

Z'kharyah ~ Part 6

Z'kharyah (7:8–14) is the second of the 4 messages in answer to the question (7-3). Harkening back to his opening call (1:4) and to the warnings of earlier prophets (cf. Isaiah 1:11–17; 58:1–7; Amos 5:10–15), the prophet alerts the delegation to produce the fruits of righteousness that demonstrate obedience to **God's Word** (vv. 7:9, 10) and to revisit the actions of their fathers who deliberately rejected **God's Word** (vv. 11, 12a) which activated the fury of **God** against them (v. 12b).

Essence of Religion

⁸ Then this message from Adonai came to Z'kharyah: ⁹ "In the past Adonai-Tzva'ot said, 'Administer true justice. Let everyone show mercy and compassion to his brother. ¹⁰ Don't oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, or poor people. Don't plot evil against each other.'

The test of true repentance is a life of obedience to **God**, specifically, *true justice that shows mercy and compassion* (v. 9) to the *widows, orphans, foreigners, or poor people*. These naturally disadvantaged groups in society were easy targets for the strong to oppress. This concern for the weaker members of society was what the **Lord** had required of his people in the former days, before **Yerushalayim's** fall.

Forefathers Missed the Point

¹¹ But they wouldn't listen, they stubbornly turned their shoulder away and stopped up their ears, so that they wouldn't have to hear it. ¹² Yes, they made their hearts as hard as a diamond, so that they wouldn't hear the Torah and the messages that Adonai-Tzva'ot had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. This is why great anger came from Adonai-Tzva'ot;

The **Ruach** served a vital function in the revelation and inspiration of **God's Word** through human authors.

¹³ and it came about that just as they hadn't listened when he called, so ADONAI-Tzva'ot said, 'I won't listen when they call; ¹⁴ but with the power of a whirlwind I will disperse them among all the nations which they have not known.' Thus, the land was left desolate after them, so that no one came or went. They had turned a pleasant land into a desert."

With the parade of sinfulness summarized in verses 4–12, **God** was justified in stirring up a windstorm that scattered the participants in all directions. Typical of prophetic language, judgment is expressed in hyperbole.

Restoration Has Come

The sermon now turns dramatically from judgment to blessing, from complete dispersion to total restoration. Spectacular blessings from **God** had already been proclaimed in the visions (1:16–17; 2:4–5, 11–12; 3:9–10), but here they are enlarged to hyperbolic proportions, seeking to change the hearers' perception of themselves. With the returnees barely existing in the land, **Z'kharyah** sought to energize them with the potential of becoming something magnificent, but it would occur only by an act of **God** (8:15).

⁸ ¹ A message came from ADONAI-Tzva'ot: ² "ADONAI-Tzva'ot says, 'I am extremely jealous on Tziyon's behalf, and I am jealous for her with great fury.'

The connection between a *jealous God* and a *God of wrath* is evident elsewhere in the Prophets (Ezekiel 16:38, 42; Nahum 1:2), suggesting that His deep desire for relationship was matched by decisive judgment against anything that would interfere - whether from within or without.

³ ADONAI says, 'I am returning to Tziyon, and I will live in Yerushalayim. Then Yerushalayim will be called Truth City, ADONAI-Tzva'ot's Mountain, the Mountain of the Holy One.

Truth City. A city which is characterized by truth, both in word and in deed (vv. 8, 16) because it is ruled over by the **Messiah** who is characterized by truth (Jn 14:6). ***The Mountain of the Holy One.*** **Zion** is holy because the **King** who lives there is holy.

⁴ ADONAI-Tzva'ot says, 'Old men and old women will once again sit in the open places of Yerushalayim, each one with his cane in his hand, because of their great age.

Old and young, male and female, are depicted enjoying their natural habitat. Such an idyllic picture of opposite extremes implies peace and plenty for all ages and both sexes, with images of healthful play and relaxed rest that contrast dramatically with the slave labor, malnutrition, and starvation that had been the fate of former Jerusalem. Certainly, compared with their present impoverished circumstances, the future holds greater blessings.

⁵ The city's open places will also be full of boys and girls playing there. ' ⁶ ADONAI-Tzva'ot says, 'This may seem amazing to the survivors in those days, but must it also seem amazing to me?' says ADONAI-Tzva'ot. ⁷ ADONAI-Tzva'ot says, 'I will save my people from lands east and west; ⁸ I will bring them back, and they will live in Yerushalayim. They will be my people, and I will be their God, with faithfulness and justice. '¹

Though the incredible blessings described may stagger the imagination, since **God** was the designer, they were not too much to hope for (Jeremiah 32:17, 27). Several Hebrew terms suggest an allusion to **Sarah's** equally incredible experience - a miraculous pregnancy after years of barrenness (Genesis 18:13-14). The reference to **my people** identifies the returnees as the true community of restoration, as promised in the Prophets (Isaiah 10:21-22; 11:11, 16; Jeremiah 23:3). ***They will be My people and I will be their God*** indicates full restoration of the covenant relationship, in contrast to God's stunning declaration, ***"You are not My people, and I will not be your God"*** (Hoshea 1:9).

At your workplace, you might notice that ethical dilemmas frequently arise, challenging your values. Like in Zechariah 7:8-8:4, God desires truth, justice, and integrity. When faced with such situations, commit to upholding these principles, even when it's difficult. Set aside some time during your week to reflect on your choices and ask God for wisdom. Consider speaking with a trusted colleague about how you can work together to promote an environment of fairness and honesty. This will not only strengthen your integrity but also inspire others around you.

In our next post, we will pick up where we left off by exploring **Z'kharyah** in the previous post.

¹ Z'kharyah 7:8-8:8.