

# Zechariah 8 - God's Promised Purpose

Tuesday, June 19, 2012  
6:53 AM

## To Read:

1. Ephesians 1
2. Ephesians 3

## Introduction

### A) This morning we are going to look at Zechariah 8, which closes the first half of the book

- i. There is a lot of overlap with the last seven chapters, as it closes and sums up the teaching of those chapters
- ii. But the main addition it gives is a summary of both the promises and the requirements that God is making
- iii. Zechariah ends the first section of his book reminding the people of the promises of God so that they will be encouraged to the work, but also reminding them of the requirements of God that they might be blessed in their work
- iv. So, before we start this morning, I want to consider how the promises and requirements of God go together

### B) Two types of requirements

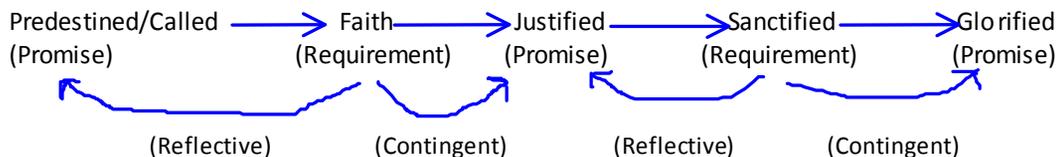
- i. What does requirement mean?
  - 1) According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a requirement is: Something that is required; a necessity.
  - 2) So, a requirement is something that is absolutely necessary
- ii. Contingent Requirements
  - 1) A contingent requirement is a requirement that must be done in order to gain something, the requirement is necessary to gain the promise
  - 2) It is like a job - you work in order to get money
    - a) Working is the contingent requirement, getting paid is the promise that working gains
  - 3) A contingent requirement comes before a promise, because it is necessary to gain the promise
- iii. Reflective Requirements
  - 1) A reflective requirement is a requirement that is based on a promise that is already given, the promise causes the requirement, the requirement is a sign of honor to the promise
    - a) Usually, the promise creates the condition for the reflective requirement to work
    - b) Without the promise, the reflective requirement makes no sense
  - 2) It is like a requirement to live in the dorms if you are accepted to a school
    - a) Getting accepted to the school is the promise
      - i) It is not caused by living in the dorms
      - ii) If you went and lived in the dorms, it wouldn't gain you admission to the school
      - iii) In fact, they wouldn't let you live in the dorms unless you had already gained admission to the school
    - b) Living in the dorms is the reflective requirement
      - i) It does not cause the promise to happen, the promise is already granted
      - ii) But, the promise does make that requirement, if you're accepted to the school, you must live in the dorms
      - iii) If you refused to come and live in the dorms, it makes the promise of no effect

### C) Both types of requirements happen in the Bible

- i. Faith is a contingent requirement
  - 1) To gain justification, one must have faith
  - 2) Faith comes before justification and, in one sense, causes it
    - a) Romans 4:5 - And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,
  - 3) So, faith is a contingent requirement
- ii. Loving each other is a reflective requirement
  - 1) We love each other because Christ loves us and loves our brothers and sisters in Christ
  - 2) Loving each other comes after Christ loving us, it does not cause the promise
  - 3) But, if we don't love each other, we make the promise of no effect
  - 4) So, loving each other is a reflective requirement

**D) Contingent Requirements are always Reflective Requirements of another promise**

- i. Contingent requirements are not theologies of works
  - 1) Everything always starts with a gracious act/promise of God
  - 2) This act or promise is unilateral, having no contingent requirements
  - 3) But, the act or promise is not ineffective, it makes reflective requirements
  - 4) Contingent requirements are always reflective requirements of a previous act/promise of God
  - 5) So, it all starts with God, and so it is all of grace - every requirement draws on a previous promise and looks forward to another promise
  - 6) Just because a future promise is contingent on a requirement does not make it non-gracious, because that requirement is precipitated by a previous gracious promise
- ii. An example from the Old Testament
  - 1) The law given at Mount Sinai was a contingent requirement
    - a) The blessings of the covenant are contingent on obeying the law
    - b) The blessings of the covenant are the promise, the law is the contingent requirement
  - 2) But, the law given at Mount Sinai was also a reflective requirement
    - a) Exodus 20:2 - "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
    - b) The initial (and completed) promise is that God would be their God and redeem them from Egypt
    - c) The laws given at Sinai are reflective of this promise
  - 3) So, the law is first a reflective requirement of a promise of God and then a contingent requirement of a promise of God
    - a) It always starts with a promise of God - God chose to redeem Israel from Egypt
    - b) But, this starts a chain of reflective requirements that are contingent requirements that lead to more promises of God that lead to more reflective requirements...
    - c) The blessings of the covenant are not less gracious because they have requirements, they are gracious because God graciously chose Israel and gave her the covenant
- iii. An example from the New Testament
  - 1) Going back to our example of a contingent requirement, we looked at faith as a contingent requirement of justification
  - 2) But, faith is also a reflective requirement
    - a) Ephesians 1:3-6 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
    - b) God made a gracious choice to bless us in Christ before the foundation of the world
    - c) Faith is a reflective requirement of that first promise
  - 3) So, faith is not a work because it is a reflective requirement of a previous promise of God
    - a) The promise of justification is contingent on faith
    - b) But the promise of choosing is dependent on nothing and this leads to the reflective requirement of faith
    - c) So, faith is first a reflective requirement and then a contingent requirement
  - 4) We could continue the list, starting with justification, the promise of God, creating the reflective requirement of sanctification, that is a contingent requirement of glorification



- 1) But, the New Covenant makes this chain even more gracious
  - a) In both cases, since the chain starts with a gracious promise of God the entire chain is of grace
  - b) But the beauty of the New Covenant is that even the requirements are really promises
    - i) In the Old Covenant, the requirements were gracious since they were based on promises
    - ii) But in the New Covenant, not only are the requirements gracious, they are promises
      - (A) Jeremiah 31:31-34 - "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
    - iii) So, when we come to a requirement like faith or sanctification, we also see that these are promised to us by God
    - iv) But, just because they are promises does not mean that they are any less requirements, they are still a reflective requirement of the earlier act/promise of God and a contingent requirement of the future act/promise of God

#### E) Passage Introduction

- We went through all this to give us a framework for looking at Zechariah 8, so now we're going to turn and look at Zechariah 8
- Zechariah 8 is arranged in five short sections, each section being a promise
  - Each promise starts with a variation of the phrase, "Thus says the Lord of Hosts," or "The word of the Lord of Host came to me."
- Within each section, we see three things
  - We see a promise of God
  - We see what brings about the promise of God
  - We see a reflective requirement based on the promise

#### F) Read Zechariah 8

#### G) Proposition and Outline

- i. Proposition - God's promises are sure because they rest on His attributes, but they do require things of us
- ii. Outline
  - 1) Promise 1 - The Jealousy of God and the Promise of God
  - 2) Promise 2 - The Charge of God and the Promise of God
  - 3) Promise 3 - The Judgment of God and the Promise of God
  - 4) Promise 4 - The Fasts of Men and the Promise of God
  - 5) Promise 5 - The Future of Jerusalem and the Promise of God

## 1. The Jealousy of God and Promise of God (1-8)

### A) What is the promise?

- i. To return to Jerusalem (3)
- ii. To restore Jerusalem (4-5)
- iii. To bring the people back to Jerusalem (7-8)
- iv. To make them His people and to be their God (8)

### B) What brings about the promise?

- i. God's jealous love and wrath (2)
- ii. God's sovereign action (6)

### C) How do God's attributes bring about God's promise?

- i. We saw this back when we went through Zechariah 1 and 2
- ii. God is going to return and restore Jerusalem because He is jealous for her as a husband is jealous for a wife
  - 1) God's jealousy gives Him the desire to restore Jerusalem
- iii. God is able to return and restore Jerusalem because He is sovereignly present
  - 1) God's sovereign action gives Him the authority and the ability to act

### D) What does the promise require?

- i. To be the people of God (8)

### E) Why is this a reflective requirement of the promise?

- i. This one is fairly straightforward, if God promises to make them His people and to be their God, then to enjoy the benefits of the promise they must be the people of God
- ii. If they refuse to be the people of God, then the promise is of no effect

### F) How does this apply to us?

- i. Looking back to the promise - We are the New Jerusalem that God is returning to, restoring and bringing us to, we will be His people and He will be our God
  - 1) Hebrews 12:22-24 - But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
  - 2) So, we look for the eternal fulfillment of these promises
- ii. Looking back to what brings about the promise - God will assuredly fulfill these eternal promises to us because of His jealous love and His sovereign presence
- iii. Looking back to the requirement - because we are the New Jerusalem chosen by God, we must be the people of God, there is a reflective requirement
  - 1) As Hebrews goes on to say (Hebrews 12:25-29) - See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken---that is, things that have been made---in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.
  - 2) If God has chosen for us to be His people and to be our God, then we must not turn our back on Him, but must listen to Him who speaks

## 2. The Charge of God and the Promise of God (9-13)

### A) What is the promise?

- i. Safety and peace, prosperity and possessions (12)
- ii. Salvation and blessing (13)

### B) What brings about the promise?

- i. God is no longer dealing with them as they deserve - that is, He is a merciful God (10-11)

### C) How do God's attributes bring about God's promise?

- i. The former generation of Israelites had earned the curses of the covenant, and had been exiled
- ii. The returning generation of Israelites was no better, so they should not receive God's blessing
- iii. But God, is merciful and acts differently towards them, He mercifully provides safety and peace

### D) What does the promise require?

- i. To not fear the people around them (9, 13)
- ii. To continue the work of God in finishing the temple (9, 13)

### E) Why is this a reflective requirement of the promise?

- i. The first is a reflective requirement of the promise because it simply entails believing the promise
  - 1) If God has promised safety and peace, then there is no need to fear the people around them
  - 2) If they still fear, it means they do not believe the Words of God
  - 3) It also makes the promise of no effect, because they do not receive the benefit of the promise
- ii. The second is a reflective requirement of the promise because it is the purpose of the promise
  - 1) God is granting all these things because He desires a temple to be built for His name
  - 2) Also, the temple will be the conduit of future blessing to God's people, so if the reflective requirement is not obeyed, it makes the promise of no effect

### F) How does this apply to us?

- i. Looking back to the promise - In Christ, we are the ones promised safety and peace
  - 1) Ephesians 2:14-16 - For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.
- ii. Looking back to the promise - We are the ones promised prosperity and blessing
  - 1) Ephesians 1:3 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
- iii. What brings about this promise - God will do this because He is not dealing with us as our sins deserve
  - 1) Ephesians 2:3-5 - [We] were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ
- iv. Looking back to the requirement - Since God has promised us safety and peace, prosperity and blessing, we are to be the temple of God and to be building the temple of God
  - 1) I Corinthians 3:16 (speaking of the church) - Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?
  - 2) Ephesians 2:22 - In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
  - 3) Ephesians 4:15-16 - Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
- v. Since God has promised us safety and peace, prosperity and blessing, we are not to fear men but God
  - 1) Matthew 10:28 - And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
- vi. So, since God has promised us safety and peace, prosperity and blessing in Christ, we should be looking to the building up of the church disregarding the ridicule or the persecution of men
  - 1) This is an active requirement, we ought to be actively seeking ways to build up the church
  - 2) How are you seeking to build up the church, how do you devote yourself to this task?

### 3. The Judgment of God and the Promise of God (14-17)

#### A) What is the promise?

- i. To bring good to Jerusalem and Judah (15)

#### B) What brings about the promise?

- i. God's sovereign purpose (14-15)

#### C) How do God's attributes bring about God's promise?

- i. God's sovereign purpose is to bring good to Jerusalem and to turn away from wrath
  - 1) This is what He desires - good for Jerusalem
  - 2) Since this is what He desire, it will come to pass
- ii. So, this one is pretty straightforward - God brings about His purpose

#### D) What does the promise require?

- i. Speak truth to one another and not lie (16-17)
- ii. Judge rightly (16)
- iii. Seek peace and not seek evil (16-17)

#### E) Why is this a reflective requirement of the promise?

- i. Because God hates the opposite of these things (17)
- ii. So, if God has purposed to do good to the people, the people ought not to provoke God to wrath

#### F) How does this apply to us?

- i. Looking back to the promise - Again, we are the New Jerusalem and in Christ, God has purposed good for us
  - 1) Ephesians 1:5 - he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,
- ii. What brings the promise about - God's sovereign purpose
  - 1) This is the point of much of Ephesians - for example, 1:5 which we just looked at
  - 2) Ephesians 1:9 - making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ
  - 3) Ephesians 1:11 - In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,
  - 4) Ephesians 3:11 - This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- iii. Looking back to the requirement - because God has purposed to bring us good we also should speak truth to one another and not lie
  - 1) Ephesians 4:25 - Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
  - 2) Colossians 3:9 - Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices
  - 3) Ephesians 4:15 - Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
- iv. Because God has purposed to bring us good, we also should seek peace and not evil
  - 1) Romans 12:18 - If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
  - 2) Romans 14:19 - So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.
  - 3) Hebrews 12:14 - Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
- v. We must do these things, because God has purposed to do us good, and God hates the opposite of these things and we ought not to provoke God to wrath
  - 1) How are we speaking truth in order to build up the people of God - this is not simply a passive requirement (don't lie) but an active requirement (speak truth)?
  - 2) How are we seeking peace with all men, especially with each other - again, not simply passive, but active?

#### 4. The Fasts of Men and the Promise of God (18-19)

##### A) What is the promise?

- i. To bring times of joy in God (19)

##### B) What brings about the promise?

- i. God reversing the effects of the exile (19)
  - 1) The fast of the tenth month remembered the start of the siege of Jerusalem
  - 2) The fast of the fourth month remembered when the walls of Jerusalem were breached
  - 3) The fast of the fifth month remembered when the city of Jerusalem was taken
  - 4) The fast of the seventh month remembered the assassination of Gedeliah, who was the leader of the Israelites left in the land after the exile
- ii. Now God is going to reverse the effects of the exile, changing times of remembrance of sorrow and sin into times of joy

##### C) What does the promise require?

- i. Love truth and peace (19)

##### D) Why is this a reflective requirement of the promise?

- i. These are the same requirements from last time, but their repeated again, because the reflection is different
- ii. The reasons someone would not love truth and peace are that they are looking for joy in dishonest and wicked things
- iii. So, if the promise is believed, that joy will be found in God, seeking joy in other things, especially joy in dishonest and wicked dealings, will be rejected
- iv. On the flip side, if truth and peace are not loved, then joy in God will never be had
- v. Loving truth and peace is the reaction of believing the promise, it is the reflective requirement

##### E) How does this apply to us?

- i. Looking back to the promise - in Christ we are promised joy in God
  - 1) 2 Corinthians 1:24 - Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.
  - 2) Jude 1:24 - Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
- ii. What brings about the promise - God reverses the effect of the fall
  - 1) Romans 5:18-19 - Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
- iii. Looking back to the requirement - we too must love truth and peace
  - 1) Just as was said above, if we look to joy in God, we must reject other seeming joys
  - 2) This means we must first love Christ, the embodiment of truth and peace, and seek our joy in Him
    - a) I John 5:20 - And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.
    - b) Ephesians 2:14 - For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility
    - c) Matthew 13:44 - The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
  - 3) And then, loving Christ, we must love what He is and seek after truth and peace
    - a) We saw these requirements before:
    - b) Ephesians 4:25 - Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
    - c) Hebrews 12:14 - Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
    - d) But we do them not only because we do not want to provoke our Lord to anger, but also because we want to have joy in Christ and not in these things

## 5. The Future of Jerusalem and the Promise of God (20-23)

### A) What is the promise?

- i. The filling of Jerusalem (20)
- ii. The favor of God present in Jerusalem (21)
- iii. The entrance of the nations into Jerusalem (22-23)

### B) What brings about the promise?

- i. God's sovereign blessing presence (21-23)

### C) How do God's attributes bring about God's promise?

- i. The presence of God or the presence of the glory of God is always associated with His blessing
- ii. Exodus 40:34-35 (consecration of the temple) - Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
- iii. Leviticus 9:22-23 (consecration of the priesthood) - Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.
- iv. Where the presence of God is, He is there to bless His people

### D) What does the promise require?

- i. Seeking the favor of God in Jerusalem (21-23)

### E) Why is this a reflective requirement of the promise?

- i. The promise is that the favor of God would be in Jerusalem
- ii. So, to enjoy the promise, they must go to Jerusalem to find God's favor
- iii. It is the ultimate reflective promise - God has promised blessing on a certain place, to receive the blessing they must enter that place

### F) How does this apply to us?

- i. Again, the church is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, so the church is the recipient of these promises
  - 1) God will fill the church
    - a) Acts 2:47 - And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
  - 2) The favored presence of God is promised to the church
    - a) Revelation 20:2-2, 22-26 - And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God... And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day---and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.
  - 3) The nations will enter into the church
    - a) Acts 11:18 - When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."
- ii. What brings this about - God is present in His church
  - 1) Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."
- iii. But, we also are the recipients of the requirement, we must seek the favor of the Lord in the Church
  - 1) God has promised blessing in a particular place - in Christ
  - 2) So, we must seek His favor there, seeking to enter Christ
  - 3) II Corinthians 5:20-6:2 - Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

## Conclusion

- A) We've seen how requirements and promises work together in Scripture
  - i. There are contingent and reflective requirements
  - ii. Actually all requirements are both reflective and contingent, which is how it is all of grace
- B) We've considered 5 promises in Zechariah
  - i. God promises to return and dwell in Jerusalem
  - ii. God promises safety and peace, blessing and prosperity to Jerusalem
  - iii. God promises to bring good to Jerusalem
  - iv. God promises to bring times of joy in Himself
  - v. God promises to rest His favor on Jerusalem and bring the nations into Jerusalem
- C) We saw that each of these promises was truly about the church, the New Jerusalem, and thus are ours in Christ
- D) We considered 5 reflective commands based on these promises
  - i. We must be the people of God, created by His word
  - ii. We must fear God and not men and seek to build up the church
  - iii. We must not provoke God to anger but must seek truth, peace and right judgment
  - iv. We must seek our joy in God, following the paths of truth and peace
  - v. We must seek God's favor in Jerusalem, in Christ, the founder of the New Jerusalem
- E) These are reflective requirements of the earlier promises
  - i. The promises of God motivate and make possible the requirements
  - ii. But also, if the promises are ours then the requirements are assuredly ours, they are absolutely necessary