

The Minor Prophets

ZECHARIAH

- I. Central Message: Words of encouragement to those rebuilding the temple and a look into the future and the coming Messiah.
- II. Introduction
 - A. About the prophet
 1. name means, "Whom Jehovah Remembers"
 2. of the tribe of Levi, making him both prophet and priest
 3. contemporary of Haggai, prophesying to Judah during their return from Babylonian captivity
 - B. About the book
 1. written two months after Haggai began his book
 2. 84 times Zechariah attributes his message either to God or an angel
 3. the longest of the 12 books of the "minor prophets"
 4. sorely abused by premillennialists
 5. two sections
 - a. chapters 1-8 (relative to their immediate situation)
 - b. chapters 9-14 (much emphasis on pointing toward the Messiah)
 - C. As with Haggai, this book should be read in the context of the book of Ezra
- III. First Section (chapters 1-8)
 - A. 1:1-6
 1. two months after Haggai's first message and a month or less after his 2nd
 2. apparently the discouragement mentioned in Haggai 2:1ff was still affecting the work for again they needed reminding to turn to God
 3. the people are taken back in history
 - a. "The only thing we learn from history is that we never learn anything from history."
 - b. but if we are willing to learn from the failures and successes of those past, we can benefit greatly
 4. their fathers had turned their ears from the warnings and were punished
 - a. they should realize that they too will be punished if they do not remain faithful
 - b. is this not still a message for us even today?
 - i. Romans 15:4 - "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..."
 - ii. many times the New Testament writers and figures of faith appealed to the past to warn those in the present
 - A. Matthew 24:36-39 (the days of Noah before the flood)
 - B. Luke 17:32 - "Remember Lot's wife"
 - C. II Peter 2:4-9 - the punishment of the disobedient
 5. verse 6 shows that everything took place just as the prophets had said it would
 - a. this being true, it would happen again if this generation turned from God

- b. the Lord constantly discourages complacency and smugness and encourages us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12) and "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10) for "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12)
- B. 1:7-17 (the first of eight visions seen in the night by Zechariah (THEME: Judah should be patient for they will once again be blessed.))
 - 1. the man riding the horse (the angel of the Lord) is considered by many to have been Jesus
 - a. several passages which show Jesus' involvement in the affairs of men prior to His coming to earth in the flesh (Genesis 18; 22:11,15,16; Exodus 13:21; 14:19; 23:20ff; Joshua 5:13,14)
 - b. "angel" also means "messenger" so Jesus served in these places as messenger
 - i. He should not be thought of as being on the order of an angel like Gabriel or Michael
 - ii. angels were created (Hebrews 1:7)
 - iii. Jesus is eternal (Colossians 1:17)
 - iv. Jesus is superior to the angels (Hebrews 1:4)
 - 2. the myrtle tree was associated with goodness and blessing
 - a. Isaiah 41:19; 55:13
 - b. used here, they seem to represent peace
 - 3. the colors of the other horses
 - a. red = warring, bloodshed
 - b. white = peace, victory
 - c. speckled = an intermediate condition wherein there are elements of strife and yet peace persists
 - 4. the report of the horsemen is that the earth was at peace for the present time
 - a. however, the land of Judah was still in confusion
 - b. the temple had not yet been rebuilt
 - c. the shaking of the nations foretold by Haggai (2:6ff) had not yet occurred
 - d. and the angel of the Lord was asking, "How long will it be before Judah is once again prosperous and in their land?"
 - 5. the angel is given a good response and then turns to Zechariah to inform him what message he is to take to the people
 - a. God loves Judah and wants the best for them (verse 14)
 - b. the heathen are going to be overthrown because, even though they had been appointed by God for the chastisement of His people, they had gone too far and abused their power (verse 15)
 - c. the temple and Jerusalem will be rebuilt (verse 16)
 - d. Judah shall once again be prosperous (verse 17)
 - 6. each of these prophecies was fulfilled
- C. 1:18-21 - the second vision (THEME: The oppressors of God's people will be overthrown.)
 - 1. the four horns
 - a. these were used to represent power (I Kings 22:11 - Zedekiah had made horns of iron to show Ahab that by those horns he would conquer Syria; cf. Micah 4:13)

- b. the four horns were the four powerful nations which had done harm to God's people (Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and Egypt)
 - 2. the four carpenters (NKJV = "craftsmen")
 - a. four other powers who would work to destroy the four previously mentioned
 - b. they would "fray" them, wear down the points of the horns and break them
 - c. the opposition to the building of the Lord's house would cease
- D. 2:1-13 - the third vision (THEME: Reinstatement of Judah into God's favor.)
 - 1. the young man was measuring Jerusalem for walls
 - a. he was stopped
 - b. the city would be so populous that no walls could retain their number
 - c. this should not worry them for God promises to be their walls and their protection
 - 2. those remaining in the land of their captivity are encouraged to return to Judah
 - 3. they are encouraged to come quickly to the land:
 - a. to enjoy the prosperity about to come upon it
 - b. to escape the destruction about to come to the land in which they then lived
 - 4. verses 10-13 could have reference to the Lord's church
- E. 3:1-10 - the fourth vision (THEME: The priesthood will be cleansed and made acceptable for service.)
 - 1. Satan attempts to accuse Joshua before the Lord but the Lord defends him and rebukes Satan
 - 2. the filthy garments represent the sins of the people
 - 3. in that the garments were changed to clean ones, we find that God had forgiven His people of their sins
 - 4. the conditional nature of God's promises seen in verse 7
 - 5. the BRANCH of verse 6 is Jesus (cf. Isaiah 11:1)
 - 6. the stone of verse 9 also has reference to Jesus (cf. I Peter 2:6)
 - 7. verse 10 refers to evangelism in the body of Christ
- F. 4:1-14 - the fifth vision (THEME: God would bless Zerubbabel in his leadership in rebuilding the temple and it would be finished.)
 - 1. the candlestick represents the blessings of God
 - 2. the two olive trees represent Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest
 - 3. verse 6
 - a. Zerubbabel's rebuilding would not be due to his power or strength
 - b. God would provide the increase
 - c. important point to remember when doing any work of God
 - i. we do the physical labor
 - ii. God deserves the glory
 - 4. Zerubbabel would overcome great obstacles and see the rebuilding to the finish
 - 5. verse 10 - the day of small things
 - a. could have reference to the work that had yet to be done before the great day of finishing the temple
 - b. no work done for the Lord is insignificant (Matthew 10:40-42)
 - 6. the seven eyes represent the "all seeing eye" of God

7. verse 14 - note, "the Lord of the whole earth"
 - a. the omnipresence of God
 - b. the sovereignty of God
- G. 5:1-4 - the sixth vision (THEME: Punishment will continue to be meted out to those who sin.)
 1. their reinstatement and repossession of the land did not guarantee their safety if they returned to sin
 2. the flying scroll
 - a. laws written on scrolls
 - b. the size (30 feet by 15 feet) and the fact that it was flying indicates that it was a public message to be seen by all
 3. more crimes than stealing and lying condemned but perhaps these were the most common of the day
- H. 5:5-11 - the seventh vision (THEME: Evil is to be removed from the land.)
 1. "ephah" = a dry measure equivalent to about seven gallons
 2. the woman in the ephah represents wickedness
 3. the lid was put back on the ephah to keep wickedness contained
 4. the ephah was then carried off into Shinar (Babylon) to remain separate from Judah (this is how the Jews were to put off wickedness from themselves)
- I. 6:1-8 - the eighth vision (THEME: God's protective providence)
 1. one explanation has the four sets of horses representing four judgments of God
 - a. the red stood for the warring vengeance of God against those who harmed Judah (this must already have been accomplished since the red horses were not sent out at this time)
 - b. the black take their dark sorrow to the north country of the Babylonians
 - c. the white represent the peace that would follow
 - d. the grisled represent mixed treatment of the southern countries
 - e. the anger of the Lord appeased by the actions against the Babylonians
 2. another explanation has the four sets of horses representing ensuing world powers
 - a. the red represent the Babylonians, a bloody empire already out of existence
 - b. the black represent the Persians who destroyed the Babylonians
 - c. the white represent the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great, who was powerful yet mild toward those he conquered
 - d. the grisled represent the divided kingdom of Rome, some good and some bad
- J. 6:9-15
 1. the men mentioned in verse 10 were probably great figures of faith
 2. Joshua serves here as a type of Christ
 3. "the BRANCH" = Jesus (3:8; Isaiah 11:1)
 - a. that "he shall grow up out of his place" indicates the growth of His spiritual body, the church
 - b. the temple He would build would not be the earthly temple put up by Zerubbabel but the spiritual temple

4. Jesus was to be (and now is) Priest and King
 - a. counsel of peace between them because, being both in one person, there would be no disagreement or strife
 - b. Hebrews 8:4 (passage which prohibits this from being premillennial)
 5. "they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord" (cf. Isaiah 2:1-4, et al. which indicate that people of all nations would be welcome in the Lord's church)
 6. "And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God."
 - a. "... does not mean that the fulfillment of these promises was conditional upon their obedience. What is meant is that the Jews themselves would be partakers of these Gospel blessings only if they believed and obeyed. Their disobedience did not prevent the coming of Christ, the completion of His undertaking as Redeemer, and the ingathering of the Gentiles. But by it they shut themselves out from participation in Gospel blessings." (The New Bible Commentary, p. 754)
 - b. Romans 11:25-26
- K. 7:1-14
1. two years have passed since the first vision seen by Zechariah and since the beginning of the rebuilding of the temple
 2. the people had sent a delegation to Zechariah that he might ask the Lord a question
 - a. among the fasts that they had kept had been some commemorating the destruction of the temple, the captivity, etc.
 - b. their question was, "Now that we are back in the land and rebuilding the temple, should we keep these other fasts that we have instituted?"
 3. verses 4-7
 - a. the Lord indicates that they had never observed the fasts in the proper manner anyway
 - b. their fasts showed their sadness over their loss, but their hearts were not humbled
 - c. why should they now be worried about fasts when they got nothing from them while observing them?
 - d. verse 7 emphasizes hearing God's Word
 4. verses 8-10
 - a. a summary of what the Lord wanted from them rather than their empty rituals of fasting
 - i. true judgment
 - ii. mercy and compassion
 - iii. care for the needy (widow, orphan, stranger, poor)
 - iv. pure hearts
 - b. I Samuel 15:22
 5. verses 11-14
 - a. the people had refused to hear God's pleas for faithfulness
 - i. they pulled away the shoulder (sign of rebellion)
 - ii. they stopped the ears (another sign of rebellion)
 - b. their sins resulted from their refusal to hear God's Word

- c. verse 13 paints a frightening picture
 - i. God had cried to them but they would not listen to His pleas
 - ii. when they sought His help in time of need, He would not hear
 - A. Psalm 66:18
 - B. Luke 16:19-31
 - d. verse 14 describes the punishment God enacted against the disobedient Jews
- L. 8:1-23
 - 1. verses 1-2 - the jealous God (cf. Exodus 20:5)
 - a. God wanted the devotion of Judah
 - b. instead of giving themselves wholly to Him, they worshipped idols and provoked Jehovah to great anger
 - 2. verses 3-15 - the forgiving God and the blessings of His forgiveness (these words given to encourage)
 - a. the Lord would return to their midst
 - b. people shall age there instead of fearing captivity in their youth
 - c. children shall play in the streets
 - d. verse 6 - if any should think this to be impossible, they should remember that God does not think it impossible; if He thinks it is possible, then it is (Mark 10:27)
 - e. the land shall be spared from the destruction of easterners and westerners
 - f. things shall not be as they were before but the land will be fruitful
 - g. as God had intended to punish them before, so now He intended to bless them
 - 3. verses 16-17
 - a. these blessings would come but if they wanted to continue they would have to follow certain conditions
 - i. speak truth
 - ii. judge fairly
 - iii. be pure in heart
 - iv. hate lying
 - b. notice that there are some things which the Lord hates (cf. Proverbs 6:16-19)
 - 4. verses 18-23
 - a. the fasts are turned into feasts
 - b. "love the truth and peace"
 - c. verses 20-23 speak of the church
 - i. many coming to Jerusalem (Acts 2)
 - ii. verse 23 has reference to the great number of Gentiles who would be brought to Christ through converted Jews
- IV. Second Section (Chapters 9-14)
 - A. Chapter 9
 - 1. verses 1-2
 - a. judgment against Syria
 - b. selected cities of Syria are mentioned to indicate the extent of the punishment

- c. the eyes of all men would be toward the Lord in the sense that they will be made aware of the fact that the judgments and punishments are from Him
- 2. verses 3-4
 - a. judgment against Tyre
 - b. Tyre was a wealthy and powerful city, but also very corrupt
 - c. it was located on an island about a half mile from the mainland
 - d. its "power" (verse 4) - the mighty walls which surrounded it
- 3. verses 5-8
 - a. the judgment against Philistia
 - b. the report of Tyre's destruction would come to the ears of the Philistines
 - i. they would fear God
 - ii. they would become sorrowful
 - iii. they expected that Tyre would be able to withstand any attack, but they would be disappointed
 - iv. the leadership would end and Ashkelon would become uninhabited
 - v. "bastard" represents a low class of people who would inhabit the once proud land of the Philistines
 - c. those left of the Philistines would turn to Judaism
 - d. God would protect His people amidst all of the surrounding destruction
- 4. verses 9-12
 - a. see Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11 and Luke 19:28-40 for fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus
 - b. the character of Jesus seen
 - i. "just" = fair and righteous
 - ii. "having salvation" = the Savior of all mankind (Luke 19:10)
 - iii. "lowly" = "without worldly pomp or splendor" (Matthew 11:28-30)
 - iv. riding on an ass's colt signified His lowliness
 - A. great earthly kings would have ridden into town on a bedecked horse
 - B. but Jesus wished to impress that He was no earthly king but a spiritual one
 - c. in contrast, verse 10 shows the worldly people with their chariots and horses being cut off
 - d. Jesus' kingdom would not be established or maintained with physical force (John 18:36)
 - e. it would cover the earth
 - f. verse 11 is a message to Jerusalem that though they could be as hopeless as prisoners, there was no need for them to be because of the blood of the covenant
 - i. they should turn to God
 - ii. the promise He had made to Abraham would come to pass
- 5. verses 13-17
 - a. before the coming of the Christ, the Jews would enjoy victories over their enemies
 - b. God was good to His people and loved them and wanted to save them

- B. Chapter 10
 - 1. verses 1-5
 - a. God would provide them with abundant physical blessings
 - b. the idols which they had followed and which other nations followed were nothing and did them no good
 - c. the leaders of the nation, though shepherds in office, were actually goats because of their impure lives
 - d. with God as their leader, Judah would win great victories and drive away the oppressor
 - 2. verses 6-12 (more on Judah's restored strength and the downfall of their enemies)
- C. Chapter 11
 - 1. verses 1-6
 - a. the tone changes drastically from promises of blessings in chapter 10 to warnings against turning away in chapter 11
 - b. the reason for Judah's destruction would be the corruption among its people
 - 2. verses 7-14
 - a. if the Jews followed God faithfully, the result would be Beauty (God's grace) and Bands (unity with God)
 - b. He would make sure proper leadership remained
 - c. yet, for all of these promises, Judah is portrayed as rejecting God's love
 - d. consequently, Judah suffered
 - e. the covenant would be broken
 - i. it was broken and a new one, the New Testament, was established
 - ii. some of the Jews would obey the new covenant and some would not
 - f. verses 12-13 form a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-10)
 - g. that "Bands" was broken indicates that the union between God and the Jews would be dissolved
 - 3. verses 15-17
 - a. rejecting the leadership of God, the Jews would be under the guidance of a foolish shepherd
 - b. the foolish shepherd would hurt them and he himself would suffer
- D. Chapter 12 (begins a different message than in chapters 9-11)
 - 1. verses 1-9
 - a. verse 1 affirms God's role as Creator (also indicates that man is a spirit being, possessed of a soul)
 - b. the enemies of Judah would become afraid of the power of the Jews (they did regain some of their power in the time before Christ)
 - c. blessings from God for their obedience
 - d. this could have a reference to spiritual Jerusalem (the church)
 - 2. verses 10-14
 - a. verse 10 gives a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus (John 19:37)
 - b. mourning would result from the death of Christ

- E. Chapter 13
 - 1. verses 1-6
 - a. the fountain of Jesus' blood would be opened to the Jews to cleanse their sins
 - b. idolatry would be forgotten
 - c. any false teachers would be punished
 - d. the false teachers would disguise themselves as ordinary herdmen
 - i. his parents were to have thrust him through for his false teaching
 - ii. should he escape, the wounds would remain
 - iii. someone asking what the wounds were, he would lie and say that they were accidental wounds, not those inflicted on a false teacher
 - 2. verses 7-9
 - a. verse 7 applied by Jesus in Matthew 26:31
 - b. those who are saved are those who turn to God
- F. Chapter 14
 - 1. Jerusalem's destruction foretold
 - 2. the Lord would show Himself to be the King over all the earth