

ZECHARIAH

Chapter 10

The Lord Will Care for Judah

Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone. ² The idols speak deceit, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. ³ “My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock, the house of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle. ⁴ From Judah will come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler. ⁵ Together they will be like mighty men trampling the muddy streets in battle. Because the LORD is with them, they will fight and overthrow the horsemen. ⁶ “I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them. ⁷ The Ephraimites will become like mighty men, and their hearts will be glad as with wine. Their children will see it and be joyful; their hearts will rejoice in the LORD. ⁸ I will signal for them and gather them in. Surely I will redeem them; they will be as numerous as before. ⁹ Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return. ¹⁰ I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, and there will not be room enough for them. ¹¹ They will pass through the sea of trouble; the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria’s pride will be brought down and Egypt’s scepter will pass away. ¹² I will strengthen them in the LORD and in his name they will walk,” 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 *it is the LORD who ... gives showers ... plants.* 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. J1 2:23). (TLSB)

10:2 *idols.* 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. (TLSB)

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). (TLSB)

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. (TLSB)

like a proud horse. 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). (TLSB)

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. (TLSB)

From Judah. See Ge 49:10; Jer 30:21; Mic 5:2. (CSB)

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. (TLSB)

overthrow. 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.” (TLSB)

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

10:7 *Ephraimites*. 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 *signal*. Lit. “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 numerous as 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 will 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)

gather them. See Isa 11:11–16; Eze 39:27–29. (CSB)

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)

not be room enough. 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)