

Lesson 3 – Zechariah

Text: Zechariah

Key Passages:

- Zechariah 1:3 – If the people returned to God, He would return to them.
- Zechariah 6:12-13 – Jesus would build the final temple of God, being both priest and king.

Background Information:

Zechariah was another prophet sent to the Jews to encourage them to rebuild the temple. He was sent only about 2 months after Haggai began prophesying. It might be generally said that Haggai focused on the reconstruction of the physical temple while Zechariah focused on the spiritual temple, that is, the body of God's people (both present and future). Zechariah's prophecies tend to include much more symbolic language, often making interpretation very difficult.

There are two main messages in Zechariah which are interwoven throughout the book. First, Zechariah called on the people (the spiritual temple) to learn from their ancestors, abandon the sin of the world, and to enter this new physical temple as the holy nation that God had originally called Israel to be (Exodus 19:3-6). Second, Zechariah prophesied in great detail about the coming of the Messiah and the construction of spiritual Jerusalem (the new kingdom of God, the church).

Outline:

- I. Purpose: to encourage the Jews to resume the reconstruction effort on the temple
- II. Be the Holy Nation that God Intended
 - a. Do not be like your ancestors who ignored God and the prophets; return to God and He will return to you (Zechariah 1:1-6)
 - b. Escape from the Babylon (sin) and live in God's realm (righteously) (Zechariah 2:6-13)
 - c. God will not tolerate sin; it must be put away and destroyed (Zechariah 5:1-4)
 - d. Wickedness must be sent away permanently back to Shinar, Babylon (sin) (Zechariah 5:6-11)
 - e. It is time to move forward (Zechariah 7-8)
 - i. The people had, in the past, been weeping and fasting during various months to remember the great tragedies during Jerusalem's destruction (note the months listed: 2 Kings 25:1, 8-9; Jeremiah 41:1-2; 52:6-7)
 - ii. God noted that the people had not been fasting for God, but for themselves, as they had not been obeying the Lord anyway (the reason for Judah's punishment)
 - iii. God instructed them to move on from the fasts, as they would become times of joy as long as they obeyed the Lord
- III. The Messiah and the New Jerusalem
 - a. The new Jerusalem would not need a wall (God would be its protection, perhaps also implies that it has no boundaries, and it would be limitless) (Zechariah 2:1-5)
 - b. The high priest was a sign of Jesus (Zechariah 3)
 - c. The priest and king would become as one (Zechariah 4; 6:9-15)
 - d. Numerous prophecies of Christ (e.g. Zechariah 9:8-17; 10:1-3; 11:1-14; 12:9-14; 13:1, 7-9)
 - e. Spiritual Jerusalem would be delivered by God and made completely holy (14:1-21)

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) We must abandon sin completely and pursue a life of holiness before the Lord; He is holy.
- 2.) We must be careful to worship God because of love for Him; not to make ourselves feel better.
- 3.) The great details that are given regarding Christ's coming should bolster our faith in the Bible.