

Minor Prophets #11 ZECHARIAH

HOSEA took a faithless wife And spoke of judgement, love and life
JOEL told of locust plagues The Spirit and the end of the age
AMOS left his flocks and trees To call the nation to its knees
OBADIAH prophesied of Edom and its foolish pride
JONAH tried to run away, but lived to preach another day
MICAH spoke of God's great plan to change the world by changing man.
NAHUM showed that God is great And prophesied Assyria's fate
HABAKKUK thought the Lord unfair But found the truth through faith and prayer
ZEPHANIAH made it clear The great day of the Lord was near
HAGGAI saw the people's need To put God's house before their greed
ZECHARIAH saw the Lord In visions, dreams and spoken word

Background

Zechariah was among the exiles who returned from Babylon in 536 BC
 After 16 years of delay, in 520 BC he encouraged the rebuilding of the temple
 See Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14

Many great texts we could address from this book -

ZEC 3:8 Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you... I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.

ZEC 4:6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."

ZEC 9:12 Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

ZEC 10:1 Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone.

ZEC 12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

ZEC 13:1 On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

ZEC 14:3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,

ZEC 14:9 The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

All in all, Zechariah presents eight dazzling visions. But we are going to look at just one of them in this study.

Get ready – the message of this passage could revolutionise your life!

1. Don't limit God! (1-5)

- A young man was asked to define the limits of Jerusalem. Young people are the builders of the future! This passage has special relevance for them.
- Too often we set limits on what God can do
- Every Sunday, church buildings give us a message – this place can only accommodate a certain number of people!
- Circumstances set limits
- Such as lack of resources; ill-health; little talent; poor education... These things put walls around us so we don't even try to step out
- Eg Helen Keller (1880-1968) who became deaf and blind as an infant but who refused to accept the boundaries of her physical limitations and became an internationally acclaimed figure.
- Eg Fanny Crosby (1823-1915) who, although blind, wrote 9000 hymns including 'To God be the Glory' and 'Blessed Assurance.'
- Eg John Milton, the great English Puritan poet, who wrote 'Paradise Lost' after he lost his sight.
- One writer speaks of 'the plausibility of the impossible!' In other words, what was once thought impossible has now become possible.

2. God's blessings are more than we can contain (4)

- Jerusalem would not need walls because of the great number of people and livestock in it.
- People = life
- Livestock = resources
- God has blessed us abundantly (Ephesians 1:3; 3:20-21)
- First the blessing, then the expansion! When we realise the blessings we have, we understand that walls cannot contain them.
- What difference would it make to your thinking if you discovered someone had deposited \$100 million in your bank account?

3. God is our security (5)

Walls imply attacks. It is to be expected that we will suffer opposition.

- Human walls are not enough.
- God is our wall of fire!
- Our enemies are sin and its companions—fear, depression, demons, corruption, despair, discouragement
- They cannot conquer the city of our lives!

4. God is our glory (5)

- God's glory is with us now—
- In Christ! (John 1:14; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:27)
- In the Holy Spirit. (1 Peter 4:14 – The Spirit of glory)
- This is enough for us! We don't need to be looking anywhere else.
- When God's glory is among us walls cannot contain it!

Challenge

- What are the walls around our church?
- What are the walls around your life?
- What are the limits that hold us back?
- When we are filled with the Spirit of glory the walls cannot contain it!
- Let's open our lives to God's glory today!
- Let's believe what God's Word says

When we step out in faith, God steps in with power!

Charles' Wesley's hymn is an encouragement—

*All things are possible to him,
That can in Jesus' name believe;
Lord, I no more Thy name blaspheme,
Thy truth I lovingly receive;
I can, I do believe in Thee;
All things are possible to me.*

*The most impossible of all
Is that I e'er from sin should cease;
Yet shall it be, I know it shall;
Jesus I trust Thy faithfulness.
If nothing is too hard for Thee;
All things are possible to me.*

*Tho' earth and hell the Word gainsay,
The Word of God shall never fail;
The The Lord can break sin's iron sway;
'Tis certain, tho' impossible.
When from the reign of sin set free,
All things are possible to me.*

*All things are possible to God;
To Christ, the pow'r of God in me;
Now shed Thy mighty Self abroad,
Let me no longer live, but Thee
Give me this hour in Thee to prove
The sweet omnipotence of love.*

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Read Zechariah chapters 2 and 4

Remember: You don't have to answer all the questions. Choose those that seem most relevant to you at this time.

Biblical

1. Read Ezra 5:1-2. From these verses, what kind of a person was Zechariah?
2. What did Zechariah do to encourage the people to recommence their building program? And what were the outcomes of his actions? (Ezra 6:14)
3. What does the phrase 'apple of his eye' mean? (2:8)
4. What is surprising about 2:9?
5. What does 4:9-10 mean?

Personal and practical

6. What are some of the walls around your life? Or the lives of people you know? (2:4) What can you do about them?
7. What are some of the walls you see in your church? Your cell group? What could be done about them?
8. How could 4b apply to your situation? (ie what would be the equivalent of 'people and livestock' for you?)
9. How could God be a wall of fire for you personally? (2:5)
10. What can you do to allow God to be your 'glory'? (2:5; 1 Cor 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:6)
11. Is there a mountain in your life that you could banish? How would you do it? (4:6-7b; Matthew 17:20)

Memorise Zechariah 2:4

About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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