

"The 8 Night Visions"

Part 1

Zechariah 1:7-6:15

**Introduction:** Today we are coming back to our study of the book of Zechariah. The name of the book means "God Remembers" and in this book He is remembering His people and the covenants that He had made 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.*

The Jews had been sent into captivity for 70 years and here in the book of Zechariah some of them had returned. They had been sent back to rebuild the temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel. They had not been building too long when they encountered opposition from the people around them. They eventually stopped building and went to work on their own homes and the temple construction ceased for about 15 years.

God then stirred up 2 prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai was like a drill sergeant and Zechariah was a little more gentle in his approach. They were different in age and in method, but they were still both sent to stir the Jews to rebuild the temple. Zechariah's message was that the King was coming, and He had to have a temple to come to.

Now the last time we were together in this study we looked at the call to repentance in the chapter 1:1-6. The Jews had stopped working on the temple and Zechariah reminded them they had been sent back for that very purpose and to abandon the work was sin.

**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.*

These people knew why they returned, and they had abandoned their mission. They were not finishers, but they had become quitters and Zechariah was called to stir them up and make them finishers.

### **Notice Zechariah 1:3-6**

Zechariah warned them that if they did not repent, they would experience the judgment of God just as their fathers did. It is interesting here in these verses that Zechariah tells us that their fathers did repent but it was too late. They repented after the judgment came. It would have been far better to repent before the judgment so as not to experience the judgment of God.

### **Application:**

This is a reminder to anyone who is living in sin or dabbling with sin today. You need to repent on the front side before the judgment comes and it will come you can be sure of that.

The words "TAKE HOLD" in verse 6 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.

### **Lamentation 2:17**

<sup>17</sup>*The Lord hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.*

Now is the time to repent if you desire to experience the blessings of the Lord. The Jews whom Zechariah was addressing also needed to repent in order to see the blessings of the Lord.

## **I. Night Vision #1 "Horses and Riders in the Myrtle Trees" Zechariah 1:7-17**

**Notice Zechariah 1:7**

This is 3 months after the call to repent and at this time the people had repented as they should have. He then goes on to describe what he saw in the visions.

**Notice Zechariah 1:8**

We need to start by slowly unpacking this verse. This is not a dream, but it is a vision at night and all 8 visions happen in the same night. In this first vision Zechariah sees a man on a red horse among the myrtle trees in the bottom or in a valley. With this man are other riders on red horses, speckle and white.

Let me explain what this means. The myrtle trees represent the Jews and the bottom, or the ditch is a picture of where they are. They are in a valley. The Rider on the red horse is the pre-incarnate Christ. The other riders are angels who patrol the earth.

**Notice Zechariah 1:9-11**

Here is the report of the angels. The earth was at rest, and it was sitting still. This is the opposite of what was happening to the Jews. They had been through 70 years of captivity, and they had no temple and no walls around their city. Everything in the world is just clicking right along but not for the Jews. There was peace in the world but not for God's people. Without a wall Israel was defenseless and without a temple they had no religious community.

Listen to the words of Charles Feinberg:

*"Let her full plight come before us; the rest promised upon return from Babylon yet unfulfilled: Israel under the yoke of the Gentile powers; hindrances in building the temple; the holy city without walls; the desolation of Jerusalem...The contrast between Israel and the nations of the earth is the occasion for the intercession now before us...Truly, God's thoughts are not ours. When the world was busy with its own affairs, God's eyes and the heart of the Messiah were upon the lowly estate of Israel and upon the temple in Jerusalem."*

**Notice Zechariah 1:12**

The angel of the Lord is very concerned with what is happening to the Jews. This is why Feinberg says that God's thoughts are not ours.

**Application #1:**

I need to stop here and point out an application for us who know the Lord. Have you ever been in a valley? Possibly you are in a valley as I speak. I want you to know that while the

rest of the world is humming right along and you are down in this valley, God knows what you are going through, and He cares about your situation. Let us notice the words of the Psalmist to see that for God's people to be in the valley while the world is doing just fine is nothing new.

**Psalm 120:1-7**

*In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.*

<sup>2</sup> *Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*

<sup>3</sup> *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?*

<sup>4</sup> *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*

<sup>5</sup> *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*

<sup>6</sup> *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.*

<sup>7</sup> *I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.*

**Psalm 122:1-2, 7-8**

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.*

<sup>2</sup> *My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.*

<sup>7</sup> *The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.*

<sup>8</sup> *The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

The point is God is concerned when we are in a ditch. He allows us to be in these situations for His purpose. It may be discipline as was the case with Judah. God will chasten His children when they are in sin.

**Hebrews 12:6-11**

<sup>6</sup> *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

<sup>7</sup> *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

<sup>8</sup> *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

<sup>9</sup> *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*

<sup>10</sup> *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

<sup>11</sup> *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

There are other times when God allows us to be in a valley because He is working on our purification just through the trials and tests of life.

### **Malachi 3:3**

<sup>3</sup> ***And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver:*** and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

### **Application #2:**

We need to be concerned about what God is concerned about. Too many times God's people are like the world, and they are concerned with everything that is material. As long as the money is coming in, the car is running, the house is freshly remodeled, and the kids are doing good in sports, they see life as being good. But that is not what God cares about. He cares about the spiritual. The Jews had no walls and no temple, and this was a great concern to Him. He knew they needed the temple to worship and the walls for protection from the enemies.

In our lives we have no temple building for we are the temple of the Lord. We should be taking care of this temple both physically and spiritually. It needs to be cleansed everyday with the Word of God.

### **Ephesians 5:25-27**

<sup>25</sup> *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

<sup>26</sup> *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

*<sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

We have no physical walls, but we should have spiritual protection as we put on the Armour of God so as to be protected and to be able to stand against the attacks of the enemy.

**Ephesians 6:10-13**

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*<sup>12</sup> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*<sup>13</sup> Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

If you get caught up in the world, then you will certainly think like the world. This is why it is so important to be in the Word of God to fill our hearts and minds with God's Truth so that we can think like God thinks.

**Notice Zechariah 1:13-14**

The Jews had been in captivity for 70 years and nothing had happened in Jerusalem, but God had not forgot about them. They were still His Covenant people, and He would fulfill His covenants that He had made.

**Notice Zechariah 1:15**

God was displeased with the nations. He had used them to bring the judgment, but they had gone too far in oppressing the Jews and stopping the building of the temple. God's message to the Jews in this verse was that they were to focus on the work which they had to do, and God would deal with the enemies who were bringing the oppression.

**Application:**

Let us also understand that it is God's place to carry out vengeance upon those who oppress us.

**Deuteronomy 32:35**

<sup>35</sup> *To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*

**Romans 12:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

<sup>19</sup> *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

**Notice Zechariah 1:16-17**

The temple would be built, and prosperity would return again to Jerusalem. The ultimate fulfillment of this will be after the tribulation, in the Millennial Kingdom.

**Conclusion:**

Why should the Jews care about the temple? Because God cared about the temple. It was important to Him so it should be important to them.

**Application:**

The church and God's people are important to God, and they should be very important to us. Be careful about getting caught up in the world and its philosophies and neglecting to serve the Lord with your spiritual gifts.