

GOD'S SALVATION OF ISRAEL

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In Zechariah 10:6, God said, *"I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them."* Although the Lord did punish rebellious Israel by sending them into captivity, God promised to restore a remnant of the people, whose who would repent (Isa 11:11-13; Jer 50:4; Ezek 37:15-28). God did this with a remnant of the physical Jews who were in captive in Babylon. But there are also spiritual and New Testament blessings to consider also.

The Israel of God today: the Lord's church

The house of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) and the house of Joseph (the Northern Kingdom) became divided after the death of King Solomon. This separation remained until the Northern Kingdom was destroyed and taken captive by Assyria in 722 B.C. It is true that under the Maccabees Israel attained a measure of physical unity again which was accompanied by a period of relative political freedom. But in the context of this specific passage and the book in general, Zechariah 10:6 more likely saw fulfillment with the gathering together of all of God's people together in His church during the New Testament (Matt 10:6-7; 15:24; Luke 1:16-17,68-75; 2:27-32,34,38; John 11:49-52; Acts 5:31; 10:36; 13:23; Rom 11:26). The church of Christ is the united spiritual Israel (John 8:37-41; Rom 2:28-29; 4:11-13; 9:6-8; 10:24-25; Gal 6:15-16; 1 Pet 2:5,9-12; Rev 2:9; 3:9; 7:4,9).

From bondage to blessings

Furthermore, God said through Zechariah, *"I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon"* (Zech 10:10). Egypt had held Israel under bondage from after the time of Joseph until Moses (Exod 1). Assyria is the nation that took the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17). Together, Egypt and Assyria are synonymous with the slavery of God's

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people. Together, Gilead and Lebanon represent the exact opposite, glorious lands of plenty (Jer 22:6). Gilead was known for its cattle land, spices, and medicines (Gen 37:25; Num 32:1; 1 Chr 5:9; Song 4:1; 6:5; Jer 8:22; 46:11; 50:19; Mic 7:14). Gilead was located on the east side of the Jordan river, and was given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh for their possession (Num 32; Deut 2:36; 3:8-16; Josh 12:6-7; 13:7-12,24-25,29-31; 17:5-6; 22:9,13,15,32; Judg 20:1; Psa 60:7; 108:8). Lebanon, to the north of Israel, was also known as a rich land (Song 4:8,11,15; 5:15; 7:4; Isa 35:2; 60:13; Hos 14:6-7), especially for its great cedar trees (Judg 9:15; 1 Kings 4:33; 2 Kgs 19:23; Psa 29:5; 92:12; 104:16; Isa 2:13; 14:8). Israel's inheritance was to extend to Lebanon to the Euphrates river (Deut 1:7; 11:24-25; Josh 1:3-6; 11:16-17; 13:5-6; 1 Kgs 4:20-21; 9:19; 2 Chr 8:6). Thus, the prophecy sees God removing His people from places of bondage to places of rich blessings. In the context of the passage and the book in general, we can see spiritual fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament, which brings about the deliverance of men from the spiritual bondage of sin (Rom 3:23-25; 5:6-11; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:13-14,20; Heb 9:11-14,22-28; 10:4-23,26-29; 12:22-24; 13:12-13,20-21; 1 Pet 1:2,18-19; 1 John 1:7; 5:6,8; Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 7:14; 12:11) into the realm of all spiritual blessings which are found in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3; Jas 1:17). However, we must keep in mind that obedience to God is a condition for receiving these blessings in Christ. Colossians 3:17 commands Christians, "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*" Zechariah 10:12 prophesied that this is exactly how God's people would walk under the New Testament: "*And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.*" "In the name of the Lord" means "by his authority," which is found only in the New Testament (Matt 7:21-23; 28:18; John 12:48; Acts 4:7). Thus, God's faithful children will only walk according to what the Lord authorizes in His word.