



“When God Dwells In the Center”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Zech. 8:1-8; 7:8-10; 1:13-14; Jer. 24:7; 2:9; Is. 1:26-27; 59:14-19; Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17; Rom. 8:23-27

Have you ever worked hard on something only to discover it was not actually the thing that needed your attention? You can finish a project and proudly say, “Look what I did!” only to realize that the one thing you were actually asked to do is still untouched. That is essentially where Israel finds herself in Zechariah 7 and 8. A delegation comes asking whether they still need to observe a fast commemorating the destruction of the Temple. But the Lord turns the question around. In effect, He says, “You are asking Me about something I never commanded. What about the things I have asked you to do?”

God was not trying to form a people who were simply good at religious observance. Exile was supposed to produce something deeper. *“Then I will give them a heart to know Me—for I am ADONAI—and they will be My people, and I will be their God”* (Jer. 24:7). He wanted a people who knew Him and therefore reflected Him—a people marked by justice, *chesed*, compassion, truth, and faithfulness. That is the heart of Zechariah 8. God is not merely rebuilding a Temple; He is forming a people and establishing His presence among them. The deeper question is not merely, “What religious things are we doing?” but, “Are we becoming the people He intended us to be?”

1. GOD IS ZEALOUS FOR WHAT HIS PEOPLE ARE CALLED TO BE

The chapter begins with unmistakable passion: *“Thus says ADONAI-Tzva’ot, ‘I am exceedingly zealous for Zion, I am burning with jealousy for her’”* (Zech. 8:2). The Hebrew word **qinah** speaks of zeal or jealousy—an intensity that has no room for rivals. God is not casual about Zion. Zion means “signpost,” and Israel was called to be a signpost, pointing the nations toward God—to reveal His truth, righteousness, justice, *chesed*, and compassion. When people encountered God’s people, they were supposed to encounter something of God Himself.

That helps us understand why the Lord is so concerned about what His people become. A signpost matters because of where it points. God is zealous that His people point toward Him and not toward something else. Isaiah described a society where *“justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far off. For truth has stumbled in the street”* (Is. 59:14). God saw it and *“wrapped Himself in zeal as a cloak”* (Is. 59:17). That same zeal appears here. God cares deeply about what His people reflect. He is zealous not only for us, but also for what He has called us to become.

2. WHEN GOD DWELLS IN THE CENTER, HIS CHARACTER DEFINES THE PLACE

The Lord declares, *"I will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth"* (Zech. 8:3). The word translated "dwell" is connected to **shakhan**, the same root behind **Mishkan**, the Tabernacle. God is saying, "I am going to set up My dwelling right in the center." Earlier He had promised, *"I Myself... will be a wall of fire around it... and I will be the glory inside it"* (Zech. 2:9). Jerusalem's security would ultimately come not from walls or armies, but from the presence of God in her midst.

And when God dwells in the center, the place begins to take on His character. Jerusalem will be called the **City of Truth**, the city of faithfulness. Isaiah saw the same future: *"Afterward you will be called City of Righteousness, Faithful City"* (Is. 1:26). Zechariah then gives us a beautiful picture of that kingdom: elderly men and women sitting peacefully in the squares while boys and girls laugh and play in the streets (Zech. 8:4–5). The most vulnerable are safe. People live long lives. Children play without fear. That is shalom. When the King is in the center, His character begins to define the community.

3. WHAT LOOKS IMPOSSIBLE TO US IS NOT DIFFICULT FOR GOD

For the remnant standing among the ruins of Jerusalem, all of this must have sounded almost impossible. The Temple was still being rebuilt. Opposition was real. They had known exile, disappointment, and deferred hope. So the Lord acknowledges what they must be thinking: *"It may seem difficult in the eyes of the remnant of this people... but will it also be difficult in My eyes?"* (Zech. 8:6). The Hebrew word **peleh** carries the idea of something extraordinary or wondrous. God does not deny that the promise looks impossible from where they are standing. His question is, "Does it look impossible from where I am standing?"

It is the same question God asked when Sarah laughed at the thought of bearing a son: *"Is anything too difficult for ADONAI?"* (Gen. 18:14). Now the Lord says, *"Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west... They will be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness"* (Zech. 8:7–8). From the rising of the sun to its setting, God will save and gather His people. He will dwell in the center, and they will dwell there with Him. What they cannot yet see is already certain in the purposes of God.

CONCLUSION

There are seasons when we feel a little like someone who has already been adopted but is still waiting to go home. We belong to the Father. We have His name. We have encountered His character, but we have not yet arrived at the fullness of what He has promised. Paul describes that tension: *"We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Ruach, groan inwardly as we eagerly wait for adoption—the redemption of our body"* (Rom. 8:23). We are not who we once were, but we are not yet everything we will be. So we wait, and

sometimes we groan. Yet *“if we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance”* (Rom. 8:25). Our Father has not forgotten us.

The Lord wants us to stop settling for religious activity when He is asking for our hearts. Maybe you have been busy doing things for God while neglecting something He has clearly asked of you. Or perhaps you are facing something that seems impossible, and you cannot see how God will get you from where you are to where He says He is taking you. Bring both things to Him. Put Him back in the center. If you have never surrendered your life to Yeshua, come to Him today. And if you belong to Him but have grown tired in the waiting, hear His question again: *“Will it also be difficult in My eyes?”* He has not forgotten. He is still working, still forming, still saving, and still preparing a place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the Lord redirect Israel’s attention from fasting to justice, compassion, truth, and faithfulness?
2. How does understanding Zion as a “signpost” help explain God’s zeal for His people?
3. What changes in Jerusalem when God dwells “in the midst” according to Zechariah 8:3–5?
4. **Personal Reflection:** Are there religious activities or projects occupying your attention while something God has clearly asked of you is being neglected?
5. **Personal Reflection:** What situation in your life currently feels too difficult or impossible? How would your response change if you truly believed it is not difficult in God’s eyes?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, You are zealous for Your people and for what You are forming us to become. Forgive us when we become more concerned with religious activity than with knowing You and reflecting Your character. Teach us to walk in justice, truth, faithfulness, chesed, and compassion. Make our lives signposts that point others toward You.

Lord, dwell in the center of my life. When Your promises seem impossible from where we stand, remind us that nothing is too difficult for You. Help us to wait with hope and perseverance, trusting that Your *Ruach* is at work even when we cannot see what You are doing. Thank You that You have not forgotten Your people and that You are still saving, restoring, gathering, and preparing a place

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.