

Bible Study Notes and Questions on the book of Zechariah

Overview: The author begins this overview with William Macdonald (P1157 in his *Believers' Bible Commentary*) having quoted from another writer called Merrill F. Unger: "The prophecy of Zechariah is profoundly precious to the Christian because of its unique Messianic emphasis and its panoramic unfolding of the events connected with the first and especially the second advent of Christ and the consequent millennial restoration of the nation Israel." The author agrees very much with this view of Zechariah's prophecy. This book out of the twelve short prophetic books is the most Christ centred.

The name Zechariah means "Remembered of the Lord", "Whom Jehovah remembers", "Remember God". The same name in the New Testament is Zacharias (Greek) and in English Zachary. Zechariah could have been born in Babylon during the seventy-year exile (608-538BC) for many Jews. He was from a priestly family being son of Berechiah, son of Iddo (**Nehemiah 12: 4, 16**) and therefore a priest as well as a prophet. Ezra has mentioned Zechariah's ministry (**Ezra 5:1 & 6:14**) along with the prophet Haggai to stir up the remnant of the children of Israel to finish rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem. Zechariah started his prophecies in 520BC at the same time as Haggai. Along with Haggai he was a prophet to the people of Judah. A small remnant of about 50000 had returned to the land after the exile in captivity. It appears Haggai only had a short public ministry, the last prophecy being on the twenty fourth day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, the Medo-Persian king (**Haggai 2:10-23**). He may well have been a much older man compared to Zechariah being the grandson of Iddo that came back from Babylon when the seventy-year exile had ended. Zechariah's first prophecy came in the eighth month of the second year of Darius. Zechariah continued to minister to the children of Israel in Judah well beyond Haggai's final prophecy in 520BC. Commentators' views vary with some saying Zechariah's ministry continued until 480BC and even later still. What is known at the beginning of **Chapter 7** is the recorded word of the Lord to Zechariah two years later.

Zechariah was given eight visions all assumed to be on the same night being the twenty fourth day of the eleventh month in the second year of Darius' reign exactly five months after the rebuilding of the temple began again. The first five visions were messages of grace whilst the last three were messages of judgment. The visions foretold in highly symbolic language the overthrow of Gentile world powers; the judgment of apostate Jews because of their rejection of Jesus Christ; the restoration of Israel; the cleansing and the glory of a remnant; and the future blessings of prosperity in Jerusalem.

There was a question about fasting raised by a delegation of Jews that came to the house of God (**7:1-3**). The Jews had developed new religious traditions but they were not showing obedience to the word of God. The four fasts mentioned in **Zechariah 8:19** commemorated in the fourth month the capture of Jerusalem (**2Kings 25:3**), the fifth month its destruction (**2Kings 25:8-10**), the seventh month the assassination of Gedaliah (**2Kings 25:22-25**, appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon as ruler in the land of Judah), the tenth month the siege of Jerusalem (**2Kings 25:1**).

Zechariah foretold the first coming (**9:9**) and details of his death and his coming again to the Mount of Olives (**14:4**) and his millennial Messianic reign (1000 years) on earth as high priest and Kings of kings and Lord of lords.

In closing, the key-note that seems to appear throughout this prophecy is God's jealousy for Zion chosen to be his dwelling place (**Psalms 132:13-14**). This prophecy has stressed this emphatically in **8:2** "*Thus says the Lord of hosts, I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury*" (**1:14**).

Questions

- Q.1)** Read **1:1-6**. What had the Lord exhorted his people to do if they were to know blessings?
- Q.2)** Read carefully **1:7-6:8**. Zechariah has been given eight visions as follows: A) Man riding on a red horse (**1:7-17**). B) Four horns and four craftsmen (**1:18-21**). C) A man with a measuring line (**2:1-13**). D) Joshua the high priest (**3:1-10**). E) The golden lampstand and the two olive trees (**4:1-14**). F) The flying scroll (**5:1-4**). G) The woman in a basket (**5:5-11**). H) The four chariots (**6:1-8**). I) Try to show the meaning of each vision. II) What has been revealed in each vision? Consider any fulfilment of each vision and what is still to come to pass. III) What do we know about the ministering angels in these visions? IV) What was known about the rebuilding of the temple in **Chapters 3 & 4**. Consider carefully the involvement of Joshua and Zerubbabel. It is also helpful to read the book of **Haggai** and **Ezra 5:1-6 & 6:1-22**.
- Q.3)** Read **6:9-15**. What is the significance of the crowns and who could be the BRANCH? See also **3:8; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5 & 33:15**. Which temple has been foretold to be built?
- Q.4)** Read **Chapters 7 & 8**. Four messages have been given by Zechariah to answer the enquiry of the Jews about fasting. A) What was the message given regarding fasting in **7:1-7**? See also **Isaiah 58:3-7**. B) Why did judgment come upon God's people so severely to scatter them from the land? Read **7:8-14**. C) Show the evidence of Jerusalem being restored and blessed. See **8:1-17**. You may find it helpful to make a list of the blessings. D) Show the encouragement given to the Jewish delegation regarding the fasts and the response of many nations towards Jerusalem. Read **8:18-23**.
- Q.5)** Read **Chapters 9-11**. This is an oracle or burden that shows the emphasis on the first coming of the Messiah. A) Show the judgment on Gentile nations. See **9:1-8**. B) What is significant regarding the Messiah in **9:9**? It is helpful to read **Matthew 21:4-5 & John 12:14-15**. C) How will Israel be blessed in the prophetic events in **9:10-17**? D) What will God do for his people in **10:1-5**? E) Show the evidence of Israel and Judah being restored and regathered. Read **10:6-12**. F) What did God intend to do with unfaithful shepherds? Read **11:1-6**. G) What was God doing in **11:7-14**? Is there evidence of the Messiah, the true shepherd being rejected by his people? See also **Matthew 27:9-10 & Luke 19:42**. H) What is known of the shepherd in **11:15-17**? Who is this shepherd in these verses?
- Q.6)** Read **Chapters 12-14**. This is another oracle or burden that shows the emphasis on the second coming of the Messiah to rule in his millennial kingdom (1000 years) on earth. A) Describe how God will be at work in Jerusalem and Judah in that day. Read **12:1-14**. You may find it helpful to make a list. Is it true to say that this prophecy is still to come to pass? B) Look carefully at **13:1-6**. Is it true to say these verses reveal Israel being cleansed? C) What has been foretold in **13:7-9**? D) Show how God will deal with the nations coming against Jerusalem. See **14:1-3, 12-15**. E) What is the evidence shown of the second coming of Jesus Christ? See **14:4, 9**. F) What physical events will take place to change the land of Israel? See **14:4-8, 10**. G) What will be known of Jerusalem when the Lord Jesus Christ will rule over the whole earth in his millennial kingdom? See **14:11, 16-21**.

Miscellaneous Questions

- Q.1)** Read through the entire book and consider who God is.
- Q.2)** What is known of the sin and wickedness of God's people throughout this book?
- Q.3)** What is known of Zechariah's character? See **1:1, 7; Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Nehemiah 12:4, 16**.
- Q.4)** What has Zechariah revealed of the Messiah? See for example **9:9-10; 12:9-13; 14:3-4, 9**.
- Q.5)** Try to show from this book any prophecies that have still to be fulfilled. See for example **1:12-17; 2:4-5, 10-13; 3:9-10; 8:1-23; 9:10; 12:1-14; 13:1-9; 14:1-21**.
- Q.6)** Consider carefully throughout this book what has been recorded regarding Jerusalem. The list of scriptural references in the previous question will be helpful.

Bibliography

The list of resources available will be helpful in studying the scriptures. The author may not necessarily agree with all the views of the writers of the reading material.

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