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

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).

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


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. Others have suggested a chiastic structure which includes both chapters. This structure, apart from the affinities between the opening and the closing verses, is very artificial, as Boda rightly points out.

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). Several scholars put forward this proposition, and thus conclude that chapters 7 and 8 are one literary piece.

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. 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

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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; Tübinger 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.
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. 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. 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. 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.

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). 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

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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.
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. 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. This, for example, is how Ackroyd regards chapter 8. 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.” 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.

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. Boda regards chapters 7–8 as a trans-
tional unit between Zechariah 1–6 and 9–14.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zechariah 7:1, 7, 9–12</th>
<th>Zechariah 1:1–6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>הָיָה בֵּשָׂם בְּשָׂם</td>
<td>(א) בַּהֲרֹת הַשְּׁמִיטָה בָּשָׂם</td>
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<tr>
<td>לָדוּתָה הַשְּׁמִיטָה</td>
<td>כִּי דָבַּר הַיָּהוּ אֵל פִּקְרָה בֶּן בּוּרֶקֶת</td>
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<tr>
<td>לָדוּתָה הַשְּׁמִיטָה בָּשָׂם</td>
<td>בֵּין הַבּוֹלֶט אֵל</td>
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<td>(ב) ... (ב) הַיָּהוּ וְגַדְּי נְאָמָא הַיָּהוּ</td>
<td>זֶבַח הַיָּהוּ עַל אֲבָתוֹךָ זֶבַח</td>
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<td>זֶבַח</td>
<td>(ד) הַיָּהוּ עַל אֲבָתוֹךָ</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ג) הַיָּהוּ וְגַדְּי נְאָמָא</td>
<td>אַשְׁרָ הַנְּבֵית בֶּן מַכֹּבֶּת</td>
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<tr>
<td>הקֹראָבָּה יְהוֹעַסָּל</td>
<td>... (ג) הַיָּהוּ זֶבַח</td>
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<tr>
<td>לַאֲמָר</td>
<td>זֶבַח הַיָּהוּ זֶבַח</td>
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<tr>
<td>מַבְּשֵׁל אֶפֶם שְׁפֵּם חָקִּים</td>
<td>לָא שְׁמַעְתָּ לָא שְׁמַעְתָּ לָא</td>
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<td>(ז) אֱלֹהִים זֶבַח</td>
<td>(ז) אֱלֹהִים זֶבַח</td>
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<tr>
<td>זֶבַח הַיָּהוּ</td>
<td>מִדְּרֵכֵיָהּ חָרִים מִשְׁלָלִיקִים חָרִים</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{20} Boda, “From Fasts to Feasts,” 390–407.

\textsuperscript{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.
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 the former prophets cried out,

‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’

11 But they refused to hearken, and turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears that they might not hear.

But they did not hear or heed me, 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. 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-
mogenous work\textsuperscript{23} or a collection of oracles given at different times.\textsuperscript{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
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


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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{26}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 1:14–15</th>
<th>Zech 8:2</th>
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| (ד) הֶעְדָּרָה אַלּ הָעֹלָה נָבְרָה בַּגֶּדֶל הַמֶּסָּיִל | (ב) הַקְּבָר הֹוָה לָכָּה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָוֲלָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָה נָבְרָh

(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.\textsuperscript{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.

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].\textsuperscript{27} Both these sources speak of God’s return to


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

\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{28}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 1:16; 2:14–15</th>
<th>Zech 8:3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1:16) Therefore, \textit{thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.}</td>
<td>\textit{Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain.}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2:14–15) Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, \textit{I come and I will dwell in the midst of you}, says the LORD. 11 And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; \textit{and I will dwell in the midst of you}, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.

3. \textbf{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].\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{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.) \textit{“Sha’ari Talmun”: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmun} (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 121–135.

\textsuperscript{29} J.E. Tollington, \textit{Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8}
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]. 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:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 2:10</th>
<th>Zech 8:7–8</th>
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<tr>
<td>(2:6) Ho! ho! <strong>Flee from the land of the north, says the LORD:</strong> <strong>for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, says the LORD (2:11–12)</strong> And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, <strong>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.</strong> <strong>And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.</strong></td>
<td>? Thus says the LORD of hosts: <strong>Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country; and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”</strong></td>
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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.”

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.”

### 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). 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 3:10; 4:9</th>
<th>Zech 8:9–13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(א)田野panse יָשָׁהוּ</td>
<td>(ב) הב אָמָר יִזָּהֵב יְבָאָהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nehmen יָשָׁהּ</td>
<td>וּתְנַחֲנָה יִזְהָּבָהּ שָׁפָםְשָׁמְעָהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נְלָלָהּ אָחַר זְכָרִים הָּאֵלָּ</td>
<td>מַפְּרִים הַבָּאָשׂ אֶלָּה יָשָׁהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ג) יְדֵי יָרָבֶל יָשָׁהּ</td>
<td>בְּתִי הָּאָלָּ הַבָּאָשׂ יָשָׁהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וְיֵחָדֶּּלָּ הָּפְרִעְתָּ</td>
<td>לֹּבְּחָנָהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ד) יָסְרָה יָשָׁהּ</td>
<td>בְּתִי הָּאָלָּ הַבָּאָשׂ יָשָׁהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יִזְהָּבָהּ</td>
<td>יִזָּהֵבָהּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ה) יָשָׁהּ</td>
<td>יִזָּהֵבָהּ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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.
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, since the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.”**

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. 

But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of hosts.

For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel...
Israel, so will I save you and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.”

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

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.
38 It is thought that the term refers to Zerubbabel, the descendental 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. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 5:3–4</th>
<th>Zech 8:14–17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ד) יאמר אל{@} ואלָהָ הַכֹּלָהּ</td>
<td>(ז) יִכְּּוָּבָּר יִהוּ֚הּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יֵאָשְׁמְעָות נַפְלֶּֽלָּחָרָבֶּֽרָבֶּֽרֶּֽ</td>
<td>עָבְּרָהָֽאָמָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כָּל תְּנַגְּבַּּֽצְּמָאָֽוָּהָנֵֽהוּ</td>
<td>בֵּֽאָסְפְּרָהָֽאָמָא אַֽלְּאָרָפֶּֽר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>והָעְשֶּֽׁבְּעַּֽזְּמָאָֽוָּהָנֵֽהוּ</td>
<td>בֵּֽאָסְפְּרָהָֽאָמָא אַֽלְּאָרָפֶּֽר</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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 swears falsely shall be cut off henceforth according to it. 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 swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide in his house and consume it, both timber and stones."

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, so again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 7:9–10</th>
<th>Zech 8:14–17</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>נָעַתָּה יָהּ לָא נַעַתָּה:</td>
<td>נָעַתָּה יָהּ לָא נַעַתָּה:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לְפַרְעַחַתָּה בָּאָל בֵּית הָבָּבָּב</td>
<td>לְפַרְעַחַתָּה בָּאָל בֵּית הָבָּב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אֲוָל בֵּית הַנַּעֲבָּדָּב בֶּמֶּר</td>
<td>אֲוָל בֵּית הַנַּעֲבָּדָּב בֶּמֶּר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לֶשֶׁר לַעֲבָּדָּב בַּעֲבָּדָּב מִן</td>
<td>לֶשֶׁר לַעֲבָּדָּב בַּעֲבָּדָּב מִן</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וְכָלָּשׁ מֵאֵתָּה אָחָה אֲבָנָּה:</td>
<td>וְכָלָּשׁ מֵאֵתָּה אָחָה אֲבָנָּה:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נָעַתָּה יָהּ לָא נַעַתָּה:</td>
<td>נָעַתָּה יָהּ לָא נַעַתָּה:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 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, so again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, says the Lord.”

40 This analogy was discussed by Beuken, Haggai-Sacharja 1–8, 123–124; Tollingon, 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.
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, so again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, 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.
3. Should I mourn and practice abstinence in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?

5. Say to all the people of the land and the priests: When you fasted and lamented in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted?

9. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another;

19. “Thus says the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth 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 you 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.
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.\textsuperscript{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 been seen simply as a further mention of the subject of the fasts.

9. Zechariah 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.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

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\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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 תמים: תמים רבי: תמים מעמסה: מלא לישון 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.


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 5:5–11</th>
<th>Zech 8:20–22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ב) התה לארשי ליהוב צבאות עלי אדריא ואריא חמה הלשון לע פני יהוה אแซת לארשי ליהוב צבאות הלשון אแซת לארשי ליהוב צבאות הלשון אonomía אנא אִלּ</td>
<td>(ב) הלשון יושב אonta הוא אל אָללה לארשי ליהוב צבאות הלשון א사무 אִלּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(א) יאמור לך אמר ואנא הלשון אָללה לארשי ליהוב צבאות הלשון א사무 אִלּ</td>
<td>(א) יאמור לך אמר ואנא הלשון אָללה לארשי ליהוב צבאות הלשון א사무 אִלּ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יאמור אל תלכת לה בּית באָראִים שער לעוּק בוּקיה שעם על המכחה</td>
<td>יאמור אל תלכת לה בּית באָראִים שער לעוּק בוּקיה שעם על המכחה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 taking the basket?”
11 He said to me, “To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it; 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 go at once to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 2:15</th>
<th>Zech 8:20–22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I am going.'" | "And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD 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."


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
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 6:8</th>
<th>Zech 8:23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ח) הָיוֹת קָרָאֵת וְעִדּוֹר אֵלֶּיהָ לַעֲמַר אֲרָא הַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּא עַלֵּה נַחֲוֹת אַתָּה רְחֵי בַּבַּרְדִּים עֵמוֹל.</td>
<td>(ב) מְלֹא אֵמֶר יְהוָה בּוֹאֵת בֵּית הַקְּפַר אֵשׁ חֲמוֹת שְׁכַנֵּיהֶם אֲשֶׁר מִלְּכֵּי לְשׁוֹנֵי הָאָרֶץ יְסֹרֵיהֶם בֵּנוֹת אֵשׁ יְהוָה לַעֲמַר הַגֵּזֶה בּוֹטֵה בּוֹטֵה אֱלֹהִים צָפָם אָלְדָּה עֵמוֹל:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then he cried out to me, “Lo, those who go toward the north country have set my spirit at rest in the north country.”</td>
<td>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.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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]:

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 quit 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zech 2:10–12, 15</th>
<th>Zech 8:23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ב) הב אפרים בני נפתלי י׃</td>
<td>(ז) את אנשי השומר וה라ע הערע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ג) אלהים מאפי את אנשיה</td>
<td>בקמים מאפי את אנשיה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ד) יאש אצלו יتسجيل את עירו</td>
<td>(ה) זכאות</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ו) stopwatch בלת בכף</td>
<td>(ו) stopwatch בלת בכף</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ז) אנשי השומר והרהע</td>
<td>אנשי השומר והרהע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ח) יאש אצלו יتسجيل את עירו</td>
<td>יאש אצלו יسجل את עירו</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. 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 précised version. 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. The digest in Zechariah 8 may be viewed as the earliest reformulation of the prophet's enigmatic sermons.