

Zechariah: Points to the first and second coming of Christ, closely linking the cross to the end times

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Zechariah is a prophetic book written for the pulpit and believers, leading us from the ruins of history to the hope of Christ's return, helping the church understand how Jesus' first coming has accurately fulfilled the prophecies and how His second coming is near.

The details of the prophet's prophecy that the Messiah would ride a donkey into Jerusalem, be betrayed by thirty pieces of silver, and be pierced were accurately fulfilled in Jesus, and the prophecies about the nations besieging Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives cracking, and the Lord becoming king of the earth were still waiting to be fulfilled.

Zechariah tells the church that this is not just ancient history, but a spiritual map that stretches from the return of captivity to the return of Christ, inviting believers to live in the tension of "fulfilled, not yet finished".

Let's start with prayer:

Father, we are about to explore a book that connects ancient Jerusalem to the end of time—a book that reveals the coming of Your Son and exposes prophetic secrets that have been hidden in light for centuries. Open your eyes and look beyond the words to see the reality they describe. Open your ears, not only listen to information, but also listen to transformation. Open your heart and respond with the urgency these truths require. Don't leave us the same. Let each revelation awaken us and prepare us for what is to come. Say, Lord—your servants are listening. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Historical Context: A Call in a Crisis

Zechariah's ministry was about 520 B.C., the second year of King Darius, and it had been nearly twenty years since the people of Judah returned from the Babylonian captivity. They had started to rebuild the temple with enthusiasm, but the work was suspended for sixteen years due to opposition from foreign enemies and inner disappointment.

In this spiritually depressing situation, God raised up Haggai and Zechariah: Haggai bluntly called the people to rebuild the temple immediately, and Zechariah unfolded a grander vision for the people to see: this temple is not just a contemporary religious building, but a key part of God's eternal kingdom plan.

The Core Message of the Turn (1:1–6)

Zechariah opened the book and conveyed a very clear message: "Turn to me, and I will turn to you", which is the spiritual mobilization command for the new generation of returnees. God reminded them that although the ancestors of the previous generation had religious ceremonies, they resisted the warnings of the prophets and lost their land and were taken into captivity.

For the church today, this is also a mirror: religious activities can be lively, but if the heart is far from God, it will only be a cloak of falsehood. God is still calling believers not only to restore the rhythm of service, but to return to Him from the bottom of their hearts.

Eight visions in one night: from judgment to glory

On November 24, the second year of King Darius, God revealed to Zechariah eight night visions that echoed each other overnight, forming a complete prophetic blueprint. These eight visions extend from God's judgment on the nations, the restoration of Israel, and the purification of sin, to the end of God's eternal coexistence with the people, showing His sovereignty over history and the fulfillment of His plan.

These visions echo each other: the first and eighth visions are related to God's search of the earth, the second and seventh speaks of the evil forces being dealt with, the third and sixth focus on Jerusalem and sin, and the fourth and fifth focus on the work of the priests and the temple, forming a "head-to-end" structure.

Vision 1: The Knight in the Myrtle Tree (1:7–17)

Zechariah saw a man riding a red horse standing in the middle of a myrtle tree with horses of other colors behind him, which were interpreted as messengers sent by God to report to Him about the world. Their report was, "The whole earth is in peace," and the international situation seemed to be stable, but the angels of heaven interceded for Jerusalem, because God's people were still in trouble while the nations were safe.

God responded that He was still very jealous of Jerusalem, extremely angry with the nations that were comfortable but had harmed His people, and promised to return to Jerusalem and rebuild His temple, so that the city would be full of abundance again. This vision brings several important reminders that God has not ignored any injustice or the tears of His people; The "stability" of the world does not necessarily mean God's approval, and He has his own time and way to turn the situation around.

Vision 2: The Four Horns and the Four Craftsmen (1:18–21)

Zechariah then saw four horns, symbolizing the nations that had attacked and dispersed Judah and Jerusalem, and saw four craftsmen raised up by God to intimidate and break these horns. To put it simply, every power that exalts itself and oppresses God's people will not last long, and God will raise up "craftsmen" to tear them down at the right time to show His righteous sovereignty in history.

When the church reads this vision, it does not encourage political fanaticism, but is reminded that any power that opposes God's will and persecutes His people will eventually face His judgment; Although His people are oppressed for a while, they will not be completely destroyed in the end.

Vision 3: The Man with the Measure in His Hand (2:1–5)

Later, a man with a yardstick was about to measure the boundaries of Jerusalem, as if to plan the walls and scope, but another angel hurriedly stopped him, declaring that Jerusalem would become a "city without walls" because the population and livestock were too large to fit the walls. God Himself promised to be a city of fire around Jerusalem and to glorify the city, which not only points to the revival after the return, but also foreshadows God's personal protection and presence in the church and the kingdom of the last days.

For believers, this vision encourages people not to measure God's works with limited eyes, because He plans for His people beyond what human hands can plan. The most important blessing is not the walls of safety, but the glorious presence of God Himself in the midst.

Vision 4: Joshua's Filthy Garments (3:1–10)

The fourth vision takes us into a heavenly court: Joshua, the high priest, stands before the angel of the Lord, Satan accuses beside him, and Joshua is dressed in filthy clothes and is completely unworthy to stand before a holy God. However, God rebuked Satan, declaring that Joshua was a stick drawn from the fire, and commanded the angels to take off his filthy clothes and put on his splendid robes and a clean crown, symbolizing the removal of sin and the restoration of identity.

God also promised to bring out the "seed" and to take away the sin of the land within one day, which clearly foreshadowed Christ's eternal work of atonement to fulfill true justification. This vision is not only for Joshua, but also for every believer who is weak in sin and accusation: God does not remove you as a person, but your filth. What He puts on you is Christ's perfect robe of righteousness, not a good deed you have earned yourself.

Vision 5: The Golden Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees (Chapter 4:1–14)

The fifth vision is a highly hopeful picture: a golden lampstand with bowls and seven lamps, and a continuous supply of oil through a golden pipe from two olive trees to keep the lights on. The core message of this vision lies in God's words to Zerubbabel: "It is not by power, not by talent, but by my spirit that things can be accomplished", indicating that the key to rebuilding the temple and fulfilling God's commission is not human resources, but the long-term supply of the Holy Spirit.

The two olive trees are interpreted as "two anointed ones", and at that time, Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest also foreshadowed God's shining testimony through the people and churches He anointed throughout the ages. This is a great comfort to today's ministers: in the face of seemingly impossible callings and services, God does not ask people to hold on, but calls people to learn to rely on the Holy Spirit.

Vision 6: The Book of Flight (5:1–4)

In the sixth vision, a huge flying scroll appears, similar in size to the porch of the temple, which records the curse on those who steal and falsely claim the name of God, symbolizing the judgment of the law on those who break the covenant. The scroll "flies" into people's homes until it is demolished, showing that God's word is not a static word, but an active approach, exposing and dealing with hidden sins.

This vision warns the people who are rebuilding the temple: if they are only busy with religious projects on the outside but condone fraud and false oaths inside, they will eventually face God's serious punishment. For believers today, this is a reminder of inner holiness: while the gospel does bring forgiveness, God also expects His people to live ethically and fearfully and not let "hidden sins" hide behind the façade of faith.

Application Today: Prepare before the coming King

Throughout Zechariah's night vision, we can see several clear lines: God favors His people, judges the proud nations, cleanses the unworthy priests, empowers His work, and finally dwells with His people in His city. The fulfilled parts—such as Jesus' first coming and redemption—become assurances that the prophecies about His return and kingdom perfection will also be fulfilled, urging believers not to be mere spectators, but to truly turn around and wait vigilantly.

For the pulpit and the small group, Zechariah is not just a prophetic textbook, but a spiritual mirror and a beacon of hope: calling the church to realign God's heart, rely on the Holy Spirit, refuse to hide sin, accept the robe of grace, and prepare to welcome the King who will return.

The seventh and eighth visions focus on the removal of evil and God's final judgment, leading readers from purification to complete victory, providing powerful end-time hope applications for pulpit and small group Bible study.

Vision 7: The Woman in the Basket – The Migration of Evil (5:5–11)

Zechariah saw an ephraim (a commercial measuring instrument, about 35 liters in size) covered with a heavy lead lid, in which sat a woman known as "evil", symbolizing the systemic sins of human society, such as greed, fraud, and idolatry. Two women with stork wings (unclean birds) carry baskets and fly to the land of Shena (ancient Babylon), where they build houses for evil and place them on pedestals, which foreshadows that sin will be temporarily restrained, but will be moved back to its source, the world system of rebellion against God. For the church today, this vision reminds us that evil will not remain in the land of God's people forever, and God will personally remove it, just like the fall of the great city of Babylon in the book of Revelation. Believers should be vigilant, separate from the system of greed and unrighteousness, and live out the testimony of righteousness.

Vision 8: The Four Chariots—Global Judgment (6:1–8)

The climax of the eighth vision comes: four chariots drive out from between the two copper mountains (symbolizing God's unchanging throne of judgment), pulled by red, black, white, and mottled horses, representing God's angelic army parading in all directions to carry out justice, echoing the knights of the first vision from observation to action.

The northern chariot specifically targeted the direction of Babylon, which had destroyed Jerusalem, and the angel declared that the Spirit of God had rested, which meant that the judgment satisfied His justice; Other directions spread throughout the earth, demonstrating God's sovereignty over all nations. This vision calls the pulpit to preach: God is in control of history, and any forces that oppose him will eventually face the chariot; Believers should choose their camp and trust in the Lord who surrounds and protects His people with a train.

Joshua's Coronation: A Type of the Priestly King (6:9–15)

After the vision, God commanded Zechariah to make a crown out of gold and silver offered by the returnees, put it on the head of the high priest Joshua, and announced that the "branch" (Messiah) would rise from his throne, build a temple, serve as both a priest and a king, and sit on the throne to rule. This unique combination exemplifies Jesus: He cleanses sins on the cross as a priest and reigns again as a king; The crown is temporarily stored in the temple, pointing to the Gentiles who also joined the church building the true temple - the body of Christ through faith. Applied to small groups, this reveals that believers enjoy the dual blessings of power and mercy in Christ, not having to choose between strength and gentleness, but living out the likeness of a priestly king.

The Trial of True Worship: The True Meaning of Fasting (7:1–7)

Two years later, when the Bethel delegation asked if they would continue the fifth month fast (commemorating the destruction of the temple), God asked, "Are you fasting for me or for yourselves?" If the revelation ceremony is not sincere, it is no different from eating and drinking. God reiterates the prophetic message: doing righteousness, showing mercy, not oppressing the weak, and not harboring resentment are true religions, not empty forms; The ancestors refused to listen and were captured, and now the new generation has a chance to renew.

Sermon application: Church gatherings and feasts should examine motivation and turn to life changes pleasing to God—righteousness, righteousness, and love for neighbor over rituals.

The Promise of Glorious Restoration (8:1–17)

God declared that he would fervently hate Zion and would dwell in Jerusalem forever, making it a "faithful city"; Young and old live in peace on the streets, children play, and past curses turn into blessings, demonstrating His ability to turn around.

He promised to redeem His people from the East and the West and establish a covenant of truth and righteousness. We call on the strength to rebuild the temple, abandon evil for good, love peace, and tell the truth. This is a great comfort to believers today: God's zeal for the

church remains unchanged, and the revival of the last days is coming, urging the group to be firm in service and live out the opposite of what He hates - honesty, justice and peace.

The final oracle of Zechariah transforms mourning into joy, foreshadowing the nation's flock to Jerusalem, announcing the global impact of Christ's return, and providing the pulpit and small group with the perfect end to the end of hope and call to action in the last days.

Fasting turned into a feast (8:18–23)

God declares that the four days of mourning and fasting (April, May, July, and October) will become joyful feasts, provided that the people love truth and peace, not to abolish commemoration, but to achieve the prophetic goal through sincere repentance. All nations flocked to the Jews, and ten men from all tribes grabbed the corners of their garments and said, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you," indicating that the Gentiles will return to the true God because of the God of Israel. For the church today, this call examines the motivation for worship: when we sincerely turn to God, mourning will become joy, attracting nations to witness the glory of His presence.

The humble king who rode a donkey (9:9–10)

Rejoice, the daughters of Zion, your king comes: righteousness, salvation, humility on a colt; He took away chariots and broke bows and arrows, and preached peace to all nations, from sea to sea and river to the ends of the earth. Jesus accurately fulfilled every detail on Palm Sunday, and the crowd shouted "Hosanna", but rejected him because he expected a military king; This prophecy prophesies the first coming of humility and the second coming of glory.

Sermon application: Today's believers should welcome Him with a heart of salvation, avoid repeating the mistakes of refusal and living out the testimony of the kingdom of peace.

The Good Shepherd and the Thirty Pieces of Silver (11:4–14)

God commanded Zechariah to shepherd the sheep destined for slaughter, using the staff of "grace" and "unity" to rid the three wicked shepherds. Yet, the flock rejected him, and he was paid a slave price of thirty pieces of silver and given to the potter in the temple. Five hundred years later, Judah betrayed Jesus for the same price, using the money to buy the potter's land—a precise fulfillment of the prophecy, demonstrating that religious leaders reject true shepherds. This reminds the group that Christ redeemed the priceless flock with his precious blood, calling believers to cherish the good shepherd and reject the temptations of corrupt leaders.

Jerusalem: Heavy Stones and Piercings (Chapter 12:1–13:1) Jerusalem became a drunken cup and a heavy stone, but all nations joined forces to attack but broke themselves; God struck the

blind of the enemy and poured out the spirit of grace, so that Israel would weep like an only begotten Son when he looked at the "assassinated", and opened a clean spring for David's house to remove sins. the whole country repented and recognized Jesus as the Messiah, foreshadowing the revival of the last days; Today's controversy between Israel's restoration and the city of Ye is the stage ready. Application: The church should pray for Israel, prepare for the fountain of repentance to come, and live out the sorrow and purification that pierces Christ.

The Mount of Olives Division and the Second Coming (14:1–5)

When the nations besieged Jerusalem, the Lord went out to fight, and the Mount of Olives was split in half, forming a valley of escape, and all the saints came with the Lord. Christ literally returns from the Ascension, overturning the peak of human rebellion; The pulpit preached this battle and firmly stood in the right camp for believers.

The Eternal Kingdom and Universal Worship (14:6–21)

The sun was unusual, and the living water flowed from Jerusalem to the east and west, and the Lord became the king of the earth. The earth turns into a plain, the city is high and safe, the enemy dissolves, the survivors keep the festival, and there is no rain for those who refuse. Holiness permeates all things, even the bell is engraved with "The Lord is Most Holy", and the Canaanites no longer enter the temple; The millennial nation is a manifestation of universal worship and unsullied life. Conclusion application: Half of Zechariah's prophecy has verified the remaining inevitability, urging the group to return to the Lord wholeheartedly: take off the robe of righteousness, accomplish things by the Spirit, separate Babylon, love righteousness and mercy, and wait for the king who will wear the crown forever.

Answer the prayer to Heavenly Father, thank Zechariah for revealing the mystery of Christ's two comings, we believe that the prophecies are accurate and the end is near. Cleanse us as Joshua did, and give us spirit like oil for lamps, so that we may stand on the side of kings. In the name of the Second Savior, Jesus, amen.