
SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF ZACHARIAH

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PREAMBLE

The book is named after its author, the prophet Zechariah, whose name means “*remembered by Yahweh*.” Or best still “*the Lord remembers*.” He identified himself as “*Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo*” (1:1b). In the book of Nehemiah, a man named “Iddo” is listed among the priests and Levites who returned to Judah with Zerubbabel and Joshua (*Nehemiah 12:4*). If he was

Zechariah’s grandfather, then Zechariah would have been a priest as well as a prophet. He is often thought to have been a young man when he worked with Haggai to encourage the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the temple.

The book is obviously divided into two parts. Chapter 1 through 8 differ obviously in style from chapter 9 through 14. This contrast has led many to assume that Zechariah 9 – 14 was written by different author and at a different time than the first eight chapters.

Zechariah is one of the two longest books among the Minor Prophets. Both Hosea and Zachariah have

fourteen chapters. The Books of Zechariah and Haggai have the same historical background. Both prophets had as their primary mission to motivate the returned exiles to complete the rebuilding of the temple {see *Ezra 5:1; 6:14*}. History shows that both Prophets successfully accomplished their objectives.

Two characteristics of Zechariah’s style of writing are evident. First, much of the book was written in highly figurative language, featuring visions and symbols. Consequently, it is often classified as being “*apocalyptic*” in nature (Clinton R. Gill, commentary on Minor Prophets). The word “*apocalyptic*” is derived from the Greek word with which Revelation begins, “*apokalupsis*” or apocalypse means an “*uncovering*” or “*unveiling*”. Apocalyptic literature was popular among the Jews from about 200 B.C. to about A.D. 200. The Books Daniel and parts of Ezekiel and Isaiah are placed in this type of literature along with the Book of

A second characteristic of Zechariah’s writing is his emphasis on the “*former prophets*.” The prophet spoke of them three times (1:4, 7:7 & 7:12). Not only did he mention the “*former prophets*,”

but he also used language found in their writings. More than twenty quotations and allusions call to mind the works of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos and Micah {H.G. Mitchell – commentary on Haggai and Zechariah}.

Out:line- The Future Glory of Zion and
or Its Shepherd- King
Revealed by mean of

1:1 -

6:8 I.Visions and ideas indicated by them.

A. The man among the myrtle tree and those vvho follovv him
Intercession.

B. The four horns and the four blacksmiths. Destruction of the enemy.

C. The young surveyor and the angel Expansion

D. Joshuathe high priestpardoned and clothed vvith beautifulgarments. Absolution {formal release from guilt obligationor punishment}. Cleansed from unrighteousness
1Jn. 1:9.

E. The golden candlestick and the olive trees. Spirit- effusion
Hence:

F. The flying roll and the vvoman in the ephad. Sanctification And

G. The four horse-dravvn chariots. Shelter. 6:9-15

II. A symbolic act (the coronation of Joshua as priest-king; a symboland a type of the Branch).

III. An ansvver to a question (vvwhether the fasts should be continued).

IV. Predictions and Promises regarding the future of Zionand

the rejection and subsequent glory of its Shepherd- King.

Main overview

Zechariah warned the returned exiles that they should not walk in the ways of their fathers (1:4) but should return to Jehovah and trust in His promises. This introductory exhortation is followed by a series of visions as follows:

1). The man among the myrtle trees and those who follow him: though at present the nations are at rest, there is going to be a change in the interest of Judah, for Zion has an Intercessor.

2). The four horns and four blacksmiths: destruction is in store for the nations that have afflicted the Jews.

3). The young surveyor and the angel: Zion will expand among the nations; Jerusalem will be inhabited as towns without walls. God's promise concerning Jerusalem was "I...will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst" (2:5).

4). Joshua, the high priest, pardoned and clothed with beautiful garments: the priesthood, though defiled, is cleansed and accepted by Jehovah.

5). The golden candlestick and the olive-trees: God's people derive their strength to accomplish from the enabling, illuminating, and never-failing Spirit of Jehovah.

6). The flying roll and the woman in the ephah: Sanctification i.e.

wickedness will be destroyed and removed from the land.

7). The four horse-drawn chariots: the land will enjoy God's protections from every direction. {it must be admitted, however, that the meaning of this vision is by no means clear. There are ever so many widely interpretations.)

These visions are followed by symbolic act: the coronation of Joshua as priest-king; a symbol and a type of the Branch.

The third section of the book contains a question concerning the propriety of continuing the fasts. In the answer it is pointed out that God desires obedience first, that the woes which have befallen the Jews should be viewed as means unto a glorious end, and that fast shall be turned into cheerful feasts.

The fasts about which Zechariah's contemporaries were inquiring had resulted from the people's own sins. If they had responded to the prophets by keeping the Law and practicing compassion, Jerusalem would not have been destroyed. then there would have been no need for mourning and fasting (7:8-12).

The result of the Jews' sinfulness was expressed further by Zechariah. He said that God had "called" His people (7:13), entreating them through the prophets to quit their evil ways. However, they had not obeyed. Consequently, God had sent destruction upon them - the

destruction wrought by the Babylonians. Then they had "called" to Him, seeking relief from the destruction; but God "would not listen" or save them from their tormentors. Instead, He had "scattered them" among "all the nations" (7:14), and the land was left "desolated behind them".

The prophet answering the question asked by the contingent from Bethel, he gave them a reminder from God that He had not required all the fasts they were observing. Thus, implies that the moral and ethical requirements of the law were more important than the issue of fasting. Their fathers had not grasped this truth before the captivity, and the people did not understand it in the days of Zechariah. The prophet said that the Jews had brought their destruction upon themselves by their sinning, which meant they themselves were the cause of their mourning. Instead of continuing to fast, they need obedience by keeping the Law's commands concerning justice, kindness, compassion, and benevolence.

Chapter 8 answers the question "*shall we continue to fast*" by saying, in effect, "*Fasting signifies mourning, but the Jews no longer have reason to mourn.*" The Lord had blessed them, and would continue to bless them, in so many ways that their days of fasting would be turned into days of festivity.

Chapters 9 - 14 constitute a section by itself, with a historical background

that is different from the one which is basic to chapters 1 – 8.

There are those who cling to the view that the entire section or a part of it is of pre-exile date. They base this belief upon passages such as **9:1, 10, 13; 10:2, 6, 7, 10; 11:14** etc. {references to Damascus, as still existing; Ephraim, Joseph, Israel; to idols; etc.}. However, not any of these passages, when correctly interpreted, conflicts with much later date. On the contrary, 9:13 points in the direction of post-exile period: {For indeed I bend Judah as a bow for me. I have filled the bow with Ephraim; And I will stir up your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, And will make you like the sword of a mighty man. (**Zechariah 9:13** WEB)} Greece at the time of writing is already on the horizon as a mighty power.

This section chapters 9 - 14 seem in agreement with several extended references to the mighty conflict between Antiochus, Epiphane and the Maccabees. However, we regard these references not as descriptions of already existing conditions but as prophecies based upon divine revelation regarding events which began to take shape even in the days of their inspired author (consider the significant of Grecian victories of 490 and 480 B.C.).

Whatever be the proper division of chapter 9 – 14, - see the many and conflicting schemes in commentaries, Bible encyclopaedias, and introductions – it is at least probable that among the predicted events the following are to be recognised:

1. The further progressive return of the captives from the land of captivity (**10:8-12**).
2. The defeat of the countries which surround Judah in a day when Judah itself will be protected (**9:1-8**).
3. The victories of the Maccabees over Antiochus Epiphanes (**9:11-17; 12:1-9**).
4. The coming of the Righteous King, the True Shepherd (9:9); also his rejection (11; 13:7) ; See also **Matthew 21:5; 26:14-16**.
5. The election of the Remnant throughout the new dispensation (13:8,9 cross reference this with other remnant passages: **Jer. 3:14; 23:3; Amos 3:12; 5:15; Mic. 2:12; 5:3, 7, 8: 7:18-20, Hab. 2:4** etc.)
6. The outpouring of the Spirit and the blessing of the Messianic Age, with the total disappearance of the dispensation of shadows and ceremonies (most of chapter 14)

Special attention should be given to the beautiful and startling Messianic prophecies contained in the book of Zechariah. Worthy to study them: **3:8-10, 6:12-14; 9:9, 10; 11:12; 12:10; 13:1, 7**. Observe that the coming, rejection, and future glory of the Branch or Shepherd King are predicted.

Needless to mention that all these prophecies should be studied in their proper context. Moreover, in certain cases the possibility of progressive fulfilment should be recognised. Also, it should constantly be noted in our minds that Christ is the very heart and

centre of prophecy, so that the Old must constantly be interpreted in the light of the New.

There is one, central theme which like a golden thread, runs through all the stories of the Old Testament. That theme is The Coming Christ. As long one does not see this, the Old Testament remains a closed book. As soon as this idea is grasped, the scriptures are opened. Clear picture is painted in Luke 24:24 - 32.

Familiar Phrases in the Book of Zechariah

Scripture Reference Phrasing Used in the Scriptures Comparable Reference

3:2 *"The Lord rebuke you, Satan!"* - **Jude 9**

8:8 *"they shall be My people, and I will be their God"* - **2 Corinthians 6:16** (see **Ezekiel 32:27**)

8:16 *"speak the truth to one another"* - **Ephesians 4:25**

9:9 *"Behold your king is coming to you...Humble and mounted on a donkey"* - Jesus Triumphal Entry **Matthew 21:5** (see **Isaiah 62:11**)

11:12, 13 *"thirty shekels of silver"; a "potter"* - Jesus Betrayal **Matthew 26:15; 27:9,10**

12:10a *"I will pour out on the house of David... the Spirit of grace..."* **12:10b** *"they will look on Me whom they have pierced"* - **Joel 2:28-32. Acts 2:17-1.** Jesus' crucifixion - **John 19:37.**

13:7 *"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered"* - **Matthew 26:31.**

Key Takeaways

Learning From the Past: Just as the Jews needed to learn from the past, so do we. The Scriptures provided many lessons for us. We need to learn that God will punish those who refuse to turn to Him in repentance. We need to take Zechariah's words personally and seriously: The Lord said, "Return to Me that I may return to you." As long as we remain unrepentant, God cannot bless us as He desires to do. New Testament writers frequently drew lessons from the Old Testament.

For example, after citing the Israelites deliverance from Egypt, Paul noted that they sinned and fell in the wilderness, with the result that they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land (**Corinthians 10:1-10**; see especially v.5). Then he said, *"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall"*. (**1 Corinthians 10:11-12** NKJV) We need to avoid sinning in the ways that the Israelites had sinned, so that we would not fall from grace and lost in the same way that the Israelites' sin had caused them to fall in the wilderness.

The **"Apple of God's Eye"** (2:8); The Jews, the people of God, were the *"apple of God's eye"*. This expression refers to the pupil of the eye, a delicate, sensitive, important part of

the eye. This passage says that “just as any human being is concerned about *“the apple of His eye,”* God was concerned about His special people Israel (see **Exodus 19:5, 6**). He was, in fact, so concerned that He would destroy those nations which had plundered His people. The best application of the expression is to the Church, God’s people today (see **1 Peter 2:5, 9**).

If Israel was “the apple of God’s eye” then, the church is now “the apple of His eye. Those who would destroy the Church or attempt to slander the Church – maybe even those who would criticize it unfairly or to speak damagingly of or criticize in a derogatory manner or dishonour or defame – had better beware! In doing so, they are touching *“the apple of God’s eye”*. (If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (**1 Corinthians 3:17** NKJV)).

Sharing our Blessings (3:10). The prophet said, *“In that day’ declare the Lord of hosts, ‘every one of you will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and under his fig tree’”* (**3:10**). In that rural economy, sitting under one’s own vine and fig tree had become a proverbial image of a peaceful and prosperous time. Zechariah says that each person would “invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.” God foresaw a time when His people would not only enjoy security and prosperity themselves, but they would also desire to share their blessings with their neighbours. As

Christians, we enjoy wonderful blessings from God. From a spiritual standpoint, we are blessed with peace, security, and prosperity. Each of us “sits under his own vine and fig tree.” However, we are called upon not to hoard those riches, not to keep the blessings for ourselves, but to share them with others (**Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16 Acts 8:4**). We should always be inviting those around us to experience the wonderful blessing of being in Christ.

Obedying the Lord Completely (6:15c). Zechariah wrote that it is blessings for the Jews that the rebuilding of the temple will take place, however, this depends if only they completely obey the Lord their God. Conversely, it implies; if the Jews did not “completely obey the Lord, “they would not be blessed. God blessings have always been conditional on obedience! When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, when Israel worshiped the golden calf, when Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, the result was punishment.

The promises given in the Law were conditional: curse for disobedience, blessing for obedience. Some today believe that God will save people unconditionally. On the contrary, in this age as in every age, salvation is offered by God’s grace to those who meet His conditions (**Ephesians 2:8, 9 Act 2:36 – 38**). Partial obedience is insufficient! In everything we must strive to obey God completely.

In **Zechariah 10** God spoke of several ways He planned to bless His people: he would “strengthen” (**10:6, 12**),

“save” (10:6), and restore them (10:6, 10). Also, He promised to “answer” them (10:6); that is to hear their prayers and respond to their requests. He would “whistle” for His people, as a signal to come to Him (10:8), and to redeem them (or He had “redeemed” them; (10:8). In the future, He would “sow” the Jews among the nations (10:9). What a wonderful blessing for God’s people! God’s love, mercy, and compassion led Him to bless His people in many ways. Much of what God did for His people then, He still does for His people today:

✓ God “whistles” for us – that is, He calls us to become His children and to follow Him daily by doing His will.

✓ He saves, redeems, and restores (or delivers from bondage) all who hear and obey His gospel.

✓ He strengthens us to live the Christian life successfully.

✓ He hears us when we pray.

✓ He “scatters” or sows, us among the peoples of the earth, giving us the opportunity to be “the light of the world” to non-Christians and lead the unsaved to Christ.

Conclusion

Those who are separated from God are separated from the blessings He imparts: salvation, peace of mind, the hope of Heaven. It is essential for anyone in this state to return, to repent and do God’s will, and receive God’s blessing of forgiveness and abundant life.

When Zechariah preached about the future, he spoke of a coming King. That King has come, and He can bring peace to our souls if we allow Him to be King over our lives.

We must dethrone ourselves and invite Him to come into our lives as Lord. Any sinner can accept Him as King by obeying His gospel: by believing in Jesus Christ as God’s Son, repenting of sin, confessing faith in Christ, and being baptised into Him. The one who takes these steps or have taken these steps and then lives as a faithful Christian will be saved. NKJV)