Zechariah 8:9-13

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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February 2016

***Zechariah 8:9–13***Thus says YHWH **tseva’ot**: “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 YHWH **tseva’ot** was laid, that the temple might be built. 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. But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares YHWH **tseva’ot**. 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. 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.”

1. For review, summarize the message of prior verses in the chapter, Zech 8:1-8.
2. In light of the message of Zech 8:1-8, what is YHWH now telling the people to do in Zech 1:9, and why? Have we heard this message before? Why is he repeating it?
3. To what group of people is YHWH speaking in Zech 1:9? How is that also a message to us today?
4. From Zech 8:10, what did life used to be like in the “good old days” prior to the beginning of the temple reconstruction? Why do you think YHWH is reminding them of this?
5. In Zech 8:10 it seems at first surprising that YHWH says “**I set** every man against his neighbor”? Why does He say this? Were those times of the past just hard times, or were they actually directed by God? What period time is probably being referred to?
6. Why will the future be different, from Zech 8:11? What is he hinting at? Check out Jer 31:31-34.
7. God speaks of the “remnant” in verses 11 and 12. This is the Hebrew שְׁאֵרִית **she’erit** “remnant, remainder, those of successive generations as a figurative extension of what is left over from a whole”. What is this term “remnant” used to refer to? You may want to check out other verses that speak of the “remnant”, for example Micah 5:7-8, Isaiah 10:22-23, and Isaiah 11:16.
8. The concept of “first use” is an ancient Jewish way of beginning a word study. They look at the first time a particular word is used in the Torah. The thinking is that God sometimes gives key meaning to key words from the context where it is used in Scripture the very first time. The “first use” of שְׁאֵרִית **she’erit** “remnant” is in Genesis 45:7. What do you learn from this, recalling also that Joseph was in many ways symbolic of the Messiah?
9. In Zech 8:12 the ESV translates “For there shall be a sowing of peace”. In Hebrew it literally says “For [there will be] **the seed of peace**”. Seed (Hebrew זֶרַע zera’ can mean seed, semen, offspring, descendants, etc. It is interesting that the very first mention (only a hint, actually) of the Messiah is in Gen 3:15. What word is used to hint at the Messiah in this Genesis passage?
10. Look at Gen 12:7 and Gen 22:18. Then look at Galatians 3:16 where Paul quotes from the Genesis. What word does Paul use to refer to the Messiah?
11. The other interesting word in that phrase “For [there will be] **the seed of peace**” is the Hebrew שָׁלוֹם **shalom** “peace”. How is this word used in Isaiah 9:6-7?
12. In light of our word study about “seed” and “peace”, what do you think about the first part Zech 8:12 actually being a prophetic announcement? Maybe this phrase has a dual meaning – both a literal meaning and a prophetic meaning. If so, what would be the literal meaning, and what would be the prophetic announcement?
13. Notice that in the Hebrew, the phrase is definite. In other words it is not “**a** seed of peace” but rather “**the** seed of peace”. Why, perhaps, is the “**the**” significant?
14. Look at Zech 8:12-14 and list all the qualities of life that will be evident in those days of “**the seed of peace**”.
15. According to Scripture we know that when the Messiah came, he initiated the “new covenant”. We also know from Scripture that not all aspects of the new covenant will be completed until the Messiah returns again, prior to the end times. With this in mind, take a look at Ezekiel 34:23-31 and Ezekiel 37:24-28. What is another name for the new covenant in these passages? How would you describe life for those that are a part of this covenant? What similarities do you see to the Zechariah passage we are studying?
16. What does it mean that they “have been a byword of cursing among the nations?” Consider also Jer 24:9, Jer 42:18-19, Jer 44:11-14. Also notice the use of the word “remnant” in the latter two passages.

[Note that the word for curse here is Hebrew קְלָלָה **kelalah** “curse, proclamation of words to lessen or in some way diminish someone”. Hebrew has a stronger word for curse (אָרַר **‘arar**) that means to pronounce of oath of disaster against someone, but that is not the word used here. **Kelalah** is often used as the exact opposite of blessing. Blessing is the Hebrew בְּרָכָה **berachah** “blessing, proclamation or pronouncement of prosperity or increase upon someone.” See for example, Gen 27:12, Deut 11:26, Deut 23:5, Deut 30:1, Deut 30:19, Josh 8:34, Neh 13:2 where blessing (**berachah)** and curse (**kelalah)** are in used in direct contrast with one another.]

1. In Zech 8:13, the phrase “so will I save you” has the Hebrew word יָשַׁע **yasha’** “to save, rescue, deliver”. This is the root word from which comes **yeshua** “salvation” as well as the name of the Messiah. Could there be a double meaning hinted at here (literal as well as prophetic)? If so, what would those meanings be?
2. Look at the phrase “you shall be a blessing” (**berachah**) in Zech 8:13. See if you can find the “first use” of this key word in Scripture. What is the connection with this prophetic word from Zechariah and that “first use” of the term? How will that blessing come about?
3. Compare the last phrase of Zech 8:13 with the first phrase of Zech 8:9. How does YHWH both start and end his words to the people? How would the content of the message encourage the people to respond in this way?
4. How would you summarize the message of this section?
5. What do you personally take away from your study of this passage?