

Repent and Reflect

Zechariah 1:1-21

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Introduction: We read in Ezra 5:1, “*Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, & Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah & Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them*” (& cf. 6:14). These 2 men were used by God to encourage the remnant of Jews who returned from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the Temple & reestablish their worship. They both witnessed the obedient response of the Jews to continue the building of the Temple until its finish. Yet Zechariah’s prophecy is far greater in scope than that of Haggai. Through a series of visions, Zechariah looks well into the future. It has been said that “he dwells on the Person & work of Christ more fully than all the other minor prophets together” (Feinberg). The book is admittedly a difficult one to interpret because of the visions of Zechariah & the book’s apocalyptic nature. Feinberg suggests a simple threefold outline of the book: (1) visions (1-6); (2) questions (7-8); & burdens (9-14). The book could also be divided chronologically: (1) prophecies while the Temple is being rebuilt (1-8); & (2) prophecies after the Temple is rebuilt (9-14). We began our study of the Minor Prophets back in February by asking: “Why study the Minor Prophets?” We considered 5 themes running through these books: (1) God’s undeniable sovereignty; (2) God’s inevitable judgment (against sin); (3) God’s unbelievable love; (4) God’s inescapable call (for repentance); & (5) God’s indescribable Messiah. We can see each of these themes described in Zechariah. In this first chapter we have Zechariah exhorting the Jews to repent & encouraging them to reflect & we will compare our need to repent & reflect as well.

I. The **voice** of the prophet (1:1-6) > exhortation to repent

A. The **meaning** of Zechariah’s name – “The Lord (Jehovah) remembers.”

B. The **mention** of Zechariah’s ancestry:

1. His father was Berechiah (probably died when Zechariah was young; see Ezra 5:1 & 6:14).
2. His grandfather was Iddo (a priest who returned from Babylon – Neh. 12:4); therefore Zechariah was both a priest & a prophet.

C. The **message** of Zechariah’s heart:

1. The displeasure of the LORD (:2, 5-6).
2. The destruction (implied) of the land (particularly Jerusalem & the Temple).
3. The decision of the leaders (:3-4). Don’t be like them – repent!

II. The **visions** of the prophet (1:7-21) > encouragement to reflect

A. The **horsemen** (horses) (:7-17) [these 3 “a’s” from Wiersbe]

1. The **army** (:7-11)

- a. The angel (of the LORD) leading –
 - (1) Riding upon a red horse.
 - (2) Rider is the Messiah – “*angel of the LORD*” – preincarnate appearance of Christ.

b. The angel interpreting –

- (1) Ten times Zechariah asks questions & receives answers from this angel.
- (2) The need for us to seek wisdom; James 1:5 & Psalm 25:14.

c. The angels following (an angelic army represented by the other horsemen).

2. The **appeal** (:12)

a. The intercession of the angel of the LORD –

- (1) The wonder of the Son of God interceding for the people of God in great affliction!

- (2) “That the Son of God should so identify Himself with the cries of His people reveals His compassion & concern” (Wiersbe).
 - b. The intercession of the believers –
 - (1) The cry “*How long?*” of the O.T. saints > Psalm 74:9-10; 79:5; 80:4; Hab. 1:2.
 - (2) The cry of the martyred saints in heaven > Rev. 6:10.
 - 3. The **answer** (:13-17)
 - a. God’s comforting words to Israel (:13-14) –
 - (1) “*Good words & comforting words.*”
 - (2) “*...I am jealous for Jerusalem & for Zion with a great jealousy.*” [more tonight]
 - b. God’s challenging words to Israel’s enemies (:15-17) –
 - (1) The Lord’s displeasure with Israel’s enemies.
 - (2) The Lord’s destruction (implied) of Israel’s enemies.
- Summary: God promises the return of His people to the land & the prosperity of the nation.
 Application: “When our situation appears to be hopeless, we must remind ourselves that God identifies with our sufferings & is in charge of the future. Our responsibility is to repent, confess our sins, & believe His ‘*comforting words.*’ His responsibility is to respond to our faith & work out His perfect will for us” (Wiersbe).

B. The horns (& carpenters) (:18-21)

- 1. Who are they? [“*horns*” speak of power & strength]
 - a. The kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece & Rome.
 - b. The same kingdoms described by Daniel in his prophecy found in chapters 2 & 7.
- 2. What do they do?
 - a. They are nations allowed by God to afflict & scatter Israel (captivities).
 - b. They are also described as “*carpenters*” (or “*smiths*”) as each empire conquered the previous one (and the eventual destruction of all of Israel’s enemies – Zech. 14).

Note: “The scattering of Israel has been accomplished with such Satanic fury that the Word indicates no man could lift us his head. This tells fully the prostrated condition of Israel & the injuries suffered at the hands of her foes” (Feinberg).

Summary of this vision (“*horns & carpenters*”): The eventual destruction of Israel’s enemies is fulfillment of God’s promise in Genesis 12:3, “*And I will bless them that bless thee, & curse him that curseth thee...*” Consider the letter of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to President Ronald Reagan (January 2, 1983). (W.W. p. 450).

Conclusion: The message of Zechariah to Judah here in chapter one could be summarized by the oft-quoted II Chronicles 7:14. Here we have the voice of the prophet exhorting the Jews to repent & the visions of the prophet encouraging them to reflect on God’s concern for His people’s well-being. The key is verse 14 where we read, “*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem & for Zion with a great jealousy.*” The message of repentance is needed in our day as well, especially as we witness the immorality, idolatry, insubordination (rebellion), & ingratitude of our society. But not only the lost sinners in our world need to repent, so, too, the Church as a whole. Consider this quote from Vance Havner, “The last word of our Lord to the church is not the Great Commission. The Great Commission is indeed our program to the end of the age, but our Lord’s last word to the church is ‘Repent.’” See Revelation 2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19, for five of the seven churches which Jesus exhorts to repent. The sins of immorality, idolatry, insubordination, & ingratitude can unfortunately be found in our churches today. And compare our need to reflect on God’s concern for His people today as we consider the sovereignty of God & the responsibility of man (cf. Hebrews 9:27 & Romans 14:11-12). How about you this morning? Are you at peace with God through salvation in Christ? As a believer, is there any sin hindering your relationship with the Lord or your fellow believers? Repent or reflect. What is your need today?