

Zechariah 10:1–12

Ask the Lord for Rain: God’s Faithfulness, Our Hearts, and His Future Restoration

Zechariah 10 continues to look ahead to a time of restoration when God Himself will renew His people, confront false leadership, and gather His scattered flock. It also speaks very directly to us about where we turn for help, what kind of joy we seek, and whether our trust is in God or in substitutes.

1. Ask the Lord for Rain, Not False Help (Zechariah 10:1–2)

Ask the Lord for rain In the time of the latter rain.
The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain,
Grass in the field for everyone. For the idols speak delusion;
The diviners envision lies, And tell false dreams;
They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep;
They are in trouble because there is no shepherd.

In an agricultural society, rain meant life. God tells His people, very simply: **Ask Me**. He is the One who sends rain. He alone can give what they really need.

Instead, the people had turned to idols, diviners, and false dreams. They went to all the wrong sources for guidance and help, and the result was confusion and pain. They were like troubled sheep without a shepherd.

That pattern is not ancient history. Today people still chase false “voices” and empty comforts—whether it is superstition, shallow spirituality, or simply trusting in money, entertainment, or human opinion instead of God. These things “comfort in vain.” They cannot satisfy the soul. Only the living God can.

God’s invitation is direct: **“Ask the Lord for rain.”** In other words, come to Him first. Depend on Him, not on substitutes.

2. God Deals with False Shepherds and Raises Up a True Leader (Zechariah 10:3–5)

“My anger is kindled against the shepherds,
And I will punish the goatherds.
For the Lord of hosts will visit His flock,
The house of Judah,
And will make them as His royal horse in the battle.
From him comes the cornerstone,
From him the tent peg,
From him the battle bow,
From him every ruler together.
They shall be like mighty men,
Who tread down their enemies
In the mire of the streets in the battle.
They shall fight because the Lord is with them,
And the riders on horses shall be put to shame.”

God is not neutral about bad spiritual leadership. He is angry with shepherds who use people instead of serving them, who mislead instead of feeding, who scatter instead of protecting. He promises to deal with those false shepherds and to personally “visit His flock.”

God pictures His people not as weak victims, but as His “royal horse in the battle.” He then uses three images:

- The cornerstone – the foundation stone that holds everything together.
- The tent peg – the point of stability and security.
- The battle bow – the instrument of strength and victory.

Ultimately, these images find their deepest meaning in the Messiah. Jesus is the cornerstone, the One on whom everything rests. He is the secure anchor for our lives, the One through whom God works His victory. God’s people become “mighty” not because they are impressive, but because “the Lord is with them.”

3. Mercy, Restoration, and Joy of the Heart (Zechariah 10:6–8)

“I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph.
I will bring them back,
Because I have mercy on them.
They shall be as though I had not cast them off;
For I am the Lord their God,
And I will hear them.
Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,
And their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.
Yes, their children shall see it and be glad;
Their heart shall rejoice in the Lord.
I will whistle for them and gather them,
For I have redeemed them;
And they shall increase as they once increased.”

Here God speaks to both Judah and Joseph (the northern tribes), promising strength, salvation, and restoration. Notice the reason: “Because I have mercy on them.” They did not earn this; it flows from His compassionate heart.

The phrase “they shall be as though I had not cast them off” is stunning. God’s restoring work is so complete that He treats them as if the rupture had never happened. Spiritually, this points ahead to what He does for us in Christ: He forgives, cleanses, and receives us as His own.

Twice God speaks of the heart rejoicing:

- “Their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.”
- “Their heart shall rejoice in the Lord.”

The Bible distinguishes between the surface level of feelings and the deeper level of the heart. People chase happiness in all kinds of ways—pleasure, distraction, success—but that kind of happiness fades quickly. True, deep joy is “in the Lord.” It rests on who He is, not on changing circumstances.

That kind of joy only comes when God changes the heart. We can change our minds often; but only God can truly change the heart. When a person is born again, trusting in Jesus Christ, God does more than adjust their moods. He begins to transform their inner life—their values, desires, and direction.

God also says, “I will whistle for them and gather them, for I have redeemed them.” The picture is of a shepherd whistling for his flock and drawing them back. God takes the initiative to call and gather His people because He has paid the price to redeem them.

4. Scattered, Remembering, and Brought Through Affliction (Zechariah 10:9–12)

“I will sow them among the peoples,
And they shall remember Me in far countries;
They shall live, together with their children,
And they shall return.
I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt,
And gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon,
Until no more room is found for them.
He shall pass through the sea with affliction,
And strike the waves of the sea:
All the depths of the River shall dry up.
Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down,
And the scepter of Egypt shall depart.
“So I will strengthen them in the Lord,
And they shall walk up and down in His name,”
Says the Lord.

God acknowledges that His people have been scattered among the nations. Yet even in “far countries,” they remember Him. He promises to gather and bring them back.

Egypt and Assyria here represent places of bondage and oppression. God brings His people **through** a “sea with affliction,” just as He once brought Israel through the Red Sea. He dries up the depths, brings down pride, and removes oppressive power.

The final word in the chapter is precious:

“I will strengthen them in the Lord,
And they shall walk up and down in His name.”

Their strength is in Him. Their identity and daily life are “in His name”—under His authority, reflecting His character, belonging to Him.

Practical Application

1. **Ask God first.**

God told His people to “ask the Lord for rain.” Where do you instinctively turn when you need help, wisdom, or comfort? Do you go first to God in prayer, or do you rely mostly on your own resources, other people, or empty comforts?

2. **Beware of false voices.**

The idols and diviners “comforted in vain.” Today, false guidance can come through voices that sound spiritual, persuasive, or popular but do not line up with God’s Word. We need to test what we hear by Scripture and stay close to the true Shepherd.

3. **Let God have your heart, not just your mind.**

You can change opinions quickly; heart change is deeper. God wants to reach the level of who you really are—your loves, your loyalties, your direction in life. Have you given Him your heart, or only your agreement with certain truths?

4. **Rejoice in the Lord, not in circumstances.**

Circumstances change every day. God does not. He says, “I am the Lord, I do not change.” His love is constant, even when your moods are not. When your joy is rooted in Him, you can grieve losses and still hold deep, steady joy at the same time.

5. **Walk in His name.**

To “walk up and down in His name” means to live daily with the awareness that you belong to Him. Your decisions, your words, your relationships—all of it is part of representing His name in the world.

A Challenge for Believers

- Are you living as if your strength is in the Lord, or as if everything depends on you?
- Are there areas where you know God is calling you to trust Him more deeply, but you still cling to control?
- Are you treating others as a true shepherd would—caring, serving, and protecting—or are you, in small ways, using people for your own ends?

Ask God to:

- Expose and remove any “idols” or false comforts you lean on.
- Deepen your joy in Him so that it is not driven by circumstances.
- Make you someone who reflects His love and faithfulness to those around you.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

Zechariah 10 shows us a God who:

- Judges false shepherds and empty substitutes.
- Calls to scattered, broken people and promises to gather them.
- Offers mercy and says, “They shall be as though I had not cast them off.”
- Gives deep, lasting joy in Himself.
- Strengthens His people to walk in His name.

All of this finds its fullest meaning in Jesus Christ.

We have all turned away from God in our own way. Our sin separates us from Him. But God did not leave us in that condition. In love, He sent His Son into the world. Jesus lived without sin, and then He went to the cross.

Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross.

On that cross, He bore the judgment our sins deserve.

On the third day, He rose from the dead. His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. He is alive, and He invites you to come to Him.

You cannot save yourself by your own efforts, religious habits, or good intentions. You need the mercy that only God can give through His Son.

Today you can respond to Him:

- Acknowledge before God that you are a sinner and cannot make yourself right.
- Believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose again.
- Ask Him sincerely to forgive you, to give you a new heart, and to become Lord of your life.

If you do, He will hear you.

The God who says, “I will strengthen them in the Lord... and they shall walk up and down in His name,” is ready to bring you into that new life—one where your heart rejoices in the Lord, your hope is secure, and your future is in His hands.