

V. Zechariah in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel According to Zechariah
“Vision #1 – The Horseman, Part 3”
Zechariah 1:7-17

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
November 13, 2022 • Sunday Evening Sermon

This is our fifth study in our series on Zechariah and we are still in the first chapter because it has such significant foundational material but it will speed up a bit when we finish this chapter. It is a great joy to take God’s Word and see it unfold. Everything it is profitable and it contains the doctrine that reproves us, corrects us and it’s sufficient to train us, and this includes all Scripture – Old and New Testament. I know people have probably heard at least one sermon from Zechariah because there are at least five or six texts in this book that are so extraordinary they can’t be ignored, but I realize very few have heard a series of sermons on Zechariah.

Think about this. God has brought discipline upon His covenant people. In 722 B.C. He brought the Assyrian people as a nation, as He had prophesied in Deuteronomy 28, to bring discipline and judgment upon His people in the Northern Kingdom of the ten tribes. In that Assyrian captivity, there was the scattering of those tribes that were never restored back to the land. Those that were there intermingled so much where they lived that it began to be called Galilee of the Gentiles. They had lost their distinctiveness. They had become Hellenized, that is the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the more profoundly the Greek culture in the spread of the Greek Empire prior to the Roman Empire which had just totally wiped out any sense of their sensibilities of faithfulness to God's Word.

A little bit over a century later comes the Babylonian Empire and they take the Southern two Kingdoms away into judgment, and they do so in 605 B.C., 597 B.C., then 586 B.C. In the third sweep of those two tribes into captivity, they utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the Solomonic temple, but God had put in His Word in Isaiah and Jeremiah that this discipline of Him on these two tribes was going to be for 70 years. Then they were going to be restored. In Isaiah He even names the king that's going to restore them and the Medo-Persian empire defeats the Babylonian empire. Cyrus, unlike the Babylonian kings like Nebuchadnezzar, his view of these that have been captured, is not to assimilate them into Babylon, but his view was to put them back so they could restore Jerusalem with his benefits which in turn they would pray for him. Plus he figured they would serve him out of gratitude for allowing them to go back and rebuild the city and the temple.

Where we are now in our study, is they have returned. Initially, they had laid the foundations of the temple in Jerusalem, but the walls and gates were still down. The tribes that were all around them were just walking in and out as they were adversarial and dominating them. This brought them discouragement and there was chaos. He already had given them a governor, Zerubbabel who was of the line of David. He had given them Joshua, the high priest. He had given them a great teacher, Ezra. Now God sent two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah.

Zechariah had been born into the priesthood. He was of the tribe of Levi, his father, Berechiah, his grandfather, Iddo – they were of the Levitical priest line, and he therefore was a priest. But now, even as a priest, he had been called as a prophet. Haggai had already started his ministry two months before Zechariah. Zechariah begins his ministry in the eighth month in the second year of Darius according to Zechariah 1:1. Darius was the Medo-Persian king that had followed Cyrus and he now is ruling and reigning. Zechariah and his family having returned at

the end of the 70 years, is being raised up by God to proclaim as a trumpet blast of the Word of God and to give him His message. The message God gave Zechariah came through a series of eight visions, eight dreams. He had all eight of these dreams in one night, and Zechariah records them for us. In other words, Zechariah is getting eight messages from God through eight dreams.

That's a pretty good way to get your sermon but that is not the way it comes today, because God has already given His full Word to us now. So we get into the Word to find out how to communicate it, but during the time of Zechariah God is putting together His word and the Prophets are finishing out the Old Testament. The year is 520 B.C. In the Advent season God breaks His self-imposed silence. After Haggai, Zechariah and then Malachi for 400 years God is silent and then He speaks as the angels announce the coming of the Word Incarnate. So, in the time of Zechariah, we are at the cusp of that silence. These are, as it were, last words of God before 400 years of silence.

I like to study constantly the last words of individuals at the end of their life. We just went through Reformation season and at the very last breaths of Martin Luther, as he is dying, one of his dear colleagues says, 'Martin, do you still stand on salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone?' Luther said, 'forever.' So, in thinking that God is going to be silent for 400 years, what is the last things He is going to say before He embraces this self-imposed silence? That's why we're taking time in this opening chapter, in this first vision, to try to set some principles and parameters in how we are dealing with the Scripture.

Before we get into this study, I wanted to answer a question I received this past week from this study we have done so far in Zechariah. The question was 'why did God restore the tribe of Judah after 70 years back to Jerusalem? Why didn't He restore the other ten tribes, the northern tribes?' The quick answer is because He had not promised to restore the ten Northern tribes, but He had promised to restore Judah and Benjamin, in which that tribe resided within the parameters of the tribe of Judah, in what we call Judea, there around Jerusalem. But why Judah? I could say because He prophesied it and he fulfilled it. But why did He prophesy it and why did He place His hand of electing love to restore them?

After 400 years of silence, the Messiah is coming. The Word will become flesh. The Messiah, whose genealogy in both father and mother goes back to David, back to Jesse, back to Judah Why does He restore Judah? It is because that's the tribe that He had declared that the scepter shall not leave the tribe of Judah. It is through Judah the promised Messiah would come. Why does He restore them? It is because He is not finished with their purpose. It is through them that Jesse is coming. In fact, we can see all of the genealogy in different books of the Bible. Though He will be silent for 400 years, He is still working and it is through that tribe that He will bring forth two descendants of David – Joseph, the adopted father of Jesus and Mary, the appointed mother by the Virgin conception will bring forth for us a Messiah. For this tribe that has been restored, God is accomplishing things to lead to that moment.

He is giving that message to not only Haggai, but also Zechariah. He is giving this message through eight visions, thus eight oracles, eight messages. We have already looked at the vision, so I'm just going to read through it but I want to give you the first message to Zechariah, who obviously is a Presbyterian, because it has three points to it. God gives him a three point message that he has to deliver to the tribe of Judah, that God has restored back to Jerusalem. God is now coming to minister to them personally through three prophets Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi. Zechariah even tells us when this night of dreams is taking place.

Zechariah 1:7-11 says [7] On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet

Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, [8] "I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen (ravine/valley), and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. [9] Then I said, 'What are these, my lord?' The angel who talked with me said to me, 'I will show you what they are.' [10] So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, 'These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.' [11] And they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, 'We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.'

I obviously understand the doctrine of the omnipotence of God but what we see here are how the angelic host are being used, at least one aspect, and that is they are seeking out the condition and giving the message back. The captain here has a very formal title that consistently runs through the Old Testament. That title is The Angel of the Lord. When you see a phrase in the Bible that says 'an angel' that could be any of the angelic hosts that God has made. Some of those angels had fallen in the fall of the angel, Lucifer who becomes the adversary, the devil or Satan and the Scripture indicates that a third of the angelic hosts fell with him, but the rest that remained faithful to the Lord serve the Lord, day and night accomplishing that which He has appointed to them in their ministry.

Here we see a Christophany which is a pre Incarnate appearance of Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, as He comes in the appearance of a man. It's not an incarnation. The incarnation awaits 400 years, where Christ comes as the Son of God, Son of man in a true human body, human soul, while maintaining the reality of His deity. We have God having come in the flesh. Here, He has not come to do His ministry as the Incarnate Son of God but when He is doing His pre Incarnate ministry, here as a Christophany, He is pointing to His Incarnate ministry. What is one of the things the incarnate Christ does for His people, His covenant people? He ever lives to intercede for us (Romans 8). He prays for us. Go read His intercessory prayer in John 17 before He goes to the cross on the night that He establish the Lord's Supper.

Christ has already appeared in the Old Testament. He appeared as the Angel of the Lord to Abraham and announced to him what He was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. He appeared with Jacob at Bethel and wrestled with him. He appeared in the burning bush before Moses and spoke to Moses. In the New Testament, this phrase, 'the angel of the Lord' that identifies a pre Incarnate appearance of Christ, is never used. Why? It is because the Incarnate Savior continues forever in His glorified Incarnate body at the right hand of the Father. Let's continue in the text.

Zechariah 1:12-14 says [12] Then the angel of the LORD said (Christ calling upon the Father), 'O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?' [13] And the LORD answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. [14] So the angel who talked with me said to me, 'Cry out (preach), Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.'

He had asked for mercy, but God gives words of grace. Mercy is when God withholds from us what we deserve. Grace is when He gives us what we don't deserve. So He not only promises mercy, He now promises grace. The gifts that we don't deserve as a covenant people. Also, in this text we have to do a little work for we often tell people not to be jealous. Jealousy is an emotion that is not a sin in and of itself, unless it sinfully appears. When I am jealous for that which is not given to me, then that becomes covetousness and idolatry, but that which God has put within our stewardship, our oversight, then the act of love is a jealous love. We want to

secure it, protect it, and uphold it. Thus, God is jealous for His covenant people to whom He is betrothed.

I have a marvelous wife who has sustained a love for me somehow for 54 years, and what I've asked God to give for me, is a jealous love for her, that she would be protected, provided for, and that no one else would have access to her in the intimacy of our marriage covenant that I might be used of God to have that relationship with her. It would be sin if I desired that for anything or anyone else, but it is right for that one to whom God has entrusted and that we enjoy one another within the covenant of marriage. God looks upon His people, His bride, and says, 'I am jealous for her. I need not be reminded that she needs My love.' Let's continue in the text.

Zechariah 1:15-17 says [15] And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster. [16] Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. [17] Cry out again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.'"

Why would God be angry at the nations that are at ease according to verse 15? The reason is His people are under derision and assault. His people are enduring multiple adversaries all around them. Now He looks to the nations and says, 'I will bless those nations that bless My people, but I will curse those nations that do not bless My people.' There were surrounding renegade tribes that were running in and out of Israel at this time and we see this in the book of Nehemiah, but there's not only sins of commission, there are also sins of omission. The nations are at ease while His people become the playground of the despots of that age.

Therefore, God is angry with the nations, even as He is gracious, compassionate and jealous for His people. This is why you, as God's New Covenant people, a royal nation that belong to the Lord, will prevail, because He prevails in His love for you and those who come against us, He brings us through it and those who would neglect He doesn't but He brings judgment upon those who bring sin and adversarial assaults upon His people.

We're reminded of that when there was a man named Saul who brought assault after assault to punish His people dragging them away to death. He had a death warrant on His people and was destroying the churches. Jesus comes to him on the road to Damascus saying 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me (Acts 9:4)?' What is done to His people is done to the Lord of Glory, and He will protect His people. Vengeance is He is not ours and He will prevail to establish His people.

This is where Zechariah is given three points to his message. First, God is letting His people know that He has returned with them with mercy through Haggai and Zechariah – I am with them, God says. Number two, He then says His house, His temple shall be built in Jerusalem. This is called the Second Temple. This is called the Temple of Zerubbabel, but that's not all He's talking about. Whenever God makes a prophecy in His Word, there is usually an immediate fulfillment. Then there is a Christological fulfillment in Christ, and then there is an ultimate fulfillment, an eschatological fulfillment forever and so it is with the temple.

We're actually going to be told by Haggai and Zechariah that the glory of the Zerubbabel temple is going to be greater than that which amazed them which was the Solomonic Temple. How could it be greater? What is glory? Glory is the presence of the Lord, right? The glory in the Zerubbabel temple is going to be greater than the glory that was in the Solomonic temple that dwelt in the Holy of Holies. Yet when we read Zechariah, Malachi, Haggai, Ezra and Nehemiah, there is no record like there is in Chronicles of God's glory filling the Solomonic temple. So, how

can His glory be greater in this temple if in fact, we have no record of the glory of God filling the Zerubbabel temple that He promises will be built?

I want to show you. Yes, the temple of Zerubbabel will be built over the next six years, and we're going to trace it out, but that temple is a shadow. The immediate fulfillments are shadows. The actual fulfillment is in Christ. Let's look at John 1. I want to share with something from this text that many others discovered long before me, but I have been able to verify and one of the blessings of spending thousands of dollars on the study of Hebrew and Greek is you get a chance to go back and read the Bible in the original languages.

John 1:14 says *[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The 'Word' here is a title for Christ and this is not a human appearance but He is now going to take upon Himself a true human body. He isn't just an appearance of flesh but He is actual flesh. Here is this glorious truth that Christ will come. The phrase 'dwelt among us' is God present in the flesh, Son of God, Son of Man. The word that is interesting that is translated in this verse as 'dwelt' is the word for tabernacle or temple. Tabernacle or temple is a noun, but John 1:14 turns the noun into a verb.

We do this all the time now. I used to have friends which is a noun but the other day someone told me 'I'm going to friend you.' That is turning a noun into a verb – I'm going to 'friend' you. It's really interesting how we do that, but the Bible did it before we did in John 1:14. This verse could literally be translated; And the Word became flesh and tabernacled or templated among us and we beheld His glory. Now you see glory filling the temple of the Body of Christ and this Christ in the arms of his mother and father when the days of purification had arrived, was taken from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to enter into the temple (Luke 2:22-39). Now here is not measured glory in the holy of holies, like it was in the days of Solomon, but it is Christ full of glory now coming into the temple for He is the fulfillment of it. Now you can forget the shadow, and in 66 A.D. to 70 A.D., God will make sure as He destroys that temple, even as Christ prophesied that not one stone would be left to put the other.

Please don't send me emails having do with a company in Israel that is buying granite rocks in Indiana as they quarrying them and send them over or some version of that because I get those all the time. I'm not interested. Don't send me emails telling me they're going to rebuild the temple because I'm not interested. That's a shadow. I have the real deal and it' is Jesus. He's the real deal.

Now, this Jesus who was prefigured with the tabernacle, the Solomonic temple and the Zerubbabel temple is now the fulfillment of it. When Jesus ascends, He puts three temples in this world and this is where we will conclude this study. I want to look at I Corinthians 3, which is Paul's letter to the church at Corinth as he continues to disciple them, where he administered for 18 months, and in the opening chapters of this letter he is correcting some problems.

I Corinthians 3:16-17 says *[16] Do you not know that **you** are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? [17] If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

Now I want to look at I Corinthians 6:18-20 says *[18] Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. [19] Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

According to I Corinthians 6 a New Testament temple is you – the Christian. If you are a Christian, God with His Shekinah glory, by the presence of the Holy Spirit dwells within you. He has taken up residence in you, not as a fixer upper, not as a makeover, but a take over. You've been bought with a price to glorify God in your body. One would also think after reading I Corinthians 3 that it also says your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, but no.

When you read I Corinthians 3:16-17 in its original language we get an insight that our bereft English language cannot communicate in this text. The 'you' in I Corinthians 3:16 is plural. If He was talking about your body, then it would have to say, 'do you not know that you are temples of God...' But in this verse He doesn't give the plural. If He was talking about the individual bodies of the Christians at Corinth, he would have to make temple plural but He's not saying that. Since the 'you' is plural it could also be translated 'Do you not know that, y'all are a temple?' This means He dwells in the local church.

Finally, I want to look at Ephesians 2 because there is one more temple that Christ dwells in today. Ephesians 2:19-22 says *[19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom (Jesus) the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

We see here that the Word of God has been given through the Apostles and Prophets as our foundation, and it all rests upon Christ the cornerstone. This passage is where He is looking at His church universal. In the New Covenant, the risen Jesus by the outpouring of the Spirit dwells in you. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the gathered local church. With all due respect, I'm grateful for how the Lord uses technology, but He dwells in the gathered church being built together. Do not forsake the Assembly (Hebrews 10:25). God dwells in the midst of His assembled people as His temple, then He dwells within His church universal, and He establishes and keeps her by His presence to prepare her for eternity.

Now we can see the immediate fulfillment of the temple – the Zerubbabel temple. Then there is the fulfillment in Christ, and then from Christ the temple for eternity – He dwells in you. He dwells in His Church, and he dwells in his church triumphant now and forevermore.

I realize there were three points to Zechariah's message and I only gave you two. The third point to his message comes from Zechariah 1:17 which says *[17] Cry out again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.'"*

The third point is that God told him the measuring line from God is out – God's blessings cannot be measured. His cities, His people will prosper not by the metrics of the world, but by the metrics of His covenant verses which are forever. God says 'I will never leave you.' Return? Don't worry. I'll never leave you nor forsake you. I dwell with you. Go and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. I'll be with you till the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20). Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. We give You praise and thanksgiving. God, I love Your Word so much, and thank You for its intricacy; 1600 years of Divine revelation, 40 plus authors all coming to the singular blessing of the glory of our Triune

God revealed in Jesus Christ, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We praise Your Name forevermore, in Jesus' Name, Amen.