

Minor Prophets: Zechariah

Background

- Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai, Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Joshua.
- He began his prophesy in October of 520 B.C.
- He is the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo.
- His name means "The LORD Remembers."

Historical Context

- Judah was exiled to Babylon in 586 B.C.
- In 536 B.C. they return under the decree of Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophesy (ch 25). From the time Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem and began taking captives it was 70 years.
- Jeremiah prophesied that God would make a New Covenant with His people, putting His law on their hearts (31:33). There was an expectation that the Messianic Kingdom would be established.
- Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the priest lead the people back and they begin to rebuild the temple.
- Surrounding people who had been placed in Judah by Babylon ask to help with the temple. Zerubbabel refuses help. In response the surrounding people become adversaries and send a letter of complaint to king Artaxerxes. The king commands that construction stop.
- King Darius takes the throne in 520 B.C. It has been 16 years since the temple project began.
- Due to the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, construction resumes and King Darius gives his blessing.

What Does Zechariah Say?

- Introduction 1:1-6
 - A Call to Repent (reminded of the past, the people repent)
- Zechariah's Dream-Visions
 - 1. Four Horsemen on Patrol Report Peace (1:8-17): Is it time for the Kingdom?
 - 2. Four Horns/Four Craftsmen (1:18-21): Reflections on Sin and Exile
 - 3. Jerusalem is Measured (2:1-13): New Jerusalem is a Pure Beacon
 - 4. Joshua the High Priest (3:1-10): Messianic Kingdom Comes **If...**
 - 5. Zerubbabel and Joshua Olive Trees: (4:1-14): Messianic Kingdom Comes **If...**
 - 6. The Flying Scroll (5:1-4): New Jerusalem is a Pure Beacon
 - 7. Woman in a Basket (5:5-11): Reflections on Sin and Exile
 - 8. Four Chariots on Patrol Report Peace (6:1-8): Is it time for the Kingdom?
- Appendix Vision (6:9-15) Hope of the Branch, a Priest/King... **if** you will obey
- Conclusion (Ch 7-8)
 - Question: Do we stop grieving and fasting for the old temple? (Is the Kingdom here?)
 - Answer: **If...** you become faithful people ready to participate in God's Kingdom
 - Render true judgment, show kindness, render justice, speak truth, make peace
- The Messianic Kingdom Pt. 1: Chapters 9-11
 - The Coming King... (9-10)
 - He comes "humble and mounted on a donkey..."
 - ...Becomes the Rejected Shepherd (11)
 - Rejected by the other shepherds and the sheep/covenants are broken

- The Messianic Kingdom Pt. 2: Ch 12-14
 - God confronts the evil of the nations and His people are saved as a remnant again
 - His people will realize their sin and repent resulting in saving and the ushering in of God's Kingdom.
 - There will be no night, a river of life will flow out of the city of Jerusalem, the nations will come to worship, even common objects will be Holy to the LORD and there will not be a trader/merchant in the house of the LORD.

New Testament Fulfillment

- Multiple prophecies from Zechariah are fulfilled in the life of Jesus.
- In Acts 1:6 the disciples asked Jesus when the kingdom will be restored.
- He promised them the Spirit and told them to be His witnesses and then ascended into heaven.
- The angels then told them Jesus would return in the same way they saw Him leave. This is prophesied in Zechariah 14:4.

What Does It Mean?

- Zechariah seems to focus on the question that is on the lips of the people of Judah, "When is the Messianic Kingdom coming?"
- The answer seems to be conditional: God is bringing His kingdom if you are faithful to the covenant.
- There are also seems to be a hint that they will fail and Jeremiah's prophesy of the law written on their hearts is yet to come.
- There is a Messianic shepherd/king coming who will be rejected and then things will get *really* bad before the LORD comes as the King over all the earth.
- Ultimately there is great hope in the promise that God's plan is not conditional on His people's fickle faithfulness, but in His time He will pour out a spirit of grace and pleas of mercy.

How Does it Apply?

- The New Testament message is still similar. We are waiting for the kingdom as well. As we wait, we need to be faithful covenant keepers whose hope is in that future kingdom.
- 2 Peter 3:9-14