

January 9, 2011 (Morning Sermon)
"The Zeal of the LORD of Hosts"
(His ZEAL is to BLESS our socks off!)
Zechariah 8

Idiom Definitions for 'Knock your socks off'

If something knocks your socks off, it amazes and surprises you, usually in a positive way. *If God BLESSES your socks off that is even better! Much BETTER!*

Do you want to be blessed?

- I. **Know the LORD of hosts!** - "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3 NKJ)
 1. **It is IMPORTANT to know our God as the LORD of hosts!**
Why do I say this? Look how OFTEN the Lord uses this title in the BIBLE, and in this chapter –
 - A. *In the Bible God calls Himself LORD of hosts – 940 times!*
 - B. *In Zechariah 8:1 He uses it twice!*
 - C. *In this chapter He uses it 17 times in 23 verses- :1 (2) :3 (1) :4 (1) :6(2) :7(1) :9(2) :11(1) :14(2) :18(1) :20(1) :21(1) :22(1) :23(1)*
When the Bible repeats something it is IMPORTANT!
 2. **It is important to know what "LORD of Hosts" means!**
 - A. *The phrase means "LORD of hosts" means LORD of armies*
 - B. *Yet, just as blessed means more than happy, so does "host" mean much more than armies of men or even angels. If you understand the term Biblically it means God is the commander of EVERYTHING!*
His armies include locusts – Exodus 10:4, 12, 13, 14, 19 and spiritual locusts – Revelation 9:3 & 7
His armies (His hosts) include the all the plagues of Egypt not only the locusts but the frogs (Exodus 7:14-25) Gnats (Exodus 8:12-15) Lice (Exodus 8:16-19) Flies (Exodus 8:20-32) and not only these but blood in place of Egypt's water

(Exodus 7:14) Disease on livestock (Exodus 9:1-7) the boils (Exodus 9:8-12) the hail (Exodus 9:13-35) Darkness (Exodus 10:21-29 ...
Not to mention the waters of the Red Sea – Exodus 14:21-31

Israel's army would be included, including their trumpets that blew down the walls of Jericho, including David and his sling and stone which took down Goliath!

Yet the bow that was drawn at a venture which killed wicked King Ahab and Nebuchadnezzar ruler of Babylon who took and burned Jerusalem these are part of God's Host too!

The fish / whale that swallows Jonah, the worm that killed Jonah's precious plant ... your headache, someone's cancer, the semi that crushes a Volkswagon Bug ... all these are part of God's Army!

He is called "Lord of Hosts" because He controls EVERYTHING! -

The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD. (Proverbs 16:33 NKJ)

Even the men who killed Jesus Christ were under God's control – "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know--²³ "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; (Acts 2:22-23 NKJ)

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together²⁸ "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. (Acts 4:27-28 NKJ)

II. **Now, what is wonderful here is that the ZEAL of LORD of Hosts (this all controlling God) is to bless His people**

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Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, ²"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.' (Zechariah 8:1-2 NKJ)

How does God (according to Zechariah 8) bless His people?

1. *By returning to them, giving them Himself – Zechariah 8:3 & 8*
2. *By bringing peace and safety to them (even in marvelous ways) – Zechariah 8:4-6*
3. *By bringing them out of captivity – Zechariah 8:7-8*

Even captivity to sin –

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵"And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. ³⁶"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (John 8:34-36 NKJ)

4. *By giving them strength and prosperity, even in regard to building the Temple, even the Temple that is us – Zechariah 8:9-13 (see also Ephesians 2:19-22 and 3:14-21)*
5. *He is zealous to "do good" to them by grace even as He may punish for our doing evil – Zechariah 8:14-17*
6. *By replacing their mourning and fasting with rejoicing and feasting – Zechariah 8:18-19 Even their heartless fasting was blessed / as is often our heartless feasting! See Matthew 5:4*
7. *By spreading these blessings world-wide – Zechariah 8:20-23*

III. *So how did God BLESS His people? Have we seen fulfillment of this prophecy? Yes!*

- *Remember the time period of this prophecy –*

Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass *that* the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth *day* of the ninth month, Chislev, (Zechariah 7:1 NKJ)

Consider this King Darius was the father of King Ahasurus – Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this *was* the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia), (Esther 1:1 NKJ)

- The same was disrespected by his first wife Vashti – Esther 1
- Who took a Jewish wife named Esther – Esther 2:1-18
- Who had plots against his life – Esther 2:19-23
- Who had trouble sleeping – Esther 6:1-3

He also had a son named Artaxerxes who wrote a letter – who was his mother?

Queen Esther was Artaxerxes mother. Artaxerxes took over as king when he was twelve years old. It is likely Esther had a great deal of influence on this leader ---

See Ezra 7:11-26 also Nehemiah 2:4-8

Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." ⁶Then the king said to me (**the queen also sitting beside him**), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. ⁷Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors *of the region* beyond the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, ⁸"and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *pertains* to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me. (Nehemiah 2:4-8 NKJ)

Yet, more so, the continued fulfillment of this prophecy was started by our Lord Jesus Christ – Matthew 16:17-17; Revelation 21