

XV. Zechariah in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel According to Zechariah
“Heaven-sent Revival”
Zechariah 10
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This is our 15th study in the book of Zechariah. I have recently found out that over to the side of the Mount of Olives down near the Valley of Hinnom is a large complex of burial sites. It's called the tombs of the Prophets and there seems to be some pretty conclusive evidence that two of our prophets that we are studying are actually buried there. One is Haggai and the other is Zechariah, which I find interesting. So why do you find it interesting that Zechariah is buried in a tomb on the side of the Mount of Olives near the Valley of Hinnom? In our next study I plan to give you the answer to that question when we get to Zechariah 11 and how Zechariah's ministry centers around the Mount of Olives which has an implication in terms of Zechariah's trajectory toward the first advent of Christ and the then the second advent of Christ.

The text for this study in Zechariah is a little bit challenging. Remember, God's people have under the prophetic Word of God been under judgment where God has taken the people who are not His people and used them to judge His people. When they were delivered out of Egypt, brought through the wilderness and brought into the promised land, God warned them that if they were ever unfaithful, then He would use the non-covenanted nations (Gentiles) that are not His nation to bring discipline on His people. There has only been one covenanted nation in the history of humanity, and that is Israel. After those nations have been used for His people's discipline, then He would bring discipline upon them for what they had done to them. God declared what He was going to do, and that is exactly what He did and the prophets have made that clear.

The ten northern tribes, when they abandon the temple worship, they abandon Biblical worship, then God brought judgment upon them as they also abandoned the Davidic line of the kingdom and the monarchy was divided. So God brought the Assyrians, this warlike people, very violent people, there. I won't take the time to describe the way that they would conquer people and what they would do with those whom they conquered, but the ten tribes were taken away into captivity and amalgamated into the Gentile nations. So much so that we talk about things like ten lost tribes even to this day.

Then a little bit over a century later, the southern kingdom, that is Benjamin and Judah, begin to follow the apostasy, the same route of apostasy, the same trajectory. So then God raised up another kingdom. This kingdom, He used, first of all, to bring judgment upon the Assyrians, whom He had used to bring judgment upon the ten tribes. This was known as the Babylonian empire. God uses the Babylonian empire to bring three deportations of the Israelites out of Judah, the environs of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Judean areas, which is where the two southern tribes were, as they were conquered by the Babylonians. Jerusalem, after it was put under a siege, was seized and then King Nebuchadnezzar comes back in 605 B.C., 597 B.C., and 588 B.C., to take away the people of Israel into captivity.

In Nebuchadnezzar's first trip, he took four young men that you're all familiar with, and that's Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, along with others. It is estimated that he took anywhere from 500,000 up to 2 million total from those three different deportations. What was left of Judah and Jerusalem, as the gates and walls were down, and people just marched in and

out vandalizing Jerusalem any time that they wanted to, but God had also made a promise and a prophecy. It's found two times in the book of Jeremiah, and that is this discipline of the two southern tribes is going to be for 70 years. Daniel, survives the entire process of this 70 years. We don't know for sure about the length of survival of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but we do know that Daniel served and was in a position of influence under the sovereign hand of God for two empires – the Babylonian Empire and the Medo-Persian Empire – and for five successive dynasties of those two empires. Daniel began to realize that the 70 years were coming so in Daniel 9 there is this great intercessory prayer where Daniel is confessing the sins of the people and asking God to fulfill His Word and restore His people.

There is no evidence of Daniel ever having returned, but there is the evidence of interestingly, three restoration movements back into Israel and they correspond generally to the three deportations in terms of the 70-year period. We don't know how many came back. We don't really know how many left, but we do know a lot less came back somewhere likely between 20,000 and 50,000 returned. When they returned, they made an initial movement to restore Jerusalem and to do so by rebuilding the temple on Temple Mount. It's what we called the Zerubbabel Temple. The first temple on Temple Mount was built in the days of the United Monarchy under the reign of King Solomon and this glorious, wonderful Solomonic temple had been utterly destroyed by the siege and the occupation of first, the Babylonians and then later the Medo-Persians.

The plans were given to rebuild the temple so they went back and were able to get the foundations of the temple laid and the altar in place, but then they the work fell off as they were constantly under assault. There were demoralized and as it they were completely under the control of these tribal rebel movements all over. Then God sends Zechariah and Haggai at the same time as two prophets. He sends them to call the people to repentance, and called them back into the engagement of rebuilding the temple, in which will come the rebuilding of the walls and the gates where the temple and sacrifices would be restored, and then the city of Jerusalem would be restored. This can be followed throughout the Bible as God raises up individuals for leadership like Zerubbabel who is the governor, like Ezra who will be a teacher, like prophets such as Haggai and Zechariah throughout this period of time where God is moving to bring them into restoration.

God initiated it under a king that had been prophesied in the book of Isaiah. His name was Cyrus. Cyrus was a Persian king of the Medo-Persian Empire. He was followed by one named Darius, who was a median king of the Medo-Persian Empire. It is Darius who will carry on the policies of Cyrus that we have record of with extra Biblical reference is in what's called the Cyrus Cylinder that is in the museum there in Britain. One can actually consult it and see how that corresponds with the very things that are recorded in the Bible in books like Daniel, Zechariah, Haggai and then later in Malachi. I wanted to take just a moment to refresh your memory of the setting that we are in here in Zechariah.

Now, what is going to happen here now that Zechariah is preaching? They are feeling demoralized because there are some people who are old enough to remember the Solomonic Temple and they look at the temple of Zerubbabel and begin to mourn. It doesn't even compare to the size, to the scope, to the grander of the Solomonic Temple. But Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi are going to be used of the Lord to tell the people not to despise the day of small things (Zechariah 4:10). God's going to do something with this temple that will be greater than the Solomonic temple, and the sacrificial system seen now will lead to a sacrifice that puts to an end all sacrifices. God wants them to be faithful and know that He is their God. God tells them that

He has sent them home and He will be with them. He will uphold them. Now we come to a chapter in the book of Zechariah that is meant for both encouragement but also prophetic anticipation which is Zechariah 10.

Zechariah is in a day in which the leadership in Judah has faltered now that they have returned. God is now going to tell them something very important. Let's look at Zechariah 10. Zechariah 10:1-2 says [1] *Ask rain from the LORD in the season of the spring rain, from the LORD who makes the storm clouds, and he will give them showers of rain, to everyone the vegetation in the field. [2] For the household gods utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies; they tell false dreams and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd.*

I want to give you a big picture here. He is going to tell them, listen, we're not making progress because we need better leaders. There is Zechariah and Haggai, but I'm going to keep bringing more leaders. I'm going to bring true shepherds. I'm going to bring shepherds who will give of themselves to lead you. But the first thing you've got to do is not look to the leaders I'm going to give you, but trust Me. In Zechariah 9 God told the people there was a new day coming. There's a new covenant that's coming. It's not only the restoration of you now, but I'm doing something now that is a new covenant that's coming. I am going to draw a new Israel from all the nations of the Earth to Myself. There's coming new grain and new wine – you can't have grain and wine without spring time and rains. So, God is saying to them, quit going to the pagan gods and diviners to find out what's going to happen. Quit going to the wisdom of the world and the false dreamers who deceive you because you're coming to them instead of coming to Me.

It seems as if God is almost giving them a lesson in Biblical logic. He is saying to them, 'Did I tell you you're going to have new grain and new wine? And is this not the God of creation who created the entire cycle's – the various botanical and hydrological cycles who happens to know you need water, spring time and sun to get new grain and new wine? If I've promised that, then I will provide the means to accomplish that. I will bring the rain at the right time. I will ensure the spring time so that there is a harvest time, yet you in the moment of trial, adversity, challenge and curiosity, you don't come to Me. You go to the world and the divination of the false prophets who serve pagan idols.'

I can't help but think constantly about how God overlaps things sometimes. Recently I was giving a study from Romans about one of the marks of someone who has 'blessed assurance Jesus as mine' is that they're led by the Spirit and the Spirit always leads with the Word of God. Even within doctrine where the Spirit of God leads the people of God with the Word of God, we have created a movement within the evangelical church, not a liberal church or an apostate church or the progressive church, but within professing evangelical churches that points people in the name of spirituality to pursue divination of extra Biblical revelation of how to live your life and sadly, led by the Spirit now means 'go get extra Biblical information from God.' And by the way, really, spiritual people go to God to get God's will for their life on the things that God has not revealed in His Word.

Hear this; the Bible is clear. In Deuteronomy 29:29 it says [29] *The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.* The Spirit of God leads me through the things revealed and there I'm content. He'll fill in the blanks with the details in His secret will when they occur. What I am to follow, is in the power of the Spirit of God through Biblical illumination of Divine revelation in understanding God's Word is to take next steps in my life. This is the language I like to use and hopefully it helps; always taking the next steps in my life, not looking for the

footstep of extra Biblical revelation, but following the channel markers of God's revealed will. He has given me His law to tell me how to love Him and His people. He has given me His Word, His precepts and that is what I am to follow. That's where I am to live my life.

In a real sense, the secret will of God is none of my business. In fact, whenever I image God by saying, 'okay, I'm going to plan my life' and when you're made in the image of God you live life on purpose, but the book of James and Proverbs tells me whenever I begin to plan my life, to live it responsibly, guided by Divine revelation, whenever I get to particulars, I always add 'if it's God's will.' In the last three centuries in America and see how many of the reformers wrote a letter that included some future plans and how they ended that sentence. It was with "D.V." which stood for 'Deo Volento' in Latin, meaning God willing and this was the penetration of a Christian view of life into how you lived your life. This comes straight from James 4:15. Is it right to plan your way? Yes. You're made in the image of God. Proverbs 16:9 says [9] *The heart of man plans his way (D.V.), but the LORD establishes his steps.*

I need to be in the Word of God so that each step is within the channel markers of Biblical truth, not be fascinated going a search that leads me to false prophets, divination, and worldly wisdom trying to fill in blanks. Yet here in Zechariah, Israel was demoralized. Those who had returned said, 'We're not making progress. We're hungry, there's a famine, a drought but oh yeah, I think God did say prophetically say, we're going to get new grain and new wine but we need to go find it.' So, they go on a search from false gods to find out when it was going to rain. Believe me, fertility gods and pagan gods, are always ready to draw you into their false prophecies. God says to them, 'Did I not tell you what I was going to do? I know how to get it done. So why don't you trust Me for the early and latter rains? I will bring the rains to you, but you are going to the gods of this age, to the pagans of this age.'

I think one of the reasons that today in Christ's Church we have such Biblical illiteracy that were given to and I want to put the blame where the blame needs to go, for first of all, we have pulpits that just don't preach the Bible. They don't expound God's Word. They might get a verse and jump off with three stories and four coach-me-ups, but the exposition of God's Word is not there. People in the church say 'if you start trying to teach the Bible, nobody will listen. It's got to be "entertaining."' When I preach, I don't try to be dry, but I know what you need is to know God's Word so I want to make it as interesting as possible. I want to include the stories, the illustrations and everything else. I want to mix up my metaphors so you will say, "Would somebody tell him to quit mixing up his metaphors?" I know I have your attention if you're thinking that way. I know all of that is crucial, but there ought to be a hunger in our souls for the Word of God.

I want to connect one more dot here. We live in an age where the evangelical church is not under the assault of liberalism, like the mainline Protestant church was in the 19th and 20th century. The mainline Protestant church was under the assault of liberalism, and it assaulted two doctrines – the infallibility of the Word and the inerrancy of the Word; God's Word is not reliable is when the doctrine of infallibility is abandoned or God's word is not trustworthy, that's when the doctrine of inerrancy is abandoned. Liberalism had its day, and the result is the mainline Protestant church that was going to be saved by abandoning the doctrine of inerrancy and infallibility to arrive at modern thought and be acceptable to the modern mind which is now on the trash bin of history. The mainline Presbyterian Church lost another million and a half members. It's done unless God sends a revival, but the evangelical church today is told that they are going to lose the next generation if you keep insisting on the exclusivity of the Gospel and the sufficiency of God's Word; that God's Word is sufficient.

Why do you think evangelical churches in the last three years were so quick to go to secular, blasphemous instruments and used them in the discipleship of God's people to “deal with the sins of favoritism or prejudice or racism,” such as critical theory, critical law theory, critical race theory? It was because the evangelical church did not believe that God's Word was sufficient to deal with the sins of God's people and what it promised it couldn't deliver. Why do you think you invent a whole new sexual ethic that then gives itself to affirming sexual desires that are pagan, destructive and ungodly, and then say it's all right to have the sins of thought as long as you don't act on them? It is because they did not believe in the sufficiency of the Scripture and the sufficiency of the promises of God that I can change not only habits, I can change hearts.

Why were these who had returned going to foreign prophets and false teachers? It was because they did not believe in the infallibility, reliability, inerrancy and sufficiency of God's Word. This battle for the integrity of God's Word from the pulpit to the lectern into the small group discipleship is a constant one that is with the church, and it will be with the church until Jesus comes back. I have no idea how many years I have left to serve the Lord (D.V.), but I do know this; I pray every day that the congregation of God's people will never abandon the authority, the integrity, the infallibility, the inerrancy, the sufficiency of the Word of God because once you do, you're not just a crippled Christianity, you are in opposition to Christianity. When you abandon the Word of God, you've abandoned the God of the Word. That's why Zechariah is telling them, believe God when He says He will bring the rain and quit going to the foreign idols and pagans for your direction in life. Let's look further in Zechariah 10.

In this next part God will address the leaders who demoralized the people in their own unbelief. God will complete His covenant people. Zechariah 10:3-7 says [3] *“My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD of hosts cares for his flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like his majestic steed in battle. [4] From him shall come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler—all of them together. [5] They shall be like mighty men in battle, trampling the foe in the mud of the streets; they shall fight because the LORD is with them, and they shall put to shame the riders on horses.*

[6] “I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and they shall be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them. [7] Then Ephraim shall become like a mighty warrior, and their hearts shall be glad as with wine. Their children shall see it and be glad; their hearts shall rejoice in the LORD.

And look, if you would go with me further, go with me further to the next passage in verse three. My anger is hot against what the shepherds. This is looking at the shepherds of Judah, those that were not leading the people, those that had demoralized the people with their own unbelief. My anger is hot against the shepherds and I will punish the leaders for the Lord of hosts cares for his flock. The House of Judah, and will make them like his majestic steed.

One of the things about a true shepherd, is he knows his sheep, his sheep know him, and he calls out by name. Another thing a shepherd did was whistled and when I read this next passage in my study of this text, I remembered how I would go and watch my son and daughters in their field of athletic competition as they played basketball, ran track and everything. It was really interesting for we all got to know each other so much so that all I had to do was whistle and Abigail would look, Jennifer would look, Ike would look and I'd give the fist pump, the

encouragement or whatever I wanted to do. That is kinda like what He is saying here – I'm going to give shepherds who are so trustworthy and intimate with the sheep that all they need to do is whistle and the sheep know to come. Not these false shepherds that are letting you go to false gods.

Whenever God does something, He does it through leaders – church history documents it and the Bible documents it. Every time God does something, He raises up a leader, and then He'll usually surround them with some more leaders because God's a Presbyterian (smile). So there's plurality of leadership. God does this time and time again. God is telling them that He promised what He will do and He will take care of them. There's a day coming when My covenant people will be restored. I don't think He's just looking at the patchwork of the next 300 to 400 years, for He is looking to the New Covenant where the new Israel will be called from every tribe and nation and God will ordain His people.

How does God do that? He is going to raise up shepherds for them. God describes them this way; they're the battle bow of the Warrior's instrument of warfare. They are the cornerstone. They are the pillar. He's using regal terms of kingly warriors. I believe He's pointing us right to Jesus, the great Warrior for our souls. He's the One that will bring the new wine and the grain. He is the fulfillment of God's Word. God tells them, 'I will give you royal rulers, I will give you Royal Kings, I will give you Royal Warriors, I will give you a great Shepherd and He will bring all of My covenant people from all the nations to Himself. Let's continue in the text.

Zechariah 10:8-12 says [8] "I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them, and they shall be as many as they were before. (Here comes the anticipation of the New Covenant) [9] Though I scattered them among the nations, yet in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return. [10] I will bring them home from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria, and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon, till there is no room for them. [11] He shall pass through the sea of troubles and strike down the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up. The pride of Assyria shall be laid low, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart. [12] I will make them strong in the LORD, and they shall walk in his name," declares the LORD. This King has all authority. Let's continue.

Zechariah 11:1-3 says [1] Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars! [2] Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, for the glorious trees are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest has been felled! [3] The sound of the wail of the shepherds, for their glory is ruined! The sound of the roar of the lions, for the thicket of the Jordan is ruined!

In other words, God says to them, 'I will bring my leaders and those that aren't my leaders will fall by the wayside and those who would stop this leader I bring, I will bring them to an end and my people will be called from all of these nations.' God is giving us a picture of the first exodus in how He uses the language here and we see this in Deuteronomy 30. In this chapter God has said through Moses, 'If you falter, I'll bring a people who are not a people to bring judgment. Then I'll bring judgment on those people and I will then restore My people.' Then he anticipates something.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 says [1] "And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, [2] and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, [3] then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he

will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. [4] If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. [5] And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. [6] And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Here, this is a New Covenant – people in a new land, a new nation that He has established Israel to bring forth. When God called Abraham, He gave him a covenant and the covenant had a promise – in you I will give a seed and in that seed, I will bless all the nations of the earth. The covenanted nation of Israel that is the result of the covenant with Abraham, that is restored in the exodus with Moses, was never designed to stop with one nation, but through that nation, to bring the seed from which His covenant people will be called from every nation. God didn't have two plans – Israel and then the church. God has one plan which is His covenant people. And he had Abraham, gave a family, gave him a seed and gave him a nation and through that nation would come the royal line of the Messiah where all the promises and all the prophecies would be fulfilled in the promised One, Jesus. Now when He has risen, now has all authority.

Did Jesus have authority before He came to Earth? Yes, but what does it mean that now He has all authority? He has all authority as the Messianic King of a covenant people that are coming from every tribe and nation and that's what He now is about. It is that picture that Zechariah is giving. Do you see what is here in this text? God is bringing out His people. He is going to take them through the Red Sea to a promised land. The people will disobey God and God is going to take a nation that's not a nation and He is going to discipline them. Then He will restore them, and then He will do this restoration that so glorious it is going to come from every tribe and nation. In fact, He is giving us a picture of a second exodus and you and I are part of that. He is calling us from the ends of the earth into a royal nation with King Jesus, and we belong to Him.

Just as He parted red seas, He is bringing His people from every tribe and nation and in Zechariah He is giving them just a taste of what will be fulfilled, not in the immediate time in the building of the second Temple, but ultimately when the King Warrior, Cornerstone comes and then God will call from all the tribes and all the nations. And another exodus is here as people leave the kingdoms of darkness, sin, and Satan and come into the Kingdom of God and are not marked out by the circumcision of the flesh, but by the circumcision of the heart. Here is the New Covenant people, and they have had done to them what they could not do for themselves. The prophets called them to 'circumcise your heart' but they can't do that. There is One who does, and that's Jesus through the Holy Spirit when He cuts out our old heart and gives us a new one. When He cut out our sin record and nails it to the cross and gives us a new record.

Zechariah is anticipating that as he is wetting their appetite with this wild mixture of metaphors that he has given to them. Now you have a Shepherd whom you love, who loves you, knows you, and you know Him because you love Him, so you want to obey Him. And when He calls you by name, you follow. All He has to do is whistle and you come because you are His and He is yours.

One final lesson; if God took away false shepherds who used the sheep, abused the sheep and did not care for the sheep in Judah to give them true shepherds, ultimately bringing them to the great Shepherd Jesus, then will He not do that now? What an awesome thing to be ordained

as an elder shepherd of Christ's church. The question we ask ourselves, 'Are we laying down our life for the sheep to hear the voice of the Shepherd or are we using the sheep for our own purposes in life?' Jesus said in John 10:11, *[11] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* If we're not those good shepherds, God has no problem ethically or otherwise, to remove such shepherds, to give His people faithful shepherds who will lead them to Christ and Him alone. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You so much for this marvelous chapter of Zechariah and the privilege to just immerse ourselves into Your Word. Thank You for great joy of studying the Scriptures together and seeing how the trajectory of the Old Testament is bringing us to Jesus and the exposition of the New Testament is explaining Jesus. God, we give You praise and glory that You sent Your Son, who came from the authority over all creation to be our Redeemer, and now has all authority to bring to consummation the work of redemption and bring His people not into a little corner of the Middle East, but to a new heavens and a new Earth, the royal nation of God from every tribe and nation who sing praises to their King Jesus, to the glory of the Father in the power of the Spirit. O God, give us a taste of that today, in Jesus' Name, Amen.