

GOD'S PLANS FOR ISRAEL

Studies in the Book of Zechariah
Part 4

"… Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he…"

– ZECHARIAH 9:9

Introduction

God's plans for Israel is one of the most prevalent topics in the book of Zechariah. But it's also one of the most prevalent topics in the entire Bible. And it's tied directly to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? It is this: that God became man on our behalf, lived perfectly, died for our sins, resurrected, empowered us as partners and co-heirs, restored us to our created purpose, and will be coming back to restore the earth to its original design as a paradise dwelling place for God and man together. It was through Israel that Jesus came, and to Israel that He will return to bless the whole world.

Another great part of God's plan is that it doesn't rely on the faithfulness of Israel or any other people. It has everything to do with the faithfulness of God.

For the purpose of this study, we will launch all our points from the book of Zechariah and only use other passages to support.

Zechariah 8

Read Zechariah 8:1–2

What is Israel's state at this time? How impressive are they? What sort of track record do they have?

Why is God jealous for them?

What is the implication of the phrase "jealous with great wrath"?

Why is that phrase important for us to keep in mind?

Read verse 3

What two tenses are used?

What's the significance of using two tenses here?

Read verses 4–8

Here God speaks of faithfulness and righteousness. But who is it that He says is faithful and righteous?

Read verse 9

Aha! Once again, we see the recurring theme of building the House of the Lord. Notice that the tense shifts again. What is the significance of that?

How does the future promise of verses 4–8 encourage the people in verse 9 to "Let your hands be strong…that the temple might be built"?

Read verse 13

It is now popular among conservatives and liberals alike to be anti-Semitic. Israel has always been a byword and is now a byword in the mouths of so many Christians. But what does God say they will become?

Keep in mind, this cannot be talking about the first coming of Christ because Israel became more of a byword than ever after His coming. In 70 AD, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed because of Rome's displeasure with them. And in 132 AD, genocide was declared on the Jews in Israel.

Today, they are a byword of cursing among the nations, but God promises to save them. Will God have to save them from me? From us? Are we participating in anti-Semitism?

Let's make an important distinction. Does knowing that God is jealous for Israel, that He loves them, and that He has plans for them mean they are perfect?

Does that mean they can be saved apart from Christ?

(No!)

This is the gospel! Did God love you when you were His enemy?

Why has Israel become a byword?

The Promise and the Nations

Read Deuteronomy 28:1, 15, and 37

> *1 And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.*
>
> *15 But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all His commandments and His statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.*
>
> *37 And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the Lord will lead you away.*

But what is the promise we are seeing in Zechariah?

Read Zechariah 8:20–23

What are God's plans for Israel—as far as what we see here in these verses?

Why do you think this is His plan?

Read Zechariah 12:1–3

Here we see God using the rage of the nations for His purposes. What do you think that purpose is?

The answer is in verse 9.

Read Zechariah 12:9

Do you think Israel will be innocent when it comes to stirring up the rage of the nations?

(Does it matter? Was Samson innocent when God used him to destroy His enemies?)

If they are not guiltless, are there consequences?

(Zech 14:2 gives the answer but we'll look at that on a different sesion.)

The Apple of His Eye

Read Zechariah 2:8–13

This is Jesus speaking. We know this because it says, "after He (the Father) sends me to the nations who plundered you…" (Who's the "me"?) This same person says, "Behold, I will dwell in your midst."

What does it mean to be the apple of the eye of Jesus?

It means anti-Semitism is the same as poking Jesus in the eye.

But these verses get to the point of it all. God rouses Himself from His holy dwelling in Heaven to do what? The answer is in verses 10 and 11.

He rouses Himself from His holy dwelling place in Heaven that He might dwell instead on Earth, with Jerusalem as the Holy of Holies.

Who does verse 11 say will join themselves to the Lord?

What is the job of a high priest? (To represent the people to God.)

With that in mind, read Zechariah 3:1–5.

Though this is applicable to anyone, in the context of the book of Zechariah, what is the meaning of this?

Joshua is the representative of Israel as a nation. And we see later in the chapter that Israel is supposed to represent the Branch, Jesus Christ (we will get into that more next session).

What is the significance of verse 5?

What do God's plans for Israel ultimately tell us about what He wants most? (To dwell with mankind and for Jesus to be loved by mankind.)

Looking Ahead

Read Zechariah 14:4–11, and 20–21

Thoughts?

Read Zechariah 6:12–13

Read Zechariah 1:17

Read Zechariah 9:9–12 and 14