

LESSON TEXT: Zechariah 1:1---4:14

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

John Foster Dulles once remarked: "Peace is often identified with the imposition by strong nations of their benevolent rule upon the weaker. Most of these efforts collapsed in war. The best known effort of this kind was the *Pax Romana*--Peace of Rome. And a *Pax Britannica* for a century kept relative peace and a world order which promoted world-wide economic development. But the world of today is very different from the world of past centuries. It cannot be ruled." Mr. Dulles is wrong! God constantly rules this world moving it one day, month and year at a time, toward its redemption through Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Savior).

That is what our lesson is all about in Zechariah, chapters 1, 2, and 3. These chapters are filled with highly *symbolic* and *apocalyptic-style* language--about horses, horns, smiths, measuring lines, angels, and priests. Once you understand Zechariah's mission and his *metaphorical* language it becomes clear that God is speaking through the prophet about his governance of the world toward redemption in the Messiah.

Zechariah is also *eschatological* in nature. *Eschatological* is just a big word meaning, words about **end-of-an-era** things. Zechariah is predicting things transpiring in his own time that will have a *future* impact on the end-of-the-Old Testament-era (i.e., the *first* coming of the Messiah). The prophet is prodding his people to rebuild the temple of God and the city of Jerusalem after the return from the exile--he is a contemporary of Haggai, Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah. They must rebuild their temple and city and reinstate the authority of the word of God because they have a glorious Messianic destiny to fulfill. From their nation and people will be born into the world, the Anointed-One-of-God (Messiah). He will be the Lord and Savior of the whole world, but in order to do so he will have to be betrayed by his own and be pierced (Zech. 12:10-11).

God rules this world is the essence of Zechariah's message. No power, visible or invisible--not even Satan--will be able to thwart his redemptive program from coming to pass.

QUESTIONS:

1. How did the words of God overtake the fathers of Zechariah and his people? 1:1-6
2. What do the four horsemen, symbolize about God's dealing with the nations that were at ease? 1:7-17
3. Who are the four horns and the four smiths and what are they doing? 1:18-21
4. Why measure Jerusalem? 2:1-5
5. Who is the apple of God's eye and why are many nations going to join them? 2:6-13
6. What is Satan doing standing at the right hand of Joshua in Zechariah's vision? 3:1-2
7. Why was Joshua clothed in filthy garments? 3:3-5
8. Who is the Branch and what does he have to do with the Lord removing the guilt of the land in a single day? 3:6-10
9. Why associate a lamp-stand and two olive trees with Not by might, nor by power.. and the day of small things? 4:1-14

Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1811-1896, authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and many other works, sister of the famous preacher,

Henry Ward Beecher, wrote, "The Bible divides men into two classes; those who trust in themselves and those who trust in God. The one class walk by their own light, trust in their own strength, fight their own battles, and claim to have no confidence otherwise. The other, not neglecting to use the wisdom and strength which God has given them, still trust His wisdom and strength to carry on. The one class goes through life orphans, the other has a Father."

LESSON TEXT: Zechariah 5:1--8:23

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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

There was a Scotchman who had formerly been a notable character, a prize fighter and a gambler. Changed by the grace of God, he became a mighty soul-winner, and on one occasion he was praying just prior to speaking. Just before he arose to speak, someone sent an envelope up to the platform. On opening it he found it contained a long list of sins and crimes that he had committed in that very city. At first he felt that he must run away, but stepping boldly to the front of the platform he said, "Friends, I am accused of crimes and sins committed in this very city. I will read them to you." One after another he read these charges, and at the conclusion of each he said, "I am guilty." When he had finished the whole list, he paused for a moment and then said, "You ask how I dare come to you and speak of righteousness and truth, with a list of crimes like that against my name? I will tell you: *'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.'*"

These chapters in Zechariah reveal from God that no human being is prepared to serve God and worship God until he has received God's forgiveness. In these chapters the prophet flits back and forth from the need of people in his day to purge themselves of sin and live holy lives, to the future Messianic age in which God will have a holy people for his own. Zechariah is attempting to set the returned-exiles on the right path of service and pure worship according to the word of God so they will be able to fulfill their Messianic destiny. The prophet sees a day (8:20-23) when strong nations (i.e., Gentiles) will seek the Lord because some in Judah have kept the prophecies of Zechariah.

The lesson for the church of Christ in the 21st century is essentially the same. If the church will seek holiness and service she will attract people to her from all over the world. She will not need gimmicks or compromise of the truth to draw people to her--all she needs is the message that God has forgiven sin by his grace and this forgiveness may be appropriated by faith and obedience.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the flying scroll symbolize? 5:1-4. Is there a message for the church in this?
2. Why is wickedness taken to the land of Shinar? 5:5-11
3. Who are the four chariots sent to patrol the four winds of heaven? 6:1-8. Why wasn't the red horsed chariot sent to patrol?
4. Why did Zechariah have to picture the high priest and the Branch with peaceful understanding between them both. 6:9-13
5. Why did the people ask the Lord about fasting and mourning 7:1-7
6. What were the people supposed to learn from the answer the Lord gave through Zechariah? 7:8-14
7. How was the Lord going to change his dealings with the remnant from the way he dealt with their fathers? 8:1-13
8. What would be the result if these Jews of Zechariah's day did as the Lord directed them about holiness in their lives? 8:14-23. Is that still true today?

**"Purer in heart, O God, Help me to be;
May I devote my life Wholly to Thee:
Watch Thou my wayward feet, Guide me with counsel sweet;
Purer in heart Help me to be.**

**Purer in heart, O God, Help me to be;
Teach me to do Thy will Most lovingly;
Be Thou my friend and guide, Let me with The abide;
Purer in heart Help me to be.**

**Purer in heart, O God, Help me to be,
Until thy holy face One day I see:
Keep me from secret sin, Reign Thou my soul within;
Purer in heart Help me to be."**

--Mrs. A. L. Davidson--James H. Fillmore, 1849-1936

LESSON TEXT: Zechariah 9:1---11:17

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Before the advent of the tape recorder, a man bought a machine that enabled him to cut his own phonograph records. He'd listened to Winston Churchill's famous speech over the radio and recorded it. But the record cracked, and if you played it you heard Churchill saying, "Our aim is victory, victory, victory, victory, victory." When you read these chapters in Zechariah you seem to hear the word, like the refrain of a broken record—"Victory, victory, victory, victory."

When the Moors set out to invade Spain, their general had them ferried across the narrow mouth of the Mediterranean. He set up a beachhead on a narrow ledge or rock below Gibraltar. Then he sent his tiny fleet back. Marching northward, the Moors met the Spanish defenders. The Moorish general said, "Before us is the enemy; behind us is the sea. We have only one choice: to win!" And they did!

Zechariah predicts that the King of the faithful remnant will come to them triumphant and victorious, humble and riding on a colt (9:9). His dominion shall be from sea to sea...to the ends of the earth. He will be victorious over enemies from without and within. This King will win this total spiritual victory by becoming the shepherd doomed to slaughter. (11:4ff).

The English are an interesting people. They celebrate two defeats as if they were victories. One is Scott's fatal attempt to reach the South Pole. The other is the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War. They were heroic defeats, but defeats nevertheless. It appears to unbelievers that Christians celebrate a defeat when they rejoice in a humiliated Christ suffering crucifixion. But that was not defeat; it was "victory, victory, victory, victory!" So, Christian, we have only one choice--to win the race that is set before us--AND VICTORY IS ALREADY ASSURED!

To the victor belong the responsibilities! --Al Bernstein

QUESTIONS:

1. How do you know this text (9:1-17) applies to Jesus Christ, the Messiah? Why does Zechariah associate judgment of all those ancient peoples with the coming of the Messiah?
2. How can the King *command* peace to the nations? 9:10-13
3. Why does Zechariah speak of Christ's victory in such bloody terminology? 9:14-17
4. Who are these shepherds against whom the Lord's anger is hot? 10:1-5
5. Who is, really, someday, to be as many as of old? 10:6-12
6. Why did the Lord say to Zechariah, Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter? 11:1-7
7. Who annulled what covenant? 11:8-11
8. To whom, ultimately, will the wages of 30 shekels of silver be paid? 11:12-14
9. Who are the worthless shepherds who desert the flock? 11:15-18

**"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat...
What is our policy?...to wage war against a monstrous tyranny
...What is our aim?...Victory, victory at all costs, victory
in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard
the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival."**

--Winston Churchill, from a speech in the
House of Commons, 13 May 1940 at the
beginning of "The Battle for Britain" in
the Second World War.

Churchill's words are *apropos* for the Christian warfare
of faith and obedience to Christ's commandments

LESSON TEXT: Zechariah 12:1---14:21

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

A laboring man was having trouble with his eyes. He went to see an optometrist who said: "There are two cataracts growing over your eyes, and your only hope of good sight is to go to Dr. _____, an ophthalmologist. I would advise you to take plenty of money with you, for the fee will be heavy." The man had \$200 in the bank, which he had been saving for a rainy day. That day had come. He drew it out and went to see the specialist. After examining his eyes, the ophthalmologist remarked: "I am not sure that you can pay the fee. I never accept less than \$1300." "Then I must go blind and remain so, for I have only \$200," said the man. But the compassionate specialist replied, "You cannot come up to my terms, and I cannot come down to yours, but there is another way open to us--I can perform the operation gratis, and that is what I am willing to do." So, fallen mankind cannot come up to the conditions laid down for him in the divine law, and God cannot in His righteousness and holiness set aside the law and accept even the best that people could give. There was another way open; God found a way through the Lord Jesus Christ to pay the price of man's sin and give him the free gift of salvation through faith in His Son.

God "poured out a spirit of compassion" for mankind by "piercing" Jesus Christ and "opened a fountain...to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness." Redemption by the grace of God, appropriated by mankind through faith and obedience, is the message of Zechariah chapters 12 through 14. These chapters in Zechariah are *all Messianic*--they speak in prophetic, symbolic, apocalyptic terminology of the **first** coming of the Messiah--*not* the second coming! If you were to underline every connecting phrase like, Then, and On that day, from the very last phrase of the book in chapter fourteen--**back** to Zech. 9:9, the indubitable Messianic prophecy, you would see that this whole section, chapters 9-14, is clearly about the **first** coming of Christ. Remember, the literary style is symbolic and apocalyptic (i.e., metaphorical).

**The Gospel is neither a discussion nor a debate.
It is an announcement!**

QUESTIONS:

1. When would Jerusalem become a cup of reeling, a heavy stone, and a blazing pot to all the peoples round about? 12:1-6
2. How would the house of David be *like* God? 12:7-9. And when?
3. Who is the one to be pierced? 12:10-14. Why would there be so much mourning? (See John 19:37).
4. On which day would the fountain be opened for the house of David to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness? 13:1
5. What would the fountain have to do with removing prophets? 13:2-6
6. When did the refining of God's people take place? 13:7-9
7. What are the great catastrophic events predicted in 14:1-16? When did they take place?
8. Why would some from the nations survive and go to Jerusalem year after year to worship the King? 14:16-21. When did this occur?

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel=s veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains,
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more:
Be saved, to sin no more,
Be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme.
And shall be till I die:
And shall be till I die,
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."
---William Cowper, 1781-1800 ---Lowell Mason, 1792-1872