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ELIE ASSIS,
ZECHARIAH 8 AS REVISION AND DIGEST OF
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ZECHARIAH 8 AS REVISION AND DIGEST OF ZECHARIAH 1–7

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INTRODUCTION

The question of the composition of Zechariah and the relationship between its different parts is central to the study of the book. One issue relates to the relationship between Zechariah 1–8 and Zechariah 9–14 which has come under much scrutiny by scholars. The presently accepted position is that these two parts were composed by different authors at different times. Though today there is a growing tendency to understand the affinity between these two units, even if they are still regarded as two separate entities.¹

It is generally accepted that Zechariah 1–8 is divided into two distinct parts: chapters 1–6 are usually regarded as one unit, with an opening that includes the date, “the eighth month of the second year of Darius” (Zech 1:1), while chapters 7–8 are regarded as the second part, with a new opening that gives another date two years later, “in the fourth year of Darius on the fourth day of the ninth month of Chislev,” (Zech 7:1).²

Even though various types of formulas may be a useful tool in delimitating a prophetic text, one should take into account the possibility that a new section may begin without this headline. It is possible that the date mentioned in 7:1 relates only to 7:1–7 or to 7:1–14 and not to the oracles in chapter 8. Even if the content of chapter 8 does belong to the date mentioned, this does not necessarily mean that it also belongs to chapter 7 from a literary or thematic point of view. Determining the delimitation of the text

¹ For a detailed survey of the research on the relationship between Zech 1–8 and 9–14, see M.J. Boda, “From Fasts to Feasts: A Literary Function of Zechariah 7–8”, *CBQ* 65 (2003), 390–407, esp. pp. 390–393.

² W. Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi* (KAT, 13), Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976, 62; J.G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (TOTC; London: Tyndale Press, 1972), 140; C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1987), lx; R. Hanhart, *Sacharja* (BKAT, XIV/7,6; Neukirchen, 1975), 452–456; D.L. Petersen, *Haggai, and Zechariah 1–8: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 122; M.H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets* (part 2, FOTL; Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2000), 412; M. Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah* (JSOTsup, 130; Sheffield: Sheffield, 1992), 70–72; M.J. Boda, “From Fasts to Feasts”, 393–395.

should rest mainly on thematic considerations rather than on the opening formula in 7:1. In this article I propose that Zechariah 1–7 and Zechariah 8 should be considered as separate units.

There are scholars who base the unity of chapters 7–8 on formal structures and criteria. Clark tried to establish their unity on the basis of various formulae of the openings of the oracles in these chapters.³ Others have suggested a chiasmic structure which includes both chapters.⁴ This structure, apart from the affinities between the opening and the closing verses, is very artificial, as Boda rightly points out.⁵

Many scholars claim that the question in 7:3 of whether the people should continue to fast in the fifth month, was not answered immediately by the prophet, but rather is given in 8:19. In this way a framework is established of a question at the beginning of a unit (7:1–3) and an answer towards its end (8:18–19).⁶ Several scholars put forward this proposition, and thus conclude that chapters 7 and 8 are one literary piece.⁷

According to the presently accepted approach that 8:18–19 is the prophet's answer to his question in 7:1–3, three general hypotheses have been proposed to explain the composition of the chapters. Conrad and Floyd consider all the material from the beginning of chapter 7 to the end of chapter 8 as being one continuous piece that was created as such at the outset by the author.⁸ A second theory is that the material between these verses was introduced by a redactor, so as to create some significant continuity. Thus, for example, Boda reasoned that part of this material belongs to the

³ D.J. Clark, "Discourse Structure in Zachariah 7:1–8:23," *The Bible Translator* 36 (1985), 328–335.

⁴ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 85; M. Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*, 149–165; B.C. Ollenburger, "The Book of Zechariah" (NIB 7; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 789–790.

⁵ Boda, "From Fasts to Feasts," 398.

⁶ According to many commentators the question and the answer in 7:1–3, and 8:18–23, form one unit, and all the intervened material is a late interpolation. See e.g. F. Horst, *Die Zwölf kleine Propheten* (HAT; Tübingen Moher, 1938), 232–233. Although Eissfeldt suspects the authenticity of 7:4–14; 8:1–17, 20–23, he admits that "there is no real ground for suspicion of any one of them." O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* (trans. P.R. Ackroyd; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 433.

⁷ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 85; Clark, "Discourse Structure in Zachariah 7:1–8:23," 328–335; Floyd, *Minor Prophets, Part 2*, 412–413. M. Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*, 149–165; E.J.C. Tigheelaar, *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers and Apocalyptic* (OTS 35; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 244–245; Boda, "From Fasts to Feasts," 394–395.

⁸ E.W. Conrad, *Zechariah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 131–150; M.H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets* (Part II, FOTL; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 412. See also T.T. Perowne, *Haggai and Zechariah* (CBSC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), 98.

prophet's response to the people concerning the continued observance of the fasts (7:4–14; 8:16–17) and the rest of the material was added by a redactor.⁹ As far as the content of chapters 7 and 8 is concerned, it is generally agreed that the prophet's concern is to give precedence to the worship of the heart and living in accordance with the covenant with God over cultic rituals.¹⁰ After the promise concerning the status of Jerusalem and redemption of the people through God in 8:1–17, the prophet can complete his answer on the transformation of fast-days into days of rejoicing (8:19). Mitchell also regards chapters 7–8 as one unit, but emphasizes the subject of the return of Judah to God.¹¹ The third proposition is that while 8:18–19 should be seen as the continuation of 7:1–3, the material in between is not connected.¹²

My general criticism of this approach is that it is difficult to connect all the material in chapters 7 and 8 to the subject of the fasting that appears only at the beginning of chapter 7 and towards the end of chapter 8. Here there are various different oracles that relate to the status of Jerusalem, the removal of foreign elements from Judah, the arrival of Jews from exile, a threat of punishment for Judah if truth is not spoken and justice not done, and other subjects which only in a general fashion can be related to the topic of the fasts. The fact that 8:19 deals with the same subject as 7:1–3 does not necessarily turn everything in between into one unit, even if some of the material was later introduced by a redactor; there are other ways of explaining the return to the subject of fasting at the end of the chapter.

Other scholars do not regard chapter 8 as a continuation of the subject of fasting in 7:1–3. They maintain that the answer to the question about continuing to observe the fast days is to be found in 7:4–7 (or, for that matter, in 7:4–14 as others have proposed).¹³ I support the position that the answer is in these verses. Clearly, the prophecy does not answer the people's question in 8:19. They wanted to know whether they should continue the fast rituals. This

⁹ Boda, "From Fasts to Feasts," 398–401. For other variations of this approach, see Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 142–152; Petersen, *Haggai, and Zechariah 1–8, A Commentary*, 312–313. See also: Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 143–144.

¹⁰ Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 412. R. Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* (Cambridge; University Press, 1977), 68.

¹¹ H.G. Mitchell, *Haggai, Zechariah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 198–217.

¹² R. Mason, *Haggai Zechariah and Malachi* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 68.

¹³ For the first opinion, see: Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 389–394. They, however, think that the response ends with v. 6. For the second opinion, see: M. A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, vol. 2, Berit Olam; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 642. Baldwin, too, sees 7:1–14 as a unit. See Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 144.

question is not addressed by the prophet in 8:19.¹⁴ To the contrary, the prophet refers in his answer to future changes, but not to the current situation.

In my opinion the prophet's answer is found where one might expect it to be—immediately following the question, vv 4–7. The answer can be interpreted as meaning that the Lord is indifferent to the question and it is the people's own decision whether to fast or not. What the Lord is interested in, the prophet claims, is that they follow the prophet's teachings. These are uttered by the prophet in vv 8–14. But even if this interpretation is not accepted, it still needs to be asserted that 8:19 is not the answer to the question. According to this approach, chapters 7 and 8 are a collection of separate oracles.¹⁵ This, for example, is how Ackroyd regards chapter 8.¹⁶ We find a more detailed treatment in Meyers and Meyers' Anchor Bible commentary. In their opinion chapter 8 is divided into two parts: vv 1–17 which contain seven short oracles, and vv 18–23, which contain another three. This division is based on the opening of each of the parts with the words: "And the word of the Lord of hosts came [to me] saying..." (v 1 and v 18). Each one of the ten oracles can be identified by its new opening, "Thus says the Lord of hosts."¹⁷ What nearly all scholars have in common is that they regard chapters 7–8 as a collection of oracles that constitute the second part of the book after chapters 1–6. This perception rests primarily on the formulas occurring in the book of Zechariah (e.g., Zech 7:1), which, in their opinion, indicates the opening of a new section.¹⁸

In regards to the position of chapters 7–8 within a larger context, Meyers and Meyers find many analogies between Haggai and Zechariah 7–8 that prove, in their opinion, that Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 is one literary unit.¹⁹ Boda regards chapters 7–8 as a transi-

¹⁴ See also: Y. Kauffmann, *Toldot HaEmuna Halsrelit*, vol. 8 (Tel Aviv: Mosad Bialik-Devir, 1972), 207 (Hebrew).

¹⁵ W.A.M. Beuken, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8: Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Frühhexilischen Prophetie* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), 156–183. See also S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1913⁹), 346.

¹⁶ P.R. Ackroyd, "Zechariah," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Nelson, 1962), 650; Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, lx–lxiii, 390.

¹⁷ C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8* (AB; New York, Doubleday, 1987), 428–433, 442–445.

¹⁸ Driver defines chapters 7–8 as the third part of the Book. The first part is 1:2–6, and 1:7–6:15, is the second. His division, too, is based on the titles that include information about the date, at the beginning of each of the three sections. See S.R. Driver, *The Minor Prophets*, vol. 2 (NCB; New York: Oxford University Press and Edinburgh: Jack, 1906), 182, 183, 215.

¹⁹ Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, lxi–lxii. For a detailed study on this approach see J. Wöhrle, "The Formation and Intention of the Haggai-

tional unit between Zechariah 1–6 and 9–14.²⁰ Sweeney also argues that Zechariah 9–14 develops ideas that are introduced in chapters 7–8.

According to the various approaches mentioned, chapters 7–8 are one unit, on account of the new opening in 7:1 and the connection between 7:1–3 and 8:19. In contrast to this proposition, a close affinity between in 1:1–6 and 7:1–14 should be noted.²¹ This leads us to the possibility that the unit which opens at the beginning of chapter 1 closes at the end of chapter 7.

Zech 7:1, 7, 9–12	Zechariah 1:1–6
(א) וַיְהִי בִשְׁנַת אַרְבַּע לְדַרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה אֶל זְכַרְיָה בְּאֶרְבַּעַה לְחֹדֶשׁ הַתְּשַׁעִי בְּכֶסֶלֹ: (יב) ... וַיְהִי קֶצֶף גָּדוֹל מֵאֵת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: (ז) הֲלוֹא אֵת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר קָרָא יְהוָה בְּיַד הַנְּבִיאִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים בְּהִיּוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם... (ט) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפַּט אֶמֶת שְׁפֹטוּ וְחֹסֶד וְרַחֲמִים עֲשׂוּ אִישׁ אֶת אֶחָיו: (י) וְאַלִמְנָה וַיִּתּוֹם גֵּר וְעֹנִי אֵל תַּעֲשֻׁקוּ וְרַעַת אִישׁ אֶחָיו אֵל תִּחְשְׁבוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם: (יא) וַיִּמְאֲנוּ לְהִקְשִׁיב וַיִּתְּנוּ כֶּתֶף סָרְתָּ וְאַזְנֵיהֶם הִכְבִּידוּ מִשְׁמוֹעַ:	(א) בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁמִינִי בִשְׁנַת שְׁתִּים לְדַרְיוֹשׁ הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה אֶל זְכַרְיָה בֶן בְּרַכְיָה בֶּן עֲדוֹ הַנְּבִיא לֵאמֹר: (ב) קֶצֶף יְהוָה עַל אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם קֶצֶף: (ד) אֵל תִּהְיוּ כְּאֲבֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר קָרָאוּ אֲלֵיהֶם הַנְּבִיאִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שׁוּבוּ נָא מִדְּרֹכֵיכֶם הָרָעִים וּמַעֲלֵילֵיכֶם הָרָעִים וְלֹא שְׁמַעוּ וְלֹא הִקְשִׁיבוּ אֵלַי נְאֻם יְהוָה:

Zechariah Corpus”, *JHS* 6 (2006), 1–14. Electronic access: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_60.pdf. Against this approach see M.J. Boda, “Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet,” R. Albertz and B. Becking (eds.) *Yahwism After the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 49–69.

²⁰ Boda, “From Fasts to Feasts,” 390–407.

²¹ Boda has presented a thorough and detailed comparison between Zech 1:1–6 and Zech 7–8. Boda, “Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet”, 49–69. He finds connections between these passages especially on the Dtr. prose sections in Jeremiah. His conclusion is that the composer of these passages was “deeply rooted in the tradition of Jeremiah”. It must be emphasized that 1:1–7 is connected mainly to chapter 7, and thus these connections can indicate that chapter 7–8 form a new unit, or that chapter 7 is the final unit of chapters 1–7, while chapter 8 forms another unit. The English translations of the biblical sources are based on the NRSV, but at times adjusted to a more literal rendering of the Hebrew source.

(יב) וְלָבַם שָׁמוּ שְׁמִיר מִשְׁמוֹעַ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה וְאֶת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּרוּחוֹ בְּיַד הַנְּבִיאִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים (יג) וַיְהִי כִּאֲשֶׁר קָרָא וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ בֶן יִקְרָאוּ וְלֹא אֲשַׁמֶּעַ אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:	
¹ In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. ¹² Therefore <i>great anger came from the Lord</i> of hosts. ⁷ ... were not these the words which <i>the Lord cried out by the former prophets?</i>" ⁹ "Thus says the Lord of hosts, <i>Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, ¹⁰ do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart</i>". ¹¹ <i>But they refused to hearken, and turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears that they might not hear.</i>	¹ In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, ² "The LORD was very angry with your fathers. ⁴ Be not like your fathers, to whom <i>the former prophets cried out,</i> <i>'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.'</i> <i>But they did not hear or heed me,</i> says the LORD.

In terms of the structure of the book and the way it is divided up, these affinities can be explained in one of two ways. Certain scholars posit that the affinity between the two oracles above suggests that they both constitute openings to the two parts of the book, chapters 1–6 and 7–8.²² But it is also possible that these affinities indicate an inclusio, where 1:1–6 is the opening oracle of the unit and chapter 7 is its closure. This structure would separate chapter 8 from chapters 1–7, and indicate it to be a separate unit.

There are a variety of opinions on how to explain the composition of chapter 8, though it is very difficult to decide if it is a ho-

²² Conrad, *Zechariah*, 137.

mogenous work²³ or a collection of oracles given at different times.²⁴ The question addressed in this paper is the relationship between chapter 8 and chapters 1–7.

The fact that the scholars did not regard chapter 8 as an entity in itself is one of the reasons why the essence of the chapter has been overlooked by commentators. A close look at the rhetoric of chapter 8 and the set of analogies with chapters 1–7 leads us to different conclusions than those reached thus far in the study of the book.

A NEW PROPOSAL

Zechariah 8 contains ten short oracles, which open with the words, “Thus says the Lord of hosts,” or one with a shorter introduction: “Thus says the Lord,” (8:3). According to this key, the oracles are:

1. Zech 8:2
2. Zech 8:3
3. Zech 8:4–5
4. Zech 8:6
5. Zech 8:7–8
6. Zech 8:9–13
7. Zech 8:14–17
8. Zech 8:19
9. Zech 8:20–22
10. Zech 8:23

Apart from the fourth oracle in this list, each of the oracles is connected linguistically and thematically (and sometimes only thematically) with oracles and visions in chapters 1–7, as we will see below. I propose that Zechariah 8 is a revision and digest of parallel oracles and visions in of Zechariah 1–7. That some verses in chapter 8 repeat previous material in Zechariah has been noticed by

²³ This is the opinion held by A. Petitjean, *Les oracles du Proto-Zacharie: un programme de restauration pour la communauté juive après l'exil* (Etudes bibliques; Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 365–383. In his opinion its date is before the return from Babylon. R.A. Mason, “The Prophets of Restoration,” R. Coggins, A Phillips, and M. Knibb (eds.) *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 148–149; Conrad, *Zechariah*, 131–150.

²⁴ W.A.M. Beuken, *Haggai – Sacharja 1–8, Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der frühnachexilischen Prophetie* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), 156–183; Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 – Maleachi*, 143–152; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 140; Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1–8, A Commentary*, 297.

a number of scholars, but since they did not detect all the analogies they did not discern the unique characteristic of chapter 8, as a summary of the prophet's previous work.²⁵

1. ZECH 8:2

The first oracle in chapter 8, v 2 is an almost exact quotation of the end of the first vision in 1:14–15.²⁶

Zech 1:14–15	Zech 8:2
(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי קְרָא לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת קִנְיָתִי לִירוּשָׁלַם וּלְצִיּוֹן קִנְיָה גְּדוּלָּה: (טו) וְקִצְף גְּדוּל אֲנִי קִצְף עַל הַגּוֹיִם הַשְׂאֲנָנִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי קִצְפְּתִי מֵעַט וְהִמָּה עֲזְרוּ לְרָעָה:	(ב) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת קִנְיָתִי לְצִיּוֹן קִנְיָה גְּדוּלָּה וְחִמָּה גְּדוּלָּה קִנְיָתִי לָהּ:
(1:14) So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy. ’ ¹⁵ And I am very angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little they furthered the disaster.	Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.

2. ZECH 8:3

The second oracle in chapter 8, v 3 is composed of the continuation of the first of Zechariah’s visions quoted above, and of 2:14–15 [ET 2:10–11].²⁷ Both these sources speak of God’s return to

²⁵ Ackroyd, “Zachariah,” 650; Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 144; P.L. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 84; Mason explains 8:1–8 as an exegesis of the preaching of Zechariah. See R. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics After Exile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 221–228. See also M.R. Stead, *The Intertextuality of Zechariah 1–8* (LHBOTS 506; New York and London: T & T Clark, 2009), 226–231.

²⁶ Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, p. 147; Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 411; R.L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1984), 231; Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 84; Mason, *Preaching the Tradition*, 221–222.

²⁷ For the connections between these texts see also Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 147; Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 411–412; Mason, *Preaching the Tradition*, 223.

Jerusalem, and his dwelling in the city, and this as a direct function of the zeal of God.²⁸

Zech 1:16; 2:14–15	Zech 8:3
(טז) לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁבִתִּי לִירוּשָׁלַם בְּרַחֲמִים בֵּיתִי יִבְנֶה בָּהּ נָאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְקוֹ יָנֻטָּה עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם: (יד) רְנִי וְשִׂמְחִי בֵּת צִיּוֹן כִּי הִנְנִי בָּא וְשֹׁכֵנִתִּי בְּתוֹכָךְ נָאֻם יְהוָה: (טו) וְנָלְווּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים אֶל יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְשֹׁכֵנִתִּי בְּתוֹכָךְ וַיִּדְעֶתָ כִּי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁלַחֲנִי אֵלֶיךָ:	(ג) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁבִתִּי אֶל צִיּוֹן וְשֹׁכֵנִתִּי בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם וְנִקְרְאָה יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הָאֱמֶת וְהָר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הָר הַקֹּדֶשׁ:
(1:16) Therefore, <i>thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion</i>; my house shall be built in it, says the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. (2:14–15) Sing and rejoice, O daughter of <i>Zion</i>; for lo, <i>I come and I will dwell in the midst of you</i>, says the LORD. ¹¹ And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; <i>and I will dwell in the midst of you</i>, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.	<i>Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,</i> and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain.

3. ZECH 8:4–5

The third oracle, in 8:4–5, parallels the oracle of the vision of the man with a measuring line in chapter 2:8 [ET 2:4].²⁹

²⁸ For the idea of Jerusalem and Zion in the postexilic period and mainly in Zechariah 1–8, see: C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, “Jerusalem and Zion after the Exile: The Evidence of First Zechariah,” M. Fishbane et. al. (eds.) *“Sha’arei Talmon”: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 121–135.

²⁹ J.E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*

Zech 2:8	Zech 8:4–5
(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו רֵץ דְּבַר אֵל הַנֶּעֱר הֵלֹךְ לֵאמֹר פְּרוּזוֹת תֵּשֵׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם מִרַב אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה בְּתוֹכָהּ:	(ד) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַד יֵשְׁבוּ זָקְנִים וְזָקֵנוֹת בְּרַחְבּוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִישׁ מִשְׁעֲנֵתוֹ בִּידוֹ מִרַב יָמִים: (ה) וְרַחְבּוֹת הָעִיר יִמְלְאוּ יְלָדִים וְיִלְדוֹת מִשְׁחָקִים בְּרַחְבֵּיתֶיהָ:
(2:4) and said to him, “Run, say to that young man, <i>Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle in it.</i>	Thus says the LORD of hosts: <i>Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.</i>

In this case, the parallel between the oracles is expressed not in the wording of the text but in its content. In 2:8 [ET 2:4], the prophet foresees that Jerusalem shall be extended greatly, and that within the city there will be so many people and cattle that the residential part of the city will burst beyond the city walls. In the third oracle, 8:4–5, there is a prediction that the city will be filled with boys and girls and the people in the city will live long lives. In 2:8 [ET 2:4], the prophet speaks of the expansion of the borders of the city and in 8:4–5 the description expands on this positive picture, adding the matter of the longevity of its residents (a similar idea appears in Isa 65:20) and the joy of the children who fill the streets of Jerusalem (see also Jer 30:19).

4. ZECH 8:6

The fourth oracle in chapter 8, v 6 does not have a parallel in the preceding material.

5. ZECH 8:7–8

The fifth oracle, 8:7–8, is parallel in its content to the vision of the measuring line in 2:10–16 [ET 12–13].³⁰ Both these oracles relate to bringing the people of Judah out of exile and settling them in Jerusalem. As with the previous parallel, in neither of these oracles is there an affinity in the vocabulary used:

(JSOTsup 150; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic, 1993), 27. This parallel was hinted by Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 648.

³⁰ This parallel was indicated by Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 418; see also Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 148.

Zech 2:10 Zech 2:15–16	Zech 8:7–8
(י) הוֹי הוֹי וְנָסוּ מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן נָאֻם יְהוָה כִּי כָאֲרֻבַּע רוּחוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם פָּרִשְׁתִּי אֶתְכֶם נָאֻם יְהוָה: (טו) וְנָלוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים אֶל יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָךְ וַיְדַעְתָּ כִּי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ: (טז) וְנָחַל יְהוָה אֶת יְהוּדָה חֶלְקוֹ עַל אֲדָמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבָחַר עֹד בִּירוּשָׁלַם:	(ז) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת עַמִּי מֵאֶרֶץ מִזְרָח וּמֵאֶרֶץ מְבֹוא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ: (ח) וְהִבֵּאתִי אֹתָם וְשָׁכְנוּ בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים בְּאַמֻּת וּבְצִדְקָה:
(2:6) Ho! ho! <i>Flee from the land of the north</i>, says the LORD; <i>for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens</i>, says the LORD (2:11–12) And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, <i>and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.</i> ¹² <i>And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.</i>”	⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts: <i>Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country;</i> ⁸ <i>and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;</i> <i>and they shall be my people and I will be their God,</i> in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

In 2:15 [ET 2:11] a promise is made: “and shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of you,” and in 8:8 (using slightly different wording) it is written: “and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” In both oracles the word “dwell” occurs: in 2:15 [ET 2:11] in relation to the spirit of God—“and I will dwell in the midst of you,” and in 8:8, where the context is the resettling of the people in Jerusalem—“and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.”

The oracle in 8:7–8 extends its parallel in 2:5–17 [ET 2: 1–13]. In 2:10 [ET 2:6] there is a call to the Jews to leave the land of the north. Zech 2:16 [ET v.12] contains a promise that God will bequeath to Judah its portion of the holy land, as well as a promise of choosing Jerusalem. The oracle in 2:5–17 [ET 2:1–13] refers to Judah leaving the land of the north, primarily in terms of fleeing and escaping: vv 10–11 [ET 6–7]: “Ho, ho, flee then from the land of the north . . . Ho! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the

daughter of Babylon.” In contrast, in the oracle in 8:7 the terms used are more optimistic: “I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country.”³¹

6. ZECH 8:9–13

The sixth oracle, 8:9–13, is the longest in this collection of oracles. It comes to strengthen the hands of those who are building the Temple, after their economic distress. Now that the foundations of the Temple were built, the prophet determines that a new era is beginning in which the economic situation will be good and blessed. Scholars have rightly pointed out the affinity between this oracle and Haggai's promise of economic prosperity on the building of the Temple (Hag 1:6, 9–11; 2:15–19).³² This oracle, however, also corresponds with the vision about Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah 3, and the vision of the golden candlestick in Zechariah 4. In the oracle on Joshua in chapter 3, the prophet talks about economic abundance, “On that day...every one of you will invite his neighbour under his vine and under his fig tree” (Zech 3:10). In the oracle of the candlestick, the subject of the foundations of the House of God arises (Zech 4:9). These two subjects are found in the sixth oracle in 8:9–13, in reverse order.

Zech 3:10; 4:9	Zech 8:9–13
(י) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תִּקְרְאוּ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ אֵל תַּחַת גֶּפֶן וְאֵל תַּחַת תְּאֵנָה: (ט) יְדֵי זְרָבְבֶל יִסְדּוּ הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה וְיָדָיו תִּבְצַעְנָה וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵכֶם:	(ט) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תַּחֲזִיקֶנָּה יְדֵיכֶם הַשְּׂמָעִים בַּיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה מִפִּי הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר בַּיּוֹם יִסֵּד בֵּית יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַהֵיכָל לְהַבְנוֹת: (י) כִּי לִפְנֵי הַיָּמִים הָהֵם שָׁכַר הָאָדָם לֹא נִהְיָה וּשְׁכָר הַבְּהֵמָה אֵינָנָה וּלְיוֹצֵא וּלְבָא

³¹ On the outlook of other Israelite/Judean communities in diaspora as one entity according to Zech 1–18, and that their soon return to Judea signifies the completion of the restoration, see J. Kessler, “Diaspora and Homeland in the Early Achaemenid Period: Community, Geography and Demography in Zechariah 1–8,” J.L. Berquist (ed.), *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Persian Period* (Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2007), 137–166. On the various perspectives regarding the Diaspora, see J. Kessler, “The Diaspora in Zech 1–8 and Ezra-Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity,” G. Knoppers and K. Ristau (eds.) *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 119–145.

³² Ackroyd, “Zechariah,” 650; Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 430–431; Mason, *Preaching the Tradition*, 228–229. See Petersen, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 306, who points out that the situation in Zechariah is more severe.

	אִין שְׁלוֹם מִן הַצָּר וְאֶשְׁלַח אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם אִישׁ בְּרַעְהוּ: (יא) וְעַתָּה לֹא כִימִים הָרָאשִׁימִים אֲנִי לְשֹׁאֲרֵית הָעָם הַזֶּה נָאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: (יב) כִּי זֶרַע הַשְּׁלוֹם הִגֵּפֶן תִּתֵּן פְּרִיָּה וְהָאָרֶץ תִּתֵּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ וְהַשָּׂמִים יִתְּנוּ טֶלֶם וְהִנְחִלְתִּי אֶת שְׁאֲרֵית הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶת כָּל אֱלֹהִים: (יג) וְהָיָה כְּאֲשֶׁר הָיִיתִם קִלְלָה בְּגוֹיִם בֵּית יְהוּדָה וּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּן אוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם וְהָיִיתִם בְּרָכָה אֶל תִּירָאוּ תַּחֲזִקְנָה יְדֵיכֶם:
(3:10) In that day, says the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbour <i>under his vine and under his fig tree</i>. (4:9) The hands of Zerubbabel <i>have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it</i>. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.	Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets, <i>since the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.</i> ¹⁰ For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in; for I set every man against his fellow. ¹¹ But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² For there shall be a sowing of peace; <i>the vine shall yield its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew;</i> and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. ¹³ And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of

	Israel, so will I save you and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.”
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In chapters 3–4 the prophet does not make the connection between the building of the Temple and economic prosperity, but this connection is made in 8:9–13. The connection is based on Haggai (Hag. 1:6, 9–11; 2:15–19).

Another difference between the oracle in chapter 8 and its parallels in chapter 3 is a marked emphasis on the status of Joshua the High Priest and of Zerubbabel in Zechariah 3, and his absence from chapter 8. The importance of Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah emerges also in 6:9–15. Another distinction is in the different ways in which vine and the fig are related to in 8:9–14, and Zechariah 4. The expression, “a man under his vine and under his fig tree,” expresses living in peace without the fear of danger and living in economic plenty.³³ It also signifies the idea of owning one’s land.³⁴ This expression appears in the context of peace under human or divine kingship and is the meaning of the expression in 1 Kgs 5:5 [ET 4:25] where it relates to the good life under a king of the house of David.³⁵ In Mic 4:4 it relates to life under the kingship of God.³⁶ The mention of the same concept is also in the words of Rab’shakeh in 2 Kgs 18:31 when relating to results of the acceptance of Assyria’s rule over Judah. This is also the meaning of Zech 3:10 that deal with the leadership of Joshua who is referred to in this oracle as *Zemah* (a shoot).³⁷ Conversely, in the parallel source in 8:12, in place of the metaphor of sitting under a vine and fig tree, the prophet speaks of the fertility of the earth. In this way, in Zechariah 8 the author seeks to play down the allusion to leadership.

In 6:9–15, the subject of the building of the Temple occurs again, but this time the name of Zerubbabel is not mentioned and in its place the name “*Zemah*” appears. Scholars dispute the identity of “*Zemah*,”³⁸ but there is a broad consensus that the absence of a

³³ See E. Ben Zvi, *Micah* (FOTL; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 99.

³⁴ D.R. Hillers, *Micah* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 51.

³⁵ For this meaning of the phrase see Petersen, 213. For the social significance of the term, see W. Brueggemann. “Vine and Fig Tree: A Case Study in Imagination and Criticism,” *CBQ* 43 (1981), 188–204.

³⁶ See Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 66. In his opinion originally *zemah* designated Zerubbabel, but the verse was modified and in its present form it designates Joshua the High Priest. He also raises the possibility that the word *zemah* here designated a future unspecified figure.

³⁷ Petersen, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 213.

³⁸ It is thought that the term refers to Zerubbabel, the descendent of King David, see Ackroyd *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew*

mention of Zerubbabel stems from his loss of status or his disappearance from the scene.³⁹ If this assumption is correct, then it would also explain the absence of Zerubbabel from 8:9–13. It should be pointed out, however, that there is also no mention of Joshua in this oracle. Is it possible that the hopes for the restoration of the status of the High priest had also been dashed? This requires further investigation.

7. ZECH 8:14–17

The seventh oracle, 8:14–17, is a reproof, in which the prophet makes the coming good conditional upon the people's deeds and morals in the new era. This oracle is parallel to the sixth vision of Zechariah in 5:1–4, which also contains a reproof, about the thief and he who swears falsely.

Zech 5:3–4	Zech 8:14–17
(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי זֹאת הָאֵלֶּה הַיּוֹצֵאת עַל פְּנֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ כִּי כָל הַגִּבּוֹר מִזֶּה כְּמוֹהָ נִקְהָ וְכָל הַנִּשְׁבָּע מִזֶּה כְּמוֹהָ נִקְהָ:	(יד) כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת כֹּאֲשֶׁר זָמַמְתִּי לְהָרַע לָכֶם בְּהִקְצִיף אֲבֹתֵיכֶם אֹתִי אָמַר

Thought of the Sixth Century B.C. (OTL; London: SCM, 1968), 174, n. 12; Petersen, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 276. Others believe that it refers to a future Messiah, see J.G. Baldwin, “*šemaḥ* as a Technical Term in the Prophets,” *VT* 14 (1964), 93–97. See also W.H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (JSOTsup 304; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 121–141. On the status of Zerubbabel according to Haggai 2:20–23 see J. Kessler, “Haggai, Zerubbabel and the Political Status of Yehud: The Signet Ring in Hag 2:23,” M. H. Floyd and R. Haak (eds.) *Prophets, Prophecy and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (LHBOTS, 427; New York and London: T&T Clark, 2006), 102–119.

³⁹ See Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 69; Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus*, 234–252; Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*, 144–179; R. Mason “The Messiah in the Postexilic Old Testament Literature,” J. Day (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (JSOTSup, 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 343–349; P.D. Hanson, “Israelite Religion in the Early Postexilic Period,” P.D. Miller, et. al. (eds.) *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 496–498. Rudolph suggests that at first Zechariah, like Haggai, identified Zerubbabel with their messianic hopes, but unlike Haggai, when these hopes were not materialized, Zechariah set these hopes on Zemah. See Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 100. For discussion on the disappearance of Zerubbabel, see: T.L. Lewis, “The Mysterious Disappearance of Zerubbabel,” R.L. Troxel at al. (ed.) *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael Fox on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 301–314.

(ד) הוצאתיה נאם יהוה צבאות ובאה אל בית הגגב ואל בית הנשבע בשמי לשקר ולנה בתוך ביתו וכלתו ואת עציו ואת אבניו:	יהוה צבאות ולא נחמתי: (טו) בן שבתתי זממתי בימים האלה להיטיב את ירושלם ואת בית יהודה אל תיראו: (טז) אלה הדברים אשר תעשו דברו אמת איש את רעהו אמת ומשפט שלום שפטו בשעריכם: (יז) ואיש את רעת רעהו אל תחשבו בלבבכם ושבעת שקר אל תאהבו כי את כל אלה אשר שנאתי נאם יהוה:
³ Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land; for every one who steals shall be cut off henceforth according to it, and every one who <i>swears falsely</i> shall be cut off henceforth according to it. ⁴ I will send it forth, says the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who <i>swears falsely by my name</i>; and it shall abide in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.”	¹⁴ For thus says the Lord of hosts: “As I purposed to do evil to you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the Lord of hosts, ¹⁵ so again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. ¹⁶ These are the things that you shall do: <i>Speak the truth to one another</i>, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, ¹⁷ do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no <i>false oath</i>, for all these things I hate, says the Lord.”

The reproof in 8:14–17 is a clear reiteration of the reproof of the prophet in 7:9–10:⁴⁰

Zech 7:9–10	Zech 8:14–17
(ט) כה אמר יהוה צבאות לאמר משפט אמת שפטו וחסד ורחמים עשו איש את אחיו: (י) ואלמנה ויתום גר ועני אל תעשקו ורעת איש אחיו אל	(יד) כי כה אמר יהוה צבאות כאשר זממתי להרע לכם בהקציף אבתיכם אתי אמר יהוה צבאות ולא נחמתי: (טו) בן שבתתי זממתי בימים האלה להיטיב את ירושלם

⁴⁰ This analogy was discussed by Beuken, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8*, 123–124; Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*, 31. She sees 8:14–17 as a summary by the compiler of the parallel in 7:9–10.

תִּחְשְׁבוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם:	וְאֵת בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶל תִּירָאוּ: (טז) אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּ דַּבְּרוּ אִמֶּת אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ אִמֶּת וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁלוֹם שְׁפֹטוּ בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם: (יז) וְאִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵת רֵעֵהוּ אֶל תִּחְשְׁבוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם וּשְׁבַעַת שָׁקָר אֶל תִּאָּהְבוּ כִּי אֵת כָּל אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׁנֵאתִי נֹאֵם יְהוָה:
⁹ <i>Thus says the LORD of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; ¹⁰ do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.</i>	¹⁴ For <i>thus says the Lord of hosts:</i> “As I purposed to do evil to you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the Lord of hosts, ¹⁵ so again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. ¹⁶ These are the things that you shall do: <i>Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments</i> that are true and make for peace, ¹⁷ <i>do not devise evil in your hearts against one another,</i> and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, says the Lord.”

There are no significant differences between 8:14–17 and its parallel in 7:9–10, though in chapter 8 the tone is lightened and the subject matter is less threatening. While the oracle in 7:11–14 primarily presents the negative outcome of the sins of the people, its emphasis is nevertheless positive in stating that God will make Jerusalem and the House of Judah prosper provided that justice is done between man and his neighbor.

8. ZECH 8:19

The eighth oracle in 8:19 provides the answer to the people's question in 7:3 concerning whether they need to continue fasting now that the rebuilding of the Temple had begun. In 8:19, the prophet replies that the fast-days will become days of rejoicing.

Zech 7:3–9	Zech 8:19
(ג) ... הָאֲבֹכָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִשִּׁי הַנּוֹר כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי זֶה כְּמֵה שָׁנִים:	(יט) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת צוֹם הָרְבִיעִי וְצוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי

(ה) אָמַר אֶל כָּל עַם הָאָרֶץ וְאֶל הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר כִּי צִמְתֶּם וְסָפֹד בַּחֲמִישִׁי וּבְשִׁבְעִי וְזֶה שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה הַצֹּם צִמְתִּי אֲנִי: (ט) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפַּט אֶמֶת שִׁפְטוּ וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים עֲשׂוּ אִישׁ אֶת אֶחָיו:	וְצֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְצֹם הָעֲשִׂירִי יְהִי לְבֵית יְהוּדָה לְשִׂשׂוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה וּלְמַעֲדִים טוֹבִים וְהָאֶמֶת וְהַשְּׁלוֹם אֶהְבּוּ:
³ <i>Should I mourn and practice abstinence in the fifth month,</i> as I have done for so many years? ⁵ Say to all the people of the land and the priests: <i>When you fasted and lamented in the fifth month and in the seventh,</i> for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? ⁹ Thus says the Lord of hosts: <i>Render true judgments,</i> show kindness and mercy to one another;	¹⁹ “Thus says the Lord of hosts: <i>The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh,</i> and the fast of the tenth, <i>shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts;</i> therefore <i>love truth</i> and peace.

In 7:1–3 the prophet did not give a direct answer to the question of continuing the fasting but instead replied with a question: “When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, for these seventy years, was it for me that your fasted? And when you eat, and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?” (Zech 7:5). The prophet then demands that the people adopt proper social behaviour, but still does not answer their question directly. I agree with those who think that the prophet’s reproof is his answer to their question. The prophet was concerned that the people were clinging to the outward superficialities of the fast, and so he determines that the fast itself is not the important matter.⁴¹ The prophet asserts that it is the people’s decision whether or not to fast; God’s expectation is that they concentrate on what they should have done to prevent the destruction in the first place, namely, the doing of justice.⁴² In chapter 7, the people did not get an answer to their question and in 8:19 the an-

⁴¹ Mitchell, *Haggai, Zechariah*, 199; Mason, *Preaching the Tradition*, 215–218.

⁴² See Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 642–643.

swer is given. It may be that for this reason it was necessary to come back to the same subject in a new oracle in order to give an explicit and positively oriented answer to the people's question.⁴³

Here again one can discern a difference in tone in the prophet's words. While the people's question in chapter 7 triggered a rebuke, the later oracle in 8:19 on the other hand, speaks words of comfort and hope.

In view of the proposition that chapter 8 is a summary of what has been said in chapters 1–7, there is now no need to interpret all the different material in chapters 7 and 8 as one unit dealing with the topic of the fasts; 8:19 can be seen simply as a further mention of the subject of the fasts.

9. ZECH 8:20–22

The ninth oracle in 8:20–22 contains a prophesy relating how gentile nations shall seek the Lord in Jerusalem out of awareness of his divinity.⁴⁴ This oracle is in contrast to the seventh vision, that of the *Ephah*, in Zech 5:5–11. This vision has been given a wide variety of interpretations which cannot be detailed here,⁴⁵ but the majority of commentators agree that the oracle is concerned with the removal of negative elements from Judah and their transfer to Babylonia where a temple will be built for them.⁴⁶ The oracle in 8:20–22 describes an opposite picture to the one in the *Ephah* vision. While the *Ephah* vision depicts the removal of ungodly elements from Jerusalem, the oracle in 8:20–22 talks about the coming of the gentiles to Jerusalem out of awareness of God. The expression, “to entreat the Lord's favor,” means to make pilgrimage to God's

⁴³ Many scholars hold that 8:19 is the prophet's answer to the question posed in 7:3–5, see e.g. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 442–443; Petersen, *Haggai, and Zechariah 1–8*, 312.

⁴⁴ According to Lipiński verses 20–23 do not describe pilgrimage of gentiles to Jerusalem, but rather that of Jews or proselytes. E. Lipiński, “Recherches sur le Livre de Zacharie,” *VT* 20 (1970), 25–55. However the plain sense of the words עמים; עמים רבים; גוים עצומים; מכל לשונות הגוים is the nations of the world. See also Kessler, “The Diaspora in Zechariah 1–8 and Ezra-Nehemiah,” 126–127. I believe that Lipiński held his constrained explanation, because he refused to accept the possibility that Zechariah here followed a universalistic approach that in his opinion apparently cannot be part of the heritage of a second temple prophet.

⁴⁵ See E. Assis, “Zechariah's Vision of the Ephah (Zech. 5:5–11),” *VT* 60 (2010), 15–32.

⁴⁶ B. Uffenheimer, *The Visions of Zechariah: From Prophecy to Apocalyptic* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 112–116 (Hebrew); Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 218–223; B.G. Curtis, *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis* (Academia Biblica 25; Atlanta, SBL, 2006), 142. H. Shy (ed.) *Tanhum ba-Yerushalmi's Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 288–289.

Temple in Jerusalem is presented conversely in the building of a temple for wickedness in Shinar, as rightly explained by many.

Zech 5:5–11	Zech 8:20–22
(ה) וַיֵּצֵא הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי שָׂא נָא עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה מָה הַיּוֹצֵאת הַזֹּאת: (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר מָה הִיא וַיֹּאמֶר זֹאת הָאִיפָה הַיּוֹצֵאת... (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר זֹאת הָרִשְׁעָה ... (ט) וְאִשָּׁא עֵינֵי וְאֶרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁתֵּים נָשִׁים יּוֹצְאוֹת וְרוּחַ בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם וְלִהְיוֹת כְּנָפִים כְּכַנְפֵי הַחֲסִידָה וְתִשָּׂאנָה אֶת הָאִיפָה בֵּין הָאָרֶץ וּבֵין הַשָּׁמַיִם: (י) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי אָנָּה הִמָּה מוֹלֵכוֹת אֶת הָאִיפָה: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי לְבָנוֹת לָהּ בֵּית בָּאָרֶץ שֹׁנֵעַר וְהוֹכֵן וְהִנִּיחָה שֵׁם עַל מִכְנֶתָהּ:	(ב) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַד אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ עַמִּים וְיֹשְׁבֵי עָרִים רְבוֹת: (כא) וְהָלְכוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי אֶחָת אֶל אֶחָת לֵאמֹר נִלְכָּה הַלּוֹךְ לְחַלּוֹת אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה וּלְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲלֵכָה גַם אֲנִי: (כב) וּבָאוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְגוֹיִם עֲצוּמִים לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בִּירוּשָׁלַם וּלְחַלּוֹת אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה:
⁵ Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, “Look up and see what this is that is coming out.” ⁶ I said, “What is it?” He said, “This is a basket coming out.”... ⁸ And he said, “This is Wickedness.”... ⁹ Then I looked up and saw two women coming forward. The wind was in their wings; they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and sky. ¹⁰ Then I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they <i>taking</i> [מולכות] the basket?” ¹¹ He said to me, “To the land of Shinar, <i>to build a house for it</i>; and when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base.”	²⁰ “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; ²¹ the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us <i>go at once</i> [נלכה הלך] <i>to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts</i>; I am going.’ ²² Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the LORD.

The oracle in 8:20–22 concerning the gentiles coming to Jerusalem in order "to entreat the Lord's favour" also has similarities with the oracle of the vision of the measuring line in chapter 2:15 [ET 2:11] which describes the coming of many gentiles to Jerusalem to the Lord:⁴⁷

Zech 2:15	Zech 8:20–22
(טו) וְנָלוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים אֶל יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָךְ וַיְדַעַת כִּי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ:	(כ) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַד אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ עַמִּים וְיֹשְׁבֵי עָרִים רַבּוֹת: (כא) וְהָלְכוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי אֶחָת אֶל אֶחָת לֵאמֹר נֵלְכָה הַלּוֹךְ לַחֲלוֹת אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה וּלְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲלֵכָה גַם אֲנִי: (כב) וּבָאוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְגוֹיִם עַצוּמִים לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בִּירוּשָׁלַם וּלְחַלּוֹת אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה:
(2:10) <i>And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD</i> in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.	²⁰ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: <i>Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities;</i> ²¹ the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ' <i>Let us go at once to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I am going.</i> ' ²² Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the LORD.

10. ZECH 8:23

The tenth oracle, Zech 8:23, describes the desire of the gentiles to attach themselves to the Jews returning to Jerusalem, in order to go with them, in the belief that the Lord is with them. This oracle reverses the picture depicted in eighth vision of Zechariah about the chariots and horses in 6:1–8. In that oracle the prophet declares: "they that go toward the north country have set My spirit at rest in the north country." The meaning of this verse is not entirely

⁴⁷ According to Petitjean, *Les oracles du Proto-Zacharie*, 419–438, Zech 8:18–23 is to be considered as a single unit. In his opinion it corresponds with Zech 2:14–17. Mitchell mentioned the connection between 8:20 and Zech 2:11, 15. See Mitchell, *Haggai, Zechariah*, 215.

clear. Many believe that the word “*ruḥi*” (My spirit) means “My anger” (see Ezek 3:14; 13:13).⁴⁸ According to many commentators the chariots that depart for the north country, symbolize the departure of the enemies of Judah from the land of Judah returning to the north country.⁴⁹ Indeed, the term “north” was understood in Jeremiah to mean the place from which a foreign power would launch a strike at Israel and Judah (Jer 1:14; 6:1; 50:3; 51:48). The nation conquering Judah shall return to his place in the north, and this shall cool the anger of the Lord. If this indeed is the meaning of this oracle, then it is a firm basis for the tenth oracle in Zech 8:23, which is not only based on it but constitutes its continuation. While the oracle in 6:1–6 talks about the expulsion of foreign elements who are hostile to Judah, the tenth oracle in chapter 8 talks about the clinging of gentiles to the Jews, and of their support for Judah.

Zech 6:8	Zech 8:23
(ח) וַיִּזְעַק אֶתִּי וַיָּדְבֵר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר רְאֵה הַיּוֹצֵאִים אֶל אֶרֶץ צָפוֹן הַנִּיחוּ אֶת רוּחִי בְּאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן:	(כג) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּיָמִים הָהֵמָּה אֲשֶׁר יַחֲזִיקוּ עֲשָׂרָה אָנָּשִׁים מִכָּל לְשׁוֹנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְהִחֲזִיקוּ בְּכִנֹּף אִישׁ יְהוּדִי לֵאמֹר נִלְכָּה עִמָּכֶם כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֱלֹהִים עִמָּכֶם:
⁸ Then he cried out to me, “Lo, those who go toward the north country have set my spirit at rest in the north coun- try.”	²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’

The tenth oracle in chapter 8 is also the opposite of the vision of the measuring string in 2:10–17 [ET 2:6–13]:

⁴⁸ Rudolph, *Haggai-Sacharja 1–8 - Sacharja 9–14 - Maleachi*, 125; Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 330; M.J. Boda, “Terrifying the Horns: Persia and Babylon in Zechariah 1:7–6:15,” *CBQ* 67 (2005), 29.

⁴⁹ Mitchell, *Haggai, Zechariah*, 179–181; Petersen, *Haggai, and Zechariah 1–8*, 272. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 75–76. Meyers, however, claims the prophecy indicates the sovereignty of God during the quiet days of the Persian Empire, see Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 324. Another possibility that is preferred by Boda, is that the divine anger in Zech 8:6, is directed at Babylon. See Boda, “Terrifying the Horns: Persia and Babylon in Zechariah 1:7–6:15,” 22–41, esp. 28–30. According to this understanding, the connection between the oracles is more general, while the prophecy in 6:1–8, according to this interpretation speaks about punishment of the Gentiles, 8:23, shows how they are drawn in.

Zech 2:10–12, 15	Zech 8:23
(י) הוֹי הוֹי וְנָסוּ מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן נֹאֵם יְהוָה כִּי כְאֶרְבַּע רוּחוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם פָּרַשְׁתִּי אֶתְכֶם נֹאֵם יְהוָה: (יא) הוֹי צִיּוֹן הַמְלֵטִי יוֹשֶׁבֶת בֵּית בָּבֶל: (יב) כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת אַחֵר כְּבוֹד שְׁלַחְנִי אֶל הַגּוֹיִם הַשְּׁלָלִים אֶתְכֶם כִּי הִנֵּגְתִּי בָכֶם נִגְעַת בְּבִכְת עֵינֶיךָ: (טו) וְנָלְווּ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים אֶל יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְשִׁכְנִיתִי בְּתוֹכָם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ:	(כג) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת בְּיָמִים הָהֵמָּה אֲשֶׁר יַחְזִיקוּ עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִכָּל לְשׁוֹנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְהִחְזִיקוּ בְּכַנֵּף אִישׁ יְהוּדִי לֵאמֹר גִּלְכָּה עִמָּכֶם כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֱלֹהִים עִמָּכֶם:
⁶ Ho! ho! Flee from the land of the north, says the LORD; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, says the LORD. ⁷ Ho! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. ⁸ For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, <i>for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye:</i> ¹¹ <i>And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD</i> in that day, and shall be my people; <i>and I will dwell in the midst of you,</i> and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.	²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue <i>shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’</i>

Both prophecies talk about the return of the Jews from exile (Zech 2:10–11 [ET 2:6–7]; 8:23). In the oracle of the measuring string there is a threat to the nations who “touch” Zion. In 8:23, the gentiles “touched” the Jews, but not with any bad intent—they held on to them so as to come with them to Jerusalem. In both oracles the gentiles accompany the Jews in their coming home from exile to Jerusalem and to the Lord, Zech 2:15; 8:23. In 2:15 [ET 2:11], the prophet proclaims that the *Lord is among the people*: “and I will dwell in the midst of you”; in chapter 8:23 the gentiles hold on to the Jews to go with them because the Lord is with them.

CONCLUSIONS

I have attempted to demonstrate that each of the ten oracles in Zechariah 8, apart from the fourth, has a parallel in Zechariah 1–7. My conclusion is that the collection of oracles in chapter 8 is in fact a revision and digest of parts of the earlier chapters; they re-quote the key phrases, re-word similar ideas, or use different wordings for similar ideas. Sometimes the oracle in chapter 8 modifies its parallel or completes it. A study of all the parallels shows, therefore, that there are three types of relationships between the oracles and visions in chapters 1–7 and their parallels in chapter 8:

1. The oracle in chapter 8 can be a summary of what was said earlier, and sometimes even a slight expansion on the earlier text.
2. The oracle in chapter 8 may present another aspect of the earlier parallel, or reiterate the earlier oracle in a way that makes it clearer.
3. The oracle in chapter 8 may also moderate or complete the earlier oracle or vision in chapters 1–7, where in chapter 8 the subject is presented in a more optimistic, more encouraging way than had been presented in the parallels in chapters 1–7.

Chapter 8 is, therefore, a revision of the earlier material with slightly different variations.⁵⁰ Contra those scholars who regard chapters 1–6 as one unit and chapters 7–8 as another unit of the book, the findings that emerge here suggest that the first unit of Zechariah is chapters 1–7 and chapter 8 is a unit that summates, reiterates, and updates chapters 1–7.

What is the point of this digest in chapter 8? Why is it included in the Book of Zechariah? It is difficult to give an unequivocal answer to this question, but certain suppositions may be posited. It is possible that here there are two versions of the oracles that the prophet spoke on different occasions, and possibly to different audiences. Perhaps the different versions were given by students or followers—one long and detailed version and a second short *précisé* version.⁵¹ A characteristic of many of the literary units in chapter 8, particularly in comparison with chapters 1–7, is that their tone is less threatening; they emphasize greater hope and comfort. It is also possible that chapter 8 was not planned from the

⁵⁰ Petersen, *Haggai, and Zechariah 1–8*, 123, sees the oracles in chapters 7–8 as a rephrase of earlier material in the book. He indicates 8:3/2:9; 7:9–10 and 8:16–17/5:1–4; 7:4–7 and 8:18–19/3:1–5.

⁵¹ For a discussion on the various opinions of this approach in Jeremiah 7:1–14 and Jeremiah 26, see W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC 2; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 681–683. Another example may be the duplication of Jer 7:30–34 with Jer 19:1–20:6.

outset to be anything but a digest designed only to explain and elucidate the words of the prophet. The reason for this could be that the obscure nature of the visions in the earlier chapters of Zechariah created the need to present the prophet's messages without the visions, in a simple, fluent form. Indeed, chapter 8 is distinctive in its clarity in contrast to the large areas of uncertainty that abound in former oracles of Zechariah. Chapter 8, unlike what precedes it, has no obscure visions, but simply short, clear messages of God's word as given through the prophet. Moreover, the oracles of chapter 8 are even bereft of the images and metaphors, which are the stock-in-trade of biblical prophecy.⁵² The digest in Zechariah 8 may be viewed as the earliest reformulation of the prophet's enigmatic sermons.

⁵² For an illustration of this simplicity, see the analysis of vv. 4–6 by Y. Zakovitch, “A Garden of Eden in the Squares of Jerusalem: Zechariah 8:4–6,” *Gregorianum* 87 (2006), 301–310, esp. 309–310.