

Studies in Zechariah 07 Zechariah 7: 8:

by John W. Bramhall

God's determined purpose is to have a family of children, holy and without blame, before him in love, accepted in the beloved.

Duration: 1:00:39

Scripture: Zechariah 8:2-16

Topics: "Restoration", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Chapter 8 of the Bible, which is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the people's sins and touches their conscience, while the second part provides a comforting and encouraging message. The speaker emphasizes the repetition of the phrase 'Thus says the Lord of hosts' throughout the chapter, highlighting its importance. The chapter also discusses the tragedies and captivity that the people of Israel experienced, but God promises restoration and joy in the future.

Transcript

Shall we turn tonight in the prophecy of Zechariah to chapter seven. We have reached the third division of this great prophecy. We have mentioned that the prophecy falls into four divisions.

The first section in chapter one, beginning at verse one, through verse six, where we have a call to national repentance. Then as we concluded this morning the second section, we found it to be a series of eight visions given to Zechariah the prophet in one night. And beginning in chapter one through and verse seven and going down through to the end of chapter six, we have that division of the visions.

Tonight we come and desire to take two chapters together. We shall read and comment as we go along in chapter seven and eight. Chapter seven and eight were written by the prophet regarding an event that took place two years later than when the beginning of the prophecy was begun in chapter one.

It is quite noticeable, and sometimes it is criticized because of this, that the prophecy was not written consecutively at one time. But two years later, the chapters before us were written by Zechariah. And later on, perhaps even two more years, the rest of the prophecy was finished, beginning with chapter nine, going through verse chapters fourteen.

We must say that God does not write his word as perhaps men would always write their books. And so that gives us the reason for the exhortation that Paul wrote to Timothy. Study to show thyself approved

unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

There is no question of doubt, there is the great need of rightly dividing the written word of God. We humbly depend upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit to do so. And we look at the chapters tonight, together, chapters seven and eight, which bring before us a question, and then God's answer concerning the question.

We read particularly tonight, beginning at verse one, first of all through verse three. And it came to pass in the fourth year of the king, Darius, that the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chislew, when they had sent unto the house of God Chereza, and Regemilech, and their men to pray before the Lord, and to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? Here we have the presentation of the question that came from the hearts of some of the captives that had returned from Babylon. The temple was being under construction.

The temple was perhaps finished two years later than this occasion. But as they saw the reconstruction of the temple, the restoration of the city, under the ministry of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, there was a natural agitation in the minds of the Jews in that day, whether they should continue what had been self-imposed national facts and sorrowing in regard to the commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem, Solomon's temple, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the ensuing events. The captives in Babylon had unquestionably placed upon themselves imposed facts that they might present to God their sorrow, at least outwardly, for the tragedies that had befallen their nation.

Now the question comes, shall we continue to weep and keep the facts of the fifth month as we have done so these many years? Now we have the Lord's answer in two great ways. In the rest of this chapter, beginning in verse four and going down to the end, we have the Lord answering through his servant the prophet in a negative manner. In chapter eight we shall see that the Lord answers the question in a positive manner, but let us look as we go to verse four, and may we read from verse four through verse seven.

For here we have the negative answer to the question, and in this negative manner God presents to them, through his servant the prophet, a divine rebuke. Then came the word of the Lord of hosts unto me, saying, speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, when ye fasted and mourned in the fifth as well as the seventh month, even though seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets? When Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain. Now from the context of the words of Jehovah to the people and to the priests, it is very evident that he rebukes them for the fact they fasted, yes, but they did not fast unto God.

There was no true sorrow, there was no true repentance for what had taken place, and particularly there was no sorrow and repentance for the sins of the nation. They were sorrowing, yes, but they were sorrowing for their calamities that had overtaken them, and the facts were self-imposed, but self-judgment and humiliation were missing. For God required the manifestation of true repentance by a return to the obedience of his precious word.

Now may we not apply the truth of this to our own hearts and consciences? We should not indeed manifest such conditions ourselves because of the outward calamities that may overtake us in life, but

when there has been the root cause of sin for the calamities and for the sorrows that we feel, it is the desire as well as true to the character of God that there should be genuine repentance, confession and sorrow for what we know to have been sinned against him. Now you find the Lord very plainly talking to them. At the end of verse seven, or five rather, at the end of verse five, he said, ye did not at all fast unto me, and even when ye feasted, your fastings were for your own self, and your feasting was for your own self.

But now note, he reminds the ministry of the prophets in the past that come to the people of Israel, should you not hear the words which the Lord had cried by the former prophets? When Jerusalem was in prosperity, when it was inhabited in the cities round about, both in the south as well as in the plain, when God saw declension coming amongst his people, he sent the ministry of the prophets. May I say a word regarding the ministry of God's prophets? Prophets were never used by Jehovah until there was spiritual declension and the threat of spiritual apostasy in Israel. May I go further to state, the reason for prophetic ministry was because of the failure of the priestly ministry.

Read the prophecy of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, where God condemns the unsafefulness of the priests, for the priests were by God given the authority to teach the people the word of God and present to them the knowledge of Jehovah. But when the priesthood failed to minister the knowledge of Jehovah to the people of God, there was a declension. It may have began with the king, and it would have been, and it was, continued in the people.

Then God sent the ministry of prophets. Prophetic ministry was always a call to repentance, confession of their failure, repentance of their sin, and seeking the Lord in genuine humiliation. The Lord did not see it, and before answering the question, which he does in chapter eight, he rebukes the nation and the people for thus not having been obedient in the past to his required word.

Now note verses eight through ten, for here the Lord tells directly what he expected and what he had desired. The word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. Now these words are very clear and plain.

What God required was the practical righteousness of their minds in the obedience to his words, manifested in their conduct one to the other. For what had existed, and you may read it in the contemporary prophecies that preceded Zechariah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, there had been the oppression of the widows, there had been the oppression of the fatherless, and of the stranger, and of the poor, and there had been that which manifested evil against their brethren, and the failure to execute true justice, and showing mercy and compassion every man to his brother. My beloved, we can recognize a principle that is divine.

God wants the fruitfulness of the life and the testimony of the character to reflect the obedience of his children to his precious word. May we not transfer again the truth of this to our own hearts, as well as to our own character, to realize that God desires his truth to be carried out in righteous practice. And God reminds the nation, I never saw the evidences of my word being obeyed in you.

That's why I sent the prophet. Now note what God has to say regarding their action to the former prophet, as we begin reading in verse 11. For then God tells of the disobedience, but they refused to hearken.

They pulled away the shoulder and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. God speaks in admonition concerning the past history, that the people of Israel have pulled away the shoulder. The inference or the illustration of this suggests, as an oxen is seeking to be thus burdened with its yoke, yet the shoulder of the oxen resists the yoke that is being placed upon it and pulls the shoulder away.

So the people of Israel refused to bear the yoke that Jehovah put on them, and that was the requirement of obedience to his precious word. Again, my beloved, may I say, lovingly to you as well as to my heart and conscience also. Think of the words of the Lord Jesus as a believer today.

When the Savior said in Matthew 11, 28 and 29, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. My beloved, there is a yoke for the believer, and that yoke certainly declares that he requires our obedience and our submission to his required word.

I think of the words that Hobson Taylor once read when he said this statement that I've never forgotten. The greatest mission in the world is submission. How true is that statement? And God required submission to his word of his people of old.

My beloved, it is the same principle today. Oh my beloved fellow believer, may I encourage you as well as exhort my conscience and heart to be obedient to the precious word of God, and let the spirit of obedience and submission be ours to what he has to declare and the responsibilities that he gives. But they not only pull the shoulder away, they stop their ears that they should not hear.

Now you note the digression, you note how they continued more and more to rebel against the required word of God. First, resisting and pulling away the shoulder. Second, stopping their ears, they did not wish to hear what he has to say.

And then third, in verse 12, yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the word which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the form of prophets. Now God brings the issue right down to the conclusion, for what he says in the next words covers the history of his judgments. Now may I remind you, and think clearly of this, these men had just passed through 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

They had recently returned to the land of Israel. They had now begun the re-establishing of the house of God, the rebuilding of the city and of the walls, and the restoration of the testimony. But God reminds them that their self-imposed feasts had not been genuinely feasts or fasts of repentance.

And he reminds them that because of the former disobedience, now note at the end of verse 12, therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass that as he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts. What a sad commentary on the disobedience of God's people.

May I ask again, could there not be written likewise, the sad commentary upon the disobedience of the church through the centuries of time? For when you and I see the conditions that prevail today, may I say with all my mismiss, the failure of the church is due to the faithlessness of men. And as you and I see the great failure at the end of the church age that prevails the testimony of the profession of Christendom, it is due to failure to obey the word of God. Now may I ask, without condemning any particular person or persons, may you and I realize that even we ourselves have contributed our share of the failure.

In a bible reading of many years ago, probably 50, the failure of the church was brought up by one brother as he thus stated the conditions that existed even then. And as he emphasized the failure of the church, one of the older brethren and a gifted brother said, brother, yet don't forget you are a part of that failing church. Yes, my beloved fellow believer, may you and I humbly recognize that.

If you take the seven letters to the seven churches of asia in revelations chapter two and three, you find again and again in every letter the repetition He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. And though their letters are addressed to seven specific churches, yet the individual believer within each one was given the responsibility to hear the message, to hear it, and overcome the difficulty. Oh may you and I certainly realize the character of God is unchangeable.

But read on, he says, as they cried, when I cried they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, said the Lord above, but I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man pass through nor return, for they laid the pleasant land desolate. Beloved, the seventy years of captivity was the hand of God's judgment, and the Sabbath that the people had never kept in the land.

The Sabbaths were brought to pass as God sent them into captivity for seventy long years. So as we look at the seven chapters, we find that God gives them the negative answer by a divine rebuke. Then following the rebuke, then he gives the positive reply to the question in chapter eight.

Now shall we read chapter eight? As we look at chapter eight, we find it divided into two divisions. In the first seventeen verses, there is a comforting and consolatory message. And then, beginning at verse eighteen to the end, there is the complete answer, the divine answer to their question.

Oh my beloved, may I reflect with you again? Before God answers the question, he touches their conscience. He touches the conscience to remind them of their sins. And then in chapter eight, he commences his message of consolation and encouragement for them.

Shall we read it, beginning at verse one? And I want you to know something, first of all. Go down the chapter with me, and I want you to see the repetition of a phrase that is important. You have it first in verse two.

Notice how it begins, thus saith the Lord of hosts. Now note verse three, thus saith the Lord. Note verse four, thus saith the Lord of hosts.

Note verse six, thus saith the Lord of hosts. Note verse seven, thus saith the Lord of hosts. Note the ninth verse, thus saith the Lord of hosts.

Note the fourteenth verse, for thus saith the Lord of hosts. Note the nineteenth, thus saith the Lord of hosts. Verse twenty, thus saith the Lord of hosts.

And verse twenty-three, thus saith the Lord of hosts. Ten times! And beloved, why? God is speaking of a truth, and God is declaring His word will not return unto Him void. Thus saith the Lord of hosts.

For this is the way that God determines He will deal with Jerusalem, and with Judah, and with Israel. My beloved, when you see the determined purpose of God, go back to chapter one, please. You recall in chapter one, as we read the sixteenth and the seventeenth verse of that first chapter, we have the same repetitious phrase, beginning in verse sixteen.

Therefore thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercy. My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and the line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad, and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

May I say, beloved, the determined character of God is revealed in the book of Zechariah regarding His purposes for Jerusalem, for Israel, and His earthly people. My, you never met a more determined being than God. And oh, beloved, to transfer the application to our present age of grace.

How precious to realize, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, that before the foundation of the world, He predetermined that He would have a family of children, holy and without blame before Him in love, accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Oh, my beloved, we must worship and adore that blessed being, who before the earth ever began and its foundations were laid in the choice of His being, He wanted you and me. Hallelujah.

Chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and by the Spirit sealed to be His own. Now, if you question God's choice regarding Jerusalem and Israel, you ought to question His choice about you, too. For oh, the determined purpose of God is declared in the book of Zechariah, as in no other prophecy, regarding what He will yet do in the final fruition of Israel's glory.

Now, let's look at the chapter carefully as we go through. In verses 1 and 2 of chapter 8, He declares His great love and His jealous love for Zion. Again, the word of the Lord of Hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I was jealous for Zion, with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

My beloved, may I say, this is jealous love. This is jealous love. This is not jealousy.

Please note the distinction. This is a love for Judah, a love for Jerusalem, a love for His people that was a jealous love. I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God.

As He gave the Decalogue of Moses, thank God for such love. Hallelujah. My beloved, you and I can never measure the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height of the love that encompasses the redeemed children of God.

My fellow believers, God's jealous for you and me, and that love is a jealous love. And may I say, He has a right to be jealous. You may not always have a right to be.

He does. And then note, as you look at verse three, He tells of returning to Zion, 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. Hope you love it what names there be.

He returning to Zion. He returning to Zion. When one thinks of the final fulfillment of the prophecy, as indicated in the second Psalm, Yet have I set my King in my holy hill of Zion.

Read the 132nd Psalm, and David is told that God declares, I have chosen Zion to be my city. My beloved, you and I cannot fathom the divine interest of a holy God in the city of Jerusalem from the very time He made the choice of it. And then He says, I'm going to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.

My, you know, when I was invited to go to the Holy Land recently, I said, well, I would like to go when it was more holy. But oh, when you recognize the transformation that He's going to make, and He will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And note next, Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth.

I want to tell you, if you went over there right now, you'd find a lot of lies there. And you can find them all over the earth. You remember the, you remember the prophet Jeremiah declared in his day of apostasy and declension, that truth had fallen in the street.

My beloved, when the restoration is complete, as God indicates and determines in this chapter, Jerusalem will be the city of truth. Nay, we shall see, we've already seen in the preceding fifth chapter, or the fourth chapter rather, that Israel is to be the light of the world, disseminating the truth throughout the world. You know, the Pilate said to Jesus as he stood before Him, what is truth? And yet the embodiment of all truth was standing in person there.

But someday, Jerusalem will be known throughout the world as the city of truth. If you want to learn the truth, you'll have to go to Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom. And the priests of Jerusalem and of Israel, ministers of God, will carry the truth of God to the then known world in every corner.

But don't, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be a holy mountain, or the holy mountain, the holy mountain. May I go further please? I've got to give you another scripture. It's in Zephaniah.

Can you find the fella? He's a little, he's back a couple of books. Zephaniah chapter three. I want you to note verse thirteen.

It will not only be a city of truth, and there'll not only be in its midst the God of truth, but I want you to note something precious. Chapter three of Zephaniah, verse thirteen. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies.

Neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. For they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Can I ask you just a simple question? Do you believe every Jew today? May I point out the transformation of God's people, the godly remnant in that day? They shall not do iniquity, neither speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.

Why, what a transformation. But let's go back to our chapter and hasten on. For, as the prophet writes, the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be the holy mountain.

And then in verse four and five, note this. It will be a populated city. 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. My beloved, it will be a populated place. The aged and the young dwelling together.

And may I remind you that in the millennium, you know some of the folks in that day, they'll do what Methuselah was never able to do. And you know, Methuselah really went through a long period, didn't he? 969 years. And I've often thought 69 years is enough for me.

I wouldn't want 969 here. But in the millennium, people will go through it. Go to Isaiah 65 for a moment with me.

Isaiah chapter 65, for the prophecy of Isaiah touches upon the population of Israel and of Jerusalem in that day. The 65th chapter of Isaiah. Let me read verse 20 through 22.

Listen to these words. They're precious. Concerning the same time, there shall be no more sense an infant of days, nor an old man that is not filled his days.

For the child shall die a hundred years old. About three or four years ago, I had a funeral of a dear old sister, one of our neighbors, and a godly sister in Christ, at the age of 102. And she'd never been in the hospital all through her life.

But here's a case where a person dies in the millennium at a hundred, and considered a child. And may I say this is not the second childhood either. Because the length of life will be extended in the millennial kingdom under the blessings of the Messiah.

But read on. But the sin of being a hundred years old shall be a curse. And may I inject the fact that when sin rises in that day, as we saw this morning, the one who is the lawgiver will immediately be the judge.

And justice will fall upon the sinner immediately in that day of the kingdom. And no sin will be permitted to continue in rebellion against the righteous throne of the King of Kings. My, I really wish he were here.

To subjugate the violence and the crime and all that is the rebellion of the human heart against sin, sin against the Holy God. And the sinner being a hundred years old will be cut off and judged and accursed. And verse 21, read on.

They shall build houses and inhabit them. The banks will not foreclose on them. There'll be no economic failure to take the homes away.

And they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. Successful agriculture. They shall not build and another inhabit.

They shall not plant and another eat. For if the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands, and so on. Adore when you look at Zechariah's prophecy.

He puts the age, women and men, and the little children all together. Now, beloved gentlemen, let me say this. There certainly will be some evidence of old age when you get to be 900 years of age, whether men or women.

But, there'll be the continuing of life and the abundance of children playing in the street. And thank God for that, you know. You know, you wouldn't let your kids play in the street today, would you? I know we did it when I was a boy, but we didn't have so many automobile and other things.

But, how one can recognize the populated place of Jerusalem in that coming day? Then go further, please. As we see what follows in verse 6. It's marvelous. It's a garden.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, if it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in mine eyes? Saith the Lord of hosts. In other words, what God is saying. You think it's too hard? You think this is too difficult? You think this is too wonderful? Do you think this is too marvelous, that it's impossible? My beloved, let me say this.

As Abraham said, and Abraham was told, is anything too hard for the Lord? Nothing's too hard for him. And hallelujah, he'll bring it to pass. He'll bring it to pass.

The birth of Isaac was marvelous. Abraham doubted, and I and Sarah particularly doubted, and lapped up her sleeve at such a suggestion. And then the Lord said, is anything too hard for the Lord? And if you may recall, when Isaac was born, they called in such meaning, laughter.

Beloved, may I say, there's going to be great laughter in the city of Jerusalem in the days of the great King. What joy. But let's read on.

I want you to know Israel's complete restoration. As you go to verse 7 and 8, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country, 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. The restoration is going to be absolutely complete.

Oh, thank God for the literal promise of a restored Israel, when God will fulfill his divine purposes, and accomplish his will, that he is determined to carry out with that chosen people, and the godly remnant who will populate the kingdom of that day. I must say I get very much disturbed over the teaching of some that relegate no future to Israel at all. Remember years ago, as one brother took exception to a little comment I made regarding God's future purpose for Israel, and he came after dinner where I was having dinner with some Christian friends to talk with me, and then he proposed to me that my teaching was wrong, and that Israel would have no kingdom, no nation, there'd be no land, there'd be no millennium.

I let him go on until I made sure that he told it all, and then I said, let me understand you correctly. If you tell me what I think I understand you to say, Israel will have no future at all, and there's no promises for a restored nation, land, or kingdom, and king. Right he said, and he was quite enthusiastic, he thought I was really understanding it perfectly.

I looked at him and I said, my friend, I heartily disagree with you. He looked surprised, and he said, we can be friends can't we? I said, friend, I've got to love you. But I want to tell you one thing, when the rapture comes, I hope I go up alongside of you, and I'll tell you all the way up, I told you so.

Beloved, beloved, please don't deny the hope of Israel. Don't deny it. God determined he will bring it to pass.

Now let's read quickly on. From verse 9 through verse 17, God gives words of encouragement for future blessings. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days, the days of Zechariah, these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.

For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast, neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction. For I said, amen everyone against his neighbor. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people, as in the former days saith the Lord of hosts, for the seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give her fruit, the ground shall give her increase, and the heaven shall give their due.

And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass that as ye were accursed among the heathen of the nations, O house of Judah, O house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong, for thus saith the Lord of hosts, as I

thought to punish you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts, and I repented not.

So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. Fear ye not. Now notice encouragement, and his admonition.

These are the things that ye shall do, speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor, execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor. And love no false host, for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord. And one can recognize and properly see that God requires the genuineness of their obedience to thus obey his word, that the blessings may be enjoyed.

Now the chapter closes with verse 18 through to the end, where God gives the actual answer to their question. Should they continue in those facts? Listen to his words. The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the past of the forefathers, and if you may note please.

It began with mentioning one fact in the first part of the chapter, and then two, and now the Lord takes them all in, for there's no question of doubt they had all these facts that they'd imposed upon themselves. The past of the fourth month, the past of the fifth, the past of the seventh, and the past of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness and cheerful peace, therefore love the truth and peace. May I state briefly, time doesn't permit the detail of it, but these four feasts, they represented some tragedy in the history of Israel during that period, of the Babylonian captivity beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem and what followed on.

And when these tragedies came, they imposed upon themselves these particular facts without any genuine repentance for their sin. But now God says, I'm going to make those facts joy and gladness, cheerful peace, therefore love the truth and peace. But all the restoration that God will give will be no need of fasting, but it will be joy, gladness, cheerful peace, therefore love the truth and peace.

The read on. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, it shall yet come to pass that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities, and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another and say, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord. Say, did you ever have anybody say that to you today? Has anybody invited you to go and pray before the Lord? Hard to get anybody to prayer meeting these days, isn't it? But what the Lord is saying that in that day of glory, when he brings the restoration to its fruition and culmination, there will be among the cities of the world, not just in Judah and in Israel, but in the cities beyond, there will be those that will say, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord.

My goodness, think of it, a millennium of prayer meeting. What a change! What a change! And if you could get the same start to one prayer meeting a week these days, you're doing well. But in that day, the spirit of prayer will be upon the people at large, and they'll seek the Lord of hosts and say, now no, they won't say, you go to the prayer meetings, I'll go with you.

I will go, and I will go also. Yea, note how broad it is. As it spreads to the length and breadth of the earth, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

Ah, what did you say? A national day of prayer? Bless your heart, international. Worldwide! And the center, the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, the place of prayer for all nations. And then as the verse closes at the end, the chapter closes saying, 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.

I don't know what would happen today if ten men got hold of a Jew, but in that day, the literal evidence of the presence of the King of Kings, the Messiah of Israel, the presence of Jehovah in the midst of his people, Jerusalem, a city of truth, Zion, the holy mountain, and that city of truth disseminating Jehovah's knowledge throughout all the earth, will bring to the nations of the earth the realization, we want to go with you as they cling to that people, for we see that God is with you. I wish somebody get hold of me like that, and you will go with you, O my beloved, the determined purpose of Jehovah to bring it all about. And instead of fasting, feasting, joy, glad.

You know I'm glad I'm saved, and I'm happy to know what lies before me and lies before you, my fellow believer, is nothing but eternal joy, through the one who gave himself for the sins of the world, that he might bring us into the blessings of the purposes of his Father, hallelujah. I never wonder anymore at the wonderful scene in the book of the Revelation, chapter five, when in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the living creature, and in the midst of the elders, the glorified saints, we shall see that Lamb, and I do not wonder at all, in unison we shall fall at his feet, and praise him, and adore him, acknowledging thou art worthy, for thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, and made us a kingdom of priests, and we shall reign on and over the earth. He's worthy, and O my beloved, if he's going to bring his earthly people as a godly remnant to the place of millennial glory and blessing, what shall you and I say who belong to the heavenly realm of the new Jerusalem above, the holy Jerusalem in heaven, to which he's brought us, and to which he will bring us in, in the fullness of that glory, to dwell in the presence of our God forevermore, in that blessed eternal home.

You know, there's one thing I'm glad of, and that is, the future's very bright for a child of God. Friend in the meeting, if you're not saved, your future can be that bright. There's only two places for the eternal destiny of your soul and mine.

One you know to be heaven, and the other hell. My beloved friend, there's no need to go to the place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when Christ, the beloved, has died on the cross to open heaven's gate, for there was none other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in, and dearly, dearly is he loved, and we should love him too, and trust in his redeeming blood, and seek his will to do.

May I say, Jehovah our God and our Savior, there's nothing too hard for him to do. He can take the lowest sinner and bring them to the pinnacle of heaven's glory, all by grace, amazing grace alone. Hallelujah, blessed be his name, shall we pray.

O blessed Father, greater thy ways, and thy ways are past finding. When we consider and say, with a psalmist, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that thou visitest or regardest him? Lord, we bow in wonder, worship, and praise. What a God thou art.

We cannot fathom thy love, we cannot explore the fullness of thy grace beyond our comprehension, but Lord, we would bathe in the ocean of its fullness, knowing that those whom thou hast loved before the foundation of the world, whom thou hast redeemed by the blood of thy Son, that they are thine forever, accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. And blessed Lord, we want to say this, thank you Lord for saving us, and that thou wilt bring us to that eternal glory that thou hast promised. Thus saith the Lord.

Father, we rest on thy word completely. Here we are. It would please us to have the Lord Jesus come even tonight, and take us into that glory that he has prepared and is preparing for us.

And we say in the language of our chorus, even so come Lord Jesus, even so come today, even so come, taking thy bride away. Oh, how my heart is yearning, longing indeed to see thy face. Even so come Lord Jesus, even so come today.

But Lord, if there is one not ready, please speak to that one by the Spirit of God, convicting them now, may they trust the Lord Jesus as their Savior. We thank thee for all that thou hast done, art doing, will yet finish, in thy precious and holy name. Amen.

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