



Zechariah: God of Might

Memory Verse: Zechariah 4:6 "So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty.' "

Background

Zechariah is the 38th book of the Bible and the 11th book of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. Zechariah, son of Berekiah and grandson of the priest Iddo (1:1), came to Jerusalem with his grandfather in 538 BC, with the first group of returning Jewish exiles led by Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 12). Because of his family lineage, Zechariah was also a priest as well as being a prophet. According to Jewish tradition, Zechariah was involved in collecting and preserving the records of revealed Scripture. Zechariah was a "young man" (2:4) when he was called to prophesy in 520 BC and it is likely that he lived into the reign of King Xerxes (c. 485-465 BC), the husband of Esther queen of Persia. In Matthew 23:35, we learn from Jesus that Zechariah was "murdered between the temple and the altar."

Zechariah began his ministry in 520 BC, the same time as the prophet Haggai with much the same message and focus. God spoke through Zechariah to urge the Jewish people to rebuild the Temple of the Lord. However, while Haggai focused on the present concern of the sins and self-focus of the Jews and exhorted them to rebuild, Zechariah concentrated on their future and motivated the people with encouragement. Zechariah inspired the people by reminding them that in the future the Messiah's glory would inhabit the Temple. By rebuilding the Temple, they were building their future. The first eight chapters of Zechariah occurred from 520-518 BC during the rebuilding of the Temple, and the last six chapters are believed to have been written much later in his life around 480-470 BC, after the Temple had already been completed.

The Short Story

Rebuild the Temple and anticipate the Messiah's coming!

What's the Big Idea?

Zechariah's name means "God remembers" or "God has remembered" and it is a central theme throughout the book. Even though the people had been exiled, God would remember His covenant and fulfill His promises. Zechariah uses eight visions, four messages, and two oracles in his ministry in order to share God's near and distant future plans for His people. The people of God would be still be judged for their sins (5:1-11), but they would also be cleansed and restored. "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you." (3:4b). In addition, Israel and Judah's oppressors would be judged by God (1:18-21) as would all nations (6:1-8). Zechariah also includes prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Zechariah predicts Jesus' first coming when He will be rejected, as well as His second coming when Israel will finally be delivered and Jesus will reign as King forever (9-14).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

The book of Zechariah abounds with many clear prophecies concerning Christ. It is second only to the book of Isaiah in the amount of Messianic prophecies given in the Old Testament. Zechariah describes Christ as the angel of the Lord (3:1-2), the Branch (3:8; 6:12-13), the stone with seven eyes (3:9); the King-Priest (6:13), and the cornerstone (10:4). Zechariah also describes the Messiah's entry into Jerusalem on a donkey (9:9), His rejection and being sold for thirty pieces of silver (11:4-13), and calls Him the "one they have pierced" (12:10). Finally, Zechariah declares that the Messiah will come as Judge and righteous King, reigning forever (14). What hope this must have brought to the Jews as they heard this message and knew that the Messiah was coming to bring life and salvation. What a wonderful hope we have today as we await Jesus' return and the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy found in 14:9, "The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name."

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

4:6-7 “So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty.’ What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’ ”

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- According to Haggai 2:23, Zerubbabel was chosen by God for a purpose. What was it?
- In this passage what is the role of the Holy Spirit? How do we access God’s Spirit in everyday life?
- Did you notice how Zechariah has an ongoing discussion and dialogue with God? Does God still have conversations with people today? How does He speak to you on a regular basis?
- What is accomplished through Zerubbabel by the Spirit of God? Did he complete the job?
- What is the meaning of “What are you, mighty mountain”? What was the real challenge?

Practical Application

- How does it make you feel to be chosen by God for a specific task in life? What is your calling?
- Does God speak to you like He spoke to Zechariah? What has He been saying lately?
- Why do we tend to rely on our might and power rather than the power of the Holy Spirit?
- Where are you facing a mighty mountain in your life? What are you doing about it?
- What has God asked you to do that still needs completion? Where do you need to finish well?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:16 ““Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I have returned to show mercy to Jerusalem. ...”
- 3:1-3 “... And the Lord said to Satan, “I, the Lord, reject your accusations, Satan. ...”
- 8:3 “And now the Lord says: I am returning to Mount Zion, and I will live in Jerusalem....”
- 9:9-10 “...Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey’s colt.”
- 14:1 “Watch, for the day of the Lord is coming when your possessions will be plundered....”

Bonus Features

Zechariah spoke both to Israel’s immediate future and to the distant future in Christ. As with most prophecies of Israel’s restoration after exile, the predictions he made had immediate significance for Zerubbabel the son of David, for Joshua the high priest and for Jerusalem. At the same time, however, Zerubbabel was only the continuance of the priestly line and was “symbolic of things to come” (3:8). As a result, what was said about Zerubbabel and Joshua anticipated what the final son of David, the Messiah, would one day accomplish in full measure. Although the Messiah is not specifically mentioned in 2:5 and 10, the promise of God’s dwelling in the midst of his people is realized in Christ (Jn. 1:14). Similarly, the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated in 14:16-20 will find its fullest expression in the final stage of the kingdom of the Messiah in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1-3). Excerpted from *Finding Christ in Zachariah* www.npchurch.org

Personal Takeaways and Notes