

"Introduction of the Book of Zechariah"

Introduction: This morning we are going to begin a journey that will last a year or better. It will be a journey that will be filled with blessings as we dive into the book of Zechariah. I personally believe this will be something that everyone of us will greatly enjoy.

Now before we get into the book itself and start a verse-by-verse study there are several other points that we need to look at. We need a good understanding of the background of the book because each book of the Bible has a context, and we **MUST** understand the context of Zechariah before we can fully grasp the contents.

I. The Title

The letter is called Zechariah because it is named after the main prophet of the letter. But there is more in this title.

Zechariah means "God Remembers." So what does He remember?

Let me first of all say that He does not remember our sins after we are saved.

Hebrews 10:16-17

¹⁶ *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;*

¹⁷ **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**

In the book of Zechariah the focus is upon the Isarel and not the church. So when we say the name Zechariah means "God Remembers" it is speaking of the nation of Israel. He remembers His people, but it goes even deeper than this. He remembers His covenant that He made with Abraham that pertains to the nation of Israel. Much of what we see God doing with the nation of Israel in the Bible is related to His covenant with them.

Exodus 2:24-25

²⁴ *And God heard their groaning, and **God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.***

²⁵ *And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.*

This then led to the Exodus. Let us notice what Ezekiel wrote.

Ezekiel 36:22-24

²² Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.

²³ And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

²⁴ For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

This speaks of the regathering of Israel in the Tribulation. What we need to see is that God does it FOR HIS HOLY NAME. Because He had made a covenant with Israel and if He does not keep the covenant then that makes Him a liar.

So here in Zechariah we shall see that God remembers His people and the covenant that He has made with them.

II. The Writer

Notice Zechariah 1:1

This verse gives us some essential information about the writer, Zechariah. We will get to this in a moment.

Notice Zechariah 2:4

Here we see that Zechariah was a young man when God called him to be a prophet.

Getting back to 1:1 we see that Zechariah was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo. Nehemiah gives us some information on Zechariah.

Nehemiah 12:1, 4, 12, 16

Now these are the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,

⁴ Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah,

¹² *And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;*

¹⁶ *Of Iddo, Zechariah;*

Here we see in this genealogy both Iddo and Zechariah and they both returned with Zerubbabel from the captivity. Since we are told that Zechariah was a young man, we can conclude that he was born in late in the captivity and most likely his father died or was not able to make the trip back and so Zechariah traveled with his grandfather. He was a priest and a prophet.

Ezra also mentions our man.

Ezra 5:1, 6:14

Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.

¹⁴ And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

We see also from these verses that Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai. We will touch on this a little later.

III. The Purpose and the People

Isarel was in captivity for 70 years. Why not 65 or 72?

Exodus 23:10-11

¹⁰ And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof:

¹¹ But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.

Isarel was to let the land rest every tenth year. But they chose not to obey this command.

2 Chronicles 36:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

¹⁸ *And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.*

¹⁹ *And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.*

²⁰ *And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:*

²¹ *To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, **to fulfil threescore and ten years.***

Israel had ignored the sabbath year for 70 years so God sent them into captivity for 70 years for the land to rest.

After the 70 years there were 3 waves of returnees.

1. 50,000 returned under Cyrus led by Zerubbabel.
2. Several thousand returned under Artaxerxes led by Ezra
3. This group returned under Artaxerxes led by Nehemiah.

➤ The first group came back to build the temple.

Ezra 1:2

² *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.*

- The second group returned to adorn the temple and reform the people.
- The third group returned to build the wall.

Zechariah returned with the first group. The first group returned and started to build the temple, but it was not long until they met with opposition.

Ezra 4:1-5

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

² Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

³ But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

⁴ Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,

⁵ And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

They then sent a letter to Artaxerxes falsely claiming the Jews were in rebellion.

Ezra 4:23-24

²³ Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

²⁴ Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

The temple construction was halted for 15 years.

Now enter Haggai and Zechariah. They are contemporaries and they are both sent to get the people motivated to finish building the temple. While they were contemporaries, they had two unique styles.

Haggai was like a drill Sargent.

Haggai 1:1-7

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

² Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

³ *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,*

⁴ *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?*

⁵ *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

⁶ *Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

⁷ *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

Zechariah's approach was different. He basically will tell the people that the Messiah is coming, and He needs a temple to come to.

Conclusion/Application:

Lessons for us:

- a. When we get involved for God there is going to be opposition.**

1 Peter 4:12

¹² *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

- b. God wants us to be finishers NOT quitters.**

Galatians 6:8-9

⁸ *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

⁹ *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

The Jews started out fine and when opposition arose, they quit. They then got caught up in their own lives building their own houses. They possibly thought the opposition was a sign the temple was not to be built.

Let us learn to finish what we start. When we get involved, we need to stay the course because there is a lot at stake.