

## Zechariah – Commentary by Dr. Chuck baynard

### Quotes in the New Testament

#Zec 8:16 in #Eph 4:25

#Zec 9:9 in #Mt 21:5 Joh 12:14,15

#Zec 11:12,13 in #Mt 27:9

#Zec 12:10 in #Joh 19:37 Re 1:7

#Zec 13:7 in #Mt 26:31 Mr 14:27

### Commentary

#### INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 1

In this chapter, after the account of the prophet, and the time of the prophecy by him, are an exhortation of the people of the Jews to repentance; the vision of a rider upon a red horse, and the intercession of the angel of the Lord for Jerusalem; and another vision of the enemies of the Jews, and of their deliverers. In #Zec 1:1 is the general inscription of the book; in which an account is given of the time of its writing, and of the writer of it: then follows the exhortation to repentance, enforced from the wrath of God, which came upon their fathers for not hearkening to the Lord, and turning from their evil ways; and from the advantage that would be received thereby, the Lord would return to them; and from the certain accomplishment of the divine word; for, though both their fathers and prophets died, the word of the Lord had its sure effect, #Zec 1:2-6 and next the vision of the rider on the red horse is presented; the year, month, day, and night, in which it was seen, are mentioned, #Zec 1:7 and the rider is described by his form, a man; by the horse he rode upon, a red one; by the place he stood in among the myrtle trees in the bottom; and by his attendants behind, red horses, speckled and white, #Zec 1:8. The interpretation of which last is given to the prophet by the angel, by the man among the myrtle trees, and by the answer of them to the angel of the Lord themselves, #Zec 1:9-11. After which the angel is represented as making intercession for Jerusalem, who is answered by good and comfortable words, #Zec 1:12,13 upon which the prophet is bid to publish the jealousy of the Lord for Jerusalem; his displeasure at the heathens for afflicting them; his promise to return to the Jews, that the temple and city of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and other cities of Judea, which should enjoy great prosperity, #Zec 1:14-17 and the chapter is concluded with a vision of four horns, signifying the enemies of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; and of four carpenters that should destroy them, #Zec 1:18-21.

#### Chapter one

1 ¶ In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

October-November 529BC Iddo: mentioned in #2Ch 9:29 12:15 13:22 is thought to be the father of Zechariah the prophet. Zechariah is after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.

2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

Meaning the fathers who were in the captivity because of their disobedience to God. This is a warning for this generation to not be like their fathers.

3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

“Turn ye unto me,” by repentance, and acknowledgment of former sins; by reformation for the future; by attending to the worship and service of God, and seeking to glorify him. Jewish literature words this "return to my worship. “I will return to you,” is not the condition for God’s turning His blessing toward them but is an encouragement for them to return to God and not sin as their fathers did. God most often points to previous chastisement as a warning against future sin as well as holding forth the promise of His blessings for obedience to His will. God’s love is not conditioned this way and is steadfast though as earthly parents God will discipline unruly children. Thus human parents will often remind a child of what happened the last time they disobeyed rather than issue a threat. God in the Bible at times however does issue warnings for disobedience as well as the blessings for obedience. A person would think that the blessing would be enough to entice every other person to obey, however for many it takes the negative consequence to help them receive the promise. God in His perfect understanding of His creation and from the greatest of grace in mercy then goes to the extra length of issuing warnings to help those of lesser ability make the right choice. We see this difference of personality in children where the one obeys at the slightest suggestion that doing a certain thing is what their parents desire while another child in the same family pushes the limits and without warnings and threats would wander far from the family boundaries of behavior.

4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and [from] your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

A reference to the fathers who lived before the captivity and who went into the captivity because they would not listen to the warnings of God, much less obey God because of God’s love and mercy already shown to

them. Notice however how God from grace alone does issue warnings and call His people to repent before the chastisement of is applied for disobedience. God had given to His people His holy word and they knew what to do and there was no excuse for their disobedience and ignorance of the will of God was not a possibility. God would have been honorable and just to simply have punished the sinners, but instead showed His infinite mercy and called them to repent.

5 Your fathers, where [are] they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

Pointing out that their fathers had died in captivity apart from the blessing of God. It is taught by the Jews that many used the excuse that the prophets died in the same captivity and in the same way as the fathers so that there was no reward for obeying God. This seems to be in agreement with this question form God that is rhetorical in nature, that is the answer is already known and the prophets did not live forever but indeed as the more common man pointed out died in the captivity. God answers in verse six however that His word through the prophets did indeed live and that the prophets were able to point to this word and remind their fathers why they were in captivity. Throughout the Bible it is a constant that the word of God is sure and without change. The fact then that the messenger was merely man did not take away the divine nature of God's word and the sureness of that word.

6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

As noted above this is in answer to the question in verse five but also points out that god deals with His people in a direct relation to their obedience to Him. This can be seen in the wisdom literature as the principle of reaping what you sow, and in the end times as being judged according to the works a person has performed while in the flesh. This is not meant to do away with the natural flow of life in the flesh, which will have adversity and afflictions coming to God's people as well as all other mankind. The curse is still in force and the natural ebb and flow of the world put into motion by God is not set-aside for God's people. The difference is that god's people have hope and such adversity will bring them humbly before God while those outside God's covenant family will rant and rave at God as if it is their right to demand better treatment from God.

7 ¶ Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which [is] the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

“Sebat” Meaning from the New moon of February until the new moon of March by our calendar this is most of January and part of February. This difference of naming and counting months and years accounts for much of the confusion of dates for events in the Bible. This is the first mention of a month by name by one of the prophets of the Bible. So an exact line cannot be established between a lunar calendar and the present Julian calendar. Most dates are thus approximations at best. Before this book was written it was always simply called the first, second, third, etc. not by name when mentioning a month. This prophecy, and the visions following to the end of the sixth chapter, were three months after the former prophecy, or more, if that was on the first day of the eighth month; and just two months after the foundation of the temple was laid, #Hag 2:18: "in the second year of Darius.

8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that [were] in the bottom; and behind him [were there] red horses, speckled, and white.

Meaning the night of 24 Sebat Zechariah had a vision. The grove of Myrtle trees in a bottom is thought to mean the estate of the Jews being very low at the this time. The prophecy begins with “Behold” or pay attention something important is about to be said. The Jews were like this Myrtle grove surrounded on all the heights by others of a statelier statue over shadowing them and hampering their rebuilding of the city and temple. There is also some importance attached to the man on the horse. The Jews taught this was at least the archangel Michael and not just any angel. This was seen as the angel of the Lord or the Angel of the covenant almost of deity himself. He is also seen as an advocate of the people with God and is a type of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is seen riding to denote his majesty and glory as a king going into battle for example. A divine person riding is also an indication of their swiftness and ability to come to the aid of the people most hastily. Many see this as an Old Testament appearance of Christ the true advocate of God’s people here appearing as a man in signifying His willingness to take on human flesh for His people, as indeed He will at His incarnation. “He stood among the Myrtle trees,” or among His people. In their lowly circumstance of the present, God was with them in person and ready to give His swift and powerful help. Thus the beginning of this prophecy the symbolism shows God is with the Jews and they should thus be encouraged to go about the restoration of the city and the temple. The Jews it can be seen from their early teachings on this passage understood this symbolism and that the Myrtle grove was their nation in its present circumstance. The others mounted were to signify the army of the Lord was ready to defend them. Some put significance to the colors and see red as the blood of those dying for the Lord and the white as the approval of God in giving to them white

robes. We see this color symbolically repeated in the visions in Revelation. It is plain from the sparse words, yet the emphasis placed on this simple vision that Zechariah knew what was meant and apparently so did the Jews of that time. Afterwards the teachers among the Jews would literally fill books with all that this beginning meant. Hindsight is always perfect and prophecy can be made to fit many historical facts. The writings of the Jews near the time are of importance because they show to us what it meant to that people in that place. Here then we get our understanding of the passage and what God meant to show to His people in that circumstance, that is that even in their present estate of lowliness He was with them, that He knew their situation and was there as their very present comfort and help. That God is immutable, that is without change then becomes our comfort today no matter what the present circumstance, we can know from human history and the Word of God that God is with us and will help us through this present darkness.

9 Then said I, O my lord, what [are] these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these [be].

Zechariah asks the angel to explain what he is seeing.

10 And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These [are they] whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

A great honor is given the prophet here as the angel is prevented from speaking and the Lord himself (the man in the grove) gives the explanation to Zechariah. These then are the angels of God sent to watch over man and to serve man with good on earth. Sowing love and peace not the disillusionment and misery that Satan and the fallen angels who also are said to go to and fro through the earth are constantly doing to the detriment of God's people. Here is a powerful help from God equal to the supernatural enemy of the devil and his minions that beset the efforts of the saints on earth. In other words once more the saints are assured the battle belongs to the Lord and they can watch the Lord fight their battles for them. They are not then to be dismayed at the size or strength of the enemy at the gates, for God is their shield and portion.

11 And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

The world being still and at rest gives credence to the dating of this book, as there were no wars among the known nations of the earth at that time. The angels then having gone about their missions as assigned by God and observing the earth make the report of no wars in progress, though the Jews are being hindered there is peace on earth and they can go about

obeying God and rebuilding the city and the temple. There is no conquering army awaiting them to take them into captivity or to impress them into the service of some king at war. Nothing of weight hinders their continuing the task given to them by God of rebuilding Jerusalem.

12 Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

The angel on the red horse cries out to God giving to God the circumstance of the people. This points to Christ making intercession for His people in the New Testament and especially as Christ points out their achievements and prays for all people in John 17. It shows God providing the intercessor, their advocate, making petition for them even as we are promised the Holy Spirit continues to do for present day saints. As God provided the sacrifice for Abraham, so god has always provided the only real advocate and sacrifice for the sins of man.

13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me [with] good words [and] comfortable words.

The effect of the Angel of the Lord's intercession (Christ's intercession) was communicated to the angel (messenger) who spoke to the prophet. God continues then to communicate His answer to the intercession of Christ for His people through His messengers to the church (angels/preachers) today. The whole system of communication between god and His people is here laid before us so that when it comes to be in the New Testament it should be no wonder and never doubted because God has shown it to us from before. We see this somewhat in the first duty of the elders in the church being that they are to represent the mind of Christ to the congregation. This sequence being more is more clearly pointed to by Paul in noting that God gave to the church preachers. Paul's instruction to Timothy concerning elders knowing the word of God that they might dutifully instruct the church can also be seen in this line of communication of God to a messenger then to the people of God.

14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

This denotes God's love for His chosen people. The Israel of the Old Testament is not an ethnic people but the chosen people of God and thus the church is the Israel (God's people) of the New Testament. This is why Paul said the Gentiles had been grafted into that tree. Not as if they had been changed and were now of another culture, but were grafted in, made part of God's people. Thus we read in another place that those who were not a people are now a people. God knows and loves His people. Present

circumstance does not mean God has forgotten or does not love His people.

15 And I am very sore displeased with the heathen [that are] at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

God is upset with the heathen because in their prosperity they are not worshipping Him but continue in their godless ways. God says He was only a little upset with the Jews and used these same heathen to punish the Jews with the captivity, but now is even more upset with those whom He formally sued to punish the Jews for their disobedience.

16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

God is showing His mercy to His people. Not because they deserve it but from His endless grace alone and has returned them to the land. The foundation of the temple had been laid about two months before this prophecy was given (Haggai 2:18). The temple will be rebuilt despite the hindrances of this heathen people because God said so. The being stretched from it (the temple) meaning that the whole city would be rebuilt and that the rebuilding would be decent and in order not in haste, but perfectly and systematically.

17 Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

18 ¶ Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

The beginning of another vision. Four horns or powers. The Jews interpret this as four kingdoms of great wealth and power

19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What [be] these? And he answered me, These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

This represents those who at various times have destroyed Jerusalem and taken the Jews captivity. It does not appear to mean only the present captivity from which the Jews have just returned from.

20 And the LORD showed me four carpenters.

Four blacksmiths would be a more accurate translation here. This indicates the horns of the beginning may have been of Iron which were once literally used to crush the gates of Jerusalem. The blacksmiths would crush and break these iron horns into pieces. Note the number four in both parts of this prophecy for earthly completeness. Even the Jews of old recognized these four carpenters (blacksmiths) as indicative of the age of the Messiah. This is also an indication that past as well as the present or even future displacements of the Jews is included in the prophecies.

21 Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up [their] horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

The angel explains these carpenters best translated workmen or builders in this verse have come to rebuild Jerusalem (the Jewish nation). Where before no one dared or even could raise up even a small statue to God now a city and a people would be raised up to God.