

Even though Habakkuk spoke out of turn, he managed to pull back his pride and ego and give the Lord a chance to respond. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower," he said, "and watch what He will say unto me" (Habakkuk 2:1). Further, he recognised that in the final analysis he would be "reproved" (v. 1).

God always responds to the person who is willing to investigate the matter deeply enough. He does not rebuke the questioner (John 20:27) and even tolerates the suggester (Genesis 18:20-33), providing that anyone who questions or suggests will also listen and accept. He promises with infinite longsuffering that if anyone will seek, he will find (Matthew 7:7). However, He will bring to nothing anyone who clings to his own wisdom rather than God's (1 Corinthians 1:19-20).

## **GOD'S SOLUTION, PART 2**

What had escaped Habakkuk's mind in his initial reaction was a proverb as old humanity: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). In Paul's record of that proverb, he adds this introductory statement: "God is not mocked." I remember Thomas Warren explaining this passage something like this: "No one can make a mockery out of God. You can't make things turn out any other way than God said they would."

Did Habakkuk really think that God would forget His promises to the Israelites and allow them to be wiped off the face of the earth? Did he think that God would allow the Chaldeans to run amuck indefinitely? Did he think that God would tolerate a nation that evil forever? I have little doubt that Habakkuk didn't think those things. He just needed to be reminded of the old proverb.

In continuing to explain His solution, God reveals what Habakkuk should have realized – "The just shall live by his faith," and, by implication, the wicked shall die without it (Habakkuk 2:4). The Chaldean's sinful pride would be his undoing – he only cared for himself, and both self indulgent nations and individuals cannot live forever. The writing was already on the wall for a nation that had not even risen to world power in the eyes of Jehovah: "Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein" (2:8).

God was not overlooking Babylon's sin – far from it. In fact, He was actually omnisciently aware of all future sins the nation was going to commit and that these sins would be Babylon's undoing. God notes four categories of sins that would bring upon Babylon the hatred of the world and pronounces woe on them for engaging in them:

- Greed/Covetousness – "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house" (2:9)
- Violence – "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood" (2:12)
- Deceit and Drunkenness – "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink [alcohol – PWS]" (2:15)
- Idolatry – "Woe to him that saith to the wood, Awake" (2:19)

These sins, sown in a heart full of pride, could reap nothing but corruption As Paul said in making application of the proverb, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8).

So what was God's plan? God would take care of the sin in Israel by bringing a more sinful nation to power to defeat it (1:6). He would take care of that sinful nation by bringing others to power whom that nation had conquered (2:6-8). Basically, God would allow things to get a whole lot worse just so they could eventually get a whole lot better. As a result of the rise of Babylon and subsequent Babylonian captivity, the children of Israel would never again fall into physical idolatry (the worship of graven images). Further, the influence of Jehovah would spread into the world through the Jews scattered abroad and in the fullness of time the church would be given a foothold in nearly every major Gentile city through these synagogues. Ever noticed how Paul began preaching in each city at a synagogue or gathering place of the Jews? Without the Babylonian captivity, he never would have been able to do so.

This plan revealed to Habakkuk was to be just a thread in the infinite tapestry of God's protective and providential wisdom in bringing into existence the church and paving the way for ultimate salvation for all the faithful (Ephesians 3:11; Romans 8:28). It alone was beautiful enough to be painted in the broadest letters so that one could read and run to tell others (Habakkuk 2:2). It proved that God was in control, reigning from His holy temple: "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him" (2:20).

### **HABAKKUK'S SURRENDER**

A good friend once relayed to me a piece of information he had received from another good friend. "Patrick," he said, "There are always three parts at work in every situation dealing with other people. There's your part, the other person's part, and God's part. If you're not doing your part, you're going to find yourself in a great deal of stress. But if you try to do God's part or the other person's part, you're going to find yourself in just as much stress."

Sometimes you just have to accept the fact that some things are beyond your control. How do you know what's in your control and what's not? All you really have to do is ask a couple of questions.

First, Have I done what God told me not to do or gone somewhere He has told me to avoid? If I'm breaking some law of God, then I certainly can expect to find myself in some difficulties in life. The law of sowing and reaping will apply to me, even as a Christian. Remember, when a son leaves the Father's house, he can't be surprised when he winds up in the mud with the pigs (Luke 15:11-16). If he runs with pack, he can't be surprised when he comes out smelling like a dog (1 Corinthians 15:33). Hopefully, you can answer no.

Second, Have I done what God told me to do, in keeping with my talents and abilities? Please don't be one of those people who misapply James 4:17 in answering this question. Some people are constantly stressed and depressed because they think that every moment one is not involved in Bible study or evangelism is a moment in sin. That passage was not designed to create that kind of mindset – in fact, in context it has reference to the person who does not keep God in his plans (v. 13-16). Not every Christian can be a Paul or a five talent man – there have to be some two and one talent men out there as well. If you are keeping God in all that you do, doing what He says (as no command of His is grievous/burdensome – 1 John 5:3), repenting of sins and confessing them as they come up (1 John 1:7-10), and doing what you can (Mark 14:8), then you can answer yes.



If you answered no to the first question, yes to the second question, and yet you are still having difficulties, then it's time for you to realise that something is beyond your control. All you can do now is submit it to God and leave it in his care. This is exactly what Habakkuk learned.

Habakkuk concludes the book by doing whatever anyone should do when taught a lesson by a holy God – he offers up a prayerful song of thanksgiving (that ch. 3 is a song is signified by the term, Shigionoth). The song can be summed up by the first couple of lines: “I... was afraid... God came” (Habakkuk 3:2, 3). Habakkuk ultimately surrendered to the wonderful wisdom of God and His plan, and learned to trust Him no matter what. “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (3:17-18).

## CONCLUSION

Obviously God took care of my working visa worries, because I am now living in Australia and God is looking after me in an amazing way. Looking back at that time in 2007-2008, I am ashamed to admit that I had not surrendered my trust to a holy God. Although I cannot say for sure on this side of eternity, maybe that's exactly why God worked things the way He did. As I look at my life in general, I am amazed at how God has put things together. I couldn't have envisioned it if I had tried.

Rather than blaming God for our difficulties and accusing Him of inactivity, maybe we should simply do our part and leave the rest to Him and everyone else. Maybe we should realise that out of great pain, great sin, and great tragedy, God can bring about things “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). The same God who watched His Son die upon the cross is watching over our cares and concerns as well.

### His Eye Is On The Sparrow

By Civilla D. Martin

*Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,  
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home,  
When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He:  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*

*“Let not your heart be troubled,” His tender word I hear,  
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;  
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*

*Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,  
When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,  
I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;  
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*

*I sing because I'm happy,  
I sing because I'm free,  
For His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.*

Introduction

The human personality is an endless study for no two people are exactly alike, no two minds react in exactly the same way. Each individual is unique in his/her own way. No place is this any better observed than in the inspired writings of the Bible authors. Each writer is cognizant of Divine inspiration and each give solid evidence of it (Isa. 51:16; Jer. 1:9); yet their inspiration does not extend past their own individuality.

1. For example: we see the tender-heartedness of a Jeremiah, the country farmish speech of a Amos, the poetical musical interest of a David, the professional physicians terminology of a Luke, and the language of a simple fisherman in a Peter. - all beautifully reflected even in the midst of verbal Divine inspiration.
2. Yes, inspiration does not swamp individuality, but leaves ample room for it. Each Bible writer has his own distinguishing characteristics, distinctive contributions, and own individuality. This is especially true of Habakkuk.
  - a. Unlike all the other prophets, Habakkuk does not address his own countrymen or a foreign people. His speech is to God alone.
  - b. Unlike the other prophets, he is not so much concerned with delivering a message as with solving a *problem* - a problem relating to Jehovah's providence and power in governing the nations.

- B. Looking around his native Judah, Habakkuk observes violence and injustice on every hand. What he sees causes him to cry out to God with his perplexing questions:

◇ *"Why are the wicked prospering in your nation, Lord?"*  
◇ *"Why are the righteous beaten down?"*  
◇ *"Why don't you do something to right the wrongs of society?"*

1. God's reply is even more shocking than the sinful conditions in Judah:

◇ *"I am doing something, Habakkuk. I am about to use a nation even more corrupt than Judah - the Chaldeans - to cleanse My people of their wicked ways."*

2. In stunned disbelief Habakkuk responds:

◇ *"How in the name of holiness and fairness can you do that, Lord?"*

3. The Lord's patient response to the prophet's question serves as the key to the book and the reason for its inclusion in the sacred canon.

- C. Like Nahum, we have little biographical information supplied about Habakkuk. However, we can be fairly certain of the *time* when he wrote. We are told that it was when the Chaldeans were rising to power (1:6). It was not until Nineveh had been destroyed (612 B.C.) that Babylon asserted herself to world domination. We are told that Babylon would inflict Judah. That did not occur until 606 B.C.

1. Therefore; we conclude that Habakkuk was an early contemporary of Jeremiah and wrote between 612 and 606 B.C.
2. The focus of Habakkuk's problem and prophecy was Babylon. Of the enemies that afflicted the covenant people, three were outstanding - the Edomites, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans, or Babylonians. Interestingly enough, it was given to three of the Hebrew prophets to pronounce the doom of these three world powers.
  - a. *Obadiah* sealed the fate of Edom.
  - b. *Nahum* tolled the knell over Assyria. And...
  - c. *Habakkuk* dug the grave for Babylon.

LY

1. HABAKKUK - THE PROBLEM, THE ANSWER

- A. The Problem: *Doubting*. The problem of doubting Jehovah did not begin with Habakkuk nor did it end with the apostle Thomas. In fact, I feel safe in concluding that all

Christians at some point in their spiritual development have been faced with nagging questions and doubts about the faith they espouse.

1. *Is the Bible really the inspired word of God? Did miracles actually occur as the Bible affirms they did? What about salvation? And heaven...and hell? Why has God allowed sickness to inflict my body or that of my friend? And why did He allow our loved one to be taken? Why do I have these times in my life when I get depressed and despondent? Why does God allow this old world of sin and shame to go on? Why...?*
2. We all have had our misgivings about those questions and many more. The question is - How do we deal with doubt? How do we seek a solution and overcome them?
  - a. Habakkuk has the answer!

B. The Answer: *Faith*. Habakkuk tells us that *God loves the doubter*. He does not care for the despairing doubter like a Judas or a Demas but, rather, He appreciates the honest doubter who will *turn to Him in faith* with his persistent problems and continual questions.

1. Yes, Habakkuk tells us that the answer to solving doubt is F\*A\*I\*T\*H and confidence in Jehovah. It is that message which runs throughout the book (2:4).

## II. THE OUTLINE

A. This brief prophecy of Habakkuk puts into words a struggle of doubt and a triumph of faith which took place in the soul of the prophet himself. It begins with a sob of doubt. It ends with a song of trust.

1. There are three chapters and a corresponding three points of the prophet.

### The Righteous Will Live By Faith

- I. A BURDEN: Faith Grappling With A Problem, ch.1-2:1
- II. A VISION: Faith Grasping The Solution, ch.2
- III. A PRAYER: Faith Glorifying In Assurance, ch.3

2. Thus we have:
- The BURDEN (1:1)
  - The VISION (2:2)
  - The PRAYER (3:1)

## III. A BURDEN: FAITH GRAPPLING WITH A PROBLEM

A. A Two-Fold Problem or *Faith Sighing*. Here is a prophet in the agony of perplexity. He is beset by a double enigma of Divine providence that he does not understand.

1. FIRST DOUBT, 1:1-4. *"Lord, why don't you do something about the evil in Judah?"* Habakkuk's problem was the silence, inactivity, and apparent unconcern of God. Violence abounded; wickedness was common-place; justice was perverted - and to the conscientious prophet, God was doing nothing!
  - a. It might be worthwhile to note that King David faced the same doubt in Psalm 73 - *"Why do the wicked prosper?"* His solution to his concern comes in verses 25-28. Habakkuk would have to reach that same conclusion.
2. Jehovah addresses the prophet's problem in verses 5-6. This, however, to the distraught Habakkuk, only solved the one problem by raising a still bigger one.
3. SECOND DOUBT, 1:12-13. Certainly the judgement coming to Judah was deserved - but why would God punish Judah at the hands of a people far more wicked and ruthless than the Jews ever dreamed of being?
  - a. Such was a shock to the prophet and proved hard for him to reconcile with his belief in the righteousness of God's judgement over the nations.
  - b. This is the *burden* of the confused prophet. What did he do? Did he give up in despair and turn his back upon Jehovah? No sir! He did what each of us must do - he waited patiently for Jehovah's response (2:1).

## IV. A VISION: FAITH GRASPING THE SOLUTION

A. A Two-Fold Promise or *Faith Seeing*. Here Jehovah makes two great pledges to the prophet:

- 1st Promise → *The righteous will live by faith* (verse 4)  
 2nd Promise → *The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord* (verse 14)

1. Promise number one is so significant that it is quoted no less than three times in the New Testament. See Romans 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). These are not mere empty incidental words but, rather, they form the heart of Old Testament godliness and New Testament Christianity. The words look beyond the outward to the *inward*, beyond the physical to the *spiritual*, and beyond the present to the *future* and the *eternal*.
  - a. What God is saying is this: *"Yes, Habakkuk, your estimate of the Chaldean is right; but though I use him to chastise My people, he himself shall be brought to destruction in the end; and although in the present the righteous suffer at the hands of the wicked, yet the righteous shall never perish in the end like the wicked, but shall live because of their faith and because that one day the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord."*
2. Here, then, is Jehovah's simple answer to perplexing problems for which (to us at least) there appears no logical answer: FAITH!
  - a. Even if you don't understand why the wicked prosper...Even if you don't comprehend about Babylon...Even if you don't understand what happens to the righteous - you must operate on the principle of faith.
  - b. God was not asking Habakkuk to understand all the "*whys*" behind his workings; He simply wanted His servant to trust fully in His control and to walk by faith. And, does He expect any less from us?
3. Finally, faith will lead to SIGHT. Notice what would happen to Babylon (2:6-20). Here are the five "*woes*" which would cause her demise:
  - a. Their lust for *Ambition*, vs.6
  - b. Their lust for *Security*, vs.9
  - c. Their lust for *Human Glory*, vs.12
  - d. Their lust for *Enticement*, vs.15
  - e. Their lust for *Idolatry*, vs.19

1) Because of their sins they too would be judged.
4. Verse 20 reminds us that it is the Lord's business to speak and ours to listen. He commands and we act. He communicates and we then operate based upon the information He in His infinite wisdom feels we need.

#### V. PRAYER: FAITH GLORYING IN ASSURANCE *ch. 3*

- A. A Two-Fold Product or Faith Singing. Here is Habakkuk's two-fold product of faith: (1) he praises Jehovah for the past, and (2) places confidence in Him for the future. Thus, we have gone from faith SIGHING to SEEING and now to SINGING. And how is that possible with us?
  1. We too must come to respect God, verse 2a. Habakkuk had begun by questioning Jehovah. Now that faith has brought understanding the prophet resigns himself to a recognition of his inferiority and God's superiority. That is where we each must start.
  2. We too must see the activity of God and realize it is right, verse 2b. Now he no longer doubts but, rather, places full assurance in God's plan. "*O Lord, revive Thy work...*" And why such a statement? Because the prophet now understands that Jehovah's work is right! See Deut. 6:24-25.
  3. We too must realize His glory, verse 3-4. How glorious God becomes when we see His providence at work to bring about His plan. There is no glory like God's glory.
  4. We too must appreciate His wrath, verse 5-7. Habakkuk needed to learn that Babylon was used only as an instrument for the salvation of his people. Had Judah continued down the pathway of sinful degradation the end would have been one of total destruction. He now understands. He had grown to appreciate God's discipline. See Heb. 12:6-11.

B. Habakkuk's Five-Step Process: *From Sobbing Doubts To Trusting Faith.*

1. He went to God with his doubts and frustrations, 1:2.
2. He had patience to wait for Jehovah's answer, 2:1. (See Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8-9).
3. He praised and glorified God when his prayer was answered, 3:3.
4. He was willing to bear the punishment his faith demanded, 3:17.
5. He was willing to make a total commitment to the Lord, 3:18-19.
  - a. Here is Habakkuk turning over his life totally and completely to God. He says in essence: *"Lord, here is the cup of my life - you fill it up any way you wish and I'll drink it down. Be it glory or shame, health or weakness, wealth or want, companionship or loneliness - whatever is best for my life, whatever it takes for me to be saved, whatever it takes for me to realize my utter dependence upon you - O Lord, you fill it up and I'll drink it down and I'll be faithful to Thee no matter what!"*
  - b. Jesus taught the same principle of total commitment in Luke 9:23 and 14:25-28. Too many times, I'm afraid, we want to be Christians on our terms instead of God's. Habakkuk learned that it doesn't work that way.

C. If there is anything we need to do it is to emulate the example of the humble Habakkuk. True, faith may still have some problems. True, there may be some enigmas that we, like him, do not understand. Yet, we must follow his example of dealing with doubt and learn to put our trust in the Almighty and walk by faith with Him down the avenues of life.

1. Yes, if Habakkuk's day seemed draped with deepening doubts, even more does our own. This little book tells us not to judge merely by the appearances of the present, but to look to the future. Yes, our great God is working out great purposes in order to bring about great promises for the future for His people.
2. And how do we know this? Look up Rom. 4:20-21; Heb. 10:38; 11:11 sometime for the answer.

Conclusion

1. People say that God does not speak to men today as He did long ago. While that is correct, a truer statement would be that men do not listen today as they did of old. To the man who waits and listens, God does not remain silent. The Savior said:

*"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened."*

- a. God does answer prayer. He may not give us the answer we would like to hear - nor does He have to. He may not tell us the why of His timing or His will - nor does He have to. He simply wanted His servant to trust completely in His control and to walk by faith. And that is what He asks of you!
2. When Habakkuk looked at circumstances he was in despair. When he waited and heard God he began to sing. Let us never forget,

*THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH!*



33

THE MINOR PROPHETS - HABAKKUK  
LESSON NINE

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read the book of Habakkuk.
2. Habakkuk means to "caress or embrace; to cling." The name does not occur elsewhere.
3. The time of Habakkuk's prophecy is not definite.
  - a. It was during a time when violence, strife, and apostasy reigned in Judah.
  - b. It was before the Babylonian captivity since God told Habakkuk the Chaldeans would punish Judah. (1:5,6).
  - c. It was also after the Chaldeans were a power able to accomplish God's purpose. "Consequently the years between 609 and 605 provide a suitable background for Habakkuk's message." (The Old Testament Speaks, Schultz, p. 407).
4. The book of Habakkuk is one of excellent poetic form and it's literary appeal is great. A great number of years ago "a select literary circle was gathered in Paris to hear the eighteenth-century author and politician, Benjamin Franklin, read a story. When he had finished reading there was unanimous and loud acclamation. The distinguished man of letters had read the book of Habakkuk, which not one of the circle had read before." ("Preaching Through The Bible," Hayden, p. 155).

DISCUSSION:

I. DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.

- A. The title. (1:1).
- B. Habakkuk's first problem. (1:2-11).
  1. How long will God ignore my prayer and allow evil to go unchecked?
  2. Why is God inactive in the midst of all this evil?
  3. God answers Habakkuk by showing him that he is not inactive about the evil in Judah but is raising up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to punish Judah. (1:5-11).
  4. God's work is "beyond the scope of the prophet's mental horizon" (Lewis) and his ways are inscrutable.
  5. Habakkuk deals with the age old problem (as does the book of Job) "of how one can justify the facts of life with the doctrine of an all-powerful but just God who is active in history." (Lewis, p. 62).
- C. Habakkuk's second problem. (1:12-2:20).
  1. Habakkuk acknowledges that Judah deserves punishment for her evil, but he can't understand how a just God could use a more wicked nation (Babylon) to punish a less wicked nation (Judah).
  2. God gives his answer to the second problem in 2:1-4.
    - a. The wicked man or nation will not last.
      - (1) There is an appointed time for evil to be punished and it will surely come. v. 3.
      - (2) Wickedness carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. V. 3, 4a.
    - b. The righteous shall live by faith. v. 4b. cf. 2 Cor. 5:7.
      - (1) Running the universe is God's business, not man's.
      - (2) cf. Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38.
  3. A series of woes upon evil and evil nations.
    - a. Woe: for robbery and pillage. (2:6-8).
    - b. Woe: for avarice and violence. (2:9-11).
    - c. Woe: for shedding of blood. (2:12-14).
    - d. Woe: for putting bottle to neighbor's lip. (2:15-17).
    - e. Woe: for idolatry. (2:18-20).
    - f. These are the "alternatives of faith."
- D. A poem with two divisions.
  1. A description of God's appearance for judgment. (3:1-16) The very thoughts cause him to tremble. (v. 2).
  2. A hymn of faith. (3:17-19). Habakkuk 3:17-19 is one of "the greatest declarations of faith to be found in biblical literature. Too many people's faith



is 'Lord, take care of me and I will take care of you.' In contrast, the prophet who has raised such searching questions in the early part of the book declares that come the worst if it will, he will hold steadfastly to the Lord (cf. Job. 13:15)." (The Minor Prophets, Lewis, p. 64).

## II. SOME GREAT AND PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM HABAKKUK.

- A. The ability to doubt is God-given. Some things need to be doubted. "He who hasn't doubted hasn't half believed."
- B. The greatest faith comes from struggle with doubt.
  1. Gideon started out with questions and doubt but ended up with great faith. (Jud. ~~2:17~~). *6:12-*
  2. The Psalmist asked "where is thy God?" (Psa. 42:3) but end up with "hope thou in God." (Psa. 42:11).
  3. Jeremiah asked, "Why! Why!" but was assured by God (Jer. 15:15-21).
  4. John the Baptist (Mt. 11); Nathanael (Jn. 1:47ff).
- C. "Every man raises questions of the justice of God (or of life itself, which is the same question) when he falls into adversity: 'Why did it happen to me?' Even when he admits he is evil, he asks, 'Am I this evil? Do I deserve all this.' In a setting where one postulates the omnipotence, the monotheism, and the justice of God, the problem becomes all the more acute." (Minor Prophets, Lewis, p. 61).

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON 9 THE MINOR PROPHETS - HABAKKUK

#### THOUGHT & DISCUSSION:

1. What is the first basic question raised by Habakkuk? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is God's answer to Habakkuk's question? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What made it hard for Habakkuk to understand God allowing Babylon to punish Judah? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you ever asked Habakkuk's "why?" \_\_\_\_\_ Under what circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the proper attitude of the Christian in the face of ruthless power? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did Habakkuk wait for God's answer? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you really believe the Bible teaches that evil has within it the germs of its own self-destruction? \_\_\_\_\_



8. Name five woes pronounced by Habakkuk.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

9. What does the expression "the just shall live by faith" mean? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Why did Habakkuk tell all the earth to keep silence? \_\_\_\_\_

TRUE OR FALSE:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Doubt is always wrong.
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Questions raised can become steps to stronger faith.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Understanding God's ways is beyond man's comprehension.
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Habakkuk found it difficult to believe God was active in such a wicked world.
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ There is a time appointed for the punishment of all wickedness.
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ Death cannot be satisfied.
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ Idols are dumb.
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ Habakkuk was afraid at the description of God's judgment.
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_ Habakkuk tells us where God originated.
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_ Habakkuk decided to trust God regardless of what happened.

## The Book of HABAKKUK

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  - a. Unlike all the other prophets, Habakkuk does not address his own countrymen or a foreign people. His speech is to God alone.
  - b. Unlike the other prophets, he is not so much concerned with delivering a message as with solving a problem - a problem relating to Jehovah's providence and power in governing the nations.

- B. Looking around his native Judah, Habakkuk observes violence and injustice on every hand. What he sees causes him to cry out to God with his perplexing questions:

◇ *"Why are the wicked prospering in your nation, Lord?"*  
◇ *"Why are the righteous beaten down?"*  
◇ *"Why don't you do something to right the wrongs of society?"*

1. God's reply is even more shocking than the sinful conditions in Judah:

◇ *"I am doing something, Habakkuk. I am about to use a nation even more corrupt than Judah - the Chaldeans - to cleanse My people of their wicked ways."*

2. In stunned disbelief Habakkuk responds:

◇ *"How in the name of holiness and fairness can you do that, Lord?"*

3. The Lord's patient response to the prophet's question serves as the key to the book and the reason for its inclusion in the sacred canon.

- C. Like Nahum, we have little biographical information supplied about Habakkuk. However, we can be fairly certain of the time when he wrote. We are told that it was when the Chaldeans were rising to power (1:6). It was not until Nineveh had been destroyed (612 B.C.) that Babylon ascertained herself to world domination. We are told that Babylon would inflict Judah. That did not occur until 606 B.C.

1. Therefore, we conclude that Habakkuk was an early contemporary of Jeremiah and wrote between 612 and 606 B.C.
2. The focus of Habakkuk's problem and prophecy was Babylon. Of the enemies that afflicted the covenant people, three were outstanding - the Edomites, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans, or Babylonians. Interestingly enough, it was given to three of the Hebrew prophets to pronounce the doom of these three world powers.
  - a. Obadiah sealed the fate of Edom.
  - b. Nahum tolled the knell over Assyria. And...
  - c. Habakkuk dug the grave for Babylon.

BY

### I. HABAKKUK - THE PROBLEM, THE ANSWER

- A. The Problem: *Doubting*. The problem of doubting Jehovah did not begin with Habakkuk nor did it end with the apostle Thomas. In fact, I feel safe in concluding that all



Christians at some point in their spiritual development have been faced with nagging questions and doubts about the faith they espouse.

1. *Is the Bible really the inspired word of God? Did miracles actually occur as the Bible affirms they did? What about salvation? And heaven...and hell? Why has God allowed sickness to inflict my body or that of my friend? And why did He allow our loved one to be taken? Why do I have these times in my life when I get depressed and despondent? Why does God allow this old world of sin and shame to go on? Why...?*
  2. We all have had our misgivings about those questions and many more. The question is - How do we deal with doubt? How do we seek a solution and overcome them?
    - a. Habakkuk has the answer!
- B. The Answer: *Faith*. Habakkuk tells us that God loves the doubter. He does not care for the despairing doubter like a Judas or a Demas but, rather, He appreciates the honest doubter who will turn to Him in *faith* with his persistent problems and continual questions.
1. Yes, Habakkuk tells us that the answer to solving doubt is F\*A\*I\*T\*H and confidence in Jehovah. It is that message which runs throughout the book (2:4).

## II. THE OUTLINE

- A. This brief prophecy of Habakkuk puts into words a struggle of doubt and a triumph of faith which took place in the soul of the prophet himself. It begins with a sob of doubt. It ends with a song of trust.
1. There are three chapters and a corresponding three points of the prophet.



### The Righteous Will Live By Faith

- |   |
|---|
| I. A BURDEN: Faith Grappling With A Problem, ch.1-2:1 |
| II. A VISION: Faith Grasping The Solution, ch.2       |
| III. A PRAYER: Faith Glorifying In Assurance, ch.3    |

2. Thus we have: *The BURDEN (1:1)*  
*The VISION (2:2)*  
*The PRAYER (3:1)*

## III. A BURDEN: FAITH GRAPPLING WITH A PROBLEM

- A. A Two-Fold Problem or Faith Sighing. Here is a prophet in the agony of perplexity. He is beset by a double enigma of Divine providence that he does not understand.

1.  FIRST DOUBT, 1:1-4. *"Lord, why don't you do something about the evil in Judah?"* Habakkuk's problem was the silence, inactivity, and apparent unconcern of God. Violence abounded; wickedness was common-place; justice was perverted - and to the conscientious prophet, God was doing nothing!
  - a. It might be worthwhile to note that King David faced the same doubt in Psalm 73 - "Why do the wicked prosper?" His solution to his concern comes in verses 25-28. Habakkuk would have to reach that same conclusion.
2. Jehovah addresses the prophets problem in verses 5-6. This, however, to the distraught Habakkuk, only solved the one problem by raising a still bigger one.
3.  SECOND DOUBT, 1:12-13. Certainly the judgement coming to Judah was deserved - but why would God punish Judah at the hands of a people far more wicked and ruthless than the Jews ever dreamed of being?
  - a. Such was a shock to the prophet and proved hard for him to reconcile with his belief in the righteousness of God's judgement over the nations.
  - b. This is the *burden* of the confused prophet. What did he do? Did he give up in despair and turn his back upon Jehovah? No sir! He did what each of us must do - he waited patiently for Jehovah's response (2:1).

## IV. A VISION: FAITH GRASPING THE SOLUTION

- A. A Two-Fold Promise or Faith Seeing. Here Jehovah makes two great pledges to the prophet:



- 1st Promise → The righteous will live by faith (verse 4)  
 2nd Promise → The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (verse 14)

1. Promise number one is so significant that it is quoted no less than three times in the New Testament. See Romans 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). These are not mere empty incidental words but, rather, they form the heart of Old Testament godliness and New Testament Christianity. The words look beyond the outward to the inward, beyond the physical to the spiritual, and beyond the present to the future and the eternal.
  - a. What God is saying is this: "Yes, Habakkuk, your estimate of the Chaldean is right; but though I use him to chastise My people, he himself shall be brought to destruction in the end; and although in the present the righteous suffer at the hands of the wicked, yet the righteous shall never perish in the end like the wicked, but shall live because of their faith and because that one day the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord."
2. Here, then, is Jehovah's simple answer to perplexing problems for which (to us at least) there appears no logical answer: FAITH!
  - a. Even if you don't understand why the wicked prosper...Even if you don't understand what happens to the righteous - you must operate on the principle of faith.
  - b. God was not asking Habakkuk to understand all the "whys" behind his workings; He simply wanted His servant to trust fully in His control and to walk by faith. And, does He expect any less from us?
3. Finally, faith will lead to SIGHT. Notice what would happen to Babylon (2:6-20). Here are the five "woes" which would cause her demise:
  - a. Their lust for Ambition, vs.6
  - b. Their lust for Security, vs.9
  - c. Their lust for Human Glory, vs.12
  - d. Their lust for Enticement, vs.15
  - e. Their lust for Idolatry, vs.19

1) Because of their sins they too would be judged.
4. Verse 20 reminds us that it is the Lord's business to speak and ours to listen. He commands and we act. He communicates and we then operate based upon the information He in His infinite wisdom feels we need.

#### V. PRAYER: FAITH GLORYING IN ASSURANCE ch. 2

- A. A Two-Fold Product or Faith Singing. Here is Habakkuk's two-fold product of faith: (1) he praises Jehovah for the past, and (2) places confidence in Him for the future. Thus, we have gone from faith SIGHING to SEEING and now to SINGING. And how is that possible with us?
  1. We too must come to respect God, verse 2a. Habakkuk had begun by questioning Jehovah. Now that faith has brought understanding the prophet resigns himself to a recognition of his inferiority and God's superiority. That is where we each must start.
  2. We too must see the activity of God and realize it is right, verse 2b. Now he no longer doubts but, rather, places full assurance in God's plan. "O Lord, revive Thy work..." And why such a statement? Because the prophet now understands that Jehovah's work is right! See Deut. 6:24-25.
  3. We too must realize His glory, verse 3-4. How glorious God becomes when we see His providence at work to bring about His plan. There is no glory like God's glory.
  4. We too must appreciate His wrath, verse 5-7. Habakkuk needed to learn that Babylon was used only as an instrument for the salvation of his people. Had Judah continued down the pathway of sinful degradation the end would have been one of total destruction. He now understands. He had grown to appreciate God's discipline. See Heb. 12:6-11.



B. Habakkuk's Five-Step Process: *From Sobbing Doubts To Trusting Faith.*

1. He went to God with his doubts and frustrations, 1:2.
2. He had patience to wait for Jehovah's answer, 2:1. (See Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8-9).
3. He praised and glorified God when his prayer was answered, 3:3.
4. He was willing to bear the punishment his faith demanded, 3:17.
5. He was willing to make a total commitment to the Lord, 3:18-19.
  - a. Here is Habakkuk turning over his life totally and completely to God. He says in essence: "Lord, here is the cup of my life - you fill it up any way you wish and I'll drink it down. Be it glory or shame, health or weakness, wealth or want, companionship or loneliness - whatever is best for my life, whatever it takes for me to be saved, whatever it takes for me to realize my utter dependence upon you - O Lord, you fill it up and I'll drink it down and I'll be faithful to Thee no matter what!"
  - b. Jesus taught the same principle of total commitment in Luke 9:23 and 14:25-28. Too many times, I'm afraid, we want to be Christians on our terms instead of God's. Habakkuk learned that it doesn't work that way.

- C. If there is anything we need to do it is to emulate the example of the humble Habakkuk. True, faith may still have some problems. True, there may be some enigmas that we, like him, do not understand. Yet, we must follow his example of dealing with doubt and learn to put our trust in the Almighty and walk by faith with Him down the avenues of life.
1. Yes, if Habakkuk's day seemed draped with deepening doubts, even more does our own. This little book tells us not to judge merely by the appearances of the present, but to look to the future. Yes, our great God is working out great purposes in order to bring about great promises for the future for His people.
  2. And how do we know this? Look up Rom. 4:20-21; Heb. 10:38; 11:11 sometime for the answer.

Conclusion

1. People say that God does not speak to men today as He did long ago. While that is correct, a truer statement would be that men do not listen today as they did of old. To the man who waits and listens, God does not remain silent. The Savior said:

*"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.*
- a. God does answer prayer. He may not give us the answer we would like to hear - nor does He have to. He may not tell us the why of His timing or His will - nor does He have to. He simply wanted His servant to trust completely in His control and to walk by faith. And that is what He asks of you!
2. When Habakkuk looked at circumstances he was in despair. When he waited and heard God he began to sing. Let us never forget,

**THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH!**

## **Zephaniah:**

"I will search Jerusalem with lamps" (Zephaniah 1: 12) - Lessons from the Day of the Lord

*Ritchie Ares Doña*

After the downfall of the Northern kingdom, Zephaniah preached to Judah. Zephaniah was one of the first of the three prophets to preach to Judah. His name means "the Lord hid" which corresponds with the declaration of the tenderness of the love of God for the remnant of Israel, "the afflicted and poor people," whom God would "leave in the midst of them" (3:12). Zephaniah seems to converge in the love of God for the remnant of His people. The remnant He calls the "undesirable nation" (2:1). The remnants are those who walk faithfully in the Lord or who have turned away from wickedness. The Lord will hide the remnant when He said, "It may be that you will be hidden in that day of the Lord's anger" (2:3). Zephaniah foretells of a sifting time, when God will take away the proud among her (3:11-12), yet there follows the largeness of the Gospel promise and of love (3:12-17). Zephaniah's name speaks of God's protections and promises for the remnant of Israel.

The theme of the book of Zephaniah is the "for the day of the Lord is at hand" (1:7). Zephaniah's message vividly speaks of the terror of a people and nations without God. On the same token, from judgement, God shows His incredible Divine love. Since time began, God has been very clear to His people, He hates evil and blesses those who obey Him. The message is that all hope is not gone even though the judgment day is near. Like many prophets, Zephaniah emphasises the point that God does not forget those who do not forget Him. A promise is given to a nation whose God is their Lord (Psalm 33:12).

King Hezekiah was Zephaniah's great-great-grandfather (1:1). Due to his royal lineage one may call him the royal prophet. He was contemporary with Jeremiah, as were Nahum and Habakkuk. Zephaniah prophesied in the days of king Josiah. Josiah became king at the age of eight. In the early days of Josiah, idolatry and anything to do with wickedness filled the land. Josiah was a good king. The scripture described his ways, "he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (2 Kings 22:2). At the age of sixteen Josiah began to seek the Lord and the age of twenty he began to purge the land of idolatry. In 621 B.C. after the "book of the law" was found by Hilkiah the high priest, Josiah led an extensive series of religious and social reforms (2 Kings 22-23). Zephaniah may have prophesied before or during these reformations. Zephaniah's message was for the people who had departed the true worship to God. The people seem to be happy in their sins. The depth of idolatry and sin in the land it seems not possible for this people to turn. Only the remnant had the hope given to them. Josiah's reforms were short-lived. The nation soon returned to its wicked ways.

Zephaniah proclaimed the coming "day of the Lord" (1:7,14-16). His description was powerfully clear that an Assyriologist George Adam Smith wrote, "No hotter book lies in all the Old Testament." The judgment or the day of the Lord was truly great. However, the book ends on an encouraging message concerning the future. Josiah's reformation did not go far enough in the minds and hearts of the people. One may destroy what causes people to sin, however, if the heart is not changed then reformation serves a little. The

prophet's duty was to preach to the hearts of the people. "They needed to see the real problem was within themselves" (Petrillo, p.48).

### **God's punishment toward the wicked: Judah – 1:1-2:3**

The Lord will consume everything (1:2-3). In this first section Zephaniah encouraged people to look within. "I will utterly consume all things from the face of the ground, saith Jehovah" (1:2). Utterly consume all things literally "sweep away" or "scrape off utterly". The Lord's consummation is not with partiality or limitation. This phrase speaks of the incredible warning of the great day coming. Here the Lord speaks "expressing the utter final consumption of all things" (Barnes). The expression of the Lord's words shows the intensity of His judgements. The Lord will consume man, beast, birds of the heavens, fish of the sea, and He will even consume idols that made Judah stumble (1:3). "I will cut off man from the face of the ground" was used in the days of Noah. The Lord said to Noah, "I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made" (Genesis 7:4). God was true to His words. With the flood God destroyed the face of the earth. The same warning of judgement was used against disobeying the Lord. After given the Ten Commandments in the wilderness God warned them about disobedience when He said, "for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God, lest the anger of Jehovah thy God be kindled against thee, and He destroy thee from off the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 6:15). These incredible warnings against sin have been given since the beginning of time. The affect of man's sins is powerful. The Lord's creation has been affected because of man's sin. In Noah's days, every living thing on earth was destroyed because man would not turn away from sin. Fools who do not believe in God blame God for the calamities and sufferings in the world. How foolish are these people. Man brings sin causing sufferings and blame God for their action.

The Lord will judge Judah because of idolatry (1:4-6). "I will stretch out My hand upon Judah" (1:4), this shows the Lord's destruction against Judah. The idolatrous ways of Judah and Jerusalem is causing the Lord's wrath to come upon them. The Lord will cut off the remnant of Baal worship. According to commentators that there still remains of Baal worship, which Josiah was not able to utterly eradicate in remote places (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown). Baal worship has been a problem with the children of Israel from the time of the Judges (Judges 2:13). This is a powerful warning about not completely eradicating one's sins. A Christian cannot live a Christ life while enjoying a little bit of sin. As anything, a little seed of sin grows and brings destruction (James 1:15). God will cut idolatrous priests. These idolatrous priests were of the Levitical family who were supposed to be priests serving God. However, these priests appointed by the Jewish kings serve Baal. It is a warning to preachers and teachers of God who are unfaithful will rightly be rewarded with God's wrath. God will cut off star worshippers and false swearers (those who have divided loyalties). God will cut off those who have turn their back from following the Lord. "These were priests claimed to worship the Lord but worship the Baalim (plural)" (Petrillo, p.51). These priests will be cut off because they have not sought the Lord or inquire of Him. So many Christians have turned their backs on the Lord because they have not sought nor inquire of Him. Our faithfulness depends on our diligence to seek God. Without diligence it is impossible to "add" to our life faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7, cf. Hebrews 6:11). Our worship to God must be with all diligence (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:7). Drifting away from the Lord instruction is caused by laziness. We can easily be guilty of the idolatry of these priests if we are not diligent enough to seek or inquire of the Lord. We are not to be "lagging in diligence" as Paul instructed all Christians (Romans 12:11).

The Lord will punish those of the royal family and the rich (1:7-9). On the great day of the Lord, boasters will be silenced. He will punish the princes and the king's children. The Lord will disable the economy of the kingdom (1:10-11). He will also punish the commerce of Jerusalem (1:12-13). In everyway the Lord will destroy them. The prophet announces a universal and all-consuming judgment with special mention and attention given to Judah.

The great day of the Lord is near. On this great day Judah and Jerusalem will be affected (1:7-13). The punishment will be upon the princes and king's children and upon those who are full of violence and deceit. There will be wailing and mourning at the northern wall (Fish Gate). The Lord will search out and punish the complacent. They will be punished because they disregarded the Lord and said they were not afraid of any distribution from the Lord. The complacency of the people said in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil" (1:12). This is the summary of the people's hearts that have become hardened. These people imply that God is not going to do anything so they are not worried about anything. Complacency comes to the hearts that think all things are well and we do not need God. This is a powerful lesson about complacency. From the moment we get too comfortable and say in our hearts we do not need God is the moment we drift away from Him. Before the great day, the Lord will search and punish these people mentioned above. The great day is coming and Zephaniah described with urgency in his tone (1:14-18). The day is near and hastens quickly. It is describes as the day of devastation, desolation, darkness, and distress. This great day will be so severe that nothing can save them from the Lord's wrath, not even silver or gold. This is an incredible reminder of nations who trust in their wealth. Nations who hold world power because of their wealth will crumble like dust if they forget God.

The Lord God calls them to repent before that great day of His wrath comes upon them (2:1-2). The nature of God's mercy is that He continues to warn them through His prophets of the impending disaster. We often forget that through God's judgment is His love to redeem them. He wants them to seek the Lord, to seek righteousness, and to seek humility (2:3). Humility is what will save them. A humble person carries out God's ordinances. Humility describes the one who submits to the will of another. In this case, the blessing comes from submitting to God's will. Seek the Lord, seek righteousness, and seek humility all of these convey activity on the part of the person. The Lord's instruction will only work to those who have a humble heart, seeking that which is from the Lord, and to seek His right ways or seek His wisdom. Observing the evangelism in Tasmania, I have noticed that people are full of pride. I have understood the power of humility. It is hard and almost impossible to obey the Lord without humility (cf. 1 Peter 5:5, Proverbs 22:4).

### **Punishment toward the wicked nations surrounding Judah – 2:4-3:7**

The Lord will punish nations on East and West. Having Zephaniah to cause Israel to look within them, he is now prompt the people to look around them. It has been the history of Israel to seek other nations' help. God will punish them as well. He will punish Philistine cities (2:4-7). Its cities will be made desolate and the inhabitants destroyed. "The coast will be for the remnant" (2:7).

"This statement speaks of the small group of faithful people who return from captivity. 42, 360 returned. 'The remnant' – the faithful few (1:4, 2:7,9; 3:13. They will be able to lie down and rest, and the Lord will take care of them. He will restore their fortune. This was fulfilled when they returned to the Lord" (Petrillo, p.54).



The Lord will punish Moab and Ammon (2:8-11). They shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah because of their pride and for insulting God's people. God make an oath to Himself when He said, "As I live" (2:9). This confirms with surety that He will destroy both nations. Both nations will overrun with weeds and salt pits. "Nelson Gluek, a Jewish archaeologist, has discovered 100's cities that were desolated with salt pits" (Petrillo, p.55). The sin of these cities was their pride (Isaiah 16:6, Jeremiah 29). From the sin of pride all things flow from it (cf. Proverbs 16:18).

The Lord will punish nations on south and north of Judah (2:12-15). Ethiopia will be slain by the sword. This was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezer conquered Egypt, 536 B.C. The Lord used Nebuchadnezer as His instrument. The Lord refers to him as His sword, rod, and servant throughout scripture. Assyria with its capital Nineveh will become desolate. Nebuchadnezer destroyed Nineveh in 612 B.C. What was once a powerful city now is place mocked. God raises one nation to become great in order to punish another nation. On a smaller scale of territory, sometimes God uses our own brethren, friends, and family to punish us. Whom the Father loves him He corrects (Proverbs 3:12).

Woe is pronounced to Jerusalem. She has rebelled against the Lord (3:1-5). She has not obeyed the voice of the Lord to draw near to Him and appeal for His help (James 4:8). Her civil and religious leaders are like lions and wolves, insolent and doing violence to the Law. The unjust know no shame. However, in contrast the Lord is righteous and never fails in His justice. There were three things Jerusalem and Judah trusted. She trusted in false gods, military strength, and alliances with foreign powers. Neither of these can help them, the Lord will destroy all. She also ignored God's judgment upon other nations (3:6-7). Judgments upon other nations would have prompted her to receive God's instruction. They could not receive God's instruction because the people were corrupted in all their deeds.

### **Punishment serves to teach God's love and mercy toward the faithful – 3:8-30**

They are to wait upon the Lord. Zephaniah is appealing to the righteous few because He is going to come and bring vengeance. Zephaniah ends his message with a look beyond. "To wait for the Lord is to put your trust in Him" (Petrillo, p.57). The faithful are told to wait for the Lord to carry out His judgment (3:8). There is a wonderful promise to those who wait on the Lord. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" (Psalm 27:14).

After judgment, God will restore His peoples a "pure language" to worship and serve Him in one accord (3:9). The remnant who are scattered will eventually come back and worship God. God will be worship, however, He demand it to be done according to His will. Israel the dispersed shall bring offerings from afar (3:10). God will remove the proud from His "holy mountain", leaving a meek and humble people will trust and rest in the Lord (3:11-13). This is possible through the Gospel of Christ. Their sins are forgiven. "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies" (3:13). There will be no more deceit in the mouths of the people. No one will cause them to worry because they will be able to lie down and they will be fed.

Since the promise of restoration was pronounce to the remnant, there will joy in Jerusalem. For the Lord will remove their judgments and their enemies (3:14-15). They would not have to fear disaster since He has cleared away their enemies. For the Lord will be in their midst, providing them with gladness, love and singing (3:16-17). God is happy when people trust Him. The Lord will give them great assurance (3:18-20). God will gather

who sorrow over the reproach of His people. God will deal with those who afflicted His people. This assurance is applicable to all Christians. There will be time when our faith is mocked and ridiculed. Be assured, whatever the assault may be, God will deal with them. God will gather those who have been driven out and give them fame and praise. For those who have been affected by the sins of others and remain faithful one will prosper.

The message of Zephaniah is simple: Judgment is coming; however blessing will follow for those who heed the warning to repent. It was a message that would comfort the remnant taken away into Babylonian captivity. It was a message that perhaps had an initial fulfillment following their restoration under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The ultimate fulfillment pertains to the age of the Messiah. Began with the establishment of His spiritual kingdom, the church. Into which God is gathering His people (1 Thessalonians 2:12). In which we enjoy the presence of God and His blessings (Hebrews 12:22-24). In which will end when Christ comes again (Revelation 21:1-22:5). The message of the apostles is very much the same today when it was first written. The "day of the Lord", which Zephaniah's day was a type, is coming (2 Peter 3:7-10). As God's people are we ready for the second coming the great and final day, the Judgment Day? Many died because of complacency. Already, there are many Christians who are becoming lazy in their service to the Lord. God's people are admonished to remain faithful (2 Peter 3:11-14). Hope of salvation is given to those who seek the Lord, seek righteousness, and has a humble heart.

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

## The Book of ZEPHANIAH

### Introduction

We now come to the thirty sixth book in the Old Testament collection - the brief (and probably unfamiliar) three chapter prophecy of Zephaniah. Perhaps no prophet ever gave a more definite declaration against sin than did Zephaniah. Perhaps no prophet ever painted a more terrifying picture of the judgement of Jehovah than did he. And perhaps no prophet ever showed the unseparable connection between God's discipline and God's love than did this man.

1. His book opens with the terrors of divine retribution and closes with the sweetest love song of the Old Testament.
  - a. It is a book of contrasts. It is a book that takes us from judgement to joy. It is a book that graphically illustrates love's passionate anger; love's patient purpose; and love's ultimate perfecting.
  - b. It is a book that desperately needs our attention and our time.
- B. During Judah's hectic political and religious history, reform would come from time to time. In fact, Zephaniah's forceful preaching may have been a factor in one such revival during Josiah's reign - a "revival" which produced only outward change while failing to remove the inward heart of corruption which characterized the nation's leaders and people.
  1. And, so, Zephaniah hammers home his message repeatedly that the "*day of the Lord*" - Judgement Day - is coming, when God would deal with the nation's malignant sin. However, after the chastening process is complete, blessing will come in the person of the Messiah, who will be the cause of praise and rejoicing.

### BODY

#### I. THE WHO, WHEN & WHAT

- A. The Who. Read 1:1 as Zephaniah introduces himself to us. He is a prince of the house of David and a prophet of royal descent, being the great-great grandson of the godly king Hezekiah (not "Hizkiah" as in the King James Version).
  1. It is easy to understand why Zephaniah would trace his lineage back to a king like Hezekiah. He is obviously grateful to be a descendant of one of Judah's greatest and godliest leaders.
    - a. 2 Kings 18:1-6 serves as a summary of the life of Zephaniah's great-great grandfather.
- B. The When. Zephaniah also tells us *when* he prophesied - "*in the days of Josiah*" (vs.1). Josiah reigned from 640 B.C. to 609 B.C. and was the last righteous ruler of Judah. It was during his reign that Jeremiah began his work (Jer. 1:2), thus making Jeremiah and Zephaniah early contemporaries.
  1. It was Josiah who attempted a last ditch effort at spiritual reformation among the people, but it was only that - a reformation and not a restoration. However, if we read between the lines we can well appreciate that king Josiah, in his noble attempt, would have had the support of his prophet-cousin Zephaniah.
    - a. And who knows - perhaps Josiah's reforms originated with his cousin, who because of his lineage, would have the intimate influence of a relative in the royal house.
- C. The What. There is something a bit pathetic about Josiah's religious reforms. Outwardly they were impressive (as evidenced in 2 Kings 23), but inwardly they were far from what was needed. It was an outward reformation sponsored by the king, rather than a real spiritual revival among the people themselves. The people followed, yes, but only because the king led. There was no genuine heart repentance. Reformation but no regeneration. See Jeremiah 3:6,10.
  1. The effort by Josiah never quite made it to the undercurrent of the nation's life. And, so, the stream of sin flowed on unchecked. Judgement was unavoidable.
  2. Perhaps it is interesting to note that Zephaniah makes no reference to the reformation in these chapters. His discerning eye left him no doubt as to the real condition of the nation's character. He saw past the facade, the pretend

and the veneer. As a result, he got right to the point of exposing the transgressions and pollutions of his day; and with a stern disposition and an inflamed fury he warns his people of the hastening "Day of Jehovah" with its tornado of Divine wrath.

- a. Here is judgement against Judah unparalleled among the prophets.
3. One more thing of interest concerns the age of Zephaniah. King Josiah was eight when he began to reign, sixteen when he began to seek after Jehovah, and only twenty when he began to purge and purify Judah. It has been suggested that Zephaniah was about the same age as Josiah, if not a little younger.
  - a. Here is a young king and a young preacher trying desperately to *"remember their Creator in the days of their youth."* Someone may remark, *"But it's difficult for today's teenagers!"* Question: Do you think it was easy then?
  - b. Here were two young men living amidst iniquity and immorality, idolatry and impurity of every sort. They faced temptations.... and peer pressures.... and difficult decisions too. You are not alone. There have been others who have been where you are and who have pledged their fidelity to God and who have remained faithful. It isn't easy. It never has been. But it is possible - and here are two teenagers who proved it.
    - 1) Two teenagers who through their religious influence almost turned an entire nation back to God.

## II. ZEPHANIAH'S THREEFOLD MESSAGE

- A. Let's carefully observe the main movements and central message of this brief book. It has three parts which, unfortunately, do not coincide with the three chapters.
  1. Part one (1:1-2:3) announces that judgement is coming on *Judah*. Part two (2:4-3:8) declares that judgement is coming, as well, to *the surrounding nations*. And finally, in part three, the prophet is not just looking *within*, at Jerusalem, nor looking *around*, at the other nations; he is looking *beyond* to the Messianic kingdom and the exalted blessings offered in Christ.
  2. Here is what we have:

<u>From Judgement to Joy</u>	
I. LOOK WITHIN!	<i>Judgement coming on Judah, 1:1-2:3</i>
II. LOOK AROUND!	<i>Judgement coming on the nations, 2:4-3:8</i>
III. LOOK BEYOND!	<i>Judgement gives way to glory, 3:9-20</i>

- B. The key thought in Zephaniah is not so much in any one verse as in the *contrast* between the very first verse (after the introduction) and the very last.

<u>First Verse</u>		<u>Last Verse</u>
<i>"I will utterly consume"</i>		<i>"I will give you renown, praise and I will restore..."</i>
Here is the fierce-fire of judgement	I JUDGEMENT to JOY	Here is the final fulness of blessing

1. God has a glorious end and purpose in view for Zephaniah's people; but even that noble goal cannot be attained at the expense of Divine justice. God does not, will not, and did not then excuse sin. Present sin must be equated by present judgement.
2. Yet, after smiting with retribution, there will come the smiling of restoration. Joy will follow judgement. He judges (3:5) - but judgement eventually brings joy (3:17).

## III. INSIGHT: A CLOSER INSPECTION

- A. Look Within! 1:2-3 - Zephaniah begins with an unpopular examination of Judah's sins.

Here was a man who saw past the sudden new burst of religious activity, and judged it for what it really was worth. He looked out on these who really nodded an artificial respect for Jehovah simply to appease the king, and seeing the tragic farce of unconcern and knowing that the biggest calamity ever known to Israel was knocking at the door - he cried to his countrymen: "*The day of the Lord is near!*" (1:7). And why? Listen to Zephaniah's six point denunciation of Judah:

1. - *Guilty because of idolatry*, 1:4. The religious reforms of Josiah were not enough for they failed to get to the *heart* of the problem. And the problem was their *heart!* See Ezek. 14:3.
2. - *Guilty because of prevented worship*, 1:5a. See John 4:24 for the three Divine requirements for acceptable worship.
3. - *Guilty because of mixed religion*, 1:5b. Here were those who were attempting to serve God and gods concurrently and Jehovah wasn't buying it! Remember the first Mosaical commandment?
4. - *Guilty because of backsliding*, 1:6a. Josiah's spiritual attempt had impressed a few, but the impression failed to stick. For God's attitude toward spiritual apostasy, see 2 Peter 2:22.... and didn't Jesus address backsliding in Luke 9:62?
5. - *Guilty because of apathy*, 1:6b. Here were people who just didn't care. They were spiritually indifferent. They went through the motions - but that's all they were - motions. Verse 12 reveals them to be "*stagnant in spirit.*"
  - a. The term "stagnant" has to be one of the ugliest words in the English language. It conjures up a picture of a body of water that is dull, motionless, inactive and foul. We call it scum water. That's the picture God paints of the apathetic, indifferent, unconcerned Christian. He has remained motionless. He has allowed the scum of apathy to cover him rendering him foul. He may continue to "go through the motions," play church, and pretend at Christianity - but God knows his heart and renders him "*stagnant in spirit.*"
  - b. Didn't John speak of a church in Asia like that?
  - c. When it comes to responding to spiritual truth, there are three "temperatures" of individuals - HOT (responsive), COLD (rebellious), and LUKEWARM (indifferent) God rewards the hot, reaches out to the cold, but rejects the lukewarm. What would Zephaniah have to say about your "*spiritual temperature?*" Are you stimulated to greater action by God's word, or stagnant toward it?
6. - *Guilty because of loss of distinction*, 1:8. Here were folks who wanted to be like their irreligious neighbors. They forgot that Jehovah's people are to be distinct, separate and holy (1 Pet. 2:9).
  - a. Now take a look back over Zephaniah's list. Isn't it a good thing that the Old Testament isn't applicable and profitable? That's what some people believe. I tend to think otherwise - do you?
  - b. See verses 14-17 for the fundamental reason for coming judgement.
  - c. This section ends with a last minute appeal for penitence in 3:1-3.

B. Look Around! Judah would not be the only nation on the receiving end of Jehovah's judgement. Zephaniah first turns *West* to Philistia (2:4-7). Then he turns *East* to Moab and Ammon (2:8-11). Then he turns *South* to Ethiopia (2:12). Finally, he turns *North* to Nineveh and Assyria (2:13-15). Peter seems to summarize this section well in 1 Pet. 4:17-18.

1. Part two ends with a final word to Jerusalem, the point being that if God so smites the surrounding nations, how certainly will He smite the people of Judah who have been privileged above all others. Privileges invoke responsibility. Judah failed to appreciate the one and failed to carry out the other. Here were three areas of her greatest failure:
  - a. *Failure of attitude*, 3:1. Note the terms describing the national disposition.
  - b. *Failure of action*, 3:2. She obeyed not...received not...trusted not...and drew not...
  - c. *Failure of leaders*, 3:3. A nation is seldom stronger than its leaders. Wouldn't that be applicable to a church as well?
2. And finally, Jehovah's tender appeal - "*Wait for Me!*" Hence will follow good news for the faithful. Judgement will be turned into joy...



C. Look Beyond! Beginning is 3:9 the prophet *looks beyond* to the dawn of the Messianic day in which all men would have:

- ▶ 1. *One language*, 3:9a. See Heb. 13:15-16. And what would it mean to "*call on the name of the Lord?*" See Acts 22:16.
- ▶ 2. *One service*, 3:9b. Here is the picture of unity and fellowship that would exist in God's spiritual house. See Phil. 1:27.
- ▶ 3. *One attitude*, 3:12. Here is the attitude to be characteristic of Christ's citizens. See Eph. 4:1-3.
- ▶ 4. *One activity*, 3:13a. The one activity of the Messianic kingdom would be righteousness.
- ▶ 5. *One security*, 3:13b. God would provide and He would protect.
  - a. It is no wonder the prophet calls for celebration beginning in 3:14 in view of what Jehovah Himself would do for the faithful (3:18-20).

#### Conclusion

- 1. What they had in promise, we now have in reality. Let us never forget to be thankful for the great graciousness of God and for the spiritual blessings which we now have in His Son (Eph. 1:3).
- 2. *One final word:* Zephaniah's name means "the Lord hides," and had great significance in his message. In the midst of a graphic description of divine judgement - Zephaniah makes a play on words by inserting a gleam of hope for the righteous remnant. Read about it in 2:3.
  - a. Today we seek to be hidden in the Savior. He is our protection against discouragement. He is our hope amidst temptations. And He is our security amid the storms of life.
  - b. May we always be able to sing...

*Hide me, when the storm is raging  
O'er life's troubled seas;  
Like a dove on oceans billows,  
O let me fly to Thee.*

*Hide me, hide me, safely hide me,  
O blessed Savior, hide me;  
O my Savior, keep Thou me,  
Safely, O Lord, with Thee.*



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THE MINOR PROPHETS - ZEPHANIAH  
Lesson Ten

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read the book of Zephaniah.
2. Zephaniah means "He whom Jehovah hath hidden."
  - a. He is the only prophet who traces his ancestry back four generations. (1:1).
  - b. He prophesied during the days of Josiah (cf. 2 Kings 22) before the destruction of Nineveh (about 612 B.C. 2:13) or the great reform (621 B.C. cf. 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chron. 34:3ff). Josiah reigned from 640 B.C. to 609 B.C.
3. The book of Zephaniah has three elements:
  - a. "The prophet's own people are indicated.
  - b. There is a denunciation of foreign nations.
  - c. There is a vision of future glory for Israel." (Lewis, The Minor Prophets, p. 48).
4. The approaching day of the Lord is the major theme of Zephaniah.

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD'S JUDGMENT COMING UPON JUDAH BECAUSE OF SIN.

- A. It would be universal in its nature. (1:2).
- B. Several types of sin are named as the basis for God's judgment.
  1. Baalism. "I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place..." (1:4).
  2. Worship of heavenly bodies. (1:5a).
  3. Attempt to worship God and foreign gods. (1:5b).
  4. They turned back from following the Lord. (1:6a).
  5. They did not seek the Lord. (1:6b).
  6. They had a syncretistic religion - an attempt to worship God and idols - a mixture of true religion with man-made religion.
- C. God's judgment will be thorough - "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles..." (1:12-17).
- C. God's judgment cannot be avoided. Money had saved them from national enemies before, but "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath..." (1:18), for God cannot be bribed.

II. EXHORTATIONS TO PENITENCE AND EXAMPLES OF GOD'S JUDGMENT. Chapter 2 - 3:1-7).

- A. Those that do the Lord's commands will be "hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (2:3).
- B. The basis of admonitions to meekness are illustrations of God's justice.
  1. The Philistines on the west. (2:4-7).
  2. The Moabites and Ammonites on the east. (2:8-11).
  3. The Ethiopians on the south. (2:12).
  4. The Assyrians on the north. (2:13-15).
- C. If God spared not the surrounding nations who sinned does Judah and Jerusalem think she will be spared in her sins?
  1. She obeyed not the voice (3:2a).
  2. She received not correction. (3:2b).
  3. She trusted not in the Lord (3:3c).
  4. She drew not near to her God. (3:2d).
  5. "Her princes within her are roaring lions" devouring the poor. (3:3a).
  6. "Her judges are evening wolves." (3:3b).
  7. "Her prophets are light and treacherous persons." (3:4a).
  8. "Her priests: (3:4b)
    - a. Have polluted the sanctuary.
    - b. Have done violence to the law.
  9. Therefore God is in the midst of her for judgment, condemnation and punishment. (3:5-7).

III. PROMISES OF A RESTORATION.

- A. Therefore wait for Jehovah - trust in Him. (3:8).
- B. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language" (3:9) - one religion.
  1. This was true after the return from Babylon captivity - no idolatry.
  2. It is also true today as God's people are to be one and serve with one consent Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 8:5,6.

- C. They were to be new creatures. (3:10-13).
- D. God to be in the midst to comfort and encourage. (3:14-17).
- E. Gather her once again and make a name. (3:18-20).
- F. Most of these things find a fulfillment in the return from Babylon, but their remote application is found in Christ and the kingdom which covers the whole world. (Bill Rogers)

THE MINOR PROPHETS - ZEPHANIAH  
Lesson 10

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Zephaniah is the only prophet that does what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When did Zephaniah prophesy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the great theme of Zephaniah? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did some of the skeptics say about God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Name 10 different terms that are used to describe "the day of the Lord."  
 a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_ e. \_\_\_\_\_ f. \_\_\_\_\_  
 g. \_\_\_\_\_ h. \_\_\_\_\_ i. \_\_\_\_\_  
 j. \_\_\_\_\_
6. What kind of city did God say Jerusalem was? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who is the "remnant" that Zephaniah refers to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What city said "I am, and there is none beside me?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TRUE OR FALSE

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The beast would not be affected in "the day of the Lord."
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The day of the Lord is pictured as a sacrifice with invited guests.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The judgment would be so thorough that Jerusalem would be searched with candles.



4. \_\_\_\_\_ They would be able to inhabit the houses they built.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Some would walk like blind men.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Some would be hid (protected) in the day of the Lord's anger.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The remnant refers to the enemy that escapes.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Nineveh would become so desolate that only beasts and birds would dwell there.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The leaders of Judah were wonderful examples.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The Lord God is mighty in the midst of his people.

## The Book of ZEPHANIAH

### Introduction

- We now come to the thirty sixth book in the Old Testament collection - the brief (and probably unfamiliar) three chapter prophecy of Zephaniah. Perhaps no prophet ever gave a more definite declaration against sin than did Zephaniah. Perhaps no prophet ever painted a more terrifying picture of the judgement of Jehovah than did he. And perhaps no prophet ever showed the unseparable connection between God's discipline and God's love than did this man.
  - 1. His book opens with the terrors of divine retribution and closes with the sweetest love song of the Old Testament.
    - a. It is a book of contrasts. It is a book that takes us from judgement to joy. It is a book that graphically illustrates love's passionate anger; love's patient purpose; and love's ultimate perfecting.
    - b. It is a book that desperately needs our attention and our time.
- B. During Judah's hectic political and religious history, reform would come from time to time. In fact, Zephaniah's forceful preaching may have been a factor in one such revival during Josiah's reign - a "revival" which produced only outward change while failing to remove the inward heart of corruption with characterized the nation's leaders and people.
  - 1. And, so, Zephaniah hammers home his message repeatedly that the "day of the Lord" - Judgement Day - is coming, when God would deal with the nation's malignant sin. However, after the chastening process is complete, blessing will come in the person of the Messiah, who will be the cause of praise and rejoicing.

### BODY

#### I. THE WHO, WHEN & WHAT

- A. The Who. Read 1:1 as Zephaniah introduces himself to us. He is a prince of the house of David and a prophet of royal descent, being the great-great grandson of the godly king Hezekiah (not "Hizkiah" as in the King James Version).
  - 1. It is easy to understand why Zephaniah would trace his lineage back to a king like Hezekiah. He is obviously grateful to be a descendant of one of Judah's greatest and godliest leaders.
    - a. 2 Kings 18:1-6 serves as a summary of the life of Zephaniah's great-great grandfather.
- B. The When. Zephaniah also tells us when he prophesied - "in the days of Josiah" (vs.1). Josiah reigned from 640 B.C. to 609 B.C. and was the last righteous ruler of Judah. It was during his reign that Jeremiah began his work (Jer. 1:2), thus making Jeremiah and Zephaniah early contemporaries.
  - 1. It was Josiah who attempted a last ditch effort at spiritual reformation among the people, but it was only that - a reformation and not a restoration. However, if we read between the lines we can well appreciate that king Josiah, in his noble attempt, would have had the support of his prophet-cousin Zephaniah.
    - a. And who knows - perhaps Josiah's reforms originated with his cousin, who because of his lineage, would have the intimate influence of a relative in the royal house.
- C. The What. There is something a bit pathetic about Josiah's religious reforms. Outwardly they were impressive (as evidenced in 2 Kings 23), but inwardly they were far from what was needed. It was an outward reformation sponsored by the king, rather than a real spiritual revival among the people themselves. The people followed, yes, but only because the king led. There was no genuine heart repentance. Reformation but no regeneration. See Jeremiah 3:6,10.
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    - b. Didn't John speak of a church in Asia like that?
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C. Look Beyond! Beginning is 3:9 the prophet *looks beyond* to the dawn of the Messianic day in which all men would have:

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#### Conclusion

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Safely, O Lord, with Thee.*

## **Haggai:**

### **"Be Strong and Work" - Lessons From An Unfinished Temple**

*Ronald D. Gilbert*

#### **Introduction**

The northern kingdom was taken captive by Assyria about 721 B.C. The southern kingdom was taken captive by Babylon about 606 B.C. Cyrus issued the first decree to rebuild about 538 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-6). About 50,000 Jews returned in 536 B.C. (Ezra 2:1-70). During the seventh month (536 B.C.) the altar of the Lord was built and sacrifices are offered (Ezra 3:1).

In 535 B.C. during the second month of that year, work on the Temple begins but is stopped (Ezra 4:24). In 520 B.C. the work of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah begins (Haggai 1:1; Zech. 1:1). In 516 B.C. the twelfth month and the third day, the Temple was completed. In 457 B.C. Ezra comes to Jerusalem and makes certain reforms. In 444 B.C. Nehemiah rebuilds the wall around Jerusalem. These dates help us get a time frame in mind of the events we will be discussing.

Haggai is the second shortest book of the Old Testament behind Obadiah. In the 38 verses of this book "Thus saith the Lord" and like phrases appear 26 times. The theme of this book is "Build God's Temple". Haggai was God's prophet, Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah and Joshua was the high priest. Our lesson on this book will consist of three main points. The need for the work, the responsibility for the work and the encouragement in the work.

#### **The Need For The Work**

In order to understand what had happened to the Temple of God we need to read Jer. 52:12-13. Babylon had marched on Jerusalem and "burned the house of the Lord, and the king's house; and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire". In Haggai chapter one the prophet calls upon the people of God to build the Temple. After the return from 70 years in Babylon they laid the foundations and started to rebuild the Temple but the work was stopped. In Haggai 1:2 the people argued that the time is not come to build the Lord's house. Whether they were arguing that the 70 years was not yet up or that they had more pressing matters to do they were still not doing what God wanted them to do. God said the time is now. We always make the wrong decision when we decide to put other things before the work of God. It had been 16 years since Cyrus had given command that the house of God be built. The people wasted no time in building their own houses. Their houses are described as "ciled houses", that is roofed with costly woods, or vaulted houses, houses whose door posts were elaborately adorned with emblems and devices. These were houses of luxury and God's house was in waste. David was of a different mindset than the people of Haggai's day.

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies; That the king said unto Nathan the prophet,

See now, I dwell in an house of cedar but the ark of the Lord dwelleth within curtains" (II Sam. 7:1-2). If we truly put the Lord first in our lives then His work will come first, (Matt. 6:33).

In Haggai 1:6-11 God told the people that all these bad things were happening to them because they refused to obey God and put Him first in their lives. The prophet of God called upon the people to "consider your ways". As preachers and teachers of God's Word today this is also our task (II Tim. 4:1-5).

In Haggai 1:12-15 we see the power of preaching God's Word, "and they came and did work on the house of the Lord". These passages also show the power in preaching, I Cor. 1:18-25, Rom. 1:16.

### **The Responsibility For The Work**

It seems that many times when it comes to the work of the Lord many are uncertain as to who has the responsibility for the work. Who had the responsibility to build God's Temple? Was it only the high priest or the governor? The prophet of God called upon all the people to rise up and build the Temple of God. All of God's people were responsible for the work God gave them. The same is true today. Sometimes brethren argue over the work in the Kingdom and whether it is the responsibility of the leaders in the church or the members. All of God's people are to be workers in His kingdom, Mark 16:15-16; Gal. 6:10; Titus 3:1; I Cor. 16:1-2; Gal. 6:1, 5. In Haggai 2:4 this point is clearly seen. The prophet called upon Zerubbabel the civil leader, Joshua the spiritual leader and "all ye people of the land" to be strong and work. We need more in the church today like Isaiah who said, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I send Me" (Isa. 6:8).

### **The Encouragement In The Work**

In Haggai 2:4 God told the people to be strong and work, "for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts". In Rom. 8:31 Paul asked, "If God be for us who can be against us?" As God's children we should always be encouraged in doing the work He has given us. There has never been a time in the history of man that God has given us a task to do without also giving us the ability to do that task. Not only do we have the encouragement from God in the work He has given us we also have the encouragement from our brethren. There is much strength and encouragement in working together for the Lord.

In Haggai 2:9 the prophet gives further words of encouragement in stating that "the glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former". He was not talking about the physical Temple for in Haggai 2:3 he clearly stated that the glory of the Temple before it was destroyed was superior. Here in Haggai 2:9 he was speaking of the spiritual Temple or the church. In I Cor. 3:16 Paul stated, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Then in I Tim 3:15 Paul said, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God the pillar and ground of the truth." The Greek word for "house" here can be translated family, home, house or temple. As glorious as the Temple Solomon built was it is not to be compared to the spiritual Temple or the church. The first Temple was dedicated by the blood of many bulls and goats. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ, Acts 20:28.

In Haggai 2:9 God promised to give peace. This refers to spiritual peace. In Eph. 2<sup>13-16</sup> Paul said, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby". Haggai spoke by inspiration of the greatest peace the world would ever know, the peace that passeth understanding.

## **Conclusion**

From the book of Haggai we learn that there can be no success in life without obeying God. When we fail to do God's will in our lives we are "earning wages and putting them in a bag with holes". "Be strong and work" is the key to success. "I am with you saith the Lord" is all we need to know for our strength and encouragement.

Discouragement comes when we only look to the conditions around us rather than the mission before us. The Lord's cause cannot go forward without personal dedication and personal involvement. There must also be personal sacrifice. God's work requires my time, energy and my money. We also should remember the Lord will reward His faithful servants in this life and the life to come. The Hebrew writer quotes Haggai 2:6, 20 as confirmation of the Lord's establishment of the kingdom of Christ in Hebrews 12:22-29.

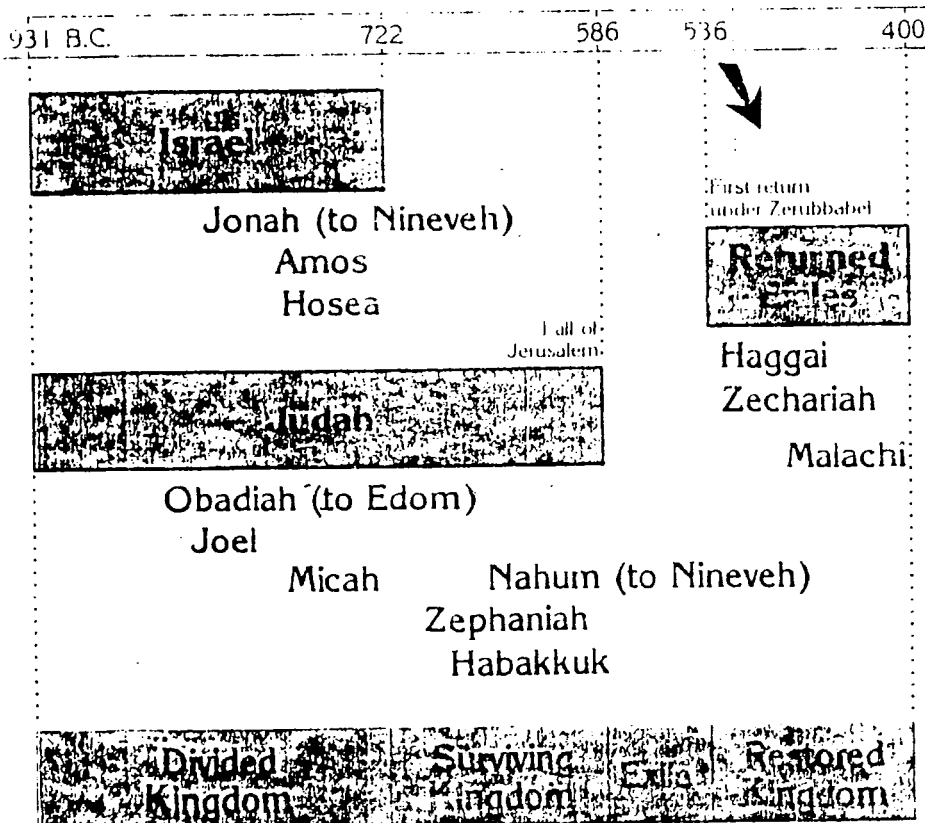


## Introduction

- A. The year was 520 B.C. Sixteen years previous the Persian emperor, Cyrus, had issued his historic decree allowing the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Lord's temple. Thus, under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, the "remnant," numbering some fifty thousand, returned to implement the royal proclamation (Ezra 1-2). Two years later the foundation had been laid and the prospects for rebuilding seemed bright (Ezra 3:8-13).
1. But now it is 520 B.C. and circumstances were anything but bright. Following the laying of the foundation, Palestinian opposition arose, discouragement followed and the temple rebuilding ceased. See Ezra 4.
    - a. Sixteen years had now dragged by since the return and fourteen since the laying of the foundation. The temple remained unbuilt, the foundation was overgrown with weeds, and God's people had turned their energy to their own homes and personal comforts.
  2. The Lord needed one who could take a message from Himself, convey it to the people and get results. Onto the scene steps Haggai, an aged, straight-talking prophet of God who minces no words in his call to "*finish what you have begun.*" His single, but simple sermon, his one paramount obsession - BUILD THE TEMPLE!
    - a. It worked! Within three weeks after his first sermon construction had begun.

# Placing the Minor Prophets

CHRONOLOGICALLY... nine of the Minor Prophets were written before the Exile, and three after.



*In this time of preparation for the coming of the Messiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were divinely commissioned to stimulate obedience to Jehovah, re-establish God's people in Palestine, and set before them the real meaning of their return and keep them in the line of duty until the coming of Christ.*

## BODY

### I. THE OUTLINE

- A. The little scroll from Haggai is in four parts. Four times within four months in the second year of Darius (520 B.C.) the *"word of the Lord"* came through the lips of the prophet. Each of the four communications is carefully dated and each has a single theme.

#### "From This Day I Will Bless You"

- I. First Message - TO AROUSE, 1:1-15  
Date: 6th Month, 1st Day  
Key Verse: *"Build the house,"* vs.8
- II. Second Message - TO SUPPORT, 2:1-9  
Date: 7th Month, 21st Day  
Key Verse: *"I am with you,"* vs.4
- III. Third Message - TO CONFIRM, 2:10-19  
Date: 9th Month, 24th Day  
Key Verse: *"From this day I will bless you,"* vs.19
- IV. Fourth Message - TO ASSURE, 2:20-23  
Date: 9th Month, 24th Day  
Key Verse: *"I have chosen you..."* vs.23

### II. THE FOUR SERMONS OF HAGGAI

- A. TO AROUSE, 1:1-15 - God's people had forsaken the work on the temple and had turned to their own houses. After laying the foundation they had lost interest in the spiritual side of life and built themselves houses of cedar. It was a time of **INDIFFERENCE, MATERIALISM, and PROCRASTINATION**. Haggai had to some how convince the people to forget their own pleasures and return to the Lord's work left untended for sixteen years. Haggai chapter one shows the prophet's plan for *personal motivation*.

1. He begins with the leadership, 1:1. To move the people of God, Haggai, by divine instruction, doesn't turn to the man in the field but rather to the *leaders* of God's people. Here is an all important lesson on the importance of godly leadership. Solomon well said, *"Where there is no vision the people perish"* (Prov. 29:18). If the leaders of God's people don't have a vision of what **OUGHT TO BE** and a plan to **ACHIEVE IT**, the people will wallow in inactivity.
  - a. So it is today - if the kingdom is ever going to be moved the leaders, the elders and teachers must be men of vision to see that **REFORM** begins with them. Without the proper kind of leadership, the ship of Zion will flounder on the rocks of indifference, inactivity, procrastination and materialism (which is exactly where the church is in many places today). Decisions can't be arrived at, discipline can't be administered, and personal work can't be done because of procrastination and materialism. Everything is put off until the next business meeting, and everyone is too busy building their own businesses and houses to attend to the Lord's temple.
  - b. The need today is for both men like Haggai to arise and cry to the leaders and for men like Zerubbabel and Joshua who as leaders hear the Lord's cry and thus rise up to build. If we can't motivate the leaders of God's cause the people in the pew will remain exactly that and not an active marching army for the Lord.
    - 1) If we can't get elders to do personal work, then how are we going to get anyone else involved. If the leaders don't seek the high road of self-sacrifice to put the kingdom first, how can they expect anyone else to.
    - 2) THE WORK PROGRAM OF ANY CONGREGATION IS NO STRONGER THAN THE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT OF THE LEADERS TO IT!

2. Read verses 2-5. Here is the source of their problem - materialism. We will sacrifice for our businesses, for our jobs, for our pleasures. Why? Because we feel like it's worth it. There is always time to do what we really want to do, yet there never seems like there is time to do what we really *need* to do. And why? Again, our *priorities*. And why do we allow our priorities to get out of whack? Materialism!
    - a. Consider the disgrace that this nation was to Jehovah. They had bragged to the surrounding nations about the power and greatness of Jehovah and how He was superior to their gods of metal and stone. Yet this same people had left the temple built to His glory in the ruins of incompleteness for sixteen years while they followed after their own materialistic pleasures.
    - b. They had laid the foundation and doubtless the weeds had grown up around the Holy of Holies, there were no walls, there was no roof, there was only a monument of disgrace to the God of heaven.
      - 1) How many things do *we* begin to God's glory - teaching programs, personal work programs, gospel meetings - only to see them cut back or abandoned in disgrace for lack of interest due to our first love for materialistic pleasure?
  3. The result - no reward, vs. 6-9. "*Consider your ways...*" Folks, God will not bless those who spend all their time building their houses instead of His. When we are too materialistic and indifferent and only hold a gospel meeting twice a year because *we have always done it that way* - God can see through our feeble facade. As long as God knows our hearts and knows that our first love is our "*paneled houses of cedar*," He is not going to be mocked by our half-hearted attempts to salve our conscience once or twice a year. "*Consider your ways...*"
  4. The people's response, verses 12-15. Taking his message to heart the people began to build with renewed zeal.
- B. TO SUPPORT, 2:1-9. Three and a half weeks pass and the zealotry on the temple restoration project begins to wane. Some are discouraged. The older ones remembered the grandeur and splendor of the Solomonic temple and began to live in the past thus demoralizing the younger people, verse 3.
1. Hence, Haggai's message of Jehovah's *support*, verse 4. Discouragement is never reason enough to quit. Why? "*For I am with you*," says the Lord. The people in essence responded - "*But this is an impossible task!*" Yet, they forgot that God deals with the impossible and that ALL THINGS are possible with His help. See Romans 8:31.
    - a. The United States Navy has a slogan that says, "*The difficult we do right away but the impossible takes a little longer.*" See Eph. 6:10.
  2. See verse 9. To those who complained that the new temple failed in comparison with the old - the Lord promises that the latter would far outshine the glory of the former. Such a promise is tied to the messianic hope and to the *spiritual* temple formed from the remnant by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:16).
    - a. "*In this place I shall give peace.*" It is Christ who as the *Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6) brought peace between God and man through the forgiveness of sins. Peace also was obtained in Christ between Jew and Gentile as the two groups became as one in the church, the spiritual temple of God. See Eph. 2:15-17.
- C. TO CONFIRM, 2:10-19. Three months have now passed. Haggai presents a lesson to the people concerning the need for purification and holiness. He asks two questions:
- Question #1 - Verse 12: "*Does holiness make unclean things clean?*"
- Question #2 - Verse 13: "*Does something unclean make the holy unclean?*"
1. The priests responded to the prophet's first question correctly - "*NO!*" One who is holy cannot make something that is unclean, clean. A well person cannot make a sick person well - BUT A SICK PERSON CAN MAKE A WELL PERSON SICK! Thus, the second question - Can something unclean make one who is holy unclean? - "*YES!*"
    - a. The prophet then brings home the point of his illustration in verse 14 - "*So is my people!*"

2. Israel had been holy but had touched the unclean and thus they had become unclean themselves. And, so, in order to receive the blessings of Jehovah they must first cleanse themselves and seek His favor.
3. *"Yet I will bless you..."* 2:19. God promises the people: If you will *build*, I will *bless*. But notice Jehovah's question: *"Is the seed still in the barn? It has not born fruit."* For two months the people have been building. What Haggai is telling them is that they had to work two months *in faith* before they could see any reward for their labor. Now after these two months of work on His temple He will start to bless them with material prosperity.
  - a. Paul made this point in Galatians 6:9. Brethren, we must understand that the rewards of our labor may take years to produce and that we simply are not at liberty to sow one day and then say if we see no harvest in a week that we are not going to labor anymore. We will reap in due season....i.e., when God sees that the time is right.
    - 1) We must understand, too, that our labor is connected inseparably with our faith. If the faith is weak, the labor will fail. If the faith is strong, we will labor no matter what the odds and trust that God will give the increase.
  - b. The people had proved their faith. Now God would send the blessings.
- D. TO ASSURE, 2:20-23. A second message on the same day. However, this message is to Zerubbabel himself and looks far beyond him to the ultimate consummation of the Davidic line in the coming reign of Christ. Zerubbabel is here addressed as a *representative* of the line of David.
  1. To Zerubbabel would be bestowed great honor (*"a signet ring"*). *"For I have chosen you,"* declares the Lord. God is here declaring that the fulfillment of the future spiritual blessing would come through Zerubbabel. The honor bestowed on Zerubbabel wasn't realized in him as a person, but in his lineage. See Matthew 1:12.

#### THREE REASONS FOR HAGGAI'S SUCCESS

- A. He Knew Where To Start. Haggai understood that true spiritual reform begins at the top.
- B. He Knew Where He Was Going. His was a single-minded mission. Haggai wasn't a rambling preacher. So it must be with us. When we preach God's word in a sermon or teach it in a Bible class we must give it some direction - we must know where we are going. Haggai had a lesson-plan and a simple one at that! And he was successful!
- C. He Knew Who To Give The Credit. Twenty-six times in thirty-eight verses Haggai appealed to a *"thus says the Lord."* Here is the key to the prophet's power and to His successful preaching.

#### Conclusion

*"On the banks of hesitation lie the blackened bones of millions who at the dawn of victory sat down to rest...*

*...and resting, died!"*

1. Haggai accomplished in four months what had been abandoned for sixteen years! The people had grown indifferent. They were getting used to being without a temple, and this would have proved to be fatal. The temple was the reason for the return in the first place and without its completion Jehovah's favor could not be expected.
  - a. His was an enormous task - some would even say it was nigh to impossible - *"Can't be done!"* But Haggai knew otherwise because Haggai knew Jehovah!
  - b. See Ezra 5:1 & 6:14-15.

- C. While thus engaged in Jehovah's work they had the promise: "I am with you" (v. 13). So today. Matt. 28:18-20; 18:20.

## II. Chapter II.1-9: DETERRENT TO DISCOURAGEMENT

- A. The old men who had seen the former house caused discouragement (Ezra 3:12; Haggai 2:3).
- B. How to deter discouragement: (1) Be strong. (2) and WORK. (3) For I am with you to keep my covenant (2:4-5).
- C. God promises the precious things of nations--silver and gold to carry on the work (vv. 7-8). Gold and silver STILL His.

The Structure of Haggai			
a Call To Action	a Call To Courage	a Call To Patience	a Call To Hope
Reproof	Encouragement	Blessing	Promises
Ch. 1	2:1-9	2:10-19	2:20-23

- c. We are told to take inventory (2 Cor. 13:5).
- C. Third, they are given a stern command to build the temple (Hag. 1:8-11).
  - 1. The Lord tells them to "get busy."
  - 2. Three verbs of action:
    - a. "GO up to the mountain."
    - b. "BRING wood."
    - c. "BUILD the house."
- D. Fourth, Haggai's message reached the hearts of the people.
  - 1. The people and the leaders responded to the challenge.
  - 2. In just 23 days they made preparation and began to build.

## II. Lessons To Learn From Haggai.

- A. First, effective preaching is based on what God says.
  - 1. Twenty-six (26) times in this short book Haggai uses "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts," "the word of the Lord," etc.
  - 2. Paul told the Corinthians and the Galatians that he received his message from God (1 Cor. 2:6-13; Gal. 1:11-12).
  - 3. Too much preaching today is filled with everything else, but the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:1-4; Acts 20:32).
- B. Second, there is tremendous power in practical preaching. Haggai's preaching produced:
  - 1. Universal obedience—"Zerubbabel...Joshua...all the people" (Hag. 1:12a).
  - 2. Reverent obedience—"did fear before the Lord" (1:12b).
  - 3. Zealous obedience—"stirred up" (1:14a).
  - 4. Immediate obedience—23 days after he preached (1:14-15).
- C. Third, life without God means wasted effort and is like putting wages "into a bag with holes" (1:6).
  - 1. Except the Lord build the house (Psa. 127:1).
  - 2. Boasting about plans (Jas. 1:13-17).
  - 3. Johnny Ramsey (Firm Foundation, Feb. 25, 1986) lists seven "bags full of holes today."
    - a. Superficial responses.
    - b. Social club religion.
    - c. Preachers who seldom study.
    - d. Elders who fail to watch for souls.
    - e. Parents who stress material values.
    - f. Folks who postpone obedience.
    - g. Brethren who drift away from God.
- D. Fourth, Haggai is an excellent book to study excuses. They offered four excuses for not building the temple.
  - 1. "The time is not come."
    - a. "I know we ought to get around to that but what is the hurry?"
    - b. The backslider will say, "Yes, I know that I ought to do something about it, but it is just not the time."
    - c. One who has learned the truth will say, "Yes, I know the Bible teaches that, but not now" (Acts 24:25).



- d. We need to carry the gospel to the world, but "not now."
- 2. "You can't expect us to build a house like Solomon."
  - a. We are just a few in number.
  - b. We don't have the silver and gold like Solomon had.
  - c. When we get on our feet we will build.
  - d. What I can do is so little that I won't do anything.
  - e. What we can do is so small we can't do anything.
- 3. What are we going to get out of it? Immediate results (1:16-17).
- 4. They were afraid of the opposition (nations about).
- E. Fifth, God's people need to constantly be reminded of their duties.
  - 1. Haggai told the people what they already knew, but they needed to be stirred up to do it.
  - 2. Peter wrote his second epistle to bring to their remembrance (2 Pet. 1:13).
  - 3. People need to be reminded today.
    - a. Bible authority is essential (2 Jn. 9-11).
    - b. The church is important (Ephesians).
    - c. Only one way to be saved (Eph. 2:14-16).
    - d. Instrumental music is wrong (Verses dealing with music).
    - e. God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
- F. Sixth, obligations do not disappear just because opposition arises.
  - 1. The Jews faced opposition.
  - 2. The church faces opposition (Acts 8,9, 20:28-32).
  - 3. The church must not allow the world to stop the work or change her.
- G. Seventh, just as they needed encouragement so we need encouragement.
  - 1. God assured them "I am with you" (Hag. 1:13; 2:5).
  - 2. Gal. 6:9, "Let us not be weary."
  - 3. Heb. 13:5-6, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

### Conclusion

- 1. The things written aforetime were for our learning (Rom. 15:4).
- 2. God's work must not be neglected while we are busy about our own.

## HAGGAI THE EXHORTER

### Introduction:

1. The name: from a word denoting rapid movement, such as dancing done on a feast-day (literal meaning: "Festival"). Cf. Roman Festus. Possibly born on feast-day. Possibly a senior to Zechariah as he is mentioned first. Ezra 5:1; 6:14.
  2. First of the Post-exilic prophets. Second year of Darius, 520 B.C.
  3. Review background: Other prophets had foretold Babylonian exile. Had come to pass (Cf. Jer. 29). About 50,000 Jews under the edict of Cyrus (Isa. 44-45) returned in 536, laid the foundation of temple, erected the altar. Being hindered they quit and the temple lay in waste 15 years (Ezra 1-6). This is the time that Haggai came on the scene.
  4. Haggai a practical prophet--deals with the exigencies of the moment. They had started out in a fine way (Ezra 2:68; 3:7), but had quit. He stirred them to action again. *a man of one idea - the temple must be built*
  5. He was the Lord's messenger with the Lord's message (1:13). The Angel of Jehovah, Malach Jehovah (Cf. Rev. 1:20; 2:1, sequel).  
*The only one called the Lord's messenger. Malachi later used it of the priest (Mal. 2:7)*
- I. Chapter I: Haggai Exhorts The People to Build

### A. The Preaching of the Prophet

1. Addressed to: Zerubbabel (civil ruler) and Joshua (religious leader) and people (v. 1). Leaders responsible--hence first (Acts 20:28).
2. The people's excuse: Time not come. The 70 years not completely finished--hindrances also, hence not time to build! (v. 2).
3. "Consider"--set your heart upon--your ways (v. 5). Cf. 2 Cor. 13:5-6.
4. Argument is no good because people don't believe it: Verse 3: Is it time then for you to dwell in your ceiled--paneled--houses? If not "time" for one then not the other! Consider this! Eph. 5:15-16.
5. Three verbs of ACTION: (a) GO... (b) BRING... (c) BUILD!
6. "I will take pleasure in it...and will glorify myself (reflexive)."
7. Make practical application: The church is the temple of God today (1 Cor. 3:16). It is made of spiritual stones, converted men and women (1 Pet. 2:5). The house is lying waste while the members are living in the lap of luxury. Consider your ways! Not time to build? What kind of cars do we drive? What kind of houses live in? What conveniences do we have? Is it time for this? VERBS OF ACTION: GO...BRING...BUILD! (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16).

### B. The Power of Practical Preaching.

1. Universal obedience--Zerubbabel...Joshua...all the people (v. 12a).
2. Reverent obedience--"did fear before the Lord" (v. 12b).
3. Zealous obedience--not half-hearted (v. 14 stirred).
4. Immediate obedience. 24th day of month. Only 23 days after preaching (1:1, 14-15).

Zerubbabel + Sheshbazzar - Same person

1. " returned to the house of the Lord (Ezra 3:8)
2. The builders laid the foundation of the temple  
(Ezra 3:10)
3. Later it is said Sheshbazzar laid the foundation  
(Ezra 5:16)
4. It said Zerubbabel laid the foundation  
(Zech. 4:9)

"Is It Time For You, O Ye, to Dwell in Your Ceiled Houses,  
and This House be Waste?" (Haggai 1:4)

### Introduction

1. Read or quote the text.
2. The background and setting of Haggai.
  - a. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first invaded Judah in 605 B.C., at which time Daniel was carried into captivity.
  - b. Ezekiel was taken to Babylon at the second invasion in 597 B.C.
  - c. In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah again, destroying Jerusalem and the temple, and carrying "all the vessels of the house of God" to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:1-21).
  - d. In 539 B.C. Cyrus entered and took the city of Babylon.
3. The Jews return.
  - a. Zerubbabel led the first group of exiles back to Palestine in 536 B.C. (Ezra 1:5-2:70).
  - b. Upon their return to Palestine in 536 B.C., the Jews "builted the altar of the God of Israel" and began to offer sacrifices, but "the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid" (Ezra 3:1-7).
  - c. Finally "in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month" (Ezra 3:8) they began and laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:8-13).
4. Opposition arose and the work on the temple stopped from 536 to 520 B.C.
5. It was at this time that God raised up Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14).

### Discussion

- I. Haggai's First Message Divides Itself Into Four Parts.
  - A. First, he charges the people with a conflict of interest (Hag. 1:2-4).  
Affluence can be dangerous.
    1. This gives a true insight into the real interest and labors of the people.
    2. This is not the last time that God's people have acted the same way.
      - a. There is nothing wrong with paneled houses, but there is something wrong with apathy toward God's word.
      - b. There is nothing wrong with paneled houses, but there is something wrong with cowardice and lack of trust in God.
      - c. Affluence can crush spiritual desire (Rev. 3:14-17).
    3. There are some things that must be first (Mt. 5:21-24; 6:33).
  - B. Second, he calls upon them to "consider their ways" (Hag. 1:5-7).
    1. "Consider" literally means "set your heart on your ways." Appears four times (1:5,7; 2:15,18).
    2. Take a look at yourselves and see the real situation.
    3. Sometimes we get so involved in matters that we don't take the time to consider spiritual matters.
      - a. We allow things to choke out the word of God (Mt. 13:3-8, 18-23).
      - b. We don't take time to consider our way.

## Haggai - Lessons To Be Learned

1. Haggai is the first of the prophets that spoke during the restoration.
2. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are the only three prophets that spoke during the restoration.
3. Some Thoughts:
  - a. The Book of Haggai is an excellent book to think about in regard to excuses. They offered four excuses as to why the temple was not being rebuilt (Lk. 14:15-24).
    - (1) "The time is not come..." (v. 2) Up to date:
      - "I will, but not now."
      - "I know we ought to get around to doing that but what is the hurry?"
      - Think about the number of ways people offer this excuse:
      - The backslider will say, "Yes, I know I ought to do something about it, but it is just not the time."
      - The one who has learned the truth and knows what he ought to do will say "Yes, I know what the Bible teaches, but not now" (Cf. Acts 24:25).
      - We need to carry the gospel to the world, but we say "not now."
      - Too many people in the church say "not now."
    - (2) You can't expect us to build a house like Solomon built. We can't do something like that.
      - We are just few in number.
      - We don't have the gold and silver like Solomon had.
      - When we get on our feet we'll build it.
      - "What I can do is so little I won't do anything."
      - "What we can do is so little we can't do anything."
    - (3) What are we going to get out of it? We want immediate results (v. 16-17). That's what we want.
    - (4) They were afraid of the opposition (nations about them).
4. Obligations do not disappear merely because opposition arises.
  - a. The Jews faced opposition.
  - b. The church faces opposition both within and without (Acts 20:28-32).
  - c. The church must not allow the world to stop her work or change her.
5. People need to be reminded of their duties.
  - a. Haggai told people many things they already knew.
  - b. Peter reminded them (2 Pet. 1:12-13).
  - c. The church needs to be constantly reminded:
    - (1) Only one way to be saved (Eph. 4:4-6).
    - (2) Church is extremely important (Ephesus).
    - (3) Bible authority for all that one does (2 Jn. 9-11).
    - (4) Denominational concept is not scriptural (Eph. 4:4).
    - (5) Carnal-mindedness is sin (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 3:1-3).



(6) Mechanical instruments of music in worship are sinful (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

(7) One can know truth (John 8:32).

(8) God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

6. Affluence can be dangerous.

a. Haggai 1:4.

b. There is nothing wrong with a paneled house, but there is something wrong with apathy toward God's Word.

c. There is nothing wrong with a paneled house, but there is something wrong with cowardice and lack of trust in God.

d. Affluence can crush spiritual desire due to satisfaction it brings (1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19; Prov. 30:8-9; Rev. 3:14-17).

e. "Thoreau said that a man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to leave alone."

7. God's work is controversial. There will be opposition.

8. "Consider your ways" 1:5,7; 2:15,18.

a. Sometimes we get so involved in matters that we don't take the time to consider spiritual things.

b. We allow so many things to choke out the word of God (Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23).

c. We need to take the time to study God's word, to consider our ways, evaluate, etc.

d. Emphasis on being strong (2:4). Consider Eph. 6:10ff.

e. The N.T. admonishes us to take spiritual inventory (2 Cor. 13:5). It must be by the right standard.

9. 2:6-9

a. Haley thinks this refers to the "shaking within the natural world and of the nations seems to point to the divinely decreed rise and fall of nations from that time to the coming of the Messiah" (p. 310).

b. Instead of "the desire of all nations" the ASV has "and the precious things of all nations" would be brought into the house of God.

c. The Hebrew writer uses this verse (Heb. 12:18ff).

(1) As God shook heaven and earth at the giving of the law of Moses at Mt. Sinai.

(2) He shook the heathen nations, removing them.

(3) He shook and removed the old Jewish economy and gave a kingdom which cannot be removed (Cf. Isa. 65:16-17).

10. Verse 6 - "Bag full of holes."

a. In the Firm Foundation, Feb. 25, 1986, Johnny Ramsey listed seven "bags full of holes today."

(1) Superficial Responses

(2) Social Club Religion

- (3) Preachers Who Seldom Study
- (4) Elders Who Fail To Watch for Souls
- (5) Parents Who Stress Material Values
- (6) Folks who Postpone Obedience
- (7) Brethren Who Drift Away from God
- b. To which we add:
  - (1) Boston/Crossroad Multiplying Ministries
  - (2) The New Unity Movement
  - (3) The New Hermeneutic
  - (4) Promise Keepers

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A BAG WITH HOLES  
HAGGAI 1:6---  
**JAMES MEADOWS**

Int.

1. In 597 and 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar carried the second and third groups of Jews into captivity, along with the sacred vessels of the temple. In 536 B.C. Cyrus, King of Persia captured Babylon and gave a decree permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (2 Chron. 36:22,23).
2. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem and immediately proceeded to lay the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3). The mongrel race of Samaritans offered help, which the Jews refused. As a result opposition arose against their work. Israel became discouraged, laid down their tools and for the next 16 years busied themselves with things of self-concern.
3. After a lapse of 16 years God roused up Haggai. In white-hot rebuke he declared God's displeasure and pointed out their sins.
  - a. The sin of easy discouragement.
  - b. The sin of procrastination. "It is not the right time" they said.
  - c. The sin of the neglect of divine things. Haggai 1:4.
4. The result of all this sloth was that their efforts for 16 years was useless. Haggai 1:6,9. They were putting their wages in a bag with holes.
5. How sad it is to see men and women giving their lives to a work that can be jerked away by sudden fate. Yet this is exactly what happened to Israel and that is exactly what is happening to too many today. Isa. 55:2.
6. Wee to the man that finishes life with no enduring works.
  - a. Too often we are like the little boy building castles, roads, and cities in the sand and so busy to see the creeping tide.
  - b. Remember the grand truth "Permanence is the final test of all values?" (1 Cor. 3:13)
- 7 Consider some questions:
  - a. Will that to which I am giving my life at this moment abide forever?
  - b. Will it pass the test of permanence?
  - c. Am I building on the foundation wood, hay, and stubble?
  - d. Am I putting it into a bag with holes?
8. When is life a bag with holes, where all efforts are wasted?

DIS.

I. LIFE OUT OF CHRIST IS A BAG WITH HOLES.

- A. In Christ we have:
  1. Peace—Rom. 5:1.
  2. No condemnation—Rom. 8:1.
  3. A new life—Gal. 3:27.
  4. All spiritual blessings—Eph. 1:3.
  5. Redemption—Eph. 1:7.
  6. The little phrase "in Christ" is the key that opens all God's treasures.
- B. Every life out of Christ is a bag with holes.
  1. "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain and build it . . ." (Psa. 127:1)
  2. No matter how upright, virtuous, noble, or brilliant a man may be, his life is a bag of holes out of Christ.
    - a. He is the author of eternal salvation to those that obey him. Heb. 5:8,9.
    - b. All glory in life must be given him in the church. Eph. 3:20,21.
    - c. He is a friend to those that obey him. Jn. 15:14

II. LIFE BY THE AUTHORITY OF MEN IS A BAG WITH HOLES.

- A. One of the most important question ever asked is "By what authority doest thou these things?" (Mt. 21:23) One outside the authority of Christ word is outside of Christ and all labor in vain. (2 John 9)
- B. Human creeds are by the authority of men. Millions live and die by them.
- C. Denominations are by the authority of men. Mt. 15:13.
- D. The New Testament church is not a denomination. As David said concerning the sword of Goliath—"There is none like that" (1 Sam. 17:9) so it can be said concerning the New Testament church "There is none like that."



1. It has an ideal creed--the New Testament. 2 Tim. 3:16,17.
2. It has an ideal organization for God set the workers in. Phil. 1:1,2.
3. It has an ideal name that glorifies God. Rom. 16:16.
4. It has an ideal work, the redemption of human souls and relief of human suffering. Mt. 28:19
5. It has an ideal destiny--heaven. Eph. 5:26,27.

### III. LIFE'S EDUCATION WITHOUT GOD IS A BAG WITH HOLES.

A. On one occasion when Horace Mann dedicated a recreation home for boys he had planned for year, he said "If all the money and energy you have expended results in the salvation of only one boy, they will not have been in vain." Later one who had invested a great amount of money asked him, "weren't you exaggerating a bit when you said all expenditure would be worth while if it saved just one boy?" Mann's reply was "Not if it were my boy."

B. Our own children are worth all the world to us and no price is too great to pay for their welfare and safety.

1. "The soul of education is the education of the soul."
2. In helping our children to get a proper education let us send them to school where they can learn to make a living as well as a life.
  - a. "The illustration Russell E. Parsons is still rich in meaning. In 1927 a very important meeting was held in the famous Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending this meeting were ten of the most successful men in the world, at least men who had found the secret of making money. Twenty-eight years later let's see where these men were:

'Charles Swab, the president of the largest steel company, died a bankrupt, and lived on borrowed money five years before his death.

'Nicholas Parnissai, head of the National City Bank, died insane.

'Samuel I. Sull, president of the largest utility company, died a fugitive from justice in a foreign land.

'Howard Hopson, president of the largest gas company, is insane.

'Arthur Cullen, the greatest wheat speculator, died abroad, insolvent.

'Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Exchange, was recently released from Sing Sing penitentiary.

'Albert Fall, member of the President's Cabinet, was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.

'Jesse Libermore, the biggest 'bear' on Wall Street, died a suicide.

'Leon Fraser, president of the Bank of International Settlements, died a suicide."

- b. Solomon, in education, was of the first rank, yet proves that education without God is a bag full of holes. Eccle. 1:18.

### IV. LIFE WITHOUT PUTTING GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST IS A BAG FULL OF HOLES.

A. Those of Haggi's day lived in ceiled, beautifully paneled houses while the house of God was in waste.

B. 1. ~~Solomon~~ once grew ashamed because he dwelled in a secure house while the ark of God dwelled behind curtains. 2 Sam. 7:2.

2. There's not anything wrong with living in a nice house, unless God's work must suffer for us to enjoy luxurious living.

B. Jesus declared that those which follow him must put the kingdom first. Mt. 6:33.

1. It means the kingdom of God comes before every other consideration of life.
2. It means that when we marry, get our education, make decisions, raise our children, prepare for the future, have success, give of our means, the church must be uppermost in our thoughts.

C. This keeps life from being a bag full of holes.

### V. LIFE WITHOUT LAYING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN IS A BAG FULL OF HOLES.

A. It was said that when Alexander the Great died he requested that one of his hands be left hanging out of the caskets so that his subjects might see that the conqueror of the world left it without a thing with him.

B. The church in Laodicea thought it had everything, but all along they were putting into a bag full of holes. (Rev. 3:17)

## Prophecies of Haggai + Zechariah

1.	September (1:1) - Haggai's first prophecy (1:1-11)	520 B.C.
2.	October (2:1) - " Second " (2:1-9)	520
3.	November (1:1) - Zechariah's first " (1:1-6)	520
4.	December ( - Haggai's third and fourth prophecies (2:10-19 20-23)	520
5.	January (1:7) - Zechariah's second prophecy (1:7-6:15)	519
"	November (7:1) - Zechariah's third " (7:1-8:23)	518
"	(4th year of Darius) - Temple Completed	515
7.	March (	

## HAGGAI, THE TEMPLE BUILDER

### Introduction

James Meadows

Haggai is the first of the post-exilic prophets. Haggai means "festival" or "festive." Robinson suggests that it may be a shortened form of Haggiak, meaning "festival of Jehovah." Possibly he was born on a feast day.

Our knowledge of Haggai is very limited.

Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them (Ezra 5:1,2). And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo (Ezra 6:14).

Haggai was a man of a single idea: build the temple. "The writing of Haggai is unlike that of his predecessors. Lacking in his work is the rhythm and rolling grandeur of Nahum, the poetry and charm of Habakkuk, or the fire of Amos. In comparison his work seems subdued and prosaic. But he was completely successful."<sup>1</sup>

In our study of Haggai we purpose to notice (1) a background and setting, (2) Haggai's addresses, and (3) lessons for today from the book of Haggai.

### A Background And Setting

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first invaded Judah in 605 B.C., at which time Daniel was carried into captivity. Ezekiel was taken to Babylon at the second invasion in 597 B.C. In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah again, destroying Jerusalem and the temple, and carrying "all the vessels of the house of God" to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:1-21).

Following Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 B.C., the Babylonian kingdom was ruled by a series of weak rulers. In 539 B.C. Cyrus entered and took the city of Babylon.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, all the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up" (2 Chron. 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-3).

This decree was issued sometime in 538 B.C. Isaiah had prophesied over one hundred fifty years before that God would raise up one named Cyrus, his servant, that would allow a remnant to return (Isa. 44:24-45:7).

Zerubbabel led the first group of exiles back to Palestine in 536 B.C. (Ezra 1:5-2:70). Upon their return to Palestine in 536 B.C., the Jews "builded the altar of the God of Israel" and began to offer sacrifices, but "the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid" (Ezra 3:1-7). Finally "in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month" (Ezra 3:8) they began and laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:8-13).

Opposition soon arose from the Samaritians who wrote letters to the king of Babylon. Finally, Artaxerxes decreed that the work on the city and temple should cease (Ezra 4:1-23) "Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia" (Ezra 4:24). The work remained at a standstill for fifteen to sixteen years 536 B.C. - 520 B.C.), which included a year and a half after Darius began to reign. Artaxerxes was no longer a threat to the Jews and the rebuilding program, yet they still made no effort to reconstruct the temple.

The conditions that prevailed in the city were as follows: (1) The walls of the city and a large part of the city itself were in ruins. Scattered throughout was the rubbish and debris of a captured city. (2) While the temple foundations had been laid, everything was in an unfinished condition. (3) Worship was most difficult, as its effect had been marred since it was conducted amid such great difficulties. (4) The wealthier classes, too easily discouraged from building the temple, had gone to work and built beautiful homes for themselves, were living in comparative luxury within sight of the ruins of the temple. (5) Marks of God's displeasure were upon their gardens and fields. Blight and drought had caused their crops to be poor. Their cattle wasted away as the water failed. The riches they expected did not come. Such was the scene when the prophet, Haggai, appeared upon it.

#### Haggai's First Message

Haggai's first message was received from the Lord and delivered "in the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month . . ." (Haggai 1:1a).



Wain-scot - "wood, esp. oak and usually in  
the form of paneling, for lining interior walls"  
(Webster).

Johnny Ramsey - Firm Foundation - Feb. 23 1986 -  
He lists seven "lags full of holes today."

1. Superficial Responses
2. Social Club Religion
3. Preachers who Seldom Study
4. Elders who fail to watch for souls.
5. Parents who Stress Material Values
6. Folks who Postpone Obedience
7. Brethren who Drift Away From God.

He rebuked them for their indifference and admonished them to build the temple. His first message divides itself into four parts.

First, he charges the people with a conflict of interest.

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, this people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the work of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house lie waste (Haggai 1:2-4)?

"This gives a true insight into the real interest and labors of the people. 'Ceiled houses indicates a degree of luxury and concern for themselves as they lived comfortably in expensive wainscoted dwellings. It may have been excusable for the people to build comfortable and conveniently furnished houses if first they had built the house of God. The irony of the charge is that while they spent their energies and wealth, probably using the materials gathered for the house of the Lord in their own dwellings, 'this house lieth waste.' By no means is this the last time the people of God have looked to the building of their own ceiled houses while the house of the Lord lay waste."<sup>2</sup>

Second, Haggai calls upon them to consider their ways.

Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways (Haggai 1:5-7).

"Consider your ways" literally means "set your heart on your ways." You need to take a good look at yourselves and see the real situation of which you are a part. Something was wrong and the fault had to be somewhere. "It was either (1) God's fault for giving an impossible order or for refusing to bless their efforts, or (2) the opponents fault for trampling the Jews and finally succeeding in having the work stopped by governmental decree or (3) the Jews' fault for not concerning themselves adequately with the work of God. And Haggai the prophet laid the blame right at the feet of the disinterested Jews. They simply were not concerned enough with building the temple. They were more concerned about building their own paneled houses."<sup>3</sup>

Third, they are given a very stern command to build the temple.

Go up to the mountain, and bring wood and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it.

Four factors that brought forth the statement  
"I am with you."

1. The people obeyed the voice of the Lord (1:12)
2. "The people did fear before the Lord" (1:12)
3. The people had their spirit stirred up and were zealous (1:14)
4. "They came and did work in the house of the Lord & fasted, their God" (1:14).

Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands (Haggai 1:8-11).

In plain language the Lord tells them to "get busy." He gives a simple solution to their problem: "Go," "bring wood," and "build the house." The Lord makes it very clear that the reason for them not receiving God's blessings was "because of mine house that is waste." They may have ascribed all their failures to natural causes and failed to see that it was Jehovah's doings.

Fourth, Haggai's message reached the hearts of the people, and the leaders, and they responded to the challenge. In just twenty three days they made preparation and began the long neglected task of rebuilding.

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord. Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you saith the Lord. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did the work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God. In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king (Haggai 1:12-15).

#### Haggai's Second Address

Haggai's second message was delivered less than one month after they began work on the temple. "In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying" (Haggai 2:1). Sixteen years earlier when the foundation of the temple was laid, the old men, who had seen Solomon's temple, wept with a loud voice (Ezra 3:12). Some of these were still alive and what they saw now was nothing in comparison to the glory of Solomon's temple. Haggai's second message from the Lord was to give them the comfort and encouragement they needed to finish the work.

Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong all the people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: According



Brother Jack Lewis does not think this is a messianic message, but should be understood as "choice treasures of the Gentiles" (cf. 1 Sam. 9:20; Isa. 60:1). Gifts were received from Darius (Ezra 6:9-13), Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:12-26), and well as other Gentiles (2 Macc. 3:3). (2) The latter glory is to exceed the former (Hag. 2:9). If the comparison is between Solomon's temple and Zerubbabel's temple, it really cannot be. Domilectically the rabbis made the first temple exceed the second in five items (T.B. Yoma 21b): The second had no ark of the covenant, breastplate of gems, cloud of glory, fire from heaven and spirit-prophecy. What the Hebrew text really says is that the latter house shall be greater than the former (that is, as of the house now at its beginning). (Jack Lewis, The Minor Prophets, p. 72).

"These verses point to a future temple which would be fulfilled in the primary sense by that of the second Jewish temple, and in the ultimate sense by the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the church of Christ" (Joseph Meador, Power Lectures, Second) p. 264

"The statements in Haggai 2:6-9 and 21-23 of the shaking of heaven, earth, and the nations, with emphasis upon the superiority of God's kingdom, finds fulfillment in the church/kingdom of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19) (Gay McDade, Power Lectures, Second, p. 273)

to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts (Haggai 2:2-9).

First, he tells them to "be strong" and "to work." He follows this admonition with the assurance "for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." This promise of being with them was according to the covenant "that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you" (cf. Exod. 19:5-6; 24:8; 29:45; Neh. 9:20).

Second, the Lord further encourages them by plainly stating what he purposes to do and what will be the glory of this house. The shaking of the heavens, the earth, and all nations had reference to the great upheavals that rocked the Persian and Greek kingdoms, and brought the Roman Empire to power, before the coming of Christ. "God never had but one house. It may have taken different forms and degrees of glory, but always there was but one. The church of the New Testament is the house of God, filled with the glory of God to a far larger degree than ever was the house of Solomon, Zerubbabel, or Herod. The application of the passage made by the writer of Hebrews (12:20) confirms this view. As God shook the heaven and the earth at the giving of the law at Sinai, so He shook the heathen nations, removing them; and now he has shaken and removed the Jewish economy that man could receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28). . . . 'In this place,' the spiritual temple in the spiritual Zion to which all saints have come, God gives peace (cf. Isa. 9:6-7; Mic. 4:4; 5:5; Zech. 6:12-13; 9:9-10; Eph. 2:15-17) Phil. 4:7).<sup>4</sup>

#### Haggai's Third Address

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment; and with his skirt do touch bread, or poltage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? and the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? and the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean (Haggai 2:10-14)

Haggai's third message indicates that the people had again become sluggish and inactive. They may have been disappointed that God's blessings had not come in response to their zeal and labor. They were reminded that a garment made holy could not communicate holiness beyond itself (Lev. 6:27). On the other hand the law made it very clear that if a priest or a high priest (Lev. 21:1,11), a Nazarite (Num. 6:6-8), or any person touched a dead body he would be unclean and everything he touched would be unclean (Num. 19:11-13; 19:22). "So it was with the Jewish nation in the sight of God, as represented by the Jewish captives. They might argue indeed that they had rebuilt the altar of Jehovah on their first return. But that good act, if it stood alone, even had there been no subsequent disobedience to vitiate it, would only, like the holy flesh making holy the garment in which it was wrapped, have extended its influence a little way. The altar would have sanctified the gift in which was offered upon it. On the other hand the sin of the people in neglecting to rebuild the temple, like a touch of the corpse, not only contaminated themselves, but brought moral pollution and consequent blight and disaster upon all the works of their hands."<sup>5</sup> They had become unclean by their failure to carry the Lord's work to a successful conclusion, and their uncleanness communicated itself to everything they touched.

And Now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord: Since those days were, when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands: yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord. Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day I will bless you (Haggai 2:15-19).

Three times God calls upon them to consider their ways over the last fourteen to sixteen years. All their efforts had produced practically nothing, but they failed to see this as judgment upon them as an effort to turn their hearts backs to God. They had planted the seed kept in the barn and so little had been produced that there was none left to plant again. All production and fruitfulness depends on God, and from this day forward they will be blessed because they are now obeying them.

### Haggai's Fourth Address

And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts (Haggai 2:20-23).

The fourth address was on the same day as the third, but this time the promise looks beyond the material blessings to the fulfillment of the spiritual hope in Zerubbabel, a descendant of David. God declares, as he had said in the second speech, that he will overthrow the heathen nations, their thrones, and all the implements of wars. Everyone is brought down by the sword of his brother which emphasizes that God often used one nation to destroy another. "In that day," when the heathen nations are destroyed, Zerubbabel is promised that he will be a signet in God's hand.

Before the captivity God had declared of Coniah that ~~th~~rough "he were a signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence" (Jer. 22:24). In 597 B.C. Coniah was cast out by Nebuchadnezzar "for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). "The promise made to David (2 Sam. 7:11-14) is now revived in Zerubbabel, a descendant of David through Coniah, and the one through whom the seed would come. 'For I have chosen thee, saith Jehovah' gives validity and assurance to the promise. The people are now back in their homeland and Jehovah has assured them of temporal blessings, of the overthrow of the heathen, and of the fulfillment of the spiritual promises through Zerubbabel. The honor bestowed on Zerubbabel was not realized in him as a person, but in his office and lineage. Matthew confirms the fulfillment of this promise as he points out that Jesus is the heir of the throne of David through Coniah and Zerubbabel (1:12,16)."<sup>6</sup> Read on back

### Lessons For Today From The Book of Haggai

First, effective preaching is based on what God says. Twenty six times in this short book Haggai uses "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts," "the word of the Lord," etc. He wanted them to know that the source of his word was God. Paul told the Galatians that he did not receive his message from man, but from God (Gal. 1:11-12; cf. I Cor. 2:



Argument from Scripture to Show That Christ  
will ~~never~~ sit on David's Throne in Jerusalem

1. Jehoiachin was the father of Jeconiah (also known  
as Coniah) - 1 Chron. 3:16; Jer. 22:24.
2. Coniah was the father of Shealtiel - 1 Chron. 3:17.
3. Shealtiel was " " " Zerubbabel - Hag. 2:23.
4. God had made a divine promise that no des-  
cendant of Coniah would ever <sup>again</sup> sit upon the throne  
and rule in Judah (Jer. 22:24-30).
5. "Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth, Messiah of God,  
being a physical descendant of Coniah (Luk. 1:12)  
will not sit on an earthly throne and rule in  
Judah." (Quintus, p. 266).

6-7). Too many sermons today are filled with everything, but the word of God (2 Tim. 4:1-4; Acts 20:32).

Second, there is tremendous power in practical preaching. Haggai's practical preaching produced universal obedience -- "Zerubbabel . . . Joshua . . . all the people" (Haggai 1:12a); reverent obedience--"did fear before the Lord" (Haggai 1:12b); zealous obedience--"stirred up" (Haggai 1:14a); immediate obedience--twenty three days after he preached (Haggai 1:14-15). Today's preaching needs to reach people where they are and stir them to action.

Third, Haggai teaches us that it is never time to live in houses of luxury if God's work lies neglected because of it. They were saying it is not time to build the Lord's house, but every man was running to his own house. There are those today who are always waiting for the set time. Neglecting while waiting! The church is God's temple today (1 Cor. 3:16). It is made up of living stones--converted men and women (1 Pet. 2:5). In too many cases the Lord's house is lying in waste while we are living in laps of luxury. What kind of cars do we drive? What kind of houses do we live in? What conveniences do we have? Is it time for this?

Fourth, life without God means wasted efforts and is like putting wages "into a bag with holes." How sad it is to see men and women giving their lives to a work that can be jerked away by sudden fate. Yet that is exactly what happened to Israel and what is happening to many today (Isa. 55:2). "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it . . ." (Psa. 127:1). "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin (Jas. 4:13-17). Will that to which I am giving my life at this moment abide forever? Will it pass the test of permanence? Am I building on the foundation, gold and silver, or wood, hay and stubble" (1 Cor. 3:12). Am I putting it into a bag with holes?

Fifth, we learn that partial obedience will not please God. The remnant had rebuilt the altar (Ezra 3:2) and were offering sacrifices, but they were not obeying God about building the temple. Their partial obedience left them unclean and their works unacceptable to God. James wrote: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). "This seems at first of a nature of an ethical paradox, but practically it states a deep moral truth. If we wilfully transgress one commandment we shew that in principle we sit loose to all. It is but accident, or fear, or the absence of temptation, that prevents our transgressing them also. Actual transgression in one case involves potential transgression in all."<sup>7</sup> One who has defiled his life, through neglect of his responsibility to God cannot sanctify himself simply by outward conformity to ritual. The Pharisees were very strict in outward conformity but Jesus said to them: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

Sixth, Haggai teaches us the essentiality of stopping and taking inventory. He called upon the people of his day to "Consider your ways" (Haggai 1:5,7; 2:15,18). Consider what you have been doing, and also what the Lord expects of you. This should suggest most vividly to us the need of frequently taking a spiritual inventory of ourselves before God. Paul admonished the Corinthians: Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (2 Cor. 13:5). We may lull ourselves into a false sense of security and think we are right before God when we are not. The Laodiceans thought they needed nothing, but God's estimate was quite different (Rev. 3:14-17). Self examination is most important, and it must not be made by the standard of conscience or after the wisdom of this world, but by the divine standard--the word of truth which we shall meet at the judgment (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15). "What does the law (the New Testament law) say concerning it" (Haggai 2:11) is still tremendously important today for it enables one to see himself and scrutinize himself from God's point of view (Col. 3:17; II John 9-11; 1 Cor. 4:6). If God's law does not authorize a given practice, then that practice is sinful. Brethren must constantly be impressed with the question, "What does the Bible say about it?"

Seventh, just as they were told to be strong (Haggai 1:4) so we must be strong in doing the Lord's work today. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them" (Psa. 84:5).

Eighth, work was required of them (Haggai 2:5). The temple would not build itself and the church today will fail if we do not work (Matt. 28:19,20; Eph. 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 9:8).

Ninth, God's people need to be constantly reminded of their duties. Haggai told the people of his day things that they already knew, but they simply needed someone to stir them to action regarding these matters. "The church must constantly be reminded that (1) there is only one way to be saved (Eph. 4:1-6), (2) the church is extremely important (the book of Ephesians), (3) one must have Bible authority for all that he does (II John 9), (4) the denominational concept is not scriptural (Eph. 4:4), (5) carnal-mindedness is sin (Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:28-32), (6) mechanical instrumental music in worship is sinful (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, 17; II John 9; 1 Cor. 4:6), (7) one can know truth (John 8:32), (8) God wants all men to be saved (II Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4), (9) the church has a responsibility to God (Matt. 22:37), to others (Matt. 22:39) and to herself (Matt. 22:39)."<sup>8</sup> Peter wrote: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:13).

Tenth, just as they needed encouragement so we need encouragement. God assured them that "I am with you" (Haggai 1:13; 2:5). "And let us not be weary in well doing! for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5,6; Cf. Matt. 10:28). " . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20b).

### Conclusion

From the book of Haggai we have learned that (1) "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4), (2) effective preaching is based on what God says, (3) it is never time to neglect the Lord's work, (4) life without



God is vain, (5) partial obedience is not enough, (6) it's important to take inventory, (7) we must be strong, (8) work is essential, (9) we need to be constantly reminded, and (10) encouragement is always needed.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Homer Haley, A Commentary on The Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> Mac Deaver, "The Living Message of Haggai," The Living Message of the Books of the Old Testament (Jonesboro: National Christian Press, Inc., 1977), p. 393.

<sup>4</sup> Haley, op. cit; pp. 310-11.

<sup>5</sup> T. T. Perowne, "Haggai & Zechariah," The Cambridge Bible For Schools And Colleges (Cambridge: University Press, 1897), p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Haley, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>7</sup> Perowne, op. cit., p. 41.

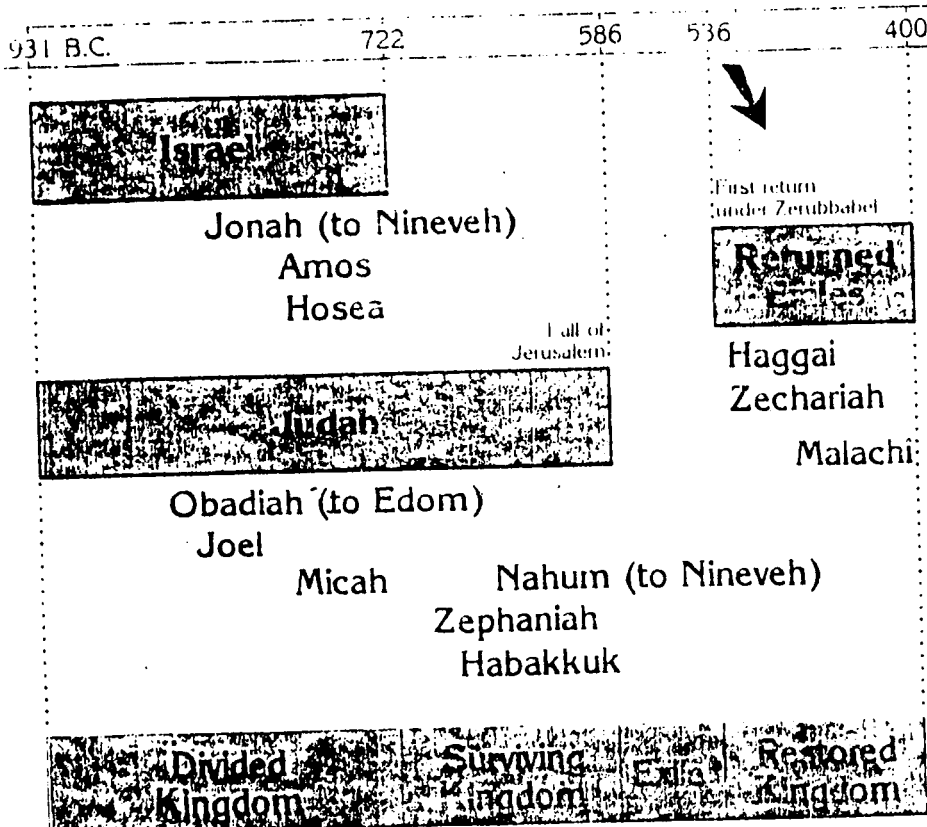
<sup>8</sup> Mac Deaver, "The Living Message of Haggai," The Living Message of the Books of the Old Testament (Jonesboro, Ark: National Christian Press, Inc., 1977), p. 395.

Introduction

- A. The year was 520 B.C. Sixteen years previous the Persian emperor, Cyrus, had issued his historic decree allowing the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Lord's temple. Thus, under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, the "remnant," numbering some fifty thousand, returned to implement the royal proclamation (Ezra 1-2). Two years later the foundation had been laid and the prospects for rebuilding seemed bright (Ezra 3:8-13).
1. But now it is 520 B.C. and circumstances were anything but bright. Following the laying of the foundation, Palestinian opposition arose, discouragement followed and the temple rebuilding ceased. See Ezra 4.
    - a. Sixteen years had now dragged by since the return and fourteen since the laying of the foundation. The temple remained unbuilt, the foundation was overgrown with weeds, and God's people had turned their energy to their own homes and personal comforts.
  2. The Lord needed one who could take a message from Himself, convey it to the people and get results. Onto the scene steps Haggai, an aged, straight-talking prophet of God who minces no words in his call to "*finish what you have begun.*" His single but simple sermon, his one paramount obsession - BUILD THE TEMPLE!
    - a. It worked! Within three weeks after his first sermon construction had begun.

# Placing the Minor Prophets

CHRONOLOGICALLY... nine of the Minor Prophets were written before the Exile, and three after.



*In this time of preparation for the coming of the Messiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were divinely commissioned to stimulate obedience to Jehovah, re-establish God's people in Palestine, and set before them the real meaning of their return and keep them in the line of duty until the coming of Christ.*

## BODY

### I. THE OUTLINE

- A. The little scroll from Haggai is in four parts. Four times within four months in the second year of Darius (520 B.C.) the "*word of the Lord*" came through the lips of the prophet. Each of the four communications is carefully dated and each has a single theme.

#### "From This Day I Will Bless You"

- I. First Message - TO AROUSE, 1:1-15  
Date: 6th Month, 1st Day  
Key Verse: "*Build the house,*" vs.8
- II. Second Message - TO SUPPORT, 2:1-9  
Date: 7th Month, 21st Day  
Key Verse: "*I am with you,*" vs.4
- III. Third Message - TO CONFIRM, 2:10-19  
Date: 9th Month, 24th Day  
Key Verse: "*From this day I will bless you,*" vs.19
- IV. Fourth Message - TO ASSURE, 2:20-23  
Date: 9th Month, 24th Day  
Key Verse: "*I have chosen you...*" vs.23

### II. THE FOUR SERMONS OF HAGGAI

- A. TO AROUSE, 1:1-15 - God's people had forsaken the work on the temple and had turned to their own houses. After laying the foundation they had lost interest in the spiritual side of life and built themselves houses of cedar. It was a time of INDIFFERENCE, MATERIALISM, and PROCRASTINATION. Haggai had to somehow convince the people to forget their own pleasures and return to the Lord's work left unattended for sixteen years. Haggai chapter one shows the prophet's plan for *personal motivation*.
- 1. He begins with the leadership, 1:1. To move the people of God, Haggai, by divine instruction, doesn't turn to the man in the field but rather to the *leaders* of God's people. Here is an all important lesson on the importance of godly leadership. Solomon well said, "*Where there is no vision the people perish*" (Prov. 29:18). If the leaders of God's people don't have a vision of what OUGHT TO BE and a plan to ACHIEVE IT, the people will wallow in inactivity.
    - a. So it is today - if the kingdom is ever going to be moved the leaders, the elders and teachers must be men of vision to see that REFORM begins with them. Without the proper kind of leadership, the ship of Zion will flounder on the rocks of indifference, inactivity, procrastination and materialism (which is exactly where the church is in many places today). Decisions can't be arrived at, discipline can't be administered, and personal work can't be done because of procrastination and materialism. Everything is put off until the next business meeting, and everyone is too busy building their own businesses and houses to attend to the Lord's temple.
    - b. The need today is for both men like Haggai to arise and cry to the leaders and for men like Zerubbabel and Joshua who as leaders hear the Lord's cry and thus rise up to build. If we can't motivate the leaders of God's cause the people in the pew will remain exactly that and not an active marching army for the Lord.
      - 1) If we can't get elders to do personal work, then how are we going to get anyone else involved. If the leaders don't seek the high road of self-sacrifice to put the kingdom first, how can they expect anyone else to.
      - 2) THE WORK PROGRAM OF ANY CONGREGATION IS NO STRONGER THAN THE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT OF THE LEADERS TO IT!



2. Read verses 2-5. Here is the source of their problem - materialism. We will sacrifice for our businesses, for our jobs, for our pleasures. Why? Because we feel like it's worth it. There is always time to do what we really want to do, yet there never seems like there is time to do what we really *need* to do. And why? Again, our *priorities*. And why do we allow our priorities to get out of whack? Materialism!
    - a. Consider the disgrace that this nation was to Jehovah. They had bragged to the surrounding nations about the power and greatness of Jehovah and how He was superior to their gods of metal and stone. Yet this same people had left the temple built to His glory in the ruins of incompleteness for sixteen years while they followed after their own materialistic pleasures.
    - b. They had laid the foundation and doubtless the weeds had grown up around the Holy of Holies, there were no walls, there was no roof, there was only a monument of disgrace to the God of heaven.
      - 1) How many things do we begin to God's glory - teaching programs, personal work programs, gospel meetings - only to see them cut back or abandoned in disgrace for lack of interest due to our first love for materialistic pleasure?
  3. The result - no reward, vs. 6-9. "*Consider your ways...*" Folks, God will not bless those who spend all their time building their houses instead of His. When we are too materialistic and indifferent and only hold a gospel meeting twice a year because *we have always done it that way* - God can see through our feeble facade. As long as God knows our hearts and knows that our first love is our "*paneled houses of cedar*," He is not going to be mocked by our half-hearted attempts to save our conscience once or twice a year. "*Consider your ways...*"
  4. The people's response, verses 12-15. Taking his message to heart the people began to build with renewed zeal.
- B. TO SUPPORT, 2:1-9. Three and a half weeks pass and the zealotry on the temple restoration project begins to wane. Some are discouraged. The older ones remembered the grandeur and splendor of the Solomonic temple and began to live in the past thus demoralizing the younger people, verse 3.
1. Hence, Haggai's message of Jehovah's *support*, verse 4. Discouragement is never reason enough to quit. Why? "*For I am with you*," says the Lord. The people in essence responded - "*But this is an impossible task!*" Yet, they forgot that God deals with the impossible and that ALL THINGS are possible with His help. See Romans 8:31.
    - a. The United States Navy has a slogan that says, "*The difficult we do right away, but the impossible takes a little longer.*" See Eph. 6:10.
  2. See verse 9. To those who complained that the new temple failed in comparison with the old - the Lord promises that the latter would far outshine the glory of the former. Such a promise is tied to the messianic hope and to the *spiritual* temple formed from the remnant by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:16).
    - a. "*In this place I shall give peace.*" It is Christ who as the *Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6) brought peace between God and man through the forgiveness of sins. Peace also was obtained in Christ between Jew and Gentile as the two groups became as one in the church, the spiritual temple of God. See Eph. 2:15-17.
- C. TO CONFIRM, 2:10-19. Three months have now passed. Haggai presents a lesson to the people concerning the need for purification and holiness. He asks two questions:
- Question #1 - Verse 12: "*Does holiness make unclean things clean?*"
- Question #2 - Verse 13: "*Does something unclean make the holy unclean?*"
1. The priests responded to the prophet's first question correctly - "*NO!*" One who is holy cannot make something that is unclean, clean. A well person cannot make a sick person well - BUT A SICK PERSON CAN MAKE A WELL PERSON SICK! Thus, the second question - Can something unclean make one who is holy unclean? - "*YES!*"
    - a. The prophet then brings home the point of his illustration in verse 14 - "*So is my people!*"

2. Israel had been holy but had touched the unclean and thus they had become unclean themselves. And, so, in order to receive the blessings of Jehovah they must first cleanse themselves and seek His favor.
3. *"Yet I will bless you..."* 2:19. God promises the people: If you will *build*, I will *bless*. But notice Jehovah's question: *"Is the seed still in the barn? It has not born fruit."* For two months the people have been building. What Haggai is telling them is that they had to work two months *in faith* before they could see any reward for their labor. Now after these two months of work on His temple He will start to bless them with material prosperity.
  - a. Paul made this point in Galatians 6:9. Brethren, we must understand that the rewards of our labor may take years to produce and that we simply are not at liberty to sow one day and then say if we see no harvest in a week that we are not going to labor anymore. We will reap in due season....i.e., when God sees that the time is right.
    - 1) We must understand, too, that our labor is connected inseparably with our faith. If the faith is weak, the labor will fail. If the faith is strong, we will labor no matter what the odds and trust that God will give the increase.
  - b. The people had proved their faith. Now God would send the blessings.
- D. TO ASSURE, 2:20-23. A second message on the same day. However, this message is to Zerubbabel himself and looks far beyond him to the ultimate consummation of the Davidic line in the coming reign of Christ. Zerubbabel is here addressed as a *representative* of the line of David.
  1. To Zerubbabel would be bestowed great honor (*"a signet ring"*). *"For I have chosen you,"* declares the Lord. God is here declaring that the fulfillment of the future spiritual blessing would come through Zerubbabel. The honor bestowed on Zerubbabel wasn't realized in him as a person, but in his lineage. See Matthew 1:12.

#### 1. THREE REASONS FOR HAGGAI'S SUCCESS

- A. He Knew Where To Start. Haggai understood that true spiritual reform begins at the top.
- B. He Knew Where He Was Going. His was a single-minded mission. Haggai wasn't a rambling preacher. So it must be with us. When we preach God's word in a sermon or teach it in a Bible class we must give it some direction - we must know where we are going. Haggai had a lesson-plan and a simple one at that! And he was successful!
- C. He Knew Who To Give The Credit. Twenty-six times in thirty-eight verses Haggai appealed to a *"thus says the Lord."* Here is the key to the prophet's power and to His successful preaching.

#### Conclusion

*"On the banks of hesitation lie the blackened bones of millions who at the dawn of victory sat down to rest...*

*...and resting, died!"*

1. Haggai accomplished in four months what had been abandoned for sixteen years! The people had grown indifferent. They were getting used to being without a temple, and this would have proved to be fatal. The temple was the reason for the return in the first place and without it's completion Jehovah's favor could not be expected.
  - a. His was an enormous task - some would even say it was nigh to impossible - *"Can't be done!"* But Haggai knew otherwise because Haggai knew Jehovah!
  - b. See Ezra 5:1 & 6:14-15.

# INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PROPHET HAGGAI.

HAGGAI was the first of the three prophets, who belong to that final stage of Jewish history which began with the return from the captivity in Babylon. Two of them, he and Zechariah, prophesied at its commencement. Malachi followed about a hundred years later. After that, the voice of prophecy was silent for four centuries till the days of John the Baptist.

Of the personal history of Haggai scarcely anything is known. His name has been thought by some to mean "festive," and to be indicative of the joyous character of the predictions which he delivered; but the derivation and reference are alike uncertain. His tribe and parentage are not told us. It would seem most probable that he was among the captives who returned from Babylon, and there is a tradition that he was born during the exile in that city. It has been held indeed by some that he was one of that small band of survivors, who having been originally carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, lived to revisit their native country. The only ground, however, for this conjecture is the reference to the Temple "in her first glory" in ch. ii. 3, of his prophecy, a reference which does not seem in itself sufficient to support the conjecture. Tradition has also made him one of the men (Zechariah and Malachi being the others), who were with Daniel when he saw his vision, "by the side of the great river which is Hiddekel," and a member, after his return to Jerusalem, of the Great Synagogue.

In addition to the prophecy which bears his name, that section of the book of Ezra which extends from ch. iii. 2 to vi. 22 (with the exception of ch. iv. 6-23, and of the mention of

<sup>1</sup> Daniel x. 7.

## CHAPTER II.

### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

The following table represents approximately the chronological position of Haggai and Zechariah, and of their prophecies, with reference to Jewish history, and to one another.

- About B. C. 536. The proclamation of Cyrus for the return of the captives.
- " " 7th month (October). The altar built. Sacrifice resumed.
- " " The feast of Tabernacles kept.
- " 535. 2nd month. Foundation of the Temple laid.
- " 535-520. Rebuilding of the Temple stopped through the intrigues of the Samaritans.
- " 520. The work resumed through the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah and the subsequent decree of Darius.
- " (September) Haggai's first prophecy, ch. i. 1-11.
- " (October) Haggai's second prophecy, ch. ii. 1-9.
- " (November) Zechariah's first prophecy, ch. i. 1-6.
- " (December) Haggai's third and fourth prophecies, ch. ii. 10-19; 20-23.
- " 519. (January) Zechariah's second prophecy, ch. i. 7-vi. 15.
- " 518. (November) Zechariah's third prophecy, ch. vii. 1-viii. 23.
- " 515. (March) The Temple completed.

The remaining prophecies in the book of Zechariah (ch. ix-xiv.) have no date given them by their author. Their date and authorship are discussed in the chapter on the Unity of the Book, introd. to Zechariah, ch. II.

The identification of the Jewish months with our own is of course only approximate.

The Jewish year was a solar year and its months coincided with the seasons. It ordinarily consisted of 12 months, but an intercalary month appears to have been introduced from time to time, in order to bring the month Abib into coincidence with the barley harvest. "Variations must inevitably exist between (our) lunar and the (Jewish) solar month, each of the former ranging over portions of two of the latter." The general identification given above is sufficiently near. See *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Month, where the whole subject is fully discussed.

# Comments On Different Verses From Jack Lewis

- verse 7 - "The desire of all nations shall come."
1. Many view this as the coming of the Messiah.
  2. It probably should be understood as "choice treasures of the Gentiles."
    - a. Gifts from Danians (Ezra 6: 9-13)
    - b. Artaxerxes (Ezra 7: 12-26)
    - c. Other Gentiles (2 Macc. 3: 13)

- verse 9 - "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former"
1. If this means a comparison between Solomon's temple and the present temple then it was not greater. The second temple:
    - a. Had no ark of the covenant.
    - b. " " breastplate of gems
    - c. " " cloud of glory
    - d. " " fire from heaven
    - e. " " spirit of prophecy
  2. "What the Hebrew text really says is that the latter glory of ~~this~~ house shall be greater than the former (that is, than it is now at its beginning). (Jack Lewis)

Waley - "God has never had but one house. It may have taken different forms and degrees of glory, but there was always just one."



2. The church of the NT is the house of God today!

a. It is filled with far greater glory than ever was the house of Solomon, Zerubbabel, or Herod.

b. Hebrews 12:26 makes the application. Just as Moses shook the heaven and the earth at the giving of the law (Ex. 19:14-19) so he shook the heathen nations, removing them, and now he has shaken and removed the Jewish economy that man could receive a kingdom that cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28)



Haggai 2:10-19

"The moral principle which underlies the ceremonial provision applies in its full force to the returned Captives. It is the gauge of their conduct, and the explanation of their treatment of God's dealing with them. Their one sin is neglecting the Temple. spreads its moral pollution over every word of their hands; and even over the sacrifices which they offer on their altar, which they vainly hope will consecrate themselves and all their doings (v. 14)" (Cambridge Bible, "Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi," by T. T. Perouse, Cambridge: University Press, 1897, pp. 23-24)



INTRODUCTION:

1. Read Ezra 1 - 6 as a background study to this prophet.
2. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem in the year 586. In 536 B.C., Zerubbabel led about 50,000 Jews back from captivity to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. (Ezra 1-2:2). There was a delay of starting the work but finally the foundation was completed. It was at this point that the enemies of Israel put forth efforts and stopped the work (Ezra 3 - 4:24; 5:16). After a period of some fifteen years delay, God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people to complete the work which had stopped. (Ezra 5:1,2). Under their preaching, the work prospered and the work was completed "on the third day of the Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." (Ezra 6:15).
3. The oracles of Haggai "have as their purpose to stir the people from their lethargy and indifference and to urge them to rebuild the temple." (Lewis).
4. Haggai's name is from a word denoting rapid movement. It means "the joyous one" or "the festive one."
5. The book of Haggai divides itself into four parts.

DISCUSSION:

- I. THE FIRST ADDRESS IS AN ADMONITION TO FINISH REBUILDING THE TEMPLE. 1:1-15.
  - A. The reasons for their delay may have been:
    1. The 70 years of the captivity are not yet completed - "The time is not come..." v. 2.
    2. Some may have pointed to the opposition and others to the poverty of the community.
    3. The main reason was the concern for building their own houses, but indifference toward the Lord's house. v.3,4
  - B. The prophet then points out the reason for their unfruitful seasons. v. 5-11.
    1. The prophets use three verbs of action with them "Go" - "Bring" - "Build." v. 7,8
    2. The main cause of their failure was "mine house that is waste." v. 9.
    3. The people "obeyed the voice of the Lord...did fear before the Lord...came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God." v. 12-15.
- II. THE SECOND ADDRESS WAS ON THE 21ST DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH. (THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES-OCTOBER). 2:1-9.
  - A. There was a need of encouragement to those who compared this second temple with the first. v. 1-3.
    1. Sixty-six years had passed since the first temple was destroyed. (586 B.C.)
    2. Some were still living that saw the first temple.
  - B. The Lord emphasizes the greatness that the glory of this second temple will have. v. 4-9.
- III. THE THIRD ADDRESS WAS IN THE 24TH DAY OF THE 9TH MONTH. 2:10-19.
  - A. This is perhaps a "reply to those who felt that God's blessings were slow in coming." (Lewis)
  - B. It is shown that holy flesh cannot defile but the dead can and that the whole nation was unclean, therefore the blessing didn't come. v. 11-14.
  - C. Once the temple was built the blessings would begin to flow. v. 15-19.
- IV. THE FOURTH ADDRESS WAS ON THE SAME DAY AS ADDRESS 3 AND PROMISES DIVINE PROTECTION. 2:20-23
  - A. God promises to "shake" the nations and preserve Israel. v:20-22.
  - B. Zerubbabel was to become a signet in God's hand. v. 23.
  - C. The Messianic line is traced through Zerubbabel. (cf. Ezek. 34:23).

THE MINOR PROPHETS - HAGGAI  
QUESTIONS ON LESSON 11

40

DISCUSSION & THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Who led the first group of Jews back from Babylonian captivity? \_\_\_\_\_  
For what purpose did he lead them back? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the main reason God raised up the prophet Haggai? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why were the people saying the work was not being done? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Even though the time was not right (they said) to build God's house it was right to do what? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What does the expression "he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did God tell the people to consider? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Who was the civil leader of Judah at this time? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who was the religious leader? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What were the results of Haggai & Zechariah's preaching? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Comparing the glory of this second house the first was discouraging to some but God states three things in 2:4 to deter discouragement. What are they? (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where are 2:6,7 quoted in the New Testament and what is the meaning? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



11. If the second temple was lacking in comparison to the first then how would the glory of the second temple be greater than the first? (2:9) \_\_\_\_\_

12. Can the clean make the unclean clean? (2:12) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Can the unclean make the clean unclean? (2:13) \_\_\_\_\_

14. What did God smite the people with, yet it brought no repentance? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Who is pictured in 2:23? \_\_\_\_\_



## ZECHARIAH:

“The Lord shall yet comfort Zion” - Lessons from a hopeful future

*Joseph Renne*

I want to go back in Bible history and remember some things about God's chosen people, the Jews. They had problems staying faithful to the Lord. On the way to the Promised Land they sinned by melting the spoils of the Egyptians and forming a golden calf as their “god” (Ex. 32:1-10). They would later fail in conquering the Promised Land because they listened to the ten unfaithful spies (Num. 13-14). As a result, God made them wander in the wilderness for forty years (Num. 14:33-35). When they went over into the Promised Land, they were instructed to remove all the residents from that place and seize the land. However, they failed to do so and eventually were influenced by the inhabitants of the land (Jud. 2:11-15). God then appointed Judges to correct the Jews when they turned to idol gods (Jud. 3-16). According to Scripture this happened many times over as Israel had fifteen different Judges.

Next, God's people asked for a ruler to be over them like the other nations (1 Sam. 8:1-9). God did grant them a leader and Saul was their first king (1 Sam. 9). It did not take Saul long to depart from God's plan and he was rejected as king (1 Sam. 13-15). David, whom God loved, became king next and was a warrior. His son, Solomon, was next in line during a time of wealth and peace. Solomon allowed the nation to be influenced with idol gods because of the foreign women he married (1 Kings 11:1-13). Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was to inherit the kingdom but Jeroboam also wanted the kingdom. Rehoboam was offered advice by the elders who served with Solomon and the young men with whom he grew up (1 Kings 12). He followed the advice of the younger men and made service harder for the inhabitants of the land (1 Kings 12:12-17). Making their burdens harder gave the other tribes reasons to leave Rehoboam's kingdom and unite with Jeroboam's kingdom in the north. Jeroboam didn't want his people to travel to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:25-27), so he set up his own mode of worship (1 Kings 12:28-33). Later Israel would fall to the Assyrian armies because of their sins (2 Kings 17). The tribes of Judah and Benjamin saw what took place with their sister tribes, but did not learn from them. Joel and other prophets foretold what would happen if they continued to disobey God. Many prophets were ignored and some were even killed. Both the Northern and Southern tribes did not do what was right in the eyes of God. Judah and Benjamin had a few faithful kings, but most of them were evil in the eyes of God. What happened to them? They too went into captivity because they failed to repent. It came to pass they did not keep His commandments and were carried off by the Babylonians (2 Kings 24-25).

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, failed to acknowledge God and his kingdom was taken away from him (Dan. 4:28-33). Cyrus of Persia became the next ruler of a world power (2 Chr. 36:22-23). He ordered the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem and some did not want that to happen (Ezra 4). Haggai was a prophet sent to encourage the rebuilding of the temple. He reminded the people that their houses were built and the temple was in ruins (Hag. 1:1-11). The temple was the central location for Jewish worship and socialization. Without the temple God's work was not being carried on. The temple was the stepping stone for the Lord's church and is where Zechariah comes into the picture.

Zechariah's mission is to give hope to God's people. "Again proclaim saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, My cities will again overflow with prosperity and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem." After all the trials and disobedience, God would set Jerusalem on a high place among all the cities of the world to show that these are His people. Darius' letter to the Jews speaks of the plans to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5). The Jews would prosper and grow into a nation that came under Greek rule and later under the Roman Empire during the life of Christ. We read in Daniel 2, of God's kingdom being built during the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44-45). Zechariah came to support Haggai and the Jews who were rebuilding the temple. These two men had a mission to complete, and if they failed, the preparation of the Kingdom would be lost.

Zechariah has similar visions to that of Daniel and other prophets. He gave hope of rebuilding the temple and encouragement to the people of that day. Zechariah wrote his book around 520 BC and it is a book containing eight visions. The first vision is of a horseman, riding under a myrtle tree which was a symbol of fertility and renewal. The rider on the red horse became a spokesman delivering a message from God (Zech. 1:12-17). The Gentiles did not rule the world where he was concerned. This was the right time to build the temple. The horseman patrolled the earth and reported all was well.

The second vision was a matter of hope containing horns and craftsmen (Zech. 1:18-21). The four horns, which represented languages or governments, represented the four world powers of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. These four nations had scattered the people of Judah and taken her freedom away. The craftsmen were coming to, "terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it" (Zech 1:21).

The third vision (Zech. 2:1-4) was of Jerusalem being measured out and protected by God. Zechariah 1:16 reads, "Therefore thus says the Lord: I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it, says the Lord of hosts, and a surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem." The wall was for defense against their enemies and it gave the people confidence. They really did not need the wall, for God was, "a wall of fire all around her" (Zech. 2:4). God also made this promise to Jerusalem, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord" (Zech. 2:10). There was still hope for God's people!

The fourth vision was of Satan accusing Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:1-2). The priesthood was guilty of sinning before God. Joshua stood as a representative for all Israel and Satan was criticizing her sin. Joshua's filthy garments symbolized the sin and pollution of the people (Zech. 3:4), but God forgave them and clothed them in clean garments. There was then a promise made to Joshua in prophecy of the coming Christ. He was referred to the Branch who would be the true High Priest of God's people (Zech. 3:8-10). The book of Hebrews tells of this great High Priest (Heb. 3:1).

A fifth vision gave the people hope and encouragement (Zech. 4). It is believed that Joshua and Zerubbabel are the two olive trees on each side of the lampstand which held seven lamps. Zerubbabel was in charge of the building of the temple and we know that he faced great opposition which was like a great mountain (Zech. 4:7). The good news, however, was that the mountain would become a plain before him. The two olive trees represented the leadership in spiritual and political matters.

The sixth vision of a flying scroll is contained in Chapter 5:1-4. God was going to give hope to the freed nation by removing the law breakers from the land. The explanation given

was, "I will send out the curse, says the Lord of hosts; It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name" (Zech. 5:4).

The seventh vision was of a woman in a basket (Zech. 5:5-11). This vision represented the iniquities that were in the land. The woman representing wickedness, sitting in a large dry measure was sent to Shinar where sin would find a home. When the temple was rebuilt evil was to be removed from the land.

According to his eighth vision Zechariah saw that there was hope for Jerusalem in "four chariots" (Zech. 6:1-8). They represent the Spirit of God going forth in the north country and another in south country and so forth. They seem to symbolize God's protection and providence. The earth is at peace under God's control. In 6:9-11 the peace that resulted from the eighth vision made it possible for Joshua to wear the crown as high priest and for the people to now focus on the coming of the Messiah called the Branch (Zech. 6:9-15).

Chapters 7 through 13, teach the people about worshiping from the heart, doing justice, not mistreating widows, orphans, foreigners, or the poor and to stop hurting others. A picture of hope and joy is set forth in Zechariah 8:4-8: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in this hand because of age. And streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in the streets. Thus says the Lord of hosts. If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it be too difficult in My sight? Declares the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, I am going to save my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west: and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they will be My people and I will be their God in truth and righteousness." Verse 19 states, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, The fast of the fourth the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness and cheerful feasts of the house of Judah; so love truth and peace." God was encouraging the people not to be afraid to rebuild. Jerusalem would be called a city of truth and the mountain of the Lord of hosts was the holy mountain. He wanted the glory to be returned to the temple: "Thus says the LORD, I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain" (Zech. 8:3). Verses 11 and read, "But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days," declares the LORD of hosts. For there will be peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce, and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things." God's people would be providing food for themselves and the land would give abundance for their comfort. They were assured that God would be with them. We can also learn from them that God wants His people to be happy and full of joy (1 Pet. 3:10-12). We are encouraged by His word and the support of the Church as the Jews were by the temple.

Zechariah 8:22 reads, "So many people and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD." Zechariah spoke of the great promise of the Messiah coming in humility and mounted on a donkey (Zech. 9:9-10). Zechariah 12:1-4 looks forward to the restoration of the land and the rebuilding of the temple. God preserved the Jews until the coming of the Messiah. The temple had to be rebuilt for the coming of Christ. All of this had to be in place. The work of Zechariah was very important for the preparation of the coming of the Branch.

## The Book of ZECHARIAH

### Introduction

- A. After the short and simple message of Haggai, the book of Zechariah may seem discouragingly complicated; yet it is full of good things. Haggai's chief concern and paramount obsession had been to challenge the returned remnant to *build the temple* which had been neglected for fourteen years (Haggai 1:7-8). Beginning the same year as Haggai (520 B.C.), the younger Zechariah takes up the same cause as his older contemporary, thus, supplementing, developing, and amplifying his message. One may even say that the little Haggai scroll virtually serves as an *introduction* to the much larger work of Zechariah (the largest of the Minor Prophets).
1. Although the two deliver similar messages (encouragement to the temple builders) - they use strikingly different manners.
    - a. Haggai uses *sermons* while Zechariah uses *visions*. Haggai is an *exhorter* while Zechariah is an *encourager*. Haggai shoots from the *hip* with a strong message of *rebuke*; Zechariah shoots from the *heart* with a soothing message of *restoration*. Haggai is concerned with the *present*: "Take heart and finish the temple!"; Zechariah is concerned with the *future*: "Take heart, the Messiah is coming!"
  2. With Zechariah, as with Haggai, we begin in the second year of the Persian ruler, Darius, or 520 B.C. Sixteen years earlier the remnant had returned at the decree of the then ruling Cyrus who announced that the exiled Jews should return to Jerusalem and "*rebuild the house of the Lord*" (Ezra 1:3). They never got farther than the foundation.
    - a. Fourteen years of spiritual inactivity come and go before Jehovah has had enough. He raises up the prophetic duo of Haggai and Zechariah and commissions them to rekindle the faltering zeal of the Jewish leaders and people and to motivate them to finish what they have begun.
    - b. Few preachers have ever been as successful. See Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-15.
- B. Who Was Zechariah? Like Ezekiel, Zechariah was both a priest and a prophet. In 1:1 we learn that he was "*the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo*." According to Nehemiah 12:4, Iddo was one of the priests who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest). Thus, Zechariah was of the family of Aaron.
1. It is interesting to note that from this time on the priesthood takes the lead in Israel. The history of the government of the covenant people falls into three main periods:

[The JUDGES: *Moses to Samuel*  
The KINGS: *Saul to Zedekiah*  
The PRIESTS: *Joshua to destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)*

- C. Zechariah's Messiah. Zechariah is one of the most outstanding pieces of literature anywhere due to the amount of Messianic prophecy it contains. There are more specific prophecies regarding the coming Messiah in Zechariah than in any other Old Testament book with the exception of Isaiah (which has 66 chapters). For example:

<u>Reference in Zechariah</u>	<u>Picture of Messiah</u>
3:8	Servant, Mark 10:45
6:12	Branch, Luke 1:68-69
6:13	King, Matt. 21:4-5
6:13	Priest, Heb. 4:14
11:12-13	Betrayed One, Matt. 27:9-10
12:10	Pierced One, John 19:37
13:1	Fountain, Reve. 1:5
13:7	Shepherd, John 10:11
13:7	Humanity, Heb. 2:11
14:9	Lord, Reve. 11:15

### BODY

#### I. A DIVIDED BOOK

- A. The Two Parts. Few Old Testament books are as difficult to interpret as is this

one. However, part of the problem lies in failing to distinguish the *two parts* of the prophecy. There is a major break following chapter eight. Chapters 1-8 were written during the days of the temple rebuilding, while chapters 9-14 were probably written at a much later time. The two sections have marked differences:

1. The first eight chapters are mainly vision-prophecies; the remaining six chapters are direct prophecies. The first part concerns the physical remnant now back in the land, while the second part concerns the spiritual remnant under the Messiah. The contents of the first section are carefully dated, while the contents of the second section are nowhere dated.

B. Note, then, our outline of Zechariah:

### "Jealous For Zion"

#### I. EARLY PROMECIES: Temple Being Rebuilt, ch.1-8

##### A. Seven Visions

1. *The four horses*, 1:8-17
2. *The four horns and craftsmen*, 1:18-21
3. *The measuring line*, 2
4. *The reclothing of Joshua*, 3
5. *The lampstand and the olive trees*, 4
6. *The scroll, ephah, and the women*, 5
7. *The four chariots*, 6

##### B. Five Messages: 6:9-15; 7:1-7; 7:8-14; 8:1-17; 8:18-23

#### II. LATER PROMECIES: After Temple Rebuilt, ch.9-14

- A. The Coming Shepherd-King and Zion's Subsequent Blessing, 9-10
- B. The Offending of the Shepherd-King and It's Tragic Results, 11
- C. The Final Travail and Triumph of Zion, 12-14

1. As the key-word-phrase in Haggai was - "*from this day on I will bless you...*" - so the same thought continues in Zechariah with the announcement that Jehovah is "*jealous for Zion*" (1:14; 2:8; 8:2).
2. The book begins with a simple prologue in 1:1-6 with a call for *present* repentance (vs.3) and a reminder of *past* problems (vs.4-6).
  - a. Notice in verse 6a that the word of the Lord outlasted both their fathers and the prophets. See 1 Pet. 1:23-25.

#### II. THE SEVEN SYMBOLIC VISIONS

- A. The Four Horses, 1:8-17 - "*GOD'S EYES ARE ON THE WICKED.*" Read verses 8-10. Here is Jehovah's angel patrol surveying world conditions. They report back in verse 11b that "*all the earth is peaceful and quiet.*" Zechariah is intended to see that while the surrounding nations are at ease, his people are suffering hardship and difficulties of every sort. Thus, the angelic question in verse 12 and Jehovah's reply.
  1. Zechariah informs us of the two levels of history - the *visible* and the *invisible*. While man operates out of the former, God operates out of the latter. To the returned Jews it appeared that Jehovah's enemies were prospering while Jehovah's people were suffering - and that He was unconcerned! However, in the invisible realm, God was watching and was preparing a stroke of retribution upon the wicked while planning a three-fold blessing on Judah (vs.17).
- B. The Four Horns and Craftsmen, 1:18-21 - "*GOD'S HANDS ARE ON THE WICKED.*" Read verses 18-19. Horns in apocalyptic literature often represent kings or kingdoms (See Daniel 8 and Reve.17:12). These four horns are the nations that have sought to destroy Judah. However, God would raise up four craftsmen or carpenters who would "dismantle" the horns and judge the nations.
  1. \*Please keep in mind that all of this is symbolic. These figures are not to be interpreted literally but figuratively as representing various ideas that God wanted his prophet/people to see.



- C. The Measuring Line, 2:1-13 - "GOD'S PROTECTION ON THE RIGHTEOUS." Notice verses 1-2. What is all this measuring business? What does the measuring represent? See Ezekiel 40-42:20; Reve. 11:1-2. The measuring speaks of dividing between the holy and the profane. God is telling the prophet what He will protect and what He won't protect. Jerusalem was to be measured, i.e., set aside as holy unto the Lord.
1. Verse 4. Why did God not want walls around Jerusalem? He wanted His people to first build the temple, not the walls. Building the temple without first constructing the walls was an indication of their faith in Jehovah. Besides, He would be their wall; He would be their protection, (vs.5,8).
- D. The Reclothing of Joshua, 3:1-10 - "A PREPARED PEOPLE FOR A PREPARED PLACE." Here is Satan as the "accuser" making his case against Joshua, who stands as a representative of the people (vs.1). Joshua appears filthy (with sin) and like a torch left too long in the fire he is burned and dirty (vs.2b-3). Satan's argument is that Joshua (the Jews) were not worth saving.
1. Jehovah did not deny the charges but did disagree with Satan's conclusion. He, being full of grace and love, took them back, cleansed them and gave them new garments (vs.4-5). And why had He done this? Was this an act of grace without works? See 1:6. Yes, here is the Old Testament illustration of the prodigal son and his forgiving father.
  2. But this is more than just a vision of God accepting again His people - it symbolizes something greater (vs.8). The Branch (the Messiah, Isa.11:1) would come and prepare a "stone." From such passages as Dan. 2:44-45; Isa. 28:16 we see that the "stone" concept represents God's kingdom, the church.
    - a. The Messiah would prepare the "stone", God's watch-care would be over it ("seven eyes") and salvation would be therein - *"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."*
    - b. Thus, as Joshua had been fitted with new garments, so are those today who wash their robes in baptism (Reve.22:14). We are to *put off* the old and *put on* the new. At such time the prepared people are added to the prepared place - the stone (Acts 2:47).
  3. *"In that day..."* (vs.10) - the people will have one main objective when the Branch rules:
    - a. EVANGELISM! - *"everyone of you will invite your neighbor..."*
- E. The Lampstand and the Olive Trees, 4:1-14 - "A PREPARED RESPONSIBILITY." This fifth vision was of special encouragement to Zerubbabel, the *civil* leader of the remnant as the preceeding vision was to Joshua, the *religious* leader. Verses 2-5.
1. The lampstand was a sign that the people would finish the temple. And how would that happen? Verse 6. Only with Jehovah's help would they be able to finish.
    - a. See verse 7 - *"O great mountain, Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain."* The mountain represents all of the obstacles in the way of rebuilding. But God removes the mountain and the temple is finished (vs.7b-9).
  2. Notice his question in verse 11. The olive trees represent the fuel (oil) that would light the lampstand. And verse 14 more specifically adds, *"These are the two anointed ones..."* The fuel which would motivate the people in the work of rebuilding would come from the two "oiled" offices - the king and high priest. The king is here represented by Zerubbabel (who was of the blood-line of David) and the high priest by Joshua. Thus, the two offices would have to work together in order for the fuel to reach the lampstand or in order for the temple to be completed.
    - a. One day these two "oiled" offices would be united in Christ!
- F. The Scroll, Ephah, and the Women, 5:1-11 - "A PREPARED HOLINESS." Here is the much needed lesson that there can never be a restoration of Jehovah's blessings without the expulsion of that which is evil (vs.1-3).
1. Zechariah sees a flying scroll containing a two-fold curse: (1) against stealing, and (2) against swearing. This summarizes all sins which are (1) against man, and (2) against God. Note in verse 3 that these sins must be purged.

God will not tolerate a mixture of good and evil in the land. Sin must be purged.

a. Can there be any application here for us? See 1 Cor.5:7 in regard to the command for church discipline. God commands that His church be pure and sin purged.

2. In verse 5-7 the prophet sees an ephah (a Jewish measurement) which was probably in the shape of a barrel. Inside was one recognized as wickedness. Immediately she was contained and sent away to Babylon (vs.8-11). The proper home for such wickedness was certainly not Jerusalem.

a. Here is a simple lesson on what to do with sin. Sin must be (1) recognized, (2) contained, and finally (3) sent away.

G. The Four Chariots, 6:1-8 - "A PREPARED JUDGEMENT." Here is Jehovah's coming judgement on the Gentile nations as represented by the land of the north (Persia), vs.8. Here follows five brief messages to Zechariah:

1. O "And the word of the Lord came..." 6:9-15. Here the prophet is commanded to enact a coronation ceremony for Joshua. The passage is entirely Messianic and tells of five things that the "Branch" would do:

a. He would grow - branch out from a lowly birth and a state of rejection to become exalted and lifted up.

b. He would build the temple - obviously this is not the physical temple for the Lord just got through promising that Zerubbabel would finish it. This temple would be spiritual. See 1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:16.

c. He would sit and rule - on the throne of David. Such was confirmed on Pentecost by Peter (Acts 2:30-31).

d. He would be a priest - but not on earth for He was of the wrong tribe (Heb. 7:14).

e. He would be a peacemaker - between God and man and between Jew and Gentile.  
1) Note also verse 15. This temple ruled over by the Messiah would not be for "Jews only" but would include all who were "*far off*" (Acts 2:38-39).

2. O "The word of the Lord came..." 7:1-7. "*To fast or not to fast*" - that is the question (vs.3). The Lord had only commanded one day of fasting - the day of atonement. Yet the Jews were observing several days of fasting and seeking to bind these on others. Hence, the Lord's response in verse 5-6. Here was the sin of selfishness in the name of religion. They were actually fasting in order to make themselves feel good rather than fasting to God's glory.

a. Can you think of anything that would involve selfishness in the name of religion today? - i.e., that which is done to please self rather than God?

3. O "The word of the Lord came..." 7:8-14. Here is what God really wants - the proper attitude and heart. See verse 9-10.

4. O "The word of the Lord came..." 8:1-17. Here are given the divine characteristics for the New Testament kingdom. The Lord promises that He will return to Zion (vs.3). Jehovah never returned to a literal temple after Ezekiel 10:18 (See also Acts 17:24). Thus, the prophecy is for a return to a spiritual temple, a spiritual city - new Jerusalem (Reve.21:2). She would be a "*City of Truth*" sounding forth the truth (Isa. 2:3b; Lk. 24:47) and a "*Holy Mountain*" i.e., set aside for righteousness.

a. She would be a city of peace, vs.4

b. She would be a city of activity, vs.5

1) Notice verse 7-8. It was Kipling who said, "*East is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet.*" He was wrong. East met west in the new Jerusalem.

2) In verse 9 he leaves the Messianic and returns to offer more encouragement to the physical temple builders.

3) Verse 16-17 - Jehovah's basic principles of morality to be applied in every age.

5. O "The word of the Lord came..." 8:18-23. Now back to the spiritual promise for the future. He would turn their sorrow into joy and gladness (vs.19) and open the door of spiritual blessing unto all peoples (vs.20).

a. Verse 21 illustrates that the whole aspect of being included in God's

spiritual city is that we might include others.

- b. Finally, verse 23 shows that salvation would come through the Jewish remnant that Jehovah had preserved. And today salvation can only be had by "*grasping the garment of a Jew.*" That Jew is Jesus Christ.

### III. THE THREE LATTER PROPHECIES      \*Note: Chapter 9 begins part two of the book. These six remaining chapters are virtually 100% Messianic.

#### A. The Coming Shepherd-King and Zion's Subsequent Blessing, ch.9-10.

- 1. Victory in Jesus, 9:1-8. In 9:1 the American Standard Version gives a marginal reading of - "*Jehovah hath an eye on men...*" Thus, the second section of Zechariah begins as does the first (see comments on 1:8-17). Before we see anything else we are meant to see God's care and concern for His own.
  - a. Here in verse 2-8 are listed the enemies of God's people with the promise that these would never again pass through Jerusalem (vs.8). This is not physical Jerusalem under consideration but, rather, spiritual Jerusalem. Physical Jerusalem was attacked time and again by its enemies but spiritual Jerusalem could NEVER be overrun. And *why* can we be assured of such victory?
- 2. The Why of Victory, 9:9-10. The *why* of our victory is seen in our King! We are great because He is great. We are led to triumph because He was triumphant. We have victory because of the victory of Jesus. And how do we have victory?
  - a. Because of His KINGSHIP, vs.9. See 1 Tim. 6:13-15; Acts 2:36. Jesus Christ has been given absolute power (Matt. 28:18). Yet many rulers turn power into corruption. Not this King!
  - b. Because of His JUSTICE, vs.9. See Isa. 11:3-4a; Jer. 23:5-6. In our courts the rich, powerful and influential often seem to be favored, but not so in the court of this kingdom.
  - c. Because of His SALVATION, vs.9. Question: Is justice all we want? When we stand in the day of judgement will we plead for justice? No, we will plead for mercy. And our King offers mercy!
    - 1) The story is told about an eastern monarch who decreed that for a violation of law the criminal would lose both hands. The first offender was his own son. Justice demanded the cutting off of the hands. Now the king was in favor of justice, yet he was also in favor of his son. Thus, mercy entered and saw the king take one of his own hands and one of his son's - and the law was paid.
    - 2) Jesus went farther than that. When the price had to be paid - He paid it all! (1 Cor.6:20).
  - d. Because of His HUMILITY, vs.9. What king ever rode on a donkey? Kings rode on white stallions and rode in gold chariots. Not this king! He forever taught the lesson that to become great you must become little; to rise you must sink; and to rule you must serve. See Matt. 20:28.
  - e. Because of the PEACEFUL NATURE OF His kingdom, vs.10. This kingdom would not be characterized by horses, chariots and weapons of the battlefield for it would be a *spiritual* kingdom.
  - f. Because of the UNIVERSAL RULE of the King, vs.10. The spiritual kingdom of Christ would know no geographical boundaries. His authority would be upon all men.
- 3. The Fulness of Victory, 9:11-17. Here is a list of seven things the Messiah would provide:
  - a. He will provide redemption, vs.11. The Mosaic covenant was a blood covenant that could not save. Because of the covenant they were in, God would make a new blood covenant - one which would save. See Jer. 31:31,34; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22; Reve. 1:5. This covenant would set man free (Rom. 7:24-25).
    - 1) Under Jesus, man would be set free from the waterless pit and be given access to the fountain of living water (13:1).
  - b. He will provide unification, vs. 13. Here we see the uniting of God's people for the purpose of taking on Greece (the Gentiles). And when did this occur? Such a battle began in Acts 16:6 and continued until Acts 19:20 as Christianity for the first time took on paganism. Before Acts 16 the

See Luke 21:20. THAT IS THE SIGN! Jesus said, "When Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, you flee!"

- c. Now how could they do that? Jerusalem was a walled city. With enemies outside the city the gates would surely be closed. History gives us the answer. The historian Josephus gives an account of the years 67-70 A.D. and tells of a Roman general named Cestius who marched against Jerusalem. He had it surrounded and was about to take the city... and then he did what no other Roman general ever did in recorded history - he turned around and went home! (See verse 5).

1) When that happened the Jewish Zealots threw open the gates of the city and pursued the Romans overtaking them and killing them. THAT WAS THE SIGN! The valley had now been opened and the saints were now to flee!

- d. When Rome received the news of the Jerusalem massacre the Emperor sent Generals Titus and Vespasian to totally destroy the city. Now none would escape. See 5b. It was the worst slaughter in the history of the world. Over 1,100,000 were killed and over 97,000 captured.

f. Verse 6 describes the darkest day in the Jewish economy. See Matt.24:29.

- B. The Results of Judgement, vs.7-15. How could there be darkness and light at the same time? It would be darkness for physical Jerusalem for it was destroyed. It would be light for spiritual Jerusalem for it was saved.

1. One writer has given three reasons for the quick spread of Christianity: (1) the persecution in Acts 8, (2) the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and (3) the destruction of Jerusalem. Why? Read verse 8.
2. Here in verse 9 is one of the purposes for the destruction - to prove the divine claim of Jesus.

- C. The Conclusion of Judgement, vs.16-21. Verse 16 speaks of the Gentile entrance into the church. The Feast of Booths was a feast of thanksgiving. Now both Jew and Gentile could rejoice together. And what of those who refused to worship the King? Spiritual draught! Verse 17.

1. Finally, verse 20-21 speak of the holy nature of the Lord's Kingdom.

#### Conclusion

1. And why so much time and space for a book like Zechariah? Well... because it's one of my favorites (and I'm the writer) and because so few people actually understand and appreciate this great little book. I hope that from now on you will.

## Zechariah

JAMES MEADOWS

### Introduction

1. Zechariah began to prophesy two months after Haggai began (Zech. 1:1; cf. Hag. 1:1) and continued his work for two years.

- a. In November, 520 B.C., he issued a call to Israel to repent (1:1-6).
- b. In February, 519 B.C., he encountered certain night visions (1:7-6:8).
- c. In December, 518 B.C., he offered responses to certain questions about fastings (Chapters 7-8).

2. His name means He whom Jehovah Remembers. It was a popular name since about 29 to 30 men wore that name in the Old Testament.

3. He was one of the priests that returned to Palestine under Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:16).

4. His work preceded Malachi's work by about 80 years (His-520 B.C., Malachi-440 B.C.).

5. Haggai had stirred the people to resume rebuilding the temple, but their zeal had slackened. Zechariah urged them to complete the great work.

6. Zechariah was evidently younger than Haggai and his work continued a year or two beyond the older prophet.

7. Haggai rebuked and admonished; Zechariah encouraged and looked to brighter days.

8. Zechariah contains many visions and a great deal of apocalyptic (imminent disaster, pertaining to last things symbolism) "the language of a persecuted and troubled people."

9. It is the longest and most difficult of the Minor Prophets—in fact the most difficult of the Old Testament books to interpret. "Haley wrote: 'When this is recognized, one should approach an interpretation of it with prayer and humility, acknowledging his own limitations and knowing that he cannot afford to be dogmatic' (Haley, p. 318). *Apocalyptic writing is extremely difficult of expression and therefore does not lend itself to dogmatic certainty.*"

10. Zechariah differs from the other prophets in three points: *(Bill, Bible Study Series, p. 259,*

- a. "He gives emphasis to visions as a means of divine communication. It is true that visions appear in the book of Amos, but not in proportion to those in Zechariah.



1:3 - The key-note of the entire message  
 "Return unto me... and I will return unto you"  
 cf. Mal. 3:7 - Plea  
 of the prophets

- b. Angelic mediation occupies an important place in his message. Angels are conspicuous in the first six chapters of the book. 1:1, 2, 13, 14, 19; 2:1, 3, 3:1, 3:5, 6, 4:1, 4, 5, 5:5, 10, 6:4, 5, 18 times
  - c. Apocalyptic symbolism entering into the visions is another outstanding characteristic of this prophet's writings" (Haley, p. 319).
11. He was identified as a priest by Nehemiah (Neh. 12:4)—able to hold two offices—priest and prophet. He wanted the temple built immediately. Cf. Ezra 5:1 & 6:14.
    - a. Zechariah was the son of Berechiah (Zech. 1:1). "Jehovah Blesses."
    - b. He was the grandson of Iddo, a priest. "Appointed Time."
  12. There are approximately 71 quotations in the New Testament from the prophet.
    - a. 31 are located in Revelation.
    - b. 27 in the gospels, especially during our Lord's last week.
    - c. Next to Isaiah he is the most Messianic of Old Testament prophets.  
*Some think he had more influence on the Messianic picture than Isaiah*
  13. There are at least 84 allusions of where Zechariah attributed his message to God—an average of six per chapter.
  14. First eight chapters written 520-518 B.C.
  15. Resemblances to other Bible books:
    - a. 1:18 - Dan. 7:7. *The horns*
    - b. 2:1 - Amos 7:7. *Plumbline*
    - c. 7:10f - Exod. 22:21-22. *Call to righteousness*
    - d. Surrounding Nations -- Amos 1 & 2.
    - e. 1:17; 2:10 - Micah 7:17. *Glory of Jerusalem*
    - f. Spirit-filled witnesses (Zech. 4) - Rev. 11.
  16. Entire prophesy concerns principally the day of the Christian Dispensation.
    - a. This is made certain by the appearance of such expressions as "the day of Jehovah," "in that day," "in those days."
    - b. Such expressions appear 24 times.

Two natural divisions of the book:

1. Chapters 1-8: The future of fleshly Israel is discussed with many the events and matters melting into a messianic prophecy.
2. Chapter 9-14: written to encourage the people of Israel through the emphasis upon the messianic.

Also appearing in

3

2:11; 3:10; 8:9; 11:11

- (1) Seven in chapter 12. (3, 4, 6, 8 (2 times), 9, 11)
- (2) Three in chapter 13. (1, 2, 4)
- (3) Ten in chapter 14. (1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21)

## Discussion

### I. Zechariah is divided into four sections.

- A. First, there is a call to repentance (1:1-6). Remember God's sore displeasure.
- B. Second, there is a series of night visions about the future of God's people and his kingdom:
  1. Riders among the myrtles (1:7-17). Vision of Comfort—Israel downtrodden, under watchfulness and prayer.
  2. The four horns and four smiths (1:18-21). Vision of Conquest—Israel delivered, overthrowing her enemies.
  3. The man with a measuring line (2:1-13). Vision of Conditions—Israel (Jerusalem) experiencing glorious prosperity.
  4. Joshua's trial (3:1-10). Vision of Cleansing—The priest--Israel polluted, cleansed, and restored to priestly service.
  5. A golden lampstand and two olive trees (4:1-14). Vision of Communication—Israel as God's lightbearer to the world.
  6. The flying scroll (5:1-4). Vision of Condemnation—Israel as a moral force in the world through the Word of God.
  7. The woman in the ephah (5:5-11). Vision of Control—Israel and the application of the Word of God.
  8. The four chariots (6:1-8). Vision of Command—Israel's agency at work.
  9. The crowning of Joshua (6:9-15). Vision of Consummation—Israel's symbolic crowning.
- C. Third, a question about fasting is raised (7:1-8:23).
  1. Chapter 7
    - a. 7:1-3 - The inquiry concerning observances

- b. 7:4-7 - The explanation pointing out omissions.
- c. 7:8-14 - The Exhortation to obedience.

## 2. Chapter 8

- a. 8:1-3 - The presence of the Lord.
- b. 8:4-15 - The perpetuity of the Jews.
- c. 8:16-17 - The precepts of the people.
- d. 8:18-19 - The manner of acceptable worship.
- e. 8:20-22 - The multitudes out of the nations.
- f. 8:23 - The magnification of the Jews.

## D. Fourth, the people of God are reassured about the future.

1. The heathen nations will fall (9:1-7).
2. The Messiah will appear (9:8-11:17).
3. Salvation established in spiritual Israel, the church (12:1-14:21).

## E. Clayton Winters gives a great summary of Zechariah in his book Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther:

Zechariah's first prophecy came just two months after Haggai began to encourage the people to action on the temple—the eighth month of the second year of Darius (Zechariah 1:1)—in which he encouraged the righteousness of the Holy People by reminding them that disobedience had brought them into captivity in the first place (1:2-6). His second vision came in the same year, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (1:7). This prophecy was more extensive, consisting of God's promise to restore and bless Jerusalem, and to take vengeance on those who had scattered the captives (1:18-21); it served as an incentive for the dispersed people to flee Babylonia (2:1-12). Joshua the priest was then seen in the presence of God's angel with Satan standing by to accuse him. His filthy clothing (sin) was taken away, and replaced by new robes of righteousness (3:1-10). So despite the opposition of Satan, he stood as a golden lampstand before the people. He had laid the foundation of the temple, and

# The messianic and messianic prophecies

1. Christ as the bride, 3:8.
2. " as servant, 3:8.
3. " to build the temple, 6:12.
4. " to sit and rule upon the throne, 6:13
5. " to be a priest while ruling, 6:13.
6. " entry into Jerusalem on a colt, 9:9.
7. " the good shepherd, 9:16; 11:11.
8. " the smitten shepherd, 13:7.
9. the price of Christ's betrayal, 11:12, 13
10. Christ's hands pierced, 12:10
11. Christ an offering for sin, 12:10; 13:1.
12. Christ wounded in the house of friends, 13:6.
13. Christ's appearance of the destruction of Jerusalem, 13:6." (Charles Pledge,  
Getting Acquainted with the Old Testament,  
p. 277-78)



would see the work through (4:1-14). A flying scroll was seen that represented the curse to be brought on anyone who violated God's pure covenant (reminiscent of the curses spoken from Mount Ebal, Deuteronomy 27:9-26). It would enter the house of the ungodly and destroy it down to its foundations (5:1-4). Israel's sins would be carried to Babylonia in a measuring basket, and Joshua would stand crowned, not only as the high priest of God, but also as a symbol of the great High Priest and King to come, Jesus Christ (5:5-11; 6:9-15). For nearly two years the prophet's voice was silent, but in the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius, 517 B.C. (7:1), he renewed his challenge. Again he called to mind the disobedient and rebellious spirit of their fathers—hearts hardened as flint against the prophetic message (7:4-13). But once more he promised prosperity and safety to the righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem (8:1-23). Above and beyond temporal blessings enjoyed in Jerusalem would be the arrival of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the real Branch. He would be pierced (12:10-14), and His flock scattered (13:7-9), but He would nonetheless open a foundation for sin in Jerusalem (13:1), and every bell and pot would be inscribed HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD (9:20,21). The prophet thus offered the greatest incentive of all to the little band of persecuted and discouraged Israelites: they would succeed in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. But their real mission was of far greater import and significance: through them the Messiah would be given to bless the whole world (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:15-29; Romans 9:1-5) (p. 24).

## II. Chapter 1

### A. First, there is the call to repentance (1:1-6).

#### 1. Learn the lessons of past history.

2. They had refused to heed and God had "scattered them with a whirlwind (7:12).

3. "As surely as the warnings through the earlier prophets had come to pass, so they should be certain that God expected them to heed what was said to their own generation" (David Pharr, Spiritual Sword).

4. One of the greatest teachers we can have is the experience of history, but the teacher has dull students. "Each generation must learn for itself."

*Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Zephaniah, Micah all begin with "came the word of the Lord?"*

*Begin  
5/29/07*

Robinson said this statement means  
"All opposition to the Jews in the rebuilding  
of their temple was at an end."

5. The call to repentance was needed because of their lost zeal. The church still faces this problem today. What is the cure? (Rev. 2:1-5; 3:14-20).
6. The fathers and the prophets were gone, but God's word lives on (Matt. 24:35; John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-12).
7. "Pay Day—Some Day!"

### Vision Number 1

B. Second, there are the riders among the myrtles (1:7-17). Vision of Comfort. Israel, downtrodden, under watchfulness and prayer.

1. There is a rider on a red horse followed by red, sorrel (speckled) and white horses (1:7-8).
2. These patrollers of the earth report that the earth is at rest, which seems bad news. "The shaking of the nations" (Hag. 2:6-7), which could restore Jerusalem to glory, is not visible (1:9-11).
3. "The angel assures the prophet that after 70 years (Cf. Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) the Lord's pity is stirred and Jerusalem will be rebuilt, while the heathen will be chastised (1:12-17)." *(Jack Lewis, p. 76)*

### Vision Number 2

C. Third, the four horns and the four smiths (carpenters) (1:18-21). Vision of Conquest. Israel delivered, overthrowing her enemies.

1. Horns are a symbol of power (Micah 4:13).
  - a. Daniel used "horns" to represent fullness of power (Dan. 7:7-8) and of kings exerting power (Dan. 7:24).
  - b. Four is a complete world number:
    - (1) Four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:12).
    - (2) Four winds (Jer. 49:36; Dan. 11:4).
    - (3) Four sore judgments (Ezek. 14:21).
    - (4) Four beasts, which are four kings or kingdoms (Dan. 7:3).
2. They represent the powers that scattered Judah.
3. The smiths on the other hand are symbols of destruction of those powers.

*Import of this vision* 7

4. God clearly reveals that there is no longer any opposition to the building of the Lord's house. "...teaching that Israel's foes have finally through WAR was destroyed themselves, and that there is no longer any opposition to the building of God's house" (The 12 Minor Prophets, George L. Robinson, p. 150).

### III. Chapter 2

#### Vision Number 3

D. Fourth, the man with the measuring line (2:1-13). Vision of Conditions.  
Israel (Jerusalem) experiencing glorious prosperity.

1. The Mormons say this young man was Joseph Smith and the angel was Maroni who revealed to him the golden plates.
2. The young man is restrained because Jerusalem is to be a city without walls (v. 4-5).
3. The Lord who is "a wall of fire about her (v. 5) and who will be glory in her midst (v. 5) is to be her protection.
4. "The exiles still in Babylon are called upon to flee (v. 6) to Zion. " (Leura, p. 76)
5. "This makes it clear that the vision is to assure the people that the Jerusalem of Jehovah's concern is not physical, but spiritual. It is not of the present, but of the future from their point of vision" (Haley, p. 330).
6. Spiritual Jerusalem is probably in view here. Think of Paul's glorious description of the church in Ephesians.
7. God's people called upon to rejoice due to God dwelling among them (vv. 10-13).
  - a. Not restricted to present Jerusalem.
  - b. Many nations come (cf. Mt. 28:19-20).
  - c. "The 'holy land' is not Palestine, but God's people. Wherever God and his people are there is the holy land..." (Robert Taylor, Jr., Power Lectures, Minor Prophets, "Commentary on the Book of Zechariah," p. 286).
8. Human flesh is called upon to be silent before God (v. 13; cf. Hab. 2:20).
  - a. It is a call for reverence in his presence.

*Only Place  
where called the  
"holy land"  
2:12*

- b. "The heathen nations would be judged, Jehovah would build and inhabit the new Zion, and He would fulfill His promises concerning Jerusalem. This is Jehovah's answer to the Jews who could not see beyond the immediate physical temple and city and to those indifferent to His purposes" (Haley, p. 332).

#### IV. Chapter 3

##### Vision Number 4

- E. Fifth, Joshua's trial (3:1-10). Vision of Cleansing. Taking place on earth. The priest--Israel polluted, cleansed and restored to spiritual service.
- "The import of this vision is that the priesthood shall be cleansed and made acceptable for service" (Lewis, p. 96)*
1. Joshua represents the whole priesthood and the entire nation.
  2. Satan is standing by to prevent Jehovah from accepting Joshua, and thus accepting the whole nation because of sin (v. 3).
  3. Satan felt confident in his accusation because the whole priesthood had been guilty:
    - a. Of making no distinction between the clean and unclean (Ezek. 22:26).
    - b. To a degree they had been responsible for the ignorance of the nation (Hos. 4:6).
    - c. They had fed on the sins of the people (Hos. 4:8).
    - d. They had taught for hire (Mic. 3:11).
  4. Joshua stood for "a brand plucked out of the fire"—the fire of trials through which the nation had gone (v. 2). The angel is pictured as the defender of God's people, so in the N.T. Christ is our Advocate (1 John 2:1).
  5. God forgave him and removed his "filthy garments" (v. 4).
    - a. They represent the sins by which the nation had become polluted.
    - b. Consider the condition in other years (Isa. 64:6).
  6. Once more the priesthood stood before God as cleansed (vv. 6-7).
    - a. The angel gives Joshua a solemn charge.
      - (1) He is to be righteous in his personal deportment.



(2) He is to be faithful in his discharge of priestly duties.

b. The promised reward is three-fold: 3:7

- (1) He will be the ruler and director over God's house (the temple now under construction): *"He will rule & direct the affairs and worship of Jehovah's house" (Haley, p. 334)*
- (2) He will keep the Lord's temple free from all idols, pollutions, etc.
- (3) He will have access to Jehovah on behalf of himself and the people. *"whom the high priest represents" (Haley p. 334)*

7. This is the first introduction of the "Branch" by Zechariah (vv. 8-10).

a. Both Isaiah (4:2; 11:1-10) and Jeremiah had introduced him (Jer. 23:5; 33:15).

b. Zechariah mentions the branch again in 6:12-13.

- (1) He would be a descendant of David and a servant of Jehovah.
- (2) In him the priesthood and kingship through Zerubbabel would be combined (Hag. 2:23).

c. The "stone" is the "kingdom of Jehovah" (Haley, p. 336); "the stone refers to the Messiah and his kingdom in which there would be spiritual completeness" (Taylor, Power Lectures, p. 287).

d. The "seven eyes" focused on it picture God's complete and full watchful care over his people. "He would bring forth a kingdom (Dan. 2:44), which would endure forever (Dan. 7:14) in spite of all opposition of all heathen powers (Dan. 7)" (Haley, p. 337).

e. "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" portrays what would be accomplished on THE day of atonement—the day of Calvary and the assumption of his priestly functions.

f. In that day, when sin is removed, and the Messianic rule begins "shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree" (v. 10). This was a symbol of peace enjoyed in the midst of safety and security (1 Kgs. 4:24-25; Isa. 36:13; cf. Micah 4:4). *(Haley, p. 337)*

g. God gives all this assurance to his discouraged and faltering people.

h. "Then the fact is emphasized that the priests are types of the Messiah, and by a symbolical action it is declared that God has a purpose which he will accomplish; the one typified will be raised up" (Davis

*Dan:  
2:34, 44-45*

## Chapter 4: 1-14

The candlestick represented the light in the temple, it was dependant upon the oil produced by the olive tree. So the completion of the temple depended upon the power of God, supplied through the Spirit directing Zerubbabel.

This vision implied a definite promise to Zerubbabel - All opposition will be removed and he would bring forth the headstone to completion.

"The day of small things" - The enemies had despised and ridiculed the Jews because of their weakness and small numbers. God show them that those who despised the day of small things would fail when fighting against truth 70 years later in rebuilding the walls the enemy said "What are these feeble Jews doing?" (Neh. 4:2-4).

Dictionary of the Bible, p. 831).

## V. Chapter 4

### Vision Number 5

*Begin  
6-62000*

F. Sixth, the golden lampstand and the two olive trees (4:1-14). Vision of Communication—Israel as God's lightbearer to the world.

1. Evidently Zechariah had gone to sleep and was wakened and describes the vision that he saw (vv. 1-2).
2. Zechariah knew what he saw, but did not know the meaning (vv. 3-5).
3. The angel's explanation is a message of encouragement to Zerubbabel, the temple builder (6-7).

a. He was facing great and mounting odds in building the temple.

b. He was assured that the job would be completed "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (v. 6).

*Donay version "not with an army."*  
c. The mountain before him probably signified all the obstacles placed before him, but he was assured that they will become like an advantageous plan (v. 7).

4. Zerubbabel is also assured:

a. He shall bring forth the headstone (v. 7)—"not the cornerstone, for it had already been laid, but the finishing stone, the last stone which would complete the temple's construction" (Haley, p. 340).

b. He was also assured that just as his hands had "laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it" (v. 9). *Cf. Luke 14:28-30*

c. "But more, it would also be a pledge that the greater spiritual house would be built according to divine promise and power; for Zerubbabel was made 'as a signet,' chosen by Jehovah (Hag. 2:23), a symbol of him who was to come" (Haley, p. 341).

5. They are also warned not to despise the day of small things (v. 10).

a. Their assessment of this temple was nothing compared to the former (Cf. Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3).

b. But the day of rejoicing will come, the job will be finished, and God's approval will be on it.

"That stand by the Lord of the whole earth" Joshua 3:11, 13

6. He then reveals to him that the two olive trees are the "two anointed ones" (vv. 11-14).

- Rev. 11:3-4  
Coffman thinks  
they refer to  
O.T. & N.T.
- The two anointed ones probably refer to Zerubbabel (as governor and temple builder) and Joshua (the high priest).
  - "Evidently the office of Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor, are indicated by the 'anointed ones'" (Haley, p. 343).
  - "However, it should be firmly fixed in mind that they serve as types and shadows of him who when he came would be anointed as priest and king as well as that of prophet—the Messiah. Meeting and merging into him would be what Zechariah (prophet), Joshua (high priest) and Zerubbabel (ruler) all were accomplishing under the Mosaic system" (Taylor, Power Lectures, p. 289).

## VI. Chapter 5

### Vision Number 6

G. Seventh, the flying scroll (5:1-4). Vision of Condemnation—Israel as a moral force in the world through the Word of God.

- "The first vision in this chapter denounces those who had sinned against the first and second tables of the law; the second of their sin would be written in unmistakable syllables, and would consume the houses of evil-doers with dry rot (v. 4)" (F. B. Meyer, Great Verses Through the Bible, p. 360).
- The flying scroll teaches that God has in his law pronounced a curse upon wickedness and he intends to "cut off" sinners.
- Curses were placed on those who had wronged man by his thefts and those who had wronged God by the misuse of his name.
- Punishment meted out would be swift and sure. It would be permanent.

### Vision Number 7

Chapter 5:5-11—Vision Number 7.

H. Eighth, the woman in the ephah. Vision of Control. Israel and the application of God's Word.

- The ephah was a Hebrew measurement. Some estimates vary from five gallons (20 quarts) to eight gallons (32 quarts).

## Chapter 3

1. The flying roll probably means that all of God's blessings are contingent upon honoring his sacred laws. Violators will be punished.
2. The ephod means that wickedness is enthroned in the end city and God's people should leave God's people should avoid all unspiritual environments that are destructive of faith.



2. Wickedness is personified as a woman. It is borne to Shinar where an abode for it would be built.
- Shinar is the place where Nimrod had begun his rebellion in earlier times (Gen. 10:10-11).
  - Shinar represents rebellion and God is removing it from his land to Satan's "A symbol of Satan's world government" (Haley, p. 346).
3. "Wickedness must be completely removed from God's kingdom and His people, and the complete separateness must be maintained throughout time" (Haley, pp. 344-45).
- "In this hieroglyphic we are taught how idolatry, with all its accompanying atrocities, was removed from the land of the Hebrews, which it had desecrated, to a country devoted to it, and where it was to commingle with its native elements, never to be re-imported into Canaan..." (Henderson, The Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 391).

Further symbolized in Revelation  
 'Harlot' - 'Babylon'  
 'great city' - 'Mystery'  
 Beast out of the sea + 144,000

### Vision Number 8

#### Chapter 6.

1. Ninth, the four chariots. 6:1-8. Vision of Command—Israel, God's agency at work.
- The four chariots from between "the mountains of brass" go forth to patrol the earth (v. 7).
    - These seem to symbolize God's protecting providence.
    - The earth is at peace under God's control.
  - "...teaching that God's protecting providence will be over his people and their sanctuary, even though the city's walls may need a Nehemiah to repair them" (Robinson, The Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 151).
  - What is the significance of the colors? "Red often represents war and bloodshed; black frequently symbolizes famine and economic times of difficulty; white reflects festivity and victory; bay or grisled represented the power essential in accomplishing the desired tasks" (Robert Taylor, Power Lectures, p. 290).
  - The black horses went toward the north country (where Babylon was located); the white horse followed the black horses. The grisled horses went toward the south country.

Begin June 7/05

cf. Rev. 6:1-5  
 Ezek. 14:21  
 15:16-17

5. The Babylonians had gone too far in the cruelty of punishment they brought upon Judah (Zech. 1:15f), so God had become sorely displeased with them on this account. (Cf. Isa. 14:6; 47:6.) Babylon had been overthrown by the Medes and Persians, but their cruelty, imbibed by the Persians, had not been fully punished.
6. God would send his black horses into that territory over which the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians ruled in succession, each bringing his own brand of oppression and cruelty upon the civilized world. The black horses apparently represent the devastation God would bring upon them, and the white horses depicting the triumph the black horses would accomplish.
7. The grisled horses would be sent into the south country, in which Egypt, another harsh foe of Israel, dwelled. Some form of punishment was in store for these idolaters and the enemies of God.
8. Verse 8 shows that God's wrath had been appeased by the mission of the two chariots into the north country.
9. "The tendency of the whole vision was to assure the Jews of the care and protection of their covenant God, and thus lead them to exercise confidence in him, while prosecuting the restoration of the temple and their former institutions" (Henderson, p. 394).
10. "The visions had begun with the condition of the heathen; all was quiet. The second through the seventh dealt with the fortunes of Judah, God's people.... It is altogether fitting that the concluding vision would deal with the heathen and his being shaken, completing the circle of visions dealing with the heathen and with Jehovah's own" (Hailey, pp. 350f).
- J. Tenth the Crowning of Joshua, the Branch, and the New Temple to be built (6:9-15). Vision of Consummation—Israel's symbolic crowning.

1. The high priest is crowned to typify the Branch (vv. 9-11). "...in which Joshua, the high priest, is crowned and made typical of the Messiah—Branch-Priest-King—the most composite and complete portion of the Coming One to be found in the Old Testament" (Robinson, p. 151).

2. Joshua was a type of him who is far greater—the Messiah (vv. 12-13).

- a. "Behold, the man." God will become man in the incarnation.
- b. He is the Branch. He would come from David's line.
- c. "He shall grow up out of his place"—no doubt a reference to his being a root out of dry ground (Isa. 53:2), and as living among

Four Winds  
Jer. 49:36  
51:1  
Dan. 7:2

Branch  
3:8  
Isa. 11:1  
Jer. 33:15

his own people. "A stem, a root, a branch would grow up out of what seemed to be a hopelessly dead tree" (David Pharr).

- d. He shall build the Lord's temple; i.e., the Lord's church (Matt. 16:18; Cf. Eph. 2:18-21).
- e. He "shall bear the glory." Majesty, power, dominion and might shall be his.
- f. He shall be both king (ruler) and priest (the one atoning for man's sins) on his throne.
  - (1) "This is a death knell to premillennialism for he is priest on the throne.
  - (2) They have his throne on earth during the millennium.
  - (3) Yet Hebrews 8:4 says he cannot be a priest on earth.
  - (4) Jeremiah 22:30 says he could not prosper if his throne was in Judah.
- g. "And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
  - (1) It's made possible because he is both priest and king.
  - (2) No real peace unless he is both and is NOW on his throne which he definitely is.
  - (3) "...is to be understood the glorious scheme of reconciliation between God and man, effected by the joint exercise of the sacerdotal and regal office of the Lord Christ. Compl. Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:5; Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 1:20,21; Heb. 13:20 (Henderson, p. 397).

### 3. The "BRANCH" In Zechariah 6:12-13.

#### a. Who is "the Branch?" Zech. 6:12,13.

- (1) Isa. 11:1
- (2) Rom. 15:12
- (3) So this is a prophecy concerning Christ on his throne.
- b. This passage affirms Christ would do several things.

(1) First, He would grow (v. 12)  
15

(1) ~~First~~ "he shall build the temple of the Lord," v. 12.

(a) He built the temple, Eph. 2:19,20.

(b) The church is the temple, 1 Cor. 3:16.

(2) ~~Second~~ <sup>Third</sup> "he shall sit and rule upon his throne."

(a) Heb. 1:3.

(b) Heb. 1:8.

(i) Unto the son he said "thy throne."

(ii) Thus one has throne, sceptre, and kingdom all in the same verse.

(3) ~~Third~~ <sup>Fourth</sup> "he shall be a priest upon his throne."

(a) Christ is priest in heaven now, Heb. 4:14.

(b) Christ could not be a priest on earth, Heb. 8:4.

(i) Paul says Christ cannot be a priest on earth. But he is a priest on his throne.

(ii) Therefore his throne cannot be on earth. Christ is priest now (Heb. 4:14). And he is a priest on his throne. So he is on his throne now.

(iii) But Hebrews 8:4 says Christ cannot be a priest on earth.

(4) ~~Fifth~~ <sup>Therefore his throne cannot be on earth.</sup> ~~he would be a peacemaker (v. 13)~~

(4) "Zechariah said Christ would sit and rule and be priest on his throne at the same time. By the fact that he now sits on his throne, is now priest on his throne and now rules on his throne—at the same time—he is made a high priest forever, "after the order of Melchizedek."

c. Brother Foy E. Wallace often put it in a chart like this:

King and Priest - Zech. 6:12,13

(1) He shall build the temple, 1 Cor. 3:16

(2) He shall sit on his throne, Acts 2:34

(3) He shall rule on his throne, Heb. 1:8

(4) He shall be priest on his throne, 4:14; 8:4

(5) He sits—rules—priest—on Throne now, Psa. 110; Heb. 5:6-10.

Christ is Priest after order of Melchizedek. Therefore He is King and Priest at the same time now—In Heaven.

4. Logical deductions from Zechariah 6:12,13:

a. Verse 13 - The Christ would sit and rule on His throne:

p1--Acts 2:32-35, Exalted by the right hand of God

p2--Colossians 3:1, Now sitting on the right hand

p3--Revelation 3:21, Sitting on throne

C1--Therefore, the Christ is now on His throne

C2--Therefore, the Christ is now ruling on His throne now

b. Verse 13 - The Christ would be a priest on His throne.

p1--Hebrews 4:14, The Christ is now High Priest

p2--Colossians 3:1, Now sitting at the right hand

p3--Hebrews 4:14, The Christ is in Heaven

p4--Hebrews 8:4, The Christ cannot be priest on Earth

C1--Therefore, the Christ is now High Priest on His throne

C2--Therefore, His throne is in Heaven

C3--Therefore, His throne cannot be on Earth

5. Verses 14-15 mention further crowns which will become memorials in the temple.

a. "They that are far off" evidently refers to the Gentiles who would enter into the great Messianic kingdom.

b. "This verse contains a striking prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, together with a solemn warning to the Jews, in which, the sentence being left unfinished, their rejection in consequence of their unbelief is forcibly implied" (Henderson, p. 397).

VII. Chapter 7

K. The question about fasting (7:1-14).

1. Zechariah is very time conscious. It has been almost two years since he received the night visions.
2. The ancient Jewish calendar bore the following names, and corresponded to our monthly divisions of the year in a unique way (their months began about the middle of one of our months and ran to the middle of the next).



MONTH	PASSAGE	CORRESPONDS
Abib or Nisan	Ex. 12:2,18; 23:4; Esth. 3:7	March-April
Zif	1 Kings 6:1	April-May
Sivan	Esther 8:9	May-June
Tammuz	Ezekiel 8:14	June-July
Ab	-	July-August
Elul	Nehemiah 6:15	August-September
Tishri	1 Kings 8:2	September-October
Bul	1 Kings 6:38	October-November
Chisleu	Zechariah 7:1	November-December
Tebeth	Esther 2:16	December-January
Shebat	Zechariah 1:7	January-February
Adar	Esther 3:7	February-March

(Winton, p. 202)

3. The delegation has come to ask a question about fasting (vv. 1-3).
  - a. "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these many years?" (v. 3)
  - b. The fast of the fifth month was in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (2 Kgs. 25:8ff; Jer. 52:12).
4. Before the exile the only required fast in Judaism was the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16; Lev. 23:27).
5. Individuals might choose to fast as a sign of grief (2 Sam. 1:12) or penitence (Dan. 9:3-4).
6. But they observed four other annual fasts.
  - a. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in its fourth month (Jer. 52:6).
  - b. When the temple was burned in the fifth month (Jer. 52:12).

*Zech  
8:18*

- c. When Gedeliah, the governor, was murdered in the seventh month (Jer. 41:1-2).
  - d. When the siege of Jerusalem was begun in the tenth month (2 Kgs. 25:1).
  - e. These fasts had not been authorized by Jehovah, but had grown out of their own self-pity rather than from a consciousness of sin" (Haley, p. 356).
7. God, through Zechariah, answers their question in six different statements.
- a. First statement - 7:4 - 7:7.
  - b. Second statement - 7:8 - 7:14.
  - c. Third statement - 8:1 - 8:8.
  - d. Fourth statement - 8:9 - 8:13.
  - e. Fifth statement - 8:14 - 8:17.
  - f. Sixth statement - 8:18 - 8:23.
8. God's answer:
- a. When you fasted it wasn't to me but for yourselves (vv. 3-4).
  - b. He told them they should have listened to the words of the former prophets when Jerusalem enjoyed prosperity; they had taught the worthlessness of meats and drinks while God was forgotten.
9. "Their fasts had not been performed from a purely religious motive, but were self-righteous and hypocritical. While they observed them, they neglected the weightier matters of the law (vv. 5-7).
10. They were majoring in minors—humanly contrived fasts and had ignored the weightier matters of law, justice and mercy (vv. 9-10).
- a. The Pharisees did this same (Matt. 23:1 ff).
  - b. God lists those things in which he would have them major with diligence.
    - (1) Execute true judgment (major in dispersing judgment).



- (2) Exhibit mercy and compassion to brethren (manifest brotherly-kindness).
- (3) Practice no oppression to widows, fatherless, strangers or poor (never mistreat or ignore their very obvious needs).
- (4) Plot no evil in your hearts against your brethren (be free of any wrath and malice in attitude and actions as well).

11. They (their fathers) refused to listen:

- a. They turned away the shoulder.
- b. They stopped their ears.
- c. Their hearts were as an adamant stone (Cf. Ezek. 3:9).
- d. Scattering of Judah was brought about by disobedience.

12. They reaped what they sowed (vv. 13-14).

13. "Therefore, why fast over Jerusalem's destruction? Instead, do the will of Jehovah, which is what he has always wanted (Haley, p. 358).

14. "Therefore, those who mourned the just punishment of God upon their fathers had best leave off such meaningless ceremonies and themselves heed the teaching of the former prophets" (Gill, Minor Prophets, College Press, p. 311). (Cf. James 1:27.)

## VIII. Chapter 8

L. Emphasize that their fasts shall become festivals (8:1-23).

- 1. In chapter seven Jehovah looked to the past and pointed out that their fasts were due to sin.
- 2. In this chapter he looks "to the future and announces what Jehovah proposes to do in fulfilling his purpose" (Haley, p. 359).
- 3. Zechariah attributes the source of his message to God.
  - a. The formula, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts" appears 10 times (vv. 2,4,6,7,9,14,18,19,20,23) in introducing new thoughts or promises.
  - b. At least six other times God is emphasized as the source of the message.

4. God declares that he has returned to Jerusalem.
  - a. God withdrew from Jerusalem when the Jews rejected him before the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek. 9:3; 10:4,19; 11:23).
  - b. Jerusalem has now been purged by "the blast of justice, and by the blast of burning" (ASV, margin, Isa. 4:4).
  - c. But the temple has now been built and the city purged of iniquity.
  - d. But it also looks to a fuller and more glorious fulfillment in the time of the Messiah (Cf. 2:4-5).
5. God gives further assurance to his people by making a three-fold promise.
  - a. He will save his people from the east country and from the west country—the whole world (Isa. 11:11-12). Jesus spoke of gospel subjects from the east and from the west being saved and ultimately sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in heaven (Matt. 8:11).
  - b. After saving them he will bring them and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem (v. 8). "The ultimate fulfillment would be in the spiritual Jerusalem under the Messiah (Cf. Heb. 12:22; Gal. 4:26)" (Haley, p. 361).
  - c. "And they shall be my people...."
6. Words of encouragement are given in this section to the building of the temple then under construction and soon to be completed (vv. 9-15).
  - a. He refers back to the days when they were not doing their work (Cf. Hag. 1:1ff) (vv. 9-10).
  - b. There was a period in which he had disciplined them, but now he planned to bless them (vv. 11-15) (Cf. Lev. 26:3-6).
  - c. This took far deeper meaning under the Messiah.
7. In verses 16 and 17 God prescribes:
  - a. Two positives for them:
    - (1) Speak truth with your neighbor.
    - (2) Execute judgment and peace.
  - b. He also prescribes two negatives:

- (1) Plan no evil in heart against your neighbor. This had led to Judah's fall (Micah 2:1-3; Hosea 4:1-3).
  - (2) Practice no false oaths.
  - (3) Verse 17 reminds one of the six things God hates (Prov. 6:16-19).
  - (4) Consider the curse written on the scroll (4:3).
8. Zechariah returns to the question (raised in chapter 7) about fasting and gives God's answer.
- a. The fasts would be turned into festivals of joy (v. 19).
    - (1) This answer indicates that the fast had been neither pleasing nor displeasing to the Lord; they had been a matter of indifference" (Haley, p. 365).
    - (2) This joy would be seen by others.
  - b. Verse 20: "The prophecy concludes with the announcement that, in consequence of the distinguished favor shown to the Jewish people after their restoration to their own land, multitudes of Gentiles should be induced to embrace the worship of Jehovah" (Henderson, p. 404).
9. This last section better fits spiritual Zion and its evangelistic thrust. "The seeking after the Lord by the people of all nations found its fulfillment in Christ" (Haley, p. 365).

Zechariah 9-14 could be summed up,

1. "The enemies of Judah will be destroyed (9:1-6; 10:11; 12:9).
  2. God will bless and strengthen his people (10:6-7; 12).
  3. False leaders will be judged (11:17; 13:2).
  4. Christ, the triumphant King will come, and living waters will go out from Jerusalem to the whole earth (9:9-10; 13:1, 6-7; 14:1-2, 4, 8-9)."
- (Frank J. Dunn, Know Your Bible, p. 399).



5. The oracle ends in a promise that God will send His servant “the Branch” (cf. Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23. 5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12) who, of course is the Messiah
- E. The golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive trees; 4:1-14
1. The two anointed ones likely represent Zerubbable and Joshua, the civil and religious heads of the community who are given assurance that the temple will be completed.
  2. Despite the difficulties now in the way, Zerubbabel, who had laid the foundation, will complete the capstone amidst applause.
  3. One should not despise the day of small things.
  4. The seven represent the all-seeing eye of God in his constant rule of earth.
  5. Success comes not by might and power, but by the Lord’s Spirit.
- F. The flying scroll. 5:1-4
1. The vision answers the question: How can crime be removed from the Land?
  2. The scroll flies over the land and its curse destroys the houses of the thieves and perjurers.
- G. The woman sitting in an ephah. 5:5-11
1. The woman, representing wickedness, sitting in a large dry measure (about seven gallons), is borne to Shinar where sin finds its natural home.
  2. With the temple rebuilt evil is to be removed from the land.
- H. The four chariots from between the copper mountains go forth to patrol the earth. 6:1-8
1. These seem to symbolize God’s protecting providence.
  2. The earth is at peace under the control of God.  
(Lewis, op. cit., pp. 76, 77)

### III. PROPHETICAL PREACHING AGAIN. 6:9- 14:21

- A. The high priest is crowned to typify the branch. 6:9-15  
(cf. Rev. 22:16; Heb. 7:1-4)
- B. Questions of the delegation from Bethel concerning fasts. 7:1-14  
It is not fasting but obedience, justice, and kindness that matters. 7:9-10  
(cf. Micah 6:8)
- C. Promises of a greater Jerusalem. 8:1-23

- D. Promises of a greater King. 9:1-17
- E. Promises of a greater corner-stone and nail in a sure place. 10:1-12
- F. Prophecy of the betrayal and broken covenant. 11:1-17
- G. Promises of a greater sacrifice, one pierced for our sins. 12:1-14
- H. Promise of a fountain for sins and cessation of unclean prophets and spirits. 13:1-9
- I. The destruction of Jerusalem foretold (the old Jerusalem) and the new Jerusalem described. 14:1-21

#### IV. ZECHARIAH EXERCISES A TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Jeremiah spoke of "the Branch of Jesse" (Jer. 23:5; 33:15) and Zechariah speaks of the Branch. 3:8; 6:12
- B. Zechariah speaks of the king who rides upon the donkey. 9:9 (cf. Mt. 21:4; Jn. 12:15)
- C. Zechariah mentions the betrayal and notes the 30 pieces of silver. 11:12-13 (cf. Mt. 26:15; 27:9-10)
- D. Zechariah speaking of the looking "upon me whom they have pierced." 12:10 (cf. Din. 19:37; Rev. 1:7)
- E. Zechariah says "smite the shepherd." 13:7 (cf. Mt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27)
- F. Zechariah mentions the king who reigns from sea to sea. 9:10; 14:9
- G. Zechariah mentions the fountain for cleansing. 13:1
- H. Paul refers to Zechariah's "speak ye every man truth to his neighbor." 8:16 Eph. 4:25
- I. One also finds many terms and expressions in the Revelation that are found in Zechariah.
  - 1. The four horsemen. 6:1-8 (cf. Rev. 6)
  - 2. The two olive trees. 4:3ff (cf. Rev. 11:4)
  - 3. The candlestick and seven eyes. 4:2-10 (cf. Rev. 1:12-13)

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THE MINOR PROPHETS - Zechariah  
LESSON TWELVE

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read Ezra as a background to this prophet.
2. Zechariah began his prophecy in the eighth month of the second year of Darius, which was two months later than Haggai. (Haggai 1:1; Zech. 1:1). The prophets overlap in time about one month, although Zechariah continued to prophesy about two years. (Zech. 7:1).
3. Haggai had first stirred the people to activity in completing the work of rebuilding the temple but, when the work lagged, Zechariah added his voice. (Ezra 6:15).
4. Zechariah's prophecy deals with lessons from history, restoration of worship in Jerusalem and future events from the time he wrote.

DISCUSSION:

- I. GOD CALLS THE PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE BY REMINDING THEM OF WHAT HAPPENED IN TIMES PAST WHEN GOD'S WORDS WERE DISREGARDED. (Zech. 1:1-6).
- II. THREE MONTHS AFTER THE FIRST VISION, ZECHARIAH SEES A SERIES OF VISIONS WITH THEIR EXPLANATIONS. JACK LEWIS, IN HIS BOOK "THE MINOR PROPHETS" p. 76,77 LISTS THEM AS FOLLOWS:

- "1. The rider on the red horse with red, sorrel, and white horses behind him. (1:7-17). These patrollers of the earth report that the earth is at rest, which seems bad news. 'The shaking of the nations' (Cf. Hag. 2:6,7), which could restore Jerusalem to glory, is not visible. The angel of the vision, however, assures the prophet that after 70 years (cf. Jer. 25:11; 29:10) the Lord's pity is stirred and that Jerusalem will be rebuilt, while the heathen will be chastised.
2. The four horns and the four smiths (1:18-21). Horns, a symbol of power (cf. Micah 4:13), represent those powers that have scattered Judah. The smiths on the other hand are symbols of the destruction of those powers. The import of the vision is that there is no longer any opposition to the building of the Lord's house.
3. The man with the measuring line (2:1-13). The young man, about to lay out the walls of Jerusalem, is restrained since Jerusalem is to be inhabited as a city without walls. The Lord, who is 'a wall of fire about her' and who will be glory in her midst, is to be her protection. The exiles still in Babylon are called upon to flee to Zion. Verse 12 is the only time in Scripture where Palestine is called 'the holy land.'
4. Joshua, a 'brand plucked out of the burning' from the priesthood, in filthy garments, is accused by Satan as one might be accused before a court. In this condition he was unsuitable to offer acceptable sacrifices (3:1-10). Joshua was grandson of Seraiah, the last high priest who had ministered before the temple was destroyed. The outcome of the vision is that Satan is denounced and the filthy garments are removed and clean clothes substituted. The import of the vision is that the priesthood shall be cleansed and made acceptable for service. The oracle ends in a promise that God will send his servant 'the Branch' (cf. Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12) who, of course, is the Messiah.
5. The golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive trees (4:1-14). The 'two anointed ones' likely represent Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and religious heads of the community who are given assurance that the temple will be completed. Despite the difficulties now in the way, Zerubbabel, who had laid the foundation, will complete the capstone amidst applause. One should not despise the day of small things. The seven represent the all-seeing eye of God in his constant rule of earth. Success comes not by might and power, but by the Lord's spirit (4:6).
6. The flying scroll (5:1-4). The vision answers the question: How can crime be removed from the land? The scroll flies over the land and its curse destroys the houses of thieves and perjurers.
7. The woman sitting in an ephah (5:5-11). The woman, representing wickedness, sitting in a large dry measure (about seven gallons), is borne to Shinar where sin finds its natural home. With the temple rebuilt evil is to be removed from the land.



8. The four chariots from between the copper mountains go forth to patrol the earth (6:1-8). These seem to symbolize God's protecting providence. The earth is at peace under the control of God."

III. PROPHETICAL PREACHING AGAIN. (Zech. 6:9 - 14:21).

- A. The High Priest crowned to typify the Branch. 6:9-15. cf. Rev. 22:16; Heb. 7:1-4.
- B. Questions of the delegation from Bethel concerning fasts. It is not fasting but obedience, justice and kindness that matters. (chapter 7).
- C. Promises for a greater Jerusalem. (Ch. 8).
- D. Promises of a greater king. (Ch. 9).
- E. Promises of a greater corner-stone and nail in a sure place. (Ch. 10).
- F. Prophecy of the Betrayal and broken covenant. (Ch. 11).
- G. Promise of a greater sacrifice, one pierced for our sins. (Ch. 12).
- H. Promise of a fountain for sins and cessation of unclean prophets and spirits. (Ch. 13).
- I. The destruction of Jerusalem foretold (the old Jerusalem) and the new Jerusalem described.

IV. ZECHARIAH EXERCISES A TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Jeremiah spoke of "the Branch of Jesse" (Jer. 23:5; 33:15) and Zechariah speaks of the Branch.
- B. Zechariah speaks of the king who rides upon the ass. (Zech. 9:9; cf. Mt. 21:4ff; Jn. 12:15).
- C. Zechariah mentions the betrayal and notes the 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12f; Mt. 26:15; 27:9f.)
- D. Zechariah speaking of the looking "upon me whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10; cf. Jn. 19:37; Rev. 1:7).
- E. Zechariah says "smite the shepherd" (Zech. 13:7; cf. Mt. 26:31; Mark 14:27).
- F. Zechariah mentions the king who reigns from sea to sea. (Zech. 9:10; 14:9).
- G. Zechariah also mentions the fountain for cleansing. (Zech. 13:1).
- H. Paul refers to Zechariah's "Speak ye every man truth to his neighbor" (Zech. 8:16; Eph. 4:25).
- I. One also finds many terms and expressions in the Revelation that are found in Zechariah.
  - 1. The four horsemen. Zech. 6:1-8.
  - 2. The two olive trees. Zech. 4:3ff; Rev. 11:4.
  - 3. The candlestick and seven eyes. Zech. 4:2-10; Rev. 1:12f.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Haggai and Zechariah prophesied at about the same time.
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Zechariah's work supplemented Haggai's work.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ The fathers and the prophets were gone, but God's words remained.
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Zechariah saw a man riding upon a gray horse.
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ The four horns represented the enemies of Judah and Israel.
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ Judah was the apple of God's eye.
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ Zechariah saw Joshua standing at Satan's right hand.
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ The Branch refers to Christ.
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_ God's work is accomplished by might and power.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Zerubbabel would not be the one to finish building the temple.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Zechariah pictures Christ as being priest and king at the same time.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ God said fasting was the most important practice.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Judah's punishment had come because they refused God's message.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ The streets of Jerusalem are pictured as been full of boys and girls.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ The expression "they shall be my people, and I will be their God."
16. \_\_\_\_\_ The one riding on the ass would have salvation.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ The two slaves were named Beauty and Bands.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ The thirty pieces of silver were used to buy a potter's field.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ There is a spirit in man.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ Mount Olives is not mentioned in Zechariah.

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who was standing at Joshua's right hand to resist him? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What does James tell us to do toward the devil? (Jas. 5) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who do the two olive trees represent in Zechariah 4? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Zechariah say the Branch would build? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What is the temple here? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name five things God told the people to do in Zechariah 7:9,10.  
 a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name at least four prophecies in Zechariah about Christ.  
 a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_



## The Book of ZECHARIAH

### Introduction

- A. After the short and simple message of Haggai, the book of Zechariah may seem discouragingly complicated; yet it is full of good things. Haggai's chief concern and paramount obsession had been to challenge the returned remnant to *build the temple* which had been neglected for fourteen years (Haggai 1:7-8). Beginning the same year as Haggai (520 B.C.), the younger Zechariah takes up the same cause as his older contemporary, thus, supplementing, developing, and amplifying his message. One may even say that the little Haggai scroll virtually serves as an *introduction* to the much larger work of Zechariah (the largest of the Minor Prophets).
1. Although the two deliver similar messages (encouragement to the temple builders) - they use strikingly different manners.
    - a. Haggai uses *sermons* while Zechariah uses *visions*. Haggai is an *exhorter* while Zechariah is an *encourager*. Haggai shoots from the *hip* with a strong message of *rebuke*; Zechariah shoots from the *heart* with a soothing message of *restoration*. Haggai is concerned with the *present*: "Take heart and finish the temple!"; Zechariah is concerned with the *future*: "Take heart, the Messiah is coming!"
  2. With Zechariah, as with Haggai, we begin in the second year of the Persian ruler, Darius, or 520 B.C. Sixteen years earlier the remnant had returned at the decree of the then ruling Cyrus who announced that the exiled Jews should return to Jerusalem and "*rebuild the house of the Lord*" (Ezra 1:3). They never got farther than the foundation.
    - a. Fourteen years of spiritual inactivity come and go before Jehovah has had enough. He raises up the prophetic duo of Haggai and Zechariah and commissions them to rekindle the faltering zeal of the Jewish leaders and people and to motivate them to finish what they have begun.
    - b. Few preachers have ever been as successful. See Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-15.
- B. Who Was Zechariah? Like Ezekiel, Zechariah was both a priest and a prophet. In 1:1 we learn that he was "*the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo*." According to Nehemiah 12:4, Iddo was one of the priests who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest). Thus, Zechariah was of the family of Aaron.
1. It is interesting to note that from this time on the priesthood takes the lead in Israel. The history of the government of the covenant people falls into three main periods:
 

The JUDGES: *Moses to Samuel*  
 The KINGS: *Saul to Zedekiah*  
 The PRIESTS: *Joshua to destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)*
- C. Zechariah's Messiah. Zechariah is one of the most outstanding pieces of literature anywhere due to the amount of Messianic prophecy it contains. There are more specific prophecies regarding the coming Messiah in Zechariah than in any other Old Testament book with the exception of Isaiah (which has 66 chapters). For example:

#### Reference in Zechariah

3:8  
6:12  
6:13  
6:13  
11:12-13  
12:10  
13:1  
13:7  
13:7  
14:9

#### Picture of Messiah

Servant, Mark 10:45  
Branch, Luke 1:68-69  
King, Matt. 21:4-5  
Priest, Heb. 4:14  
Betrayed One, Matt. 27:9-10  
Pierced One, John 19:37  
Fountain, Reve. 1:5  
Shepherd, John 10:11  
Humanity, Heb. 2:11  
Lord, Reve. 11:15

### BODY

#### I. A DIVIDED BOOK

- A. The Two Parts. Few Old Testament books are as difficult to interpret as is this

one. However, part of the problem lies in failing to distinguish the *two parts* of the prophecy. There is a major break following chapter eight. Chapters 1-8 were written during the days of the temple rebuilding, while chapters 9-14 were probably written at a much later time. The two sections have marked differences:

1. The first eight chapters are mainly vision-prophecies; the remaining six chapters are direct prophecies. The first part concerns the physical remnant now back in the land, while the second part concerns the spiritual remnant under the Messiah. The contents of the first section are carefully dated, while the contents of the second section are nowhere dated.

B. Note, then, our outline of Zechariah:

### "Jealous For Zion"

#### I. EARLY PROMISES: Temple Being Rebuilt, ch.1-8

##### A. Seven Visions

1. The four horses, 1:8-17
2. The four horns and craftsmen, 1:18-21
3. The measuring line, 2
4. The reclothing of Joshua, 3
5. The lampstand and the olive trees, 4
6. The scroll, ephah, and the women, 5
7. The four chariots, 6

##### B. Five Messages: 6:9-15; 7:1-7; 7:8-14; 8:1-17; 8:18-23

#### II. LATER PROMISES: After Temple Rebuilt, ch.9-14

- A. The Coming Shepherd-King and Zion's Subsequent Blessing, 9-10
- B. The Offending of the Shepherd-King and It's Tragic Results, 11
- C. The Final Travail and Triumph of Zion, 12-14

1. As the key-word-phrase in Haggai was - "*from this day on I will bless you...*" - so the same thought continues in Zechariah with the announcement that Jehovah is "*jealous for Zion*" (1:14; 2:8; 8:2).
2. The book begins with a simple prologue in 1:1-6 with a call for *present* repentance (vs.3) and a reminder of *past* problems (vs.4-6).
  - a. Notice in verse 6a that the word of the Lord outlasted both their fathers and the prophets. See 1 Pet. 1:23-25.

#### II. THE SEVEN SYMBOLIC VISIONS

- A. The Four Horses, 1:8-17 - "*GOD'S EYES ARE ON THE WICKED.*" Read verses 8-10. Here is Jehovah's angel patrol surveying world conditions. They report back in verse 11b that "*all the earth is peaceful and quiet.*" Zechariah is intended to see that while the surrounding nations are at ease, his people are suffering hardship and difficulties of every sort. Thus, the angelic question in verse 12 and Jehovah's reply.
  1. Zechariah informs us of the two levels of history - the *visible* and the *invisible*. While man operates out of the former, God operates out of the latter. To the returned Jews it appeared that Jehovah's enemies were prospering while Jehovah's people were suffering - and that He was unconcerned! However, in the invisible realm, God was watching and was preparing a stroke of retribution upon the wicked while planning a three-fold blessing on Judah (vs.17).
- B. The Four Horns and Craftsmen, 1:18-21 - "*GOD'S HANDS ARE ON THE WICKED.*" Read verses 18-19. Horns in apocalyptic literature often represent kings or kingdoms (See Daniel 8 and Reve.17:12). These four horns are the nations that have sought to destroy Judah. However, God would raise up four craftsmen or carpenters who would "dismantle" the horns and judge the nations.
  1. \*Please keep in mind that all of this is symbolic. These figures are not to be interpreted literally but figuratively as representing various ideas that God wanted his prophet/people to see.



- C. The Measuring Line, 2:1-13 - "GOD'S PROTECTION ON THE RIGHTEOUS." Notice verses 1-2. What is all this measuring business? What does the measuring represent? See Ezekiel 40-42:20; Reve. 11:1-2. The measuring speaks of dividing between the holy and the profane. God is telling the prophet what He will protect and what He won't protect. Jerusalem was to be measured, i.e., set aside as holy unto the Lord.
1. Verse 4. Why did God not want walls around Jerusalem? He wanted His people to first build the temple, not the walls. Building the temple without first constructing the walls was an indication of their faith in Jehovah. Besides, He would be their wall; He would be their protection, (vs.5,8).
- D. The Reclothing of Joshua, 3:1-10 - "A PREPARED PEOPLE FOR A PREPARED PLACE." Here is Satan as the "accuser" making his case against Joshua, who stands as a representative of the people (vs.1). Joshua appears filthy (with sin) and like a torch left too long in the fire he is burned and dirty (vs.2b-3). Satan's argument is that Joshua (the Jews) were not worth saving.
1. Jehovah did not deny the charges but did disagree with Satan's conclusion. He, being full of grace and love, took them back, cleansed them and gave them new garments (vs.4-5). And why had He done this? Was this an act of grace without works? See 1:6. Yes, here is the Old Testament illustration of the prodigal son and his forgiving father.
  2. But this is more than just a vision of God accepting again His people - it symbolizes something greater (vs.8). The Branch (the Messiah, Isa.11:1) would come and prepare a "stone." From such passages as Dan. 2:44-45; Isa. 28:16 we see that the "stone" concept represents God's kingdom, the church.
    - a. The Messiah would prepare the "stone", God's watch-care would be over it ("seven eyes") and salvation would be therein - *"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."*
    - b. Thus, as Joshua had been fitted with new garments, so are those today who wash their robes in baptism (Reve.22:14). We are to *put off* the old and *put on* the new. At such time the prepared people are added to the prepared place - the stone (Acts 2:47).
  3. *"In that day..."* (vs.10) - the people will have one main objective when the Branch rules:
    - a. EVANGELISM! - *"everyone of you will invite your neighbor..."*
- E. The Lampstand and the Olive Trees, 4:1-14 - "A PREPARED RESPONSIBILITY." This fifth vision was of special encouragement to Zerubbabel, the *civil* leader of the remnant as the preceeding vision was to Joshua, the *religious* leader. Verses 2-5.
1. The lampstand was a sign that the people would finish the temple. And how would that happen? Verse 6. Only with Jehovah's help would they be able to finish.
    - a. See verse 7 - *"O great mountain, Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain."* The mountain represents all of the obstacles in the way of rebuilding. But God removes the mountain and the temple is finished (vs.7b-9).
  2. Notice his question in verse 11. The olive trees represent the fuel (oil) that would light the lampstand. And verse 14 more specifically adds, *"These are the two anointed ones..."* The fuel which would motivate the people in the work of rebuilding would come from the two "oiled" offices - the king and high priest. The king is here represented by Zerubbabel (who was of the blood-line of David) and the high priest by Joshua. Thus, the two offices would have to work together in order for the fuel to reach the lampstand or in order for the temple to be completed.
    - a. One day these two "oiled" offices would be united in Christ!
- F. The Scroll, Ephah, and the Women, 5:1-11 - "A PREPARED HOLINESS." Here is the much needed lesson that there can never be a restoration of Jehovah's blessings without the expulsion of that which is evil (vs.1-3).
1. Zechariah sees a flying scroll containing a two-fold curse: (1) against stealing, and (2) against swearing. This summarizes all sins which are (1) against man, and (2) against God. Note in verse 3 that these sins must be purged.



God will not tolerate a mixture of good and evil in the land. Sin must be purged.

a. Can there be any application here for us? See 1 Cor. 5:7 in regard to the command for church discipline. God commands that His church be pure and sin purged.

2: In verse 5-7 the prophet sees an ephah (a Jewish measurement) which was probably in the shape of a barrel. Inside was one recognized as wickedness. Immediately she was contained and sent away to Babylon (vs. 8-11). The proper home for such wickedness was certainly not Jerusalem.

a. Here is a simple lesson on what to do with sin. Sin must be (1) recognized, (2) contained, and finally (3) sent away.

G. The Four Chariots, 6:1-8 - "A PREPARED JUDGEMENT." Here is Jehovah's coming judgement on the Gentile nations as represented by the land of the north (Persia), vs. 8. Here follows five brief messages to Zechariah:

1. O "And the word of the Lord came..." 6:9-15. Here the prophet is commanded to enact a coronation ceremony for Joshua. The passage is entirely Messianic and tells of five things that the "Branch" would do:

- a. He would grow - branch out from a lowly birth and a state of rejection to become exalted and lifted up.
- b. He would build the temple - obviously this is not the physical temple for the Lord just got through promising that Zerubbabel would finish it. This temple would be spiritual. See 1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:16.
- c. He would sit and rule - on the throne of David. Such was confirmed on Pentecost by Peter (Acts 2:30-31).
- d. He would be a priest - but not on earth for He was of the wrong tribe (Heb. 7:14).

e. He would be a peacemaker - between God and man and between Jew and Gentile.  
1) Note also verse 15. This temple ruled over by the Messiah would not be for "Jews only" but would include all who were "far off" (Acts 2:38-39).

2. O "The word of the Lord came..." 7:1-7. "To fast or not to fast" - that is the question (vs. 3). The Lord had only commanded one day of fasting - the day of atonement. Yet the Jews were observing several days of fasting and seeking to bind these on others. Hence, the Lord's response in verse 5-6. Here was the sin of selfishness in the name of religion. They were actually fasting in order to make themselves feel good rather than fasting to God's glory.

a. Can you think of anything that would involve selfishness in the name of religion today? - i.e., that which is done to please self rather than God?

3. O "The word of the Lord came..." 7:8-14. Here is what God really wants - the proper attitude and heart. See verse 9-10.

4. O "The word of the Lord came..." 8:1-17. Here are given the divine characteristics for the New Testament kingdom. The Lord promises that He will return to Zion (vs. 3). Jehovah never returned to a literal temple after Ezekiel 10:18 (See also Acts 17:24). Thus, the prophecy is for a return to a spiritual temple, a spiritual city - new Jerusalem (Reve. 21:2). She would be a "City of Truth" sounding forth the truth (Isa. 2:3b; Lk. 24:47) and a "Holy Mountain" i.e., set aside for righteousness.

a. She would be a city of peace, vs. 4

b. She would be a city of activity, vs. 5

1) Notice verse 7-8. It was Kipling who said, "East is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet." He was wrong. East met west in the new Jerusalem.

2) In verse 9 he leaves the Messianic and returns to offer more encouragement to the physical temple builders.

3) Verse 16-17 - Jehovah's basic principles of morality to be applied in every age.

5. O "The word of the Lord came..." 8:18-23. Now back to the spiritual promise for the future. He would turn their sorrow into joy and gladness (vs. 19) and open the door of spiritual blessing unto all peoples (vs. 20).

a. Verse 21 illustrates that the whole aspect of being included in God's



- spiritual city is that we might include others.
- b. Finally, verse 23 shows that salvation would come through the Jewish remnant that Jehovah had preserved. And today salvation can only be had by "*grasping the garment of a Jew.*" That Jew is Jesus Christ.

### III. THE THREE LATTER PROPHECIES      \*Note: Chapter 9 begins part two of the book. These six remaining chapters are virtually 100% Messianic.

#### A. The Coming Shepherd-King and Zion's Subsequent Blessing, ch.9-10.

- 1. *Victory in Jesus, 9:1-8.* In 9:1 the American Standard Version gives a marginal reading of - "*Jehovah hath an eye on men...*" Thus, the second section of Zechariah begins as does the first (see comments on 1:8-17). Before we see anything else we are meant to see God's care and concern for His own.
- a. Here in verse 2-8 are listed the enemies of God's people with the promise that these would never again pass through Jerusalem (vs.8). This is not physical Jerusalem under consideration but, rather, spiritual Jerusalem. Physical Jerusalem was attacked time and again by its enemies but spiritual Jerusalem could NEVER be overrun. And *why* can we be assured of such victory?
- 2. *The Why of Victory, 9:9-10.* The *why* of our victory is seen in our King! We are great because He is great. We are led to triumph because He was triumphant. We have victory because of the victory of Jesus. And how do we have victory?
- a. Because of His KINGSHIP, vs.9. See 1 Tim. 6:13-15; Acts 2:36. Jesus Christ has been given absolute power (Matt. 28:18). Yet many rulers turn power into corruption. Not this King!
- b. Because of His JUSTICE, vs.9. See Isa. 11:3-4a; Jer. 23:5-6. In our courts the rich, powerful and influential often seem to be favored, but not so in the court of this kingdom.
- c. Because of His SALVATION, vs.9. Question: Is justice all we want? When we stand in the day of judgement will we plead for justice? No, we will plead for mercy. And our King offers mercy!
- 1) The story is told about an eastern monarch who decreed that for a violation of law the criminal would lose both hands. The first offender was his own son. Justice demanded the cutting off of the hands. Now the king was in favor of justice, yet he was also in favor of his son. Thus, mercy entered and saw the king take one of his own hands and one of his son's - and the law was paid.
- 2) Jesus went farther than that. When the price had to be paid - He paid it all! (1 Cor.6:20).
- d. Because of His HUMILITY, vs.9. What king ever rode on a donkey? Kings rode on white stallions and rode in gold chariots. Not this king! He forever taught the lesson that to become great you must become little; to rise you must sink; and to rule you must serve. See Matt. 20:28.
- e. Because of the PEACEFUL NATURE of His kingdom, vs.10. This kingdom would not be characterized by horses, chariots and weapons of the battlefield for it would be a *spiritual* kingdom.
- f. Because of the UNIVERSAL RULE of the King, vs.10. The spiritual kingdom of Christ would know no geographical boundaries. His authority would be upon all men.
- 3. *The Fulness of Victory, 9:11-17.* Here is a list of seven things the Messiah would provide:
- a. He will provide redemption, vs.11. The Mosaic covenant was a blood covenant that could not save. Because of the covenant they were in, God would make a new blood covenant - one which would save. See Jer. 31:31,34; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22; Reve. 1:5. This covenant would set man free (Rom. 7:24-25).
- 1) Under Jesus, man would be set free from the waterless pit and be given access to the fountain of living water (13:1).
- b. He will provide unification, vs. 13. Here we see the uniting of God's people for the purpose of taking on Greece (the Gentiles). And when did this occur? Such a battle began in Acts 16:6 and continued until Acts 19:20 as Christianity for the first time took on paganism. Before Acts 16 the



## ZECHARIAH:

“The Lord shall yet comfort Zion” - Lessons from a hopeful future

*Joseph Renne*

I want to go back in Bible history and remember some things about God's chosen people, the Jews. They had problems staying faithful to the Lord. On the way to the Promised Land they sinned by melting the spoils of the Egyptians and forming a golden calf as their “god” (Ex. 32:1-10). They would later fail in conquering the Promised Land because they listened to the ten unfaithful spies (Num. 13-14). As a result, God made them wander in the wilderness for forty years (Num. 14:33-35). When they went over into the Promised Land, they were instructed to remove all the residents from that place and seize the land. However, they failed to do so and eventually were influenced by the inhabitants of the land (Jud. 2:11-15). God then appointed Judges to correct the Jews when they turned to idol gods (Jud. 3-16). According to Scripture this happened many times over as Israel had fifteen different Judges.

Next, God's people asked for a ruler to be over them like the other nations (1 Sam. 8:1-9). God did grant them a leader and Saul was their first king (1 Sam. 9). It did not take Saul long to depart from God's plan and he was rejected as king (1 Sam. 13-15). David, whom God loved, became king next and was a warrior. His son, Solomon, was next in line during a time of wealth and peace. Solomon allowed the nation to be influenced with idol gods because of the foreign women he married (1 Kings 11:1-13). Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was to inherit the kingdom but Jeroboam also wanted the kingdom. Rehoboam was offered advice by the elders who served with Solomon and the young men with whom he grew up (1 Kings 12). He followed the advice of the younger men and made service harder for the inhabitants of the land (1 Kings 12:12-17). Making their burdens harder gave the other tribes reasons to leave Rehoboam's kingdom and unite with Jeroboam's kingdom in the north. Jeroboam didn't want his people to travel to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:25-27), so he set up his own mode of worship (1 Kings 12:28-33). Later Israel would fall to the Assyrian armies because of their sins (2 Kings 17). The tribes of Judah and Benjamin saw what took place with their sister tribes, but did not learn from them. Joel and other prophets foretold what would happen if they continued to disobey God. Many prophets were ignored and some were even killed. Both the Northern and Southern tribes did not do what was right in the eyes of God. Judah and Benjamin had a few faithful kings, but most of them were evil in the eyes of God. What happened to them? They too went into captivity because they failed to repent. It came to pass they did not to keep His commandments and were carried off by the Babylonians (2 Kings 24-25).

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, failed to acknowledge God and his kingdom was taken away from him (Dan. 4:28-33). Cyrus of Persia became the next ruler of a world power (2 Chr. 36:22-23). He ordered the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem and some did not want that to happen (Ezra 4). Haggai was a prophet sent to encourage the rebuilding of the temple. He reminded the people that their houses were built and the temple was in ruins (Hag. 1:1-11). The temple was the central location for Jewish worship and socialization. Without the temple God's work was not being carried on. The temple was the stepping stone for the Lord's church and is where Zechariah comes into the picture.

Zechariah's mission is to give hope to God's people. "Again proclaim saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, My cities will again overflow with prosperity and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem." After all the trials and disobedience, God would set Jerusalem on a high place among all the cities of the world to show that these are His people. Darius' letter to the Jews speaks of the plans to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5). The Jews would prosper and grow into a nation that came under Greek rule and later under the Roman Empire during the life of Christ. We read in Daniel 2, of God's kingdom being built during the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44-45). Zechariah came to support Haggai and the Jews who were rebuilding the temple. These two men had a mission to complete, and if they failed, the preparation of the Kingdom would be lost.

Zechariah has similar visions to that of Daniel and other prophets. He gave hope of rebuilding the temple and encouragement to the people of that day. Zechariah wrote his book around 520 BC and it is a book containing eight visions. The first vision is of a horseman, riding under a myrtle tree which was a symbol of fertility and renewal. The rider on the red horse became a spokesman delivering a message from God (Zech. 1:12-17). The Gentiles did not rule the world where he was concerned. This was the right time to build the temple. The horseman patrolled the earth and reported all was well.

The second vision was a matter of hope containing horns and craftsmen (Zech. 1:18-21). The four horns, which represented languages or governments, represented the four world powers of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. These four nations had scattered the people of Judah and taken her freedom away. The craftsmen were coming to, "terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it" (Zech 1:21).

The third vision (Zech. 2:1-4) was of Jerusalem being measured out and protected by God. Zechariah 1:16 reads, "Therefore thus says the Lord: I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it, says the Lord of hosts, and a surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem." The wall was for defense against their enemies and it gave the people confidence. They really did not need the wall, for God was, "a wall of fire all around her" (Zech. 2:4). God also made this promise to Jerusalem, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord" (Zech. 2:10). There was still hope for God's people!

The fourth vision was of Satan accusing Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:1-2). The priesthood was guilty of sinning before God. Joshua stood as a representative for all Israel and Satan was criticizing her sin. Joshua's filthy garments symbolized the sin and pollution of the people (Zech. 3:4), but God forgave them and clothed them in clean garments. There was then a promise made to Joshua in prophecy of the coming Christ. He was referred to the Branch who would be the true High Priest of God's people (Zech. 3:8-10). The book of Hebrews tells of this great High Priest (Heb. 3:1).

A fifth vision gave the people hope and encouragement (Zech. 4). It is believed that Joshua and Zerubbabel are the two olive trees on each side of the lampstand which held seven lamps. Zerubbabel was in charge of the building of the temple and we know that he faced great opposition which was like a great mountain (Zech. 4:7). The good news, however, was that the mountain would become a plain before him. The two olive trees represented the leadership in spiritual and political matters.

The sixth vision of a flying scroll is contained in Chapter 5:1-4. God was going to give hope to the freed nation by removing the law breakers from the land. The explanation given

was, "I will send out the curse, says the Lord of hosts; It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name" (Zech. 5:4).

The seventh vision was of a woman in a basket (Zech. 5:5-11). This vision represented the iniquities that were in the land. The woman representing wickedness, sitting in a large dry measure was sent to Shinar where sin would find a home. When the temple was rebuilt evil was to be removed from the land.

According to his eighth vision Zechariah saw that there was hope for Jerusalem in "four chariots" (Zech. 6:1-8). They represent the Spirit of God going forth in the north country and another in south country and so forth. They seem to symbolize God's protection and providence. The earth is at peace under God's control. In 6:9-11 the peace that resulted from the eighth vision made it possible for Joshua to wear the crown as high priest and for the people to now focus on the coming of the Messiah called the Branch (Zech. 6:9-15).

Chapters 7 through 13, teach the people about worshiping from the heart, doing justice, not mistreating widows, orphans, foreigners, or the poor and to stop hurting others. A picture of hope and joy is set forth in Zechariah 8:4-8: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in this hand because of age. And streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in the streets. Thus says the Lord of hosts. If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it be too difficult in My sight? Declares the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, I am going to save my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west: and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they will be My people and I will be their God in truth and righteousness." Verse 19 states, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, The fast of the fourth the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness and cheerful feasts of the house of Judah; so love truth and peace."

God was encouraging the people not to be afraid to rebuild. Jerusalem would be called a city of truth and the mountain of the Lord of hosts was the holy mountain. He wanted the glory to be returned to the temple: "Thus says the LORD, I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain" (Zech. 8:3). Verses 11 and read, "But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days," declares the LORD of hosts. For there will be peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce, and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things." God's people would be providing food for themselves and the land would give abundance for their comfort. They were assured that God would be with them. We can also learn from them that God wants His people to be happy and full of joy (1 Pet. 3:10-12). We are encouraged by His word and the support of the Church as the Jews were by the temple.

Zechariah 8:22 reads, "So many people and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD." Zechariah spoke of the great promise of the Messiah coming in humility and mounted on a donkey (Zech. 9:9-10). Zechariah 12:1-4 looks forward to the restoration of the land and the rebuilding of the temple. God preserved the Jews until the coming of the Messiah. The temple had to be rebuilt for the coming of Christ. All of this had to be in place. The work of Zechariah was very important for the preparation of the coming of the Branch.

Introduction

- A. After the short and simple message of Haggai, the book of Zechariah may seem discouragingly complicated; yet it is full of good things. Haggai's chief concern and paramount obsession had been to challenge the returned remnant to *build the temple* which had been neglected for fourteen years (Haggai 1:7-8). Beginning the same year as Haggai (520 B.C.), the younger Zechariah takes up the same cause as his older contemporary, thus, supplementing, developing, and amplifying his message. One may even say that the little Haggai scroll virtually serves as an *introduction* to the much larger work of Zechariah (the largest of the Minor Prophets).
1. Although the two deliver similar messages (encouragement to the temple builders) - they use strikingly different manners.
    - a. Haggai uses *sermons* while Zechariah uses *visions*. Haggai is an *exhorter* while Zechariah is an *encourager*. Haggai shoots from the *hip* with a strong message of *rebuke*; Zechariah shoots from the *heart* with a soothing message of *restoration*. Haggai is concerned with the *present*: "Take heart and finish the temple!"; Zechariah is concerned with the *future*: "Take heart, the Messiah is coming!"
  2. With Zechariah, as with Haggai, we begin in the second year of the Persian ruler, Darius, or 520 B.C. Sixteen years earlier the remnant had returned at the decree of the then ruling Cyrus who announced that the exiled Jews should return to Jerusalem and "*rebuild the house of the Lord*" (Ezra 1:3). They never got farther than the foundation.
    - a. Fourteen years of spiritual inactivity come and go before Jehovah has had enough. He raises up the prophetic duo of Haggai and Zechariah and commissions them to rekindle the faltering zeal of the Jewish leaders and people and to motivate them to finish what they have begun.
    - b. Few preachers have ever been as successful. See Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-15.
- B. Who Was Zechariah? Like Ezekiel, Zechariah was both a priest and a prophet. In 1:1 we learn that he was "*the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo*." According to Nehemiah 12:4, Iddo was one of the priests who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest). Thus, Zechariah was of the family of Aaron.
1. It is interesting to note that from this time on the priesthood takes the lead in Israel. The history of the government of the covenant people falls into three main periods:
 

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The JUDGES: *Moses to Samuel*

The KINGS: *Saul to Zedekiah*

The PRIESTS: *Joshua to destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)*
- C. Zechariah's Messiah. Zechariah is one of the most outstanding pieces of literature anywhere due to the amount of Messianic prophecy it contains. There are more specific prophecies regarding the coming Messiah in Zechariah than in any other Old Testament book with the exception of Isaiah (which has 66 chapters). For example:

<u>Reference in Zechariah</u>	<u>Picture of Messiah</u>
3:8	Servant, Mark 10:45
6:12	Branch, Luke 1:68-69
6:13	King, Matt. 21:4-5
6:13	Priest, Heb. 4:14
11:12-13	Betrayed One, Matt. 27:9-10
12:10	Pierced One, John 19:37
13:1	Fountain, Reve. 1:5
13:7	Shepherd, John 10:11
13:7	Humanity, Heb. 2:11
14:9	Lord, Reve. 11:15

BODY

I. A DIVIDED BOOK

- A. The Two Parts. Few Old Testament books are as difficult to interpret as is this

one. However, part of the problem lies in failing to distinguish the *two parts* of the prophecy. There is a major break following chapter eight. Chapters 1-8 were written during the days of the temple rebuilding, while chapters 9-14 were probably written at a much later time. The two sections have marked differences:

1. The first eight chapters are mainly vision-prophecies; the remaining six chapters are direct prophecies. The first part concerns the physical remnant now back in the land, while the second part concerns the spiritual remnant under the Messiah. The contents of the first section are carefully dated, while the contents of the second section are nowhere dated.

B. Note, then, our outline of Zechariah:

### "Jealous For Zion"

#### I. EARLY PROPHECIES: Temple Being Rebuilt, ch.1-8

##### A. Seven Visions

1. The four horses, 1:8-17
2. The four horns and craftsmen, 1:18-21
3. The measuring line, 2
4. The reclothing of Joshua, 3
5. The lampstand and the olive trees, 4
6. The scroll, ephah, and the women, 5
7. The four chariots, 6

##### B. Five Messages: 6:9-15; 7:1-7; 7:8-14; 8:1-17; 8:18-23

#### II. LATER PROPHECIES: After Temple Rebuilt, ch.9-14

- A. The Coming Shepherd-King and Zion's Subsequent Blessing, 9-10
- B. The Offending of the Shepherd-King and It's Tragic Results, 11
- C. The Final Travail and Triumph of Zion, 12-14

1. As the key-word-phrase in Haggai was - "*from this day on I will bless you...*" - so the same thought continues in Zechariah with the announcement that Jehovah is "*jealous for Zion*" (1:14; 2:8; 8:2).
2. The book begins with a simple prologue in 1:1-6 with a call for *present* repentance (vs.3) and a reminder of *past* problems (vs.4-6).
  - a. Notice in verse 6a that the word of the Lord outlasted both their fathers and the prophets. See 1 Pet. 1:23-25.

#### II. THE SEVEN SYMBOLIC VISIONS

- A. The Four Horses, 1:8-17 - "GOD'S EYES ARE ON THE WICKED." Read verses 8-10. Here is Jehovah's angel patrol surveying world conditions. They report back in verse 11b that "*all the earth is peaceful and quiet.*" Zechariah is intended to see that while the surrounding nations are at ease, his people are suffering hardship and difficulties of every sort. Thus, the angelic question in verse 12 and Jehovah's reply.
  1. Zechariah informs us of the two levels of history - the *visible* and the *invisible*. While man operates out of the former, God operates out of the latter. To the returned Jews it appeared that Jehovah's enemies were prospering while Jehovah's people were suffering - and that He was unconcerned! However, in the invisible realm, God was watching and was preparing a stroke of retribution upon the wicked while planning a three-fold blessing on Judah (vs.17).
- B. The Four Horns and Craftsmen, 1:18-21 - "GOD'S HANDS ARE ON THE WICKED." Read verses 18-19. Horns in apocalyptic literature often represent kings or kingdoms (See Daniel 8 and Reve.17:12). These four horns are the nations that have sought to destroy Judah. However, God would raise up four craftsmen or carpenters who would "dismantle" the horns and judge the nations.
  1. \*Please keep in mind that all of this is symbolic. These figures are not to be interpreted literally but figuratively as representing various ideas that God wanted his prophet/people to see.



- C. The Measuring Line, 2:1-13 - "GOD'S PROTECTION ON THE RIGHTEOUS." Notice verses 1-2. What is all this measuring business? What does the measuring represent? See Ezekiel 40-42:20; Reve. 11:1-2. The measuring speaks of dividing between the holy and the profane. God is telling the prophet what He will protect and what He won't protect. Jerusalem was to be measured, i.e., set aside as holy unto the Lord.
1. Verse 4. Why did God not want walls around Jerusalem? He wanted His people to first build the temple, not the walls. Building the temple without first constructing the walls was an indication of their faith in Jehovah. Besides, He would be their wall; He would be their protection, (vs.5,8).
- D. The Reclothing of Joshua, 3:1-10 - "A PREPARED PEOPLE FOR A PREPARED PLACE." Here is Satan as the "accuser" making his case against Joshua, who stands as a representative of the people (vs.1). Joshua appears filthy (with sin) and like a torch left too long in the fire he is burned and dirty (vs.2b-3). Satan's argument is that Joshua (the Jews) were not worth saving.
1. Jehovah did not deny the charges but did disagree with Satan's conclusion. He, being full of grace and love, took them back, cleansed them and gave them new garments (vs.4-5). And why had He done this? Was this an act of grace without works? See 1:6. Yes, here is the Old Testament illustration of the prodigal son and his forgiving father.
  2. But this is more than just a vision of God accepting again His people - it symbolizes something greater (vs.8). The Branch (the Messiah; Isa.11:1) would come and prepare a "stone." From such passages as Dan. 2:44-45; Isa. 28:16 we see that the "stone" concept represents God's kingdom, the church.
    - a. The Messiah would prepare the "stone", God's watch-care would be over it ("seven eyes") and salvation would be therein - *"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."*
    - b. Thus, as Joshua had been fitted with new garments, so are those today who wash their robes in baptism (Reve.22:14). We are to *put off* the old and *put on* the new. At such time the prepared people are added to the prepared place - the stone (Acts 2:47).
  3. *"In that day..."* (vs.10) - the people will have one main objective when the Branch rules:
    - a. EVANGELISM! - *"everyone of you will invite your neighbor..."*
- E. The Lampstand and the Olive Trees, 4:1-14 - "A PREPARED RESPONSIBILITY." This fifth vision was of special encouragement to Zerubbabel, the *civil* leader of the remnant as the preceeding vision was to Joshua, the *religious* leader. Verses 2-5.
1. The lampstand was a sign that the people would finish the temple. And how would that happen? Verse 6. Only with Jehovah's help would they be able to finish.
    - a. See verse 7 - *"O great mountain, Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain."* The mountain represents all of the obstacles in the way of rebuilding. But God removes the mountain and the temple is finished (vs.7b-9).
  2. Notice his question in verse 11. The olive trees represent the fuel (oil) that would light the lampstand. And verse 14 more specifically adds, *"These are the two anointed ones..."* The fuel which would motivate the people in the work of rebuilding would come from the two "oiled" offices - the king and high priest. The king is here represented by Zerubbabel (who was of the blood-line of David) and the high priest by Joshua. Thus, the two offices would have to work together in order for the fuel to reach the lampstand or in order for the temple to be completed.
    - a. One day these two "oiled" offices would be united in Christ!
- F. The Scroll, Ephah, and the Women, 5:1-11 - "A PREPARED HOLINESS." Here is the much needed lesson that there can never be a restoration of Jehovah's blessings without the expulsion of that which is evil (vs.1-3).
1. Zechariah sees a flying scroll containing a two-fold curse: (1) against stealing, and (2) against swearing. This summarizes all sins which are (1) against man, and (2) against God. Note in verse 3 that these sins must be purged.

God will not tolerate a mixture of good and evil in the land. Sin must be purged.

a. Can there be any application here for us? See 1 Cor.5:7 in regard to the command for church discipline. God commands that His church be pure and sin purged.

2: In verse 5-7 the prophet sees an ephah (a Jewish measurement) which was probably in the shape of a barrel. Inside was one recognized as wickedness. Immediately she was contained and sent away to Babylon (vs.8-11). The proper home for such wickedness was certainly not Jerusalem.

a. Here is a simple lesson on what to do with sin. Sin must be (1) recognized, (2) contained, and finally (3) sent away.

G. The Four Chariots, 6:1-8 - "A PREPARED JUDGEMENT." Here is Jehovah's coming judgement on the Gentile nations as represented by the land of the north (Persia), vs.8. Here follows five brief messages to Zechariah:

1. "And the word of the Lord came..." 6:9-15. Here the prophet is commanded to enact a coronation ceremony for Joshua. The passage is entirely Messianic and tells of five things that the "Branch" would do;

a. He would grow - branch out from a lowly birth and a state of rejection to become exalted and lifted up.

b. He would build the temple - obviously this is not the physical temple for the Lord just got through promising that Zerubbabel would finish it. This temple would be spiritual. See 1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:16.

c. He would sit and rule - on the throne of David. Such was confirmed on Pentecost by Peter (Acts 2:30-31).

d. He would be a priest - but not on earth for He was of the wrong tribe (Heb. 7:14).

e. He would be a peacemaker - between God and man and between Jew and Gentile.

1) Note also verse 15. This temple ruled over by the Messiah would not be for "Jews only" but would include all who were "*far off*" (Acts 2:38-39).

2. "The word of the Lord came..." 7:1-7. "*To fast or not to fast*" - that is the question (vs.3). The Lord had only commanded one day of fasting - the day of atonement. Yet the Jews were observing several days of fasting and seeking to bind these on others. Hence, the Lord's response in verse 5-6. Here was the sin of selfishness in the name of religion. They were actually fasting in order to make themselves feel good rather than fasting to God's glory.

a. Can you think of anything that would involve selfishness in the name of religion today? - i.e., that which is done to please self rather than God?

3. "The word of the Lord came..." 7:8-14. Here is what God really wants - the proper attitude and heart. See verse 9-10.

4. "The word of the Lord came..." 8:1-17. Here are given the divine characteristics for the New Testament kingdom. The Lord promises that He will return to Zion (vs.3). Jehovah never returned to a literal temple after Ezekiel 10:18 (See also Acts 17:24). Thus, the prophecy is for a return to a spiritual temple, a spiritual city - new Jerusalem (Reve.21:2). She would be a "*City of Truth*" sounding forth the truth (Isa. 2:3b; Lk. 24:47) and a "*Holy Mountain*" i.e., set aside for righteousness.

a. She would be a city of peace, vs.4

b. She would be a city of activity, vs.5

1) Notice verse 7-8. It was Kipling who said, "*East is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet.*" He was wrong. East met west in the new Jerusalem.

2) In verse 9 he leaves the Messianic and returns to offer more encouragement to the physical temple builders.

3) Verse 16-17 - Jehovah's basic principles of morality to be applied in every age.

5. "The word of the Lord came..." 8:18-23. Now back to the spiritual promise for the future. He would turn their sorrow into joy and gladness (vs.19) and open the door of spiritual blessing unto all peoples (vs.20).

a. Verse 21 illustrates that the whole aspect of being included in God's

spiritual city is that we might include others.

- b. Finally, verse 23 shows that salvation would come through the Jewish remnant that Jehovah had preserved. And today salvation can only be had by "*grasping the garment of a Jew.*" That Jew is Jesus Christ.

### III. THE THREE LATTER PROPHECIES     \*Note: Chapter 9 begins part two of the book. These six remaining chapters are virtually 100% Messianic.

#### A. The Coming Shepherd-King and Zion's Subsequent Blessing; ch.9-10.

- 1. Victory in Jesus, 9:1-8. In 9:1 the American Standard Version gives a marginal reading of - "*Jehovah hath an eye on men...*" Thus, the second section of Zechariah begins as does the first (see comments on 1:8-17). Before we see anything else we are meant to see God's care and concern for His own.
  - a. Here in verse 2-8 are listed the enemies of God's people with the promise that these would never again pass through Jerusalem (vs.8). This is not physical Jerusalem under consideration but, rather, spiritual Jerusalem. Physical Jerusalem was attacked time and again by it's enemies but spiritual Jerusalem could NEVER be overrun. And *why* can we be assured of such victory?
- 2. The Why of Victory, 9:9-10. The *why* of our victory is seen in our King! We are great because He is great. We are led to triumph because He was triumphant. We have victory because of the victory of Jesus. And how do we have victory?
  - a. Because of His KINGSHIP, vs.9. See 1 Tim. 6:13-15; Acts 2:36. Jesus Christ has been given absolute power (Matt. 28:18). Yet many rulers turn power into corruption. Not this King!
  - b. Because of His JUSTICE, vs.9. See Isa. 11:3-4a; Jer. 23:5-6. In our courts the rich, powerful and influential often seem to be favored, but not so in the court of this kingdom.
  - c. Because of His SALVATION, vs.9. Question: Is justice all we want? When we stand in the day of judgement will we plead for justice? No, we will plead for mercy. And our King offers mercy!
    - 1) The story is told about an eastern monarch who decreed that for a violation of law the criminal would lose both hands. The first offender was his own son. Justice demanded the cutting off of the hands. Now the king was in favor of justice, yet he was also in favor of his son. Thus, mercy entered and saw the king take one of his own hands and one of his son's - and the law was paid.
    - 2) Jesus went farther than that. When the price had to be paid - He paid it all! (1 Cor.6:20).
  - d. Because of His HUMILITY, vs.9. What king ever rode on a donkey? Kings rode on white stallions and rode in gold chariots. Not this king! He forever taught the lesson that to become great you must become little; to rise you must sink; and to rule you must serve. See Matt. 20:28.
  - e. Because of the PEACEFUL NATURE Of His kingdom, vs.10. This kingdom would not be characterized by horses, chariots and weapons of the battlefield for it would be a *spiritual* kingdom.
  - f. Because of the UNIVERSAL RULE of the King, vs.10. The spiritual kingdom of Christ would know no geographical boundaries. His authority would be upon all men.
- 3. The Fulness of Victory, 9:11-17. Here is a list of seven things the Messiah would provide:
  - a. He will provide redemption, vs.11. The Mosaic covenant was a blood covenant that could not save. Because of the covenant they were in God would make a new blood covenant - one which would save. See Jer. 31:31,34; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22; Reve. 1:5. This covenant would set man free (Rom. 7:24-25).
    - 1) Under Jesus, man would be set free from the waterless pit and be given access to the fountain of living water ( 13:1).
  - b. He will provide unification, vs. 13. Here we see the uniting of God's people for the purpose of taking on Greece (the Gentiles). And when did this occur? Such a battle began in Acts 16:6 and continued until Acts 19:20 as Christianity for the first time took on paganism. Before Acts 16 the

enemy was Judaism. After Acts 16 the enemy was Gentile paganism. It's no wonder that letters have been found written in the first century from various rulers to Caesar expressing alarm that "*Christianity is about to destroy us!*"

- c. He will appear over them, vs.14. Before, God had led His people by fire and by cloud. Now He will lead them personally through the Messiah. Here is a prophecy of the incarnation of Jesus Christ who would come to "*dwell*" with man (John 1:14). Now mankind could identify with their leader.
- d. He will defend them, vs.15. Christ's kingdom was challenged by every type of foe imaginable - both from within and without. Yet time after time it emerged from the fiery furnace of battle stronger than ever. "*You go preach,*" He said, "*and I'll go with you!*"
- e. He will save them, vs.16. Refers back to verse 11.
- f. He will exalt them, vs.16b-17a. Here is a picture of the beautiful bride of Christ - the church. See Eph. 5:26-27.
- g. He will prosper them, vs.17b-10:1. Here was the promise of a better day ahead in language that was comprehensible to them. Paul speaks of our prosperity in Eph. 1:3.

4. Chapter 10 shows what the Messiah found and what He would do when He came. He came and found His people wandering as sheep without a shepherd, vs.2b-3a. Thus, the Messiah will seek to lead them and will turn His scattered sheep into a "*majestic horse in battle*" (vs.3b). How will He do it? Verse 4.
  - a. He will be their *cornerstone* upon which they will stand. He will be their *tent peg* upon which they can rest securely. He will be their *bow of battle* and give them courage. And He will be their *ruler* to give them authority.
  - b. Verse 5 tells the result of His leadership - "*mighty men*." Just think of the change that came over the disciples following the resurrection. Before they were cowardly and fearful. Yet, after they got a good look at the resurrected Lord, they became "*mighty men*" and went out to conquer the world for Christ. And why were they successful? See verse 5b.

- B. The Offending of the Shepherd-King and It's Tragic Results, ch.11. Here God promises to shepherd His people (vs.7). Yet the people refuse God's Shepherd and when asked their value of the Shepherd they paid thirty pieces of silver (the price of a wounded slave), vs.12. The Lord responds sarcastically in verse 13 which serves as a prophecy of what Judas would later do with the betrayal silver. Because the Jews rejected God's Shepherd, God would do three things:

1. *He broke His staff Favour*, vs.10. For 1,500 years the Jews had been Jehovah's chosen. But now God will remove that blessing.
2. *He broke His covenant with the nations*, vs.10. This is not the covenant of Sinai for it was never made with the nations. Rather, this is God's covenant of protection that said to the surrounding nations - "*You can't touch Israel!*" That covenant of protection would be removed.
3. *He broke the staff Union*, vs.14. There would be no more union between the Jewish people and Jehovah.

- C. The Final Travail and Triumph of Zion, ch.12-14. In chapter 11 physical Jerusalem would be destroyed because they rejected God's Shepherd. Yet, while physical Jerusalem is destroyed, spiritual Jerusalem is protected. The siege under discussion is the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

- 1. *The Protection of Spiritual Jerusalem in the day of the siege*, vs.1-4. The protection is illustrated in three ways: The church would be like a *cup* which many peoples would try but fail to consume. The church would be like a *rock* that none would be able to move. And to those who would seek to destroy it God would cause consternation among them.
- 2. *The Impowering of Spiritual Jerusalem in the day of the siege*, vs.5-6. The "clans" speak of leadership. The church would have strong leadership which would shine forth like a torch. Nothing could stop the growth of the early church because of her leadership.

- ➔ 3. *The Glory of Spiritual Jerusalem in the day of the siege*, vs.7. What a paradox! God's people are seen as living in tents (i.e., they have no physical fortification) and are saved, while those living in the great walled city of Jerusalem are destroyed. Only God could receive the glory in that.
- ➔ 4. *The Defending of Spiritual Jerusalem in the day of the siege*, vs.8-9. Even the most feeble in spiritual Jerusalem will be as Israel's greatest warrior - David. No nation would be able to destroy this kingdom.
- ➔ 5. *The Extension of Grace to Physical Jerusalem in the day of the siege*, vs.10-14. It is my belief that this does not have reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit but, rather, the outpouring of destruction upon physical Jerusalem.  
Question: How could the destruction be spoken of as "grace?" Answer: The destruction of Jerusalem was Jehovah's last ditch effort to reach the Jews. Why did Jesus spend so much time predicting Jerusalem's fall? (See Matt.24). So that when the destruction came many would remember His words and believe.
  - a. See Daniel 12:1-2 which speak of the destruction of Jerusalem and in the same breath speaks of those awakening to salvation.
  - b. Before the destruction of Jerusalem there were two religions: Judaism and Christianity. After 70 A.D. there was only Christianity. The Jewish genealogical records were destroyed, the temple was destroyed, the ceremonies were destroyed, etc. - Mosaical Judaism was destroyed in order that Christianity might grow, prosper and survive. Thus, when God came in judgement on Jerusalem He did two things:
    - 1) He gave an opportunity for some honest Jews to see that Jesus was indeed the Christ, and
    - 2) He proved to the world which was the religion of His choice.
- ➔ 6. *The End of Miracles in the day of the siege*, 13:2-6. The destruction of Jerusalem would be the miraculous grand finale. It would be the final miracle to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. There would no longer be any prophets in the land nor would there be any more demons. Both would be removed.
  - a. Thus, if one wanted to ascribe an approximate date for the cessation of miracles it would be around 70 A.D. And, if you notice, the closer the New Testament writers get to 70 A.D. the greater the encouragement is given to study.
- ➔ 7. *The Redemption of Mankind that brought on the necessity of the siege*, 13:7-9.
  - a. Verse 7 stands as a tremendous monument for our hope of salvation. Verse 7 should be studied along with Isaiah 53.
  - b. Verse 8 - only a third part (minority) are left who confess the Lord.
  - c. Verse 9 - this small group of saints are then challenged to pass the test of persecutions and trials and to call upon the name of the Lord. He will hear and He will answer.

#### IV. THE FINAL CHAPTER: JUDGEMENT!

- A. The Factors of Judgement, vs.1-6. Chapter 14 discusses at length the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. "Behold, a day is coming." This is not the end of the world but the end of the Jewish world (12:11). What will happen when the day comes? See verse 2. That's not the end of the world.
  - 1. Someone says, "Wait, they can't do that. The Jews are the His people. He has a covenant to protect them..." Remember 11:10? God broke that covenant of protection when they crucified His Shepherd.
    - a. Notice the end of verse 2. A remnant will be spared.
  - 2. Now verse 4. Yes, this is His personal coming but it is His personal coming in judgement! See also Matt. 24:30,34. The instrument our Lord used in judging Jerusalem was the Roman army. And what will happen when the Lord comes in judgement on Mt. Olives? Verse 4b.
    - a. What are Christians commanded to do when the mountain splits? FLEE! (This wouldn't do much good if it were the end of the world...)
    - b. In Matt. 24 Jesus gives the sign as to when the Christians should escape Jerusalem. In verse 4-14 He tells what the sign is not. Then in verse 15-16 He tells what the sign is. And what is the "abomination of desolation?"



See Luke 21:20. THAT IS THE SIGN! Jesus said, "When Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, you flee!"

- c. Now how could they do that? Jerusalem was a walled city. With enemies outside the city the gates would surely be closed. History gives us the answer. The historian Josephus gives an account of the years 67-70 A.D. and tells of a Roman general named Cestius who marched against Jerusalem. He had it surrounded and was about to take the city... and then he did what no other Roman general ever did in recorded history - he turned around and went home! (See verse 5).
- 1) When that happened the Jewish Zealots threw open the gates of the city and pursued the Romans overtaking them and killing them. THAT WAS THE SIGN! The valley had now been opened and the saints were now to flee!
- d. When Rome received the news of the Jerusalem massacre the Emperor sent Generals Titus and Vespasian to totally destroy the city. Now none would escape. See 5b. It was the worst slaughter in the history of the world. Over 1,100,000 were killed and over 97,000 captured.
- f. Verse 6 describes the darkest day in the Jewish economy. See Matt.24:29.

B. The Results of Judgement, vs.7-15. How could there be darkness and light at the same time? It would be darkness for physical Jerusalem for it was destroyed. It would be light for spiritual Jerusalem for it was saved.

- 1. One writer has given three reasons for the quick spread of Christianity: (1) the persecution in Acts 8, (2) the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and (3) the destruction of Jerusalem. Why? Read verse 8.
- 2. Here in verse 9 is one of the purposes for the destruction - to prove the divine claim of Jesus.

C. The Conclusion of Judgement, vs.16-21. Verse 16 speaks of the Gentile entrance into the church. The Feast of Booths was a feast of thanksgiving. Now both Jew and Gentile could rejoice together. And what of those who refused to worship the King? Spiritual draught! Verse 17.

- 1. Finally, verse 20-21 speak of the holy nature of the Lord's Kingdom.

#### Conclusion

- 1. And why so much time and space for a book like Zechariah? Well... because it's one of my favorites (and I'm the writer) and because so few people actually understand and appreciate this great little book. I hope that from now on you will.

## Zechariah

JAMES MEADOWS

### Introduction

1. Zechariah began to prophesy two months after Haggai began (Zech. 1:1; cf. Hag. 1:1) and continued his work for two years.
  - a. In November, 520 B.C., he issued a call to Israel to repent (1:1-6).
  - b. In February, 519 B.C., he encountered certain night visions (1:7-6:8).
  - c. In December, 518 B.C., he offered responses to certain questions about fastings (Chapters 7-8).

2. His name means He whom Jehovah Remembers. It was a popular name since about ~~29 to 30~~ men wore that name in the Old Testament.

3. He was one of the priests that returned to Palestine under Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:16).
4. His work preceded Malachi's work by about 80 years (His-520 B.C., Malachi-440 B.C.).
5. Haggai had stirred the people to resume rebuilding the temple, but their zeal had slackened. Zechariah urged them to complete the great work.
6. Zechariah was evidently younger than Haggai and his work continued a year or two beyond the older prophet.
7. Haggai rebuked and admonished; Zechariah encouraged and looked to brighter days.
8. Zechariah contains many visions and a great deal of apocalyptic (imminent disaster, pertaining to last things symbolism) "the language of a persecuted and troubled people."

9. It is the longest and most difficult of the Minor Prophets—in fact the most difficult of the Old Testament books to interpret. "Haley wrote: "When this is recognized, one should approach an interpretation of it with prayer and humility, acknowledging his own limitations and knowing that he cannot afford to be dogmatic" (Haley, p. 318). *Apocalyptic writing "is extremely difficult of exegesis and therefore does not lend itself to dogmatic certainty."*
10. Zechariah differs from the other prophets in three points:
  - a. "He gives emphasis to visions as a means of divine communication. It is true that visions appear in the book of Amos, but not in proportion to those in Zechariah. *(Bill, Bible Study Series, p. 259)*

1:3 - The key-note of the entire work  
 "Return unto me" and I will return unto you"  
 cf. Mal. 3:7 - Plea  
 of the prophets

- b. Angelic mediation occupies an important place in his message. Angels are conspicuous in the first six chapters of the book. 1:12, 13, 14, 19; 2:3, 3; 3:1, 3, 5, 6; 4:1, 4, 5; 5:5, 10; 6:4, 5, 18 times
  - c. Apocalyptic symbolism entering into the visions is another outstanding characteristic of this prophet's writings" (Haley, p. 319).
11. He was identified as a priest by Nehemiah (Neh. 12:4)—able to hold two offices—priest and prophet. He wanted the temple built immediately. Cf. Ezra 5:1 & 6:14.
    - a. Zechariah was the son of Berechiah (Zech. 1:1). "Jehovah Blesses."
    - b. He was the grandson of Iddo, a priest. "Appointed Time."
  12. There are approximately 71 quotations in the New Testament from the prophet.
    - a. 31 are located in Revelation.
    - b. 27 in the gospels, especially during our Lord's last week.
    - c. Next to Isaiah he is the most Messianic of Old Testament prophets.  
*Some think he had more influence on the Messianic picture than Isaiah*
  13. There are at least 84 allusions of where Zechariah attributed his message to God—an average of six per chapter.
  14. First eight chapters written 520-518 B.C.
  15. Resemblances to other Bible books:
    - a. 1:18 - Dan. 7:7. *The horse*
    - b. 2:1 - Amos 7:7. *Plumbline*
    - c. 7:10f - Exod. 22:21-22. *Call to righteousness*
    - d. Surrounding Nations -- Amos 1 & 2.
    - e. 1:17; 2:10 - Micah 7:17. *Glory of Jerusalem*
    - f. Spirit-filled witnesses (Zech. 4) - Rev. 11.
  16. Entire prophesy concerns principally the day of the Christian Dispensation.
    - a. This is made certain by the appearance of such expressions as "the day of Jehovah," "in that day," "in those days."
    - b. Such expressions appear 24 times.

Two natural divisions of the book:

1. Chapters 1-8: The future of fleshly Israel is discussed with many of the events and matters melting into a messianic prophecy.
2. Chapter 9-14: Written to encourage the people of Israel through the emphasis upon the messianic.

Also appearance

2:11, 3:10, 8:9, 11:11

3

- (1) Seven in chapter 12. (3, 4, 6, 8 (2 times), 9, 11)
- (2) Three in chapter 13. (1, 2, 4)
- (3) Ten in chapter 14. (1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21)

## Discussion

### I. Zechariah is divided into four sections.

A. First, there is a call to repentance (1:1-6). Remember God's sore displeasure.

B. Second, there is a series of night visions about the future of God's people and his kingdom:

1. Riders among the myrtles (1:7-17). Vision of Comfort—Israel downtrodden, under watchfulness and prayer.
2. The four horns and four smiths (1:18-21). Vision of Conquest—Israel delivered, overthrowing her enemies.
3. The man with a measuring line (2:1-13). Vision of Conditions—Israel (Jerusalem) experiencing glorious prosperity.
4. Joshua's trial (3:1-10). Vision of Cleansing—The priest--Israel polluted, cleansed, and restored to priestly service.
5. A golden lampstand and two olive trees (4:1-14). Vision of Communication—Israel as God's lightbearer to the world.
6. The flying scroll (5:1-4). Vision of Condemnation—Israel as a moral force in the world through the Word of God.
7. The woman in the ephah (5:5-11). Vision of Control—Israel and the application of the Word of God.
8. The four chariots (6:1-8). Vision of Command—Israel's agency at work.
9. The crowning of Joshua (6:9-15). Vision of Consummation—Israel's symbolic crowning.

C. Third, a question about fasting is raised (7:1-8:23).

1. Chapter 7

a. 7:1-3 - The inquiry concerning observances



- b. 7:4-7 - The explanation pointing out omissions.
- c. 7:8-14 - The Exhortation to obedience.

## 2. Chapter 8

- a. 8:1-3 - The presence of the Lord.
- b. 8:4-15 - The perpetuity of the Jews.
- c. 8:16-17 - The precepts of the people.
- d. 8:18-19 - The manner of acceptable worship.
- e. 8:20-22 - The multitudes out of the nations.
- f. 8:23 - The magnification of the Jews.

## D. Fourth, the people of God are reassured about the future.

- 1. The heathen nations will fall (9:1-7).
- 2. The Messiah will appear (9:8-11:17).
- 3. Salvation established in spiritual Israel, the church (12:1-14:21).

## E. Clayton Winters gives a great summary of Zechariah in his book Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther:

Zechariah's first prophecy came just two months after Haggai began to encourage the people to action on the temple—the eighth month of the second year of Darius (Zechariah 1:1)—in which he encouraged the righteousness of the Holy People by reminding them that disobedience had brought them into captivity in the first place (1:2-6). His second vision came in the same year, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (1:7). This prophecy was more extensive, consisting of God's promise to restore and bless Jerusalem, and to take vengeance on those who had scattered the captives (1:18-21); it served as an incentive for the dispersed people to flee Babylonia (2:1-12). Joshua the priest was then seen in the presence of God's angel with Satan standing by to accuse him. His filthy clothing (sin) was taken away, and replaced by new robes of righteousness (3:1-10). So despite the opposition of Satan, he stood as a golden lampstand before the people. He had laid the foundation of the temple, and

## The messianic and messianic prophecies

1. Christ as the bride, 3:8.
2. " as servant, 3:8.
3. " to build the temple, 6:12.
4. " to sit and rule upon the throne, 6:13
5. " to be a priest while ruling, 6:13.
6. " entry into Jerusalem on a colt, 9:9.
7. " the good shepherd, 9:16; 11:11.
8. " the smitten shepherd, 13:7.
9. the price of Christ's betrayal, 11:12, 13
10. Christ's hands pierced, 12:10
11. Christ an offering for sin, 12:10; 13:1.
12. Christ wounded in the house of friends, 13:6.
13. Christ's appearance of the destruction of Jerusalem, 13:6." (Charles Pledge,  
Getting Acquainted with the Old Testament,  
p. 277-78)

would see the work through (4:1-14). A flying scroll was seen that represented the curse to be brought on anyone who violated God's pure covenant (reminiscent of the curses spoken from Mount Ebal, Deuteronomy 27:9-26). It would enter the house of the ungodly and destroy it down to its foundations (5:1-4). Israel's sins would be carried to Babylonia in a measuring basket, and Joshua would stand crowned, not only as the high priest of God, but also as a symbol of the great High Priest and King to come, Jesus Christ (5:5-11; 6:9-15). For nearly two years the prophet's voice was silent, but in the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius, 517 B.C. (7:1), he renewed his challenge. Again he called to mind the disobedient and rebellious spirit of their fathers—hearts hardened as flint against the prophetic message (7:4-13). But once more he promised prosperity and safety to the righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem (8:1-23). Above and beyond temporal blessings enjoyed in Jerusalem would be the arrival of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the real Branch. He would be pierced (12:10-14), and His flock scattered (13:7-9), but He would nonetheless open a foundation for sin in Jerusalem (13:1), and every bell and pot would be inscribed HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD (9:20,21). The prophet thus offered the greatest incentive of all to the little band of persecuted and discouraged Israelites: they would succeed in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. But their real mission was of far greater import and significance: through them the Messiah would be given to bless the whole world (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:15-29; Romans 9:1-5) (p. 24).

## II. Chapter 1

### A. First, there is the call to repentance (1:1-6).

#### 1. Learn the lessons of past history.

2. They had refused to heed and God had "scattered them with a whirlwind (7:12).

3. "As surely as the warnings through the earlier prophets had come to pass, so they should be certain that God expected them to heed what was said to their own generation" (David Pharr, Spiritual Sword).

4. One of the greatest teachers we can have is the experience of history, but the teacher has dull students. "Each generation must learn for itself."

*Begin  
5/29/07*

*Hosea, Joel, Jonah,  
Zephaniah, Micah all begin  
with "came the word of the Lord?"*

Robinson said this statement means:  
"All opposition to the Jews in the rebuilding  
of their temple was at an end."

5. The call to repentance was needed because of their lost zeal. The church still faces this problem today. What is the cure? (Rev. 2:1-5; 3:14-20).
6. The fathers and the prophets were gone, but God's word lives on (Matt. 24:35; John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-12).

7. "Pay Day—Some Day!"

Vision Number 1

- B. Second, there are the riders among the myrtles (1:7-17). Vision of Comfort. Israel, downtrodden, under watchfulness and prayer.

1. There is a rider on a red horse followed by red, sorrel <sup>bay</sup> (speckled) and white horses (1:7-8).
2. These patrollers of the earth report that the earth is at rest, which seems bad news. "The shaking of the nations" (Hag. 2:6-7), which could restore Jerusalem to glory, is not visible (1:9-11).
3. "The angel assures the prophet that after 70 years (Cf. Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) the Lord's pity is stirred and Jerusalem will be rebuilt, while the heathen will be chastised (1:12-17):" *(Jack Lewis, p. 76)*

Vision Number 2

- C. Third, the four horns and the four smiths (carpenters) (1:18-21). Vision of Conquest. Israel delivered, overthrowing her enemies.

1. Horns are a symbol of power (Micah 4:13).
  - a. Daniel used "horns" to represent fullness of power (Dan. 7:7-8) and of kings exerting power (Dan. 7:24).
  - b. Four is a complete world number:
    - (1) Four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:12).
    - (2) Four winds (Jer. 49:36; Dan. 11:4).
    - (3) Four sore judgments (Ezek. 14:21).
    - (4) Four beasts, which are four kings or kingdoms (Dan. 7:3).
2. They represent the powers that scattered Judah.
3. The smiths on the other hand are symbols of destruction of those powers.



*Import of this vision*

7

4. God clearly reveals that there is no longer any opposition to the building of the Lord's house. "...teaching that Israel's foes have finally through WAR ~~was~~ destroyed themselves, and that there is no longer any opposition to the building of God's house" (The 12 Minor Prophets, George L. Robinson, p. 150).

### III. Chapter 2

#### Vision Number 3

#### D. Fourth, the man with the measuring line (2:1-13). Vision of Conditions. Israel (Jerusalem) experiencing glorious prosperity.

1. The Mormons say this young man was Joseph Smith and the angel was Maroni who revealed to him the golden plates.
2. The young man is restrained because Jerusalem is to be a city without walls (v. 4-5).
3. The Lord who is "a wall of fire about her (v. 5) and who will be glory in her midst (v. 5) is to be her protection.
4. "The exiles still in Babylon are called upon to flee (v. 6) to Zion. *"(Levins) p. 76"*
5. "This makes it clear that the vision is to assure the people that the Jerusalem of Jehovah's concern is not physical, but spiritual. It is not of the present, but of the future from their point of vision" (Haley, p. 330).
6. Spiritual Jerusalem is probably in view here. Think of Paul's glorious description of the church in Ephesians.
7. God's people called upon to rejoice due to God dwelling among them (vv. 10-13).
  - a. Not restricted to present Jerusalem.
  - b. Many nations come (cf. Mt. 28:19-20).
  - c. "The 'holy land' is not Palestine, but God's people. Wherever God and his people are there is the holy land..." (Robert Taylor, Jr., Power Lectures, Minor Prophets, "Commentary on the Book of Zechariah," p. 286).
8. Human flesh is called upon to be silent before God (v. 13; cf. Hab. 2:20).
  - a. It is a call for reverence in his presence.

*Only Place  
where Palestine  
is called the  
'holy land'  
2:12*

- b. "The heathen nations would be judged, Jehovah would build and inhabit the new Zion, and He would fulfill His promises concerning Jerusalem. This is Jehovah's answer to the Jews who could not see beyond the immediate physical temple and city and to those indifferent to His purposes" (Haley, p. 332).

#### IV. Chapter 3

##### Vision Number 4

E. Fifth, Joshua's trial (3:1-10). Vision of Cleansing. Taking place on earth.

The priest--Israel polluted, cleansed and restored to spiritual service.

*"The import of this vision is that the priesthood shall be cleansed and made acceptable for service" (Leura, p. 76)*

1. Joshua represents the whole priesthood and the entire nation.
2. Satan is standing by to prevent Jehovah from accepting Joshua, and thus accepting the whole nation because of sin (v. 3).
3. Satan felt confident in his accusation because the whole priesthood had been guilty:
  - a. Of making no distinction between the clean and unclean (Ezek. 22:26).
  - b. To a degree they had been responsible for the ignorance of the nation (Hos. 4:6).
  - c. They had fed on the sins of the people (Hos. 4:8).
  - d. They had taught for hire (Mic. 3:11).
4. Joshua stood for "a brand plucked out of the fire"—the fire of trials through which the nation had gone (v. 2). The angel is pictured as the defender of God's people, so in the N.T. Christ is our Advocate (1 John 2:1).
5. God forgave him and removed his "filthy garments" (v. 4).
  - a. They represent the sins by which the nation had become polluted.
  - b. Consider the condition in other years (Isa. 64:6).
6. Once more the priesthood stood before God as cleansed (vv. 6-7).
  - a. The angel gives Joshua a solemn charge.
    - (1) He is to be righteous in his personal deportment.

(2) He is to be faithful in his discharge of priestly duties.

b. The promised reward is three-fold: 3:7

- (1) He will be the ruler and director over God's house (the temple now under construction). *"He will rule & direct the affairs and worship of Jehovah's house (Haley, p. 334)"*
- (2) He will keep the Lord's temple free from all idols, pollutions, etc.
- (3) He will have access to Jehovah on behalf of himself and the people. *"whom the high priest represents" (Haley p. 334)*

7. This is the first introduction of the "Branch" by Zechariah (vv. 8-10).

a. Both Isaiah (4:2; 11:1-10) and Jeremiah had introduced him (Jer. 23:5; 33:15).

b. Zechariah mentions the branch again in 6:12-13.

(1) He would be a descendant of David and a servant of Jehovah.

(2) In him the priesthood and kingship through Zerubbabel would be combined (Hag. 2:23).

c. The "stone" is the "kingdom of Jehovah" (Haley, p. 336); "the stone refers to the Messiah and his kingdom in which there would be spiritual completeness" (Taylor, Power Lectures, p. 287).

*Dan:  
2:34, 44-45*

d. The "seven eyes" focused on it picture God's complete and full watchful care over his people. "He would bring forth a kingdom (Dan. 2:44), which would endure forever (Dan. 7:14) in spite of all opposition of all heathen powers (Dan. 7)" (Haley, p. 337).

e. "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" portrays what would be accomplished on THE day of atonement—the day of Calvary and the assumption of his priestly functions.

f. In that day, when sin is removed, and the Messianic rule begins "shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree" (v. 10). This was a symbol of peace enjoyed in the midst of safety and security (1 Kgs. 4:24-25; Isa. 36:13; cf. Micah 4:4). *(Haley, p. 337)*

g. God gives all this assurance to his discouraged and faltering people.

h. "Then the fact is emphasized that the priests are types of the Messiah, and by a symbolical action it is declared that God has a purpose which he will accomplish; the one typified will be raised up" (Davis

## Chapter 4: 1-14

The candlestick represented the light in the temple. It was dependant upon the oil produced by the olive trees. So the completion of the temple depended upon the power of God, supplied through the Spirit directing Zerubbabel.

This vision implied a definite promise to Zerubbabel - All opposition will be removed and he would bring forth the headstone - the completion.

"The day of small things" - The enemies had despised and ridiculed the Jews because of their weakness and small numbers. God show them that those who despised the day of small things would fail when fighting against truth 70 years later in rebuilding the walls the enemy said "What are these feeble Jews doing?" (Neh. 4:2-4).

Dictionary of the Bible, p. 831).

## V. Chapter 4

### Vision Number 5

*Begin 6-6-2000*

F. Sixth, the golden lampstand and the two olive trees (4:1-14). Vision of Communication—Israel as God's lightbearer to the world.

1. Evidently Zechariah had gone to sleep and was awakened and describes the vision that he saw (vv. 1-2).
2. Zechariah knew what he saw, but did not know the meaning (vv. 3-5).
3. The angel's explanation is a message of encouragement to Zerubbabel, the temple builder (6-7).

- a. He was facing great and mounting odds in building the temple.
- b. He was assured that the job would be completed "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (v. 6).

*Donay version "not with an army."*  
c. The mountain before him probably signified all the obstacles placed before him, but he was assured that they will become like an advantageous plan (v. 7).

4. Zerubbabel is also assured:

- a. He shall bring forth the headstone (v. 7)—"not the cornerstone, for it had already been laid, but the finishing stone, the last stone which would complete the temple's construction" (Haley, p. 340).

- b. He was also assured that just as his hands had "laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it" (v. 9). *Cf. Luke 14:28-30*

- c. "But more, it would also be a pledge that the greater spiritual house would be built according to divine promise and power; for Zerubbabel was made 'as a signet,' chosen by Jehovah (Hag. 2:23), a symbol of him who was to come" (Haley, p. 341).

5. They are also warned not to despise the day of small things (v. 10).

- a. Their assessment of this temple was nothing compared to the former (Cf. Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3).
- b. But the day of rejoicing will come, the job will be finished, and God's approval will be on it.



## MALACHI:

“Where is mine honour” (Malachi 1: 6-8) - Lessons from polluted offerings

*William Howard*

- I. Introduction
  - A. Malachi - last book of the OT
  - B. Malachi referred to as a post-exilic prophet.
  - C. Background of Malachi's message.
    - 1. Polluted Offerings
      - a. Violation of specific commands in the Mosaic Law.
      - b. Deuteronomy 15:21
    - 2. Specific reference to their sin.
      - a. Malachi 1:8
      - b. Is God not infinitely greater and worthy?
        - i. Jeremiah 10:6
    - 3. Point of the original command in Deuteronomy 15:21?
      - a. Show that God deserves and accepts only the best.
      - b. Acknowledgment of His position as the Supreme Ruler and Creator.
  - D. Jews suffered the consequences of their sins by not putting God first.
    - 1. From the beginning, Moses had offered this warning - Deuteronomy 8:11.
    - 2. How could they be so blind?
      - a. Be careful before we cast any stones.
      - b. Man, in general, is a forgetful creature.
    - 3. God knows His creation and has provided continual reminders.
      - a. Ironically, found in these very sacrifices which they were now defiling.
      - b. Forgotten the point of the very thing God had given them to remind them not to forget.
- II. How do we make application to our own lives?
  - A. New Covenant no longer requires animal sacrifice.
    - 1. Jesus is our eternal sacrifice.
    - 2. A continual reminder so that we never forget; The Lord's Supper.
  - B. We too can forget the point of that which was given to remind us to remember.
    - 1. Church in Corinth.
      - a. I Corinthians 11:20-22
      - b. Was Christ being honored by such actions? Was this a form of a polluted offering?
      - c. Paul refocuses their minds on its true purpose. I Corinthians 11:27-29
    - 2. What about us?
      - a. Do we forget to remember properly?
      - b. And, if so, where is God's honor?
  - C. Let's widen the scope of this discussion of "polluted offerings."
    - 1. God is still above all.
      - a. Psalms 57:5
      - b. Psalms 113:4
      - c. Psalms 135:5
      - d. Ephesians 4:6

2. Deserved the best animal sacrifice available and deserves the best we have to offer under the New Covenant.
- D. Some verses that drive this point home:
  1. Mark 12:30
    - a. First expressed in the OT. God's expectation of man has not changed. Deuteronomy 6:5.
    - b. "All" is a very important descriptor.
    - c. Heart, soul, mind and strength encompass all that we are.
      - i. Our physical nature.
      - ii. Our intellect.
      - iii. Our emotion and affection.
      - iv. Our spirit. (that part of us made in the image of God)
    - d. God wants us to love Him with everything we are.
    - e. Anything less robs Him of the honor due Him and becomes a "polluted offering."
  2. Colossians 3:23-24
    - a. Did your father ever tell you, "Whatever you put your hand to, give it your best"?
    - b. Giving your best effort is the measure of a person who is honorable, trustworthy and full of integrity.
    - c. That's what this verse says. Give it your all.
    - d. Anything less becomes comparable to offering an animal that is blind or lame, or has some other defect.
- III. Some obvious and perhaps challenging areas of life.
  - A. Our time
    1. There only 24 hours in a day.
      - a. Can't do everything.
      - b. Have to be able to prioritize.
    2. Whatever is important to you, you will make time for.
      - a. You will find a way to fit it in.
      - b. Is God important enough to us that we are making time for Him every day?
    3. Jesus gave simple advice in Matthew 6:33.
      - a. What things would be added?
      - b. Look at the context. The physical things; food, clothing, shelter.
      - c. Put God first and He will ensure we have the physical things we need.
      - d. Time is perhaps our most precious commodity.
  - B. Our talents.
    1. The church has many needs.
    2. Are we bringing our talents to bear on the work?
      - a. Parable of the talents - Matthew 25:14-30
      - b. Jesus' point - you must use what God has given you, physical possessions or unique abilities.
      - c. You must find what you are good at and then use it to His glory.
    3. The real question; are we trying?
    4. To give God our best means our talents are engaged in His work.
  - C. Our physical possessions.
    1. Many sayings that are true and biblical:
      - a. "God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7
      - b. "We are just stewards or caretakers of the things He has blessed us with."

- c. "We must give to God first off the top and not of what is left over."
- 2. This is perhaps, one of our greatest tests of faith.
  - a. We live in a physical world requiring physical things
  - b. Really believe God is in control and will provide if we just serve Him faithfully?
  - c. Giving of physical possessions demonstrates faith in God and not in things.
- 3. No one can tell you how much to give to the Lord.
  - a. That's something personal to each of us.
  - b. Does what you give reflect your love and faith in Him who has blessed you so richly?
- 4. Failing to give or use our possessions in a way that puts God first robs Him of His honor just as much as a defective sacrificial animal.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. God deserves the best, period.
  - 1. Whether an animal sacrifice, or your time, talent, or possessions.
  - 2. Must be ever mindful and continually diligent that our lives represent an acceptable offering and not a polluted sacrifice.
    - a. 2 Peter 1:10
    - b. What things? All that He has commanded and revealed to us in His holy word.
  - 3. Avoid having God ask you, "Where is mine honor?"
    - a. Live your life in such a way as to extend that honor.
    - b. Strive to give your best at whatever you put your hand.
  - 4. And, on those occasions when we do stumble, thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ that overcomes our shortcomings.

*Key words* *LORD OF HOSTS* *20 TIMES* *"get you say"*  
*"Lord" - 46 times* *Malachi* *(1:2, 6, 7, 12, 13; 2:14, 17(2); 3:7, 8, 13, 14)*  
*"Say the Lord" - 25 times* *James Meadows*

## Introduction

### 1. Malachi

- His name means "My messenger."
- We know nothing about Malachi except what is found in this book.
- John Kachelman in his book, Studies in Malachi, suggests the following characteristics of Malachi learned from his prophecy.
  - First, he was willing to be used by God (1:1).
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### 2. Historical background leading up to Malachi.

- Zerubbabel and the people return from Babylon (Ezra 3:1-4 - 536 B.C.).
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- In the 20th year of Artaxerxes Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls Neh. 2 - 444 B.C.).

### 3. Some facts revealed in Malachi.

- Malachi contains 55 verses and God is mentioned in 53 of them. God is the all-important subject.
- Characteristics of God:
  - Love (1:2; 2:11).
  - Hate (1:3; 2:13, 16).
  - Angry (1:4).
  - Wearied (2:17).
  - Has pleasure and displeasure (11:10, 13; 3:4).
  - Threatens (2:3; 3:11).
  - Blesses (3:10-12).
  - Curses (2:2, 9, 12; 3:9).

### 4. During the time of Nehemiah and Malachi similar conditions prevailed.

- The priesthood was polluted (Neh. 13:29; Mal. 2:8).
- Their marriages involved them with paganism (Neh. 13:13-27; Mal. 2:10-16).
- They were not paying the tithes (Neh. 13:10-12; Mal. 3:10).
- Abuse of the poor (Neh. 5:1-5; Mal. 3:5).
- Malachi's work probably came just a little later than Nehemiah - about 440 B.C.

*careless priests (1:6-2:9); skepticism (3:14; 2:17);*  
*intermarriage (2:11-16).*

didactic -

Malachi uses the dialectic method -

1. An assertion is made
2. A question that the assertion provoked is raised
3. There is an elaboration of the original assertion with additional facts + illustrations

1. I have loved you (1:2-3)
2. You have despised my name (1:6-7)
3. Judah has been faithless (2:10-16)
4. You have wearied the Lord with your words (2:17)
5. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes (3:7)
6. You have robbed me (3:8)
7. Your words have been stout against me (3:13)



Use Specific Lessons which Israel and  
(modern America) failed to heed

1. First, there is a fundamental necessity for  
holiness for all followers to demonstrate holiness  
in all areas of life (1:6, 12; 2:2, 5, 7; 4:2-3) etc)
2. Second, there will be a hard penalty  
for all who choose lifestyles that are  
inconsistent with holiness (1:10, 14; 2:8, 9, 12; 3:5, 9)
3. Third, God constantly invites all to live a  
holy life because that is the only way to  
find happiness (2:5-6; 3:4; 4:3; etc) (John  
MacKlemm)

5. A question asked some eight times in the book reveals the condition of the people — "Wherein" or "How?"
- a. "Wherein has thou loved us?" (1:2) — They doubted the genuineness of God's love.
  - b. "Wherein have we despised thy name?" (1:6) — The name of the Lord despised by the priest.
  - c. "Wherein have we polluted thee?" (1:7) — The sacrifices were polluted.
  - d. "Wherefore" (2:14) — Marriage rites were defiled.
  - e. "Wherein have we wearied thee?" (2:17) — God's justice doubted.
  - f. "Wherein shall we return?" (3:7) — There was perpetual departure from God.
  - g. "Wherein have we robbed thee" (3:8) — They were robbing God.
  - h. "Wherein have we spoken against thee?" (3:14) — Blasphemy.

6. Malachi's message examines how the holiness of God should impact human lives. Malachi's emphasis on this is so strong that his prophecy can be outlined in the following manner: (The following outline taken from John Kachelman's book, Studies in Malachi, p. 6).

### MALACHI: The Necessity of Holiness

- I. God's Holiness REPROACHED by Israel (chapter 1).
  - A. 1:1 - Introduction to the prophecy of Malachi.
  - B. 1:2-5 - Israel's rejection of God's holiness.
  - C. 1:6-14 - Unbelievable fruits of rejecting holiness.
- II. God's Holiness REPROVED Israel (chapter 2).
  - A. 2:1-9 - The priests rebuked. *you have turned aside*
  - B. 2:10-16 - The nation rebuked. *you have caused many to*
  - C. 2:17 - The tragic results summarized. *stumble*  
*you have corrupted the*  
*covenant of Levi.*
- III. God's Holiness RESTORED in Israel (chapter 3:1-7).
  - A. 3:1-3 - The restored holiness assured.
  - B. 3:4-5 - The restored holiness brings blessings.
  - C. 3:6-7 - The restored holiness magnifies God.
- IV. God's Holiness RESILIENT to error (chapter 3:8-4:6)
  - A. 3:8-12 - Error in worship will not prevail.
  - B. 3:13-15 - Error in life will not prevail.
  - C. 3:16-18 - Faithful allegiance distinguishes.
  - D. 4:1-3 - Allegiance to error is damning.
  - E. 4:4-6 - Conclusion - "Remember God's holiness!"

## 7. Outline of Malachi as given by Franklin Camp.

- a. Malachi 1:1-5 - God's love for the nation—undeniable.
- b. Unacceptable Sacrifices - 1:6-14.
- c. Malachi 2:1-9 - Unkept obligations - Priests.
- d. Malachi 2:10-16 - Untrue husbands - divorces.
- e. Malachi 2:17-3:1-6 - Unexpected judgment.
- f. Malachi 3:7-12 - Unmeasured blessings.
- g. Malachi 3:13-4:3 - Unwarranted assertions - they denied there was justice.
- h. Malachi 4:4-6 - Unforgettable farewell.
  - 1) Admonition - v. 4 - "Remember."
  - 2) Promise - v. 5 - "I will send."
  - 3) Warning - v. 6 - "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Discussion: The following outline is taken from James Meadows' book, A Study of the Minor Prophets, pp. 51-52).

### I. God Really Loves Israel (Malachi 1:1-5).

- A. In view of all that was happening some questioned that God loved Israel.
- B. God points out his love by saying "I loved Jacob, and yet I hated Esau." The expression "hate" here means "loved less." (Cf. Gen. 29:31; Deut. 21:15).
  1. Judah was punished, but restored after 70 years (Jer. 29).
  2. Edom (Esau) was destroyed forever.
  3. Jacob stands for Israel (came from Jacob).
  4. Esau stands for Edom (came from Esau).
  5. The passage is not talking about individuals, but the two nations at this particular time. Note the context:
    - a. God had returned Israel from captivity and they had rebuilt the temple. Proof that God loved Israel.
    - b. Had the Edomites returned? No! Proof that God hated them and their wickedness (Jer. 49:7ff; 25:9,21).
      - (1) Cyrus had allowed the Israelites to return and rebuild.
      - (2) But the Edomites had not returned, furthermore God had said if they try to rebuild I'll see that they are not successful (v. 4).
  6. God hated the nation and the way they lived.
    - a. Consider Genesis 12:3.
    - b. Consider Genesis 25:22.
    - c. Refused to let Israel pass through their land (Num. 20:14ff).
    - d. Consider Psalms 137:1-7.
    - e. Consider Revelation 2:6.
  7. Thus God gives proof that he had loved them. Every false doctrine grows out of a false conception of God. That shows all the way through the book of Malachi.

## II. Ungodly priest rebuked (Malachi 1:6 - 2:9).

- A. Jehovah dishonored, and they are so depraved that they inquire, "Wherein?" (Malachi 1:6).
- B. Offer polluted bread—that is, contrary to law. Leviticus 1 and 22 forbids certain types of offerings. "Bread" includes all types of offerings. This refers to the sacrifices (Lev. 21:6; Ezek. 44:7).
- C. They said "table of Jehovah is contemptible" (Malachi 1:7). No respect for.
- D. A challenge to offer to their Persian Pasha their blind and crippled animals. They were offering to God, the I Am that I Am, a gift so contemptible that they should have been executed for contempt if offered to Pasha (Malachi 1:8).
- E. God had rather have doors of temple closed than to have such worship (Malachi 1:10). This is nothing but "temple trampling" (Isa. 1:12). Do we have such worship today? Do we use our income for our own pleasures and then give God the scraps and leftovers like we do the dogs and cats?
- F. Promise of glorious future when Gentiles will worship acceptably to God (Malachi 1:11) (Cf. Jon. 4:24). Rev. 5:8 - Incense - Heb. 13:15-16 - Pure offering.
- G. Hirelings expose their true attitudes: Not satisfied with what they get, and complain of the work involved in offering sacrifices (Malachi 1:12-13).
- H. Man condemned who could do better in his sacrifice (Malachi 1:14; Cf. 2 Cor. 8:12). "This oracle of Malachi will never go out of date as long as the world has people who feel that though nothing is too good for our homes, just anything will do for the Lord" (Lewis).
- I. This is a special oracle for priests.
  1. Their blessings to be cursed (Malachi 2:2).
  2. They refused to lay it to heart.
- J. Contrast between Levi and his descendants as regards covenant.
  1. Levi:
    - a. My covenant with HIM, i.e., guarded as precious thing (Malachi 2:5).
    - b. Of life and peace.
    - c. He feared - revered - the Lord. Contrast with verse 6 of Chapter 1.
    - d. Law of truth in his mouth - Knew Lord's will. Function. Hag. 2:11.
    - e. Unrighteousness not in his lips - that is no crookedness.
    - f. Walked with the Lord (Amos 3:3).
    - g. Turned many away from iniquity. This is great work (Malachi 2:7).

## 2. The Present Priests:

- a. But YE are turned aside - do not do work that you should do.
- b. Cause others to stumble.
- c. In so doing have corrupted covenant of Levi.

K. All such religious leaders to be despised (Malachi 2:9).

## III. God hates divorce or putting away (Malachi 2:10-16).

A. The men of Judah were dealing treacherously with the wives of their youth.  
V. 15 - "not one has done so who had a residue of the spirit" (ASV).

B. "In a world where at least one marriage in three marriages ends in divorce and where the mixed marriage is common in which the effect upon the children is largely ignored, we would do well to listen to Malachi" (Lewis).

## C. Divorce—Is it intrinsically wrong?

1. Legally there is such a thing as divorce from bed and board (William Woodson).

- a. Few years ago there was a man in Jackson that was extremely mean to his family.
- b. She finally kicked him out and told him, "I don't want to get married again," and if you straighten up you can come back.
- c. The elders agreed with her decision.

## 2. I Corinthians 7:11-12:

- a. "depart" — Greek word charizo.
- b. "Asunder"
- c. "Unmarried" — Greek word agamos.
- d. "Married" — Mt. 19:9 — gameo.
- e. The person here is unmarried—thus divorced.

3. God hated it under the circumstances. What were the circumstances?

- a. "Dealt treacherously," 2:11a,14,15,16.
- b. "Profaned the holiness of the Lord" (11b).
- c. "Hypocritical in their offerings," 2:12-13.
- d. Covereth violence with his garment, 2:16.
- e. In the midst of all this they were putting away the wives of their youth.

## 4. In Matthew 19:9 the Lord condones divorce and remarriage where fornication has been committed. If divorce is intrinsically wrong (essential, innate, inherent, inborn, ingrained) then the Lord was condoning that which was intrinsically wrong even for one who had the right to marry again.

## 5. There is a difference in something that may be circumstantially permissible (due to the circumstances under which something occurs) but not intrinsically evil.

- a. Heb. 6:4—Impossible to save. Under the circumstances.
- b. This was true because the one talked about was crucifying the Son of God



- afresh and putting him to open shame.
- c. But were there circumstances under which one might be restored?

IV. Some of the specific sins of Judah are seen (Malachi 2:17 - 3:18).

A. A spirit of skepticism about serving God (Malachi 2:17 - 3:6).

1. God answers their question about "Where is the God of judgment?" (2:17).
  - a. He tells them that he will come himself (3:1).
  - b. But he will send his messenger before him to prepare his way (3:1).
    - (1) This prophecy is based upon Isaiah 40:3-5.
    - (2) This messenger is the Elijah of 4:5.
    - (3) The messenger is John the Baptist (Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23; Matt. 11:7-15; 17:10-13).
  - c. Three palpable and incontrovertible proofs of Christ's divinity.
    - (1) "First, he is identified with Jehovah: 'he shall prepare the way before ME.'— saith Jehovah."
    - (2) Secondly, He is represented as the Proprietor of the temple.
    - (3) Thirdly, He is characterized as ... The Sovereign, a title nowhere given in this form to any except Jehovah" (Ebenezer Henderson, The Twelve Minor Prophets, Baker Book House, 1980, p. 456).
  - d. "He shall prepare the way before me."
    - (1) Referring to ancient custom of sending one on ahead to cut through rocks and forests to make the way smooth.
    - (2) It means "to clear, clear away, put in order, prepare," which John the Baptist did.
  - e. "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple."
    - (1) "Suddenly" does not mean immediately, but his coming would be sudden, unannounced, and unexpected.
    - (2) The temple here refers to the spiritual temple, the church (Eph. 2:21).
  - f. "Even the messenger of the covenant."
    - (1) The messenger (angel) of the covenant is here identified as the Messiah.
    - (2) God had promised that He, the Messiah, would be "for a covenant of the people" — that is for a personal bond between Jehovah and His people (Isa. 42:6; 49:8).
    - (3) Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant, the covenant of peace (Heb. 9:15; 13:20).
  - g. "Who ye delight in...."
    - (1) The one the pious Jews expect and desire.
    - (2) They "looked for the redemption in Jerusalem and waited for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25,38).
  - h. He will come, not as they expected, but in a purifying judgment (v. 2).
    - (1) The unbelieving skeptics will not be able to stand—these are his own people.

- (2) He will be "like the refiner's fire"—as a smelter, purging the dross from the silver (v. 2).
- (3) He will be "like fuller's sope" — one "who washes and thickens cloth, who will cleanse with a strong lye soap" (Haley, p. 419).
- (4) The "sons of Levi" are the first to feel the judgment of the Lord (v. 3).
  - (a) He will purge them as gold and silver — inwardly.
  - (b) "An offering in righteousness" — it will be offered sincerely.
  - (c) This refined priesthood is the spiritual priesthood under the new covenant (1 Pet. 2:5,9).
    - They are fruit of our lips (Heb. 13:15-16).
    - Under these conditions the offering of the new nation would be pleasant and acceptable "As in the days of old" (v. 4).
- (5) Then he will come in judgment against all wicked people (v. 5). This is his answer to those who charged that he was not a God of justice.
  - (a) God would judge these moral and ethical sins.
  - (b) The root of all their actions was clear — They did not fear Jehovah. "When this respect for Jehovah is gone, there is no restraining force against evil" (Haley, p. 420).
- i. "For I am the Lord, I change not" (v. 6).
  - (1) Man can depend on this immutable principle in all ages.
  - (2) "Though the sentence passed against evil works (v. 5) be not executed speedily, yet it will be executed for he is the Lord; he changes not" (Matthew Henry, p. 1198).
  - (3) "His infinite love, which is basic to His immutable character, will provide mercy that they be not completely consumed; but his eternal hatred for sin will consume with the fire of His everlasting justice those who are His adversaries (cf. Ps. 89:14ff; 97:2ff)" (Haley, p. 420).

#### B. Withholding of tithes that belonged to God (Malachi 3:7-12).

- 1. Israel had always turned from God and had failed to recognize that his blessings were conditional (Lev. 26; Deut. 28) (v. 7).
  - a. But God invites them to return and receive his blessings.
  - b. But they asked "Wherein shall we return?"
  - c. "They are so ignorant of themselves, and of the strictness, extent, and spiritual nature, of the divine law, that they think they need no repentance. They are firmly resolved to go on in sin" (Henry, p. 1198).
- 2. They were withholding the tithes that belonged to God.
  - a. There were three tithes commanded (Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 12:18; 14:28).
  - b. There were also the offerings (Deut. 18:4; Neh. 13:10-12).
  - c. Because of their refusal to acknowledge God's claim (Deut. 10:14) they had been cursed with a curse.
  - d. Now they are invited to prove the Lord by bringing the tithes and having

the windows of heaven opened. Cf. Deut. 28:1-2,12; 2 Cor. 9:10.

C. Stout words against God (Malachi 3:13-18). Cf. Jude 15.

1. "Stout" means "hard, harsh, violent."
2. They said it was vain to serve God (v. 14).
3. They said (v. 15):
  - a. The proud are happy.
  - b. The wicked are set up.
  - c. They that tempt God are delivered.
4. But even in the midst of all this God still has his remnant (Cf. 1 Kgs. 19:18).
  - a. God has his book of remembrance (Ex. 32:32ff; Psa. 56:8; 69:28; 139:16; Ezek. 13:9; Dan. 7:10; 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12).
  - b. God will always be mindful of those that serve him (vv. 17-18).

V. Close of the Old Testament (Malachi 4:1-6).

A. Punishment of the wicked (Malachi 4:1).

B. The sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2,3).

C. The coming of Elijah (Malachi 4:4-6).

VI. Some Great Lessons From Malachi.

A. All unacceptable worship to God grows out of a wrong attitude.

1. If one understands honor to one's earthly father then honor God our Father (v. 6).
2. First, notice how they were failing to honor God in worship (v. 7).
3. Second, they were desecrating the altar (v. 8).
  - a. They thought the altar was contemptible.
  - b. They were giving God the leftovers.
  - c. What do I bring when I come to worship God?
  - d. If I just give God the leftovers, then he will not accept it.
    - (1) "But I don't have time." Does God just have the leftover of my time?
    - (2) "But I don't want to give sacrificially." Does God just have the leftovers of my money?
    - (3) "But I don't want to do anything - use my talents." Does God just have the leftovers?
4. Attitude of indifference in service (v. 10).
  - a. Do we serve God because we expect to receive something from God or because we love him and the value for which he stands (cf. Job 1:8-10; 13:10).
  - b. ~~First~~ <sup>SECOND</sup> Corinthians 11:23-33 shows that Paul didn't serve God for what he

was getting out of it, but because he was God, v. 31.

- c. This gets at the heart of why people quit the church. They don't get what they want and they quit.
- 5. Attitude toward that which we offer (v. 11; cf. Rom. 2:17-29).
- 6. Attitude toward the worship service (v. 13). What is my attitude toward worship and God's standard?
- 7. Cursed be the deceiver (v. 14).
  - a. God looks on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).
  - b. We can't hide anything from God.

**B. It is impossible to worship God without the following:**

- 1. One cannot worship God without love.
- 2. One cannot worship God without reverence.
- 3. It is impossible to worship God without sacrifice - Mal. 1:6-8.
- 4. It is impossible to worship God with a wrong motive, Mal. 1:10.
- 5. It is impossible to worship God without instruction in the truth - Mal. 2:7.
- 6. It is impossible to worship God without obedience, 2:13-15 - Broken homes. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:7.
- 7. What happened in the collapse of Israel's worship? 3:14; 1:13.

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- D. A challenge to offer to their Persian Pasha their blind and crippled animals. They were offering to God, the I Am that I Am, a gift so contemptible that they should have been executed for contempt if offered to Pasha (Malachi 1:8).
- E. God had rather have doors of temple closed than to have such worship (Malachi 1:10). This is nothing but "temple trampling" (Isa. 1:12). Do we have such worship today? Do we use our income for our own pleasures and then give God the scraps and leftovers like we do the dogs and cats?
- F. Promise of glorious future when Gentiles will worship acceptably to God (Malachi 1:11) (Cf. Jon. 4:24).
- G. Hirelings expose their true attitudes: Not satisfied with what they get, and complain of the work involved in offering sacrifices (Malachi 1:12-13).
- H. Man condemned who could do better in his sacrifice (Malachi 1:14; Cf. 2 Cor. 8:12). "This oracle of Malachi will never go out of date as long as the world has people who feel that though nothing is too good for our homes, just anything will do for the Lord" (Lewis).
- I. This is a special oracle for priests.
  - 1. Their blessings to be cursed (Malachi 2:2).
  - 2. They refused to lay it to heart.
- J. Contrast between Levi and his descendants as regards covenant.
  - 1. Levi:
    - a. My covenant with HIM, i.e., guarded as precious thing (Malachi 2:5).
    - b. Of life and peace.
    - c. He feared - revered - the Lord. Contrast with verse 6 of Chapter 1.
    - d. Law of truth in his mouth - Knew Lord's will. Function. Hag. 2:11.
    - e. Unrighteousness not in his lips - that is no crookedness.
    - f. Walked with the Lord (Amos 3:3).
    - g. Turned many away from iniquity. This is great work (Malachi 2:7).
  - 2. The Present Priests:
    - a. But YE are turned aside - do not do work that you should do.
    - b. Cause others to stumble.

## WILL A MAN ROB GOD?

James Meadows

### Introduction

1. What if I should introduce this class by saying: "This morning you came to church from a stolen home, driving a stolen car, wearing stolen clothes, and adorned with stolen jewelry. The reason I say this is because you paid for these things with money withheld from God. You took that which was rightfully His and spent it on yourself."
  - a. Is this too shocking and tactless?
  - b. But man can, have and **will** rob God.
2. When men keep for themselves that which rightfully belongs to the Lord they have robbed God.
3. Malachi 3:8-10 was not written at a time of supra-abundance, but at a time when the Jews were extremely poor.
  - a. The Jews had just returned from captivity and were rebuilding the walls.
  - b. But the unfavorable circumstances were no excuse of their neglect.
  - c. The amount withheld, whether small or great, that is due the Lord is the robbery. The Macedonians, in deep poverty, put to shame those in Corinth (2 Cor. 8:1,11).

### Discussion

#### I. HOW DO MEN ROB GOD TODAY?

##### A. Some rob God by not giving at all.

1. Some, like the Dead Sea, are dead trying to hitch-hike a ride to heaven.
2. Some are not giving because they are saying "It is Corban."
  - a. The Pharisees freed a man from obligation to parents if he said "it is Corban" - a gift to God (Mk. 7:9-12).
  - b. Some today feel free from giving to God because they are using all to support others.
  - c. Some say, "I don't give because I don't have much cash. I am investing my money."

##### B. Some rob God by giving a portion but not in proportion to their ability.

1. God said, "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:30).
2. "Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse..." (Mal. 3:10).
  - a. The Jews robbed God by failing to bring "all the tithes" ("the whole tithe" - ASV) into the storehouse.
  - b. They robbed God, not because they were failing to give at all, but because they were failing to give the amount God required.
3. Today, we are to give as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1,2).
  - a. If a man ought to give \$10 and gives only \$5, he has robbed God of \$5.
  - b. If a man ought to give \$20 and gives only \$10, he has robbed God

- c. What did you do with that money you "skipped" giving the Sunday you were away?
- 3. "According to our prosperity" belongs to the Lord each week whether we give it or not.
- 4. What about those people who are faithful to observe the Lord's supper on Sunday night, but do not give?
- E. MEN ROB GOD WHEN THEY GIVE ON THE BASIS OF ONE INCOME WHEN IN REALITY THEY HAVE TWO OR MORE.
  - 1. When both husband and wife work outside the home they cannot forget they have two incomes.
  - 2. Then there are unexpected increases, bonuses, gifts, etc.
- F. MEN ROB GOD BY EXTRAVAGANCE AND WASTEFULNESS.
  - 1. The insatiable desire to keep up with friends and neighbors drains off what many owe God.
  - 2. Some plunge themselves so deeply in debt that they have nothing left to give God and then excuse it by saying, "I have not been prospered."
  - 3. Some of the members of the church could triple their giving and not be deprived a single luxury, much less necessity. What do you say?

## II. WHY DO MEN ROB GOD?

- A. Some rob God because of ingratitude.
  - 1. God had loved Israel even before they were a nation and then when they became a nation, yet they could still ask "Wherein hast thou loved us?" (Mal. 1:2).
  - 2. The cruelest of all human traits is ingratitude.
    - a. Revenge is cruel because it returns evil for evil, but ingratitude returns evil for good.
    - b. Jesus asked "Where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17).
  - 3. The Christian who fails to "communicate" (give) mocks God and is sowing to the flesh (Gal. 6:6-8).
- B. Men rob God because they do not know how important liberal giving is to the upbuilding and salvation of their own souls as well as the advance of the truth.
  - 1. The Jews of Malachi's day said "behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it" (Mal. 1:12). How many do the same?
  - 2. The title of the Old Testament was "holy" (Lev. 27:30).
  - 3. How many today regard the contribution as sacred and holy?
    - a. Some partake of the Lord's supper with tears.
    - b. But three minutes later are dry-eyed and sometimes angered when the contribution plate is passed.
  - 4. Then some say "If the elders would do this or that I'd double my contribution." "What they say is that they do not understand our obligation to the elders of the local church, and our obligation to give as we have been prospered each Lord's day, are not subject to our own whim and fancy" (Layton).
    - a. We cannot go about establishing our own righteousness (Rom. 10:1-3).

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## The Problems of Malachi

William S. Cline

MALACHI--the last voice of prophecy before the silence that was to last four hundred years. What does this final voice of God say? What is his message? What were the problems that he dealt with?

I will spend no time in answering the modern critics who tell us that Malachi was not a real person. All of them, collectively, have not produced one shred of evidence, and their arguments are only as weighty as feathers. For a good synopsis of such arguments and a brief, but good, introduction to the book, the reader is referred to *ELLICOTT'S COMMENTARY* and the *PULPIT COMMENTARY*.

It is almost universally admitted that the book occupies its right place in the arrangement of the Old Testament scriptures. Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

Malachi does not date his prophecy, but there are points that leave little doubt that the work of Malachi is closely associated with the work of Nehemiah. To better appreciate and understand the prophecy of Malachi, one should first read Nehemiah.

Perhaps some of the main dates and events which preceded the ministry of Malachi should be listed. They are:

536 B.C. At the decree of Cyrus, 50,000 returned to Judea, under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-2).

534 B.C. The foundation of the new temple was laid (Ezra 3), but the building was delayed.

520 B.C. The prophetic work of Haggai and Zechariah. After sixteen years, the rebuilding of the temple was resumed (Ezra 5 and Haggai).

516 B.C. The restoration was completed (Ezra 6:15).

457 B.C. The return of 1,800, plus wives, daughters, and servants under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 7).

445 B.C. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem by royal edict, as governor, to rebuild the city (Neh. 2).

430 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, after absence on a visit to Artaxerxes (Neh. 13:6-7). Malachi prophesied sometime after this.

I recognize the above dates are approximate, for no one standing where we stand can speak with absolute certainty regarding dates twenty-five centuries old, but these events are important for they led up to the work of Malachi. There can be little doubt that shortly after the time of Nehemiah, Malachi rose to his important office. His writing bears a divine message to the condition of things portrayed in the history of Nehemiah. Three examples are offered for consideration.

First, in Nehemiah 13:29 we read, "Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites." Now note the words of Malachi 2:8, "But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi saith the Lord of hosts." Notice that the complaint of Nehemiah in his closing years, and the pointed charge of Malachi are identical.

Second, in Nehemiah 13:23-27, divine history records that the people of God had entered into an unholy alliance with idolaters by way of marriage. Malachi speaks of the identical problem in his prophecy (Malachi 2:10-16). The problem and evil of mixed marriages troubled both Nehemiah and Malachi.

Third, in Nehemiah 13:10 and Malachi 3:8 we see that both prophets were concerned with the fact that the people had not kept the law regarding giving.

These three, brief observations should be enough to establish that Malachi's prophecy was uttered in the time of Nehemiah's influence--perhaps not in the days of Nehemiah, but not long thereafter. The conditions described in Malachi suggest a deterioration beyond that which seemed to be extant during the work of Nehemiah. The people had fallen into the very abuses that Nehemiah set himself against, and Malachi was raised up to bear the message of Jehovah to them.

The peculiar need of the period in which he spoke and wrote was a distinct and direct message, and it was that distinct and direct message from God that he came to pronounce. Perhaps we need more than anything else today, that our preachers be messengers of God, and that the people be spoken to from the oracles of God, as did Malachi in the long ago.



God, by his messenger Malachi, leveled several, serious complaints against the formal and self-satisfied people.

These complaints showed the people to be in a horrible condition. To each of the charges the people answered, "Wherein" have we done thus and so, or "What do you mean? We don't see that we have done these things, so why should we be subjected to these accusations?" This was the spirit of the age. Mechanical, outward observance was in practice. Religious life was formal, ritual, and ceremonial, yet the people were willing to look into the very face of heaven and argue their innocence.

Though the prophecy of Malachi is stern and condemning, it begins and ends with the love of God. The book opens with, "I have loved you, saith the Lord" and closes with the promise of the coming of John to prepare the way for the Messiah. Further proof of the love of God is found in the closing phrase, "... lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." God loved them. He had warned them, and in the warning he had given them hope. Change would bring the approval of God, but just as sure as God exists, continual sin would bring punishment--proof beyond question that he truly loved them.

Let us now turn our attention to problems of Malachi, and as they unfold, note that many of the problems the church is faced with today are no different from those which God's final, Old Testament messenger dealt with.

### DESPISED THE NAME AND SERVICE OF JEHOVAH

The first problem Malachi set his pen against was the horrible attitude the people had toward the service and name of Jehovah--they despised them. In 1:6-7 we read:

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of host unto you, O priest, that despise my name. And ye say, wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible.

The people called God "Father," yet gave him no honor. They called him "Master," but had no fear of him. They placed polluted bread on his altar and said that the table of the Lord was contemptible; and yet they boldly argued, "Wherein have we despised thy name . . . Wherein have we polluted them?" They clearly demonstrated their despite for the service and

name of God by what they said and what they did.

They said, "Behold what a weariness it is! . . ." (1:13). They did not enjoy serving God. Their heart was not in their service. Their attitude was one that is often seen today. For example, how many attend the worship services on Sunday with the attitude demonstrated in Malachi? They arrive at the meeting house, take a seat, and fold their arms as if to say, "O.K., I'm here. Let's sing, pray, preach--do whatever you please but keep it short and sweet. Make me feel good, and by all means, get this over with." Such attitude problems are destructive to the souls of men, and endanger the spirit and welfare of entire congregations.

Great principles are often revealed in small things and in unexpected ways. Members of the church say, "What a weariness it is," not in actual words, but they say it nonetheless. Multitudes say, "God is weariness," by snuffing at his will. They make light of "doing this" or "not doing that" and say of some brethren, because of their strictness for obeying the will of Christ, "They worship a paper pope." And further, what has happened to the faith of our fathers? Faith that led them to worship in barns, while they sat on hard benches for hours as they studied the Bible. Instead of that kind of love for worship, we hear an ungodly cry for shorter sermons and more entertainment. Such is proof of the attitude, "What a weariness it is." The same people will sit at a sports event for hours without complaining. They will watch a movie, sometimes more than once, and never object to the time, but they will quickly look at their watch and become anxious and restless if the preacher exceeds by a few minutes, what is recognized as his allotted time.

This is a serious matter. When men tire of meditating upon the things of God, the fault lies within. We need to continually search our hearts to see if the things of God have become merely a duty and a weariness to which we hold only for the sake of appearances.

The people also showed their despire by what they did. They brought polluted bread to the altar. One writer suggested that if one could have examined the bread, he may have found it not polluted at all in the normal usage of the word. These people profaned the name of God. They degraded the sacred things of God to the common level of mediocrity, and stated, "The table

of the Lord is contemptible." No polluted man can offer pure bread upon God's altar. God receives or rejects the gifts of man in proportion as he has received or rejected the giver; therefore, the "polluted bread" may have been a direct result of the polluted worshippers. Such a consideration should make us exceedingly careful how we give to God. Whatever our exact understanding of the phrase may be, let us be careful to understand that no man can remain in the grace of God while he despises the service and name of Jehovah.

### OFFERED INFERIOR SACRIFICE

The second problem which Malachi dealt with is found in the same chapter:-

And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor: will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of host (1:8).

Here is something that goes beyond profanity. These men were actually offering the blind, the lame, and the sick for sacrifice! The law of Moses specifically required that "the lamb placed upon the altar should be without spot or blemish—the finest of the flock." But the people had lost what worship meant. They had retained the finest of the flocks for themselves and had brought to the altar that which showed contempt for the very God they claimed to worship. Mark the sarcasm of the prophet's words when he wrote, "... offer it now unto thy governor . . ." Through Malachi, God, with great plainness of speech, asked the people if they would offer to their governor, the man who ruled over them, the kind of offerings they were laying on his altar. The answer was obvious and should have laid like an anvil on every man's conscience. Their conduct was unacceptable and they should have known it.

Why was the conduct so serious? For one thing, the offerings placed upon the altar were valueless to the souls who placed them there, and God always values the offering by what it costs the individual who brings it, and never by its intrinsic worth. Have we learned that lesson even today; a lesson which Jesus emphasized when he sat and watched the people of his time putting their offerings into the treasury? His measure of every gift was determined by its cost to the soul who offered it. Rich men gave of their abundance. He saw every gift and recognized the value of each. Then along came a woman who was a

widow. She dropped into the treasury two mites. Jesus then commented as to the value of the gifts. He said that she had given "more than they all." In other words, Jesus said, "Total all the gifts given today and this widow's two mites would outweigh them all on the balance scale of God." He measured the gift as God has done from the beginning of time--by its cost to the giver. There was no self-denial in the giving of the rich men. They did not miss what they gave. It was nothing to them, for they were rich, but to the widow, two mites was all of her living. She sacrificed when she gave. This kind of giving reveals the soul's estimate of the God to whom the gift is given. Such love and devotion was not present in the hearts of the men to whom Malachi spoke. They knew nothing of sacrifice. They were selfish, stingy men who considered sacrifice to God a contemptible thing; therefore, they offered unto him the blind, the lame, and the sick.

Man has always considered breaking into a church building to steal among the worst of crimes. From time to time someone actually steals from the collection baskets, and such conduct is so gastly that it is spoken of in tones of outrage and disgust. But lest we fail to notice, there is something worse, and that is going into the church building and putting "something" into the basket. Do not forget that. Sacrilege is centered in offering God something which costs nothing, because such giving shows that the giver thinks of God as nothing. Without doubt, there is much sacrilege in giving and men should carefully examine their offerings. Thankfully, there is also much sacrifice in giving, for there are multiplied thousands who love the church as much as they love life itself and they give accordingly.

May we never be guilty of offering to God that which we would be ashamed to offer to our governor. Let us learn what it means to give as Christ would have us to. The apostle Paul plainly stated what our goal should be in giving to God:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1).

If you ask, "How could the brethren in Corinth give so liberally, when they were so poor?", the answer is found in the fact that they first gave themselves (2 Cor. 8:2-5). And so it is with all of us. We will give--not grudgingly or of necessity, but freely in joy and happiness--when we first give ourselves to

God. Until we make that decision, we will always have the problem of offering to God inferior sacrifice.

### CAUSED MANY TO STUMBLE AT THE LAW

THIRD  
PROBLEM

The second chapter begins "And now, O ye priest, this commandment is for you." The seventh verse reads, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." That is God's concept of the priesthood. The priest should have the knowledge of the law. Not only should he know it, but he should also keep it; walk in it; obey it; faithfully practice its precepts. That is the ideal, but it is not the way things were when Malachi prophesied.

Ezra had set an example that all priests and prophets should have followed. Inspiration tells us:

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments (Ezra 7:10).

In proper order of importance, we are told that he learned, lived, and taught the will of God. Every preacher, every Christian should follow Ezra's example. But the priests to whom Malachi spoke had not followed the law of God. Malachi said:

But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts (2:8).

Thus we learn that at the back of the corruption of the people is the corruption of the priests, and the corruption of the message to the people. The people had failed in their concept of God and their service to him because the priests had tampered with ("corrupted" is the word Malachi used) the very covenant of God.

Note a statement in Nehemiah concerning the corruption of the priesthood:

And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib, the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore, I chased him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites (Neh. 13:28-29).

Here we have an example of the very thing that Malachi was concerned with. The priests caused people to stumble at the law by what they did. They did not "practice what they preached." They said one thing but by their conduct they led the people to do another. Not only did they corrupt people by

their example, they also caused men to stumble by what they said. By their speech, they corrupted the word of God. They should have been guarding the articles of the covenant, but instead they were breaking, tampering with, and corrupting it.

The church is continually faced with such problems. One of the reasons Austin McGary began the Firm Foundation one hundred years ago was to wage war against a major problem in the church which he referred to as "shaking in the Baptist." That battle was not the first enjoined nor will it be the last. As it was in the days of Malachi, so it is today. Behind the corruption of the people will be the corruption of the will of God, led by corruption among the teachers of his word.

Regarding the qualifications and responsibilities of elders, Paul wrote:

For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision; Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake (Titus 1:10-11).

A sad commentary on many elders in spiritual Israel is that they do not possess the qualifications nor the will to fulfill their responsibility in stopping the mouths of false teachers who subvert the faith of God's children. With great anticipation, we look forward to the day when leaders of the church, yea when Christians everywhere, will seek to correct, and if that fails, oppose anyone who would cause men to stumble at the covenant of Jesus Christ.

### SHOWED RESPECT OF PERSONS

*to the problem*  
The priests had caused people to stumble at the law, and in their administration of God's covenant they had shown partiality. Through Malachi, God said:

Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? (2:9-10).

Such conduct is an outgrowth of an attitude that God abhors, and should never be named among his children. This Old Testament problem was also a problem in the New Testament church. James wrote:

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a



man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou here, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? (James 2:1-4).

~~It is a sly seduction and one that works well for the father of evil. Men seem to be naturally prone to "respect of persons" in ways that are contrary to God's will. Men often hold the faith of Jesus Christ with respect of racial background.~~ Some have gone so far as to argue that people of certain races do not possess a soul. In various parts of America, people of different national backgrounds are looked upon as half-rate human beings. When such attitudes exist among members of the church, it must be a fire that burns continually in the nostrils of Almighty God.

~~But racial prejudice is not the only form of respect of persons we are plagued with. There is respect of persons with regard to social standing, economic status, educational attainments, etc.~~ Is it not easier for a man to be appointed an elder or deacon who has social standing, money, and a good education than it is for one who is an ordinary citizen, with little money, and a poor education? There is nothing wrong with possessing each of the above, and more, but it is a tragedy when these things are of major concern when leaders of the church are selected. And when prospects for conversion are discussed, who do we place the most emphasis on? Are we not like those to whom James wrote? Do we not court the rich, the influential, and the successful and leave the rest to "what will be, will be"? Have we forgotten the common man in our quest for converts? We must always guard against showing respect of persons in the Lord's church. It is productive of no good and it runs contrary to every aspect of Christianity.

*Full Problem* DID NOT OBEY GOD'S MARRIAGE LAW

The altar of God had been covered with the tears of the divorced wives, and he would not receive the offerings placed there by the priests who had dealt treacherously with the wives of their youth (2:13-14). Malachi further said:

... yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? ... For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away ... (2:15-16).

The priests, the ones who set the example before the people, had put away their wives and married foreign women. God was calling them to account for their evil deeds. Surely we can learn a valuable lesson here. God's marriage law is: one man for one woman for life (Matt. 19:4-6). That does not seem to be hard to understand, but the weakness of the flesh, emotional reasoning, false teachers, and other influences have resulted in multiplied millions disregarding this law. From the beginning, God intended for man and woman to leave their parents and become one flesh for life. He gave only one exception--unfaithfulness to that union by one of the marriage partners.

We have reared a generation that has little respect for the marriage bond. Today marriages are built on the standards of society rather than the standard of God, and the divorce rate that once was so alarming in the world, is now very alarming in the church. We may blame many things for the problem, when in reality, those of us who teach our young people--preachers, teachers, and especially parents--are to be blamed for the poor concept they have of marriage. We have not properly taught our young people on the subject of marriage; therefore, their conduct in marriage has not been in keeping with God's word. We have taught, with zeal, the exception to God's marriage law (Matthew 19:9), but have failed miserably in teaching the rule--one husband for one wife for life. So, it is no wonder that many marriages among members of the church end in divorce. (For a thorough study of this subject see the chapter on *God's Marriage Law*).

#### PRAISED AND SUPPORTED THOSE IN ERROR

Still in the second chapter we read:

Ye have wearied the Lord with your words, Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment? (2:17).

What did they mean by such statements? They were saying, "Our God is a God of love; there is no judgment. The man you say is evil, is really good and God surely delights in him." Such statements are beyond snuffing at the will of God--they are treason in its worst form. They are a countenancing and an excusing of sin. They are an attempt to gloss over evil and treat it lightly, as if it is not important. When man begins to excuse

sin, and says that it does not really matter to God, that there is no judgment; evil has a holiday; every demon in hell rejoices; and high treason has been committed.

This, also, is a peculiar sin of our day. There are many who are tired of a strong Christianity and cannot stand to be told of the judgment of God. They seek to lower the standard of the government of God, and the moment a man in the church is guilty of that, he is guilty of treason against God. The idea that a God of love passes lightly over sin is founded in a false concept of what love is. The love of God is the sworn enemy of sin, and if God ever excused sin, as we often do, it would prove that he does not truly love man. God hates sin, and all sin not covered by the blood of Christ will be brought into judgment.

There is no way in which a child of God can excuse, praise, and support a man in sin and not sin in so doing. The New Testament plainly warns against such conduct:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:17-18).

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; . . . from such withdraw thyself (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

Also, Paul referred to false doctrine as "profane and vain babblings" which "increase unto more ungodliness." He stressed that false teachers' words "will eat as doth a canker" (another word for canker is gangrene), and will "overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

An entire volume could be written on the attitude we are to have toward false teachers and false doctrine. For the present, suffice it to say that we must love the souls of all men and always do everything possible to correct those in error; at the same time we should never, in any way, encourage those who have departed from the truth. We must have a clear vision of sin and understand that it is not to be excused. Praising the person in error, using and encouraging the false teacher,

excusing the one who does evil, and belittling the judgment of God is sin. One of the needed lessons of Malachi's time is a much needed lesson in the church today.

### ROBBED GOD

*7th Problem* In the third chapter and the eighth verse, we have the seventh problem which Malachi dealt with:

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation (3:8-9).

How had they robbed God? By not responding to the divine claim he had on the people. They owed God more than the tithe. That was the bare minimum, and there was more than one tithe. They were carelessly giving to God what they considered to be the minimum, legal amount, and in so doing had failed to give as the covenant really demanded. There is much more to giving than putting something into the treasury.

What about the giving in Christianity today? God has nowhere taught the Christian to give a tithe. Some carefully give ten percent of their income, and for them that may be correct. But, we are to give, not governed by a strict percentage but by the love of Christ and the blessings of God. There is no doubt that the church would have millions more if every member gave ten percent of their income; likewise, there is no doubt that many members of the church are robbing God by only giving one tenth. God does not deal with Christians in percentages of material things. Rather he makes his claim on all. Everything is his. We are simply stewards of all that we possess. How we give to God depends on our ability and our love and appreciation for all that he has done for us. Determine your giving upon these standards and not upon, "How little can I give and still get by with it."

Malachi taught the people a lesson that all Christians should learn:

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it (3:10).

That same lesson is emphasized by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:9-12. When men put God first in their lives, he will bless them. I have a sermon from the restoration period that well

expresses the thought. The pioneer preacher titled his lesson, "YOU JUST CAN'T OUT GIVE GOD." And that is the summation of the matter. God said to the people that if they would put him first and give as they should--that included amount and attitude--he would bless them beyond anything they ever dreamed of. God is truly a gracious God, but his grace extends only to those who live in harmony with his will.

### SPOKE AGAINST GOD

It is not uncommon for men who serve God to think that everything in life should run smoothly, and if problems arise, blaming God is much in fashion. Thus we read:

Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? (3:13-14).

This is the sin of blasphemy. Blasphemy means to speak injuriously, to say something that will hurt the one against whom the words have been spoken. Here the people were saying things that would injure or hurt God and his cause upon the earth, and theirs was the worst form of blasphemy. The man who openly blasphemes, who, standing under the sun, looks toward the heavens and says, "I hate God and all that is holy and righteous," is far less dangerous in his influence than the man who says, "I love God" and then criticizes and disobeys him. The worst form of blasphemy--the blasphemy which we should be truly afraid of--is found in the person who serves God with zeal and enthusiasm, then when something goes wrong in his life, he blames God for it. I have heard, "How could God do me like this after the way I have served him. I've been faithful for years, and for him to let my wife die is not fair. I quit." I have seen some like that quit serving God and go to eternity in such condition. This terrible attitude grows out of the belief that if we faithfully serve God, he will see that we have no problems. Of course, just the opposite is true. If we put God first in our lives, we will suffer persecution, and in the routine of daily living God has never promised that everything would be smooth, good, and positive for his children. We live in a world filled with evil, sickness, and problems. Tragedies will occur. Sickness will come. Men will lose jobs. Fires,

tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc., will destroy property and lives. Being a Christian and faithfully serving God is not protection insurance against any of these calamities, nor any other problems we encounter as citizens of this world. Faithfully serving God is the Christian's anchor in the sea of trials, troubles, and turmoil, and he can know that no matter what happens, he has something far better than this world—a home which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

But the devil is never content to let the child of God rest. He (the devil) operates on the premise that man serves God for material reward, and by his methods he has caused multitudes to forsake God when things go wrong. His method did not work with Job and the example of that faithful patriarch should always encourage us to remain faithful to God, no matter what the circumstances. Job was a rich man and Satan surmized that Job served God because God had been so good to him. Satan said, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" In other words, "Doesn't Job receive much reward for his service?" You recall the story. Job lost everything he had, but he still served Jehovah. May his life be a lasting lesson to us. Let us never blame God for the problems in our life. When things go wrong, don't blaspheme God by saying, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance . . . ."

## CONCLUSION

Earlier it was noted that the prophecy of Malachi, though stern in its content, begins (1:2) and ends (4:5) with the love of God. Actually, the last two verses are a strong expression of God's love:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (4:5-6).

After that phrase "with a curse" there is no more prophetic utterance for four hundred years. I think it interesting and important that the last word in the Old Testament is the word "curse." Every period of Bible history had ended in failure. The Garden of Eden, the time of the Judges, the Kings, the period of the Prophets—all had their problems. Now God looks to the people whom he had called and created for a special purpose—



a people through whom the whole world might be blessed--and says for them to turn to him, "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

God did not desire to send the curse. A phrase of hope is found in that last sentence in Malachi--"Lest I come . . ." Hope was not forever past. The curse had not been pronounced. It had only been threatened. These words are an appeal of love and stress that the curse could be avoided if the people would turn from sin.

The Jews understood the threat of those final words, " . . . smite the earth with a curse." From that time they read the sixth verse as the fifth and the fifth as the sixth. They did not want their Bible to end with a threatened curse. Some early editions of the Septuagint made a further change. They lifted the fourth verse and made it the sixth, thus it read in this order--verse five, six, and four. Evidently the early translators/producers of the Septuagint did not want their Bible to end with a curse either. Such reveals the way the Hebrew nation understood this message. They understood the threatened curse, but they also understood the message of hope. The final word then, is a word of warning, a word of love and hope, coupled with a declaration of the possibility of escape from the threatened curse, and a statement of the condition of such escape. It promised the coming of Elijah who would turn the hearts of the people marking the condition by which the curse could be avoided. They had turned from God, but they could return and he would accept them. That was and is the gospel of love.

The Elijah of Malachi was fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist. In Matthew 17:12, Jesus said, " . . . Elias is come already . . ." In speaking of John, the angel said to Zacharias:

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

The similarity of language in Luke 1:17 and Malachi 4:5-6 is striking and demonstrates divine explanation of prophecy.

Malachi's message ended. He had dealt with numerous problems (we have noted only a few of the major ones), told the people of the love and sternness of God, and made the final announcement that God was not abandoning the world, for the day would come when another prophet would be sent.

Between the time of Malachi and the coming of John, four hundred years ran their course, but in the fullness of time God sent his messenger and the way was prepared for Christ. And so it is, that all who will turn to Christ and learn of him, and obey him can return to the Father. They can bask in the sunshine of the remission of their sins, and anxiously await that day when all the faithful will be united with God for evermore.

ARTAXERXES I [ 465 – 424 BC ]      Ezra (458 BC) and Nehemiah (445 BC)

538 BC King Cyrus -- MEDO – PERSIAN EMPIRE

538 BC Zerubbabel (governor), Haggai (prophet), Zechariah (prophet) sent back to Jerusalem to restore worship and rebuild the temple.

478 BC Queen Esther to King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and Mordecai

458 BC Ezra [prophet, ruler, priest, and scribe] sent to Jerusalem to establish worship.

445 BC Nehemiah [prophet, ruler, and cupbearer to Artaxerxes I] – rebuild walls.

430 BC Malachi [prophet] {last of 12 minor prophets}

God refers of Judah as “this people” [Haggai 1:2] and “not my people” in Hosea. Israel was in Egypt as slaves for 430 years and now Judah must wait another 430 years for the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

In Malachi's day, 1. tithes were neglected, 2. divorce was common, 3. intermarriage with foreign women was popular, 4. the priests were corrupt, lazy, careless, and a complaining set of leaders.

BEAUTY (the covenant) had been broken and BANDS (racial walls) had been shattered, and Judah was now back in Jerusalem as God's slave and they would “sit still” for God for 430 years. No other prophets would visit Judah.

(After Malachi, the next prophet would be John the Baptist [Elijah] who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah.)

In 3:1 MALACHI said, “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.” (This refers to John the Baptist)

The question that the people were asking was: “If God loves us, why does He not show it?” MALACHI answers that question.

Malachi uses a style similar to Paul in which an objection is repeated and then answered: “yet ye say”, “but ye say”, “and ye say”. --- at least 10 times.

## **[1: ] Contempt For Temple Sacrifices**

Judah (like Gomer, the wife of Hosea) has gone back home, no longer a trusted wife, but as a slave, condemned to “sit still” for God 430 years until His purpose of redemption is assured in the birth of the Messiah through her flesh.

“burden” of God’s Word for those who are 1. ashamed of it, 2. those who despise it, and 3. those who love and keep it because of the obligations and duties imposed: “For my yoke is pleasant and my load (burden) is light.” [Matt. 11:30]

Malachi shows that “God has loved” Judah (past tense) just as Hosea said, “Your iniquity has never for a moment ceased ... therefore I hate you ... and I shall not love you any more ... your nation is a rotten root and a branch ... I your God do cast you away.” [Hosea 9: 15-16]

God destroyed the Edomites (descendants of Esau).

Amos confirmed that Edom’s wickedness was very great and should be destroyed.

The Herod’s of Christ’s time were descended from Esau’s Edomites (Idumaeans).

Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi all recognized the corrupt and reprobate priesthood who despised God.

The priests offered polluted “bread” or blemished bloody sacrifices of the Mosaic law.

To the priests Malachi seems to be saying: “Seeing that you have accepted and used all these worthless sacrifices and offered them upon God’s alter, why don’t you now pray for God’s favor? You really must have impressed God with the type of offerings you placed on His alter.”

Verse 11 is a Messianic prophecy showing that Gentiles will be accepted into His kingdom where a “pure” offering would be made in the blood of Jesus Christ that takes away sin, and the Lord’s Supper honors that event every Sunday.

Verse 13, “snuffed at it” --- cows who do not like their feed will blow on it to show the detestable nature of the feed, and other cows will not eat it.

The “curse of God” will rest on all who offer to God inferior and blemished service.

## **[2: ] Marriages with Heathen Neighbors**

Malachi, Hosea, Amos, and Micah all showed judgments and punishment that were soon to come upon Judah by the hand of God.

The Jewish priesthood was removed in AD 70.

God cancelled the Levitical covenant of the Jewish priesthood due to total violation (thru the priests) of Levi.

Verse 5, “my covenant was with him” {past tense} NKJV

Verse 8, “you have departed from the way” NKJV ... “you have corrupted the covenant of Levi.”

Israel’s priesthood had succeeded very little better than the pagans in the communication of God’s will for man.

The covenant of Levi had been “corrupted”. Ruined, destroyed, or annulled.

God expected His covenant to be honored by the obedience of them that had received it.

Judah had profaned herself as the sanctuary of God because of the bitter sin between Jews and Arabs in hostile race relations.

God warned against mixed marriages and Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi all terminated those foreign wives among Judah.

Verse 14 and 15, God’s wrath and displeasure is poured out against a man who marries a beautiful young woman and then divorces (“deals treacherously”) to marry another young woman.

God hates divorce (“putting away”). Verse 16

Where is the justice of God when we see the wicked prosper? David said, “It was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God, and considered the latter end.” ... [The Word of God teaches that there is a judgment of Almighty God, upon which occasion the wicked will be punished.]

[3: ] Tithes and National Skepticism

(MALACHI has a number of Messianic passages in the Old Testament.)

God will come suddenly, but before He comes He will send His messenger [John the Baptist] to prepare the way before Him. {Malachi 3:1},

John the Baptist would come in the spirit and the power of Elijah. He would call the people to repentance and point the way to One greater than he. [*“He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will walk before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the*

*disobedient to the wisdom of the upright, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.” Luke 1:16-17 ]*

(John the Baptist = Elijah)

Jesus said, *“But I assure you that Elijah has already come and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written concerning him.”* [Mark 9: 13] King Herod had John the Baptist beheaded.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” {John 1: 29} ...“he...is my superior, for He existed before me.” {John 1:30}

For atonement of sin, the blood of Christ is the one great sacrifice for all men.

Spiritual sacrifices to God are: 1. our faith, 2.. our love of God, 3. our words, 4. our confession of Christ, 5. our baptism, 6. our praise, 7. our contributions, 8. our songs, 9. our prayers, 10. our entire life as a Christian.

Verse 4, the “offering of Judah” is the spiritual sacrifices of the New Testament.

The unchangeableness of God meant that no matter what Israel did, God would preserve a “remnant” of them until the Messiah came.

God’s eternal purpose of redemption could not and would not allow Him to destroy Jacob.

Since the Day of Pentecost, God’s “chosen people” is the remnant of Jews and Gentiles who are baptized into Christ.

The tithe (10%) was to be paid for support of the worship of God because men needed to pay it.

We are to give “freely” and “liberally”, “as God has prospered us” --- [if we fail, we are robbing God.]

(God’s gifts will overflow the capacity of His children to receive them. We will receive 100-fold now and then eternal life.)

*“everyone who listens to my words but does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.”* [Matthew 7: 26]

The “proud”, “arrogant”, “godless” Israelites were living like pagans.

[4: ] The Coming Day of the Lord



“the day cometh” --- final Judgment Day

*“The devil (their deceiver) was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (where also were the beast and the false prophet). They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” ... Death and Hades were thrown into the fiery lake (this second death is the lake of fire). If any one was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the fiery lake.” [Revelation 19: 10 –15]*

(Sun of Righteousness = Dayspring = Messiah)

*“through the tender mercies of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high will visit us, to shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” [Luke 1: 78-79]*

The angel of the Lord {Gabriel} said to the priest Zacharias of John the Baptist: *He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will walk before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the upright, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.” [Luke 1: 16-17] {Zacharias and Elizabeth = parents of John the Baptist}*

To this day the Jews set a plate, goblet, and an empty chair for Elijah, the prophet, during the Feast of Purim.

“the day of the Lord”, “that day”, “the great and notable day”, “the great and terrible day” all refer to the Final Judgment Day.

Artaxerxes I [465 – 424 BC] {sent Ezra (458 BC) and Nehemiah (445 BC) back to Jerusalem to establish worship and rebuild the walls  
--- completed in 445 BC.

OBADIAH 845 BC

JOEL 837 BC

JONAH 800 BC

AMOS 760 BC

HOSEA 750 BC

MICAH 740 – 700 BC {king Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah}

NAHUM 650 BC

HAGGAI 520 BC

MALACHI 430 BC {King Artaxerxes I [465 – 424 BC] MEDO-PERSIAN Empire.

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James Burton Coffman, “Zechariah and Malachi”, 1989, Abilene Christian University Press.

- b. Malachi prophecies that when the Messiah comes He will purify and refine His people in order that they be made righteous.

D. The Eternal Principle of Giving, 3:10. Here is the:

- |                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| 1. <i>Call of God</i>      | → | <i>"Bring the whole tithe..."</i>             |
| 2. <i>Challenge of God</i> | → | <i>"Test me..."</i>                           |
| 3. <i>Promise of God</i>   | → | <i>"I will open the windows of heaven..."</i> |
| 4. <i>Result,</i>          | → | <i>"All nations will call you blessed..."</i> |

- a. The eternal principle of giving? Man gives and God windows! See Psa. 37:25.  
Is this just an Old Testament principle? See Matt. 6:33.

E. A Study on the Law, 4:4-5

1. The law defined? *"statutes and ordinances"*
2. The law began? *"in Horeb"* (Sinai)
3. The law was for? *"all Israel"*
4. The law would end? vs.5 - John the Baptist in preparing the way for the Messiah also prepared the way for the end of the law of Moses. See John 1:17.

• Conclusion

1. Thus, the Old Testament leaves us with a final promise of the coming of the Messiah. The very first promise and the very last, in the Old Testament, concerns HIM. And, yet, what a wealth of material lies in between. From Genesis to Malachi the Old Testament story is a story of a coming Savior - Jesus Christ our Lord.
2. And, so, the prophecy of Malachi brings down the curtain on the Old Testament with a final reminder that sin must be dealt with. When the New Testament opens the scene will be set for the One who alone can cure man's sin.
3. One final thought - God takes care of His own. Read 3:16-18. Are YOU serving God?

INTRODUCTION:

1. Malachi means "My Messenger."
2. The problems of careless priests, skepticism, intermarriage, withholding of tithes, etc. show the conditions at the time Malachi prophesied.
  - a. Read Nehemiah as a background as Malachi and Nehemiah were active at the same time.
  - b. Read the book of Malachi.
  - c. The time was possibly between 456 B.C. and 425 B.C.
3. The style of the book is the dialectic method.
  - a. An affirmation is made.
  - b. An interrogative objection which might be offered.
  - c. Then a refutation of the objection.
  - d. There are seven such forms in the book. 1:2, 3, 6, 7; 2:10-16, 17; 3:7, 8, 13-16.

DISCUSSION:

- I. GOD REALLY LOVES ISRAEL. 1:1-5.
  - A. In view of all that was happening some questioned that God loved Israel.
  - B. God points out his love by saying "I loved Jacob, and yet I hated Esau." The expression "hate" here means "loved less." (cf. Gen. 29:31; Deut. 21:15).
    1. Judah was punished, but restored after 70 years. Jer. 29.
    2. Edom (Esau) was destroyed forever.
- II. UNGODLY PRIEST REBUKED. 1:6-2:9.

(Bill Rogers gives this outline of this portion).

  - A. Jehovah dishonored, and they are so depraved that they inquire, "Wherein?" (v. 6).
  - B. Offer polluted bread--that is, contrary to law. Lev. 1 and 22 forbids certain types of offerings. "Bread" includes all types of offerings.
  - C. They said "table of Jehovah in contemptible." (v. 7) No respect for.
  - D. A challenge to offer to their Persian Pasha their blind and crippled animals. They were offering to GOD, The I Am That I Am, a gift so contemptible that they should have been executed for contempt if offered to Pasha. (v. 8)
  - E. God had rather have doors of temple closed than to have such worship (v. 10). This is nothing but "temple trampling." (Isa. 1:12). Do we have such worship today? Do we use our income for our own pleasures and then give God the scraps and left-overs like we do the dogs and cats?
  - F. Promise of glorious future when Gentiles will worship acceptably to God. (v. 11; cf. Jno. 4:24).
  - G. Hirelings expose their true attitudes: Not satisfied with what they get, and complain of the work involved in offering sacrifices. v. 12-13.
  - H. Man condemned who could do better in his sacrifice. v. 14; cf. 2 Cor. 8:12.

"This oracle of Malachi will never go out of date as long as the world has people who feel that though nothing is too good for our homes, just anything will do for the Lord." (Lewis).
  - I. This is a special oracle for priests.
    1. Their blessings to be cursed. (v. 2:2).
    2. They refused to lay it to heart.
  - J. Contrast between Levi and his descendants as regards covenant.
    1. Levi:
      - a. My covenant with HIM, i.e., guarded as precious thing. (v. 5).
      - b. Of life and peace.
      - c. He feared - revered - the Lord. Contrast with v. 6 of Chapter 1.
      - d. Law of truth in his mouth - Knew Lord's will. Function. Hag. 2:11.
      - e. Unrighteousness not in his lips - that is no crookedness.
      - f. Walked with the Lord. (Amos 3:3).
      - g. Turned many away from iniquity. This is great work. (v. 7).
    2. The PRESENT PRIESTS:
      - a. But YE are turned aside-do not do work should do (v. 8).
      - b. Cause others to stumble.
      - c. In so doing have corrupted covenant of Levi.
  - K. All such religious leaders to be despised. (v. 9).



III. GOD HATES DIVORCE OR PUTTING AWAY. 2:10-16.

- A. The men of Judah were dealing treacherously with the wives of their youth.
- B. "In a world where at least one marriage in three marriages ends in divorce and where the mixed marriage is common in which the effect upon the children is largely ignored, we would do well to listen to Malachi." (Lewis).

IV. SOME OF THE SPECIFIC SINS OF JUDAH ARE SEEN. 2:17-3:18.

- A. A spirit of skepticism about serving God. 2:17-3:6.
- B. Withholding of tithes that belonged to God. 3:7-12.
- C. Stout words against God. 2:13-18.

V. CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. Punishment of the wicked.
- B. The sun of righteousness.
- C. The coming of Elijah.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON 13

TRUE OR FALSE

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Edom was completely destroyed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The return of Judah proved God's love.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The people were giving to God what wouldn't dare offer their governor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. God wanted the temple doors shut.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The people were enjoying their service to God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The people were doing the best they could.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The priests were not respected by the people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Levi had not kept God's covenant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The priest was pictured as the messenger of the Lord.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The messenger of Malachi 3:1 referred to John the Baptist.

THOUGHT & DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS:

- 1. Why did God despise the worship of the people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. How had they profaned the Lord's name? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. What indicates they were giving God the "left-overs"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ What are some ways in which  
Christians can give God the "leftovers" today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. What does the expression "will not lay it to heart" mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How were some husbands dealing treacherously with the wives of their youth? \_\_\_\_\_

What is God's attitude toward divorce? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How had they wearied the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

7. When was the messenger to come? \_\_\_\_\_

What was he to do? \_\_\_\_\_

When would the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant again? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Who would God be a swift witness against? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How were they robbing God? \_\_\_\_\_

How can one rob God today? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What were some saying about serving God? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your attitude about it? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What did they that feared the Lord do? \_\_\_\_\_

What did the Lord do? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Who was the Elijah that was to come? \_\_\_\_\_

What would he do? \_\_\_\_\_

## THE DAY OF THE LORD

### INTRODUCTION

*JAMES MEADOWS*

The subject assigned for this hour reads: "The Day of the Lord" in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Philemon. It is a subject that demands attention because there is such a vast amount of misunderstanding. Errors also abound on every hand about the Day of the Lord.

This study proposes to look at (1) the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament, (2) the Day of the Lord in the New Testament, (3) the Day of the Lord in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Philemon, (4) some errors being taught about the Day of the Lord, and (5) what will occur when the Day of the Lord does come?

### THE DAY OF THE LORD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The "Day of the Lord" is an Old Testament concept. It "... was the day when Yahweh would vindicate his righteous cause and execute impartial judgment (cf. Amos 5:18; Joel 2:31; Mal. 4:5)."

The expression Day of the Lord is found sixteen to twenty-eight times in the prophets, depending on the way the occurrences are counted. Each context must determine the meaning of the phrase.

The Day of the Lord came on the proud and lofty in Judah. "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low. (Isa. 2:12; cf.



Isa. 2:11, 17, 20) The Day of the Lord here probably refers to the judgment of God at the Babylonian captivity.

Babylon felt the Day of the Lord. "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty . . . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13:6-9, 13, 17). The Day of the Lord came when the Medes overthrew the Babylonians.

The Day of the Lord came on Egypt. "For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge himself of his adversaries . . . (Jer. 46:10, cf. Ezek. 30:3).

The false prophets, and those in Israel that followed them, would not be able to stand in the Day of the Lord. "Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel in the battle in the day of the Lord" (Ezek. 13:5).

Obadiah said: "For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head" (Obad. 15). Obadiah uses the Day of the Lord, as do the prophets, to designate a judgment from God. Hailey wrote:

It may be the introduction of judgment or the judgment itself. The "day of Jehovah" is a day in which Jehovah manifests Himself in the overthrow of His enemies. It is a day of terror to the enemies of God but a day of deliverance to the people of God.<sup>2</sup>

"Here as elsewhere in the prophets, the Day of the Lord is a day within history after which history will continue."<sup>3</sup>

The Day of the Lord is the main theme in the book of Joel. There was to be devastation of Judah. The locust scourge was a forerunner of the Day of the Lord, thus an urgent call to repentance (Joel 1:14-15). It was to be a day of darkness and gloom (Joel 2:1-2; cf. 2:11; 3:14). Often the prophets simply referred to "that day" (Isaiah 2:20; 3:18; 4:2; 5:30; 28:5; Amos 2:16; 8:9; Hos. 2:18, 21).

Most of the occurrences of the "Day of the Lord" in the Old Testament have the connotation of judgment (Isa. 13; 34:8; 63:4; Jer. 46:10; 47:4; Ezek. 30:3; Zeph. 1-3). But for the godly there was the other side of hope and deliverance (Isa. 61:2; Mal. 4:1-2; Joel 2:31-32).

A. B. Davidson classified three general uses of the expression:

1. Judgment on Israel in pre-exilic prophets. Amos 3:2; Zeph. 3:12; Isa. 2,3; Hos. 4:3; 2:18 ff.
2. Punishment on Israel's oppressors in exilic writings. Isa. 13; Hag.; Zach. 1-8.
3. Judgment on Israel in post-exilic writings. Mal. 3:2 ff.<sup>4</sup>

Neil Pryor wrote:

In the Old Testament prophets, the Day of the Lord is any day in which God intervenes in history and accomplishes His will on earth . . . Very seldom did the prophets look beyond world history for the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord was almost exclusively to them a time in the near future when God would do great things for His people. The concept of the Day of the Lord as

a day beyond history, at the consummation of history, did not become popular until hope for such a day within history had been virtually abandoned.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE DAY OF THE LORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament the Day of the Lord and the "second coming" (Heb. 9:28) refer to the same time. The Day of the Lord will come "as a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2) and the "second coming" will be as a thief in the night (Matt. 24:42-44). "Interpreted in the light of its context and of the reference to the thief, both here and in Matt. 24, this passage supports the view that 'the day of the Lord' and the 'second coming' are synonymous expressions."<sup>6</sup> The Corinthians will be Paul's rejoicing (glorying) "in the day of the Lord" (2 Cor. 1:14) and the Thessalonians will be his rejoicing "at his coming" (1 Thess. 2: 19-20). The resurrection will take place at the "coming of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:23) and the resurrection will take place at the "last day" (John 6:44).

Many terms are used throughout the New Testament to describe the Day of the Lord. They are: "the day of the Lord" (Acts 2:20; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10), "the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14), "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:8), "the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6), "the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:10; 2:16), "the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 16:14), "that day" (Matt. 7:22; 14:36; 26:29; Luke 10:12; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:18), "the last day" (John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48) "his

day" (Luke 17:24), "the revelation of Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7) "the appearing of Christ" (1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1,8), "the coming of Christ" (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; James 5:7) "the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30), "the day of wrath" (Rom. 2:5), and "the day of judgment" (2 Pet. 2:9).

Even though the Day of the Lord and the second coming are synonymous terms, one must not confuse every coming of the Lord with the second coming. There are at least three non-visible comings of the Lord mentioned in the New Testament: (1) when the church was established (Matt. 10:23; 16:28); (2) at the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:27; 1 Pet. 4:7; James 5:7); to every Christian (John 14:23; Phil. 4:5).

It is also important to note the use of the terms "Day" and "days" in the New Testament. Dr. Strong correctly

points out that the length of time involved in the period denoted by the word 'day' is always defined for us by the context itself. . . . wherever it refers to the second coming it is always in the singular (punctillian) view. An extended period of time, when referred to in the New Testament, is always distinguished by the plural, i.e., days as distinguished from day.<sup>7</sup>

When the New Testament speaks of current or past periods these are always in the plural. It speaks of the "last days" (the Christian age) (Acts 2:16-21; Heb. 1:1-2), the days of Herod (Matt. 2:1), the days of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1; 11:12), the days of the prophets (Luke 4:25; Matt 23:30), the days of tribulation (Matt. 24:19-22,29), the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37), and the days of Christ's earthly ministry (Mark 1:9; Heb. 5:9).

In the New Testament one never reads about the second coming or the Day of the Lord in the plural. This event is always spoken of in the singular (Matt. 7:22; 10:15; Luke 17:24, 30-31; John 6:39; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:20; Rom. 2:5).

#### THE DAY OF THE LORD IN 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night . . . But ye brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief (1 Thess. 5:1-2,4).

There are one hundred thirty six verses in the Thessalonian letters and forty one are directly related to the second coming of Christ which will take place at the last day. Something about the second coming is named in each of the eight chapters (1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 23-24; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1-12; 3:5).

Brother Hugo McCord says there are four specific words employed in the Thessalonian letters in regard to the second coming. They are:

1. Parousia (1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:14; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1,8). It is a compound meaning "being at the side." "The advent of Jesus at Bethlehem (2 Pet. 1:16), and his advent at the end of the world (1 Cor. 15:23), are both called parousia."<sup>e</sup> . . . presence, or event; the official, technical term used to indicate his coming."<sup>9</sup> Parousia is found twenty four times in the New Testament and

unquestionably refers to Christ's second coming sixteen times.

2. Apokalupsis (2 Thess. 1:7) It means an "uncovering" or an "unveiling." It is used to describe the "uncovering" or "unveiling" of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13; 2 Thess. 1:7) at his second visible coming. It ". . ." depicts Christ's appearance in majesty and glory."<sup>10</sup>

3. Epiphaneia (2 Thess. 2:8) It means a "shining on." "The word is used of the first advent of Jesus (2 Timothy 1:10) and of his second advent (1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13), translated as 'appearing'."<sup>11</sup>

4. He Hemera Kuriou (1 Thess. 5:2,4)

The phrase he hemera kuriou (cf. 1, 5:2,4; 2, 1:10; 2:2) means the "day of the Lord," and refers to that day which God has appointed in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained (Acts 17:31). It is the day of the "brightness" (epiphaneia) of his "coming" (parousia) at his "revelation" (apokalupsis).<sup>12</sup>

The certainty of the Day of the Lord or the second coming is repeatedly emphasized in the Thessalonian letters.

Note the following:

1. The Thessalonians were to serve "and to wait for his Son from heaven . . . " (1 Thess. 1:10).
2. They were to be Paul's hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing "in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming" (1 Thess. 2:19).



Acts 17:30-31). Christ will be the judge (Acts 17:31). The word of God will be the standard (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15). All nations will be assembled (Matt. 25:31-46). Each will be judged according to the deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10). The righteous will be rewarded (Matt. 25:34; 2 Cor. 5:10). The wicked will be condemned (Matt. 13:40-42; 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:15; 21:8).

Fourth, the heavens and the earth will be burned up.

Peter wrote:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

#### CONCLUSION

The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament was any day when God intervened in history and accomplished his will. The Day of the Lord in the New Testament refers to the last day of history. The Day of the Lord in the Thessalonian letters is the last day of history or the day when the Lord returns to judge the world.

In view of the certainty and seriousness of the Day of the Lord Christians ought always to watch (Matt. 24:42-41), watch and be sober that the day not overtake them as a thief (1 Thess. 5:4-6). Again Peter wrote:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. Wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:11-12).

## ENDNOTES

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9. Guy N. Woods, The Second Coming And Other Sermons, West Jefferson, N.C.: Winmore Publications, Reprint 1978, p. 18.
10. Ibid., p. 18.
11. McCord, op. cit., p. 225.
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15. Thomas B. Warren, "Premillennialism Defined, Delineated, Developed and defeated," Premillennialism, True or False, 1978, p. 11.

16. Ibid., p. 11.
17. Woods, op. cit., p. 15.
18. Harold Hazelip, "What About the Signs of Matthew 24?" Fort Worth Christian College Lectures, Editor Wendell Winkler, Fort Worth, Texas: Fort Worth Christian College Bookstore, 1968, p.
19. Walter R. Martin, The Kingdom of the Cults, p. 361.
20. Charles Taze Russell, The Day of God, p. 212.
21. Woods, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
22. Welch, op. cit., p. 53.
23. John Allen Chalk, "When The Son of Man Shall Come," Fort Worth Christian College Lectures, Fort Worth, Texas: Fort Worth Christian College Bookstore, 1968, p. 64.

3. As they continued to increase and abound in love toward one another, and toward all men, they would have their hearts established "unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:12-13).
4. Those asleep in Jesus "will God bring with him" (1 Thess. 4:14).
5. Some will be "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15).
6. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . ." (1 Thess. 4:16).
7. "For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2).
8. The Thessalonians were not in darkness that "that day" should overtake them as a thief (1 Thess. 5:4).
9. Paul wanted them to be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).
10. The Lord Jesus "shall be revealed from heaven" (2 Thess. 1:7).
11. He is coming to be "glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:9).
12. Paul beseeched them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:1).
13. Paul assured them that "the day of Christ" was not at hand (2 Thess. 2:2).
14. "That day" would not come before there was a falling away (2 Thess. 3:3).

15. The Lord would destroy that wicked one "with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8).
16. Paul wanted God to direct their hearts unto love and unto "the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5).

### ERRORS

Numerous errors have been taught in regard to the second coming of Christ. These errors need to be presented and answered.

#### The Rapture

Hal Lindsey, in his book The Late Great Planet Earth, vividly describes the rapture:

Rapture . . . is not found in the Bible . . . The word rapture means to snatch away or take out. But whether we call this event "the Rapture" or the "translation" makes no difference - the important thing is that it will happen. Drivers will disappear from cars, students will suddenly vanish from classes, a football quarterback will be no more, etc.<sup>13</sup>

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote:

The theory is that when the Lord comes "for his saints," it will be the time of his "presence" - the parousia. But when he comes "with his saints," it will be the time of his "manifestation" - the epiphaneia. And it is argued that there will be a seven year period between the parousia and the epiphaneia. This period is what is called "rapture of the saints" in the heavens with the Lord, while the tribulation is blasting out its fury on the earth.<sup>14</sup>

The "rapture" is also called "the first part of the first stage of the Lord's second coming - the taking of the saints to heaven is called by premillennialists 'the rapture'."<sup>15</sup>

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 is a key rapture text.

Does it teach the rapture?

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we even be with the Lord.

First, this text is not discussing both the wicked and the righteous. Second, the text is discussing those that are asleep in Jesus (vs. 14,15,16) and those that are alive in Christ (v. 15,17). Third, "the dead in Christ shall rise first" (v. 16) does not refer to rising before the wicked dead, but to their being raised before the righteous living are caught up. After they are raised both are "caught up together" (v. 17). Fourth, other verses show that both the righteous and the wicked will be raised at the same time (John 5:28-29). Fifth, it teaches that we will be caught up to be with the Lord forever, not seven years.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 teaches that the epiphaneia and the parousia are at the same time - not a split second between. "And then shall the wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (epiphaneia) of his coming (parousia).



1 Thessalonians 3:13 destroys the "for saints" and "with saints" argument. "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." The word coming here is parousia. Paul states that the Lord will come "with his saints" at the parousia, but the millennial theory says he will come "for his saints" at the parousia and "with his saints" at the epiphaneia. Thus Paul, according to the millennial theory, has the Lord coming "with his saints" seven years too early.

#### Split Resurrection

Premillennialists teach a "split resurrection" or "two parts" of the "first resurrection". Warren writes:

The "first resurrection" (mentioned in Rev. 20) will take place, according to premillennialism, at "the rapture." As per premillennialists this means: when Christ comes for his saints. All saints who have died (both during the Old Testament and New Testament periods) will be raised from the dead. All saints then living will be changed. This is the so-called "first part" of the first resurrection. The resurrection of "the tribulation saints" later will be the "second part" of the first resurrection.<sup>16</sup>

The Bible clearly reveals that both the righteous (there will not be two stages of raising the righteous) and the wicked will be raised at the same time. Jesus said:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:39-40).

Brother Guy N. Woods commenting on these verses,

wrote:

Attention is for the moment directed to the comprehensiveness of this statement: (1) An hour is coming when (2) all that are in the tombs shall come forth and (3) of this number those who have done good rise to eternal life, while (4) those who have done evil come forth to judgment (damnation, King James Version). This simple analysis leads irresistably to the conclusion that any theory of the second coming which would assume an interval of time between the resurrection of the good and the bad is false.<sup>17</sup>

### "Signs" Preceding The Return

Prophetical radio and television preachers, as well as others, are always talking about the signs preceding the Lord's second coming. They are convinced that the signs mentioned in Matthew 24 are signs that will precede the second coming of Christ. Is this true?

First, Jesus answers two questions asked by the disciples in Matthew 24. The first question concerned "when shall these things be" (Matt. 24:1-3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7); the second question concerned the "end of the world" (Matt. 24:3). Jesus answered the first question in Matthew 24:4-35 and the second question in Matthew 24:36 through Matthew 25:46.

Second, Matthew 24:34 divides the chapter into two main sections. All of the events described in the first thirty four verses would happen before that generation died (Matthew's use of the term generation shows that he was referring to the present generation - Matthew 1:17; 12:38-45; 23:36). The signs mentioned in Matthew 24 are listed before verse thirty four.

Third, Jesus is very definite regarding the events and time<sup>of</sup> his judgment in section one (Matt. 24:4-35). In section two (Matt. 24:36-25:46) He is very indefinite. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36; cf. 24:44,50; 25:13).

Fourth, the Lord gives four explicit signs by which they would know the end had come: (1) the gospel would have been preached in all the world (Matt. 24:14; ch. Col. 1:23); (2) the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel (Matt. 24:15); (3) the great tribulation (Matt. 24:21-29a); (4) the darkening of the sun and moon and the stars falling (Matt. 24:29). He also gives some general signs that might deceive them (Matt. 24:4-13). The one specific sign that would let them know the time was come was seeing "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matt. 24:15). When they saw this sign they were to flee quickly into the mountains (Matt. 24:16-20). Question: If this refers to the final judgment day then how can one escape it by fleeing quickly, and how can one flee into mountains which will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10)?

Fifth, if there are signs of the second coming of the Lord then how can his coming be like a "thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2; Matt. 24:43)? Hazelip wrote:

This comparison, which is also made in I Thess. 5:1-3 and II Pet. 3:10, has no moral connotation, but rather implies that as a thief gives no advance announcement of his visit, neither will Christ give a prior notice of his second coming.<sup>10</sup>

The date of Christ's coming is unknown. Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). It is egotistical and presumptuous for man to think that he knows what even the angels do not know. Yet many would-be prophets have rushed in where angels fear to tread and set dates for the Lord's return.

William Miller, the real founder of Seventh Day Adventism, predicted:

I believe the time can be known by all who desire to understand and to be ready for His coming. And I am fully convinced that sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come and all His saints with Him.<sup>19</sup>

He proved himself to be a false prophet!

Charles Taze Russell, of the Jehovah's Witnesses, thought the Lord came to "the kingdom in 1914, but unseen to men." He also stated that "from 1874 is the time of the Lord's second presence."<sup>20</sup>

The time of our Lord's return remains hidden in the inscrutable counsel of his own will. Even though man can learn something about the manner of his appearing, the purposes of his appearing, and the fact of his appearing, the time element is not revealed (Matt. 24:36). Woods wrote:

It is not for man to know "the times or seasons which the Father hath in his own power" (Acts 1:6), and the Day will come as "a thief in the night," who obviously does not send ahead an announcement of his intention to burglarize! He will come when men are saying "Peace and safety," (I Thess. 5:1-3) unaware that sudden destruction is upon them . . .

it must forever remain that so far as the New Testament is concerned it will be at a time unannounced, and on a day unanticipated.<sup>21</sup>

### THE EVENTS OF THE LORD'S DAY

The day of the Lord will be the last day of history.

Alonzo D. Welch wrote:

When the future shall have been exhausted and all that remains is the present, this will be the last day of history. The Christian religion is a time-conscious religion. It recognizes the significance of the past, is challenged by the decisiveness of the present and places great stress upon the future. . . . The teachings of the New Testament concerning the last things center around the "day of the Lord."<sup>22</sup>

What are the events of that last great day?

First, the return of the Lord falls logically at the head of the list. Our Lord promised to return (John 14:1-3), at his ascension the two men in white announced his return (Acts 1:9-11), and the apostles preached his return (Heb. 9:28). "In the New Testament there are over 1,800 references to our Lord's return . . . the fact is certain . . . Jesus is coming again."<sup>23</sup>

Second, the resurrection will take place on that day. Jesus promised the resurrection at the last day (John 6:44). The Thessalonians were promised that the dead would be raised when Christ returned (I Thess. 4:13-18). Both the righteous and the wicked will be raised at the same hour (John 5:28-29). At the time of the resurrection the living will be changed (I Cor. 15:34-58).

Third, the judgment of the world will take place on the day of the Lord. It is appointed of God (Heb. 9:27;