

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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A look at Zechariah: Zechariah 10:1-12 - Blessing Enjoyed by Israel

While researching the twelve verses of Zechariah 10, I was prompted to write the following verses which give a broad overview of its contents:

*Lord, You give rain in Autumn,
And in the Springtime too.
A sign that shows that Israel
Has turned again to You.
The Autumn speaks of Jesus
Who came to earth to die.
He rose again triumphant
And lives beyond the sky.*

*Lord, You give rain in Autumn,
And in the Springtime too.
A sign that shows that Israel
Has turned again to You.
The Springtime speaks of Jesus
Who shall return as King.
And all of faith (in Springtime)
Shall of His glories sing.*

*Lord, You give rain in Autumn,
And in the Springtime too.
A sign that shows that Israel
Has turned again to You.
He'll bend the bow in battle
When He shall come again!
Yes, Israel's Stone and Shepherd
In righteousness shall reign.*

*Lord, You give rain in Autumn,
And in the Springtime too.
A sign that shows that Israel
Has turned again to You.
You'll blow the shepherd's whistle
And Ephraim shall return.
United then with Judah,
Their hearts for You shall yearn.*

*Lord, You give rain in Autumn,
And in the Springtime too.
A sign that shows that Israel
Has turned again to You.
Your Son will bear the glory
As Priest upon His throne.
Kings shall bow down before Him
And His dominion own.*

Now, let's turn to Zechariah 10:1: "Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."

Following the prophecy of the Zechariah 9 that spoke of the certainty of God's future blessing for Israel through the Messiah, it is good to see Israel being encouraged to pray. Prayer is the outflowing of faith. Faith, of course, depends on the certainty of the Word of God. The LORD, through Moses, had promised Israel: *"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full"* (Deuteronomy 11:14).

The first rain was connected with the sowing of seed in Israel. It would start in the eighth Hebrew month (Bul) equivalent to our October. The meaning of the word actually signifies 'rain'. The latter rain is that which falls in the Spring. But Israel had, by their departure from God, forfeited this promise and God chastened them by withholding the latter rain. The return of these rains will show that Israel has turned from his backsliding and back to the Lord. Recent statistics show the seasons appear to have altered in Israel, and most rain now falls from November to March inclusive. This is of interest because Joel 2:23 states: *"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."*

Joel goes on to say: *"And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed"* (Joel 2:26-27). So the period of this rain is directly linked to the presence of the LORD with Israel. It therefore speaks of the time of the 1,000 years reign of Christ. The fact that the pattern of rain is changing to this end is a definitive sign to Israel that the time of the Messiah's rule is near. For this reason, Zechariah only mentions the time of the latter rain in Zechariah 10:1. It is at that time the words of the prophet Joel will be fully fulfilled: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy"* (Acts 2:17-18).

As the blessing of rain indicates the presence of the LORD with Israel, then we could say that the first period of spiritual blessing for the nation was when the Son of God came to them almost 2,000 years ago. *"He came to His own but His own received Him not"* (John 1:11). He had come to suffer and die for the sins of the people (and for ours) at Calvary. There God made the Sinless One, the sacrifice for sin. God the Father raised him from among the dead (Romans 6:4) to show that He had approved of His sacrifice and was able to approach us now with mercy instead of judgment. The Lord Jesus then ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the majesty on high. He is, presently, building and sanctifying His church as indicated by Ephesians 5:25-27: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* In a soon-coming day, He will snatch away the church prior to returning as King of kings and Lord of lords to save His earthly people Israel.

Zechariah 10:2 shows that Israel had been deceived by idolatrous means and by false prophets. These were unable to comfort the people. We read: *"For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd."* So the idolaters had lied in trying to encourage the people when, in fact, they were headed for greater trouble. The result was that Israel's people were wandering like sheep without a shepherd. The diviners would have taken up the role of shepherds; but they were not genuine. The LORD therefore says (in Zechariah 10:3: *"Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats..."* God Himself would deal with these wicked people. The shepherd who should have been tending the sheep and the "he-goats" who were leading the sheep astray would come under His judgment (compare Ezekiel 34:10).

Today, every Christian is individually responsible for his own spiritual state, but the leaders in the church are held accountable for its state as a whole. Therefore, anyone in a position of responsibility in a local church must be very diligent in knowing and applying the will of God in order to lead the people in righteous paths.

Two millennia ago, the Lord saw the plight of His earthly people. He pitied their condition. In Matthew 9:36 we read that *"when [Jesus] saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."*

Zechariah goes on to say: *"For the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle"* (Zechariah 10:3)

The LORD of hosts will visit His flock when He returns to Zion, to take His rightful place as Shepherd over the house of Judah. He will use the Jews as a glorious horse in the battle against the idolaters and the self-seeking leaders of the

time. His people will be delivered from their oppressors. As Zechariah 9:16 states: *“And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.”*

In Zechariah 10:4 we find some metaphors of the Messiah: *“Out of him came forth **the corner**, out of him **the nail**, out of him the **battle bow**, out of him **every oppressor together**.”*

Firstly, He is the Cornerstone. The Lord Jesus is the predicted Shepherd, the Stone of Israel (Genesis 49:24). The Cornerstone is also predicted in Isaiah 28:16 where the Lord says: *“Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone].”* 1 Peter 2:6 confirms this as the Lord Jesus. The cornerstone is the reference point for the whole building. The structure receives its character from Him. It speaks of that which is stable, providing lasting blessing for Israel in contrast to the instability of their condition previously.

He is “the nail”. Isaiah 22:23-24 states: *“And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.”* This is confirmed by Zechariah 6:13 which reads: *“Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”* There have been many great people through the ages, but they were unable, because of sin within, to bear the glory of their position in a righteous way. The Lord Jesus will bear more glory than them all and will do so perfectly before God the Father.

He is also described as “the battle bow”. He will accomplish victories over great distances just as the bow releases the arrows to effectively defeat the power of the distant enemy. His arrows will always find their mark. He will *“strike through kings in the day of His wrath.”*

The last thing added here includes others beside the Messiah: *“From Him every exactor together.”* The Lord will appoint certain individuals to exact righteous vengeance over the enemies of the house of Judah. They will do so in perfect unity in the power of their Messiah. He will make them *“as mighty men”* (Zechariah 10:5), and give them power to *“tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets.”* This looks on to the end of the period of Great Tribulation when victory will belong to the Jews who have (for so long in the past) been the victims of oppression.

In Zechariah 10:6 the LORD goes on to say: *“And I will strengthen the house of Judah...”* The people of Judah and Benjamin will be in the land already at the time and they will be established by God. He will also *“save the house of Joseph.”* The house of Joseph refers to the ten tribes of children of Israel scattered throughout the nations. The LORD knows who and where they are and will bring them back to their land and all Israel shall be saved both physically and spiritually. The Apostle Paul refers to this time in Romans 11:26-27: *“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”*

The Lord then states: *“For I have mercy upon them”* (Zechariah 10:6) or, as Young's Literal Translation puts it: *“For I have loved them.”* The Lord acts out of love for His people who had been so faithless and rebellious in the past. He continues: *“... And they shall be as though I had not cast them off.”* This will be a complete and permanent restoration of a nation once rejected by God for their unbelief. He then states: *“For I [am] the LORD their God.”* Here He remembers His covenant promise and He must be true to His word and ultimately bless all His chosen people.

Furthermore, He hears their prayers. The prayers of a people now dependent upon Him. If prayer is important for Israel in that coming day, how much more it is required of Christians today. It is worth emphasising that prayer is an act that is a proof of faith. It shows our utter dependence upon our God and Father and a desire to do His will to His glory.

Writing about the once scattered tribes of Israel, Ephraim, Zechariah writes: in Zechariah 10:7: *“And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.”* Hosea spoke of this restoration in this way: *“I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God”* (Hosea 2:23).

In Zechariah 10:8 Zechariah reveals how the LORD will go about restoring the lost tribes: *“I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.”* The word “hiss” means “whistle” referring to a shrill-noted pipe used by shepherds to gather the sheep. The LORD then shows why, *“for I have redeemed them”*. He is able to restore them righteously because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ of which the Passover lamb was a picture when He previously brought them out of Egypt. But not only are they brought back, they increase tremendously. In Hosea 1:10 we are told: *“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of*

the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

Those who had increased in number while among the nations shall remember the Lord and, along with their children, return as shown by Zechariah 10:9-10: *"And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them."*

Although Israel will have possession of lands which were made his many years previously (like Gilead and Lebanon) there still will not be enough room for all the people. Joseph shall indeed be a fruitful bough (see Genesis 49:22). So the land of Israel is extended from the Mediterranean to the River Euphrates as the Lord had promised Abram many years previously. In Genesis 15:18 we read: *"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."*

Zechariah gives further details in Zechariah 10:11. The LORD passes through the sea which symbolises the animosity of the nations. The waves suggest their wickedness against Israel. This, He deals with in His power. The river generally speaks of the Nile which shall dry up. It would no longer be a barrier to Israel. He will also destroy the power of Assyria which may indicate the end of the King of the North (see Daniel 11) who had swept through Israel with his armies. At the same time, the dominion of Egypt will depart. This will allow those of Israel liberty to go where they wish in the name of the Lord. They will be free to serve the God who delivered and restored them. All this under the sway of their Messiah. Of Him, Richard Holden wrote:

*Royal robes shall soon invest Thee,
Royal splendours crown Thy brow;
Christ of God, our souls confess Thee
King and Sovereign even now;
Thee we reverence,
Thee obey,
Own Thee Lord and Christ alway.*

Today, we who are Christians are to serve the Lord wherever we go. As the Lord Jesus Himself said: *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture"* (John 10:9).

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