The Jealousy of God

Zechariah 8:1-23

Jealousy does not seem like a godly characteristic; Oprah Winfrey left the faith when she heard her pastor at a Baptist Church in Chicago speak on Exodus 20:5 on the jealousy of God; while she calls herself a "Christian" she is a leading proponent of Eastern Mysticism and the pantheistic New Age Movement; she denies the fundamentals of the faith and speaks of God as an "impersonal FORCE;" according to Beliefnet.com, 33% of 6,600 respondents said that Oprah has a "more profound impact on their spiritual lives than their pastors or priests."

Zechariah 1:14 (NIV) speaks of God's jealousy: "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy..."

In chapter 8 there is a series of repetitious phrases: "Thus saith the LORD" appears 9 times (vvs. 2,4,6,7,9,14,19,20, 23); the name YHWH appears 22 times; this gives you the idea that this chapter is from the Lord and that He wants His name attached to it.

There are seven promises in this chapter that God is making to Israel that will most likely occur during Christ's Millennial Reign, but they also apply to the
Church: "For all the promises of God are 'Yes,' and in Him 'Amen,' to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Let's look at these seven promises.

**Divine Punishment (8:1-2)**

_The redness of God's face..._"...I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her" (8:1-2); the word "jealous" (quinethe) means "redness of face;" God burns with jealousy for His people; jealousy is wounded love; God loves Israel (Deuteronomy 7: 6-8).

We must not confuse envy with jealousy; envy is manifested in selfishness; the desire for something that does not belong to you; jealousy is a natural response of being emotionally hurt by someone you love; God loves Israel but His love was not reciprocated.

_The rejection by Israel of God's love..._ In Zechariah 7 we learned of the Jews who came from Babylon to inquire about fasting on the 5th month after doing so for 68 years; it had become a ritual that lost its meaning; their fasting had become hypocritical; it was nothing more than an outward display; when they were told what to do they refused to listen, they shrugged their shoulders, they stopped their ears, and their hearts became hard like flint (7:1-13).
The retribution from God for rejecting His love... "Great wrath came from the LORD of hosts" (7:12b); their prayers would not be answered and they would be a scattered people and their land become desolate (7:13-14).

The reminder that God disciplines those whom He loves... God loves you and God loves His Church (John 13:34-35); only the God of the Bible is a God of love (1 John 4:8); "whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Hebrews 12:5-6).

Divine Presence (8:3)

The descending and the departing of God's glory... "... I will return to Zion... Jerusalem shall be called the city of Truth..." (8:3); God's glory had departed from the tabernacle in the days of Eli the high priest (1 Samuel 4); it returned in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:11); it departed during the days of Ezekiel because of Israel's idolatry (Ezekiel 8:14-15; 9-11); it returned in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14) and is to continue in the life of the believer (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The discovery of God's glory... This is made possible by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and Christ continued presence in our lives (Romans 8:11; Hebrews 13:5); when Jesus returns He comes "in the glory of the Father" (Matthew 16:27); then Jerusalem will be called the city of Truth; in the days of Isaiah it was "a harlot and a murderer" (Isaiah 1:21); in Revelation it is called "Sodom and Egypt" (Revelation 11:8); when Christ returns it will be called "the city of Truth."
To us who believe, Jesus is the truth (John 14:6); His word is truth (John 17:17); one thing God cannot do is lie (Titus 1:2); therefore we can manifest His glory when we know Jesus and live by the Truth.

Divine Peace (8:4-5)

The coming of a secure world... "Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem... the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets"(8:4-5); when Christ returns life on earth will be dramatically changed (Isaiah 2:4; Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 11:9).

The certainty of the believers' promise... As believers we will "inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5); "reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10); longevity of life for the mortals will give them 100 years to get right with God (Isaiah 65:20); the Millennial world will be one of peace, justice, and righteousness, and filled with the knowledge of God.

Divine Power (8:6)

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, will it also be marvelous in My eyes?' says the LORD of hosts" (8:6); literally the Hebrew text reads, "in those days," not "in these days;" this refers to the future kingdom; God will create a time in history where He calls His creation "marvelous in His eyes;" this speaks of divine power because there is nothing too great for God; our present world is
breathtakingly beautiful; how much more beautiful will the kingdom be when God says "it will be marvelous in His eyes."

**Divine Pledge (8:7-8; 18-23)**

*The promise of God to re-gather His people Israel...* "... Behold, I will save My people from the land... I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem..."(8:7-8); God is going to gather the Jews from the four corners of the earth; that became true on May 14, 1948 when Israel became a nation a second time (Isaiah 11:10-13); during the Millennium God will pour out His Spirit on a remnant of Jews (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3); He will expand their land (Ezekiel 36:10-11; 48:1-29) and she will become the prime nation of the world (Isaiah 60-62).

When the Lord returns He will turn the fast of the Jews into a feast and they will "love truth and peace" (8:18-19); people will come from all over the world to Jerusalem to pray and seek the Lord (8:20-22); the people will come saying "we have heard that God is with you" (8:23).

*The peace of the believer is through trust in God's faithfulness...* God is a faithful God (Lamentations 3:22-23); no matter your lot, cheer up; you are a chosen of God (Ephesians 1:4-7) and your citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).
Divine Prosperity (8:9-13)

*The call to be strong*... "... Let your hands be strong..." (8:9-10); there was opposition to rebuilding the temple; don't quit, more prosperous times are coming (8:11-13).

*The confidence in God's presence*... "Do not fear" (8:13b)... Isaiah writes: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am with you and I will help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10; see Psalm 147:3; Zephaniah 3:17; Psalm 23:4; Philippians 4:19; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 4:6,7).

Divine Preference (8:14-17)

*The determination of God to bless His people*  “Just as I determined to punish you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath... I am determined to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear....” (8:14-17); they had spent 70 years in captivity; now God is determined to bless them; God is a God of goodness; Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

*The decision for God’s people*... God asks you to do good: speak the truth; let your judgments be just; don’t think evil of others; don’t give a false oath; be a person of integrity.
This message began by speaking of God as a jealous God; He loves His people; there are few chapters in the Bible that better illustrate that love for even though His people turned away from Him, He never turned away from them; for after bringing His divine punishment came His divine presence, His divine peace, His divine power, His divine pledge, His divine prosperity, His divine preference; these promises are for His Church as well (2 Corinthians 1:20). Amen!