

STUDY PACK 2

ZECHARIAH The Call to Repentance

“Zechariah did not see a weak nation in a ruined city, he looked down the centuries and saw _____ and _____.”
~ Wiersbe, p. 626 ~

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Luther

“The quintessence of the Old Testament prophecy.”
(Quintessence = ultimate substance)

Baron

“Indeed it seems to be the special aim and mission of Zechariah to condense and concentrate in small compass and in his own peculiar tense style, almost all that has been revealed to the “former prophets” _____, and of his _____ and the _____.”

Hengstenberg

“The Messianic Prophecies of Zechariah are only second to those of Isaiah in distinctiveness. The purpose of the book are to _____ and to summarize the prophecies about the Messiah” and the millennium.

Feinberg

“He dwells on _____ and _____ more fully than all the other minor prophets together.”

II. THE ADDRESS (v. 1)

A. Darius has succeeded Cyrus the Great on the throne of Persia.

Knox gives an excellent summary of the importance of Darius.

“A Mede by birth, Darius took the kingdom at age 62 (Daniel 5:31). He was an Achæmenid prince, the son of Hystaspes, who saved the Persian empire in the revolt which followed the death of his predecessor, Cambyses II (530-522). Darius succeeded Cyrus the Great, who founded the mighty Persian empire which ruled the world for over two centuries.

It is Darius who is so prominent in the dates given in the books of Haggai and Zechariah, yet he is no less famous archaeologically. He is the one who recorded his triumph over his enemies trilingually on the rock of Behistun, the decipherment of which furnished the key to unlocking Babylonian-Assyrian cuneiform, the wedge-shaped writing of antiquity.

Darius founded a new capital at Persepolis and beautified and enlarged Susa (the Biblical Shushan, Nehemiah 1:1; Esther 2:8, 3:15) and Ecbatana (the Achmetha of Ezra 6:2).

He displayed unusual humanity and restraint, as did most of the Ashemaenian kings. Like them, he exercised a more liberal rule than was generally true of oriental despots of the ancient world.

The Persian rulers, moreover, showed wisdom in administration and adhered to a high moral code, which resulted in 200 years of peace throughout the East.

These factors were used of God; thus the work on the house of God resumed in Darius' second year (Ezra 4:24; Haggai 1:1).

It was finished in his 6th year (Ezra 6:15)."

- B. It has now been sixteen years since the first return. There is a great need for renewed zeal and revival.

III. THE PROBLEM (v. 2)

- A. Zechariah states the problem immediately - their father's displeased God!
- B. Will the Jews learn anything from the past?

IV. THE CALL TO REVIVAL (v. 3)

- A. The Lord of Hosts is speaking.
 1. This title is used _____ in Zechariah.
 2. It is a reminder _____ available to the Lord.
 3. These include armies of angels and of the redeemed (Revelation 5:11-12, 19:14; Matthew 26:53; II Kings 6:14; Joshua 5).
- B. The nation of Israel is called to return to the Lord. Compare Jeremiah 3:12-13; Hosea 14:1; Joel 2:12-13; Amos 4:4-6; Zephaniah 2:2-3).

V. THE INFLUENCE OF THE WORD UPON PREVIOUS GENERATIONS (vv. 5-6)

- A. Previous generations had suffered judgement when they wouldn't _____.

- B. The Word of God had judged their forefathers; would it be any different with them?
- C. The prophets were gone but their words remain.
- D. "... the people are warned not to repeat the errors of their fathers; a warning alas, soon forgotten and quite unheeded." ~ Ironside, p. 343 ~
- E. "The frequent repetition of God's name by the prophet is emphatical; it was done, that what he taught might more sharply goad the hearts of the people." ~ John Calvin, p. 22 ~

VI ARNO GAEBELEIN SUMMARIZES THIS CALL TO REPENTANCE

"RETURN TO ME"

"THE LAST SENTENCE OF Zechariah's message tells of a past generation: "Then they repented and said, 'The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do'" (v. 6). He is not speaking about the generation that perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, but their successors, those who saw the hand and justice of God in what happened. This is the spirit Zechariah wants to see in the remnant before he begins to unfold the visions that constitute the bulk of this book.

If we had only Haggai to go on, we might assume, however wrongly, that God was interested most of all in the temple that is, in buildings. But this is not the case. True, God had given instructions about this building, but most of all, God was interested in the people to whom He had given this work, and He was concerned that they _____ . Luther saw this and wrote: 'This, then, is a brief outline of this first sermon of Zechariah: he first wished to make the people pious and God-fearing by means of threats and promises; and in order to frighten them, he offers them the example of their fathers. For while they are to build the temple and the city, as their fathers had thought that it was good enough if they sacrificed. No, my good man, rather than all good works he wants faith and a heart converted to him. That is all he is interested in. This must come first and be preached first: Return to me, and after that build me a temple, and after that return to me. Good works inflate us and make us proud, but faith and conversion humble us and make us despair of ourselves.'

This is the good beginning God wants. He wants it to be said of us, as it was of the believers of the apostle Peter's day: 'You were like Sheep going astray, but not you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls' (I Peter 2:25)."

~ Gaebelein, p. 160 ~