## ZECHARIAH 8

## Review...

- Zechariah 38<sup>th</sup> book of the Old Testament the 11<sup>th</sup> of what is known as the 12 Minor Prophets
  - o In 520 B.C. in the second year of King Darius the Great of the Medo-Persian Empire...
  - o God raised up 2 prophets Haggai / Zechariah (remembered) to rebuild the Temple!
- Zechariah is broken up into five sections:
  - o **Zechariah 1:1-6** The first prophecy comes 2 months after the rebuilding the Temple began...
  - o **Zechariah 1:7-6:15** In the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of King Darius...
  - o God gave a series of eight visions all in one night to the prophet!
  - o  $1^{st}$  the 4 horsemen /  $2^{nd}$  the 4 horns /  $3^{rd}$  the measuring tape /  $4^{th}$  Joshua the priest
  - o 5<sup>th</sup> the golden Lampstand / 6<sup>th</sup> flying scroll / 7<sup>th</sup> woman in a basket...
  - o The 8<sup>th</sup> and final vision 4 chariots that came riding out between 2 bronze mountains...
  - o The idea being these chariots came from God to wage war bring judgment!
  - o The chapter ended with the crowing of the High Priest BOTH Priest and King Jesus!
- **Zechariah 7-8** Two years later God gave a Word about fasting....
  - o The people came to the Altar and asked whether they should still fast in the  $5^{th}$  month...
    - The  $9^{th}$  of Av ( $5^{th}$  month) is a solemn fast in Israel to this day destruction of both Temples...
    - God asked did they fast for Him or for themselves the implied answer is it was for them!
    - It was not done out of a reverence for the Lord it was just empty tradition!
  - o So God answered what the people should have done was obey the Word of the Lord...
    - If they had they would not have ended up in captivity the Temple would still be there!
    - But instead of listening the people of Israel had shrugged their shoulders...
    - Or they plugged their ears so the Word could not convict them...
    - It made their hearts like flint (diamond) HARD refusing to hear what the Spirit said!
    - Therefore because they refused to listen to the Lord the Lord refused to listen to them!
- Zechariah 9-11 The first Burden addresses the first Advent of Christ
- Zechariah 12-14 The second Burden addresses the second Advent of Christ

## THE END OF FASTING... (3 THINGS)

- $1^{ST}$  The promise... vs. 1-8
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> The Lord of Hosts is ZEALOUS for Zion... vs. 1-3
    - Zion is the name of one of the mountains (hills) that Jerusalem sits on...
      - But it is often given as a reference to the city of Jerusalem as a whole...
      - The term ZEALOUS is repeated 3 times in verse 2 the Lord is VERY ZEALOUS!
      - I like the way the NTL puts it 'the Lord is consumed with passion for Jerusalem'!
      - They shrugged their shoulders / plugged their ears / had hearts as hard as flint...
      - But in spite the wickedness of the people God WOULD NOT give up on them!
      - There is A VERY destructive doctrine commonly taught today in many churches...
      - It states God has rejected Israel and been replaced by the church...
      - Galatians 6:16 "Peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."
      - The reason is because Israel betrayed and crucified Jesus Christ...
      - Matthew 27:25 "All the people... said, "His blood be on us and on our children."
      - This doctrine has led to intense persecution of the Jews by the church over the centuries!
      - Yet in **Romans 11:1** Paul uses himself as an example God is not done with Israel...
      - In fact all of the Apostles and everyone in the church up to Acts 10 were Jews!

- They are proof that God has not rejected Israel Jews were/are still being saved...
- Because God has not cast away Israel He promised they would always be His people...
- As long as the sun rises waves crash on the seashore Israel is Gods nation!
- Jeremiah 31:36 "I am as likely to reject Israel as I am to do away with the laws of nature!"
- The Lord promised He would come back to Israel...
  - Ezekiel 10:4/18 the Glory of the Lord departed from the Temple...
  - Ezekiel 11:23 "and the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city..."
  - The presence of God the Glory of the Lord had abandoned Israel because of their sin!
  - But He would return to Zion call the forsaken city of Jerusalem His home once again...
  - And when He did Jerusalem would change it would become the city of Truth...
  - It would become the Mountain of the Lord of Hosts / a Holy (Kadosh) mountain!
  - When we study the history of Israel we find a sorted and often shameful past...
  - The people of God were often anything but people who actually followed God...
  - But I LOVE the patience of God that is revealed in how He deals with Israel...
  - There are consequences to their actions and rebellion but He never stops loving them!
  - In the same way we can frustrate the work of God in our live loose His presence...
  - But He will never give up on us and He is ALWAYS willing to come back...
  - All it takes is turning back to God and we once again become the Home of the Lord!
  - He takes away all of our failures and makes us Holy set apart once more for Him!
- o 2<sup>nd</sup> The restoration of Jerusalem... vs. 4-5
  - God promises to give two signs that He has returned:
  - Old men will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem...
    - War / famine / and disease had plagued Israel because of their rebellion...
    - Making old age a rare trait among the people most did not live to see their golden years...
    - But God would again bring back the men who are old enough to need canes to walk!
    - **Isaiah 65:20** "No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred!"
    - Since 1900 the average life span in America has increased by almost 30 years (78 today)...
    - A fact that most would credit to the prosperity and healthcare in the US...
    - But interestingly a statistic that has been on the decline the past few years
    - A long life is not the result of better medical care or lots of money...
    - God is the one who keeps wars at bay keeps disease / famine from culling a generation...
    - A long life is one of the signs of a blessing from God on a nation!
  - The streets will be full of young boys and girls playing in the street...
    - When there is strife in a land people fear to let their children outside!
    - When I was a kid we would leave the house at sunrise and not come back till sunset...
    - People did not fear for their children they felt safe letting their kids out...
    - But sadly that is not the way it is today the streets are empty...
    - People fear predators wicked influences a country besieged by corruption!
- o  $3^{rd}$  The impossible made possible... vs. 6-8
  - This promise seemed MARVELOUS (impossible) to the remnant of Israel...
    - A small rag tag group of refugees huddling in a the ruins of a rebellious city...
    - How could they be 'the City of Truth' with young and old alike filling its streets!
    - But as impossible as it seemed to them that did not make it look impossible to God!
  - God would bring His people home...
    - He would save His people from the lands to the east and west return the Diaspora...
    - They would come back and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem...
    - They would again be His people and He would be their God in truth and righteousness!

- Since 1948 Jewish population in Israel has surged to over 6 million...
- There are more Jews living in Israel today than any other nation on earth...
- **Isaiah 43-5-6** "I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west... Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth."
- If we look at the MOUNUMENTAL problems in our lives we become overwhelmed...
- We think it MARVELOUS when God says that He can heal / provide / rescue us...
- But the only reason we marvel is because we limit God to our abilities / understanding...
- He who created the universe with a word has no limitations if we will only run to Him!
- But it is worth noting the timing of the fulfillment it did not happen in a moment!
- $\bullet \quad 2^{ND} \text{THE commands... vs. } 9-17$ 
  - o 1st Obey and build the Temple... vs. 9-13
    - In the mean time Lord commanded the people to let their hands be strong...
      - They had a part to play they had a Temple that needed to be rebuilt...
      - They had been working on the Temple for 2 years but had 2 years still to go 516 BC...
      - And even thought their eyes might not see the total fulfillment of the promise of the Lord...
      - As long as they obeyed the Lord the blessing of the Lord would flow!
    - Before they began to work on the Temple...
      - There was no work no wages for either man or animal...
      - There was no peace there were enemies on all sides everyone against his neighbor...
      - There was no fruit the people sowed but did not reap anything **Haggai 5:5-7**
      - There was a curse Judah was known among the nations for being CURSED!
      - We all know what it is like to fail in life cursed we have all experienced disappointment...
      - Maybe we have faced / or are facing the frustration of always coming up short...
      - No matter what we do not matter how hard we try it just seems to fail!
      - The key to success in life is putting things in their proper order...
      - We must learn to put God first then we will find blessings from the Lord...
      - Blessings in life do not come from what we do but who we know!
      - Luke 12:31 "Seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you."
      - **Psalm 1:3** "Blessed is the man who delights in the Lord... whatever he does prospers."
    - But now that the work on the Temple was underway...
      - God would deal with His people the way He had in former / better times...
      - The harvest would be plentiful because the Lord would rain down the dew...
      - God would save Israel make them a symbol of BESSINGS to the nations...
      - Therefore they had no reason to be afraid instead their hands could be strong and build!
      - Not that God needed them to build the Temple God did not need a building...
      - **Isaiah 66:1** "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool..."
      - But God wanted His people to invest their lives in Him!
      - We talk a lot about volunteering put an emphasis on plugging in at the church…
      - Not because God need our help or because of some obligation to the church...
      - It is for our sakes it is an opportunity for us to invest our time in the Lord!
      - That is why I love it when people step out not because of a need (*God takes care of that*)...
      - But cause I know what it will do to their relationship with God the blessings it will bring!
  - o 2<sup>nd</sup> Believe and do not fear... vs. 14-15
    - Just as God was determined to punish Israel when Israel rebelled and provoked him...
      - And He would not relent there was no changing His mind!
      - Now God was determined to do good to Jerusalem nothing was going to change His mind!
      - Therefore the people had no reason to fear the second time God says 'do not fear'!

- But notice the promise to not fear is only for those who were investing in the Lord...
- We would do most anything to make sure our kids have everything they need...
- But we are not willing to make the same sacrifices for someone else's children!
- God does not give any promises to provide to those who belong to this world...
- But God does promises to take care of His kids those who have faith in Jesus!
- But what does it mean to have faith that is a bit of an ambiguous term...
- Perhaps a better word is TRUST we have no reason to FEAR as long as we TRUST in Jesus!
- And there is ONLY ONE WAY to build trust and that is to spend time with someone...
- Therefore the more time we spend with Jesus the more we TRUST the less we FEAR!
- II Timothy 1:7 "God has not given us a spirit of fear... but of power, love..."
- Jesus would say the same thing in **Luke 12:32** 'fear not'...
  - But He adds perspective why we should not fear our Father does not just what we need...
  - He wants to give us His whole kingdom bless us beyond imagination!
  - In Christ we have become heirs to all that God has joint heirs with Jesus Romans 8:17
  - To the extent we will even sit on Jesus throne with Him Revelation 3:21
  - Are we sure ABSOLUTELY God will NOT CHANGE His mind!
  - Often times we are left to wonder if God can/will take care of our needs...
  - God does not just want to provide for our needs we are heirs to His Kingdom!
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Walk and be an example... vs. 16-17
  - It was not enough to just OBEY and BELIEVE...
  - God wanted His people to WALK as His children be HOLY / be an example...
  - $1^{st}$  They were to tell the truth each man to his neighbor...
    - In the world there are levels of lies little lies / white lies / half truths...
    - But for us there is just the truth and then there is a lie no middle ground...
    - If we are not telling all of the truth then we are telling a complete lie!
    - And there is ever a good reason not to tell the truth...
    - Such as if it keeps someone from having hurt feelings 'how do I look' ugly!
    - The end does not justify the means it is as much about the journey as the destination...
    - There is never a good reason to lie it is depending on our efforts / wisdom...
    - Better to be honest tell the truth and trust in/depend on the Lord!
  - $2^{nd}$  They were to give judgment in the gates (*speaking of the courts*)...
    - The judges were to judge in truth and justice which would bring peace...
    - Because when there is true justice the lawless fear / and the righteous rejoice!
    - **Proverbs 29:2** "When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan."
    - I laughed this this week when I read an article about recent legal decisions in California...
    - Convicts illegal immigrants were pardoned / but coffee was listed as dangerous!
    - Sometimes we wonder if there will ever be real justice perhaps not in California...
    - But ultimately God will judge fairly and righteously the actions of all men...
    - So pray for those who are leaders those entrusted with the justice of the nation...
    - Pray they will be righteous God fearing rulers who listen to and obey God...
    - Pray because if they are not they will be held accountable James 3:1
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> They were to not think/plot evil in your heart against your neighbor...
    - This particular command stands out because it was not an action / but a thought...
    - They people were not just to be Holy in their actions it was also in their thoughts!
    - Our minds are literally a battleground for the control of our actions **Galatians 5:17**...
    - Do we choose to live for pleasure/the moment or do we live for the Lord...
    - Many face constant defeat because they try and fight the war in their own strength...

- The only way to win the battle is to let Jesus fight for us...
- As we abide in Him John 15:4-5 He fight and wins the war for us makes us HOLY!
- 4<sup>th</sup> They were not to give false oaths...
  - Those who do not know Jesus do not tend to value their word...
  - They will often attempt to reinforce their word to assure you they are not lying...
  - They will tell you what you want to hear or even flat out lie to your face...
  - But God expects us to be men and women of our word...
  - We should not be taking oaths we should just do what we say!
  - Matthew 5:37 "'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one."
- 3<sup>RD</sup> THE RESULTS... vs. 18-23
  - o 1st The end of fasting... vs. 18-19
    - In answer to the original question from chapter 7 should Israel still fast in the 5<sup>th</sup> month...
    - All of the fasts 4 different months commemorating aspects of the fall of Jerusalem...
    - 4<sup>th</sup> month wall of Jerusalem II Kings 25:3/5<sup>th</sup> month Temple destroyed Jeremiah 52:12
    - 7<sup>th</sup> month death of Gedeliah- II Kings 25:25 / 10<sup>th</sup> month start of siege- Jeremiah 52:4
    - Would turn from fasts of mourning into feasts of celebration! Love truth and Peace!
    - God has given us incredible promises in spite of our failures and sin...
    - Too often we want to hold onto our past mourn the dates of our failures...
    - But God wants to take those same dates and make them days of celebration...
    - Because it was through those failures that we learned to depend on Him!
    - It was through them we learned to OBEY and invest in the things of the Lord...
    - We learned we learned to BELIEVE and all of our fears were wiped out in perfect trust...
    - We learned to WALK and were made HOLY and an example as children of God!
    - Isaiah 61:3 "To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning..."
  - o 2<sup>nd</sup> Many will seek the Lord... vs. 20-23
    - In those days people from all over the world will come to Jerusalem...
      - People from one city will go to another city and say let us go and pray / seek the Lord...
      - Many people even from powerful nations will come to seek the Lord...
      - $\bullet \hspace{0.4cm}$  In that day 10 men from different languages / nations will grab the sleeve of a Jew...
      - Asking to go with him because the they have heard God is with them!
      - Yalak (we will go) / Shama (we have heard) Eloheem (God)!
      - **Isaiah 2:2** "In the last days, the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem will become the most important place on earth. People from all over the world will go there to worship."
    - When we WALK as HOLY children of God people take notice…
      - Because they have no promises yet we are blessed in whatever we do...
      - Because they are terrified by life yet we have no fear...
      - Because we have God living in us making us HOLY setting us apart...
      - So although we live in this world we are obviously not apart of this world...
      - We become a light example to those who are around us **Matthew 5:1**
      - And they come up and tug on our sleeves and ask to come with us to Jesus!