

A Survey of the Old Testament
Prophetic Books
by Pastor Richard H. Jones

8 "Zechariah"

I. THE PROPHET

Zechariah's name means "the Lord remembers". In Zech. 1:1 he is referred to as "the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo", but as the son of Iddo in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14. Iddo was a priest who returned from the captivity (Neh. 12:4). The references to Zechariah, as his son, were probably used loosely for grandson. This was the case with Laban (Gen. 29:5; 31:28).

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and was also called to encourage the people during the time that the temple work had ceased. We may assume from Ezra 6:14,15 that Zechariah lived to see the temple finished.

II. THE PROPHECY

Zechariah's prophecy can be divided in two major divisions. The first eight chapters consists of visions and have an immediate reference to the historical setting of Zechariah's time. The remaining six chapters are prophecies for the future and are eschatological in context.

Broken down, in a little more detail, 1:1-6 is a call to repentance. 1:7 - 6:15 comprises eight visions all received in one night by Zechariah. Chapters 7 and 8 give an account of a delegation from Bethel. Then finally chapters 9-14 deal with Israel's exaltation over the nations and the Messianic Kingdom of the latter days.

III. THE PERIOD

The historical background of Zechariah's time is the same as that of Haggai. King Artaxerxes had ordered the temple rebuilding to cease (Ezra 4:6). He was apparently Cambyses, the Son of King Cyrus, who had decreed the Jewish return to Palestine in 536 B.C. After 16 years Cambyses was succeeded by Darius who lifted the suspension in the second year of his reign (Haggai 1:1). Zechariah prophesied around 520 B.C. when the religious state of affairs was indifferent to the things of the Lord. The people had not only become complacent, but also selfish, seeking their own interests.

IV. NOTABLE THINGS

- A. Note how Zechariah sets forth the Messiah: the Branch and God's servant (3:8); the Shepherd (9:16; 11:11); the Smitten Shepherd (13:7); His triumphant entry (9:9); betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (11:12-13); His return to the Mt. of Olives (14:3-8). Many other references disclose His suffering, rejection, death, and millennial reign.
- B. Note Matt. 27:9-10 cites a passage from Zech. 11:12-13 but attributes it to Jeremiah. Matthew apparently combined two prophecies, one from Zechariah and one from Jeremiah but ascribed them both to Jeremiah.
- C. Note where Christ will return at His second coming and what will happen as a result (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:9-11).
- D. Note what will happen during the millennium to those nations which do not worship the Lord (14:16,17).
- E. Note God's plan for the Northern ten tribes (Zech. 10:6,7).
- F. Note God's answer on fasting (Zech. 8:19). The fast of the fifth month remembered the destruction of the temple and that of the seventh month was the anniversary of Gedaliah's murder (Jer.41). Both of these were instituted by the people.
- G. Note 2:12 is the only place in the Bible where "holy land" is used.

V. PERSONAL LESSONS

- A. We can become polluted, by the sin around us, so that we are defiled to serve God.
- B. What we would do in the Lord's work can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit (4:6).
- C. There is an end to God's longsuffering (7:11-14).
- D. God is faithful despite our unfaithfulness.

OUTLINE

- I. CALL TO REPENTANCE (1:1-6)**
- II. COMFORTS TO REFRESH (1:7-6:15)**
- III. CONCERN OF RELIGIONISTS (7-8)**
- IV. CERTAINTIES OF RESTORATION (9-14)**

