

ZECHARIAH

Chapter 10

The Restoration for Judah and Israel

Ask rain from the LORD in the season of the spring rain, from the LORD who makes the storm clouds, and he will give them showers of rain, to everyone the vegetation in the field. 2 For the household gods utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies; they tell false dreams and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd. 3 “My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD of hosts cares for his flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like his majestic steed in battle. 4 From him shall come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler—all of them together. 5 They shall be like mighty men in battle, trampling the foe in the mud of the streets; they shall fight because the LORD is with them, and they shall put to shame the riders on horses. 6 “I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and they shall be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them. 7 Then Ephraim shall become like a mighty warrior, and their hearts shall be glad as with wine. Their children shall see it and be glad; their hearts shall rejoice in the LORD. 8 “I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them, and they shall be as many as they were before. 9 Though I scattered them among the nations, yet in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return. 10 I will bring them home from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria, and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon, till there is no room for them. 11 He shall pass through the sea of troubles and strike down the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up. The pride of Assyria shall be laid low, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart. 12 I will make them strong in the LORD, and they shall walk in his name,” declares the LORD.

10:1-12 The subject discussed in the last chapter was so great and wonderful that the Lord has not begun to exhaust it, but takes the opportunity of giving a fuller description of its beauties. (Kretzmann)

10:1 *from the LORD who ... gives showers ... vegetation.* The Lord, not the Canaanite god Baal, is the one who controls the weather and the rain, giving life and fertility to the land (see Jer 14:22; Am 5:8). Therefore God’s people are to pray to and trust in him. See further Isa 55:10–12; Hos 2:8; 6:3; Joel 2:21–27; Mt 5:45. (CSB)

In Israel, rain falls mainly in the winter months. Early rain marked the beginning of the season; spring rain came at the end of the season and was essential for crop development (cf. Jl 2:23). (TLSB)

10:2 *Household gods.* They were used for divination during the period of the judges (Jdg 17:5; 18:14–20). (CSB)

Prayers addressed to such objects were useless. (TLSB)

diviners. Included among false prophets, they were the occult counterpart to true prophets. Cf. Jer 23:30–32; 27:9–10. Resorting to such sources for information and guidance is expressly forbidden in Dt 18:9–14 because God provided true prophets (and ultimately the Messianic Prophet) for that purpose (Dt 18:15–22; see Jn 4:25; 6:14; Ac 3:22–23, 26). (CSB)

People who claimed to be able to tell the future by communicating with some supernatural power. (TL SB)

lack of a shepherd. Spiritual leadership is missing (cf. Mk 6:34). “Shepherd” is primarily a royal motif, whether referring to human kings (2Sa 5:2; Isa 44:28; Jer 23:2–4) or to God as King (Ps 23:1; 100:3; Eze 34:11–16) or to the Messianic, Davidic King (Eze 34:23–24; Jn 10:11–16; Heb 13:20; 1Pe 5:4). (CSB)

The people failed to turn to the Lord in prayer because they lacked leaders to give them spiritual direction. They were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:36). (TL SB)

10:3 *I will punish the leaders.* Cf. Eze 34:1–10. (CSB)

Both kings and other spiritual and political leaders were described as shepherds in the Bible. (TL SB)

like his majestic steed. Triumphant. (CSB)

The Lord Himself took over leadership of His flock and shaped them figuratively into His majestic horse, with which He fought spiritual battles (cf. 6:1-8). (TL SB)

10:4 Probably Messianic (indicated by the Aramaic Targum).

Christ is from the house of Judah and the cornerstone on whom the Church is built (Eph 2:20); 1 Pt 2:5-8). Other terms used here also refer to Him. (TL SB)

tent peg. The ruler as the support of the state (see Isa 22:24). (CSB)

battle bow. Part of the Divine Warrior terminology (cf. 9:13; Ps 7:12; 45:5; La 2:4; 3:12; Hab 3:9). (CSB)

10:5 *they.* Judah (v. 4), i.e., its people. (CSB)

the LORD is with them. See Jos 1:5; Jer 1:8, 19; 15:20. (CSB)

Words of a familiar hymn, “onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war” (LSB 662:1), compare the Church to an army fighting battles with the Lord’s help. (TL SB)

put them to shame. Partly fulfilled in the Maccabean victories (during the period between the OT and the NT). (CSB)

10:6 *Judah ... Joseph.* The people of the southern and northern kingdoms will be reunited. (CSB)

The Lord promised to bring back Judah and Joseph (Ephraim), who had been carried off into captivity as a punishment for sin. Luther: “This passage is to be understood about a spiritual conversion.” (TL SB)

I will answer them. The Lord will hear and respond to the prayers of His people. (TL SB)

10:7 *Ephraim.* These are the true descendants of Joseph, the spiritual children of him who was given the right of the first-born in the house of Jacob. (Kretzmann)

glad as with wine. Cf. Ps 104:15. (CSB)

Zion was encouraged to “rejoice greatly” because of the coming King (9:9). Ephraim, the Northern Kingdom, will join the celebration. (TLSB)

10:8 *whistle*. A continuation of the shepherd metaphor (see Jdg 5:16). (CSB)

God’s whistle was His Word summoning Ephraim to to come back to Him. (TLSB)

redeem. The Hebrew for this word is often used of ransoming from slavery or captivity (see Isa 35:10; Mic 6:4; cf. 1Pe 1:18–19). (CSB)

as many as they were before. See Ex 1:6–20. (CSB)

That is, the growth of the people of God in the Messianic era would be like that of Israel when it first came to the Promised Land. (Kretzmann)

10:9 *they shall remember me*. According to the meaning of Zechariah’s name, “the LORD remembers” (his covenant people and promises). Now they will remember him. (CSB)

In judgment, the Lord scattered His people among the nations. But He says “they shall remember Me” and return. Many did at Pentecost (Ac 2:5–11). (TLSB)

This is where ever the spiritual children of Israel would be found. (Kretzmann)

10:10 *Egypt ... Assyria*. See v. 11. Probably representing all the countries where the Israelites are dispersed, these two evoke memories of slavery and exile. (CSB)

Significant numbers of Israelites had been captives in these countries, which are examples of places from which the redeemed will come. (TLSB)

Gilead. Small territories east and north, respectively, of the Sea of Chinnereth. Even if this area was joined to Israel, there would not be room for all those who will eventually live in God’s kingdom. (TLSB)

no room for them. Even if all the countries mentioned were joined to Israel there will not be sufficient room for them to expand, the number of the spiritual children of Israel being so great. (Kretzmann)

10:11 *pass through the sea of trouble*. As at the Red Sea. (CSB)

The Lord will lead His people through the sea of troubles, strike down the waves, and dry up the depths of rivers such as the Nile in Egypt. (TLSB)

10:12 The Lord identifies Himself as the source of strength, life and guidance so that they would live under His protection and in accordance with His will. The entire connection brings out the characteristics of the New Testament Church, whose members form a royal priesthood and find their delight in walking in the ways of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

The Lord identifies Himself as the source of strength, life, and guidance for His people. (TLSB)

Ch 10 There is a vast difference between the OT kingdom of Israel and the kingdom restored by the Messiah. Luther described the former as weak because it was based on Israel's obedience. Of the latter he said: "This kingdom is founded on God's mercy without our own goodness or merit, and therefore it will stand fast to all eternity" (AE 20:304). Like Israel, we all fall short of God's glory. Because of His compassion, He called Israel back to Him and likewise keeps calling us. • Holy Spirit, move me to exclaim with gratitude and awe in my heart, "The LORD ... is good for His steadfast love endures forever" (Ps 136:1). Amen. (TLSB)