

Promising Peace

Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17
SS Lesson for 05/10/2020

Devotional Scripture: Eph 2:14-18

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Zech 8:15

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

PEACE THROUGH GOD'S PRESENCE (ZECH 8:1-3)

God's presence through His jealousy(1-2)

Jealousy to protect His Holy Name (Ezek 39:25)

Jealousy that want us to obey and worship God for our own good (Ex 20:4-6)

Jealousy that wants purity (2 Cor 11:2)

Jealousy that comes with being in a covenant (James 4:4-5)

Jealousy of intimate fellowship (1 Cor 10:20-22)

God's presence brings truth (3)

God's truth makes Him faithful in all He does (Ps 33:4)

Faith comes through the belief and obedience to the truth of God (Col 1:5)

It is the truth of God's presence that leads a life of faith into godliness (Titus 1:1)

Jesus says that only in Him is the truth (John 14:6)

Through truth comes knowledge of God (Prov 9:10)

God's word is truth (John 17:17)

Through obedience to God's truth comes sanctification (1 Peter 1:22)

The One who guides us in truth is the Holy Spirit (John 16:13)

It is the Church that should be the agent of instruction and growth of the truth (1 Tim 3:15)

God's presence brings holiness (3)

God is Holy because His glory fills the earth (Isa 6:3)

God is majestic in His Holiness (Ex 15:11)

The heavens declare the Holiness of God (Ps 19:1)

God is Holy because He is Almighty and Everlasting (Rev 4:8)

We are called to be holy because God is Holy (1 Peter 1:15-16)

God is perfect in His Holiness (Matt 5:48)

PEACE THROUGH RESTORATION (ZECH 8:4-8)

Peace to grow old (4)

Peace in older age is a blessing (Isa 65:16-20)

God grants peace in old age so that the elderly can pass on to the next generation God's great power (Ps 71:18)

Peace in older age is a reward of a righteous life (Prov 16:31)

Peace in older age only comes from God (Ps 29:11)

Peace in older age is the future of the blameless and upright (Ps 37:37)

Peace in the heart gives life to the body (Prov 14:30)

Peace for the children (5)

Fearing God can bring peace to one's children (Ps 128:3-4)

Avoiding wicked influences can bring peace to one's children (Ps 144:11-12)

Obedient children have a promise of long life and peace (Eph 6:1-3)

Children walking in truth can bring and have peace (2 John 4)

Peace through returning to God (6-8)

Returning to God will result in growth in knowing God (Jer 24:7)

Returning to God could bring blessings from Him (Joel 2:13-14)

Returning to God is a sign of growth in faith (Luke 17:17-19)

Returning to God brings healing of the spiritual and physical man (2 Chron 7:14)

Returning to God brings mercy and prosperity (Prov 28:13)

BLESSINGS OF PEACE (ZECH 8:11-13)

Blessings of renewal (11)

Renewal into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)

Renewal into a spiritual covenant (Gal 6:15)

Renewal inwardly daily (2 Cor 4:16)

Renewal of the old self (Col 3:10)
Renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

Blessings of prosperity (12)

Prosperity through well-being (Ps 35:27)
Prosperity through righteousness (Ps 92:12-14)
Prosperity through delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)
Prosperity through remaining in Jesus (John 15:3-5)
Prosperity into old age (Isa 46:4)
Prosperity through the fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

Blessings God's salvation (13)

A common salvation that must be qualified for (Col 1:12)
A common salvation that includes a grafting by God (Rom 11:17-21)
A common salvation of heirship (Eph 3:6)
A common salvation obtained by a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1)

RESPONSE TO PEACE (ZECH 8:14-17)

God's forgiveness (14-15)

God's forgiveness means that He will not remember our sins any more (Heb 8:12)
God's forgiveness sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)
God's forgiveness rescues from a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)
God's forgiveness is through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)
God's forgiveness is in accordance with His grace (Eph 1:7)

Respond with truthfulness (16)

Truth through receiving God's word (1 Thess 2:13)
Truth through believing and being sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13)
Truth through the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:9)
Truth through standing firm (Eph 6:14)
Truth through the Gospel (Col 1:5-6)

Respond with loving one another (17)

Loving others by loving God (1 John 4:21)
Loving others by obedience to the second great commandment (Matt 22:39-40)
Loving others by owing nothing except love (Rom 13:8)
Loving others as we have been taught by God (1 Thess 4:9)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

There's a little-known psychiatric condition called athazagoraphobia. It refers to an irrational fear of being forgotten. The associated anxiety can be debilitating. Sufferers may feel the need to check in with family constantly while traveling. Or they might excessively remind a coworker about an upcoming meeting. Changes in plans can bring on panic attacks. Sufferers' lives are filled with anxiety and fear. A few passages of the Bible speak of a fear of being forgotten by God (example: Lamentations 5:20); many more speak of the reality of people forgetting Him (example: Jeremiah 3:21). That fact speaks directly to an important role of prophets: pointing out the reality of God's memory and its implications for us (example: Zechariah 10:9).

By one count, there are at least 30 men in the Bible by the name of Zechariah. The one who wrote the book of today's study was a prophet from a priestly family; his recorded ministry occurred after the Babylonian exile (Ezra 5:1, 2; 6:14; Nehemiah 12:12, 16). The datings in Zechariah 1:1, 7; 7:1 compute to a time between late 520 BC and late 518 BC. The setting in post-exilic Jerusalem is essential to understanding the book of Zechariah. Twenty years after the return from exile, signs of God's continued favor seemed to have disappeared (Ezra 4:24; Haggai 1:1-11). Many of those who had returned from exile undoubtedly wondered if God had forgotten them.

Key Verse: Zech 8:15

So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

As chapter 7 resembles the call to repentance in 1:2-6, so chapter 8 reflects the promised blessings pictured throughout the night visions (1:7-6:8). Thus the third and fourth messages view the restoration from Exile in Zechariah's day as a precursor of future blessing and prosperity in the Millennial Age. They also place emphasis on that future time when righteousness, justice, and peace will fill the earth.

8:1. Zechariah again identified this message as a revelation from God (cf. 7:4, 8; 8:18). The message is divided into seven parts by the recurring phrase, "This is what the LORD Almighty [or **LORD**] says" (vv. 2-4, 6-7, 9, 14). Whether each of these sections summarizes more lengthy messages which Zechariah delivered orally but did not record cannot be determined from the passage.

8:2. God's zeal on behalf of **Zion** (i.e., the people of Jerusalem) is affirmed in superlative terms (cf. 1:14; Joel 2:18).

8:3. God's resumed presence with His people when He will **return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem** (cf. 2:12) anticipates millennial fulfillment through the personal reign of Christ on the throne of David. At that time His **truth** and holiness (cf. Joel 3:17; Obad. 17) will be imparted in **the city** and throughout the earth. Zion was originally the name of the mound where the Jebusites lived, whose fortress David conquered (2 Sam. 5:7). Later Zion (and Mount Zion) were names for the temple site in Jerusalem (Ps. 2:6; Isa. 8:18; Joel 2:1). Also Zion became a synonym for the entire city of Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; 4:3; 33:20; Amos 1:2; Micah 3:10, 12). Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned together several times by Zechariah (Zech. 1:14, 17; 8:3; 9:9).

8:4-5. **Jerusalem** will be secure and safe for senior citizens and children alike (cf. Isa. 65:20-22).

8:6. Such future blessings **may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time**, in contrast with the destruction that will precede it (cf. Matt. 24:15-25), but such miraculous performances are not difficult for God (cf. Gen. 18:14; Matt. 19:26).

8:7-8. Once again **the LORD** promised to regather Israel and Judah in the future. **The countries of the east and the west** is probably a merism for countries in all directions, all over the earth (cf. Isa. 11:11-12; 43:5-6). The worldwide scope of this restoration suggests that **Jerusalem** represents the land of Israel as a whole. This regathering will institute a restored relationship between God and Israel (**They will be My people**; cf. Zech. 13:9; Hosea 2:21-23) in which God's faithfulness and righteousness will be most evident (cf. Hosea 2:19-20).

8:9-13. The people who heard **these words spoken by the prophets** (Zechariah and Haggai) were to be encouraged (**let your hands be strong**; cf. Hag. 2:4) to complete the rebuilding of **the temple**. God's promises of future blessing should always encourage His people in their present tasks. **Before that time**, when the people started to rebuild the temple, their work had little results (Hag. 1:6, 9-11; 2:16-19) and enemies kept them unsafe. Israel's future blessings relate not only to the productivity of the land (Zech. 8:12) but also to a reversed role among the nations (v. 13). Now **an object of cursing among the nations** (cf. Deut. 28:37), **Judah and Israel... will be a blessing** (cf. Micah 5:7; Zech. 8:22-23). Therefore the people should **not be afraid** (cf. v. 15).

8:14-17. **The LORD** then affirmed the certainty of the fulfillment of His divine purpose for future blessing. He contrasted that forthcoming blessing with the already fulfilled promises of **disaster** which He brought on their sinning **fathers** (vv. 14-15; cf. 7:11-14). In view of the options of disaster and blessing, God offered His people an agenda that reflected spiritual reality rather than the hypocritical formalism that had characterized their fathers and was threatening them. **Truth**, justice, mercy, and honesty should characterize them in both personal and civil spheres (cf. 7:9-10). In short, the message is, "Do the things God loves (cf. 8:19) and avoid the things God hates."

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Peace Through God's Presence (Zech 8:1-3)

1 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 fervor I am zealous for her.'

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's presence through His jealousy(1-2)

Jealousy to protect His Holy Name (Ezek 39:25)

25 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.

Jealousy that want us to obey and worship God for our own good (Ex 20:4-6)

4 " You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 " You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Jealousy that wants purity (2 Cor 11:2)

2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

Jealousy that comes with being in a covenant (James 4:4-5)

4 You [are like] unfaithful wives [having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God]! Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose that the Scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a jealous love? (Amp Bible)

Jealousy of intimate fellowship (1 Cor 10:20-22)

21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

God's presence brings truth (3)

God's truth makes Him faithful in all He does (Ps 33:4)

4 For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Faith comes through the belief and obedience to the truth of God (Col 1:5)

5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel

It is the truth of God's presence that leads a life of faith into godliness (Titus 1:1)

1:1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-

Jesus says that only in Him is the truth (John 14:6)

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Through truth comes knowledge of God (Prov 9:10)

10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

God's word is truth (John 17:17)

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Through obedience to God's truth comes sanctification (1 Peter 1:22)

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

The One who guides us in truth is the Holy Spirit (John 16:13)

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

It is the Church that should be the agent of instruction and growth of the truth (1 Tim 3:15)

15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

God's presence brings holiness (3)

God is Holy because His glory fills the earth (Isa 6:3)

3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

God is majestic in His Holiness (Ex 15:11)

11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you-- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"

The heavens declare the Holiness of God (Ps 19:1)

19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

God is Holy because He is Almighty and Everlasting (Rev 4:8)

8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

We are called to be holy because God is Holy (1 Peter 1:15-16)

15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

God is perfect in His Holiness (Matt 5:48)

48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Peace Through Restoration (Zech 8:4-8)

4 "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.'

6 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?' Says the Lord of hosts.

7 "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;

8 I 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.'

Peace to grow old (4)

Peace in older age is a blessing (Isa 65:16-20)

16 Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth; he who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes. 17 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. 19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. 20 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

God grants peace in old age so that the elderly can pass on to the next generation God's great power (Ps 71:18)

18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.

Peace in older age is a reward of a righteous life (Prov 16:31)

31 Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life.

Peace in older age only comes from God (Ps 29:11)

11 The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Peace in older age is the future of the blameless and upright (Ps 37:37)

37 Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace.

Peace in the heart gives life to the body (Prov 14:30)

30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

Peace for the children (5)

Fearing God can bring peace to one's children (Ps 128:3-4)

3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. 4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.

Avoiding wicked influences can bring peace to one's children (Ps 144:11-12)

11 Deliver me and rescue me from the hands of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful. 12 Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.

Obedient children have a promise of long life and peace (Eph 6:1-3)

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise- 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Children walking in truth can bring and have peace (2 John 4)

4 It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us.

Peace through returning to God (6-8)

Returning to God will result in growth in knowing God (Jer 24:7)

7 I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Returning to God could bring blessings from Him (Joel 2:13-14)

13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing- grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.

Returning to God is a sign of growth in faith (Luke 17:17-19)

17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Returning to God brings healing of the spiritual and physical man (2 Chron 7:14)

14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Returning to God brings mercy and prosperity (Prov 28:13)

13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Blessings of Peace (Zech 8:11-13)

11 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.

13 And 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.'

Blessings of renewal (11)

Renewal into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Renewal into a spiritual covenant (Gal 6:15)

15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

Renewal inwardly daily (2 Cor 4:16)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Renewal of the old self (Col 3:10)

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Blessings of prosperity (12)

Prosperity through well-being (Ps 35:27)

27 May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant."

Prosperity through righteousness (Ps 92:12-14)

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; 13 planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

Prosperity through delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Prosperity through remaining in Jesus (John 15:3-5)

3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Prosperity into old age (Isa 46:4)

4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Prosperity through the fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. 2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Blessings God's salvation (13)

A common salvation that must be qualified for (Col 1:12)

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

A common salvation that includes a grafting by God (Rom 11:17-21)

17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

A common salvation of heirship (Eph 3:6)

6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

A common salvation obtained by a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1)

1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

Response to Peace (Zech 8:14-17)

14 "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,
15 So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear.
16 These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;
17 Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,' Says the Lord."

God's forgiveness (14-15)

God's forgiveness means that He will not remember our sins any more (Heb 8:12)

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

God's forgiveness sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)

17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

God's forgiveness rescues from a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

God's forgiveness is through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

God's forgiveness is in accordance with His grace (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Respond with truthfulness (16)

Truth through receiving God's word (1 Thess 2:13)

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

Truth through believing and being sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13)

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Truth through the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:9)

9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

Truth through standing firm (Eph 6:14)

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

Truth through the Gospel (Col 1:5-6)

5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

Respond with loving one another (17)

Loving others by loving God (1 John 4:21)

21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Loving others by obedience to the second great commandment (Matt 22:39-40)

39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Loving others by owing nothing except love (Rom 13:8)

8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Loving others as we have been taught by God (1 Thess 4:9)

9 Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 1

"The introductory formula lacks the words *to me* in the original, a fact which suggests that Zechariah was repeating words he had often spoken rather than expressing a new revelation." [Note: Baldwin, p149.]

D. Israel's restoration to God's favor (8:1-17)

Chapter 8 not only contains two major messages from the Lord (Zechariah 8:1-23) but 10 minor messages, "a *decalogue* of divine words," [Note: Leupold, p141.] that make up the two major ones. Another writer believed there were seven oracles in this section. [Note: Waltke, p846.] "Thus says the Lord" introduces each of these minor messages (Zechariah 8:2-23) each of which contains a promise of future blessing for Israel. These short sayings may have been the texts of different sermons that Zechariah had preached and later wove together because of their similar content. [Note: Baldwin, p148.]

"In the preceding section [ch7] Israel was to repent and live righteously after the punishment of her captivity; here [in ch8] she is to repent and live righteously because of the promise of her future restoration." [Note: Barker, pp649-50.]

The whole chapter presents Israel's eventual restoration and participation in full millennial blessing. [Note: Unger, p132.] The restoration from exile in Zechariah's day was only a precursor of greater future blessing and prosperity.

"Of a total of 36 occurrences of "YHWH of hosts" in Zechariah, 15 are in this one oracle [ch8], the highest concentration of the phrase in the OT with the possible exception of Malachi. Even more remarkable, it occurs six times in the present passage alone [Zechariah 8:1-8], a passage that focuses narrowly on eschatological restoration. So humanly impossible will that be, it can come to pass only by the resources of the Almighty One." [Note: Merrill, p220.]

I counted 16 occurrences of "the LORD of hosts" and four more of "the LORD" in this chapter.

Verse 2

Almighty Yahweh had revealed that He was very jealous for the exclusive love and commitment of His people (cf. Zechariah 1:14). His loving jealousy burned within Him.

". . . YHWH is a "jealous God" (Exodus 20:5), one who tolerates no rivals real or imaginary and who is zealous to protect His uniqueness and maintain the allegiance of His people to Himself alone. He is also jealous for His people, that Isaiah, He is protective of them against all who would challenge them or claim to be elect alongside

them. Therefore, He is zealous to safeguard their interests and come to their defense." [Note: Merrill, pp220-21.]

The English word "jealous" derives from the Latin *zelus*, "zeal."

"The zeal with which God had carried through His chastisement of Israel and then of the nations (Zechariah 1:15; Zechariah 1:21) was now burning to restore the covenant bond." [Note: Baldwin, p149.]

Verse 3

Yahweh announced that He would return to Zion and reside among His people in Jerusalem again (cf. Zechariah 1:16; Zechariah 2:10). When He did, people would call Jerusalem the City of Truth, and they would refer to the temple mount as the Holy Mountain (cf. Zechariah 14:20-21). Finally the recurring cycle of apostasy followed by punishment would end.

"Jerusalem did not acquire this character in the period after the captivity, in which, though not defiled by gross idolatry, as in the times before the captivity, it was polluted by other moral abominations no less than it had been before. Jerusalem becomes a faithful city for the first time through the Messiah, and it is through Him that the temple mountain first really becomes the holy mountain." [Note: Keil, 2:312.]

Verse 4-5

Then the elderly would feel secure enough to sit in the open streets again, and children would again play in the streets because they would be safe. During the destruction of Jerusalem both of these groups of Israelites had suffered greatly (Lamentations 2:21). In other words, Jerusalem would become a place of tranquillity, long life, peace, prosperity, and security for even the most defenseless of her citizens (cf. Isaiah 65:20-25). These conditions await the return of Jesus Christ at His second coming.

"In one of the most amazing and challenging statements about measurement of the health of society, Zechariah suggests that we look at the place the old and the young have in that society." [Note: Smith, p233.]

Verse 6

Even though these blessings seemed impossible to the people of Zechariah's day, they were not to assume that they would be impossible for the Lord. His promises of blessing were as hard for the returned exiles to believe as His threats of judgment had been for their ancestors previously.

Verse 7-8

Sovereign Yahweh promised to deliver His people from the distant places in the world where He had scattered them and to bring them back to live in Jerusalem (cf. Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 30:7-11; Jeremiah 31:7-8). Jerusalem stands for the whole land here (by metonymy), not "the true church of God." [Note: Leupold, p148. Cf. McComiskey, p1141.] It identifies the place where people would come to worship the Lord. There they would enjoy intimacy with Him, a relationship marked by truth and righteousness. This future Exodus depended on Yahweh's electing grace and His covenant faithfulness just as much as the original Exodus did.

"They will be my people, and I will be ... their God" is covenant terminology, pertaining to intimate fellowship in a covenant relationship (cf. Genesis 17:7-8; Exodus 6:7; Exodus 19:5-6; Exodus 29:45-46; Leviticus 11:45; Leviticus 22:33; Leviticus 25:38; Leviticus 26:12; Leviticus 26:44-45; Numbers 15:41; Deuteronomy 4:20; Deuteronomy 29:12-13; Jeremiah 31:33; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 21:3). [Note: Barker, p651.]

"This is one of the greatest and most comprehensive promises in reference to Israel's restoration and conversion to be found in the prophetic Scriptures." [Note: Baron, p237.]

Verse 9

The Lord also told the people to gain strength from the words of the prophets who had encouraged them to complete the rebuilding of the temple ever since they began the project (cf. Joshua 1:7; 2 Samuel 2:7; 2 Samuel 16:21; Haggai 2:4). These prophets were Haggai, Zechariah, and perhaps others (Ezra 5:1-2). Probably the resumption of construction in 520 B.C. (Haggai 2:18) is in view rather than the restoration of the foundation in 536 B.C. (Ezra 3:8). Between these dates the people did little work on the temple, especially between 530, 520 B.C.

Verse 10

Before the returnees began to rebuild in earnest, there was severe unemployment, so there were no wages for many of the people (cf. Haggai 1:6). Even the animals were not earning their keep. There was also no peace because the enemies of the Jews oppressed them (cf. Ezra 4:1-5; Haggai 1:6-11; Haggai 2:15-19). The Lord Himself was ultimately responsible for the antagonism that existed then.

"This verse presents a contrast of the present, when they had begun to obey the Word of God, with the past, when they did not." [Note: Unger, p140.]

Verse 11-12

The Lord promised to treat the remnant of His people differently in the future than He had in the past (cf. Haggai 2:19). Peace would prevail for the people as they sowed their seed, their fields would become productive (cf. Haggai 2:19), there would be abundant moisture so things would grow (cf. Haggai 1:10-11), and the remnant would enjoy the fruits of all these blessings. These were some of the things God had promised the Israelites for covenant obedience (Leviticus 26:3-10; Deuteronomy 28:11-12; cf. Ezekiel 34:25-27).

Verse 13

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

"Not only the two tribes [of Judah] but the ten [of Israel]. This has never yet been fulfilled." [Note: Perowne, p105. Cf. Jeremiah 31:1-31; Ezekiel 37:11-28.]

One of the purposes of these promises was to remove the Jews' present fear and give them strength to complete the temple. "Let your hands be strong" is the exhortation that frames this sixth message of encouragement (cf. Zechariah 8:9).

Verse 14-15

Yahweh of armies also promised that just as He had purposed to bring His people into difficult times because of their forefathers' sins (cf. Jeremiah 4:28; Jeremiah 51:12; Lamentations 2:17), so He would bless Jerusalem in the near future. Covenant disobedience had brought divine discipline, but covenant obedience would bring divine blessing. As He had not relented from bringing the first promise to pass, so He would not go back on the second promise. His determination was equally strong in both instances. Therefore the people should not fear (cf. Zechariah 8:13).

"These glorious eschatological promises illuminating the future of the Jews and setting before them their future national hope also came as an illustration to them of the blessing God had in store for them at that time. To describe this the prophet uses the expression in these days (Zechariah 8:15). But the benefits that were immediate *did not exhaust the full scope* of these sweeping prophetic previews.

"Like Jonah out of God's will they have caused a storm among the Gentiles. Yet in a future day, after their great tribulation, like Jonah's experience in the fish, they shall be restored to faith and obedience to minister to the nations of the millennium, as Jonah did to the Ninevites." [Note: Unger, p145.]

Verse 16-17

In view of this promise, the remnant should speak truthfully with each other. They should also practice justice and promote peace (Heb. *shalom*) in their community life. They should stop plotting to take advantage of one another and stop lying under oath because the Lord hates these things (cf. Proverbs 6:16-19; Malachi 2:16).

"One theological rationale for ethics, then, is awareness that God hates attitudes and actions contrary to his character. We are to love what God loves and hate what he hates." [Note: Barker, p653.]

Zechariah 8:14-15 explain God's part in the people's immediate restoration, and Zechariah 8:16-17 explain theirs.

(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/zechariah-8.html>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

When a relationship needs to go from bad to good, someone has to make the first move. The text for today tells of a time when God did just that. The bad relationship between God and His covenant people was wholly the fault of the people. Logically, therefore, they should have made the first move. But God in His compassion took the initiative, promising great things to His people. And so it still is: God promises great things for us when we actually deserve quite the opposite. He is determined to redeem all who are willing to acknowledge Him as sovereign Lord. Do you?

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Encouragement - Zechariah prophesied to the Jewish remnant as they were rebuilding their temple and Jerusalem. Haggai jump-started the construction program in the city, and now Zechariah offered encouragement. The prophet reminded the people of God's steadfastness—He is faithful to His promises and not like any other god.

Hope - Zechariah focused the congregation on hope in God. The city had not been completed, but Zechariah said it would be rebuilt. He affirmed God's love and promised a brand new city built on honesty and righteousness, set apart for God's purposes and plans. The Father committed Himself to establish a place where children play freely and safely in the streets and the elderly are secure also.

Unity - While the prophecy dealt with the present situation, it also foreshadowed a coming time of reunifying the nation. Jewish people from many places will one day all meet up in His holy city. At the time of the exile, the Jews worshiped all kinds of gods. However, now people would stay true to their one and only God.

Prosperity - A time would come when the crops in the land would grow and flourish, and God would bring abundant dew. Once again the economy would turn for the better, and the curse the people had felt would end. Those looking on at the time would exclaim, "Look how the Lord has blessed Israel!" God told the people to speak correctly to one another, be upright in the courts, and judge fairly.

Reflecting God - The marks of those who reflect God's character are faithfulness, truth, and holiness. Only when our lives show those things can we find true peace, the peace that only God can give us.