Zechariah 8

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[0:00] Good morning. We're in Zechariah 8 today, but there was a bit we didn't finish from the end of Zechariah 7, which could mean I don't manage to finish the end of Zechariah 8 today, but we'll see.

I just want to pray before we study this. Father, I thank you for this amazing book of Zechariah, who over 500 years before Christ predicted what will happen over 2000 years after Christ.
And as we get into the latter part of this book, it's it's a fascinating and exciting and yet daunting read. And in this chapter, Lord, I do pray that our hearts will be right towards you.
I think the application of this chapter for us is to make sure our hearts are right and sincere before you. So I ask you, Lord, to teach us not just that we share information, but that our hearts change.
So. I don't know if you recall this, but at the beginning of chapter seven, we had two guys turn up from a town called Bethel and they asked a question.
[1:18] They said, should we continue this ritual of fasting that we've been carrying out for the last 70 plus years, probably more like 90 years? A long time anyway. And the Lord didn't directly answer them.

But what he produced after that through the prophet Zechariah were four separate responses, all of which go together to make the fullness of his response.
And so in verses one to seven, they spoke of the fact that the rituals were manmade, had never been required by God. That they were doing something. What they were doing was they were celebrating, not celebrating is the wrong word.
They were bemoaning. They were fasting and going. They were going without food and weeping.
And the Jews are famous for being able to turn on the tears. Like we have the wailing wall where they they go up and they wail and they produce tears.
And I'm told I've never seen it, but I'm told when they have one of their weep fests that real tears are weeped, even though they kind of manufactured. It's it's I guess it's good acting.
[2:27] I don't know. But what he said was these are insincere feasts. And you're celebrating stuff that God never, ever required of you. And if you recall, one of the things we said was the only fast that God ever required was on the Day of Atonement.

So these were in addition to what the Lord had asked for. And as far as the Lord is concerned, they were actually a waste of time. He. He also pointed out that they weren't just doing this on one occasion, but they were actually doing it on two occasions.
And we'll return to that because actually they were doing it on four occasions. But we'll come to that in this passage. So he was saying that's not the only fast you need to repent of. You've got other fasts that you do that are insincere.
And God has got no time for insincere religious ritual. And then in verses eight to 14 of chapter seven, we saw his second response, which was to point out in some detail the reasons for God's judgment falling upon their forefathers.
And you may recall it said he requires justice, kindness, compassion and no oppression for those who are poor or infirm.
[3:49] But there needed to be a society that sincerely looked after itself and looked after the members of that society. And this is spoken to a Jewish population who were renowned for trying to avoid spending money looking after their elderly relatives.

And they were it was also a thing that orphans, instead of being looked after and cared for, were used as cheap labor and sometimes widows the same. They were exploited rather than cared for.
And in verse 11 of chapter seven, God, Yahweh points out that against all these attributes, so kindness, compassion, no oppression, justice against all those.

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The Bible describes it as they had turned a stubborn shoulder. In other words, their failure in these matters was willful. They'd set their hearts against being compassionate, set their hearts against being kind, set their hearts to oppress those who were worse off than themselves and so on.
And in verse 12, it says their hearts were like flint. Now, the analogy in verse 12, and this is the bit that I didn't get to last week, the analogy of having hearts like flint in verse 12, the Hebrew literally uses the word corundum.
[5:21] And corundum is a stone that is too hard to engrave. In fact, some versions say diamonds because diamond isn't the only stone that's almost impossible to engrave.

But certainly in their day, it would have been impossible. But there are a few contenders. But the point is that the hearts were so hard that they could not be changed. Now, so in our study of Zechariah 8, let's turn to Jeremiah 31.
And it's so important to realize that we gloss over these things thinking, well, they're hard hearted. But I think, and I'm happy to be corrected, but I think there's a little bit of a difference in being a bit hard hearted.
And having a heart that is beyond change. And in chapter 31, it says, sorry, I need to find, start at verse 31.
It's a passage that we've read quite a few times. Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.
[6:48] My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Where it says on their heart, I will write it.
The Hebrew there is to engrave it or grave it on their hearts. So to have a heart like Flint or Corundum suggests that you're not going to be a candidate for God to be able to engrave his word on your heart.
Because you've blocked it out. You've written it out. So that was the last bit of last week that I wanted to deal with.
It meant that they couldn't hear the word of the Holy Spirit through the prophets. And the result was a great outpouring of God's wrath. In the last two verses of the chapter, chapter seven, it says he called to them through the prophets.
[8:00] And they had ignored him. And so it then goes on to say that. He called out to them through the prophets and they didn't listen.

And then they got into adversity in Babylon and they started to call out to him and he didn't listen. So it was a reciprocal thing. And then in the very last verse, we're reminded that he then scattered them among the nations that they did not know.
Now, he did this twice to Israel. Well, in 722 BC, he scattered them to Assyria and he used the Assyrians to deal with the northern tribes.
And then later on in 605 to 586 BC, he used the Babylonians. He scattered them into Babylon. And that was the southern tribes.
So in both cases, the northern and the southern tribes had been warned that their sin would bring this upon them. And they didn't listen. And so it did bring this upon them.
[9:04] And although Zechariah is dealing with people in his own time and saying, this is what's going to happen if you don't listen to the Lord and you and you listen to you have the same attitude that your forefathers had.

You'd think that would be enough. And you'd think maybe Zechariah was only speaking to that time. But then fast forward to Jesus's day. And once again, they didn't listen to the word of the Lord.
And once again, they cast Messiah aside. And so once again, they were scattered. Now, the Bible says it would be scattered to both the east and the west.
Well, twice they'd been scattered east to Assyria and to Babylon. But in AD 70, it was Rome that scattered them, which, of course, is more west.
And they were scattered all over the earth. And what God had said in the book of Zechariah was that when the time is right, he would regather them.

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[10:07] And we've seen them be regathered. And even latterly, when Rome dispersed them, they've been regathered again since 1948. They've been back in their land with their old language, their old culture.

And they've taken up where they left off 2,000 years before, approximately. So they went through a lot of unnecessary hardship.
But God was faithful throughout. And God drew them back as a nation. And the application for us, I suppose, is that when we practice our faith, we practice it from the heart.
We don't turn up and do rituals with a hard heart. But we are sincerely engaged in our expressions of worship to the Lord and our love for one another.
God is not impressed with empty rituals. So now chapter 8. Now, there were four responses in all to these questions that were asked by these two guys from Bethel.
[11:10] And we've seen two of them in chapter 7. And chapter 8 contains the other two. The first one is contained in verses 1 to 17. And the second is contained from verse 18 to the end of the chapter.

And there is a complete change of emphasis. God is changing their thinking from the woe is me, victim mentality, mourning their losses, to a more hopeful and forward-looking attitude where they are trusting the Lord for a great future.
So let's read it, Zechariah 8. And it becomes clear as we read it that we're not just reading, well, we're not reading about the Jerusalem that would be present after they'd finished rebuilding the temple.
This was referring to a Jerusalem that was far beyond that. And we have not yet seen it. So it's, a lot of it remains future. Chapter 8.
Then the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I am exceedingly zealous for Zion. Yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.
[12:27] Actually, the proper translation should be zealous, not jealous. Especially the way we use jealous these days. Because jealous is kind of sinful. But he is passionate and zealous is what should be conveyed.

Thus says the Lord, I will return to Zion. I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the city of truth. And the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the holy mountain.
Thus says the Lord of hosts, old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem. Each man with his staff in his hand because of age. And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.
Thus says the Lord of hosts, if it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant to this people in those days, would it also be too difficult in my sight, declares the Lord of hosts.
Thus says the Lord of hosts, behold, I am going to save my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west. And I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem.
[13:31] And they shall be my people and I will be their God in truth and righteousness. Thus says the Lord of hosts, let your hands be strong. You who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets.

Those who spoke in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid to the end that the temple might be built. For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for animal.
And for him who went out or came in, there was no peace because of his enemies. And I set all men one against another. But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the Lord of hosts.
For there will be peace for the seed. The vine will yield its fruit. The land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their due. And I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things.
It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations of house of Judah and house of Israel. So I will save you that you may become a blessing.
[14:39] Do not fear. Let your hand be strong. For thus says the Lord of hosts, just as I purpose to do harm to you. Sorry, past tense. Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, says the Lord of hosts.

And I have not relented. So I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear. These are the things which you should do.

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Speak the truth to one another. Judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. And let none of you devise evil in your heart against another. And do not love perjury.
For all these things are what I hate, declares the Lord. And I'm going to stop there. And we'll do the last bit if I don't run out of time. So we've gone from looking at the empty rituals.
Don't know what you're doing that for. It's insincere. It's wrong. I have no time for it.
Da-de-da-de-da. And you're all sitting there bemoaning your lot. You're remembering the day that Gedaliah got killed.
[15:50] And you're remembering the day that the temple was burnt down. And you're basically, woe is me, woe is me, woe is me. And what this says is, thus, this is verse 2.

I am exceedingly zealous for Zion. Yes, with great wrath, I am zealous for her. And this, if you were a Jew in these days, you've just come out of 70 years of captivity.
Now you are surrounded by the ruins of your old city. And you've got a partially built temple. And everything seems hard. And you've got people oppressing you, trying to disrupt your building program, trying to get in the way.
When you read the book of Nehemiah, there's a time when they have to build the walls. And they're building with their sword strapped to them.
And they're building with one hand, with their other hand ready with the sword. They're living in this environment that isn't very encouraging. And God is saying, don't look at that.
[16:54] I am going, I am exceedingly zealous for Zion. And when it says, I am zealous for her with great wrath, it promises that he will pour out his wrath on those who pour out their wrath against the Jews.

There is a direct link that if you mistreat the Jews, you will be mistreated by God. I would go as far as to say that still goes.
That's why this nation of which we are a part, I believe, is in mortal danger. Because we are doing all sorts of things. We were the ones who actually were the biggest instrument in giving the Jews back their land.
And it was a very messy thing. And I'm not going to go into it in detail. But the Balfour Declaration came about because of Britain. And so they got their land back. In fact, they didn't get as much of it back as they should.
But they got what they got because of Great Britain. And Great Britain is now taking sanctions against the Jews. Who is going to lose that battle? We are dicing with death, quite literally, as a nation.
[18:04] And we've got Russia posturing in the background, just waiting to take advantage of the fact that we've got hardly any military functioning at the moment. It's a scary prospect. But God is in charge.

But what he's saying here is, it's not just that Zion is a place I like. I'm passionate for this place. And I'm going to pour out my wrath on those who come against it. And then in verse 3, we're filled with lots of hope. Because Yahweh says he's going to return there and dwell there.
Where he says he's going to return and dwell there, the Hebrew word is, I don't know if I pronounce it right, but it looks like it should be shachan. And it means usually to take up permanent residence. It's not just a visitation. I'm going to live there in the future. It's going to be my place of abode. And at this point, it says Jerusalem will be called the city of truth.
[19:04] Some of your versions will say the city of faithfulness. I think truth is a more accurate translation. But in any event, what you have is this city that they're rebuilding slowly and the temple that they're rebuilding, that is currently not much more than a ruin, will be looked upon globally as the city of truth.

So there is a massive development to take place in Jerusalem. And it doesn't take place in the life of Zechariah or Haggai or any of the other prophets that were active at this time.
Various bits of what they say did come to pass. But the fullness of this becoming a place where God is known to live and it being labeled the city of truth among all the cities of the world, that is yet to happen.
What I can tell you, and it's another study entirely, is that politically and religiously, worldwide, we are on the pathway that the Bible predicts to take us to this place.
But that's another study. And I find it really exciting. But I mustn't get sidetracked. So this has not yet happened. But God has reserved this city as his future permanent abode.

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[20:31] So we should be circumspecting the way we deal with Israel in general and Jerusalem in particular. And of course, the Jews that lived there at that time must have been really challenged in their imagination because they're surrounded by ruins and they can't even get on with the job without interruption.

And what they're planning to build is only a shadow of the former temple anyway because people have been moaning that it isn't going to be as glorious as Solomon's temple was. And yet God is calling upon them to believe that he will keep his promise and that they are paving the way for a Jerusalem and an Israel where God will set up home.
I do believe, and this is open to challenge. I haven't planned this, but I do believe that the Feast of Tabernacles is something to do with this where God tabernacles with his people.
God makes home with his people. There are lots of ways in which the Bible predicts that God will kind of move in with his people. As we read on, the picture gets even better.
We've got in verses 4 and 5, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age, and the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in the streets.
[21:55] If you go to Israel today, you will not see this. And in Zechariah's day, you wouldn't have seen this. In fact, I don't think, and please correct me if you know different, I don't think there's ever been a time when there's been that freedom, at least not since Nebuchadnezzar carted them all off to Babylon.

I don't think there's been a time when children are free to play in the streets in safety. And I don't think it's been particularly good for the elderly to sit out in the streets because they're just under fire all the time.
It's actually, although God has protected it miraculously, it's quite a violent place. Because people hate the Jews.
And they hate the Lord. So we're a long way from this when this is prophesied. And it says, the mountain of the Lord will be called a holy mountain.
Now you may recall from previous studies that where the Bible talks about mountains, it's usually referring to a kingdom, an empire or a kingdom. If you just quickly turn to Isaiah chapter 2.
[23:11] Because when he says, the mountain of the Lord will be called a holy mountain. Now the mountain of the Lord is Zion. And you often hear people disparaging Zionists.

I am an unashamed Zionist personally. Because Mount Zion is going to be the mountain of the Lord. And that will be called a holy mountain.
Chapter 2, verse 2. Might as well read verse 1. The word which Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
It will come about in the last days. So prophecies about Zion becoming a holy mountain are reserved for the last days.
Zechariah wasn't prophesying in the last days. He was prophesying about the last days. Reading on. The mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains.
[24:15] And will be raised above the hills. And all nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.

To the house of the God of Jacob. That he may teach us concerning his ways. And that we may walk in his paths. For the law will go forth from Zion. As the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
Jerusalem. So. Something is going to happen that is going to transform. I was going to say the fortunes. And I don't mean it in the sort of gypsy sense of the word fortunes.
But something is going to transform the fortunes of Israel. That it. It will. First of all, there will be topographical changes. In other words. It will become the highest mountain for miles around.
Now I have no idea how that's going to happen. But it will. And nations are going to stream to it. Not just because it's a good tourist venue.
[25:18] But they will be seeking the Lord. The God of Jacob. So. Psalm 2 has a similar message.

I'm not going to divert to read it. But Psalm 2 has a similar message. So. Today when we look at Israel. It's certainly much improved and prospered from Zechariah's day.
But we're not seeing this yet. Are we? This is still future. In verse 6. Going back to Zechariah. In verse 6.
It says. Thus says the Lord of hosts. If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant. Or the people in those days.

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Will it also be too difficult in my sight? Declares the Lord of hosts. Our Bible translators haven't helped us here. And I think some versions will say.
[26:15] Is it too marvelous? And is that the old King James? Or the new King James? And revised standard. That's a better translation. As long as you understand the word marvelous.

The way it always used to be used. Because we. Like many things we do. When we crucify the English language. We bring words down in their meaning. And we go.
Oh that's marvelous isn't it? You know. When we think it's good. You know. A nice sunny day. Oh isn't it marvelous to see the sun again? It doesn't mean that. It means it's a marvel.
Or. A miracle. And so what the Lord is calling out here. Is he's. In verse 6 he's saying. Is it too much of a miracle in the sight of you.
Remnant. And does that mean. It's too much of a miracle. For me to do. And. Of course. Where they're sitting. It must seem.
[27:15] An incredible thing to believe. I know it's only little by comparison. But when we first prayed for a building. I have to say.

I wasn't really jacked up in my faith. That. Somebody was going to come and dump a building in our lap. With about a hundred grand to fix it with. I.
I'm still. I'm still getting over that. But things that God can do with the snap of his fingers. Seem impossible. And must have seemed impossible to this remnant.
Who was struggling with much more difficulty than we've ever had to struggle with. So. He's. He's saying. I can do this.
In verses seven and eight. We read. He will save his people from the east and the west. And we've. We've talked about that briefly. Up to this point. He'd only had to save them from the people of the east.
[28:14] So. Again. It speaks of a future occasion. When he will also have to save them from the people of the west. And. You could just interpret that as.

People all over the earth. Because when we get to the book of Revelation. Which we will one day do here. Um. Every nation sets itself against Israel and Jerusalem.
Every nation. So. It's. It's speaking to a time yet future. When every nation. Will be against Jerusalem.
Um. And. What it says. Where are we? Verse seven and eight. He's going to recall his people. Verse seven. Going to save my people from the land of the east.
From the land of the west. And I will bring them back. And they will live in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people. And I will be their God in truth and righteousness. And when it says in truth.
[29:12] It's like. I really mean this. This isn't just an idea. This is going to happen. It's truth. I am going to reclaim my people. I'm going to gather my people to myself.

Um. And we'll see as we read on. He's going to create in those people. A future witness for himself. Where nations will run to Jews.
To be educated about God. And in a sense. We've always done that. Because we're reading. The book that they mostly put together. So we've always been guided toward God.
By. Jewish input. And Jesus said salvation is from the Jews. Jews. But that's never yet happened on a worldwide basis. And it's never yet happened.
Where all nations. And all people from all nations. Flock to the Jews. To find out about God. More of that when we get to the end of the chapter. Um. And so this.
[30:12] Exhortation. About the certainty. That this is going to happen. Is being used to exhort the people. To continue to build. Just turn with me to Haggai. Which is.

Uh. The next door book. Uh. Backwards. Haggai was prophesying at the same time. He was a contemporary. In the second year of Darius.
The king. On the first day of the sixth month. The word of the Lord. Came. By the prophet Haggai. To Zerubbabel. The son of Shealtiel. Governor. Of Judah.
And to Joshua. The son of Jehoshadak. The high priest. Saying. Thus says the Lord of hosts. Uh. This people says. And this is. This will give you an idea. Of the despondency.
That they were facing. This people says. The time has not come. Even the time. For the house of the Lord. To be rebuilt. So they were despondent. They'd made a start.

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[31:08] But everything was difficult. And they were all. Decided not to bother. And they were building. Their own houses. Verse three. Then the word of the Lord. Came by Haggai the prophet. Saying. Is it time.

Is it time. For you. Yourselves. To dwell. In your panelled houses. While this house. The Lord's house. Lies desolate. Now therefore. Says the Lord of hosts.
Consider your ways. You have shown. You have sown. Much. But harvested little. You eat. But there is not enough. To be satisfied. You drink.
But there is not enough. To become drunk. You put on clothing. But no one is warm enough. And he who earns. Wages. To put into a purse.
With holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts. Consider your ways. Go up to the mountains. Bring wood. And rebuild the temple. That I may be pleased with it. And be glorified.
[32:02] Says the Lord your God. So there's. There are two prophets. Exhorting them to build. And they've reached this point. Of despondency. And what we're reading here. Is the Lord saying again.

Get on with it. He says. Let your hands be strong. In other words. Don't be idle. And don't sit there. Not using your hands. But get on and build.
The house of the Lord. Why? Well because. From what we've read. The temple has a bright future. Verse. Go back to Zechariah.
Verse. Zechariah 8. And verse 10. The Lord carries on saying. For before those days. There was no wage for man.
We've just read that in Haggai. Haven't we? Right? You're not getting enough money. And you're not getting enough food. And you're not getting enough drink. Before those days. There was no wage for man. Or any wage for animal.
[32:59] Now I know we don't pay animals wages. So an animal's wage would be animal feed. And for him who went out. And came in. There was no peace. Because of his enemies. And I set all men against one another.

So the Lord here claims responsibility. For setting men against each other. So when everything's against you. It's a good time to reflect. As to why. Because sometimes it's an attack from Satan. And sometimes it's God trying to sort you out. And it's always. Judgment begins at the household of God. When judgment comes on my life. My first duty is to check in with God.
To see that my life is where it ought to be. I find that quite challenging. You know. Why me Lord? I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian. It strikes me here.
That God had set men against each other. To try and shake them out of their inertia. And going back. I mean in chapter 7 verse 11. They refused to listen to God.
[33:59] So he eventually stopped listening to them. But verse 11 of this chapter. Says. I will not treat the remnant of this people.

As in former days declares the Lord of hosts. There will be peace for the seed. The vine will yield its fruit. The land will yield its produce. Now they had not had a decent harvest.
For a very long time. And God was promising. That all this would return to them. Good harvests. Good seed. Good food. Food for the animals.
Flocks that thrive. They're going to be treated well. If they cooperate with him. But the message thus far. Is if they don't cooperate with him.
They won't receive that blessing. There's going to be peace for the seed. The vine is going to yield its fruit. And then in verse 13. What we see is.
[34:56] It will come about. Just as you were a curse among the nations. Now as far as I'm concerned. That is still the case to this day. Israel is still a curse among the nations.

Very few nations are. There are very few nations that are not anti-Semitic. And it says. Just as you were a curse among the nations.
Oh house of Judah. And house of Israel. So I will save you. That you may become a blessing. Do not fear. Let your hands be strong. You're going to.
Your relationship to other nations. Is going to change. Now actually. If you follow Jewish history. They were awful to the Gentiles. They're supposed to have been.
The harbingers of God's word. To the Gentiles. And they weren't. They treated Gentiles like second class citizens. And they became. Treated like second class citizens themselves.
[35:56] And God is saying. That that's going to change. That. The Jews will. Have a new. Compassion in their hearts. For the nations of the world. And the nations of the world.

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Will flock to the Jews. Jews. So. Israel is destined to be a blessing to other nations. As I said. I believe. Israel is generally looked as a curse.
Looked upon as a curse. To most nations today. It was even more the case then. I mean. I guess there were fewer nations then. But they've always had. They've always been under duress.
They've always had to fight for their status in the world. And God says. Don't give up. Keep your hands strong. And he goes on to apply. If you think that they've.
Recently come out of captivity. And he uses. What he did with them in captivity. To describe. The future. Just as I propose to do harm.
[36:53] When your forefathers provoked me. And I've not relented. So I will not relent to do good. To this generation. So God is consistent.

And once he sets himself on a path. He follows it through. So in verse 15. We read. So I have again purposed in these days.
To do good to Jerusalem. And to the house of Judah. Do not fear. And then we go back to the exhortation. These are the things which you should do.
Speak truth to one another. Judge with truth. And judgment for peace in your gates. And let none of you devise evil in his heart against another. And do not love perjury. For all these things are what I hate.
Declares the Lord. Now Israel was rife with all of those things. And what God is kind of saying here. Is when that changes. It will change. Finally. And in the end times.
[37:50] We will see that Israel will be the place that everybody rushes to. Now before I go on. How much time have I got? We'll go for it. And see how we get on.

So when we get to verse 18. We get the fourth response. Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me saying.
Thus says the Lord of hosts. The fast of the fourth. The fast of the fifth. The fast of the seventh. And the fast of the tenth month. Will become joy and gladness.
And cheerful feasts. For the house of Judah. So love. Truth. And peace. So. The original question. Called into question one fast.
God said. Yeah but what about the other fast? Now he's saying there are four fasts. If you turn quickly with me to. Two kings 25.
[38:48] I believe is where we need to go. Just so that you. Understand where this came from. And I've lost my way in my own notes.

How unlike me. Yeah. So we start in verse. Nineteen. Two king 25.
Sorry. In verse one. Two kings 25 verse one. They do put the maps in an awkward place sometimes. Now in the ninth year of his reign.
On the tenth day of the tenth month. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came. He and all his army against Jerusalem. Camped against it. And built a siege wall around it.
So the city was under siege. Until the eleventh year. Of king Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the fourth month. The famine was so severe.
[39:44] In the city. That there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city was broken into. And all the men of the war. Fled by night. By the way of the gate. Between the two walls.

Beside the king's garden. Though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arab. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king.
And overtook him. In the plains of Jericho. And all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king. And brought him to the king of Babylon. At Riblah. And he passed sentence on him.
They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah. Before his eyes. And then put out the eyes of Zedekiah. And bound him with bronze fetters. And brought him to Babylon. So what we've got there.
In verse one. We see the fast of the tenth. Which is the day that Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city. So they were memorializing that as well. Oh woe is me.
[40:40] We got besieged. And then in verse three and following. We have the foundation for the fast of the fourth. The day when the city was broken into.

And they fled because of starvation. And as they fled. Nebuchadnezzar's forces captured King Zedekiah. And did that most evil thing.
Where they killed his sons in front of him. Then they put his eyes out. So the last thing he saw was his own son's death. Which is just macabre isn't it? Then if we go on to verse eight.

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On the seventh day of the fifth month. Which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar. Says Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar the captain of the guard.
A servant of the King of Babylon. Came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord. So we looked at that in a previous chapter. Didn't we? They were memorializing the day the Lord's house got burned down.
[41:41] And then we've already spoken about the fast of the seventh. Which was when Gedaliah was executed. So there were these four fasts. Where they were keeping in memory.

A bit like we just have with Remembrance Day. They were keeping in memory things that had happened. And what he's saying is. These will no longer be fasts. They will become joyful feasts. So. God has assured them. That these fasts will become feasts of joy and gladness. So once again. We've got the Lord predicting a complete overturn.
Of this. Kind of morose. And navel gazing. Kind of. Poor attitude. Towards what God is going to do. And I'm going to finish.
Go back to Zechariah. And I will finish with. What for me. Is actually become my favorite verse. In the entire Old Testament. Just because it says that God is going to do something utterly remarkable.
[42:47] So let's. Let's just read out the chapter. Verse 20. Thus says the Lord of hosts.

It will yet be. That peoples. So peoples means nations. It doesn't just mean. More than one person. Will come. Even the inhabitants of many cities.
The inhabitants of one will go to another. Saying let's go at once. To entreat the favor of the Lord. And to seek the Lord of hosts. I will also go. So there's an enthusiasm in this.
Right. Loads of people are going to want to go to Israel. And when you. When people get the idea that someone's going to be going. But I want to go too. So many peoples and mighty nations.
Will come to seek the Lord of hosts. In Jerusalem. And to entreat the favor of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts. In those days. And I just love this.
[43:46] In those days. Ten men. From all the nations. Will grasp the garment of a Jew. Saying let us go with you. For we have heard that God is with you.

Instead of being. The world pariah. They will become. The people that. All nations and all people seek out. Father I just thank you.
That you have shown us the destiny. For your people. And may we never lose sight. Of how zealous you are for your people. And whilst we. Might find ourselves not in agreement.
With everything they do. We must be in agreement. With their destiny. So Lord we thank you. For that nation. Which has. Preserved the word of God for us.
And provided salvation to us. And we thank you. That you have demonstrated. That you have. An eternal plan. For that city. And for those people.
[44:44] And we ask you Lord. That you would remind us of it constantly. And that we would never be. A section of our own society. That sides with. The anti-Semitic tendencies.

That we often see. Father teach us to love your people. As you love your people. In Jesus name. Amen.

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