

### **Zechariah 10 The Redemption of God's People**

Chapter 10 announces the blessings that will come to Judah and Israel when they were restored to their lands. The chapter also has a near and a far fulfillment, the near being the revival of Israel's power under the Maccabees in the second century B.C., and the far being the return of Jesus.

The Lord promised rain for the Israelites in their land, but they preferred to pray to idols for rain. Zechariah says, "The people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd." Shepherd means king." A modern parallel of rejection of the Lord is the modern-day interest in magic and spiritism. People ignore God altogether and assume that no problem is beyond man's ability to solve." The Cornerstone in verse 4 is well known to be a symbol of Christ.

The next verses picture the rise of Judah and Israel in their land to prominence and victory.

The promise to the Israelites (people from the Northern Kingdom who were exiled in 722 B.C.) is that they would be gathered, redeemed, and multiplied in their land. They would remember the Lord Who brought them back from Egypt and Assyria. "The Nile will dry up." The people to be returned from Egypt were from southern Egypt. The Nile rather than the Red Sea would be the barrier to their return. Assyria and Egypt would be humiliated as the Lord promises strength to His people.

### **Zechariah 11 The Rejection of the Messiah and Its Consequences**

Greek rule is at an end, and we have reached the time of the Romans when the Jews rejected Jesus. The chapter opens with a scene of judgment, then shows the cause of the judgment. Zechariah is commanded to do a symbolic act as a type of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. There is difficulty in the meaning of these staves (or staffs) unless "Grace or Beauty" seems to refer to the divine covenant, and "Bands or Union" to the union between the Northern Kingdom and Judah.

Times were very dark when Zechariah felt called to act as shepherd to the Israelites. Rulers and priests were driven by selfish greed and bitterness. Three shepherds had already failed. After a short effort, Zechariah renounced the attempt and broke his staff of Grace, as if God's tender love had withdrawn from its struggle with evil; and when he challenged the people to set a value on his services, they weighed out thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. He then broke the other staff, disrupting the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. There is a reference to the terrible reign of Antiochus whose cruelties led to the uprising of the Maccabees.

The last part of this message announced woe on the worthless shepherds. The prophet foresaw the Roman victory over the chosen nation after they abandoned the Messiah, Christ.

### **Zechariah 12 Events around Jerusalem in the Last Days**

This chapter deals with Jerusalem's role and the way it always seemed to provoke the surrounding nations. It begins by identifying the Lord as Creator of all and by quoting His words. He was establishing Jerusalem like a cup of poison that sends nations staggering and reeling. He also would make Jerusalem a rock they could not move. The frustrated nations would explain their inability to handle Jerusalem by saying, "The LORD Almighty is their God."

Then the passage turns to the role of Judah in subduing the nations in David's time. The issue of Judah's pride is mentioned, as is the rise of Jerusalem's power under David. At that time, God subdued the Philistines and all the competing nations so that David ruled all of Palestine. "A spirit of compassion and supplication" will be poured on the house of David and Jerusalem's people related to the temple and worship there.

This chapter ends with mourning in Jerusalem. God was speaking of Himself as the One "they have pierced" by their sins. But New Testament quotations such as John 19:37 and Revelation 1:7 should be to any believer evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is meant, explaining the passage fully.

### **13:1-9 The Responsive Remnant**

Jerusalem's long history under David's line was by the grace of God. The kingdom period was the age of prophets. They were often unpopular and mistreated. And some were false prophets.

The chapter closes with an oracle from God calling for the assassination of his shepherd, the Davidic king in Jerusalem. Of those in the land, two-thirds would die, leaving one-third alive. Even this third would be tested and refined. But that remnant would be responsive to God and be a real covenant people of God. God would bring the people home again to live safely in Jerusalem where they would be His people, and He would be their God.

### **14:1-21 God's Day of Universal Rule**

Zechariah recorded Jerusalem's destruction with half its people exiled. Then Zechariah gives a picture where the Lord fought against the nations. The historical account of God's intervention for the Jews and Jerusalem is told in Ezra and Nehemiah. History records that Persia conquered Babylon and that Persia was friendly to the Jewish restoration of Jerusalem and its temple. Persia did defeat the Palestinian nations and forced them to leave Jerusalem alone.

The Lord would be King over the whole land, and His name would be the only one.

Next, we see Jerusalem raised high over the land, inhabited, and secure with no force of arms involved. Wealth from many nations would be collected as the decree of Artaxerxes required governors of surrounding territories to support Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild the city. Even with opposition from surrounding nations, God's intervention would be against them too.

The chapter ends with pictures of survivors from all the nations that had previously attacked Jerusalem, including Egypt, participating in Jerusalem's worship of the Lord as King. Failure to appear in Jerusalem would bring punishment in rain withheld.

The last picture is the entire city of Jerusalem as a temple, all its territory sacred, and all its utensils treated as sacred vessels. The city would no longer be a mercantile city, no longer an administrative center for government. It would simply be a place to meet God and learn about Him.

These last three chapters dealt with the role of Jerusalem under the Davidic dynasty, and its role after it no longer had a king. In both cases it had been and was a special city for God, a city that triggered attention from the nations, once hostile, but now friendly.

## **Final Thoughts about Zechariah**

The first six chapters called God's people to attempt great things for God, specifically rebuilding the temple. The next two chapters repeat the message of earlier prophets such as Amos and Micah that God does not value ritual worship of those who deal unjustly with others. Then, the last six chapters remind us that God's plan for Israel's future went beyond the return of a relatively small number of exiles from Babylon and the building of a second temple.

New Testament writers see God's plan working out in Jesus. They often applied Zechariah's images to Jesus: the triumphant yet peaceful King, the pierced One, and the Shepherd, who was struck down.