

# Zechariah 10:1-4 – Rain, Ruin, Revival: Works of God

Beloved in the Lord: God gave hope to his people. He gave them hope through assurances of security, he promised them success over their enemies, and showed them how much he treasured them...as precious stones. One would think that that would have been enough for the Jews to rebuild the temple, restore worship, and ready themselves for the expansion of God's kingdom. But it wasn't – not in God's mind. God anticipated the doubts that would rise in the minds of his people and encouraged them in 3 more ways that you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

God will give Rain for Israel's Harvests

God will bring Ruin for Israel's Adversaries 对手

God will cause Revival for Israel's People

Our goals are: That you will know that your Lord Jesus will totally equip you, above and beyond what you need, to do the work he has called you to do.

## God will give Rain for Israel's Harvests

1 Ask the LORD for rain In the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone.

1. The Lord challenged (not "rebuke" as Calvin alleged) his people to pray for rain so that he would make their crops and they would have enough and more. God knew that drought was one of the worst enemies of God's people – even worse than the Samaritans and Edomites.

2. Specifically, God wanted to provide the latter rain...to help fatten and ripen the grains. The latter rains were the spring rains. The "latter" were "early." The Jews sowed their crops in the fall and harvested in the spring to early summer.

Psalms 147:8 Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

God wanted them to pray so that the Jews would know that he was the source of their provisions.

God would provide large amounts of this heavenly gift. You know this by the expression "flashing clouds." The heavy dark clouds produced a lot of rain would made the lightning show more remarkable. (Lightning was a harbinger 预兆 of rain.)

Jeremiah 10:13 When He utters His voice, There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: "And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasuries."

Psalms 72:16 There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, On the top of the mountains; Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; And those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

## 3. Lessons:

a. Prayer is an indispensable 不可缺少 tool for the Christian. Praying is an indispensable duty to the Christian. If you don't have what you need to do the work you were called to do it is likely you don't pray like you should. If your job as a parent seems too hard, pray. If you live in fear of terrorism, pray. If you are worried about your health, pray.

b. You will only pray to your Father when your faith is strong. Your faith will be strong when you know the Word.

c. This promise of provision was not limited to Judah. This was a promise to the church. Remember, the kingdom was not identified by circumcision 割礼 of the body, but by circumcision of the heart. In other words, the promise was to those who had faith in the coming Savior...like Abraham.

d. This promise of provision was not just about rain. Rain represented the abundant provisions of God for his people. He would provide everything the church needed to do her work. God will fatten you for the job! This is why when Jesus was leaving he promised to send his Holy Spirit with all the gifts that his church needed (Galatians 5), and why he told them not to be afraid, and that they would conquer the world.

## God will bring Ruin for Israel's Agitators

2 For the idols speak delusion 虚空; The diviners envision lies, And tell false dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; They are in trouble because there is no shepherd.

1. Drought wasn't Judah's only enemy; they had other enemies within the congregation 会众 of God's people. These wicked ones were the religious and political leaders. So God reminded the Jews of the existence of these agitators 滋事者 from the past in order to make them watch out for these agitators in the future.

## 2. What did these agitators do in the past?

**a. These agitators deluded the Jews with fake messages from idols.** These house gods—teraphim, were like the one Rachel stole from her father. These idols were representations of demons. They were supposed to bring blessings and wealth. **But these idols were impotent 无能为力.**

Jeremiah 14:22 **Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain?** Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O LORD our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.

**b. These agitators deluded the Jews with lies they supposedly got from God, but were from demons, like Balaam.** Jeremiah 23:32 "Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness 以謊言和矜誇使我百姓走錯了路的。 Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the LORD.

**c. These agitators deluded the Jews with supposed messages they got from dreams.** But either they were demonic dreams or made up messages.

**The false teachers and leaders did these things in order to give false comfort to the Jews before the Babylonian captivity, telling them that there was no real problems and that everything was good between them and God.** The Jews found out that the leaders were lying and their comforts were fake. Babylon came and captured them with violence.

## 3. Even before the captivity, these things caused the sheep of God to become lost and become prey to wicked philosophies 哲学.

Ezekiel described what happened to the people of God before captivity.

**Ezekiel 34:2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" 3 "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 "The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. 5 "So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.**

3 "My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds.

## 4. So God wanted them to know that from his anger he would ruin these agitators as he did before!

**Ezekiel 34:16 "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."**

## 5. Lessons:

**a. There will always be abusers of God's people who will try all kinds of ways to prevent God's people from accepting and trusting in the promises of God. Identify these rejecters of God's Word and condemn them.** This is what will save the flock of Jesus from being deceived. **Do not be polite to a wild animal** that is out to satisfy his hunger on the blood of the innocent! Yes, these so-called shepherds are wolves in sheep's clothing. **They are a "brood of vipers."**

**b. Why do these false teachers abuse God's people today? They follow their father, the Devil. They love money and power. These charlatans 骗子** will promise people that their wicked dead relatives are in heaven, hoping to make more money from their ear-tickling sermons. They were like the Roman Catholics who promised people that as soon as the money hit the bottom of the box their relatives would be released from purgatory 炼狱! Some of these crooks today guarantee healing and financial success – though Solomon said: You should sow, but you don't know whether you will reap or not!

**c. Do you see the benefits of having the Bible—a Bible that you can read for yourself, instead of relying on dreams and visions?** Isn't it foolish to go back to childish gifts as "speaking in tongues?" Those gifts were only used when the whole Bible wasn't available. Those who cling to these simple things are like those who ignore the **overwhelming fountain of pure water** and try to drink from rain drops.

## God would cause Revival for Israel's People

For the **LORD of hosts will visit His flock, The house of Judah, And will make them as His royal horse** in the battle.

**1. Drought was an enemy. Internal agitators were enemies. But Judah had exterior enemies also. So God promised to preserve his flock by crushing their exterior enemies.** On account of this, the Jews would become more than a remnant 余民. And

then God would provide good shepherds who would conquer more land and provide ample land for his flock. This was revival. The promise of Abraham would come true.

**2. This promise first became evident when God protected the Jews through the Maccabees against the Greeks.** Then God preserved his flock against the Romans.

Isaiah 22:23 I will **fasten him as a peg in a secure place**, And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

Zephaniah 2:7 The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; **They shall feed their flocks there; In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.** For the LORD their God will intervene for them, And return their captives.

**3. You also somewhat see how this would take place.** Jesus would go out to battle for them. He is the principle warrior on the white horse, **but he uses the horse, a picture of his people, to go with him.**

4 From **him comes the cornerstone**, From him the **tent peg**, From him the **battle bow**, From him **every ruler together**. 房角石、釘子、爭戰的弓、和一切掌權的、都從他而出。

**4. When the nations are captured they would be built into a great building and Jesus would be the Cornerstone.**

Hebrews 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord **arose from Judah**, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

Ephesians 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.**

A cornerstone anchored a building and it was the stone by which the other stones were aligned. So Jesus was that picture for foreign and domestic stones being compacted to build a strong house of God.

**5. From Judah came the tent peg and battle bow.** The **tent peg was used to secure (anchor) and the bow was used protect** the house of God.

**6. And since no expanding kingdom can succeed without rulers working together, God provided great rulers for his people.** Elders and deacons are a fulfillment of this promise.

## **7. Lessons:**

**a. The Lord has always been able to conquer all his people's enemies in the past (where are the great empires) and you can be sure he will conquer all your enemies— regardless of their size.** He could do it directly but he is pleased to use you to target the minds of the enemy. He can use you to target their hearts with the spiritual sword.

**b. You must be willing subjects to fight in the place where God places you.** Don't be too zealous to fight giants when God wants you to fight gnats. Both fights are essential. Stay in your place. Use the gifts God has given to you. If you are a ruler, rule. If you are a foot soldier, be one.

**c. You must know you will win.** The Lord will reign until all his enemies become his footstool 脚凳!

## **Conclusion:**

What blessings God gave to his church so she could be encouraged during hard times! Added to what you have already heard, God provided everything she needed for sustenance and for surplus. He destroyed her enemies from inside and outside. He brought the enemies to his side, to his church, after conquering their hearts.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Since you are the true Jews, these promises are for you. So...

**1. Reflect on these blessings; let them sink in.** You were saved by the blood of the Lamb, and you are now equipped with everything you need to do the work the Lord has called you to do. You have been fattened with the rain of the Gospel.

**2. Ready yourself for kingdom expansion** by knowing the Word and increasing your faith. **Rebuild the church that is obviously weak, through effective evangelizing 传福音, through faithful preaching, through family discipline, and proper administration of the sacraments.** Challenge Christians who have abandoned proper worship. Learn to fight every argument that raises its head. This is how Christ's kingdom will expand.

Finally, if you don't know Jesus you don't know love. Your life is pitiful because you have a no-good future and you lack true joy now. But you can experience God's love if you ask. He will clean out your sins, knowing that Jesus died for sinners, and he will incorporate you into his family.