

# Zechariah & Luke: The Returning King

## Lesson 9: The Covenant King

**Key Verse:** ...and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness. ~Zechariah 8.8

Hiking in the Texas Hill Country is a transcendent experience. The boulders, springs, elevation changes, birds, flowers, creeks, and smell of pristine air provide relief from daily stresses, allowing hikers to gain perspective. However, you must watch where you place your next step! It is common, when preoccupied with avoiding rocks known as “ankle breakers”, to miss the opportunity for relief and perspective. Likewise, God’s people were preoccupied with the act of fasting rather than the opportunity and purpose of fasting. God reminds them that He is a **jealous** God, who will not be satisfied with anything less than whole-hearted devotion and obedience to Him. He demands more than attention to His commands. Just as He is faithful to His **covenant** to be their God, He demands their hearts to be preoccupied, engrossed to the exclusion of all other thoughts and devotions, solely with Him.

*LORD of Hosts, our God and our Savior, continue to teach me. Guard me from becoming “diamond-hearted”, keep me from “turning a stubborn shoulder” in refusing to submit myself to Your will (7.11-12). Show me where I am disobedient to Your clear commands found in this week’s passage. Enable faith in me, not fear of You. Illuminate your Spirit’s light in me to everyone who interacts and observes me so that they will beg to know You (8.20-23).*

**Zechariah 7.1-8.23: CH 7** In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. **2** Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men to entreat the favor of the LORD, **3** saying to the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, “Should I weep and abstain in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”

**4** Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me: **5** “Say to all the people of the land and the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? **6** And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? **7** Were not these the words that the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?’”

**8** And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, **9** “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, **10** do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” **11** But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder<sup>1</sup> and stopped their ears that they might not hear. **12** They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts. **13** “As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear,” says the LORD of hosts, **14** “and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate.”

**CH 8** And the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, **2** “Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.

**3** Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. **4** Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. **5** And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. **6** Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the LORD of hosts?

**7** Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, **8** and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

<sup>1</sup> “Turned a stubborn shoulder” is to express the image of an ox refusing to bear the yoke. It’s literal translation is that they “pulled back a shoulder” in refusal.

**9** Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. **10** For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in, for I set every man against his neighbor.

**11** But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. **12** For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. **13** And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong."

**14** For thus says the LORD of hosts: "As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, **15** so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. **16** These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; **17** do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD."

**18** And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, **19** "Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace.

**20** "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. **21** The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.' **22** Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. **23** Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

**Diamonds:** Zechariah 7-8 could serve as a summation of Luke 10-13 (last week's lengthy and very full lesson!) This prophecy, beginning in Zechariah 7, arrives two years after Zechariah's sleepless night of eight consecutive visions (Zechariah 1-6). A delegation from Bethel arrives in Jerusalem to check on the progress of the temple rebuilding. While touring the rebuilding, they ask the wrong question!

1. What question do they ask and what is God's response (Zechariah 7.3-7)?

The fasts of the fifth and seventh month were tied to four major events of Jerusalem's fall: the breaching of the walls, the burning of the city and temple, the murder of the governor, and Nebuchadnezzar's siege. Thus, there were four fasts, as referenced further within this passage (Zechariah 8.19). Now, as this delegation from Bethel tours the rebuilding efforts, noting considerable progress, they essentially ask, "We see that this is going to be finished in a few years, do we still have to fast? I mean y'all are doing a great job rebuilding, so all that awful history has now progressed into restoration. Does God still require this continued fasting? Won't it be irrelevant and kinda pointless soon?"

The people's preoccupation was with the ritual. They were missing the point of all fasting – genuine mourning over sin itself, not just the consequences of sin. More than just mourning sin's consequence of a broken relationship with God, their fasting should have included an authentic heart's desire to do whatever it would take to faithfully listen to God and obey Him at all costs.

Ultimately, the kind of fasting that pleases God is "fasting" from sin. Synonyms of fasting include "starving oneself" and "denying oneself". Thus, the fast God desires includes "starving oneself" of sinful desires, and "denying oneself" the absolute right to own their daily agenda and ambitions (Luke 9.23-25; Ephesians 4.22-32).

2. Jesus provides two profound examples of "fasting" best summarized in Philippians 2.5-8. What are they?

Antonyms of fasting include “indulging oneself”. Thus, the people were caught “indulging” themselves and their desires, thus paying lip-service to God by complying with rituals required by the Law. That the people asked, “Do we still have to fast?” prompted God to warn them that a mindset that leads to asking such a question will lead to a “diamond-hard” heart and an ox-like refusal to obey God. In the past, such disobedience led to God’s “great anger”, His unwillingness to listen to their cries for help, and their “pleasant land” being made “desolate” (7.13-14).

3. List God’s expectations of His people from Zechariah 7.8-10. What is He getting from His people instead (Zechariah 7.11-12)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Review your answers to Lesson 8, The Rabbi King (Luke 10-13). Identify at least one story that illustrates the same dynamic between Jesus and the religious leaders as is found between God and His people in Zechariah 7.8-12:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is your gut response to this? What insight does this provide to you? What relationship dynamics does God want between you and Him? Answer this question with much prayer, listening for God’s warning and His encouragement to you, His daughter.

**Deity: Jealous** (Zechariah 8.2)

6. Read Exodus 20.4-5. What does God expect of His people? How does this shape your definition of “jealous”?

God’s jealousy is not like human jealousy. He is not jealous or envious because someone has something He wants or needs. God’s divine jealousy is aroused when someone gives to another what rightly belongs to Him. This is the essence of idolatry. God is rightly jealous when worship, praise, honor, or adoration are given to idols.

The apostle Paul describes precisely this kind of jealousy in 2 Corinthians 11.2. Worship and service belong to God alone and are to be given to Him alone.

7. In Zechariah 8.2, God says He is jealous for His people “with great jealousy” and “with great wrath”. We define jealousy and wrath in negative and harsh vocabulary. How do you reconcile God’s “great jealousy”, to the point of “great wrath”, with His love for you *and* for His Church?

8. God commands His people to “fear not” in Zechariah 8.13-14. From these verses, why are they not to fear the God whose jealous wrath was poured out on them for their disobedience to Him? How will this shape your repentance and devotion to love and serve God alone?

**Doctrine: Covenant**<sup>2</sup>~ (Zechariah 8.4-8) A covenant is a formal binding agreement or sealed promise. Covenants are accompanied by a sign or a legal guarantee. Like covenants, promises are legally binding. However, a covenant is superior to a promise. To illustrate, the promise of marriage is inferior to getting married (a covenant). Marriage involves not only a promise but a ceremonial sign that seals and guarantees the promise (the exchange of rings). Likewise, the Holy Spirit seals and guarantees God’s promise of eternal life with Him (2 Corinthians 1.21-22, 5.5; Ephesians 1.13-14, 4.30).

There are at least six widely agreed upon covenants documented in the Bible. Five of these covenants are unconditional, while the Mosaic covenant is conditional and temporary. It ended with the death of Jesus. In Genesis 1-2, God obligates man to worship and serve Him, man’s Creator. Yet God obligates Himself through His promises to sinful man. In fact, God uses His covenants to man as His plan through which His kingdom purposes unfold.

1. **Noahic Covenant:** Established and confirmed in Genesis 6.18, 9.9-17. The first use of the word “covenant” (berit) after sin’s entry into creation is used in this covenant. This is an unconditional and eternal covenant still in effect today. Its sign is the rainbow. This covenant is considered the initial platform for God’s purposes. Listed are the promises and provisions of this covenant:

~Provides stability of nature (Genesis 8.22)  
~Re-issues God’s command to Adam to multiply (Genesis 1.28, 9.1, 7)  
~God causes animal kingdom to fear man (Genesis 9.2)  
~Like plants, animals become food for man (Genesis 9.3-4)

~Dignifies man as God’s image bearer despite sin’s entry (Genesis (9.5)  
~Capital punishment instated for murder of God’s image bearer (Genesis 9.6)  
~God promises never to destroy the world by water again (Genesis 9.15)

2. **Abrahamic Covenant:** Established in Genesis 12.1-3, ratified by God in Genesis 15.7-17, reaffirmed in Genesis 22.15-18. This everlasting covenant details God’s plan to save people and restore all things through three promises: 1) land for Abraham, 2) numerous descendants of Abraham, and 3) universal blessings for the nations.

It is through this covenant that God reveals He will use Abraham and the nation of Israel to bless the Gentiles (Genesis 12.3; 22.18). Through the lineage of Abraham, God promises kings, most importantly, king David, who is in the lineage of God’s promised Messiah, Jesus. Listed are the promises God makes in this covenant:

~God will make Abraham a “great nation”; Israel, the descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12.2)  
~Abraham will be blessed, and his name will be great (Genesis 12.2)  
~Abraham will be a blessing for others (Genesis 12.2)  
~God will bless or curse others according to their treatment of Abraham (Genesis 12.3)

~Abraham’s descendants as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15.5)  
~Multiplication of Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 17.2); descendants will be innumerable (Genesis 22.17)  
~Abraham will be father of many nations (Genesis 17.6)  
~Kings will come from Abraham (Genesis 17.6)

<sup>2</sup>MacArthur, J. & Mayhue, R., *Biblical Doctrine*, A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2017) ppgs. 870-880

~The nation to come from Abraham will be a blessing "to all families of the earth" (Genesis 12.3)  
 ~Land for Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12.6-7) and "forever" (Genesis 13.14-17); dimensions given in Genesis 15.18-21  
 ~Commitment to protect and reward Abraham (Genesis 15.1)

~Abraham promised all the land of Canaan (Genesis 17.8)  
 ~Male circumcision established as the sign of the "everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17.10-14)  
 ~All the nations of earth will be blessed through Abraham's offspring (Genesis 22.18)

There are over fourteen promises God makes to Abraham on behalf of not only Abraham himself, but also his children, their children, and through so many generations of descendants that they make up a nation!

3. **Mosaic Covenant:** Commonly referred to as "the law"; given through Moses after Israel's exodus from Egypt to govern the life and conduct of God's people in the "Promised Land" of Canaan (see Abrahamic covenant). This covenant is bilateral and conditional, contingent on Israel's obedience to God. Their disobedience would render this covenant invalid (or legally null). It consisted of 613 commandments in total, summarized by the ten commandments (Exodus 20.1-17). It includes rules governing Israel's social life (Exodus 21-23) and worship system (Exodus 25-31). The Sabbath, a day of rest, is the sign of this covenant (Exodus 31.12-17). Keeping the Mosaic covenant out of love for God would result in spiritual and material prosperity, while disobedience would result in judgment (Deuteronomy 28-29).

This covenant was never a means for salvation. Rather, this covenant is considered a gracious covenant because it allowed Israel, God's chosen people, a way to show its love and commitment to God. While Israel promised to obey (Exodus 24.1-18), the biblical record reveals their disobedience to God, resulting in God's judgment for breaking the covenant. Thus, this covenant reveals people's sinfulness. Since Israel failed and broke this covenant, God promised a better, new covenant (Jeremiah 31.31-32). The Mosaic covenant ended with the death of Jesus because He fulfilled the demands of this covenant and established a new covenant with His blood (Luke 22.20).

4. **Priestly Covenant:** This covenant was established in Numbers 25 at a time when many of God's people, Israel, were worshiping Baal of Peor (a false god). It was a perpetual covenant made by God with a priest named Phineas. While Moses was leading Israel in eliminating all those in Israel who "yoked themselves to Baal of Peor" (Numbers 25.5), Phineas killed an Israelite man for openly and brazenly bringing a Midianite woman into his family (Numbers 25.7-8).

The perpetual nature of this priestly covenant suggests it stands as a separate covenant and not as a part of the temporary nature of the Mosaic covenant. This Priestly covenant extends into Christ's second coming (1 Chronicles 6.50-53; Jeremiah 33.20-21; Ezekiel 44.10, 15; 48.11).

5. **Davidic Covenant:** This covenant was established in 2 Samuel 7.1-17 and 1 Chronicles 17.1-15 with king David through God's prophet, Nathan. This unconditional covenant reaffirms the Abrahamic covenant of blessings, including the Gentiles. It reveals more of God's covenant plan by focusing on the royal descendants through the lines of Isaac and Jacob. These are the provisions of this covenant:

~David's name will be made great (2 Samuel 7.9)  
 ~Israel will have a home (2 Samuel 7.10)  
 ~Israel will "disturbed no more" by their enemies (2 Samuel 7.10-11)  
 ~A "house" or dynasty in the line of David will endure forever and his throne established forever (2 Samuel 7.11, 16)  
 ~A coming son will establish this kingdom (2 Samuel 7.12)

~Solomon (David's son) will build the temple (2 Samuel 7.13)  
 ~Solomon's kingdom will be established forever (2 Samuel 7.13)  
 ~God will be a father to Solomon, whom He will discipline when Solomon sins, but God will not take the kingdom from Solomon as He did Saul (2 Samuel 7.14-15)

The genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, references Jesus as “the son of David” (Matthew 1.1). This recognition remained in Jesus’s earthly ministry (Matthew 9.27, 15.22, 21.15). Through the early church, Jesus’s death and resurrection are recognized as the fulfillment of the promised seed of David (Acts 2.30-36, 13.34-37). John also identifies Jesus with David (Revelation 3.7, 22.16). As such, Jesus’s first coming as King in the line of David fulfills the promise of messianic salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 15.14-18), and transfers those who believe in Him to His kingdom (Colossians 1.13). Jesus’s second coming will fulfill the final promises left of this covenant (Matthew 19.28; 25.31).

6. **New Covenant:** This is an unconditional and eternal covenant founded in Jeremiah 31.31-34. It is a covenant in effect now in what is known as the Church Age (Acts 1-2). A new heart is the center of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31.33; Hebrews 8), which also includes the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36.26-27). No longer is obedience to God compelled by external threat. Now, obedience to God is internal. God enables and empowers His people to serve Him willingly and to remain in His blessings (Ephesians 1).

Jesus is the mediator of this covenant, having ratified it with His sacrificial death (Hebrews 9) and His identity as the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53.3-6; Luke 22.20; Hebrews 8.8-12, 9.15, 12.24). Jesus’s second return is also tied to the final fulfillment of this covenant (Jeremiah 31.27, 31, 38; Hebrews 9.28). The indwelling Holy Spirit is a sign of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit seals and guarantees God’s promise of eternal life with Him (2 Corinthians 1.21-22, 5.5; Ephesians 1.13-14, 4.30). A new heart, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and forgiveness of sins are the spiritual blessings at the center of this covenant.

God promised that His people’s exile would last 70 years (Zechariah 7.5). Time was about to expire for His people’s exile from Jerusalem. Temple construction would end in two years. God indicated His readiness to continue to fulfill His covenant promises in Zechariah 8.8, saying, “And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

9. List every promise God makes to His remnant, beginning in Zechariah 8.8 to Zechariah 8.23:

10. Which promise is your favorite and why? Do you believe these promises are for you? How certain are you of this promise or this teaching?

11. Look at the neighborhood God will move His people back into! (Zechariah 8.3-10) Draw, sketch, write, paint – be creative as you like – the picture of the neighborhood God is building for His people. Note what details most stand out to you:

Zechariah 8.20-21 may be the first church invitation in scripture! What is so compelling and challenging about this church invitation is the implied eagerness of the “inhabitants” to “entreat the favor of the LORD” and “to seek the LORD of hosts.” It is followed by what seems to be a beggar’s posture with the 10-to-1 ratio of men seeking a Jewish man to introduce them to God. Whether this final verse is a direct reference to Jesus is debatable. However, “the Hebrew of this text literally speaks of “a man, a Jew,” on whose coattails we are to grab.”<sup>3</sup>

12. How does your life compel others to want to know more about the God you serve? How will you live so that others will eagerly join you in attending church? Who has God placed into your life that needs to grab the coattails of Jesus? Do you need to grab the coattails of Jesus?

### **Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:**

#### **Lecture Outline:**

**Aim:** God’s jealous love compels Him to turn judgment to JOY.

- I. True Religion (Zech 7.1-14) T1: God’s jealous love compels Him to turn fasting into feasting.
  - a. How regularly and genuinely do you fast from your sins?
  - b. What do you do after you repent of your sin?
- II. True Restoration (Zech 8.1-17) T2: God’s jealous love compels Him to turn banishment to blessing.
  - a. What specific blessings have you received from God?
  - b. Which blessings might you be forfeiting because of your disobedience, unbelief, or faithlessness?
- III. True Revival (Zech 8.18-23) T3: God’s jealous love compels Him to turn exile into exodus.
  - a. How does your life proclaim that you have moved from exile to exodus?
  - b. In what ways are you and your local church making the gospel of Jesus Christ attractive to the lost?
  - c. How do you shine as God’s flashlight to illumine His presence and power?

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Duguid, Iain M., *Haggai Zechariah Malachi*, Evangelical Press Commentary (Leyland, England, 2010) pgs.124-140

Phillips, Richard D., *Zechariah*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007) pgs.155-191

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<sup>3</sup> Phillips, p. 190