

Zechariah, work today for a glorious future tomorrow

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Overview of what we'll talk about

- This is one of the post-exilic prophets meaning he preached after the return of the remnant of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.
- The Babylonian captivity was God's ultimate judgement—destruction of the Temple and removal from the land because his people did not keep his covenant.
- In brief they violated the two great commands to love God and love others. They worshipped idols and treated people terribly.
- He spoke at the same time as Haggai, though tradition says he was much younger.
- His book is very different—Haggai quite brief, practical....
- After the return he told them things are bad because of your sin
- Quit focusing on your fears but get back to work and build the temple you were brought back into the land to build
- They obeyed and started on the temple that took 4 years to complete.

- **Zechariah and Haggai preached during that time**
- Zechariah's book has the same basic themes:
- Sin resulted in the exile and present troubles; obedience by completing the temple will bring blessings
- But there is much more in this book
- Visions, prophecies concerning the place of Israel and Jerusalem in God's plan of salvation, plus the first and second comings of the Messiah—it is NOT an easy book to understand and I recommend commentaries for a more detailed study.
- But we can learn a lot from it.
- One more little intro note: More prophecies about the Messiah in this book than in any book of the prophets except Isaiah

Outline of the book

- After an initial rebuke
- The book is divided into two main sections, with some additional lessons inbetween
- 1) Eight visions while they are building the Temple
- B. Night Visions: Zechariah recounts a series of eight night visions and the coronation of Joshua in order to encourage the nation that He is not finished with them but--has plans for them and will fight for them, bless them, take away their sins, enable them to build the temple, bring true worship, and unite them, if they will repent and obey Him 1:7--6:15
- 2) Prophecies after the building of the Temple, possibly many years later
- These concern the Messiah, both his first and second comings

<https://bible.org/article/argument-book-zechariah-->

Source vision summaries that follow

After reminding them of their sin and judgement, the 8 visions....

- Meant to be encouraging, hopeful pictures. Hard for us to grasp them because we don't have the context to give the images meaning
- If we know what the images mean—they can add a depth to our understanding that mere description won't do, e.g. Statue of Liberty—just a big statue of a lady standing in a harbor with a torch in one hand
- This is where I (we can) rely on commentators. Read a variety of them, look at their background, always try to check out the classics and see what Matthew Henry, Calvin and others had to say, their deep study of the Bible helps them stick to Bible-solid commentary
- Quoting from Bible.org, article by David Malick, his overview of the vision:
- Vision One--A Horseman Among the Myrtle Trees--God's Devotion to Jerusalem: The Lord proclaims that His riders are patrolling the earth which is at peace, and that He will restore Jerusalem because He cares deeply for her 1:8-17
- Vision Two--Four Horns & Four Craftsmen--Judgment on Judah's Oppressors: Through the vision of the horns and craftsmen, Zechariah proclaims that divine agents are going to overthrow those powers who have overcome Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem 1:18-21 [Hebrew 2:1-4]
- Vision Three--A Man with a Measuring Line--Jerusalem's Future: Through the vision of the surveyor the Lord proclaimed that a time is coming when Jerusalem will be a secure city with many inhabitants, the Lord will dwell among them, the nations will be judged, and the people should rejoice 2:1-13 [Hebrew 2:5-7]
- Vision Four--Clean Garments for the High Priest--The Cleansing and Restoration of Joshua/Israel: Although Israel is defiled (as is pictured through Joshua), Yahweh will cleanse her, restore the Davidic throne, bring about a time of peace and prosperity 3:1-10
- Vision Five--The Golden Lampstand and Two Olive Trees--The Temple, Joshua & Zerubbabel: The Lord proclaimed that His Spirit would empower Joshua and especially Zerubbabel to complete the temple so that the people would know of His presence among them 4:1-14
- Vision Six--The Flying Scroll--Purification of the Land: In the vision of the flying scroll Zechariah learned that the Lord will curse those (and the households of those) who disrupt the building of the temple (steal and lie) 5:1-4
- Vision Seven--A Woman in a Basket--Removal of Evil to Babylon: In the vision of the women in the ephah basket Zechariah learned that the Lord is going to take Israel's idolatrous evil captive to Babylon where it will be honored 5:5-11

- Vision Eight--Four Chariots--God's Conquest of the Northern Nations: In a vision of the four chariots Zechariah learned that the Lord sends his spirits out to patrol the earth, and that the nations in the north will be destroyed 6:1-8

Summary of what he shared

- The visions were meant to be hopeful encouraging images—gotta trust the commentators on that one.
- Then a little visual lesson in 6:9-15-A Symbolic Crown for Joshua: Through placing a crown on the head of Joshua the high priest a symbol was made of the coming Branch who will unite the offices of king and priest
- Greater hope for the land, but also a picture of the coming king and priest that Jesus would be

After the Temple is built, then the picture widens to the broad scope of history

- The First Prophetic Message--The Advent and Rejection of the Messianic King: This message proclaims the king/shepherd's coming to defeat the nations and gather His people only to be rejected by His own people and replaced by a false shepherd who will destroy the people and be destroyed 9:1--11:17
- The Second Prophetic Message--The Rejected King Enthroned: This message begins with the nation in warfare and mourning over their sin toward the 'one whom they pierced,' and ends with God faithfully cleansing His people, going to battle on their behalf, and finally establishing His world-rule from Jerusalem in order that Israel might take courage in God's faithful plan for them 12:1--14:21
- Illustration of the two mountain peaks of the visions of the Messiah and that the Jews did not see the valley of time between them.
- We walk in that valley—remember the past***Do not lose sight of the future.

In this discussion of the Messiah are many specific prophecies about Jesus, more than any other outside Isaiah

- Overall descriptions (these not so much specific events, but the Gospel writers looked back and were able to say, "this is what the OT prophets were talking about") e.g. Messiah as "the Branch" God's servant, the good Shephard, the sticken Shephard, wounded by his friends
- Then VERY specific prophecies:
- Jesus coming mounted on a donkey
- Bible prophecy: Zechariah 9:9
- Zechariah foreshadowed the betrayal of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, and then money thrown to the Potter
- Bible prophecy: Zechariah 11:12-13
- Zechariah foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus "looking on one they pierced"
- Bible prophecy: Zechariah 12:10
- All of these written Between 520 and 518 BC
- All of these fulfilled: About 31 AD
- ***we sometimes forget the really extraordinary significance of these prophecies
- That our God is outside of time, telling in exact detail

- what would happen—no other explanation for it
- Not only enables us to trust God now—that He knows what is going on, but enables us to trust in future

Second coming Zech 14:4—To be fulfilled

- Zech 14: 5Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.
- ⁶On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. ⁷It will be a unique day—a day known only to the Lord—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.
- ⁸On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter.
- ⁹The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.

Overview of the book

- God cares for and defends his people
- But that does not leave them guiltless
- Sin is punished
- Restoration is always possible
- Future blessings are promised
- And most importantly.....

What was going on in the lives of the people was part of a bigger picture

- The nation itself prepared for the Messiah
- The line of David
- The development of the Word of God, integral to all the people no matter where they went
- Jerusalem and the Temple, a center for worship for all the known world
- And among the people was always the expectation of the coming Messiah

Application, In the midst of this broad sweep of history, and knowing God is at work in our world in ways we can't see.....

How then should we live?

- 2 passages
- A question about religious observance
- Chapter 7 people came to him with a question about fasting
- "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?"
- ⁴Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me: ⁵"Ask all the people of the land and the priests, '**When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?**' ⁶And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves?"
- **Evaluate your motive for any religious action

God shows what is important to HIM....

- ⁸And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah: ⁹"This is what the Lord Almighty said:

'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. ¹⁰ Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.'

-SAME message given for the hundreds of years prior to the exile
- "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. ¹² They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry.
- ¹³ "'When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the Lord Almighty. ¹⁴ 'I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land they left behind them was so desolate that no one traveled through it. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.'"

But now blessings are promised

- ¹⁴ This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you and showed no pity when your ancestors angered me," says the Lord Almighty, ¹⁵ "so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. ¹⁶ These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; ¹⁷ do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the Lord.
- ¹⁸ The word of the Lord Almighty came to me.
- ¹⁹ This is what the Lord Almighty says: "The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace."
- Application: God wants the lives of his people to reflect his love and care, his truth and peace. When we live like that instead of just scrambling for ourselves, we show that we belong to a God who can be trusted to make all things right.

The second passage, and my fav application

- Background of Zerubbabal—leader, coward—quit work on the Temple because of fear—16 years go by—and God was not done with him.
- Zech 4
- ⁶ So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.
- ⁷ "What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"
- ⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to me: ⁹ "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.
- ¹⁰ "Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth

will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?"

Thoughts and applications

- Life Application Bible
"More than the rebuilding of the Temple was at stake. The people were staging the 1st act in God's wonderful drama of end times."
- Specifically what this talks about is that the Temple they were building would be the one visited by the Messiah
- Overall this quote reminds us that God always has a much larger plan in process than we can see or are often aware of
- ***Yet he has told us what that plan is

Challenge to us....are we participating in God's plans for us or living the kind of selfish lives Haggai and Zechariah warned about that is not pleasing to God?

- This doesn't mean we go hide in a monastery--We work out our calling IN our world
- *"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."* C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.
- Exactly how that work is for each person is unique to that person.
- Back to Zechariah the current calling for the people was to build the temple. They started on it 16 years ago. They had to work another 4 years to see it completed. Probably many times as stone was laid on stone they did not have a grand vision for their work.
- No matter how little, how fearful, how weak, how we have put off the work of God—He wants to fulfill His calling in us.

So what is your call? Can be so many things....

- Building in the life of a child—a mom who cooks and cleans and trains and loves
- A dad who works each day
- People who do good work and are faithful and kind in their work.
- People who go out of their way to care for the less fortunate, aliens, those in need.
- That's what God wants.
- To help you determine what God wants, spend time in his Word and for it to permeate you life, know it takes time.
- I look back on my life, done dumb things, didn't do things I should have, but most important thing I've done....is to make time in God's word a habit in my life.
- My mom read the Bible to us each night (Parents PLEASE DO THAT), heard it in church, In college part of 7 minutes with God introduced me to a daily quiet time; and then over 20 years ago my mom gave me a Read through the

Bible in Chronological order booklet—on the site—it has totally changed my life. I work to make that my discipline each year and it has that has given me a firm foundation in life.

- I recommend that to you. On the website www.untilfulllight.com is the schedule for reading through the Bible and past lessons and how to study materials I've put on there from various classes I've taught. Please check it out.

Finally back to Zechariah

- Imagine being a stone-cutter working on the Temple. Perhaps you started it 16 years ago, but distractions and fears intervened and you abandoned the work.
- But then a firey prophet and his visionary friend came along and you got back to work.
- You are 16 years older—your back hurts and your fingers are stiff, but you keep on day after day for four more years. Some days there doesn't seem like any reason to keep going, but you do and the Temple is completed.
- And centuries from that time the Lord of heaven will walk on the floors you laid and preach from the stone porch you set in place.
- Like that stone-cutter—we probably won't see all the results of the work we do for our Lord in other's lives or in ministries we work in or support, but if take time to determine His will for us and do it, the ultimate results will be eternal joy for us and glory to our Lord.

To listen to the podcast (audio) version of this lesson and for other materials to help you grow in your Christian life, go to: www.untilfulllight.com

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