Zechariah 10:6-12

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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October 2016

***Zechariah 10:6–12***  
**6** “I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and they shall be as though I had not rejected them, for I am YHWH their God and I will answer them. **7** Then Ephraim shall become like a mighty warrior, and their hearts shall be glad as with wine. Their children shall see it and be glad; their hearts shall rejoice in YHWH. **8** “I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them, and they shall be as many as they were before. **9** Though I scattered them among the nations, yet in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return. **10** I will bring them home from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria, and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon, till there is no room for them. **11** He shall pass through the sea of troubles and strike down the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up. The pride of Assyria shall be laid low, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart. **12** I will make them strong in YHWH, and they shall walk in his name,” declares YHWH.

1. Summarize the previous section, Zech 10:1-5.

The Messiah will return and save his people. He will again shower his blessings upon his people and their land. Blessings of a physical nature as well as a spiritual nature. He returns to gather his flock and save them from their oppressors. The Messiah will come from Judah, and He will lead his people into battle as mighty men, trampling their enemies like mud on the street.

1. In Zech 10:6a, what is the “house of Judah” and the “house of Joseph”? Are they the same or different?

They are different. This refers to the two kingdoms – the northern 10 tribes (usually called either Israel or Ephraim), and the two southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin, usually called by the name of Judah). Since Ephraim is the son of Joseph, here the northern tribe is called by his name.

1. What is the point YHWH is communicating by referring to the “house of Judah” as well as the “house of Joseph”?

God’s people have been divided ever since Solomon’s death. Even during the time of Zechariah it is really on the house of Judah that is involved in rebuilding the temple and the city of the Jerusalem. The northern kingdom had been destroyed and integrated together with the gentile nations, no longer retaining their identity, and eventually becoming the “Samaritans” referred to in the Apostolic Scriptures. YHWH is saying that there will come a day when He will strengthen and save them all, both the south and the north.

1. In Zech 10:6b, YHWH says that he will “bring them back”. Look up the Hebrew root word used here. It is a word that we have encountered before. What does it mean? The form of the verb in this verse is actually causative. In other words, it means “God will cause” something to happen. What is he actually causing to happen in this case?

The root is “shuv” meaning “turn, turn around, or return”. It is often translated with the meaning of “repent”. Here in the “hiphil” form of the verb, it designates active, causative action, meaning “YHWH will cause to return” or **“YHWH will cause to repent”.**

1. Why will YHWH bring them back? How will that look? And what is implied by God saying “I will answer them”?

He will have compassion on them. It will be as though they had never been rejected at all.

He says “I will answer them”. This implies that the people are calling out to him. There is an implied prerequisite to his salvation. But out his compassion he will “cause” them to repent. YHWH will cause them to call out to him once again. And when they do so, they will restored to their former place, as if they had never been rejected.

1. About two hundred years before Zechariah, the prophet Jeremiah was speaking to the house of Judah, just after the house of Israel had been destroyed. Read Jer 3:6-18. What are the similarities and connections with this prophesy of Jeremiah to our Zechariah portion?

***Jeremiah 3:6–18***  
**6** YHWH said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? **7** And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. **8** She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, **I had sent her away with a decree of divorce.** Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. **9** Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. **10** Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah **did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense,** declares YHWH.” **11** And YHWH said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. **12** Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “ ‘**Return**, faithless Israel, declares YHWH. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares YHWH; **I will not be angry forever**. **13** Only **acknowledge your guil**t, that you rebelled against YHWH your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares YHWH. **14** **Return**, O faithless children, declares YHWH; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and **I will bring you to Zion**. **15** “ ‘And **I will give you shepherds after my own heart**, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. **16** And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares YHWH, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of YHWH.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. **17** At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of YHWH, and **all nations shall gather to it**, to the **presence of YHWH in Jerusalem**, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. **18** In those days the **house of Judah shall join the house of Israel,** and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

Zech: YHWH will bring back (to the land) the houses of Judah and Israel (v6)  
Jer: house of Judah and house of Israel being joined together again in their land

Zech: YHWH rejected his people (v6)  
Jer: YHWH sent them away with a decree of divorce  
  
Zech: God’s answering the people implies their calling out to him (v6)  
Jer: acknowledge your guilt  
  
Zech: I will bring them back (cause them to repent) (v6)  
Jer: I will not be angry forever… I will bring you to Zion  
  
Zech: God is angry with the shepherds (leaders) and will punish them (v3)  
Jer: God will give them shepherds after his own heart  
  
Also both prophets generally speak of the people returning to YHWH and vice versa, and of YHWH again dwelling in Jerusalem, with ALL nations gathering there in worship. (This is a theme of Zechariah, although not explicitly stated in Zech 10:6-12.

1. Where does YHWH scatter his people? And what happens to those places where they are scattered? Note also the similar situation prophesied in Hos 11:11.

***Hosea 11:11***they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares YHWH.

“among the nations”, “in far countries”. Specially mentioned is Egypt, the immediate neighbor to the south, and Assyria, the immediate neighbor to the north.

Those places are punished. The pride (lit. height) of Assyria is laid low (brought down, made to fall). The Nile (source of life for Egypt) is dried up and the scepter of Egypt (symbolizing its ruling power as a nation) will be removed.

1. To where does YHWH bring his people, when he gathers them together again? Where is Gilead and Lebanon, and what is significant about them? Why are these places mentioned rather than other places like Jerusalem (for example, Zech 8:22, Is 27:13).

YHWH says, “I will bring them **home.**” “I will bring them to the land of Gilead and Lebanon.”

Gilead mountains – in the area of Bashan – the land of the giants, the land of evil, on the northeast border of Israel, originally included as part of the promised land.

Lebanon – the country of Tyre and Sidon – the place of the Phoenicians, a land known for idolatry, on the northwest border of Israel, originally included as part of the promised land.

***Zechariah 8:22***Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek YHWH Tsava’ot **in Jerusalem** and to entreat the favor of YHWH.

***Isaiah 27:13***And in that day **a great trumpet will be blown**, and those who were lost in the **land of Assyria** and those who were driven out to the **land of Egypt** will come and worship YHWH **on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.**

YHWH has said many times in Zechariah that he will return to Jerusalem and dwell with his people there. But here he specially mentions Gilead and Lebanon. Why?  **Perhaps to emphasize that these areas of the promised land which were never really under Israel’s control would in the end become fully theirs as well.** They will get even more in the end that they ever had before!

How does that apply to us? When we are scattered far away – in a far country – in other words, brought to the lowest place in our life, when we are the farthest ever away from God, then, when we turn back to Him we are blessed like we have never blessed before. We end up coming home to a home that is way better than it ever was!

1. Zech 10:8 speaks of YHWH “whistling” for his people, to gather them together. See also Is 5:26 and Judges 5:16. What is the imagery that this word would bring to mind in the culture of Zechariah’s day? (Hint: This same imagery was used earlier in Zech 10.) Can you think of any complementary passages from the Apostolic Scriptures?

***Isaiah 5:26***He will raise a signal for nations far away, and **whistle** for them from the ends of the earth; and behold, quickly, speedily they come!

***Judges 5:16***Why did you sit still among the sheepfolds, to hear the **whistling** for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.

***John 10:27***My sheep **hear my voice**, and I know them, and they follow me.

The picture is of a **shepherd whistling for his flock** to follow him. Yeshua is our shepherd. He whistles for us and we follow him. This verse builds upon the reference to the shepherd from earlier in the chapter, Zech 10:2-3.

***Zechariah 10:2–3***…the **people wander like sheep**; they are afflicted for **lack of a shepherd**. “My anger is hot **against the shepherds,** and I will punish the leaders; for YHWH Tsava’ot **cares for his flock**...

We have to hear the whistle and respond to it! It comes with years of experience in following the shepherd, listening and following him, learning to recognize his sound in the midst of all the other noises around us!

1. The entire chapter usually refers to the people of Israel with the plural pronoun “them”, for example in Zech 10:10. but in Zech 10:11 we all of a sudden have the singular form twice in the statements, “**He shall pass through the sea of troubles and he shall strike down the waves of the sea.**” If the “he” refers to the nation of Israel (the collective people of Israel), what might these statements mean?

Looking toward the past, it recalls the parting of the Red Sea, and perhaps also the waters of the Jordan River. Poetically, Zechariah is saying that just as Israel passed through the troubled waters in the past, so too in the future YHWH will lead through these times of turmoil once again.

1. It is also possible that the “he” of Zech 10:11 may refer to the Messiah. In that case, what might these two statements mean? What events in Yeshua’s life are perhaps being foretold?

Yeshua passed through sea of troubles with his life. His death and burial in the tomb was a really culmination of that “sea of troubles”. And with his resurrection, He passed through.

Also, there were two times in the gospels where Yeshua literally fulfilled these two statements:

***Matthew 8:24–27***  
**24** And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. **25** And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” **26** And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then **he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27** And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

So here Yeshua literally “**struck down the waves of the sea**”. Then in Matthew 14 we see that Yeshua was literally “**passing through the troubled sea**”, before he calmed the winds when he and Peter got into the boat:

***Matthew 14:22–33***  
**22** Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. **23** And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, **24** but the **boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them**. **25** And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, **walking on the sea**. **26** But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. **27** But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” **28** And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” **29** He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. **30** But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” **31** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” **32** **And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased**. **33** And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

1. Look back at Zech 10:3-5 when we had a similar change from plural “them” to singular “him”. What did the use of the singular point us to in this section?

The “him” seems to refer to the house of Judah in general, but also specifically to the Messiah, the One who was to come from the house of Judah… From him shall come the Cornerstone, Tent peg, battle bow, every ruler.

So in Zech 10:11 we have yet another instance in the same chapter where the sudden switch from singular to plural seems to refer to the Messiah.

1. Hebrew does not have as many conjunctions and connecting words as English. Hebrew uses the **וְ** wa “and” very frequently. Although the basic meaning is “and”, depending on the context it can be translated as “and, also, then, but, though, with, so that, etc.” Often it is not translated at all, since English doesn’t use “and” nearly as often as Hebrew does. For example, look at Zech 10:9-12. Regardless of how your English Bible translates it, every phrase in these verses begins with the Hebrew  **וְ** wa “and”:

**9** **And** ~~Though~~ I scattered them among the nations,

**And** ~~yet~~ in far countries they shall remember me,

**And** with their children they shall live and return,

**10** **And** I will bring them home from the land of Egypt,

**And** gather them from Assyria,

**And** I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon,

**And** ~~till~~ there is no room for them,

**11** **And** he shall pass through the sea of troubles,

**And** strike down the waves of the sea,

**And** all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up,

**And** the pride of Assyria shall be laid low,

**And** the scepter of Egypt shall depart,

**12** **And** I will make them strong in YHWH,

**And** they shall walk in his name,”

Realizing this, and further knowing that there were no verse divisions and also no punctuation in the original Hebrew (no periods or commas), how does this influence how we read our translations? What do we have to be careful of? Particularly in Zech 10:11, how does this impact our discussion of the Messiah in relationship to the following phrases, especially “all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up” which is followed by a period in the ESV?

The English meaning changes a lot depending on the word used to translated Hebrew **wa**. So we have to be careful in reading our translations, as sometimes an incorrect meaning may be communicated.

In Zech 10:11, the ESV makes it seem like the “all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up” is part of the same sentence as “And he shall pass through the sea of troubles…” They put a period after it, and then delete the next “and” making a clear linguistic break when there is none. But both linguistically and logically it seems best connected to the next phrase “and the pride of Assyria shall be laid low.” The way the ESV translates it tends to obscure the fact that the “he” could refer to the Messiah.

1. How can you summarize this Chapter 10?

The Messiah will return and save his people. He will again shower his blessings upon his people and their land. Blessings of a physical nature as well as a spiritual nature. He returns to gather his flock and save them from their oppressors. The Messiah will come from Judah, and He will lead his people into battle as mighty men, trampling their enemies like mud on the street.

Both the house of Judah and the house of Israel will be restored to their full place, as if they had never been rejected. YHWH will call them back together from the among nations, punishing those nations, and bringing his people back to the promised land, even including the land of Gilead (Bashan) and Lebanon. The Messiah will pass through all the “troubled waters” and impart judgment on the oppressors of Israel. God’s people will be made strong again.

1. What do you personally take away from your study of this passage?