

Zechariah

Introduction

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and like Haggai was instrumental in God's hands in stirring up the returnees from captivity to the task of rebuilding. It is the longest of the minor prophets and contains some very difficult sections.

1A. Overview/outline

Introduction, 1:1-6 (Call to repentance)

I. Night visions, 1:7-6:15

There are 8, included are the man with the measuring line, the lampstand, the high priest in filthy clothes, and the flying scroll. Transition: A fasting lesson in obedience and restoration, 7:1; 8:23. The people are asked, "when you fasted was it really for God" (7:5) to point out true religion (7:9-10) and its neglect (7:11) and the consequent scattering (v. 14). But God is jealous for Zion and will return (8:3) and form a remnant (vs. 6-8), covenantally (v. 8), and not deal with the remnant of this people as he did in the past (8:11). Now the international scene will be marked by worship (8:22-23).

II. Two oracles, 9-14 (9-11; 12-14)

2A. Theme

The theme is night visions and oracles of restoration through the crowned high priest in filthy rags and riding a donkey. Zechariah gives night visions and oracles that anticipate the restoration of the people of God through Christ in a now and not yet pattern. Like the other prophets the book moves from the restoration community of the prophet's day to the coming of Christ that unfolds in the present realization of the kingdom as it moves toward final consummation.

3A. Message for us

1B. Repentance

The repentant life is basic to all the stages of restoration (cf. 1:1-6; 7:8; 8:16). Return to me and I will return to you. Repentance is the way of life. Given the downward spiral in all of Israel's (and mankind's) history, and in light of passages like Haggai 1:12-14, we know that we obey because of his effectual love; if the Lord did not leave us a seed we would be as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:9).

2B. The Great High Priest

Jesus will bring a greater restoration. He will do so as a high priest with filthy clothes opposed by Satan but by obedience will govern (3:1-7) and secure the return to Eden (3:8-10). Jesus must be cleansed of the sins he owns as his own (cf. the baptism by John). As high priest he will be crowned king in order to build the temple and rule (6:11-13). As priest he will be a humble king who rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (9:9) in order to free the prisoners by the blood of the covenant (9:11). As shepherd he will be stricken and his sheep scattered. But he will extend his rule to the ends of the earth (9:10).

3B. The New Jerusalem and the New Earth

Jerusalem will be a new Eden (14:8), secure (v.11) and a truly holy city. There all the remnant from all nations will go to worship the king (v.16) for the Lord will be king over the whole earth (v. 9).