

## Zechariah 8

3-27-03

*“Faith’s Eye looks to the Future!”*

### 1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. Vance Havner said, “Life is like a bowl of **spinach** in front of you & clear down at the other end of the table is a **chocolate cake**.”
  - 1.1.1. It’s hard to eat the **spinach** when your eyes are on the **cake huh?**
  - 1.1.2. On this DC trip 3 times we had the All you can eat Buffet’s...& we did! {**One of them had 37 desserts!**}
  - 1.1.3. If the Lord explained **all** about the **choc. cake**, we’d probably have a rough time eating our **spinach!**
  - 1.1.4. Here Zechariah describes, not the **chocolate cake**(Heaven), but the piece of **apple pie** right in front of it(the Kingdom age)!
- 1.2. Here we have many “**Blessed Assurances**” for God’s people.
  - 1.2.1. This chapter is all about **the Kingdom age!**
  - 1.2.2. Warren Wiersbe has said, “**God’s people don’t live on explanations; they live on promises.**”
  - 1.2.3. Here he focuses the people’s eyes on **faith & the future.**
- 1.3. **Outline:** [1]Turning Today into Tomorrow [2]Turning Blight into Blessing [3]Turning Fasting into Feasting.
  - 1.3.1. **Note:** “**Thus says the Lord of hosts**” 10 times.

### 2. **TURNING TODAY INTO TOMORROW! (1-8)**

- 2.1. **His Jealousy!** (1,2)
- 2.2. His strong love for His bride!
- 2.3. **His New City!** (3)
- 2.4. Here is promise is to rebuild a “**different**” city...dedicated to **truth & holiness.**
- 2.5. **His Safety!** (4,5)
- 2.6. Here he focuses on the **people** not the **buildings.**

- 2.6.1. The **elderly** would sit safely in the sunny streets & the **young** would play w/o fear.
  - 2.6.1.1. **Oh, the day of rest!** 😊 - "Oh how good...is it to work for God in the day-time, and at night to lie down under his smiles." - Jonathan Edwards
- 2.6.2. **Not so today on the streets of Jerusalem.**
- 2.6.3. I've shared before that all children (Israeli & Palestinian) are walked to school, escorted by a parent in the rear, with a **fully automatic weapon** strapped to their back.
- 2.6.4. Today **children** are killed before they have a chance to be born (Abortion) & the when society deems **the elderly** no longer "useful" then we find legal ways to end their lives (Euthanasia).
- 2.7. **His Marvel!** (6)
- 2.8. **Marvelous** - Too good to be true, or seemingly impossible.
- 2.9. **His Restoration!** (7,8)
- 2.10. We've seen some groups of Jewish patriots returning to their homeland, but not a worldwide regathering that is mentioned here.

### **3. TURNING BLIGHT INTO BLESSING! (9-17)**

- 3.1. **His Encouragement!** (9-13)
- 3.2. The people had **not been faithful** to God, so He withheld His blessings. They were **busy with their own houses** & didn't have time for God's house. (see Haggai 1:1-11)
- 3.3. **But now the land would be refreshed buy the Lord**(12).
  - 3.3.1. **Crops** would grow abundantly; **Laborers** would get their wages; The Lord would send his **promise rain/dew**; **other nations** would witness the blessings & be blessed by Israel.
  - 3.3.2. Is.35:1 "**The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;**" in the kingdom of the Messiah.
- 3.4. **Let's keep 2 facts about material blessings in mind:**<sup>1</sup>
  - 3.4.1. **[1] We don't obey God just to become wealthy & secure.**

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Warren Wiersbe pg.126 in "Be Heroic".

- 3.4.1.1. We obey Him because **He is God & deserves** our loving obedience.
- 3.4.1.2. Obedience builds **character**, & when our character is what it ought to be, **God can trust us with His blessings**.
- 3.4.1.3. **Material blessings aren't bribes, nor are they rewards**.
- 3.4.1.4. They are God's way of saying, "You're maturing in godliness, & now I can give you more to use for My Glory."
- 3.4.2. **[2] God doesn't always respond w/material blessings, & poverty is not a sign that God has forsaken His people.**
  - 3.4.2.1. The experience of Job annihilates this "**commercial idea**" of faith & obedience.
  - 3.4.2.2. Job's friends had a commercial view of faith, so they encouraged Job to confess his sins so God could again make him wealthy.
- 3.4.3. **Note these 2 important distinctions!**
- 3.4.4. **God's covenant with Israel:** Punishment physically & materially for lack of obedience(see Deut.27,28 cursing/blessing)
- 3.4.5. **God's covenant with His Church:**
  - 3.4.5.1. He promises to meet all of our **needs!** (Phil.4:19 "my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.")
  - 3.4.5.2. He promises to **direct** all our circumstances! (Rom.8:28 "we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.")
  - 3.4.5.3. He promises to **bless us w/"spiritual" blessings!** Not nec. Physical one's (besides "needs", already mentioned) (Eph.1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,**")
  - 3.4.5.4. **Pop Quiz - Q:** Did you experience Gods blessings upon your life today?
    - 3.4.5.4.1. **Q:** Did you sense **God's presence** in your devotions today?
    - 3.4.5.4.2. **Q:** Did you experience **joy** in your life today?
    - 3.4.5.4.3. **Q:** Did you feel **Him Love** on you?
    - 3.4.5.4.4. **Q:** Did you obtain **mercy** and find **grace** to help in any time of need today?

3.4.6. *Thus, **riches** are no proof of God's special love, nor is **poverty** evidence that He's forsaken us.*

3.5. **Truth**(16,17) – “**Truth does not blush**”. (Tertullian)

3.5.1. **Honesty** - Coming home from work, a woman stopped at the corner deli to **buy a chicken for supper**. The butcher reached into a barrel, grabbed the **last chicken he had**, flung it on the scales behind the counter, and told the woman its weight. She thought for a moment. "I really need **a bit more chicken** than that," she said. "Do you have any larger ones?" Without a word, the butcher put the chicken back into the barrel, groped around as though finding another, **pulled the same chicken out**, and placed it on the scales. "This chicken weighs one pound more," he announced. The woman pondered her options and then said, "**Okay. I'll take them both.**"

3.5.1.1. **Honesty is still the best policy!**

3.5.1.2. Honest Abe once said, "**No one has a good enough memory to lie.**"

3.6. **His To-Do List!** (14-17)

3.7. **Old or New Testament...** God's standards don't change!

3.7.1. We don't live "under" the old cov. law...but "the righteousness of the law" is still what God wants to develop in our lives.

3.7.2. "**Be holy for I am holy**" is an Old covenant law, quoted for NT Christians!

3.7.3. Paul tells us that **all the law is fulfilled** in our conduct when we practice **love**. (Rom.13:8-10 **read it**)

3.7.4. Yes God works in **different ways** in **different times** (we call them dispensations), but His **character & standards** never change.

## **4. TURNING FASTING INTO FEASTING! (18-23)**

4.1. **He Turns Fasting into Feasting!** (18,19)

4.2. Here he answers the question asked back in 7:3.

4.2.1. They had 4 traditional days of fasting: 4<sup>th</sup> month(Babylonian siege); 5<sup>th</sup> month(Temple Burned); 7<sup>th</sup> month(Gedaliah's murder); 10<sup>th</sup> month(Jerusalem siege begun).

- 4.3. No need for fasting when the groom is present. It's a time of **joy** not sorrow.
- 4.3.1. Is.65:19 "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of **weeping** shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of **crying**."
- 4.4. **His Prayer!** (20-22)
- 4.5. God called Abraham & established the nation of Israel so His people would witness to the Gentiles & lead them to faith in the true God.
- 4.5.1. In setting apart one nation, God was seeking to reach the whole world.
- 4.5.2. **Israel failed in her mission!** Instead of Israel "going out" to the Gentiles...now God brings them in!
- 4.5.2.1. **Q: Are we, the Church, doing any better when it comes to winning the lost at home & taking the gospel to the nations?**  
{I was challenged by Aaron to carry tracks again}
- 4.5.2.2. Start with 1 track a day. (if ya don't have em, you won't hand em!)
- 4.5.2.3. **Isaiah** saw a river of Gentiles flowing into Jerusalem to worship Him "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.  
Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." (Is.2:2,3)
- 4.6. **His Presence!** (23)
- 4.7. **10 men** is a Hebrew expression representing "many men".
- 4.8. **Oh, that men would hold onto our sleeves today & follow us to our houses of worship!**
- 4.8.1. That they would say regarding to us, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."
- 4.8.2. This reminds us of 1 Cor.14:24,25 "But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" (NIV)

- 4.9. **Every nation...** let's remember saints...even **Iraq!**
- 4.9.1. Since the war, have you been reminded to pray for the Iraqi citizens or just our troops?
- 4.9.2. For the many Iraqi believers there?
- 4.9.3. How we should reach them should the doors open to evangelism there? (i.e. what part you might play?)
- 4.10. **Wrap up!** - If life is like a bowl of **spinach** in front of you, & clear down at the other end of the table is a **chocolate cake**. Let's eat **any & all** the veggies that God places on our plate down here, knowing full well... there's 37 desserts-a-comin!
- 4.10.1. **Parable** – There is a story about a **sailor**, shipwrecked on one of the South Sea islands. He was seized by the natives, hoisted to their shoulders, carried to the village, and set on a rude throne. Little by little, he learned that it was their custom once each year to make some man a king, king for a year. **He liked it until he began to wonder what happened to all the former kings. Soon he discovered that every year when his kingship was ended, the king was banished to an island, where he starved to death.** The sailor didn't like that, but he was smart and he was king, king for a year. So he put his **carpenters** to work making boats, his **farmers** to work transplanting fruit trees to the island, **farmers** growing crops, **masons** building houses. So when his kingship was over, he was banished, not to a barren island, but to an island of abundance. **It is a good parable of life: We're all kings here, kings for a little while, able to choose what we shall do with the stuff of life.**
- 4.10.1.1. **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19-20).**