

ZECHARIAH
Text: 8:1-10

INTRO: Because of the special church days that have taken place recently, it is some time since we began the book of Zechariah. To do this book in 2 messages means skipping a lot of material, and because some of you have said it was OK to take more time, I will do so with this book. So, we want to briefly review the first message in Zechariah. We considered section I in Zechariah which is a brief message in 1:1-6. The basic message here is a call for Israel to repentance.

Then we looked at the first five visions of section II. I will quote briefly from the conclusion of the first message. "The first vision is of the rider on the red horse and three other horses; red, speckled and white. Israel has been defeated and the world is at rest. But this vision closes with a promise that Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The second vision I gave in two parts. The first part had four horns, representing the four world powers which scattered Israel. Then came four carpenters who dismantled these four world powers. Vision 3 speaks of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the regathering of Israel. Vision 4 shows us Joshua the High Priest and his dirty clothes which are replaced, speaking of the restoration of the temple. It also speaks of Israel being saved in one day. This is yet future and will happen at the end of the tribulation. Vision 5 gave us the picture of the lamp stand and the two olive trees. We saw the fulfillment of this in the book of Revelation. These two olive trees will provide spiritual light during the first 3 and 1/2 years of the tribulation, where millions of people will get saved according to Revelation 7."

This morning we will look at the last 3 visions and then at the concluding message to these visions. That will conclude part II of this book and Part three has 3 messages and two burdens. This morning I plan to only get through the 3 messages which will leave the 2 burdens for next time.

6. Vision 6 (5:1-4)

For the sixth vision we go to chapter 5 (read 1-4). The vision is of a flying roll about 15x30 feet. David Levy says that the first five visions encouraged and comforted Israel. The last three

are a stern warning against wickedness. It is unclear what this flying roll is. Views vary from it being a reference to an airplane to it speaking of God's law. But whatever it is, the picture here is one of judgment. G.C. Luck says God has two ways of dealing with sin; grace and judgment. In this vision judgment against those who break God's commandments is no doubt in view. Furthermore it speaks of a curse that goes over the whole earth. This may be a reference to a far fulfillment in the time of the tribulation.

7. Vision 7 (5:5-11)

Vision number seven is found in 5:5-11 (read). The interpretation of some of these visions is difficult and it could be that they are written for a time yet future when their significance will become clear. Interpretations abound. Again writers like J. R. Church thinks the ephah speaks of airplanes. He says that the word 'ephah' is made up of two Hebrew words. The first word is the Hebrew 'iy' ee, meaning a doleful sound, a howler. The second is 'paah', which means to puff or blow away. So he thinks there might be the idea here of an airplane.

I think rather it speaks of the measure of Israel's sin being full. An ephah was approximate to our bushel, or about 5 gallons. And the idea here continues from the previous vision that Israel's sin has reached its full mark.

In verses 10-11 Shinar is mentioned. Shinar is Babylon. A question raised is, could this speak of the reestablishment of Babylon? Or, and I think more likely, that it speaks of Mystery Babylon of Revelation 17 which speaks, I think of Roman Catholicism.

I think that the full understanding of these visions will come in the future when the things prophesied take place.

8. Vision 8 (6:1-8)

We come now to the eighth and last vision and we start with 6:1 (read). We have four chariots and two mountains of brass. The mountains are not identified but it is said that they are of brass. Brass, in Scripture, is often used symbolically to refer to judgment and to me there is no doubt that this is what it speaks of here. One can only speculate as to what two mountains these are, and some think they are the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion. If that is so, then these chariots are coming up the Kidron valley in Jerusalem.

It is sometimes speculated that these four chariots with horses and chariot riders speak of the four world empires that Daniel spoke of, or the four horsemen of the book of Revelation, since the colors are similar. However, the text says in verse 4 that these are four spirits of heaven. This does not seem to speak of the four winds, as the word spirits can be translated winds as well, but these four have their station before God in heaven. That seems to speak of spirits or angels.

The black and white horses go north. That is in the direction of Babylon or also Russia. The dappled horses went to the south country. This could well speak of Egypt. We are not told where the red horses go, but we are told that these all walk to and fro in the earth. Verse 8 then tells us that the horses that go to the north country have given rest to God's Spirit. Levy thinks this anticipates that they destroy the evil system of Babylon.

Well, these last three visions are as yet hard to fully understand, but I expect that in days to come some of these difficult prophecies will become much clearer and become very significant.

B. The Message (6:9-15)

Chapter 6:15-19 presents somewhat of a difficulty as far as interpretation is concerned with relation to the previous vision. The previous visions all began with something regarding what Zechariah saw, thus we see them as visions. The first vision, 1:8 says, "I

saw by night..." The second vision, 1:20 says, "Then the Lord showed me..." The third vision, 2:1 says, "Then I raised my eyes..." The fourth vision, 3:1 says, "Then he showed me..." The fifth vision, 4:2 says, "What do you see?" The sixth vision, 5:1 says, "Then I raised my eyes and saw..." The seventh vision, 2:5 says, "Lift your eyes now, and see..." The eighth vision, 6:1 says, "Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked..." But when we come to 6:9, though we have a change in subject, it says nothing about seeing. It says, "Then the word of the Lord came to me saying..." I think it is quite clear that we have a break in subject matter. And what I see here is a conclusion to all the previous visions. In the end, Messiah will come and set up His divine kingdom.

The names given in verse 10 may be symbolic (read 9-10). J. Vernon McGee says that Heldai means *robust*, Tobijah means God's *goodness* and Jedaiah means *God knows*. He puts the message together like this, that God knows that through His goodness He intends to put His king upon the throne. Whatever the significance of these three men who had come back from Babylon, verse 11 now clearly instructs Zechariah to make an elaborate crown and place it on Joshua (read). Joshua is a priest, and what is most significant is that in the OT they did not put crowns on priests. Crowns were for kings. It is pointed out by some that the word 'crown' is in the plural, and speaks of crowns. It may well be a crown representing the priestly ministry and a crown representing the kingly ministry of Jesus Christ. Remember that this name Joshua is the same as Jesus in the NT. In the millennium Jesus will be both priest and king.

We go to verse 12-13 to learn the reason why this crown is placed on the head of a priest (read). The Man whose name is the BRANCH is none other than the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is clear from such passages as Isaiah 53:2 and Jeremiah 33:15. Verse 12 says that this Branch will branch out from His place and He shall build the temple of the Lord. From the fact that Joshua, whose name in the NT is Jesus, was crowned and is spoken of here, the building of the temple spoken of here is the millennial temple. Jesus Christ will be involved in the construction of the millennial temple. This

temple is described for us in Ezekiel 40-47 in great detail. Now note in verse 14 this clause, "So He shall be a priest on His throne." A priest did not sit on a throne, but Jesus Christ will be both.

Now consider verse 15 (read). The reference to 'those who are far off' likely refers to the Gentiles. Not only will the Gentiles be involved in worshipping at the temple in the millennium, but here it seems they may be involved in the construction of it as well. May I remind us once more that we may be very near to that time. What an appropriate reminder at the close of this second section of the book.

III. SECTION 3 (7:1-14:21)

As I outline this book, we come now to the third and final section of Zechariah. From 7:1 we learn that this section of the book came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month (read). In this last section we have a further division. The first part has three messages and the second part has two burdens. We begin with the first part and the first message which goes from 7:1-14. Approximately 2 years have passed since the parts of the book we have already covered were given.

A. Messages (7:1-8:23)

1. First message (7:1-14)

The first message is found in chapter 17. Verses 2-3 give us the question that leads to the Lord's answer (read). After Israel was taken captive by Babylon they held a yearly fast to commemorate this sad time. Also, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and Judah, he had set up Gedaliah as the governor of the Jews in Judah. Gedaliah was a good man but he put his trust in untrustworthy men and he was assassinated. During the 70 year captivity, the Jews held a fast to commemorate this sad event as well. Thus we have these two fasts that are now in question. And the question here is that since the temple is being rebuilt, should they continue to keep these two fasts related to its destruction?

Well, look at verses 4-7 for the Lord's answer (read). God says, "Did you really fast for Me, FOR ME?" Let me put this in my own words. The Lord said, "When the prophets came to you before the captivity, you should have obeyed them. If you had obeyed them you would not have been taken captive, that would have reduced one fast for you. But also, Gedaliah would not have been assassinated, that would have reduced the second fast for you. If you had obeyed you would not have needed to have any of these fasts. I told your forefathers what to do but they refused, therefore you went into captivity and I scattered you among the nations."

Maybe the message is this: Don't weep and fast regarding the past; repent and live right! The Lord is much more concerned about obedience to His word in the present than he is about the keeping of fasts related to the past! Yet it appears that Israel did not repent nor live right, and Zechariah, like many other prophets before him died a martyr's death from people who did not want to obey God.

We continue the message in 8-14 (read). Verses 9-10 give the instructions God had given through the former prophets to the forefathers of those who were now wondering if they should keep the fasts. These instructions had been, first, execute true justice. Do right! Second, show mercy and compassion to your brother. Three, do not oppress the widow, or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Four, let none of you plan evil against his brother. When the people in the land live like this, God blesses that land. In other words, live right among each other. When injustice, unconcern for others, oppression of the helpless and evil planning against others takes over, eventually God will deal with that land and that is what happened to Israel. That is what the whole world is now building up for.

2. Second message (8:1-17)

We are now ready to look at the second message which we find in chapter 8. Look at verse 1 (read). The phrase, 'the Lord of hosts' occurs 17 times in this chapter. Probably the translation, 'the Lord of armies' is accurate to the meaning. That is significant in light of the fact that this chapter is about Jerusalem.

Some time ago one of our young men asked something like this: What is so special about Jerusalem? Why did God pick that spot? I have pondered that. I do not know why. I do know this, that Jerusalem, or Zion as it is often called, is the place God chose above all other places on earth. If you and I had chosen one place on earth that was the more special than any other, a place to build a city that would some day be the capital of the whole world, what place would we have chosen? Certainly not some dry rocky place on the top of a mountain with very little water! I do not know any human being that would have chosen this place. So let me say this, that in the eyes of God there is no place like Jerusalem on all the earth. In Zechariah 2:8 God said it was the apple of His eye.

We see here in verse 2 that the Lord feels very strongly about Jerusalem. Notice how verse 2 is worded (read again). Now look at verse 3 (read). When it says, "Thus says the Lord..." you can count on it that it will happen. God says He will return to Jerusalem and He will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. The temple spoken of in this verse is not the temple that was being rebuilt in Zechariah's day. I have not read of the glory of God ever coming to the second temple. However, when the millennial temple is rebuilt, there the Shekinah glory cloud will once more enter the Lord's house.

We note in this verse also that Jerusalem is to be called the City of truth. And it will be

called the mountain of the Lord of hosts and the Holy Mountain. Again, the final fulfillment of these prophecies is still future.

So let us see how Zechariah encourages the Jews of his day to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple in verses 4-15. In verses 4-5 we have the promise that people of all ages will once more live in Jerusalem (read). In verses 7-8 we have the promise of the regathering of the Jews (read). We are still seeing this promise being fulfilled today. In verses 9-10, Zechariah encourages the Jews in their work of rebuilding the temple in their day (read). Then verses 11-15 speak of the blessing of Israel (read). David Levy says whenever Israel is out of the land, it becomes desolate. Whenever they are in the land, it flourishes. Then in verses 16-17, the Lord once more encourages them to live right (read).

3. Third message (8:18-23)

First, in verses 18-19 we find that their fasting days will be turned into feasting days (read). The fast of the fourth month remembered the flight of the royal seed from Jerusalem. The fast of the fifth month spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The fast of the seventh month spoke of the murder of the good governor, Gedaliah and the fast of the tenth month remembered the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Babylon. In the millennium, these fasts will be turned into feasts. That means that instead of refraining from eating, there will be all kinds of eating!

Verses 20-23 then speak of the prominence of Jerusalem in the blessed days of the millennium (read).

That completes the three messages of this part of Zechariah and these messages give way to Zechariah's two burdens which are given to us

in the last six chapters of the book, chapters 9-14.

CONCL: Well, we covered a lot of material. We covered the last three of eight visions along with the concluding message to those visions. Then in section 3 we covered three more messages. That is a lot. I trust that when you read through the Bible it will become more and more meaningful. This morning was heavy going but in the next message things will be a little more familiar and a little easier to understand.

Let me give you a few summarizing thoughts. God is deeply concerned for the welfare of Israel and Jerusalem. He notes meticulously what is happening there. And second, some day the Messiah will return to earth and He will set up His kingdom, and Jerusalem will be the capital of the world. If you die a truly born again believer, or are raptured, you will experience the millennium. You may well be involved in the rebuilding of the temple. I cannot begin to describe to you the glory of those days, but they are only the beginning. When the new heavens and new earth come, glory upon glory will be entered by the true believer and it will be like that for all eternity!