

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
27 June 2006
Zechariah 1-3

Before beginning to read from Zechariah let's spend time in prayer, considering God's grace that comes to repentant sinners through Jesus Christ. Let's ask God that we might:

1. **Return** to God, turning from evil ways and deeds, that God might return to us;
2. **Know** that God sees all, will again comfort Zion, interceding for them with the Father;
3. **Remember** that we must answer to God for how we treat helpless, downtrodden people;
4. **Know** the glory of Christ in our midst, and that He is a wall of fire about us;
5. **Escape** the judgment coming on worldly Babylon;
6. Be **joined** to God, in reverence and humility, as His people, and
7. **Stand** in the righteousness of Christ, untouched by Satan's accusations against us!

Zechariah ministered in Jerusalem after the time of the Babylonian captivity, beginning his ministry a few months after the prophet Haggai. The people were once again working on rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. But this was a broken people, discouraged and downcast. Nehemiah chapter 1 describes the sad plight of this group. The city of Jerusalem was entirely without defenses, a ruin, and a place of shame and contempt. Yet God had called them to begin a work there, and God saw that their work would have a glory they could not imagine: God would enter this meager temple. For though Herod would start fresh from the foundations in remodeling the temple in Jesus' day, Herod's temple was seen as a continuation of this temple begun by Zerubbabel and Joshua.

(1:1-6) God was calling the people to return to Him, that He might return to them. The issue wasn't just the reestablishment of the religious system, but the need to turn from evil ways and evil deeds. God had spoken to their fathers. Their fathers didn't listen or obey. Though their fathers passed from the scene God's word remains forever. God is still speaking today through His word. Are we listening? Are we obeying? (Hebrews 2:1-4)

(1:7-17) Here we see the first of eight visions. We could speculate on the meaning of various symbols, but the angel tells us all that we really need to know. We see four horses with riders – those sent throughout the earth to see what is happening – reporting back to the Angel of the Lord – Jesus himself in preincarnate form. The world is at peace, but Judah has not been redeemed yet. How long, O LORD? Jesus prays for Judah – even as Jesus prays for his church. The Father answers with assurance and comfort. God will punish those nations at ease for what they did to Judah. God will build His house in Jerusalem, prosper, comfort and choose again for Himself this city.

(1:18-21) The second vision is of four horns – the four great empires that came against God's people – and four craftsmen sent to terrify them and whittle them down to nothing.

What God has raised up God can take down – so consider carefully how God's inheritance is treated. How are we treating our brothers and sisters in Christ?

(2:1-5) The third vision is of a man going out to measure the width and length of Jerusalem. How big will it be? It will be a great city without walls because of its huge population and wealth. How long will it last? Unlike the other empires, God will be the glory in its midst. And God will be a wall of fire around it, so it will outlast whatever forces come against it.

(2:6-9) Justice will come to Babylon. Some have grown comfortable in captivity and choose in the place where they were captives. Now God's judgment is coming on Babylon, so it is time to flee! We see the warning again in Revelation 18:4-8. Who touches God's people touches the apple of His eye – God feels their pain very acutely. God will get glory by plundering the enemies of His people. Their riches become spoils for their servants. The upshot will be that the world will know that Jesus Christ was sent by the Father. Nobody will be able to stand against Him in that day.

(2:10-13) Christ comes to His people. For this cause we ought always to be rejoicing. God has come to save His people, both the Jews and as many as believe on His name. And Jesus is coming again. We see the Gentile nations joined to God in Christ. We see God dwelling in the midst of His people. Wow! God will once again claim His inheritance, Judah and the Holy Land. Jerusalem will be the city of God. Let us look to God in reverence and awe as we consider this coming day!

(3:1-10) Jerusalem is restored, and the nations are punished, and God dwells with His people – in the end. What about the situation now? The high priest, Joshua, isn't much to look at. How can he minister before God, seeing as Satan stands accusing him? Here we see Jesus standing as advocate before the Father, answering the charges of Satan. The plea is simple: Joshua is one plucked out of the fire, saved by the blood of Christ. He stands clothed in the righteousness of Christ. And we see the coming Christ as the seal of this promise. In Christ we can, like Joshua, stand and minister before God. Let us then come boldly before the throne of grace by the blood of Jesus. (Hebrews 10:19-25)

P.S. Recordings of these studies in John and the Prophets and copies of these notes are now available on a new website at <http://www.jstoker.name>. A new podcast is also available there or at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast>.