

# From Babylon to Jerusalem - (Zechariah)

## ch.8:14 - 10:12

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon explores the transition from Babylonian captivity to the joy and responsibilities of life in Jerusalem, emphasizing truth, humility, and the drawing of a faithful remnant to God.*

**Duration:** 59:33

**Scripture:** Zechariah 8:7-9, Zechariah 8:13, Zechariah 8:16-17, Colossians 3:11

**Topics:** "From Babylon To Jerusalem"

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### Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God is faithful to fulfill both his promises of judgment and blessings. He encourages believers not to fear, as God has proven his faithfulness throughout history. The preacher then highlights the responsibilities of believers, which include speaking the truth to one another and maintaining peace within the church. He also warns against harboring evil thoughts towards fellow believers. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the pride of mankind and how God opposes it. The preacher references various Bible verses, including Colossians 3 and Zechariah, to support his points.

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### Transcript

We turn to the book of Zechariah, chapter 8. Just read a few verses there at the end of that, which we need to read to conclude what we were studying last week. Last week we finished at verse 13, if you remember, where the Lord encouraged the people who had come back from Babylon to complete the superstructure of the temple, saying, Do not fear, let your hands be strong. And then, Zechariah continues his message to these people, and says, Thus says the Lord of Hosts, Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked me to rot, says the Lord of Hosts, and I have not relented, so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah, do not fear.

And there we read that just as God's promise of judgment upon their fathers was literally fulfilled, and they were sent to Babylon in judgment, in exactly the same way, God's word of blessing, he says, will be fulfilled in exactly the same way. The God who promised judgment and has fulfilled it, we have seen that in many situations in history, the same God, when he promises blessing, will fulfill his blessing just as really and truly and fully, and so do not fear. But he says, These are your responsibilities, and it's very important and interesting to see what the Lord lays upon his people there, as their responsibilities.

He says, These are the things which you should do. First of all, speak the truth to one another. Now it's very easy to come to an exhortation like that and think that we don't need that exhortation at all.

In Colossians 3 we read, I think it's verse 11 or so, where there's an exhortation written to believers. You know what the exhortation is? Do not tell lies to one another. It's amazing that believers need an exhortation not to tell lies to one another.

And there is a great possibility and danger of our lying to one another if we have not judged lying severely in our own flesh. Speak the truth to one another. Very important.

We tell lies because we seek honor from one another, and that is the sin. To speak the truth is to be free from honor-seeking, because sometimes speaking the truth may put me in an embarrassing position, but I'm still willing to speak the truth because I do not seek the honor of men. And judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gaze.

There must be justice and righteousness in our judgment, and the end should be peace. Truth and peace--two very important things that the Lord wants to find in the Church. Speak the truth to one another, and in your relationships with one another, when Satan tempts you in various ways, judge yourself so that there will be peace within your gaze in the Church.

And also, something for the heart. Don't let any of you devise evil in your heart against another. Watch the heart attitude towards your fellow believers.

These are things that we have heard before, but it's interesting how Zachariah repeats, the Lord repeats through Zachariah, this emphasis on being careful that even in our hearts there is no bad thought towards another person. We have to keep ourselves in goodness in our attitudes towards one another if we are to build the superstructure, press on to perfection, and build the body of Christ. And do not love a false oath.

Perjury means a false oath. That again refers to lying. A double emphasis there on avoiding all types of lying.

And we have considered that even in our earlier study. This emphasis on lying. You remember one of the visions was that, that God would judge the liars among his people especially.

For all these are what I hate. He hates those who lie, he hates those who do not seek for peace, and he hates those who devise evil in their hearts against others. These actions he hates.

Verse 18. Then the Lord said to the host, that says the Lord of hosts. You remember these people had come to Zachariah to find out whether the fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months should be continued now that they had come back to Jerusalem.

These were fasts that they had kept when they were in Babylon. And the Lord says, you won't be fasting in those days anymore. Those fasts will now become feasts of joy, gladness, cheerful feasts for the house of Judah.

And again this double emphasis, therefore, love, truth, and peace. Now when we see that all this is related to our building Jerusalem today, we see why the Lord keeps on emphasizing truth in our relationship with one another, peace in our relationship with one another. Very, very important.

Almost the two things which are never found in Babylon. You can recognize Babylonian Christians by the lack of truthfulness in their lives and the lack of peace in their relationships. But these fasts will be feasts.

And I believe that refers to the kingdom of God, which is joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is not something that brings upon us gloom. A fasting day was a day of gloom.

But the kingdom of God is joy in the Holy Spirit. There is no place for gloom in the Christian life. There is a place for fasting where there is a burden to accomplish God's purposes.

But in the Old Testament, fasting was of a different way. They used to be gloomy on those days. And Jesus said, that's not the way.

And that's what Zachariah is saying, too. That gloomy fast has to be thrown out altogether. It's a dead ritual.

The kingdom of God is joy in the Holy Spirit. And there's never a place for a true disciple of Jesus Christ to be gloomy or in a bad mood. That's basically the meaning of that verse.

Thus says the Lord of Hosts, it will yet be that people will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. And this speaks of the church, the kingdom of God, drawing people from many countries and cities as a magnet. We've often said that there are two ways to find needles in a haystack.

To find the wholehearted in a country of 700 million people like India is like trying to find a few needles in a huge haystack of 700 million pieces of straw. And how to find a few needles in the middle of this? One is to do evangelism, the common way, that is, push aside all the straws and try to find where these needles are. And the other is to be a powerful magnet outside the haystack and draw the needles out without looking for them.

And that is what is referred to here. This is the type of evangelism the church is going to be involved in, that people from many cities and the inhabitants of one will go to another saying, let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, to seek the Lord of Hosts. I will also go.

And many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem. It's not Jerusalem going out and seeking them, but they coming into Jerusalem to entreat the favor of the Lord. And thus says the Lord of Hosts, in those days, 10 men from the nations of every language will grasp the garment of a Jew.

Or we can apply that today to a wholehearted disciple of Jesus saying, let us go with you to your church, for we have heard that God is with you. You see, this is quite a different type of evangelism. This is the type of evangelism that we read in 1 Corinthians 14 verse 25.

It's a familiar passage where it says that an unbeliever comes into the midst of your meetings and he hears the different ones prophesy in the meeting. And what happens? The secrets of his heart are made manifest and he falls down and what does he confess? God is in your midst. God is with you.

That's what we see here. Let us go with you for we hear that God is with you. In other words, these people are being drawn by the Holy Spirit to the true church, to the body of Christ, almost without any effort.

It's a magnet drawing out the wholehearted. It's not that everybody will come, but the remnant, the wholehearted will be drawn and they will come. And when it says 10 men in Zechariah 8 verse 23, you

remember where that occurs in the book of Genesis when Abraham was praying for Sodom.

He said, Lord, will you spare Sodom if there are 10 men? And the Lord said, all right, if there are 10 men, if there's a remnant of 10 men in Sodom, I'll spare the whole city. And so the 10 men speak of a remnant, a remnant that can bring the blessing of God. And here is the remnant.

It doesn't say multitudes will come. 10 men, a remnant will come drawn to the body of Christ in the last days to be built up as Jerusalem. We praise God for the privilege that we can have to be a part of that body of Christ, which is being built in these days.

Now, literally, this is also going to be fulfilled in the last days, in the days when Jesus establishes his kingdom on the earth. And literally he will rule in Jerusalem for a thousand years and people from the nations will come to the Jews and say, let's come with you because we hear the Lord is reigning in Jerusalem. We have often said, and I want to repeat it again, that what is spiritually being fulfilled in the body of Christ today will literally be fulfilled in the land of Israel, in Jerusalem, in the day when Jesus returns and establishes his kingdom on earth for a thousand years.

And now we come to chapter 9. And here the Lord has a burden to be discharged through Zechariah concerning the country of Syria. And the burden of the word of the Lord is against the land of Hedrak, which means Syria, with Damascus, which is the capital of Syria, as its resting place, for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel, are toward the Lord. Now, it's interesting that these prophets use the word burden.

And the mark of a true prophet is that he has a burden. And when he has a burden, he cannot keep quiet. You read in Jeremiah 20, verse 9, that Jeremiah tried to keep quiet about the word of God because it was a word of judgment.

It says when he kept quiet about it, it was like a burning fire in his bones, and he couldn't keep quiet. He had to bring it out. That's a burden.

And these prophets had a burden that God placed upon them, something that weighed them down, a concern, a burden. And they spoke from a burden. It was not from some head knowledge they had studied somewhere in their rooms.

It was a burden God placed on their heart, and from that burden they spoke. And we read here, this burden was concerning Syria. And the Lord said to them, I have a burden.

And the last part of that verse 1 is translated in the Amplified Bible like this, reversed as to what it is here in NASB, that the Lord has his eyes on all men, and especially on the tribes of Israel. That's true. The Lord has his eyes on all men, and today especially on the church.

We read that in 1 Timothy 2, that God is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. And so we see the Lord has his eyes on all men. He's not just watching Israel, he's watching Syria.

And the Assyrians, you remember, took the ten tribes of Israel captive and punished them. And God used them to punish Israel, but now God was punishing them for their sins. God used them to punish Israel for their sins, and then God is punishing Syria for their sins.

And Hamath also, which borders on it, Tyre and Sidon. Though they are very wise, for Tyre built herself like a fortress, piled up silver like dust and gold like the mire of the streets. But the Lord will dispossess her and cast her wealth into the sea.

Now we don't want to go into too much of the detail of all this, but I just want you to notice three things, that Tyre, which is one of the big cities, it's like saying New York today, some big city, or London. Tyre was one of those great cities of that time, in the time of Zechariah. And there were three things mentioned there about Tyre which are true of men, the children of Adam.

One, their cleverness, the last part of verse two. Though they think they are very wise. Second, their human strength.

They built themselves up like a fortress, verse three. And the third is their material wealth. Piled up silver like dust and gold like the mire of the streets.

There are three things that make people proud. One is their cleverness, the second is their strength, whether physical or any other type of strength, and the third is material wealth. And you know he's going on to speak about the pride of these people in verse six.

God is against pride. A person becomes proud of these three things. Now, there's a very interesting verse in Jeremiah chapter nine, verse twenty-three.

It's good for us to look at, Jeremiah nine twenty-three. You read there in Jeremiah nine twenty-three that the three things a man should not boast about, because these are the three things a man tends to boast about, twenty-three and twenty-four. Let not the wise or the clever man boast of his cleverness, that is earthly cleverness.

Let not the mighty man boast of his might, and let not the rich man boast of his riches. There are three things particularly that we have to be careful about that we don't boast about. One is our intelligence, the other is strength of any sort, for example even physical health, we can be proud of it, or any other type of human strength.

And the third is material wealth. These are the things that tend to make a man proud, but in contrast the one who really wants to boast, let him boast in this, verse twenty-four, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord. See, that is the thing that one can really be rejoiced about.

So those are the three things mentioned in Zechariah nine, verse two and three, about Tyre. But it says here, the Lord will dispossess her and cast her wealth into the sea, and she will be consumed with fire. I just want you to know something interesting that took place in history, that this wonderful city of Tyre, which is like New York or London today, it's like Zechariah prophesying against Tyre, would be like somebody prophesying against some big city of the world today, saying it's just going to, nobody's going to live there.

You see, that's what he says later on, the whole thing is going to be cast into the sea, she'll be consumed with fire. The whole city. And that happened a little less than two hundred years after Zechariah prophesied, when Alexander the Great, the king of Greece, came against Tyre, and the word of God was literally fulfilled, that big city was burnt.

And you know what Alexander did? He literally cast his wealth into the sea, he cast the stones and the rubbish and Tyre into the sea. I want to turn you to a verse in Ezekiel 26, just to see how literally the word of God is fulfilled. In Ezekiel 26, we read about Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre.

Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, aha, that's a prophecy against Tyre. And one of the things he says there is, verse 12, Ezekiel 26, 12, they will make a spoil of your riches, and a prey of your merchandise. Break down your walls, and destroy your pleasant houses, and listen to this, they will throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water.

And verse 14, I will make you a bare rock, you'll be a place for spreading your nets, you'll be built no more. Now that's exactly what Alexander the Great did. History tells us that when Alexander the Great came to Tyre, Tyre was on the coast, and a half a mile from the coast was an island, which is also part of Tyre, where they had built this big fortress, and all the wealth of Tyre was on this island.

And they thought Alexander may come to the mainland, but it'll be difficult for him to capture the island, because it was surrounded with a fortress. So what Alexander the Great did was, he captured the coastal city, and threw all the debris of everything that was knocked down into the city, into the sea, literally, and thus connected up the island to this, to the mainland, that half mile distance was covered with this debris, and thus he went and overcame that island and captured Tyre and took away its wealth. It's amazing how exactly, as God had said through his prophets, it was literally fulfilled.

And when we think that Ezekiel prophesied that 200 years before it actually happened, we see how literally prophecy is fulfilled. We turn back to Zechariah 9, that's what we see here in Zechariah 9.4, the Lord will dispossess her, and cast her wealth into the sea, and she will be consumed with fire. And that was because of her pride.

It's all a warning for people who are proud in these areas. And it says, your Ashkelon will see it and be afraid, that's another city. Gaza too will reap in great pain.

Also Ekron, for her expectation, has been confounded, three places mentioned, which are all down the Mediterranean, on the east coast of the Mediterranean. And then, moreover, the king will perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon will not be inhabited. Now we know that Gaza is inhabited even today.

In fact, it's one of the disputed areas between Israel and Egypt. But Ashkelon, it's interesting, it doesn't say Gaza will not be inhabited. Gaza is inhabited even today.

But it says Ashkelon will not be inhabited. And Ashkelon was destroyed in the 13th century A.D. That means about 1700 years after Zechariah prophesied. For 1700 years it was inhabited, but then a day came, when the Muslim sultans of Turkey came and wiped out that place, and God's word was fulfilled and nobody lives there today.

It's amazing to see how the fulfillment of prophecy may take hundreds of years, but it is fulfilled. And a mongrel race, a mixed race that is, will dwell in Ashdod. And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

You see, it is the pride which makes God humble all these nations, and all these people who think no end of themselves. God brings down the proud and the mighty from their seats. And that is the value for us in studying these Old Testament prophecies of how God judged these nations.

It teaches us one thing, that God is against pride. And that's the reason why God's written all this in the Old Testament, to warn us of the danger of pride of any sort. And I will remove, verse 7, there we see something of God's mercy, I will remove their blood from their mouth.

You know, blood was one of the things which God had forbidden the Jews from eating. He said, when you eat an animal, make sure that the blood is poured out, and you must never eat blood. You read that in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15 also, mention about not eating blood.

But here were these idolaters among the Philistines who were eating blood, and their detestable thing is this sacrifice offered unto idols, which is in their teeth, between their teeth, and God says, I'm going to remove it all. And from the midst of this Gentile nation, here is God's mercy. There will be a remnant for God in the midst of this heathen nation as well.

After God has judged certain parts of that heathen nation, there will be a remnant there, a remnant saved out of idolatry. We see that being fulfilled in the world today, in the Church. A remnant saved out of heathen idolatrous nations.

And when they come into the Church, they will be like a clan, or like a chief, it says in the margin in Judah. In other words, when these Gentiles come into the Church, the Jews are not going to be the senior brothers, just because they came in first. There will be no partiality.

There will be no respective persons. This heathen person can be an elder brother, the chief means an elder brother, in Judah. In other words, just because the Jews came into the Church first, we know the Jews came into the Church first on the day of Pentecost, they're not going to have any seniority.

The person who came into the Church first is not necessarily going to be the elder brother, just because he's been there from the beginning. God can bring someone out much later and make him an elder brother. That's what we see here.

And Ekron, the remnant from Ekron, like a Jebusite, no respective persons. That's the point. Verse 8, here's a wonderful promise, the Lord says, I will camp around my house, that is the Church.

I will camp around my house as a guard, it says in the margin, as an army, so that no one will go back and forth. And no oppressor will pass over my house anymore. What a wonderful thing.

Who is the oppressor? That is Satan. And the Lord says, I will be like an army around my house, so that this oppressor that has moved up and down my people, oppressing them, making them his slaves, will no longer be able to do it. Because I will be like an army around my house, and the oppressor will be crushed.

Now I have seen with my eyes. It's just something similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 16, 18. I will build my church, and the gates of hell will have no power over it.

They will not be able to prevail against it. And here we see how the Lord is going to remove the oppressor. We would think that the way to remove the oppressor is by crushing him, and hitting him hard, because God has got such mighty power.

But God does not crush Satan with his mighty power. He could have done that ages ago. He is going to overcome Satan by humility.

That's the point of verse 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Because your king is coming to you. Your king is coming for what? To drive out the oppressor. But how is he going to drive out the oppressor? Is it with sword and spear? No.

He is righteous and endowed with salvation. And this is how that salvation comes. In humility, mounted on a donkey.

Think of that. Think of God's way of driving out the enemy. Not with a horse and a bow and arrow, and a sword and a spear, speaking of crushing Satan with power, but with humility.

You see, it's a shame to ride on a donkey. Just think of that. Just picture in your mind, if you see somebody down the road riding on a donkey.

To see somebody riding on a horse, that's something majestic. That's something great in the eyes of men. But just imagine somebody riding on a donkey down the road.

It's something to laugh at. And just think that Jesus had come to destroy all that was big and great in the eyes of men in his life. He was determined.

If they had given him a horse, he wouldn't ride on it. He was determined to root out all that was big and great in the eyes of men. And he rode on a donkey.

There's a lesson there for us, brothers and sisters. And thus, the oppressor was driven out. Thus, Jesus could say, the prince of the world comes and he has got nothing in him.

If Jesus had ridden on a horse, there would have been something in him. But when he came on a donkey, the prince of the world had nothing in him. Nothing.

There was nothing of that world's empty pride and show and vanity found in Jesus. He came mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Now, this is in contrast to the king mentioned in verse 5. There's another king who will perish from Gaza, who is cut off, verse 6, because of the pride.

That king was cut off because of his pride. And verse 5 and 6 is contrasted with the king in Jerusalem who rules through humility. That's the contrast here.

And that's the difference between Babylon and Jerusalem. In Babylon, the elders rule with earthly greatness and earthly power. But in Jerusalem, the eldership is on the basis of humility.

In Matthew 21, you know this verse is quoted there, in case you don't know it. Matthew chapter 21, we read. Matthew 21, we read in the first five verses that the Lord told his disciples to go to Jerusalem and to bring, go to the village opposite you, verse 2, and bring a donkey and a colt, bring them to me.

And he rode upon them so that it could be fulfilled, verse 4, what the prophet Zechariah had said, saying, say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming to you, gentle mounted on a donkey, and so on. That was fulfilled when Jesus rode upon that donkey into Jerusalem. And the reason of his riding into that city of Jerusalem was as it were to say, one day, I'm going to build a true Jerusalem with this spirit, with this spirit of riding on a donkey.

And that's the way to come into Jerusalem, brothers and sisters. There's no room to come to Jerusalem riding on a horse. You've got to go to Babylon if you're on a horse.

The way we come into the true church is riding on a donkey, despising that which is great in the eyes of men. That's how we build the church. That's how we preserve the church, with that reproach of riding on a donkey, because our eldest brother, that's how he came to Jerusalem.

And that's where we follow in his footsteps. So let's learn that lesson and never forget it. There is a time, we read in Revelation 19, 11, when Jesus will come on a horse for judgment.

And that is a future day. But today he rides on a donkey, even today. We need to see this difference.

Jesus riding on a donkey in Matthew 21, and Jesus riding on a horse in Revelation 19 when he comes in glory. To learn a lesson for ourselves, that today, it's the donkey that we need, not the horse. One day, when Jesus comes and our bodies are transformed, then we can ride the horse.

And you understand the significance. That human greatness and human power is not for us today. Today it is in meekness and weakness and gentleness and humility that we carry on building the church.

The donkey is the animal, the symbol for us, not the horse. That's what God has called us to be. Particularly those who have just started riding a scooter for the first time, maybe the first time they've got one, particularly if they are young people.

And the way they ride itself you can make out there is something of pride and arrogance and showing off. We don't see people riding horses, but we see people riding scooters and we can learn something from that. There is a spirit there.

There we can see the spirit of the rider of the horse. Think of riding on a donkey, when this man who has ridden a scooter is pushed down to the level of riding a cycle or something like that. And then you see something there.

That's a different spirit altogether. That's a modern day illustration to help us to understand something of the meaning here, the difference between the horse and the donkey. Well, that's the spirit in the church.

There is none of that human greatness and show and pomp in the church. Now cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. He's certainly going to do that.

We're going to get rid of the horse from Jerusalem, we're going to bring the donkeys in. Get rid of all these chariots, all this human greatness, because those are the instruments through which people fight. And it's because of the horses that there is fighting in Babylon.

The people want the horses and the chariots and so along with them comes the bow of war as well. But in Jerusalem, the horse is going to be driven out, the chariots are going to be driven out and therefore the bow of war will also be driven out, praise God. In humility we dwell together and therefore we have peace.

It's easy to have peace if we drive out the horses and bring in the donkeys, I'll tell you that. And he will speak peace to the nations. And his dominion will be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

That means that's the way of expressing the Old Testament to say that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will rule the whole world. Today it's happening in the church, that to the uttermost parts of the earth, as Jesus said in Acts 1.8, God is raising up a remnant here and there across the face of the earth in every nation. A remnant of people who are wholeheartedly seeking to be the body of Christ in these days.

But what is spiritually happening in a small number in the church around the world is going to literally happen when Jesus Christ rules in Jerusalem and the literal horse and bow and weapons of war will be cut off and there will be peace on the earth for a thousand years and his dominion will be across the whole earth. So what's referred to in verse 10 is spiritually happening in the church today and will literally happen in the world from the literal Jerusalem in the middle of Israel when Jesus returns. And then he goes on on the same subject.

As for you, it's because of the blood of my covenant with you that I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. The waterless pit could refer to the lake of fire where the rich man who was burning wanted one drop of water on his tongue. There is only one way to be saved from that, and that is through the blood of the new covenant with Jesus shed on Calvary's cross.

There is no other way of salvation from that waterless pit. It is through that blood of the covenant that we are set free, and every one of us who is in the church needs to be established on that, the value of that blood of the covenant. But that blood of the covenant not only saves us from hell, and here's the important thing, it's meant to save us from Babylonian Christianity as well.

For Babylonian Christianity is another waterless pit, a pit without the water of the Holy Spirit. It counterfeits spirits. And the blood of the covenant has come to save us not only from the waterless pit of hell, but from the waterless pit of Babylonian Christianity, dry as dust.

A waterless pit. Return to the stronghold, and that stronghold is Jesus Christ, and it is the church. And here is Zachariah prophesying, come out of Babylon, that waterless pit, and come into Jerusalem, the stronghold around which the Lord is like a wall of fire.

O prisoners who have the hope, this very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you. You remember what Jeremiah prophesied when he said that, I know the thoughts and plans I have towards you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare to give you a future and a hope, not plans for calamity. And so, the Lord's promise is that I will restore double to you, a promise of blessing.

Just like after he had taken Job through a period of affliction, the word of God says, finally, Job 42.10, the Lord gave Job double. That's always God's end. James says, think of Job and think of the end of the Lord, James 5. The Lord is full of compassion, longing to give us double.

For I will now bend Judah as my bow, and I will fill the bowl with Ephraim. Judah refers to the two tribes in the south, Ephraim refers to the ten tribes in the north, who were two separate kingdoms. But these two are going to be united, and they are going to function together against the enemy.

Judah is going to be the bow, Ephraim is going to be the arrow. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece. And I will make you like a warrior's sword.

Here are two brothers. They were brothers, Judah and Israel, they fought with each other. And instead of fighting the enemy, they were fighting with each other.

They became two groups. But now the Lord says, I'm going to make you one. The Jew and the Gentile is going to be one.

This brother and that brother from different backgrounds who couldn't get along with each other, they're going to be one. And one is going to be the bow, and the other is going to be the arrow. And they're going

to cooperate with each other in their fight against the enemy.

They're not going to fight with each other. That's the point. And I will make them together like a sword against the Grecian enemies.

And that speaks of the spirit of the Antichrist. Now again, there was a literal fulfillment of this in Israel. When we studied the book of Daniel chapter 11, we studied a little bit about it, about the Maccabean brothers who fought against Antiochus Epiphanes.

The sons of Zion fought against the Grecian leader, Antiochus. What is literally fulfilled in Israel is spiritually fulfilled in the church. And then the Lord will appear over them.

Now all these verses, right down to verse 17, again is going to be literally fulfilled when Jesus appears in glory. You could take it to refer to the second coming of Christ. It says the Lord will blow a trumpet and He'll go forth like lightning.

Suddenly He will appear and He'll blow the trumpet and the Lord of hosts will defend them when He comes down against the armies of the Antichrist in Jerusalem in that final battle of Armageddon. That's referred to here and how He will save His people, verse 16, but also spiritually applying to the church today. The Lord will appear over them.

He does appear over us. His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord will blow the trumpet and that is in the church.

He will march in the storm winds of the cloud of the south. The Lord of hosts will defend them. They will devour and trample on the sling stones, that is, overcome the sling stones of the enemy.

They will drink and be boisterous as with wine, and this is what happened on the day of Pentecost when they were filled with the new wine of the Holy Spirit, and they will be filled like a sacrificial basin, drenched like the corners of the altar, and the Lord their God will save them physically from the armies of the Antichrist in the future day, spiritually today from all sin. He will save them in that day when they are filled with the new wine, referred to in verse 15, as the flock of His people, that is, the New Testament church, for they are as the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land. This is what God wants His children to be, for what comeliness and beauty will be theirs.

When the beauty of Jesus Christ, of the divine nature, comes upon His people, the word of God says, what comeliness and what beauty will be theirs, what was His will be theirs, and grain will make the young men flourish and new wine the virgins, referring to the ministry of the word of God and the Holy Spirit that is going to refresh the young people, the young men and the young sisters upon whom the Spirit will be poured out, and the beauty that is going to be ours more completely in the day when Jesus returns and comes over us and blows the trumpet, as mentioned in verse 14, we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him. Therefore, he who has this hope, written in verse 12, prisoners who have this hope, that's what we read in 1 John 3.3, he who has this hope of having His beauty upon him one day will purify himself as He is pure. It's amazing to see all these things way back there in the Old Testament, how Zachariah prophesied, he was one of the last prophets before the coming of the new age, and Malachi was the only prophet after him.

It was the preparation of that new age that was coming. Now we come to chapter 10. Here it says, Ask rain from the Lord at the time of the spring rain or the latter rain, and this again is a reference to the Holy

Spirit.

Ask and you will receive. You know that verse we have considered in Luke 11.13, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. And that's why it says, Ask rain from the Lord at the time of the latter rain.

Now we would think that at the time of the latter rain there's no need to pray for rain because the rain will automatically come. And that's the attitude that many believers take. We don't need to ask for the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will automatically come.

But notice what it says. At the time of the latter rain, in the period when the Spirit is being outpoured, that is the time of the latter rain, you must ask personally for that rain upon your own life. And there's a very beautiful illustration of this in the Old Testament if you turn to 1 Kings chapter 18.

And I feel this is a beautiful picture of our asking God for the Holy Spirit's power to come upon our life. 1 Kings chapter 18 verse 1. After many days of drought, there was a long period of three and a half years without rain. We could say it was a long dry period, referring to all that period prior to the day of Pentecost in the history of the human race.

And then came the time, the day of Pentecost. 1 Kings 18.1. The Lord said to Elijah in the third year, saying, I will send rain on the face of the earth. That's a promise, symbolically, of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

That was God's word. Now Elijah could have said, well God has said he'll send rain, his word cannot be broken. I can just go and sit back on my easy chair and the rain will fall.

But that's exactly what Elijah did not do. You know what he did. We read in 1 Kings 18, verse 41.

Sorry, verse 42. Ahab went to eat and drink. You see, Elijah said to Ahab in verse 41, there's a sound of a heavy shower.

And Ahab was the one who went and sat on the easy chair. But Elijah didn't go and sit on the easy chair. He went to the top of Carmel and he began to pray.

And you know what he was praying for? For rain. You see, God's word alone is not enough. There must be the prayer of the man of God, based on God's word.

God had said, I'll send rain. Elijah says, now Lord, send the rain. And he sends his servant.

See, the servant comes back and says, no cloud. Seven times he prayed. And the seventh time, he came back and said, yeah, I see a little bit now there.

Not the full outpouring yet, but a little bit. And that is how we are to pray for the Holy Spirit. There are some people who wait for the Holy Spirit like Ahab.

They eat and they drink. And they sit back in their easy chairs and say, yes, God will do it. I'll tell you this, we won't get any more of the Holy Spirit than Ahab got.

But there are others like Elijah, who even if God has said, I'll send rain, they say, fine, now I've got to ask God for it. And he prays. He just doesn't pray once and take it by faith.

He prays a second time. He's not going to take it by faith. He wants it literally, a literal rain.

And he doesn't take it by faith the third time. He says, I'm going to keep on praying till I at least get that assurance that God's heard. And when did he stop praying? Not when the rain came.

When he saw a cloud the size of a man's hand. He got a witness that God has heard his prayer. Then he got up.

That's the time we need to get up. When we have that witness that God has heard and answered prayers. Maybe only a cloud the size of a man's hand.

But it will become a downpour in a short time. And it became a downpour. And so you see, that's the difference between Elijah and Ahab.

And that's the difference between many people in these days of the latter rain as well. They don't ask. They just sit and wait and nothing happens.

And they go through their whole life and nothing happens. We need to ask. And when we feel dry and all withered up, we need to ask again.

That's the verse we need to keep in mind always. Ask. And Jesus said, knock and knock and knock and it will be open to you.

How much more shall you heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. So it says here, ask rain from the Lord at the time of the spring rain. The Lord who makes the storm clouds, he will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to each man.

There's going to be food, fruit, in the field as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Then he goes on to say about the false prophets, the idols speak iniquity and the diviners see lying visions and tell false dreams. And I'll tell you this, there are a lot of such diviners in charismatic circles and Pentecostal circles today who are seeing lying visions and tell false dreams, who seek to speak about a vision and a dream in the church for getting honor, for getting a name for themselves and try to imagine that they have seen a vision.

Imagine that they have seen an angel and even imagine that they have seen Jesus Christ come and speak to them in their room. I've heard people say that, that they saw Jesus Christ come and speak to them in their room. But I always tell such people that if Jesus Christ came to your room then he's already come back a second time, then what we are waiting for is the third time for him to come back.

But the thing is, he's appeared apparently to so many people in their rooms that we are probably waiting the 40th coming of Jesus Christ or the 50th coming of Jesus Christ because people say he's already come into their room sometime and talked to them. I just want to tell you that's a deception. Jesus has not come back to the earth.

And when they shall say to you, he has come here and he has come there and he has come in that room and that brother's room and the other brother's room, what did Jesus say? Don't, don't believe it. Think of the believers who are believing it. Even though Jesus said it.

Has he come back a second time? He has not. No apostle saw Jesus Christ on earth after he ascended up to glory, not even Paul. He saw him there at the right hand.

Stephen saw him at the right hand. Paul saw him up there on the Damascus road. None of them said Jesus came into their room.

This is a great deception that's going on in the 20th century, but it's a fulfillment of what Jesus said. They shall say he is there. He is there.

He's in that secret chamber in the room when the door was locked up. He came there exactly like people say today. Read that in Matthew 24.

He came in the secret room they say. Jesus said, don't believe them. False dreams, lying visions.

How do we know that it's a lying vision? It does not lead people to godliness. It just leads to the exaltation of that so-called prophet, that so-called healer, that so-called preacher. It does not lead the followers to godliness.

And I say that's the proof that it's a false vision and a lying dream. They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep.

That is the result of all these lying visions and saying that Jesus came and talked to me in my room. What is the condition of the people? They wander like sheep afflicted without a shepherd. Do you see the result of following these types of leaders? Sheep without a shepherd.

That's how it was in Jesus' days. We read in Matthew 9.36. He looked around and saw the people like sheep without a shepherd. There were people in those days with lying visions and false dreams.

And we see a duplication of that in the 20th century. Therefore the anger is kindled against the shepherds. He's against all these false shepherds.

And I will punish the male goats. The male goats are the ones who are supposed to be a little more senior, but just going astray themselves. The Lord of hosts has visited his flock.

That's the true church, the house of Judah. And he will make them like his majestic horse in battle. And then in verse 4 we are given four titles of Jesus Christ who is in the midst of his church.

First of all it says, from Judah, from the true church, will come the cornerstone, that is Jesus. That was literally fulfilled, that Jesus came of the tribe of Judah. Mary and Joseph were both of the tribe of Judah.

The cornerstone, Jesus the cornerstone. The tent peg. Jesus is called the tent peg.

You know, in the olden days they used to live in tents and there was a central pole on which the whole tent rested. If you took away that pole, the tent collapsed. And that was just like the cornerstone of a building.

The central pole of the tent, which is the church. And from them the bow of battle. That's another title given to Jesus Christ, the one who is the bow from which the arrows, that's you and I, are fired against the enemy.

And the fourth title is the ruler, or as the margin says, the oppressor. Jesus is the oppressor of the oppressor. We read earlier about the oppressor called the devil, in the previous chapter, chapter 9 verse 8. Now here we read about Jesus as the oppressor of the oppressor.

He's the one who's going to oppress Satan and drive him off. Four wonderful titles of Jesus Christ. And then it speaks about the overcomers.

Just like we see in Revelation. Jesus and the overcomers. And they, verse 5, will be as mighty men, these who are standing with the lamb on Mount Zion, 144,000, treading down the enemy, he shall crush Satan under your feet, Romans 16, 20, treading down the enemy in the mire of the streets in battle, and they will fight, for the Lord will be with them.

Who are they? These are the people who have asked for rain, verse 1, in the time of the latter rain. These are the people who are not following these false shepherds described in verse 2 and 3, but who are joined to the cornerstone, the tent peg, the bull, and the ruler. And they will fight, and the riders on horses will be put to shame.

These ones who are on donkeys are going to defeat the ones who are on the horses. And I shall strengthen the house of Judah, and I shall save the house of Joseph. Notice again the two tribes mentioned.

Judah, the northern two kingdoms, and Joseph, representing the northern ten kingdoms, again brought together. This comes a number of times in these prophets related to the restoration of God's people from Babylon to Jerusalem. This emphasis that these two groups will become one, the two groups will become one, the two groups will become one, repeated again and again and again.

That is the will of God. And that is why unity is so important in God's eyes. Two different sets of people, but God is going to make them one.

I will strengthen the house of Judah, I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them back, because I have had compassion on them, and they will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the Lord their God, and I will answer them. That refers to these two groups of people being brought back from Babylon, the twelve tribes. They went out separately, but they were brought back together.

Just to repeat a little bit of that Old Testament history, in case we have forgotten, Solomon was the son of David, and he started out well, but he went astray, worshipping idols and going after women. And therefore God punished the nation of Israel in the time of Solomon's son Rehoboam, and the nation of Israel, which had twelve tribes, were split into two. They became two denominations.

The southern one was Judah and Benjamin, that was one group. All the other ten were in the north, and they were always against each other. And the northern kingdom went into idolatry sooner, and so about three or four hundred years after the time of David, the northern kingdom was taken captive by the king of Assyria, about seven hundred and thirty years before Christ.

And the southern kingdom saw this and said, see, they are the ones who went into captivity. They are the backsliders, and we are the ones whom God is going to honour. But God sent his prophets and said, be careful, the same thing will happen to you if you don't repent.

And a hundred years later, the same thing happened to the southern kingdom. The king of Babylon, by the time Assyria had been defeated, Babylon came and took the southern kingdom into captivity. There were two groups, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom.

Both fell, and both were taken into captivity. But when they came back from captivity, from Babylon back to Jerusalem, God brought them back together. From Babylon they came to Jerusalem, and when they came back to Jerusalem, they were no longer belonging to this tribe or that tribe.

They were one. And that's how it is in the church. That's the meaning of these two groups being brought together.

The different communities, the different backgrounds, the different languages, the Lord brings them together and makes them one in the church. This is the Old Testament picture. And it will be as though I have not rejected them.

It will be as though the Lord had accepted them all along. In other words, he's going to forget the past. That is the meaning of justification.

The Lord will look upon us as though we had never sinned in our life. And the last seven, verses seven to twelve, is again, as I say, literally going to be fulfilled in Israel. We can read through it spiritually in the church.

It's very interesting to see. Ephraim will be like a mighty man. Their heart will be glad as if from wine.

Indeed their children will see it and be glad. Their heart will rejoice in the Lord. God has a plan for the children of those who have come out into the church as well, that they will see this life and rejoice.

And their heart should rejoice in the Lord. I will whistle for them, means I will call them to gather them together in the church, for I have redeemed them. They will be as numerous as they were before.

Now we see this literally happening in Israel. You see, it's very interesting to see the development in the last forty years or so, particularly in this century, particularly since the beginning of this century. God is gathering the Jews back to Israel, and throughout the world He's gathering the wholehearted spiritually to build the body of Christ.

These two things are going on simultaneously. And the Jew is coming back to Israel, and the wholehearted are coming to the spiritual Jerusalem. When I scatter them among the peoples, they will remember me in far countries, and that's where the Jews remember.

And that's where the wholehearted remember the Lord in Babylon. And they, with their children, will live and come back. Praise God, and we pray that that will be true, that our coming back to Jerusalem will be with our children.

And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt, gather them from Assyria, and I'll bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon. I just want to mention this. Gilead is today what is known as Jordan, the country of Jordan.

Lebanon is Lebanon. And it's very interesting that it says here that the Lord is going to bring the Israelites not only into Lebanon, He's also going to bring them into Jordan. We've seen Israel go into parts of Lebanon, but it says here it's going to occupy parts of Jordan as well in the coming day.

We'll see that fulfilled before our eyes, until no room can be found for them. And He will pass through the sea of distress and strike the waves in the sea, so that all the depths of the Nile will dry up. This is speaking about people being brought out of Egypt.

And the pride of Assyria will be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt will depart, and I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in His name they will walk, declares the Lord. This speaks of the Jews being brought back. The drying up of the Nile means the power of Egypt will not be able to hold the Jews down, the pride of Assyria will not be able to hold the Jews down.

From different nations they will come back to Israel, occupy the land. And the day will come when Jesus comes back in glory, when they will look upon Him whom they pierced 2000 years ago on Calvary, and the wholehearted God-fearing among them will be converted. And in that sense, all Israel will be saved.

The wholehearted will be saved in that day. And referring to them it says in verse 12, I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in His name, in that name of Jesus Christ which they despise today, they will walk. It's really exciting to see what God is doing in the nation of Israel in our day and age.

And we see the beginning of that from 1948 and from 1967 when Israel occupied Jerusalem. We will see a much greater fulfilment in the days to come as Israel occupies the land and things are getting ready for the reign of the Antichrist, the battle of Armageddon, and the coming of Jesus Christ in glory. This is why we believe that we are living in the most privileged generation in the history of the Church.

We believe that there is a very real possibility of our being alive when Jesus comes. And therefore, he who has this hope will purify himself as he is pure, so that we can be ready for his coming.

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