

**"Zechariah's First Burden"**

**Part 6**

**Zechariah 9-11**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Zechariah we finished chapter 9 which proved to be a very interesting chapter.

**Zechariah 9:1-8**

The conquests of Alexander the Great

**Zechariah 9:9**

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

**Zechariah 9:10**

The blessings that would have come if the Jews would have accepted Jesus as their King. They rejected Him so these blessings will come in the Kingdom.

**Zechariah 9:11-12**

The Abrahamic Covenant is what assured the Jews of complete deliverance from the Babylon captivity. God would bring them all back to their homeland.

**Zechariah 9:13-17**

The victory over Antiochus Epiphanes through the family of the Maccabees, and the celebration of Hanukkah.

This now brings us to Zechariah 10.

➤ **Hindered Blessings**

**1. The Challenge**

**Notice Zechariah 10:1**

Here we see that God offered to the Jews the rain that was needed to cause their land to prosper. This rain would be based upon the obedience of the Jews.

**Deuteronomy 28:1, 3-5, 8, 11-12**

*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:*

<sup>3</sup> *Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*

<sup>4</sup> *Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*

<sup>5</sup> *Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

<sup>8</sup> *The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

<sup>11</sup> *And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.*

<sup>12</sup> *The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.*

If the Jews would walk in obedience, they would enjoy the prosperity of their land. The land belonged to the Jews because of the Abrahamic Covenant, but to enjoy the blessing they needed to be obedient.

### **Genesis 15:5-7, 18**

<sup>5</sup> *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

<sup>6</sup> *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

<sup>7</sup> *And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.*

<sup>18</sup> *In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:*

Just as a side note let me point out that Israel was promised material blessings and these promises are not for the church. Notice a text that is often quoted and applied to the USA but is only for Israel.

### **2 Chronicles 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> *If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;*

<sup>14</sup> *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

**Notice Zechariah 10:1 again.**

This verse speaks of the blessings that God desired to bring upon the Jews.

**Joel 2:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

<sup>24</sup> *And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.*

I show you the words of Joel to help you to see that when God offers the former and the latter rain it is because He wanted to bless the Jews. So, what was holding up the blessings?

## **2. The Problem**

**Notice Zechariah 10:2a**

Here was the problem. There were idols which the Jews were looking to for answers. The diviners were people who claimed to know the future but here we see that their message was not from God but it was from the idols. They were experiencing dreams and were offering only false comfort. What was happening here with the Jews was that because of the idols they were coming under the influence of the demonic world. Let me show you why this is.

**1 Corinthians 10:19-21**

<sup>19</sup> *What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?*

<sup>20</sup> *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, **they sacrifice to devils**, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*

Here is something that we have considered before but we need to be reminded. When the Gentiles in Corinth sacrificed to idols Paul tells us they were sacrificing to demons. The point to understand is that demons attach themselves to idols which is what was happening with the Jews.

Jeremiah tells us how God looked upon what was happening among the Jews.

**Jeremiah 23:32**

<sup>32</sup> *Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.*

**Application:**

When it comes to things/idols in this world that lead us away from the Lord and keep us from looking to Him for guidance those things must be eliminated from our lives no matter the cost.

**Acts 19:17-20**

<sup>17</sup> *And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.*

<sup>18</sup> *And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.*

<sup>19</sup> *Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it **fifty thousand pieces of silver.***

<sup>20</sup> *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

Ryrie tells us the value here would have equaled 138 years of pay for a rural worker. The point it is was a major cost to give up their curious arts but the benefit was greater because we read that the Word of God mightily grew and prevailed.

So how would all of this apply to us today?

We must be sure that our direction and guidance for life comes straight from the Word of God and not from some idol. People today look to horoscopes and many other pagan practices to get direction for their lives. There are those today also who believe they can

communicate with the dead and so they look to the dead for direction. Steve and Sarah Berger lost a son at the age of 19. Steve is a Pastor and he and Sarah believe they can communicate with their deceased son. They wrote a book called "Have Heart: bridging the gulf between heaven and earth".

Listen to what is recorded in the book:

*"Only two weeks after Josiah went to Heaven, I (Sarah) made it a habit to talk to Josiah... I would then be in instant conversation with Jesus and Josiah" (Have Heart, p. 82).*

*"Jimmy's dream [Jimmy's dream?] is a great example of how we are surrounded and how our loved ones are connected to us. They know, they care about what we're going through, and there's a nearness that's not easy to explain but wondrous in reality... We are one body, connected here on earth, connected in Heaven, and connected between Heaven and earth. Our loved ones may show up in dreams or visits or other ways (who can limit God's imagination?), but the fact is that we're connected. Our loved ones are not "up there" and we are "down here." There is a thin veil, and we're connected to them, forever, in Christ." (Have Heart, p. 110).*

*"You don't father or mother a child for nineteen years and then hear God say, 'Oh, now you can't talk to him. You no longer have a relationship with him until you see him face to face in Heaven....' We still talk to Josiah, and it's going to be so great when we're together again."*

What Scripture do they base this upon?

#### **Hebrews 12:1**

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

This Scripture is often used to teach that deceased believers are watching and involved in the affairs of this life. That is not what it meant! A witness here is someone who testifies not someone who is watching the events down here. Let me show you a major problem for those who teach this.

#### **Luke 16:19-29**

<sup>19</sup> *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*

<sup>20</sup> And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

<sup>21</sup> And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup> And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

<sup>23</sup> And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

<sup>26</sup> And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

<sup>27</sup> Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

<sup>28</sup> For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

<sup>29</sup> Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

The rich man pleaded that Lazarus would be sent back to his brothers and the answer was "NO!"

There is one account of someone brought back from the dead and that was Samuel. Notice the passage.

### **1 Samuel 28:11-19**

<sup>11</sup> Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

<sup>12</sup> And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

<sup>13</sup> *And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.*

<sup>14</sup> *And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.*

<sup>15</sup> *And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.*

<sup>16</sup> *Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?*

<sup>17</sup> *And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:*

<sup>18</sup> *Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.*

<sup>19</sup> *Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.*

**Conclusion:**

**Notice Zechariah 10:2**

The Jews were walking about like sheep with no shepherd. They had no guidance or direction.

**Application:**

When believers look away from the Lord for guidance they become like sheep with no shepherd. In the world we live in that is a dangerous place to be.