Of great interest today is whether or not the gift of prophecy continues or if it ceased when the foundational period of the church was complete. First Corinthians 12-14 is the longest New Testament passage relating to prophecy. The church at Corinth was misusing this gift as well as the gift of tongues. One problem they had was that, when the believers gathered, too many prophets were speaking, and they were interrupting each other to boot. Paul says that at most two or three prophets should speak, and they should do so one at a time. Others should carefully consider or evaluate what the prophet says (1 Corinthians 14:29-31). Perhaps the best understanding is that some people in Corinth thought they are getting a word directly from God, but they could have been wrong; therefore, they needed to submit their prophecies to the judgment of the church. As in the Old Testament, if a New Testament prophecy was contrary to sound doctrine, then the prophecy was to be rejected.

The instruction in 1 Corinthians 14 also suggests that a person should be cautious in speaking for God if the revelation is extra-biblical. Bearing a “message from God” does not automatically place one in a position of authority. The potential prophet should humbly submit his or her message to the leaders of the church for confirmation. Paul’s directive suggests that the gift of prophecy was already beginning to wane as an authoritative gift at the time 1 Corinthians was written.

A preacher or pastor today fulfills a prophetic role to the extent that he proclaims and explains the written Word of God. However, pastors are never called “prophets” in the New Testament. The pastor can confidently say, “Thus saith the Lord,” if he follows it up with chapter and verse. Unfortunately, some pastors assume a prophetic mantle and make pronouncements that are not from God but from their own imaginations.

For additional studies this week, listen to Dr. J. Vernon McGee's Zechariah sermons/studies:
https://www.blueletterbible.org/audio_video/popPlayer.cfm?id=7088&rel=mcgee_j_vernon/Zec

TUESDAY

Zechariah 7 (Ritualism leads to wrath)

Summary: Two years pass. The people ask God if they should fast and mourn, keeping the rituals they had in the past (vv.1-3). God says that these religious observances were actually selfish (vv.5-6). The “earlier prophets” (v.7; cf. Isa. 58) had already covered this. The people were dead set on the rituals, refusing to listen (v.11) and hardening their hearts (v.12). This is similar to James 1:27. “Religion” always usurps God’s desires and plans.

(7:1) Historically, this is two years later. The date is December 518 BC.[32]

(7:2-3) The people of Bethel wanted to know if they should continue a ritual fast that they had learned in the Exile. These names (Sharezer and Regemmelech) are Babylonian, so they were probably Jews who had been born during the Exile.[33] These fast were created in the Exile, but should they continue to do these? This delegation brought this question to the priests and the prophets.

(7:4-5) God rebuked this extrabiblical, ritualistic fast. He accuses the people of doing this for themselves. This might imply that the people were really fasting to expedite their judgment and get back into the land.

(7:6) Fasting can be just as self-serving as feasting!

(7:7) The “former prophets” probably includes at least Isaiah (Isa. 58).

(7:8-10) The people were focusing on fasting, rather than loving others and upholding justice for the marginalized (cf. Jas. 1:27). Barker writes, “They were guilty of legalism: an external adherence to the letter of the law while disregarding the internal spirit—the true divine intent of the law.”[34]

(7:11) Zechariah addresses their ancestors. He is reminding his current generation what their forefathers did to warrant judgment.

(7:12) God inspired the prophets to speak.

(7:13) The problem wasn't with God's call, but with their hardened hearts.

(7:14) This is why the original generation was exiled.

Resource:

<https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/zephaniah-haggai-zechariah-malachi/introduction-to-zechariah/>

WEDNESDAY***Zechariah 7 Breakdown | YEBC.net***

7:1 In King Darius' fourth year, on the fourth day of Kislev, the ninth month, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.

Jehovah gave Zechariah a prophecy two years after the eight visions. This was also two years before the completion of the temple.

2 Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melech and their companions to seek the Lord's favor

Sharezer and Regem-Melech were Babylonian names. These were Jews who were born into captivity. They returned to Israel possibly during Ezra's returns. These men and their companions were sent to ask Zechariah a question.

3 by asking both the priests of the temple of the Lord who rules over all and the prophets, "Should we weep in the fifth month, fasting as we have done over the years?"

The fifth month was the Ninth of Av. On the ninth of Av, the city of Jerusalem and its temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. The Romans would also destroy the Jewish temple on the ninth of Av. After the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, the Jews declared a yearly fast on the ninth of Av. They had been observing this ritual for the last 69 years. They asked Zechariah if they should continue this national fast.

4 The word of the Lord who rules over all then came to me,

Jehovah answered this question, but He did not tickle the ears of His listeners.

5 "Speak to all the people and priests of the land as follows: 'When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and seventh months through all these seventy years, did you truly fast for me—for me, indeed?'

Jehovah asked Zechariah to proclaim His message to these men, but also to all of Israel. Israel was fasting during two different months. They fasted in the fifth month, because the temple and city was destroyed on the ninth of Av. They fasted in the seventh month, because the Jewish leader Gedeliah was assassinated during this month. These fasts were

not proclaimed by Jehovah. These were man-made fasts created by the Jewish people after they went into the Babylonian Captivity. Jehovah asked the people if this fasting was for themselves or for the glory of God.

6 And now when you eat and drink, are you not doing so for yourselves?’ ”

When the Jews were feasting, were they eating and drinking for the glory of God or for themselves? Everyone eats to either serve God or serve Satan.

7 Should you not have obeyed the words that the Lord cried out through the former prophets when Jerusalem was peacefully inhabited and her surrounding cities, the Negev, and the Shephelah were also populated?

Instead of asking about these man-made feasts, Israel should have kept the Mosaic Law. If they had kept the Mosaic Law, then the temple would not have been destroyed. Gedeliah would not have been assassinated. They would not be asking these questions.

8 Again the word of the Lord came to Zechariah:

Jehovah gave Zechariah another prophecy.

9 “The Lord who rules over all said, ‘Exercise true judgment and show brotherhood and compassion to each other.

Jehovah rules over all things. He commanded Israel to judge in righteousness, because many of the Israeli judges were taking bribes. He asked the Jews to show brotherhood and compassion to each other.

10 You must not oppress the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, or the poor, nor should anyone secretly plot evil against his fellow human being.’

Jehovah commanded the Jews not to oppress four different types of people. They are not to oppress the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, or the poor. Neither should one plan evil against another human being.

11 *“But they refused to pay attention, turning away stubbornly and stopping their ears so they could not hear.*

Israel refused to obey the Mosaic Law. They refused to listen to the prophets which God sent to them.

12 *Indeed, they made their heart as hard as diamond, so that they could not obey the Torah and the other words the Lord who rules over all had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore, the Lord who rules over all had poured out great wrath.*

When the Jews rejected the Word of God, their hearts were hardened. Jehovah sent prophets who were led by the Spirit of God, but Israel rejected their message.

13 *“It then came about that just as I cried out, but they would not obey, so they will cry out, but I will not listen,’ the Lord who rules over all had said.*

Since Israel refused to listen to the Holy Spirit which God sent them through the prophets, then God refused to listen to their cries of help when they were being crushed by their enemies.

14 *‘Rather, I will sweep them away in a storm into all the nations they are not familiar with.’ Thus the land had become desolate because of them, with no one crossing through or returning, for they had made the fruitful land a waste.”*

Since Israel hardened their heart against the teachings of the Holy Spirit through the prophets, God would send them away in a storm. The storm will scatter the Jews into all nations of the world. The land will become desolate. The Jews were scattered into all nations of the world in 70 A.D. The land became desolate after the Babylon Captivity.

What were 5 points that stood out to you in this chapter? They can be observances, cross references, questions, etc...

Feel free to post & share in the blog comments & our church group page!

THURSDAY

Zechariah 8 (Future restoration for Israel)

Summary: Chapter 8 emphasizes a remnant of people (8:6, 12) who inherit the promises of God (cf. Rom. 11). It ends with the worldwide blessing of the nation of Israel.

(8:1-2) In this context, God's "**jealousy**" is one to bless—not to curse.

(8:3) God will come back and dwell in the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 1:16; 2:10).

Jerusalem could be called "**The City of Truth**" (NASB) or the "**Faithful City**" (NLT). Verse 16 implies that this refers to the city of truth—not the faithful city.

(8:4-5) These are good passages for the concept of the Millennial Kingdom. For one, there are old and young people. In the New Heavens and Earth, it seems more likely that we will not be elderly. Moreover, these old people still need a "**staff**," which implies that they do not have resurrected bodies. Yet, this is a time of peace and security—something that has never happened in Jerusalem.

(8:6) To paraphrase, God is saying, "Just because something is hard for you to fathom, does that mean that it should be hard for Me to accomplish?"

(8:7-8) The "**east**" and "**west**" are a merism to show the totality of everything in between.[35] This is similar to saying, "I love you from head to toe." This speaks to the regathering of Israel.

(8:9) God used the prophecies about the future regathering to encourage the contemporary audience.

(8:10) The enemies tried to stop the rebuilding of the Temple (e.g. Ezra 4:1-5).

(8:11-13) The people will be regathered. Just as they were cursed, they will later be blessed.

(8:14-15) God had brought judgment on the people (v.14), but now, his judgment was expended. He tells them this so that they will not **“fear”** being judged again.

(8:16-17) The people are to be truthful, because they are the “City of Truth” (v.3).

(8:18-19) The *fasts* will turn into *feasts* of celebration. Zechariah was able to summarize God’s commands into **“love and peace.”**

(8:20-22) The **“cities”** and **“nations”** will come to meet God in the city of Jerusalem.

(8:23) The Gentiles will be flocking to Jewish people (10:1 ratio) to understand God.

Resource:

<https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/zephaniah-haggai-zechariah-malachi/introduction-to-zechariah/>

FRIDAY***Zechariah 8 Breakdown | YEBC.net***

8:1 Then the word of the Lord who rules over all came to me as follows:

Jehovah is sovereign over all history. He gave another prophetic message to Zechariah.

2 “The Lord who rules over all says, ‘I am very much concerned for Zion; indeed, I am so concerned for her that my rage will fall on those who hurt her.’

Zion is Israel. Jehovah loves Israel very much. If anyone attempts to hurt Israel, then Jehovah will turn his rage on that nation. This is a warning for any nations or people today who are anti-Semitic.

3 The Lord says, ‘I have returned to Zion and will live within Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem will be called “truthful city,” “mountain of the Lord who rules over all,” “holy mountain.” ’

During the Millennial Kingdom, Jehovah will return to Israel. He will physically live in Jerusalem in the bodily form of Jesus the Messiah. During the Millennial Kingdom, Jerusalem will be called “the truthful city,” “the mountain of the Lord who rules all,” and the “holy mountain.”

4 Moreover, the Lord who rules over all says, ‘Old men and women will once more live in the plazas of Jerusalem, each one leaning on a cane because of advanced age.

During the Millennial Kingdom, believers will live to ages over 1000 years.

5 And the streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing.

During the Millennial Kingdom, there will be a population explosion.

6 And,’ says the Lord who rules over all, ‘though such a thing may seem to be difficult in the opinion of the small community of those days, will it also appear difficult to me?’ asks the Lord who rules over all.

The Hebrew word for “difficult” is קָלָה (pala), meaning wonderful miracles that only God can do. During the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will do miracles that only God can do.

7 “The Lord who rules over all asserts, ‘I am about to save my people from the lands of the east and the west.

During the Millennial Kingdom, God will take the Jews who are scattered all over the world and move them into Israel to inherit the land which was promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

8 And I will bring them to settle within Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.’

During the Millennial Kingdom, all of Israel who survives the Great Tribulation will be saved. Jesus the Messiah will settle them within the city of Jerusalem.

9 “The Lord who rules over all also says, ‘Gather strength, you who are listening to these words today from the mouths of the prophets who were there at the founding of the house of the Lord who rules over all, so that the temple might be built.

In verses 9-17, Jehovah speaks to Zechariah’s own generation. He reminds them that He is sovereign over all of history. He encourages them by commanding them to gather strength from the words of Zechariah and Haggai. He encourages them to rebuild the temple. The temple sacrifices all point to Christ, so Jehovah desires for the temple to be rebuilt.

10 Before that time there was no compensation for man or animal, nor was there any relief from adversity for those who came and went, because I had pitted everybody—each one—against everyone else.

Jehovah reminded Zechariah’s generation of the situation of Israel before their return. There was unemployment, external enemies, and internal enemies.

11 But I will be different now to this remnant of my people from the way I was in those days,’ says the Lord who rules over all,

In verses 11-13, Jehovah promised that He will be different to Zechariah’s generation.

12 'for there will be a peaceful time of sowing, the vine will produce its fruit and the ground its yield, and the skies will rain down dew. Then I will allow the remnant of my people to possess all these things.

Jehovah promises this current generation that they will have peace and prosperity. This current generation will prosper agriculturally. They will be able to eat and sell their own produce, because there will be peace in the land.

13 And it will come about that just as you (both Judah and Israel) were a curse to the nations, so I will save you and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid! Instead, be strong!'

Israel was cursed for disobeying the Mosaic Covenant. Jehovah will remove the curse from Israel.

14 "For the Lord who rules over all says, 'As I had planned to hurt you when your fathers made me angry,' says the Lord who rules over all, 'and I was not sorry,

Jehovah reminds Israel that He is sovereign over all of history. He is in control of all things. When Israel fell into idolatry, Jehovah did not feel sorry for hurting Israel.

15 so, to the contrary, I have planned in these days to do good to Jerusalem and Judah—do not fear!

Jehovah has better plans for this current generation. He is going to do good things for them.

16 These are the things you must do: Speak the truth, each of you, to one another. Practice true and righteous judgment in your courts.

Jehovah commanded the current generation to do four things. First, they were to speak the truth. Second, they were to execute righteous judgment in the judicial courts.

17 Do not plan evil in your hearts against one another. Do not favor a false oath—these are all things that I hate,' says the Lord."

Third, they were not to plan evil against one another. Fourth, they were not to make false oaths. Jehovah hates all of these things.

18 The word of the Lord who rules over all came to me as follows:

In verses 18-23, Jehovah will answer the question about keeping the fasts.

19 “The Lord who rules over all says, ‘The fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months will become joyful and happy, pleasant feasts for the house of Judah, so love truth and peace.’

Judaism had created four fasts. These fasts were not created by Jehovah, but by Judaism. They asked Jehovah if they were to still keep these fasts, since Israel had returned to the land. The fast of the fourth month commemorated the day that Jerusalem was taken. The fast of the fifth month commemorated the day when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. The fast of the seventh moment commemorated the day in which the Governor Gedaliah was killed. The fast of the tenth month commemorated the day that the city of Jerusalem was first besieged. God’s answer was that He would turn these man-made fasts of Judaism into divine feasts. Instead of mourning on these days, they would celebrate.

20 The Lord who rules over all says, ‘It will someday come to pass that people—residents of many cities—will come.

In verses 20-24, Jehovah returned His attention to the future of Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom. He predicted that during the Millennial Kingdom, many Gentiles would travel to Jerusalem.

21 The inhabitants of one will go to another and say, “Let’s go up at once to ask the favor of the Lord, to seek the Lord who rules over all. Indeed, I’ll go with you.” ’

During the Millennial Kingdom, the Gentiles will want to travel to Jerusalem so that they can seek Jehovah in the city. Jesus the Messiah will be ruling from Jerusalem with a rod of iron.

22 Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord who rules over all and to ask his favor.

Many Gentiles will make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to seek the visible Messiah.

23 The Lord who rules over all says, 'In those days ten people from all languages and nations will grasp hold of—indeed, grab—the robe of one Jew and say, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ' "

During the Millennial Kingdom, there will be no more anti-Semitism. Gentiles will eagerly grab Jews by the robe and desire to be instructed by the Jews.

What were 5 points that stood out to you in this chapter? They can be observances, cross references, questions, etc...

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