

BOOK OF EZRA
ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY TO JUDAH
EZRA 5:1; 6:14; ZECHARIAH 1:1-6

Introduction

This remnant of these exiles of Babylon have been allowed to go back to their homeland in Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. We've seen how they got started, but because of opposition they stopped!

What was their greatest need? You probably could have gotten a wide range of opinions from God's people on what their greatest needs were. But in reality, what was their greatest need?

I. ZECHARIAH REVEALED THEIR GREATEST NEED!

Their greatest need is found in verse 3—REVIVAL

A Return Back To God's Ways, God's Worship, God's Will, and God's Word!

A. Revival Is Needed When We Turn From God!

1. When We Turn From His Ways!

Jeremiah 6:16—“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

Jeremiah 7:23-24—“But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. 24But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.”

2. When We Turn From His Worship!

When worship becomes a matter of going through the motions rather than from the heart, revival is needed!
1 Samuel 15:22—And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

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Isaiah 1:11—“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.”

John 4:23-24—“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

3. When We Turn From His Will!

Have you told God “No!” lately?

Ephesians 5:17—“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

4. When We Turn From His Word!

Where is your faith? Many say they believe God's Word to be true but then live their lives as if God's Word is not true!

The Word of God is what will change our lives!
Isaiah 55:11—“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Jeremiah 23:29—“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

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John 8:31-32—"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

5. **When We Turn From His Warnings!**

Does "Thus saith the Lord" mean anything to you?

Some folks reject the messenger so they reject the message too! Wrong move!

That's like "throwing out the baby with the bath water." By the way when the messenger is rejected, it is usually because someone doesn't like the message! (Moses; Jeremiah)

Jeremiah 6:17—"Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken."

SO, REVIVAL IS NEEDED WHEN WE TURN FROM GOD!—His Ways, Worship, Will, Word, and His Warnings!

B. **REVIVAL IS NEEDED WHEN GOD TURNS FROM US!**

Don't get me wrong. We can't lose our salvation! God is never going to leave us or forsake us! But as we turn from God we leave the path of His blessings!

*Isaiah 59:1-2—"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2But **your iniquities** have separated between you and your God, and **your sins** have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."*

*Proverbs 29:23—"A man's **pride** shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."*

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Proverbs 16:18—"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

1 Peter 5:5-6—"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

II. **ZECHARIAH REVEALED THEIR GREATEST NEED!
ZECHARIAH HAD A WARNING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE!
(Zechariah 1:4-6)**

A. **The Warning Not To Repeat History! (Vs 4)**

"Those who disregard the past are bound to repeat it."
(George Santayana)

"The worst thing about history is that every time it repeats itself the price goes up." (Pillar in Coronet)

In vs 2, the LORD had these words for Zechariah and His people, "The LORD hat been sore displeased with your fathers."

We could call that a simple statement of fact! The bottom line!

It had been the reason Jerusalem had been destroyed and they had been carried away into captivity by the Babylonians (or Chaldeans)!

In **verse 4**, the LORD reminded His people of past occasions when their fathers had been disobedient to Him, had not listened to Him and had committed spiritual adultery.

Jeremiah 3:6-14; 4:1, 14; 5:1-4, 7-9, 22-25; 6:10, 16-19; 7: 23-28

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The Israelites thought they could just cast aside the words of the prophets. The problem was they did not believe in the **Authority of the Word of the LORD!**

When a true prophet would come to them in the name of the LORD they rejected the Words he spoke even though he came speaking, *"Thus saith the LORD God!"*

Now, they had the benefit of knowing what the result was for their fathers casting aside the words of the prophets—Defeat, Disaster!

The LORD's people needed to NOT ONLY move from their spiritual apathy and **RETURN TO HIM** wholeheartedly, but they needed to move beyond their **despair** over the pressures from their enemies and move beyond their **discouragement** about the smaller scale of the new Temple.

The despair and discouragement **could be** AND **would be** dealt with if they FIRST returned to the LORD wholeheartedly! As they returned to the LORD, the LORD would return to them and help them in their despair and discouragement!

Next, we see that God doesn't speak about the terrible punishments that came upon His people, but about their mortality:

B. Two Sobering Questions!

1. ***Your fathers, where are they?" (Vs 5)***
What remained of them? What had their rebellion brought them? They had died in their sin! That is the worst thing that can possibly happen to a person! What counts is what remains at the end of our lives!

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Look into the past! Where are all of the great mockers, tyrants and atheists of world history?

I'll tell you, they have all passed away, but God lives forever! His Word, in contrast to them, will abide for all eternity!

How many generations have had to acknowledge that the so called "great" men of the past were wrong?

What counts is what remains at the end of our lives!

Let me ask you...what kind of legacy did YOUR forefathers leave you?

1. If it was a legacy of love for the LORD and His Word, well you ought to praise the LORD for that and continue the legacy! Make it a lasting legacy! Amen!
2. If it was a legacy of DISDAIN for the LORD and His Word **OR** even if it was a legacy of APATHY for the things of the LORD, YOU NEED TO LEARN FROM THE PAST AND MOVE BEYOND WHAT YOUR FATHERS DID!

If your parents and/or grandparents dropped the ball, DON'T REPEAT HISTORY!!! Look at where their lives got them and learn from it!

Oh, How we need to establish a GODLY LEGACY! And we need to pray to the LORD that it will be a LASTING LEGACY to our children and grandchildren!

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We can't choose how our children and grandchildren will live their lives! I wish we could! But we can't!

But listen, the legacy that we leave ought to be such that if our children and grandchildren choose to follow the same path we took, their lives will go well!

2. **"...and the prophets, do they live for ever?" (Vs 5)**

With these words, the Lord was surely saying that His servants were also buried, but His work continues!

The prophets proclaimed the truth and died in service; yet the truth remains! Amen!

This preacher isn't going to live on this earth forever! But when I'm dead and gone the truth of God's Word will remain!

The Word of God IS a LASTING LEGACY!

C. **The Reality And Realization Of God's Word! (Vs 6)**

We see that SOME DID NOT BELIEVE! They died and perished in their unbelief leaving a trail that speaks of **the fruit that rebellion brings—chastisement and judgment!**

But OTHERS BELIEVED and died but remain in eternity both in their person and in the work they accomplished through the LORD!

NOTHING that is done in obedience to the LORD is ever wasted! (Let me repeat that!)

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Sometimes we may hesitate to do good because we don't see any results! We may feel as if we are spinning our spiritual wheels in the mud of this world! We feel like we are bogged down not getting anywhere! But that's if we look at things from a worldly perspective!

But if we maintain a Heavenly perspective, we will understand that we don't always see the good that results from our efforts! We can plant and water, but we may never see the "increase" in our lifetime!

That's because we can't see the hearts of men! There are things going on in folks hearts and lives that you can affect in a positive way if you stay faithful and let God use you! But not if you quit!

Listen, we can affect folks either POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY! Which is it going to be?

Do you truly believe that Christ has won the ultimate victory? *1 Corinthians 15:57—"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Do you really, truly believe that? Well then, let it affect the way that you live right now!

Don't let your discouragement over a PERCEIVED LACK OF RESULTS or even discouragement over your PERCEIVED INADEQUACIES keep you from doing and being what the LORD has called you to do and be!

1 Corinthians 15:10—"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

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Obey God right now realizing that what you do in obedience to the LORD will have ETERNAL RESULTS!

These Jews who returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity needed to recognize this and needed to turn wholeheartedly to their LORD!

In the same way, WE need to recognize this and turn wholeheartedly to our LORD!

Conclusion

We too will all experience death (or the rapture), but our trust in God, our devotion to Christ, and our service to Him will remain in eternity!

Paul said it this way in *1 Corinthians 15:58*—*"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."*