

Thursday Bible Class Zechariah Chapter 8

23rd June 2022

The Remnant Of This People

Yahweh Tzvaoth

*Verse 1 Again the word of the **Lord of hosts** came to me, saying...*

Lord of Hosts in Hebrew is Yahweh Tzvaoth, meaning I will be Armies.

- In the book of Isaiah there are 66 chapters which use this title 60 times,
- in Jeremiah: 52 chapters use the title 80 times
- but Zechariah: just **14** chapters uses title **50** times,

We can see how this title is used much more intensely, and has become a theme of this small prophecy. Zechariah prophesied when the nation had returned in exile surrounded by hostile nations, and were rebuilding the wall in troublous times. In Nehemiah we can read how people built with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, to make sure they were never surprised by their enemies. But the message of God though the prophet was to encourage, and put their minds at rest. I WILL BE ARMIES, would both protect and save, them, now and in the future.

The purpose of armies is twofold, - to protect and destroy, to defend or to attack. God has no need for such a thing, It is God's ultimate purpose to share His glory, and to be at ONE. Thus in this state of harmony, there will be no need to defend or attack, to create or destroy, as Yahweh Tzvaoth will instead be Yahweh Elohim – I will be Mighty Ones, and Yahweh Tsidkenu The Lord our Righteousness.(Jeremiah 33:16)

However during the six thousand years of man's history, God has chosen this specific Title Yahweh Tzvaoth to explain to those who want to learn and know him, what His purpose with them is.

The pressure on the nation to obey the commands of God and their leaders, to rebuild the House of God, and the city, and their homes, while under attack was significant. It weakened their hearts after a while. But this combat, this pressure is common to all those who want to return to God.

The scripture given to us is the defence against the adversary, the enemy within, but when the defence is allowed to break down, the adversary attacks. The only way to defeat sin, is to go onto the attack and destroy it. The only man to have succeeded in this immense mission is Jesus *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.* (Hebrews 2:14) For this reason that Jesus is described as the captain of our salvation. His legions of Angels that will be presently be given to him, are the soldiers, the messengers of the Lord, the foot soldiers who have acquitted themselves well in the fight, by following his example, by putting on the *whole armour of God*, to resist the deceits of the sinful nature we bear. Those who come through such training are able to join the ranks, and they are commanded to fastening the belt of truth around the waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness, and taking up the shield of faith to extinguish the flaming arrows from the evil. (Ephesians 6) – they will all become part of Yahweh Tzvaoth.

Zion

In this chapter, Zechariah appeals to his people along these lines, that when there is true repentance, wonderful blessings follow, God would be their shield and exceeding great reward.

*2 Thus saith the **Lord of hosts**; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.*

This should be I AM jealous, not was jealous. In fact, God says His Name is Jealous. Exodus 34:14 *For thou shalt worship no other god:*

for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: This is not the jealousy we understand in a negative sense,. The Hebrew is qinah and can mean envy but also zealous. Not jealousy in the way in which human nature covets what his neighbour has, but jealousy in the sense of being protective, possessive, a passionate enthusiasm. For seventy long years, the Holy City where God chose to place His Name had been violated, corrupted, inhabited by Gentiles, had been destroyed, burnt with fire, and humiliated. The same location where Abraham offered Isaac, where the plague was stayed at the time of David, where God's Son would be crucified and victory of sin ensured by the Greater Son of David. Zion.

It was a name first used in 2 Samuel 5:7, *Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.* Zion may well have come from the Hebrew word: *ṣiyyôn* or castle. It was directly south and adjacent to Mount Moriah, and has also been known as Ophel, and today lies outside of the Old City walls, and is currently being excavated, where many artifacts of the Old Testament era have been discovered. Zion is mentioned in the Scripture 152 times, and 26 times of those is used to describe the Daughter of Zion, showing how Zion became another name for Jerusalem. In Psalm 137 we can read of the exiles by the rivers of Babylon weeping when they remembered Zion. Zion can also mean in Hebrew 'a conspicuous place', a monumental or guiding **pillar**, a waymark or sign. This city has certainly been a sign, and still is – a sign of the times! It has been a guiding pillar, for there in the city was where God allowed His Spirit to fill the temple the *shekinah* glory, where He said He would dwell among His people, between the Cherubim in the Most Holy Place. There His Throne was established, His Kingdom ruled by His law, and His Chosen King, with mercy, grace and love.

All was trampled on, taken for granted, despised, and ridiculed, - by the very subjects of that Kingdom, Israel. The Kingdom being divided and the nation invaded many times, did little to dampen the ardour

of the Jews for the titillations of the pagan customs and habits, of the very nations who subjugated them, and so Judah followed the rest of the tribes into captivity, so that the land at least could rest from the vile sins that were committed upon its blood soaked soil. As the land rested for seventy years, the exiles slaved away in foreign climes, wishing things were different. Some like Daniel and his three friends, Esther and many others longed for the day they returned. When they did finally return with great joy, it was not long before that happiness dissipated, as the back breaking work of restoration, rebuilding, and defence against the angry hostile neighbours. Maybe the fish, cucumbers, leeks and garlic of Babylon were worth going back for after all.

God being a Jealous God, would not allow His purpose to be changed, so He sent prophets, Haggai and Zechariah to support the work of Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah and others, to lift up the spirit of the people.

3 Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.

Of course, such a proclamation that God was among them still would have been a huge encouragement, it made their puny efforts and fixing the walls much more worthwhile. There was the Samaritans mocking that a fox jumping on the wall would knock it down.

(Nehemiah 4:3) Well if God was going to dwell here, there was no need to worry about those jealous and envious nations. In this statement Zechariah was repeating his message from earlier: Zechariah 1:16: *Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.*

However, the translation *I am returned unto Zion*, can also read, I **will** return unto Zion... Again repeating another message Zechariah has already delivered, speaking of a future Restoration Zechariah 2:10-

11: *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the **LORD of hosts** hath sent me unto thee.*

Of course, this was partly fulfilled when the Son of God was revealed to the nation in Zion, and as John observed: John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* This promise of dwelling with His people is explained by the Lord Jesus himself: John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* This collective dwelling in unity in the Spirit, in this symbolic way is taught by the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 6:16: *... for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* In a spiritual sense, a temple of people would be built, where God would dwell in their midst: Ephesians 2:21-22 *In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* And the Apostle reveals that this temple or city made of the collective of believers, would be the **pillar** and ground of the truth – even Zion which is above...Hebrews 12:22 *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,* Revelation 21:10 shows how this spiritual and symbolic city, will in fact merge with the physical, where the city where God chooses to place His Name will have a House of Prayer for all Nations based on Truth and Righteousness. Revelation 21:10 *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.*

That there will be a literal restored city called Zion, Jerusalem the scripture is in no doubt. For though Zechariah may well have been speaking of a spiritual city, (to those who had an ear to hear and understand) he was also speaking very much of the literal, as his compatriots were still rebuilding Zion while he spoke to them. It was part of the vision of the future, that the prophets described, which Zechariah would have reminded them, they knew the words of the prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah!

Jeremiah 33:16: *In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.*



Isaiah 2:2-3 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

So Zechariah also used imagery, and picture words to describe the atmosphere of this great city in the future: *4,5 Thus saith the **Lord of hosts**; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of*

Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. There are a couple of interesting points here. Plazas and walking sticks.

Plazas



This prophecy has been used in the past to describe a bucolic environment of safety with children in the roads, free from violence –



These are screen grabs of Israeli photos of Jerusalem today. Prophecy fulfilled? No.

All this will be destroyed. 'I will go up to the land of unwalled villages' is the evil thought of the invading Gog, *I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely* (Ezekiel 38:11) No, the prophecy Zechariah is describing will be in the reconstructed Zion. The city of God, will be of a frame of city, but will not be a normal city as such with houses for people, but will be a meeting point for all people and God. In it



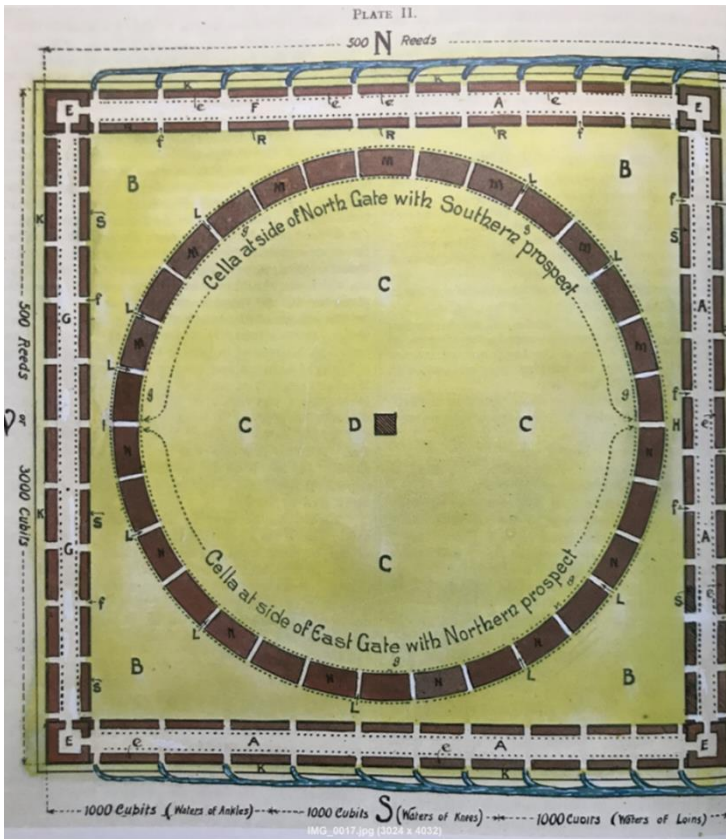
will be a huge enormous circular temple built within four square parallel courts a mile square. To the outer zones, mortal inhabitants will bring up the sacrifices with their families. They will not be allowed into the inner sanctuary, reserved for the people of the Prince, the immortals. But it is this which Zechariah is speaking of. The word here in the KJV for streets in Hebrew is *rechob*, and means

wide open spaces or plazas as we call them today.

See the long wide spaces marked A, E and possibly B we suggest are the plazas being referred to here by Zechariah.

All of the above images are artist's impressions of this House of Prayer for all nations, and may not be correct, and are just designed to give a general idea, following the

descriptions in the last chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel.



The plaza's may look something like this.

Walking Sticks

Another interesting point is the description of old people holding a walking stick.... *every man with his staff in his hand for very age*. As we just mentioned, Zechariah is referring to the mortal inhabitants. There will be births and deaths in the Kingdom of these mortals. Who will live a life of probation like we do now. However, they will be in an idyllic world where much disease and corruption has been taken away, as the earth is immersed in the Blessing of God. So what of the passage in Isaiah where it says: Isaiah 35:6 *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert*. Why is the old man walking with a walking stick then? There will still be the normal process of aging, as all men and women need to experience the trials of life as part of their necessary shaping, but they will be privileged generations who will be shielded from the excesses of the curse laid upon the sons of Adam since the Fall. Indeed Isaiah explains further in Isaiah 65:20 NET: *Never again will one of her infants live just a few days or an old man die before his time. Indeed, no one will die before the age of one hundred; anyone who fails to reach the age of one hundred will be considered cursed!*

Marvelous!

Of course to the small nation numbering not much more than a medium size town in the UK today, - not even a nation but a protectorate, - a province of Medo Persia, such visions of glory seemed almost too fantastic to be believed, so the prophet states: verse 6 *Thus saith the **Lord of hosts**; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the **Lord of hosts***. The NET puts it into modern day language which seems to convey even more impact: NET *And,' says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, 'though such a thing may seem to be difficult in the opinion of the small community of those days, will it also appear difficult to me?'* asks the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

The answer of course not! Jeremiah says something similar: 32:17: *Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: So did the Lord Jesus* Luke 18:27: And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Yes, this is FAITH! Paul reminds us of this factor in our lives, which we often forget when the odds seem against us, the burden too heavy, the pressure too much. God will do it, He will help those who trust Him. Romans 4:20-21: *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

Right now, the remnant of Israel has returned. 9 million people, a tiny nation. We have been watching the world's biggest bully – Russia grinding down Ukraine with its war machine, Russia has been shown to be weak. Putin has implicitly acknowledged this, by stating his military will be boosted, and will become far stronger. When we see the enormous firepower of Gog, when he is weak... how can Israel stand against him? On Tuesday this week, the Russian president who hosted military academy graduates at a lavish ceremony at the Kremlin, said that his country would continue to boost its military capabilities that have been dented by losses in Ukraine. "We will continue to develop and strengthen our armed forces, taking into account potential military threats and risks," he said, hailing Russian troops in Ukraine for fighting "with courage, professionalism: like real heroes". "There is no doubt we will be even stronger," he added. As part of those efforts, Russia would place the first batch of Sarmat, its newly tested intercontinental ballistic missile, on combat duty before the end of the year, Putin said. The missile, also known as Satan II, has a range of 18,000 kilometres (11,000 miles) and can deliver between 10 to 15 nuclear warheads at a hypersonic speed while bypassing most radar and missile defence systems. "There is no existing air defence for the Sarmat missile systems, and it will probably not exist in the coming decades," he

said. Other major new additions to the Russian arsenal will include S-500 missile defence systems that, according to Putin, “are unmatched in the world”.

But the small nation of Israel though it will be humiliated will not be destroyed, for Zechariah here prophesied: verse 7 *Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;* or can be understood as wherever the sun shines, wherever it rises and sets, (see Psalm 50:1,2)

Will Israel need to be saved? Yes, from the pogroms and persecutions of hundreds of years of antisemitism, saved from the gas ovens of Nazi Europe. And they have been saved! Will they need to be saved again? Yes, and they will be. Israel will become the target of imperialist and strategic expansion of Gog, *an evil thought* will come into his mind... we have seen Gog against the “bread basket of the world” - Ukraine, so will it be against “the gas supplier of Europe”. (see recent news on the gas provision with Europe via Egypt, infuriating Russia) So Gog and his bands will come like a cloud to cover the land. But he will come to his end and none shall help him. For Zechariah reveals the will of God: Verse 8 *And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.* This was always God’s intention as we read recently in the law: Leviticus 26:12: *And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*

Partly fulfilled of course, but in unbelief. Like the little temple built under Nehemiah and Ezra and Zerubbabel, it was nothing compared to what was there before, but Zechariah encouraged them by telling them of the great things to come, same with us - But if we see the miracle of restoration now, it is nothing compared with what will be, and will it not be marvelous in our eyes?

So in the next couple of verses, Zechariah delivers words of kindness from the Lord of armies, (notice the constant use of this title of God,

as we have already mentioned) Strengthen yourselves, you who are listening to my prophets, who were in attendance when the foundations of the temple were laid. Do you remember in those days when times were so hard, and there was no relief from adversity for anyone – because I had pitted everybody—each one—against everyone else. Yes, that was a few years before, and things were very difficult, because of the bad attitude of many of the members of the returned exiles expected God to just do everything for them, and they could go back to their old lives. But that way of life had got them into captivity. Their minds had to change. Ezra records this time of soul searching: Ezra 4:4 *Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building.* Instead they turned to building their own houses; Haggai 1:2 ... *This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.* Verse 9: You expected a lot from your harvests, but it came to little; and when you *brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.* God sent a drought and hardship upon them all – because of their state of mind and attitude.

But back to Zechariah 8:11, God describes how because of their change of heart, he will not be like this to the remnant – because of their faithful response, instead they would be blessed:

12 For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these

things.

ANTHEM 21.

God in His kind-ness has looked down from heaven, sun-shine in
plen-ty to us He has given: We will en-deav-our to
walk in His ways, tun-ing our hearts, for the sound of His
praise. Joy-ful-ly, hope-ful-ly on-ward we go,
learn-ing of fruit which from good seed will grow, sing-ing our
thanks un-to God for His love, grate-ful for bless-ings re-
ceived from a-bove. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: The seed shall be
pros-p-erous, the vine shall give her fruit and the ground shall give her
in-crease and the heavens shall give their dew and I will cause the
rem-nant, the rem-nant of this peo-ple to poss-ess all these.

We know how true this is, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

God gives the increase

Seeds, Vines, Ground all giving their increase. This is not down to the wit and cunning and intelligence of man, but is the design and processes which God controls. And can slow down if He so wishes. None of these things can we particularly influence or control. How plants grow, whether there is rain or not, the fertility of the land... Artificial fertilisers – Ammonium Nitrates that modern farming relies upon, has been shown recently to actually cause long term damage to the soils. But the lesson is clear: 1 Corinthians 3:7 *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that waters; but God that gives the increase.* And is true on a spiritual level, if our attitude of mind is wrong the fruits of the spirit will not develop. 2 Corinthians 9:10 Now he that ministers seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

As God – The Lord of armies continues to speak to His people, up to verse 16, we see the echoes of the blessings given in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, how instead of curses, blessings will poured upon them. So long has the remnant languished under curses, even though they have been allowed to return back in unbelief, that curses appear the norm. The successes of the Jewish nation today have been despite their sin, and unbelief, and only permitted in the grace and mercy of God. But once the curses pronounced in the law are removed, how the world will marvel, and be instructed:

Deuteronomy 4:8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

Doers not just Hearers

‘Having the right attitude of mind’ is a phrase that is all very well, but what exactly does it mean? What is it that God delights in? what does God expect from His Remnant? We are not left with any doubt. It is not just about being hearers of the Word but doers (see James 1:22) So verse 16:

These are the things that ye shall do:

- *Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour;*
- *execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:*

These are the things not to do:

- *Do not imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour;*
- *Don't make false promises : for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.*

The first two Do's effectively encapsulate the two greatest commandments. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This gospel should be on our lips, and become our speech. It is the goal, what we must aim for,

although we are sometimes far from it. The second Do, is executing, practicing that love – in our gates, our environment, to our neighbours, to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Towards the end of this chapter, Zechariah refers to an aspect God has already referred to – their self-imposed fasts. They had been keeping these fasts...

- Fourth Month - Babylonians breach Jerusalem's wall see Jeremiah 52:6-7
- Fifth Month - Temple Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar see 2 Kings 25:8 -9
- Seventh Month - Gedaliah was killed see Jeremiah 41:1-2
- Tenth Month – Babylonians lay siege to Jerusalem see 2 Kings 25:1

But in verse 19, God through Zechariah announced that instead of being times of forced solemn mourning and miserable faces, looking glum and down in the mouth – for no reason – except “it’s the way we always do things”, -no more- instead to be cheerful, happy joyful and glad. And to

Love the truth and peace. This is the true sacrifice, not being negative and downcast, but to be brimful of sparkle and fire, because of the Saving Name of Jesus Christ, who has rescued us, and given Hope and Promise of glory. What is the point in mourning over past calamities? It’s done. As long as lessons are learned.

It is this vision that Zechariah leaves the people with, the Vision of the Future where the House of Prayer for all nations will be situate upon Zion, when all nations will desire, and long for the courts of the Lord: Zechariah under inspiration seems to echo the words of the prophets Isaiah (chapter 2) and Micah 4:2: *And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his*

ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The conversion of the nations, the change from oppressors to best friends? What a thing to look forward to. Just as Jesus dropped in on a conversation of strangers walking on the road to Emmaus, and was welcomed into the conversation about the Gospel, so the time will come, when this will be a common occurrence! This will be truly marvellous!

23 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

The woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of Jesus garment to be cleansed. Like any observant Jew, he would have worn a ribbon of blue around that hem, recalling Numbers 15:38-39. It was not anything magical that healed the woman, but it was her faith – she believed in that Word of God which the blue ribbon represented. It is when that Law of God touches our hearts that we are healed. That will be the reaction of the nations, when people will suddenly realise the true value of the principles of righteousness and Truth, and they will do anything to get it – ultimately touching the Saviour, Jesus Christ the King of the Jews.

Brother Terry