

Post-Exile Prophets
THE REGATHERED NATION

Saturday, August 30
Reading: Zechariah 10:6-12

Zechariah 10:6 *"I will strengthen Judah and save the tribes of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them."*

This passage promises a future return and renewal of the people of Israel when Messiah returns. There are several interesting features in these verses.

(1) A REUNITED NATION: The Lord speaks of both Judah and Joseph/Ephraim being victorious warriors. After the reign of King Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms by civil war (c.930 BC). The southern kingdom was called Judah and was ruled by David's descendants from Jerusalem. The northern kingdom was called Israel and was made up of the 10 tribes that split away. In the prophets, it is sometimes called Samaria after its capital city or Ephraim (Joseph's son) because it was the largest tribe. The northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC and was exiled from their land. The northern kingdom fell about 136 years later (586 BC) and were exiled by the Babylonians. But in this prophecy, God promises to restore all of Israel and gather them to their homeland.

(2) A SCATTERED NATION: God promises to "signal" for His people to return. This may be another allusion to God as their Shepherd for this word means to whistle, much like a shepherd would whistle to call His sheep. Egypt and Assyria were longtime enemies of God's people. They stand for those who hate and oppress the Jewish people. This return cannot be talking about the return of the exiles from Babylon as that began some 20-40 years before Zechariah's writing. This is describing an Israel scattered among the nations (10:9).

(3) A FAITHFUL NATION: Though it is God's compassion (10:6) and power (10:12) that will bring them back, the people must do their part. In their exile, "they will remember" the Lord (10:9) and "their hearts will rejoice in the LORD" (10:7). When the Jewish people repent and turn to God, He will rescue and redeem them.

While we saw the reestablishment of the nation of Israel in 1947, this promised regathering has not yet occurred. We know from the first half of this prophecy (10:1-5) that the Messiah stands at the heart of this redemption. Only when the Jewish nation fully turns to God and accepts their Messiah will He bring about the final salvation and restoration He has promised. Zechariah's 2nd burden (12-14) will deal with this event.

But this passage should bring the Jewish people (and us) hope! God has not rejected or forgotten His people. He will fulfill His promises in His time. We often want God to do things on OUR timetable and in OUR way! We need to remember the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 55:6-9 Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on them, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."