

Notes on Zechariah

prepared by Prof. Daniel Smith Christopher for CBI Orange

Intro/Setting: During the Reign of Darius 522-486, the Third of the PERSIAN rulers after CYRUS. The issue is the rebuilding of the community after the disaster. Begins with a “Deuteronomic Review”:

Zech 1:1-6 – In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo, saying: ² The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. ³ Therefore say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts: Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. ⁴ Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.” But they did not hear or heed me, says the LORD. ⁵ Your ancestors, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶ But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your ancestors? So they repented and said, “The LORD of hosts has dealt with us according to our ways and deeds, just as he planned to do.”

Reminds us of Isaiah 40, which begins with a review of the punishment of Israel as well.

The EIGHT NIGHT VISIONS:

- (1) Zech 1:7-17 The Four Horsemen
- (2) Zech 1:18-21 The Horns and the Blacksmiths (HB Zech 2:1-4)
- (3) Zech 2:1-13 The Measure of Jerusalem (HB Zech 2:5-17)
- (4) Zech 3:1-7 Purifying Joshua for Priesthood
- (5) Zech 4:1-14 The Golden Lamps
- (6) Zech 5:1-4 The Flying Scroll
- (7) Zech 5:5-11 The Wickedness Flies Away
- (8) Zech 6:1-8 The Four Chariots

FIRST NIGHT VISION: 1:7-17 (The Four Horsemen)

- Introduces the Four Horsemen, who patrol the earth to see what the situation is.
- They find that the world is “at peace” (v. 11). But they should NOT be!! Israel is suffering and yet the world is not paying any attention. God threatens that a change is coming:

Zech 1:14-17 – So the angel who talked with me said to me, Proclaim this message: Thus says the LORD of hosts; I am very jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. ¹⁵ And I am extremely angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they made the disaster worse. ¹⁶ Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. ¹⁷ Proclaim further: Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.

SECOND NIGHT VISION: 1:18-21 (The Horns and the Blacksmith) (HB 2:1-4)

- The blacksmiths who will “strike off the horns” of the nations. Horns as a sign of power in Apocalyptic thought.

THIRD NIGHT VISION: 2:1-13 (The Measure of Jerusalem) (HB 2:5-17)

- Israel is told to FLEE Babylon – because Babylon is supposed to be punished – they will be pillaged by their own slaves (perhaps the people themselves?)

NOTE esp. v. 11: Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.

FOURTH NIGHT VISION: 3:1-7 (Purifying Joshua for Priesthood)

- The FILTHY cloths of Joshua the High Priest are exchanged for the clothes of purity – God will choose him, and allow him to rule over the Temple.
- Note the role of “The Satan” – similar to JOB – A MEMBER OF THE HEAVENLY COURT! He questions whether Joshua is ready (does this reflect opinion of some of the people about this person?)

Then the discussion of “The Branch”:

Isaiah 11:1-7 – A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a **branch** shall grow out of his roots. ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 – The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous **Branch**, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

The Inscribed Stone with SEVEN facets – whole and complete symbolism

- The Word of Peace: Vine and Fig Tree:

2 Kings 18:31 – Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make your peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat from your own **vine** and your own **fig** tree, and drink water from your own cistern

FIFTH NIGHT VISION: 4:1-14 (The Golden Lampstands)

- The selection of Joshua and Zerubbabel
- The issue of “Twin Leadership” – reflected in Zechariah, and in Ezra and Nehemiah. This seems an interesting post-exilic development.
- Zerubabel’s power NOT by military might:

Psalms 33:16-17 – A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. ¹⁷ The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save.

2 Chronicles 20:5-6 – Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said, “O LORD, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand are **power** and **might**, so that no one is able to withstand you.

- The mountains that move are the rubble of the Temple Mount?

SIXTH NIGHT VISION: 5:1-4 (The Flying Scroll)

- The scroll that contains condemnation of steals or swears falsely. The Temple as a location of economic well-being, and also a place of settling disputes.

Psalm 55:1-23 – Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my supplication. ² Attend to me, and answer me; I am troubled in my complaint. I am distraught ³ by the noise of the enemy, because of the clamor of the wicked. For they bring trouble upon me, and in anger they cherish enmity against me. ⁴ My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me. ⁵ Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. ⁶ And I say, “O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; ⁷ truly, I would flee far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah ⁸ I would hurry to find a shelter for myself from the raging wind and tempest.” ⁹ Confuse, O Lord, confound their speech; for I see violence and strife in the city. ¹⁰ Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; ¹¹ ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace. ¹² It is not enemies who taunt me-- I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me-- I could hide from them. ¹³ But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend, ¹⁴ with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng. ¹⁵ Let death come upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol; for evil is in their homes and in their hearts. ¹⁶ But I call upon God, and the LORD will save me. ¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice. ¹⁸ He will redeem me unharmed from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me. ¹⁹ God, who is enthroned from of old, Selah will hear, and will humble them-- because they do not change, and do not fear God. ²⁰ My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me ²¹ with speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war; with words that were softer than oil, but in fact were drawn swords. ²² Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. ²³ But you, O God, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and treacherous shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.

Psalm 71:10-24 – For my enemies speak concerning me, and those who watch for my life consult together. ¹¹ They say, “Pursue and seize that person whom God has forsaken, for there is no one to deliver.” ¹² O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me! ¹³ Let my accusers be put to shame and consumed; let those who seek to hurt me be covered with scorn and disgrace. ¹⁴ But I will hope continually, and will praise you yet more and more...²⁴ All day long my tongue will talk of your righteous help, for those who tried to do me harm have been put to shame, and disgraced.

SEVENTH NIGHT VISION: 5:5-11 (The Wickedness Flies Away)

- Wickedness flies away (to Babylon) in a basket.

EIGHTH NIGHT VISION: 6:1-8 (The Four Chariots)

- Now things are moving again! Like a reminder of the opening sequence. Now the Earth is moving toward the end that God intends.

Zech 6:15 – Those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD; and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

CHAPTER 7: The Question about Fasting results in another HISTORY LESSON
(like the opening verses of the Book):

Zech 7:8-14 – The word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying: ⁹ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; ¹⁰ do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. ¹¹ But they refused to listen, and turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears in order not to hear. ¹² They made their hearts adamant in order not to hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. ¹³ Just as, when I called, they would not hear, so, when they called, I would not hear, says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁴ and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and a pleasant land was made desolate.

CHAPTER 8: A long sermon the promises of God that things are going to get better, both agriculturally (remember Haggai) and otherwise. SO, This Time, don't screw it up!

Zech 8:14-17 – For thus says the LORD of hosts: Just as I purposed to bring disaster upon you, when your ancestors provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁵ so again I have purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; do not be afraid. ¹⁶ These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, ¹⁷ do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the LORD.

FINALLY THE ANSWER TO THE FASTING QUESTION: 8:18-19

It is going to stop!

And then the final promise, once again, of others who will join in:

Zech 8:20-23 – Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, the inhabitants of many cities; ²¹ the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Come, let us go to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.” ²² Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of the LORD. ²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from nations of every language shall take hold of a Jew, grasping his garment and saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

SECOND ZECHARIAH (Chaps. 9–11, 12–14 internal divisions)

Mention of GREECE?

- There is NO mention of Zechariah
- No mention of visions, angels
- NO mention of reconstruction of the Temple.
- Ch. 9, 12, and MALACHI? Was it originally part of this section? “An oracle”...
- Does Zech 9–14 “re-read” Zech 1–8 for a “new setting”?

Common themes:

- ALL Nations will worship Yahweh 9:9-10
- UNIVERSAL Kingdom: 14:16-21
- Purified Community 13:1-2

Zech 9: 1-7 – Judgment on the Nations (Oracles against the Nations)**Zech 9:8-10** – The Universal Rule of God:

Then I will encamp at my house as a guard, so that no one shall march to and fro; no oppressor shall again overrun them, for now I have seen with my own eyes. ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Zech 9:11-17 – An oracle AGAINST GREECE!! (post 333) and restoration of grain and wine once again in the land. Note deliverance from ENEMIES and the productivity of the LAND. Is there a connection?

CHAPTER 10 – Judgment against the Nations

- CALL DIRECTLY ON GOD

- God, who is the CREATOR, the “Storm God”

- The supposed “diviners” are not reliable, and the people wander without a “shepherd”

Zech 10:4-5 – Out of Judah will come “cornerstone”, “tent-peg”:

Psalms 118:22 – The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

Isaiah 22:20-23 – On that day I will call my servant **Eliakim** son of Hilkiah...²² I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open. ²³ I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his ancestral house.

BATTLE:

Zech 10:5 – Together they shall be like warriors in battle, trampling the foe in the mud of the streets; they shall fight, for the LORD is with them, and they shall put to shame the riders on horses.

Zech 10:8-12 – The Gathering In from the Dispersion, NOTE especially the Canaanite imagery in 10:11: They shall pass through the sea of distress, and the waves of the sea shall be struck down, and all the depths of the Nile dried up. The pride of Assyria shall be laid low, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

CHAPTER 11 – The unjust Shepherds – Mystery, but judgment on internal leaders. Scholars have tried to match up the figures with virtually every period of Israelite history, but we must settle for the fact that the persons knew – but we do not!

- Zech 11 may also be a review of Israelite history.
- Thus the “three” shepherds rejected are Saul, David, and Solomon
- The broken staffs are the divided Kingdom’s history
- The Final break is judgment of shepherds who are destroyed

CHAPTERS 12—14

Begins with the Creation (12:1); continues with Jerusalem/Davidic Kingdom, a fright to surrounding nations:

Mourning for the One who was pierced – Allusion to Collective Exile?

OR – A prediction about the FUTURE glory of Israel and the military victories to come, and a restoration of the Davidic line? Mistreatment of a descendent of David when they were no longer administrators over this area?

CHAPTER 13: CLEANSING FROM IMPURITY

So PURE, there will be NO NEED FOR PROPHETS!!

God will refine the people: Poetically described in 13:7-9:

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate,” says the LORD of hosts. Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones. ⁸ In the whole land, says the LORD, two-thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one-third shall be left alive. ⁹ And I will put this third into the fire, refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, “They are my people”; and they will say, “The LORD is our God.”

THE CONCEPT OF THE PURIFIED REMNANT – THE REFINERS FIRE!!

Final CHAPTER 14 – Restoration after Godly battle with nations. GOD becomes King:

Zech 14:9 – And the LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

The plague among the Nations. Note that the Jerusalemites do not need to engage in warfare – God will strike them with plagues like the Egyptian plagues – God returns to “warfare”, like Moses in Exodus 14:13-14 – But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”

Zech 14:12-19 – This shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet; their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths. ¹³ On that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of a neighbor, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other; ¹⁴ even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected-- gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. ¹⁵ And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever animals may be in those camps. ¹⁶ Then all who survive of the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the festival of booths. ¹⁷ If any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain upon them. ¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt do not go up and present themselves, then on them shall come the plague that the LORD inflicts on the nations that do not go up to keep the festival of booths. ¹⁹ Such shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to keep the festival of booths.

Holiness spread throughout the City – no more “graded holiness”

Even horses adorned with “Holy to the Lord”:

Exodus 39:30-31 – They made the rosette of the holy diadem of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, “Holy to the LORD.” ³¹ They tied to it a blue cord, to fasten it on the turban above; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Even everyone’s COOKING POTS will be as holy as the Temple vessels; similar to the END of Prophecy.

Zechariah’s interesting vision of equalization of holiness, end to “shepherds rule”, and abundance for all! This is a vision of restoration in the early Persian Period, and down into the Greek period as well.

Influences on Book of Revelation:

(1) horsemen; (2) measure city (Rev 11:1); (3) olive trees, lamp; (4) light and water (Rev 21:25; 22:1.5)