

Zechariah 8:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

Analysis

Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,—This simple introductory formula marks the beginning of Zechariah's eighth prophetic oracle, following the question about fasting in chapter 7. The repetition of "**the word of the LORD**" (devar-Yahweh, **דְּבָר־יְהָוָה**) emphasizes divine initiative in revelation—Zechariah doesn't manufacture messages but receives them from God. The adverb "**again**" (vayehi, **וַיְהִי**) signals continuity with previous revelations while introducing a distinct oracle.

The title "**LORD of hosts**" (Yahweh Tzeva'ot, **יְהָוָה אֲצֹבָה**) appears repeatedly throughout chapter 8 (verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 19, 20, 23)—fourteen times in twenty-three verses. This divine name emphasizes God's sovereign command over all heavenly and earthly armies, assuring the struggling post-exilic community that infinite power backs every promise. The cumulative effect builds confidence: the One who speaks these restoration promises possesses unlimited authority and might to accomplish them.

The phrase "**came to me**" establishes Zechariah as authentic prophetic mediator. True prophecy doesn't originate in human imagination (2 Peter 1:20-21) but comes from God to His chosen messengers. This formula validates everything that follows—it's not wishful thinking from a discouraged prophet but authoritative divine word declaring certain future realities.

Historical Context

This oracle dates to approximately 518 BC, roughly two years after Zechariah's initial night visions (520 BC, Zechariah 1:7). The temple rebuilding project, which had resumed under prophetic encouragement from Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-2), was progressing but not yet complete. The community faced ongoing challenges: economic hardship, opposition from surrounding peoples, and questions about their relationship with God after the exile.

Chapter 7 records delegates from Bethel asking whether they should continue mourning fasts commemorating Jerusalem's destruction. God's response (7:4-14) rebuked empty ritualism and called for justice, mercy, and obedience—the very things their fathers neglected, resulting in exile. Chapter 8 shifts from rebuke to radiant promise, assuring the community that God's purposes for Zion remain unchanged despite past judgment. The restoration God envisions far exceeds mere temple completion—it anticipates comprehensive spiritual and material blessing.

For Christians, this prophetic pattern reveals God's consistent character: He disciplines His children for correction, not rejection, and His ultimate purpose is always redemptive restoration. The "word of the LORD" that came to Zechariah ultimately finds its fullest expression in Christ, the incarnate Word (John 1:1, 14), through whom all God's promises find their "Yes" and "Amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the repeated phrase "the word of the LORD came" throughout Scripture build confidence in biblical authority and reliability?
2. What does the divine title "LORD of hosts" reveal about God's ability to fulfill His promises despite human obstacles and opposition?

3. In what ways does God's pattern of discipline followed by restoration in Zechariah parallel His dealings with the church today?

Interlinear Text

לִאמְרָה: אָמַר־יְהוָה־צְבָאֹת וְאַתָּה בְּדִבֶּר־יְהוָה־צְבָאֹת
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