

Zechariah – Oh the Visions! Oh the Messiah!

Lesson One

Introduction

In 538 BCE, Babylon was conquered by King Cyrus of the Persian empire. Cyrus allowed the Judean exiles to return to Jerusalem after 70 years in Babylon. Many returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel.

Upon returning, they find Jerusalem in ruins. More importantly, the temple was destroyed. They began rebuilding the temple but were met with many obstacles which weakened their resolve and diminished their enthusiasm. The work stalled for 16 years. This is when Zechariah and Haggai would encourage them to finish their task.

Zechariah carries the most messianic prophecies of any of the twelve minor prophets in the Bible.

[1:1-6]..... Come Back or *Return*

Vs.1 Darius became King of Persia about 16 years after Cyrus conquered Babylon.

Iddo was a priest. Zechariah is one of the rare persons who was both priest and prophet (as Samuel was).

NOTE: Many of the Judeans Zechariah is speaking to and working with were born in exile.

Vss.2-6 Zechariah tells the story of how they ended up in Babylon – because their fore parents did not heed the word of the Lord.
And God's word has outlived them all.

vs.6 Unlike their fore parents, they repented. They took God's word seriously.

[1:7-17].....First Vision

Here are the Biblical Jewish months of the year (compared to ours):

1. **Nisan** (First Month) - March/April
2. **Iyar** (Second Month) - April/May
3. **Sivan** (Third Month) - May/June
4. **Tammuz** (Fourth Month) - June/July
5. **Av** (Fifth Month) - July/August
6. **Elul** (Sixth Month) - August/September
7. **Tishrei** (Seventh Month) - September/October
8. **Cheshvan** (Eighth Month) - October/November
9. **Kislev** (Ninth Month) - November/December
10. **Tevet** (Tenth Month) - December/January
11. **Shevat** (Eleventh Month) - January/February
12. **Adar** (Twelfth Month) – February/March

NOTE: These months are based on the lunar calendar and are significant in Jewish tradition and religious observances.

Vss.1-12 The person on the red horse is the Angel of the Lord.
The other horsemen are also angels who report to the Angel of the Lord.

Vs. 9 It appears there is the Angel of the Lord and the angel Zechariah is talking to. They are two different figures.

- Vss.10-12 The horsemen traveling across the globe is a symbol of God's concern for world affairs and God's presence.
 They report that the earth is at rest and peaceful.
 The Angel of the Lord takes their report and gives it to God and asks how long Judah's punishment will last? How long will God be angry with Jerusalem?
- Vss.13-17 God speaks of God's anger to the secure nations who had been called by God to punish Judah.
 God's angry because these nations went too far – farther than God intended.
 They took liberties of power and abuse, and they will be dealt with.
 Why? God is very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.
 God's promise is to restore Jerusalem and Judah by overflowing them with prosperity. They will be God's choice again.

[1:18-21].....Second Vision

- Vss.18-21 Some believe that four suggests these oppressors of Judah came from all four directions.
 Horns represent power and authority – kingdoms that defeated and exiled God's children.
 The craftsmen are the means by which God will deal with these enemies.
 They are warned in the previous vision to not feel secure.

NOTE: The craftsmen (the judgment of God) do not always move as swiftly as we prefer, but judgment will be given accordingly.

[2:1-13].....Third Vision

- Vss.1-5 Again, more angels appear to Zechariah.
 The conversation between the angels with Zechariah are very similar to the visions at the end of Daniel and in Revelation.
 What's the purpose for measuring the city?
 No need for a wall because God will be the protector of Jerusalem (a wall of fire) and the prosperity there will be for all people.
- Vs.7 Zechariah has a criticism against those Judeans who did not leave Babylon when they were given the opportunity.
 They chose to remain in Babylon under Persian rule.
 Zechariah needs them in Jerusalem to help rebuild the city, and this prophecy reflects this.
- Vss.8-13 God has been moved and has promised to live with God's people.
 God's presence will draw other nations to join Judah
 In opposing nations, further justice will be the rising of the enslaved to fight back.

NOTE: Prophets have to be proven by there prophecies coming true. When these things have happened, people will know how true Zechariah's prophecies are.