

EXILIC & POST-EXILIC PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE

Senior Adults & Friends Bible Study — Summit View Church of Christ
Spring 2023

PART 7, SECTION 3 — PROPHECIES OF REFINEMENT AND RESTORATION ZECHARIAH 7-8

Date: Zechariah received this message from God on the fourth day of the ninth month (Kislev) of King Darius's fourth year (7:1)—on our calendar, **December 7, 518 BC**. It was a little more than two years since rebuilding of God's temple had resumed, and a little less than two years since Zechariah's 9-part vision of chapters 1-6.

- Jewish fasts were held in the fourth, fifth, and seventh months during the exile to commemorate—and seek God's healing of—three tragic events associated with the start of the Jewish exile:

month of the fast

4th month (8:19)

5th month (7:3, 7:5, 8:19)

7th month (7:5, 8:19)

10th month (8:19)

event commemorated

Babylonian capture of Jerusalem on July 18, 586 BC, in the fourth month of the Jewish calendar (2 Kings 25:3-4)

Babylonian destruction of God's temple in August 586 BC, in the fifth month of the Jewish calendar (2 Kings 25:8-9)

assassination of Gedaliah, a Jew who had been appointed governor over Judah by the Babylonians. He was killed in October or November 586 BC, in the Jews' seventh month (Jeremiah 41:1-2)
start of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem on January 15, 588 BC, in the Jews' tenth month (2 Kings 25:1)

Zechariah 7 — The Question, and God's Complaint

7:2-3 — What question had the Jews in Bethel brought to God's priests and prophets in Jerusalem?

7:5 — For the past 70 years (since roughly the time of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC) these Jews had been fasting in the _____ and _____ months each year.

7:8-10 — Fasting can be pleasing to God, under the right circumstances. But what God wanted most from his people was that they would administer true _____ and show _____ and compassion to one another, that they would not oppress the _____ or the _____, the _____ or the _____, and that they would not plot _____ against each other.

7:11-13 — How had the Jews of earlier generations responded to these requirements (in verses 9-10) from the Lord?

7:14 — Because of how earlier Jews had responded to God's commands, what had he done to them?

- To what past event is God referring (hint: recall 586 BC)?

food for thought — What do you think might have been the motive behind the Bethel Jews' question? Do you think their asking it honored or dishonored God? Why?

Zechariah 8 — The Rest of God’s Response: Ten Blessings

Responding to the people’s question in 7:3, God speaks ten blessings upon them, each introduced by the phrase, “This is what the Lord [Almighty] says...”

8:2 — BLESSING #1: The Lord says, “I am very _____ for Zion.”

- How is this emotion from God for his people, then and now, a blessing?

8:3 — BLESSING #2: God will _____ to Zion and _____ in Jerusalem. The effect on Jerusalem will be that it will be called the _____ City, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty (where the temple stood) would be called the _____ Mountain.

- *Recall Ezekiel’s vision in Ezekiel 9-11, dated to September 17, 592 BC, in which he saw God leave his temple and Jerusalem because of the Jews’ sin, especially idolatry. Now, many years later, God promises to return! What will the renewal of his presence mean for his people?*

8:4-5 — BLESSING #3: What will the men and women “of ripe old age” do in Jerusalem?

- What will the boys and girls of Jerusalem be doing in its streets?
- What will these actions of the elderly and the youth say about the quality of life in Jerusalem?

8:6 — BLESSING #4: Why might this situation in Jerusalem “seem marvelous” to people who had experienced the exile?

8:7-8 — BLESSING #5: What will God do for his people exiled or scattered in other countries?

- God says, “They will be my _____, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their _____.”
- *Notice the similarity of this statement to Revelation 21:3 — “They will be his _____, and God himself will be with them and be their _____.” This relationship with human beings is the goal of all of God’s redemptive work in humanity.*

8:9-13 — BLESSING #6: What command does God give in verse 9?

- When his people obey this command, what blessings will he offer...
 - ...for “the remnant of this people” (verse 11)?
 - ...for their crops (verse 12)?
 - ...for Judah and Israel (verse 13)?
- In 8:13, the Lord instructs his people, “Do not be _____, but let your hands be _____.”
- Compare Zechariah 8:9-13 with Haggai 2:15-19 (written about 2 years earlier). What are one or two similarities or differences that you notice?

8:14-17 — BLESSING #7: Just as God brought disaster on the Jews' ancestors without pity (because of their wickedness), so now God has decided to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Therefore they should not be afraid. But they must do these 4 things...

- speak the _____ to each other
- render true and sound judgment in their _____
- do not plot _____ against each other
- do not love to _____ falsely

8:18-19 — BLESSING #8: Recall the question brought by the Jews of Bethel in 7:3. How does the Lord now answer that question?

- Because of this blessing, God's people must love _____ and _____.

8:20-22 — BLESSING #9: Who will come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem?

- Consider the Ethiopian of Acts 8:26-39. How did he, as just one example, fulfill this prophecy?
- How do Christians from across the world fulfill this prophecy today (though perhaps not at the literal city of Jerusalem)?

8:23 — BLESSING #10: In those days _____ people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one _____ by the hem of his robe and say, "Let us go with you, because we have heard that _____ is with you."

- *Consider the transformation God is promising to work in his people: They will go from being a weak and scattered people because of their sin and the exile to being a people so faithful, holy, and strong that other peoples from across the world will come to them and beg them to let those peoples join them so those peoples may be in the presence of God!*

EZRA 6:14b-18

Date: The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius (6:15). On our calendar, this was **March 12, 516 BC**. It had been about 3½ years since the resumption of temple construction in September 520 BC.

Ezra 6:14b-18

6:14 — Ezra lists the decrees of 3 Persian kings—_____, _____, and Artaxerxes—as commanding the reconstruction of God's temple in Jerusalem. (Actually, Artaxerxes did not become king until after the temple was finished; but he gave authority to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls [see Nehemiah 2:1-9] and so continued God's promised renovation of Jerusalem, which included the rebuilding of the temple.)

6:15-17 — For the dedication of the completed house of God, the Jews offered 100 _____, 200 _____, 400 male _____, and a sin offering of 12 male _____.

6:18 — The Jews installed the _____ in their divisions and the _____ in their groups for the service of God at Jerusalem. By doing so they made it possible for all the services at the temple to resume.

JOEL

Date: maybe late 500s BC — The date of Joel is unknown, and scholars date it anytime from the 800s BC to the 200s BC. The best arguments, though, suggest that its most likely date of composition is after the Jews' return from exile and after the Jerusalem temple was rebuilt, perhaps in the late 500s BC. Certain lines in Joel mention events that fit that time period well. Several of them sound like scenes from the wars that led to Jerusalem's destruction and the Jewish exile in 586 BC: Judah and Jerusalem had been divided up and their people scattered (3:1-2); God was now bringing some of the exiles back home to Jerusalem (3:7); etc. It also appears that Jerusalem was settled and the temple was standing, with worship of God taking place there, in Joel's time (1:13, 2:1, 3:17). Even so, this dating is only a guess.

Joel 1:1-12 — The Invasion, Part 1

- Who had invaded the land?

- What sorts of things had they destroyed?

- 3 groups who are mourning or who are called to mourn:
 - 1:5 — the _____, because...
 - 1:9 — the _____, because...
 - 1:11 — the _____, because...

Joel 1:13-20 — Cry Out to the Lord, Part 1

1:13-14 — List 2 or 3 things Joel urged the priests and people to do because of what's happened:

for group discussion...

1:15 — "The day of the Lord" is the time when God makes things right, usually coming to bring judgment on the wicked and to reward the righteous. What is this reference to the "day of the Lord" doing here in the midst of this lament over the destruction of the people's food supply?

1:19-20 — Joel himself calls out to the Lord here. What does he want God to do?

1:19-20 — *Notice that, in addition to the invasion, Joel describes consequences of a drought (wildfires, dried streams, thirsty wild animals). As if the invasion itself weren't enough!*

Joel 2:1-11 — The Invasion, Part 2

2:1-2 — List 2 things that are coming:

2:4-9 — Joel describes this "army" as being like _____ (verse 4), _____ (verse 5), and _____ (verse 7).

2:11 — This army belongs to _____.

Joel 2:12-17 — Cry Out to the Lord, Part 2

2:12-13 — How does God want the people to respond to this invasion?

2:13 — The Lord is _____ and _____, slow to _____ and abounding in _____, and he relents from _____.

- *This description of God comes from God's description of himself in Exodus 34:4-7.*

2:15-17 — Joel urges his people to call out to God by...

Joel 2:18-32 — The Lord Replies

Apparently the people did turn back to the Lord. What 3 things did the Lord promise to do for his people?

- verse 19 —
- verse 20 —
- verses 25-26 —

The Lord promised to do a fourth thing for his people:

- verses 28-29 —
- verse 32 — the result would be...

Read Acts 2:1-14 and 2:36-41

- *How was the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 (quoted here in Acts 2:17-21) fulfilled on the day of Pentecost?*
- *How did the people listening to Peter respond to the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy?*

Joel 3 — Judgment on Other Nations

5 cities/nations that had mistreated the people of Judah/Jerusalem and that would be punished by God for it:

- verse 4 —
- verse 19 —

In this chapter, what is God promising to do for his people?