

Seeing Jesus in the Minor Prophets

Zechariah Part 1

Historical Background

Outline

- I. Return to the Lord—Chapter 1:1-6
- II. 8 Night Visions—Chapters 1:7-6:15
- III. Fasting and Feasting—Chapters 7-8
- IV. The Return of the King—Chapters 9-14

The Message of Zechariah

V. Return to the Lord

❖ *Zechariah 1:1-6*

VI. 8 Night Visions

🕒 **How do we approach these visions?**

- Should we think of these visions as literal historical events that actually happened? No. Should we think of them as literal future events that will one day happen? No. Rather, we should think of them as a scenes in a movie. A movie that symbolically depicts what God is doing in the world.

1. Vision 1: The Horseman in the myrtle trees

🕒 **Characters:**

Zechariah	Man in the myrtle trees/Angel of the Lord/Jesus
Interpreting Angel	Riders on multi-colored horses
	Lord of Hosts/God the Father

🕒 **Plot:**

- In this first vision or scene, the prophet Zechariah and the interpreting angel see a man on a red horse standing among myrtle trees. This man, who is later referred to as the angel of the Lord is in command of a host of riders riding horses of various colors. He commands them to ride all over the world and see how things are. Their report is that all is calm. This is a disturbing report because Jerusalem is experiencing famine and difficulty. The wicked world is doing just fine and God’s people are struggling. So the man/angel of the Lord cries out...

❖ *Zechariah 1:12*

- The Father’s answer was to the interpreting angel who conveyed his message to Zechariah. The message was basically, “The wicked nations won’t be at ease for long! I was already angry with them and they have made me even more angry! Jerusalem won’t suffer for long! I can’t bear to watch the wicked world flourish while my people struggle any more. I will move on their behalf! I will show them mercy. I will build my house among them. I will build my people. I will bring them bountiful prosperity and comfort.”

🕒 **What does it mean? What is this scene symbolizing?**

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- Before explaining the meaning, I need to justify my claim that the man in the myrtle trees/ AoL was in fact Jesus. I believe this for 2 reasons. First, in the ancient eastern world, myrtle trees represent the abode of God¹. Some believe this is why myrtle trees were planted just outside Jerusalem in the Kidron valley. Second, in verse 11, the man is referred to as “the angel of the LORD. This term in the Old Testament is often used to refer to God himself. An example of this is when the Lord spoke to Moses from the burning bush in Exodus 3. The text says...
 - ❖ Exodus 3:2—*And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush*
- So, since we have a man who is referred to by the divine title of “the angel of the LORD,” it is safe to assert that this is indeed Jesus himself.
- So, what does this vision symbolize? Ultimately, it symbolizes the coming work of Christ. God is revealing that he is going to work mightily on behalf of his people. Through Jesus he will bring judgement upon this wicked world (John 5:22). Through Jesus, he will demonstrate his jealous love for his people (Romans 5:8). Through Jesus he will show mercy to his people. In this vision God says that his house (temple) shall be built in Jerusalem and in John 2:19-22 Jesus reveals to us that he is the temple. When this vision declares that a “measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem” (1:16) it is God promising to build his people which he did through Christ who shed his blood and ransomed many (Revelation 5:9). This vision promises overflowing prosperity for God’s people and it is only in Christ that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3). This revelation of God’s good and glorious plan is meant to encourage Zechariah and the people of God. God intends to stir within them an eager anticipation and an excitement about what he is going to do for them and through them.

2. Vision 2: 4 Horns and 4 Craftsmen

Characters/Objects:

Zechariah	4 Evil Horns
Interpreting Angel	4 Craftsmen

Plot:

- The plot here is really simple. There are 4 horns that have scattered and oppressed God’s people and there are 4 craftsmen who are coming...

❖ **Zechariah 1:21b**

What does it mean? What is this scene symbolizing?

- Many try to associate the 4 horn with 4 specific nations who were used to scatter God’s people. To do so would be to miss the significance of the symbolic use of the number 4. “Grouping objects or phrases in fours is a Hebrew literary technique used to picture universality.”² This is especially true in the Bible’s apocalyptic sections. In Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation we see four beasts, four heads, four kings, four living creatures, four angels, as well as four horns. In each case, “the main meaning seems to be completeness or

¹ Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai Zechariah Malachi: Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*, p.132.

² Tremper Longman, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*

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supremacy.³ Thus, the four horns represent every enemy of every kind that has or ever will oppose the glory of God by opposing God's people.

- Again, many try to associate the 4 craftsmen with 4 specific nations who were used to defeat those who scattered and oppressed God's people. Again, to do so would be to miss the point entirely. Just as the 4 horns represent all that is opposed to God and God's people, the 4 craftsmen represent the all that will defeat the enemies of God and God's people. When we understand this, we can begin to see through the light of the New Testament that these 4 craftsmen actually represent one carpenter (Jesus) who by his sacrificial death on the cross utterly defeats the enemies of God and God's people. It is the fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3 which says...

❖ Genesis 3:15—*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

3. Vision 3: A Man with a Measuring Line

Characters/Objects:

Zechariah	A young man with a measuring line
Interpreting Angel	A second angel who delivers a message from the LORD

Plot:

- The third vision begins with a young man trying to measure the width and length of Jerusalem. Before he gets to into his work, an angel is sent to him with a message from the LORD.

❖ **Zechariah 2:4-5**

- The rest of the vision is a message to God's people. A message in which God calls his people out of captivity and promises to deliverance in Zion. He promises to turn the tables on those who formerly held them captive because...

❖ Zechariah 2:8—*for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye:*

- He then goes on promise that God's people will be the one's who capture the nations. Only not in an oppressive way. He says...

❖ **Zechariah 2:10-11**

What does it mean? What is this scene symbolizing?

- At this point many of you probably already know what this vision is all about. This vision is about God's glorious purposes and workings through the church. It's about how Jesus's bride, the Church, is going to be such a massive nation that the total number of souls is beyond reckoning (Revelation 7:9). It's about how Jesus's bride, the Church, will not need walls to protect it because the omnipotence of God guards his people like a wall of fire. It's about how the glory of God is in the midst of his Jesus's bride, the Church, through the indwelling presence of Holy Spirit and when Jesus comes again, God's glory will be so all encompassing that we no longer need the sun for light because the radiance of God almighty will be a light to us (Revelation 22:5). It's about how Jesus's bride, the Church, is made up of "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). It's about

³ Ibid.

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how the Church is Jesus's inheritance. It's about how all the world ought to be silent with awe at the mighty work that God is doing for and through the Church.

4. Vision 4: Joshua the High Priest

Characters/Objects:

Zechariah	Joshua the high priest
Interpreting Angel	The Angel of the LORD/Jesus/the Branch
	Satan
	the stone with seven eyes

Plot:

- The fourth vision is somewhat different from the previous visions in that Zechariah sees someone he knows personally. The high priest Joshua. In this vision Joshua is standing before the Angel of the LORD in filthy garments. The ESV study bible notes elaborate that filthy actually means "soiled with excrement."⁴ Because of this, Satan seeks to accuse him. However, the angel of the LORD doesn't allow Satan to accuse him. He says...

❖ **Zechariah 3:2**

- The angel does much more than just rebuke Satan. He goes on to take away Satan ability to accuse Joshua by removing the filthy clothes and dressing him beautiful clean garments...

❖ **Zechariah 3:4-5**

- After dressing him in clean garments the angel of the LORD gives Joshua a solemn task and makes Joshua a glorious promise. The task is to walk faithfully with God. The promise is that after he has done so, he will rule and reign in the house of God.
- Next, the angel of the LORD reveals how all of this will come about. He will send his servant the Branch. Both Isaiah 11 and Jeremiah 23 make it quite clear that the branch is a messianic title. Using this branch, the angel of the LORD says...
 - ❖ Zechariah 3:9—*I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.*
- The vision closes by stating that on the day that the branch takes iniquity away, all those who have exchanged their filthy garments for pure priestly garments will invite others to do the same.

What does it mean? What is this scene symbolizing?

- Just as the vision states in verse 8, Joshua is a sign. This vision involving Joshua is a depiction of the saving work of Jesus Christ in an individual's life. Each and every one of us stood before the Lord Jesus in filthy garments. Satan stood ready to accuse us before Jesus our judge but for all those whom he has appointed to repent of their sin and trust in Jesus, Jesus says to Satan "the Lord rebuke you Satan!" I, the Branch, have taken his filthy garments upon myself cross! I, the branch, lived a sinless life. I obeyed the law perfectly so that I might attain pure priestly garments for him to wear. He is clean! He has the right to stand before me unashamed! I have given him a place of honor and authority here in my

⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

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courts! You have no charge against him! Furthermore, I have sent him out to invite many many many more to come to me that I might remove from them their filthy rags and clothe them in my own priestly garments.

Summary

- If you haven't noticed yet, these visions are beginning to tell a single story. The story of God's glorious purposes through Jesus.
 1. In vision 1, we see that God is stirring. He is about to work mightily on behalf of his people through Jesus.
 2. In vision 2, we see that God is going to defeat his enemies and the enemies of his people through Jesus.
 3. In vision 3, we see that God is going to build a massive nation, protect this nation from enemies, and dwell in glory with this nation through Jesus.
 4. In vision 4, we see that God will take away our filthy rags and dress us in robes of righteousness through Jesus. Because of this, we are granted the privilege of ruling and reigning with Jesus for all eternity and because we have the honor and obligation to invite others to do the same.
- May our hearts burn within us, as we see the glory of God in Christ Jesus in the book of Zechariah.