

OUTLINE STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

Prof. William G. Moorehead

Copyright © 1893

CHAPTER FORTY

ZECHARIAH

This prophet was the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo, 1:1.

In Ezra 5:1, he is called the son of Iddo. The word son, like brother, is often used in a wide sense, and here no doubt is equivalent to grandson. He was a priest as well as prophet. His name signifies "*whom the Lord remembers.*"

He was contemporary with Haggai, and began his ministry in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, B. C. 520. How long he continued it is difficult to determine; but in the fourth year of Darius, Zechariah received a message from the Lord, 7:1. Probably for five years he continued to prophesy.

1. Is this prophet to be identified with Zechariah the son of Barachias mentioned by our Lord in Matthew 23:35? The majority of expositors think not; but that the reference in Matthew is to the priest Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, who was slain at the temple, II Chronicles 24:20-22.

There is no record of the death of the prophet; yet it should be borne in mind that the book of Chronicles does not extend to a date so late as his death. The Jewish Targum states, we are told, that Zechariah, the son of Iddo, prophet and priest, was slain in the sanctuary. Nehemiah 12:4, identifies Iddo with the priests; Zechariah 1:1, with the prophets. Josephus likewise says that Zechariah the son of Baruchus was slain at the temple. Baruchus is closely akin to Berechiah.

2. *Is Matthew 27:9, 10, quoted from Zechariah or Jeremiah?*

In the gospel it is ascribed to Jeremiah, but is so nearly identical with Zechariah 11:12, 13, that it was taken from the latter. Some think Matthew quoted from memory and wrote Jeremiah when he meant Zechariah—by no means a satisfactory explanation. Others, that the quotation was originally made from Zechariah and that Jeremiah's name was inserted by the oversight of some copyist. Still another explanation is, that Matthew quoted Jeremiah 18:19, which prophecy lies at the foundation of Zechariah's.

3. *The book may be divided into two parts:*

Part I. Chaps, 1-8. The contents of this portion of the book may be distributed as follows:

(1) Introduction, 1:1-6; a warning voice from the past.

(2) A series of visions, some of which were soon to come to pass, while others lose themselves in the distant future, 1, 7; 6, 8.

The visions appear to be intended to strengthen the feeble Hebrew colony in Judea.

The first is that of horses and riders in the valley of myrtles, 1:7-17, representing a time of peace, opportune for the building of the city and temple.

The second is, the four horns and four carpenters, or artisans, 1:18-21. It symbolizes the comparative safety of Israel in the midst of the contending world-powers. If the horns are understood as the emblem of the kingdoms which overthrew Israel, then their demolition by the smiths signifies their powerlessness toward the Jews.

The third is that of the man with a measuring line, 2. The meaning seems evidently to be that Jerusalem should have a wider extent than ever before; it should be too large to be encompassed by walls—evidently, still future.

The fourth relates to Joshua the high priest, clad in filthy garments, the angel and the adversary Satan, 3. Typical of the removal of the remnant's guilt and acceptance before God.

The fifth is, the candlestick and the two olive trees, 4. All obstacles should be removed, and the chosen people at length shine in God's light, anointed with His Spirit.

The sixth is the flying roll, 5:1-4. It is a solemn warning of the swift curse of God upon thieves and perjurers—the land should be purified.

The seventh is the woman and the ephah, 5:5-11. It is wickedness personified; it should be caught, shut in a cage as a savage beast, and held in by a weight as of lead, and transported to the land of Shinar, i. e., Babylon.

Two interpretations are given of this difficult vision:

First, that it means idolatry and that the action signifies the removal of the abominable practice from Israel and the transfer of it to Babylon where it belonged. As a matter of history, it is well known that idolatry ceased in Israel with the return from the exile.

Second, that it means the unbelieving and impenitent Jews who shall be thrust out of the land, and be identified with Babylon where they really belong. If the visions pertain to the times of Zechariah, then the first is preferable; if to the times of Jerusalem's destruction, then the latter is its meaning.

The eighth vision is, the four chariots, 6:1-8. It seems to refer to the time of the end, and is to be interpreted by the four horses and their riders of Revelation 6.

(3) *Symbolic act*, 6:9-15. It is the crowning of the high priest Joshua. By this act the two great offices of priest and king are united in his person, type of the person and work of the man whose name is the Branch, vs. 12, and who shall sit on His throne of glory as a priest.

(4) Chaps, 7, 8, *contain prophecies of later date than the preceding* (7:1). They are partly didactic—obedience to God’s word, justice, mercy, truth, a tender heart and sensitive conscience are more pleasing to Him than fasts and ceremonial observances. Partly, they are predictions of near and remote blessing: near, Jerusalem visited with divine favor; remote, many nations visiting the holy city and clinging to Israel and sharing in their blessings.

Part II. Chaps, 9-14.

This section of the book does not bear the name of Zechariah, nor of any author, and much dispute has arisen as to its authenticity. That there is a difference of style traceable in these chapters is freely admitted, but that this difference is so great as to be accounted for only on the supposition of a difference of authorship is not admitted.

The quotation in Matthew 27:9, seems to favor the idea that the latter part of Zechariah was not written by him, but by an earlier one, viz., Jeremiah. So Joseph Mede thought, the first to call the integrity of this section in question.

The all-sufficient reply is this; that the author of these chapters must have written at a later date than Jeremiah, for he refers not only to Joel, Amos and Isaiah, but also to Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zephaniah (See Zechariah 9:2, and Ezekiel 28:3; Zechariah 9:5, and Zephaniah 2:4; Zechariah 11:4, and Ezekiel 34:4; Zechariah 11:3, and Jeremiah 12:5; Zechariah 14:10, 11, and Jeremiah 31:38-40, etc.).

The proof seems overwhelming that these chapters were written after the exile, and although they are anonymous save as found in this book, yet the presumption is very decidedly in favor of the view that Zechariah was the author.

The second part of the book is divided into two sections, each of which begins with the expression, “**The burden of the word of the Lord.**”

(1) Chaps, 9:10, 11, “**The burden of Hadrach and Damascus.**”

The name of the land of Hadrach is somewhat obscure, but that it is connected with Syria in some way can hardly be doubted. The Persian empire, or Gentile-ism in general, cannot be meant, as some have imagined. There is nothing to intimate that it is a symbolic name. Its association with Damascus and Hamath is fatal to that suggestion. The view of Canon Drake in the Bible Commentary is probably correct, that it signifies Syria “from the name of its king, Hadrach.” Tyre and Sidon and Philistia share in the awful judgments threatened against the former places.

The reference may be to the invasion of Alexander the Great, for these very countries were overwhelmed by his army. Yet it is promised that the house of the Lord, and by implication, Jerusalem, shall be preserved by the intervention of God Himself, 9:8.

From 9:9, to the close of 11, we have a series of predictions, some of which relate to the appearing and rejection of Messiah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the powerlessness and ignorance of the Jewish rulers, and the final establishment and glory of the kingdom of God and some of them to the distant time when Jerusalem shall be encompassed with armies for the last time, and when a mighty deliverance shall be wrought for the chosen people, such as never was experienced before.

(2) Chaps, 12-14. **“The burden of Israel.”**

The old comprehensive name Israel returns, and the entire twelve tribes appear in the predictions in this section. Judgment, repentance, forgiveness and cleansing are all secured to Israel through the gracious work of Messiah. It is of Israel’s restoration, redemption and re-establishment as God’s center for earthly and universal blessing of which these chapters treat.

The last chapter introduces the universal peace and blessing and glory by the personal return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

4. Messianic predictions.

Zechariah is remarkable for the fullness with which he treats this great subject. He is but too well aware that the people who had returned from captivity were not maintaining fidelity toward God. Declensions and apostasy were but too manifest among them.

Even Ezra and Nehemiah recognize the fact that only a remnant exhibit any genuine faithfulness.

But in Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi it becomes quite manifest that **“all were not Israel who were of Israel.”** It is in but a few that they find the true spirit and character of the people of God; and ere the voice of prophecy is hushed, Malachi distinguished in the most solemn way between the godly remnant and the mass of the nation, whether people or priests. Accordingly, these prophets, and more especially the last two of the Old Testament, turn away from any further hope in the restored captives, and gaze with eager joy and swelling hope on the coming of the Messiah in whom every promise and prophecy will be made good.

Chap, 3, 8, 9. **“For behold, I will bring forth my servant, the Branch. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes,”** etc.

That Christ is meant by the name Branch is evident from Isaiah 4:2; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Zechariah 6:12.

By this title is denoted among other things the great fact that Messiah is to be identified with our race, and incorporated with our kind.

- He is to be born of a woman.
- He is to spring from the stock of Abraham, but especially from the root of Jesse, the family of David.
- He is, therefore, to be of royal lineage and princely descent.
- Moreover, He is the Lord's Servant (cf. Isaiah 13:1), one who perfectly fulfills the will of God, and the neglected duty of His people.
- And further, He is to be supremely intelligent—as Zechariah expresses it, “**He possesses seven eyes**” (cf. Revelation 5:6). He is to have the power to know and to execute the will of God, as it has never been performed by man nor by all men.

Chap, 6:12, 13. “**Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.**”

Messiah shall unite in His own person the priestly and the kingly dignities. The two characters, so long distinct in Israel, will be blended in Him. Nor will there be divergence or disagreement between them, or pre-eminence of the one over the other, as so often happened in the past. The regal office will not overshadow the sacerdotal or the sacerdotal the regal.

Chap, 9:8. This great prediction was literally fulfilled when Jesus made His memorable entry into Jerusalem, John 12:14, 15.

Chap, 11:12, 13, contains the announcement of Messiah's betrayal and rejection, cf. Matthew 27:3-10.

Chap, 12:10-14, is the account of Israel's conversion, at least of the remnant, “**in that day,**” which seems to mean the beginning of the day of the Lord. Their conversion is attributed to the Spirit of God, vs. 10. Their repentance is stated very distinctly to be universal, individual and profound, and its occasion is the sight of Him whom they had pierced, vss. 11-14.

Chap, 13:1. The sin of the nation thus bemoaned is washed away. The “**fountain opened**” denotes Messiah's death, and the application of the benefits of His death to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Chap, 13:7. Messiah's death is in fulfillment of the will and plan of God for the redemption of His people.

Chap, 14, records the tremendous crisis through which Israel is yet to pass, their sufferings from the nations which gather against Jerusalem “**in that day,**” their ultimate deliverance by the direct and personal interposition of the Lord, and the cosmical revolutions, and the sway of the kingdom of God over the renewed earth.

That this majestic prophecy cannot have been fulfilled in the past every right principle of interpretation must lead us to conclude.

It was not fulfilled when Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives; much less when the Roman army besieged and destroyed Jerusalem, for then no deliverance was had, and no earthly blessing ensued.

It evidently looks onward to the day when the Lord will once more interfere in behalf of His repentant and mourning people, and when His feet shall stand on Olivet, and when He will accomplish every promise He has made, and every word He has spoken touching Israel and the whole world.

~ end of chapter 40 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
