

Zechariah

by Oswald J. Smith

Zechariah's prophecy speaks of Jesus' return to establish his kingdom, reign as King of Kings, and build the temple of the Lord.

Duration: 1:00:49

Topics: "Zechariah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the fourth chapter of a book, possibly from the Bible. He mentions a statement in the sixth verse that encourages Christians who have backslidden to turn back to God. The preacher then discusses the significance of the phrase 'three score and ten years,' which represents seventy years. He explains how the children of Israel had strayed from God and were punished by being captured and kept in Babylon for seventy years. The sermon also mentions the concept of the 'branch' and how it relates to the return of the Jews and the establishment of the Millennium when Jesus Christ reigns for a thousand years. Additionally, the preacher emphasizes God's care for His chosen people, the Jews, and warns against touching them, as it is considered touching the 'apple of His eye.'

Transcript

You remember on Sunday night, commencing an exposition of one of the books of the Old Testament, I asked you to bring your Old Testament with you, not just the New Testament, but the Old Testament. And the book we're going to deal with is Zechariah, Zechariah, right near the end of the Old Testament Scriptures, the second-to-last book, the second-to-last book in the Old Testament Scriptures. There's only Malachi after that, and just before Malachi we have Zechariah.

And I want you to turn with me now, if you will, to the first chapter of Zechariah, and we want to deal with some of the outstanding verses in this book. It's a wonderful book. I've read it again and again and again, time after time, and every time I read it, I get new blessings from it, and I want you to see it with me tonight, if you will.

Zechariah talks about the time when Jesus Christ will reappear. He talks about his first coming, and then he talks mainly about his second coming. And sometimes he mixes the two together, mixes the first coming with the second coming.

And sometimes we have to study the verses very carefully to find out whether he's talking about the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ or whether he's talking about the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

Zechariah was born in Babylon. He was not born in Palestine.

Zechariah was born in Babylon, and when he was a child, a very small child, he was brought to Palestine. And then he became a prophet of God to the people of Israel in Palestine. Now take that first chapter, if you will, and look at it for a moment.

I'm just going to pick out a few verses that I want to say a word about. I want you to look, if you will, at the third verse, first of all. Now I have these words underlined in my Bible, starting with the word turn.

Turn unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you. I've underlined those verses. Turn unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you.

That applies to the saved and to the unsaved. Zechariah is speaking especially to God's own chosen people, the Jews. So he is applying the verse to the people of God.

But that verse can be just as well applied to the unsaved Gentile as it can to the saved who were among the Jews in the days of Zacharias. It can apply to both. Turn unto me, saith the Lord of hosts.

You will never be saved if you are unsaved now. You will never be saved until you turn to God. There must come a time in your life, sometime or other, sooner or later, when if you are going to be a Christian and you are now unsaved, you will at last turn to God.

Because this verse says, turn unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you. And if you want God to turn to you, you'll have to first of all turn to him. And that's what God is waiting for you to do at this present time.

He's waiting for the unsaved man, the unsaved woman, to turn unto him. And as soon as that turn is made, is completed, then the discovery will be made that God has turned to you. First you turn to him, then he turns to you.

Now if you're a Christian, the same thing applies. If you're a backslidden, if you're away from God, if you have grieved the Holy Spirit, God's word to you is, turn unto me, saith the Lord. And if you're a backslider, the thing for you to do is to turn to God, and then the promise is that God will turn to you.

But you must first of all turn to him. So if you're unsaved, turn to God, and you have the assurance that God will turn to you. There's no doubt about it.

If you're a Christian and you're a backslider, again turn to God, and God will turn to you. Now when you come to the twelfth verse of that chapter, you'll find at the very end of the verse these figures, as it were, three score and ten years. What is represented by three score and ten years? By, of course, seventy.

Now the children of Israel had departed from God in their own land, had wandered away from him, had deserted him for a full seventy years. And God allowed the Babylonians to capture them and take them to Babylon, and to punish them by keeping them in Babylon for seventy years. So they were turning from their Lord in Palestine for seventy years, and then to punish them, God was keeping them in Babylon for the same length of time, seventy years.

And we have in this verse the words, Have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation, three score and ten years, or seventy years, altogether. And then when you come to the sixteenth verse, you have a remarkable promise. I am returned to Jerusalem with mercy.

My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts. At the end of seventy years, after seventy years of punishment in Babylon, God promises us to restore his people to Jerusalem. And he says that when he restores them to Jerusalem, he'll see to it that his house, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians, that his house is rebuilt, and that his house will again adorn Jerusalem.

We have that promise in the sixteenth verse. Now when you come to the second chapter of this book, I want to draw your attention to the fifth verse, For I, saith the Lord, will be unto it a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of it. Now then, suddenly God changes from the return of the Jews in the days of Zechariah to the return of the Jews in the days of the Millennium.

Looking more than two thousand years ahead, how much farther, we do not know. But God is not talking here about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in Zechariah's day. He is talking here not about the return of the Jews from Babylon, but he is talking now about the return of the Jews at the beginning of the Millennium, the reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years.

Let me read verse five again. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto it a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of it. Now, that never occurs when the Jews return from Babylon, but that will occur when the Jews return and the Millennium is set up and Jesus Christ reigns for a thousand years.

Now, in the eighth verse, to show you God's care of his people, he says at the end of the eighth verse, He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. God says that about the Jews. The Jews were God's chosen people, and any nation or any individual who turned against God's chosen people, the Jews, God says that if they touch his people, that then he that toucheth you, he says, toucheth the apple of his eye.

God's own ancient people. Now, look at the tenth verse. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.

Now, that's not talking about the return from Babylon. That's talking about the return that is still future. In this our day and generation, it hasn't yet occurred.

That prophecy hasn't yet been fulfilled. It still lies in the future. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come.

Jesus Christ is coming back, and God says, Here I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. Well, the one who is to come is the Lord Jesus, and he is going to dwell in the midst of his people. Now, when you come to verse 12, you have something very striking.

And the Lord shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. That's still future. That has not yet taken place.

The Lord shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land. Now, there's something very significant about this verse. Notice that expression, the holy land.

Where is the holy land? The holy land is Palestine. It's right here upon the earth. It's a land that we call Palestine.

God calls it the holy land. But here's something that's significant. This is the only place in the entire Bible where Palestine is called the holy land.

You'll never find that expression in any other book in the Bible. Nowhere from Genesis to Revelation is Palestine called the holy land except here. This is the only place.

And I've underlined the words the holy land in my Bible because that expression is never used again anywhere in the Bible. Only here in Zechariah, Palestine is called the holy land. Now, we often speak of Palestine as the holy land, but the Bible doesn't.

Only once does the Bible speak of Palestine as the holy land. And this is where it's found, and this is the only place that you will find it. Now, when you come to the third chapter, the last statement in the second verse is, a bran plucked out of the fire.

And that's what every sinner is, a bran plucked out of the fire. And if he doesn't get saved, he has to face the fire one of these days. And God says that if he does get saved, he'll be a bran plucked out of the fire.

Is not this a bran plucked out of the fire? Now, here it applies to Jerusalem, not to an individual. And here God speaks to Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. Even the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.

Is not this a bran plucked out of the fire? Jerusalem, here was the bran plucked out of the fire. But every sinner is a bran plucked out of the fire. Now, when you come to the eighth verse, you have two words at the end of the verse that are very significant.

I will bring forth my servant, the branch. Now, in my Bible, the word branch is spelled with capital letters. Every letter is a capital letter.

To whom does the branch refer? The branch refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. All we have to do is to look at the other places in the Bible where Jesus is called the branch. There are several places in the word of God that speak of Jesus as the branch.

And the word branch is spelled with capitals, as I've already pointed out, because it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy fellows who sit before thee, for there are men wondered at, for behold, I will bring forth my servant, the branch. Jesus was God's servant, and he is called here the branch.

I'll have more to say about that in a few moments when we come to that expression again. But look now at the fourth chapter, if you will, and the last statement in the sixth verse. If you and I could only realize that it's not our efforts, it's not our endeavors, it's not our learning, it's not our education, it's not our gifts, it's not our talents, it's not what we are, it's not what we can do.

It's the Spirit, and only through the Spirit can anything be accomplished. The Holy Spirit is the one who does the work. He convicts the sinner.

He convicts the backslider. He deals with the unsaved. He does the work in the heart of the unbeliever, not by might, nor by power, not by man's effort, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

That's a wonderful statement, and a statement that you and I ought to pray about many a time when we pray and tell God that we realize that it's not because of us. It's the Holy Spirit who does the work. It's not our preaching.

It's the work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of men and women who listen. It's by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Look at the ninth verse, if you will.

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also finish it. And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you.

Now God is back again to the days of Zerubbabel and the days of Zachariah and the days of Babylon. This is not future. This is in the past.

It's already taken place. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. And that happened.

For when the Jews returned to Jerusalem, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the foundation of the temple was laid. And God's promise was that the work would go on so rapidly that before the death of Zerubbabel, the temple would be completed. The work would be done.

And it happened like that. You turn to any history about the temple and you'll discover that the temple that was started by Zerubbabel in Jerusalem was finished by Zerubbabel. The entire work was completed in the lifetime of a single man.

And that's the fact that the prophet brings out in the ninth verse of the fourth chapter. And it's very, very important. Now turn with me to the sixth chapter, if you will.

And when you get in the sixth chapter, I want you to look at the twelfth verse. And I want you to look at the word, behold, at the beginning of the twelfth verse, just down a line or two. Behold the man whose name is what? The branch.

Here for the second time, the word branch is used in this prophecy of Zachariah, referring again to the Lord Jesus Christ and stating that the branch is a man. The branch is a man. That man, the Lord Jesus.

And in this passage, the word thee is in capitals as well as the word branch. Both words are in capitals. And Jesus is called Thee Branch.

And this is what God says, behold, the man whose name is the branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he, he shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall build the temple of the Lord. What is the reference to in this passage? I wonder if the reference is to the church.

And I wonder if it means that Jesus Christ would be the one who would build the church. I don't know, but it could be. It could be the church.

For Jesus Christ is the one who builds the church. But then there is to be a temple in the future built. And the one who is to build that temple is the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a temple to be built in heaven. And that temple is to be built by Christ himself. So whatever it refers to, Jesus Christ is the one who builds it.

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. Well, if he has a throne, he must be a king.

It's only a king who has a throne. And Jesus Christ is spoken of scores of times in the Bible as Lord of lords and king of kings. He's a king.

He has a throne. And he's going to sit on that throne of his one of these days. But there's something else.

And he shall be a priest. First it says he's a king. Then it says he's a priest.

And both are true. He was the king priest. He was to be a king.

And he will be a king. And he never has been a king. And he was not a king when he was here 2,000 years ago.

They would not accept him as a king. He came to be the king of the Jews. They spurned him.

They cast him out. They crucified him. He did not become a king.

But all through the Old Testament scriptures, Jesus is spoken of as a king. And in the New Testament as well. Now, those prophecies have to be fulfilled.

There must come a day when Jesus will be king. And that will be when he establishes the millennium. And he'll reign as Lord of Lords and King of Kings in that day.

He's not on his own throne today. Jesus Christ is on his Father's throne today. Upon which side of his Father is he sitting? He's sitting on the right hand of his Father, the Bible says.

On God's throne in heaven, Jesus is seated today on the right-hand side of his Father God. He's a king. But he has not yet received his own kingdom, which is here upon earth.

And one of these days, the rejected king is coming back. And when he comes back, he's going to establish his own kingdom here upon this earth. And his throne will be in Jerusalem.

And he'll occupy that throne in the city of Jerusalem, in Palestine, here upon this earth, in the Holy Land. And he'll reign as King of Kings. King over all other kings.

That is still future. And Zechariah speaks of it as a future event yet to be fulfilled. But it also says that he's a priest.

He shall be a priest upon his throne. Jesus Christ is not only a king and will occupy his own throne in the future, but he's also a priest. He intercedes on behalf of believers, on behalf of those who come to him and accept him as their Savior.

He's my priest today. He'll be King of all the earth. When he establishes the millennium, then he'll be both priest and king.

Now, look in the seventh chapter at the end of the fifth verse, if you will. Notice that it says once again, Seventy years. Seventy years.

When he fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did he at all fast unto me, even to me? And when he did eat and when he did drink, did not he eat for yourselves? And drink for yourselves? Oh, they fasted. They fasted all right. They fasted for seventy years.

But they did not fast unto God. They did not eat and drink unto God. They fasted unto themselves for seventy years.

And to punish them, God took them to Babylon and kept them for seventy years in Babylon. A year of captivity for every year that they fasted unto themselves in Palestine. Now, I'm going to close with these verses in the eighth chapter.

And I'm going to continue the study when I speak to you again on another Wednesday night. Look at the third verse of the eighth chapter of Zechariah. Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion.

Now, he's talking about the kingdom. This is not his return from Babylon. This is still future.

His return to establish his kingdom. I am returned unto Zion, Jerusalem, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem when Jesus Christ comes back. Where is he going to live? He's going to live in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem in Palestine. That's where he's going to establish his kingdom. And Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth.

And the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain. What does a mountain mean in the Bible? A mountain means a kingdom. Whenever the word mountain is used in prophecy, it refers to a kingdom.

And we could read that verse like this. And the kingdom of the Lord of hosts, the holy kingdom, God's kingdom. Thus saith the Lord of hosts.

There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem. Did that happen when they came home from Babylon? It did not. Only a handful were found in Jerusalem when they returned from Babylon.

And very, very few old people were in Jerusalem, for they had been slain. When Babylon captured Jerusalem, the older people were all slain. And the younger people were taken to Babylon, those who escaped and were not slain.

But God says there's going to come a day when Jerusalem will be filled with old men and old women. Long life will occur again. But that's not all.

They'll dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. When does a man use a staff? When he gets old. When he really gets old.

Then a man gets a staff to help him walk. And in Jerusalem, in the future, men are going to be so aged, so old, that they'll have to have a staff with which to walk because of their age. Well over a hundred years of age in that day, according to other prophecies.

And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets of it. That also did not happen when they came back from Babylon. But Jerusalem, during the millennium, is going to be filled with boys and girls.

And they'll play in the streets of Jerusalem unafraid. No danger of destruction of any kind whatever. When the Jews are re-established in their own city, full of boys and girls playing in the streets of it.

We haven't seen that yet. That's never occurred. There's been too much danger in Jerusalem.

Too many wars. Too much bloodshed. But in this day of which the prophet speaks, boys and girls will play in the streets of Jerusalem.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts. If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of Hosts. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts.

Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country. He's going to get them from the east. He's going to get them from the west.

Eastern countries. Western countries. He's going to find them all and bring them all back during the millennium.

And I will bring them. They shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people.

And I will be their God in truth and in righteousness.

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