

**"The Call to Repentance"**

**Zechariah 1:1-6**

**Introduction:** The last time we were together in the book of Zechariah we looked at an introduction to the book.

**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?

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**

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

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

**II. The Writer**

**Notice Zechariah 1:1**

This verse gives us some essential information about the writer, Zechariah.

**Notice Zechariah 2:4**

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

Zechariah was born in Babylon, and he returned with his grandfather to Jerusalem with the first wave of Jews that came back from the captivity to rebuild the temple.

**Nehemiah 12:1,16**

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

<sup>16</sup> *Of Iddo, Zechariah;*

**III. The Purpose and the People**

After the first group returned and began to build the temple, they met opposition.

**Ezra 4:4-5**

*<sup>4</sup> Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,*

*<sup>5</sup> 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**

*<sup>23</sup> 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.*

*<sup>24</sup> 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. This is when Zechariah and Haggai enter the scene. They are raised up by God to encourage the people to get back to work. This is the purpose of the message of the book of Zechariah. It goes far deeper than just an encouragement to the Jews as we shall see.

Now the book of Zechariah is a book of comfort and hope but there was a warning that needed to be given for these people.

**I. The Need for Repentance**

**Notice Zechariah 1:1**

We will not spend much time on this verse but there is something important to see here. Zechariah dates this book by naming Darius who was a Gentile. Most of the Old Testament prophets (not all but most) date their writings by naming the King of Israel or the king of Judah. The fact that Zechariah names a Gentile king was a reminder to his readers that they were in the "times of the Gentiles" which began with Nebuchadnezzar and will end when Jesus sits on His throne in His earthly Kingdom. For now Israel had been stripped of her glorious dynasty but there will come a day when their King will rule over the entire world. This is the main focus of the Scriptures from the Old Testament through to the end of Revelation.

### A. The Anger of God

#### Notice Zechariah 1:2

Here is a reminder from Zechariah of how God was angry with the Jews who had went into the captivity. This was also a warning to Zechariah's audience.

#### 2 Kings 21:14-15

*<sup>14</sup> And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;*

*<sup>15</sup> Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.*

Few people today consider the anger of the Lord. They imagine God as a God of love who will accept all who are sincere in their belief. But that is not the God of the Bible. **God will only accept people who come to Him on His terms and that is through His Son, Jesus Christ.** There is coming a day when the world will see the anger of the Lord at its worse. God loves people but He hates sin, and all sin must be judged.

#### Revelation 6:15-17

*<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;*

*<sup>16</sup> And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

*<sup>17</sup> For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

There is a verse in Hebrews that should shake people to the foundation of their soul.

#### Hebrews 10:31

*<sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

### B. God's Grace

#### Notice Zechariah 1:3

Here we must ask, "What is this verse all about?"

Let us put some thoughts together here to see what is being said in the verse. The Jews whom Zechariah is writing to had returned from the captivity in the first wave which had come back to rebuild the temple.

**Ezra 1:1-4**

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,*

<sup>2</sup> *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.*

<sup>3</sup> *Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.*

<sup>4</sup> *And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.*

I show you these verses to help you to see that God moved the heart of Cyrus to send the Jews back to build the temple. This was announced and therefore these people who volunteered knew exactly why they were returning. The ones who could not return for one reason or another, they were to fund the building project.

So they came back, and they first built an altar and then started on the temple. Then it was not long before the opposition came and the work stopped. The temple foundation then sat for 15 years, and the Jews made no attempt to stand against the opposition. But instead they built their own houses.

**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,*

<sup>2</sup> *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.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,*

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

<sup>5</sup> *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

<sup>6</sup> *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.*

<sup>7</sup> *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

The sins of their fathers had brought destruction to the temple and the sins of those who had returned resulted in the delay of the temple. This was what God was calling on them to repent for. They had become apathetic toward God's Work. They had returned for the reason of building the temple, but they had somehow lost sight of that.

**Application:**

We who are saved are left here on this earth to serve the Lord and to be used as He builds His church. He has gifted us and given us grace to carry out His work.

**Ephesians 2:10**

<sup>10</sup> *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

We are not here to live for the pleasures and entertainment of this world. We are here to serve the Lord. When we get caught up in living for the pleasures here it is sin just as it was with the Jews who were neglecting the temple. Our responsibility here is to learn and grow and to serve the Lord. Many believers get all caught up in the stuff of this world which drags them away from serving the Lord.

**2 Timothy 2:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

<sup>4</sup> *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

**1 John 2:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

<sup>16</sup> *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

### C. The Warning

#### Notice Zechariah 1:4

Here the Jews are reminded about the previous generation that went into captivity. They had been warned over and over by the prophets.

#### Jeremiah 3:12-13

<sup>12</sup> *Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.*

<sup>13</sup> *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.*

#### Jeremiah 25:5-9

<sup>5</sup> *They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever:*

<sup>6</sup> *And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.*

<sup>7</sup> *Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.*

<sup>8</sup> *Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words,*

<sup>9</sup> *Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.*

#### Notice Zechariah 1:5

The fathers had died from famine, pestilence, and the sword.

The prophets died also which means the offer to repent should not be ignored. The window was small.

**Notice Zechariah 1:6**

The words "TAKE HOLD" are one word in the Hebrew and it is a hunting term. It means to "pursue or to hunt down." The judgements of God hunted down the people who were disobedient and it overtook them. There was no way to escape. Neither would there be for the Jews who had neglected God's work. Now was the time to repent if they desired to experience the blessings which Zechariah was about to speak of.

**Conclusion:**

For the believer who turns away from the Lord's work and to turns to the pleasures of the world today, there are many consequences. It affects you and your family. I could tell you many stories of families that have been devastated because the parents were not committed to following the Lord. If you are not committed, then this message is for you today and mark it down that as you chase after the STUFF of this world there will be consequences that are irreversible. You are missing the blessings of the Lord.