

“Introduction To The Book Of Zechariah”

Zechariah 1:1-21

Message by Michael J. Barnard

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding Zechariah’s prophecy to the Jewish remnant after their return from the Babylonian captivity to the ruins of Jerusalem. To realize the Book of Zechariah is quoted some 40 times in the New Testament and has more references to the Messiah than any other book in the Old Testament except the Book of Isaiah. To understand God keeps His promises; He is the covenant keeping God.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Return to Me and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts (Zech. 1:1-6)

1. Understanding the structural divisions of the Old Testament is helpful to making sense out of some of the more difficult passages. The prophetic books are divided into three categories: 1) The Pre-exilic Books; 2) The Exilic Books; and 3) The Post-exilic books. Which exile is the dividing point? Which of the three categories do the books of Haggai and Zechariah fall into? Why is timing so important to understanding the material in these books?
2. Sometimes the Old Testament prophetic books are divided up into two other categories: 1) The major prophets; and 2) The minor prophets. Does this mean that some prophets are more important than others? What does this distinction tell us about each book? Which helps the reader more, dividing the prophetic books into major and minor prophets by the length of the book or studying the books from a historical perspective?
3. When was the word of the LORD given to Zechariah according to **Zech. 1:1**? Which Gentile king was ruling at this point? What was the literal date according to your Bible commentaries? What can we learn about the LORD from **verse 2**? Why was He so angry (**vs. 3**)? What promise did the Lord give to the Jewish remnant? Is this principle still true for us today? (See **Jam. 4:7-8**)
4. What warning did God issue to the Jewish remnant in **verse 4**? According to **verse 4**, how had the Jewish remnant responded to God’s previous warning? Are we guilty of doing the same today when we know that something is wrong according to God’s Word but do it anyway? Today our nation is a mess both politically and spiritually. What principle can we learn from **2 Chron. 7:14**?

5. The LORD asked the Jewish remnant in **verse 5**, *"Your fathers, where are they?"* What was the obvious answer? Then God asked, *"And the prophets, do they live forever?"* Once again, what was the obvious answer? The prophets may have died, but would their words live on forever? What warning do we find the exilic prophet Jeremiah giving in **Jer. 4:5-9**? Could the Jewish remnant now see with their own eyes that the prophecy Jeremiah was true?
6. Does **verse 6** indicate that the fathers returned to the LORD when they realized that they were in trouble? Do you do the same when you are in trouble? Would it have been easier to obey God in the first place? Then why do we so often choose to learn the hard way?

Part II: Zechariah's vision of the four horses and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Zech. 1:7-17)

1. As we come to **verse 7**, Zechariah gives us a second date in the book. What was the actual date? (See Commentaries) What makes this date so important and how does it relate to the eight-night visions in the Book of Zechariah? What is the difference between a dream and a vision? What was the purpose behind God sending the eight night-visions to Zechariah? Who was the man riding on a red horse (**vs. 8**)? (See **vs. 11**) Who was riding on the red, sorrel, and white horses? What significance, if any, was there in each color?
2. What is *"apocryphal literature?"* Where else in the Bible do we see apocryphal literature using different colored horses? (See **Rev. 6:1-8**) What were the colors of these horses?
3. What significance was there in the man on the red horse standing among the myrtle trees? What did myrtle trees at times represent in the Old Testament? (See **Lev. 23:33-44; Neh. 8:15**) What did being in the hollow symbolize? What other region of the world besides Israel has myrtle wood trees?
4. Did Zechariah immediately understand what he saw in his vision (**vs. 9**)? In **verses 9 & 10** the angel that Zechariah spoke to was not the Angel of the LORD, but rather the interpreting angel. What did the interpreting angel communicate to Zechariah (**vs. 10**)?

5. What message did the angels patrolling the earth bring to the Angel of the LORD (**vs. 11**)? Why would this be unsettling in light of the remnant's current condition? When going through a crisis have you ever cried out to God, "*Why LORD?*" What did Asaph cry out in **Psa. 79:5-6**? What did the martyred saints cry out in **Rev. 6:9-10**?

6. The exilic prophet Jeremiah prophesied that Judah would be taken into captivity for 70-years. (See **Jer. 25:11**) He also prophesied that after the 70-years the nation would be restored to the land. (See **Jer. 29:10-11**). What question did the Angel of the LORD ask God in **verse 12**? What was the Angel of the LORD requesting from God?

7. How did the LORD respond to the intercession from the Angel of the LORD (**vs. 13**)? Has the Lord ever assured you with good and comforting words during a time of crisis, perhaps from the Bible or through another person? How did these good words affect you?

8. What did the angel command Zechariah to do in **verse 14**? How would these words be an encouragement to the downtrodden Jews? In **verse 11**, the angels reported that the Gentile nations throughout the earth were resting quietly while the Jews were still suffering. How did the LORD respond here (**vs. 15**)?

9. What can we learn from **verse 15b**? Is it true God is sovereign over human affairs? Then why was He so angry at these nations? (See **Gen. 12:2-3**) Why should **verse 15** be a good reminder to the world today not to mistreat Israel? Why do many people today believe that the existence of Israel is one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God?

10. What two major promises did the LORD make to Israel in **verse 16**? Why were these promises huge to the Jewish remnant? What is the difference in definition between the words, "*mercy*" and "*grace*?" What was the surveyor's line symbolic of? Note: Work on the second temple had been encouraged by Haggai and was finally completed in 516 B.C. What can we learn from **Ezra 6:15-16**?

11. What promise did the LORD give to the Jewish people in addition to promising His mercy and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (**vs. 17**)? This has been God's plan from the beginning, but when will this promise be fulfilled in its ultimate sense? (See Commentaries)

12. F. Duane Lindsey wrote, *"Though the restoration temple was completed about four years after this prophecy (See **Ezra 6:15**) and a partial rebuilding of the city about 80 years later (See **Neh. 6:15**), the passages noted from Ezekiel indicate that the divine glory will be absent from the temple until millennial times."* What incredible truths can we learn from **Isa. 40:9-11** & **Ezek. 48:35** about the coming millennium?

Part III: Zechariah's vision of the four horns and four craftsmen (Zech. 1:18-21)

1. As Zechariah raised his eyes, he saw his second of eight visions. What did he notice (**vs. 18**)? What are "horns" normally symbolic of in the Old Testament? Note: These nations represented four great world powers that God used to bring down Israel. What are some of the theories in your Bible commentaries about who these powers might be? Which theory makes the most sense to you and why? In fulfillment of the curse in **Lev. 26:31-33**, what had these nations done to the Jews? The angel verified this in **verse 19**. Note: But these world empires did far worse than God inspired, they tried (or will try in the future) to annihilate the Jews. God had taken notice, and His wrath would not linger for long.

2. What did Zechariah see in his vision after "the four horns" (**vs. 20**)? What did "the four craftsmen" represent? (See Commentaries) What do you think is the best explanation for the craftsmen? How might the fourth craftsman relate to Daniel's vision in **Dan. 2:43-45**? Note: The four craftsmen hammered (or will crush) the four world powers that so mistreated the Jews (**vs. 21**). How do we see God's promise in **Gen. 12:3** being fulfilled in **verse 21**? Note: This is encouraging for us today as we see that God really does keep His promises.

3. It has been said, *"One of the greatest proofs for the existence of God is the existence of the tiny nation of Israel."* Why? What amazes you most about Israel? If someone were to ask you, *"How do you know that you can trust God's Word?"* What would you say? What proofs could you offer?

4. Have you, by grace through faith, received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord yet? If not, why not repent of your sins and do so right now in prayer?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The prophets Haggai and Zechariah wrote as contemporaries during the post-exilic era following the Babylonian Captivity, their purpose was to encourage the Jewish remnant to rebuild God's temple and the city of Jerusalem.
- The 70-year Babylonian Captivity came as a result of the disobedience of the Jewish people.
- The LORD was very angry at the Jewish fathers for their disobedience, but promised, *"If you return to Me, I will return to you;"* this promise still holds true for us today.
- The four horses of **Zechariah chapter 1** symbolize that God is aware of the circumstances His people are in and will bring justice to the enemies of the Jews at just the right moment.
- Though God allowed four empires to punish the Jews, He will hold each empire accountable for their mistreatment of His people.
- The final craftsman will be Jesus Christ who will crush Antichrist and the revised Roman Empire ushering in His Millennial Kingdom.