



ZECHARIAH, Being the People of God

Showers of Blessings

Lesson 10 Zechariah 10:1-12

10:1 “Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.”

This chapter continues the “burden” that was given to Zechariah, which began in chapter 9, verse 1. Whereas chapter 9 focused on the coming of the King of Kings, this chapter focuses on the blessing He will bring to His people in His kingdom. To an agrarian culture, nothing speaks more of blessing than rain, and under Messiah’s leadership, rain will always be forthcoming. His people need only ask for it, and He will “give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.” Of course, the showers of rain will grow the crops the people eat, and the abundant grass in the field will feed their livestock.

10:2 “For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.”

The coming King will be a caring shepherd, in contrast to the shepherds of Israel’s past that led them astray and in contrast to Alexander the Great that figured prominently in chapter 9. The words of the idols were “vanity,” meaning that the idolatrous shepherds gave useless and powerless messages. Indeed, their messages were lies and “false dreams.” Instead of speaking truth, they gave people what they wanted to hear, but their “comfort” was “in vain” because their words did not come true. The people were like a flock of sheep with no shepherd, and therefore “they were troubled.” False prophets and teachers throughout history have led many people into sin and judgment. (Jeremiah 14:13-15; Lamentations 2:14; Ezekiel 13:1-3; Revelation 2:20). The problem is that people can reach a point where false teaching is what they desire. (2 Timothy 4:3). And when the false teachers are dealt with, so are the false worshipers. (Zephaniah 1:4-6). In contrast to the “diviners” that Zechariah was addressing, Jesus the Messiah is the good shepherd.

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. **12** But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. **13** The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. **14** I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.”

QUESTION

1. The world presents a consumer’s bazaar of religions and philosophies. What does God’s commentary on the false shepherds say to us in our time about both the religions and the leaders?

10:3 “Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.”

The wicked shepherds did not go unnoticed by God. They attracted God’s anger and were punished. Zechariah refers to them as “goats,” the Hebrew term indicating male goats. Just as male goats tend

to bully, so also the wicked shepherds manipulated the people to do their will. In addition to punishing the wicked shepherds, the LORD will fix the problem by visiting the flock (*“the house of Judah”*) and transforming them from a flock without an adequate shepherd into a warhorse, which may indicate God’s enabling them to stand strong against all of their enemies. There is no indication that Judah deserves God’s intervention on their behalf. Indeed, exactly the opposite is true because they followed the bad shepherds. That God is, nevertheless, intervening for them is a testimony to His keeping the covenant He made with Abraham. This is a picture of grace, and we should take notice how grace permeates the Bible. This is the distinguishing feature of Christianity, that God’s favor is not earned.

10:4 “Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.”

The prior verse promised Israel’s future deliverance, and this verse explains that it will be the Messiah that accomplishes the deliverances. The “him” referred to here is Judah, and out of Judah will come Messiah. (see Genesis 49:8-10). The Messiah will be the cornerstone (*“the corner”*), *“the nail”*, and *“the battle bow.”* The term cornerstone is used in the Old Testament to designate leaders (see Judges 20:2, 1 Samuel 14:38), and is used specifically of the Messiah in Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22, as well as in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 3:11 and 1 Peter 2:6. The Messiah will be foundational to Israel’s future, a cornerstone. The word *“nail”* is more accurately translated as peg or tent peg. Valuables were hung on pegs (see Ezekiel 15:3; Isaiah 22:22-24), and pegs were used for tents. Thus, the term here could speak of Messiah’s strength and stability or of a place of honor and glory, or perhaps both are intended. The battle bow pictures military strength and characterizes Messiah as a conquering king. The term “oppressor” is an unusual word, used in Exodus 3:7 for the Egyptian taskmasters. Here, it is more likely used in the positive sense of a ruler. Thus, the point is that future rulers will come from Judah.

10:5 “And they shall be as mighty *men*, which tread down *their enemies* in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded. 6 And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I *am* the LORD their God, and will hear them. 7 And *they of Ephraim* shall be like a mighty *man*, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.”

Messiah, in addition to being a caring ruler, will also be a victorious ruler. He will lead his people as warriors (*“as mighty men”*) in victory over their enemies. God will be with them, and their enemies confounded. The picture here is of the infantry defeating the cavalry, which in the context of ancient warfare is quite unexpected. It is all because God is with them. Moreover, Messiah will reunite the nation of Israel. We must remember that after the rule of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, the kingdom split into two separate nations. Here, those separate kingdoms are referred to as Judah (the southern kingdom) and Joseph (recall that Joseph was the father of Ephraim and the Old Testament often referred to the northern kingdom as Ephraim). In Messiah’s rule, these separate nations are reunited. The house of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) will be strengthened, and the house of Joseph will be delivered (the Northern Kingdom; the two northern tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh came from Joseph). They both will be put back into the land, a reference to the undoing of the scattering of the Jewish people. Indeed, the healing will be so complete that it will be as if they were never scattered (*“as though I had not cast them off”*). This future time will be characterized not only by physical restoration, but also spiritual, as the united nation will again hear and obey the LORD as their God. This future restoration is, once again, a picture of grace. In verse 7, Ephraim refers to the

Northern Kingdom, which before Zechariah's time was defeated and scattered by the Assyrians. In the future, the Northern Kingdom will be like a mighty warrior, and their affliction will be reversed so that they rejoice in the LORD.

QUESTION

2. How do God's people tackle what appear to be overwhelming odds?

10:8 “I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.”

Whereas verses 5 through 7 focus more on the reuniting of the two nations into a united Israel, this verse focuses on Messiah's regathering the people. He will call them (“hiss” or whistle) and gather them together. Messiah has redeemed them; it is interesting that the term used here for redeem is the term for purchasing from slavery and captivity (see Deuteronomy 13:5; 2 Samuel 7:23; Micah 6:4). Israel's future population will be as it was before the dispersion. All that has befallen Israel in the past as judgment for their sin is seen here as being undone (or healed) by the Messiah.

10:9 “And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again.”

God will scatter them to far countries, but the regathering will happen when they characteristically repent (“they shall remember me”). Of course, God used the Romans to do this because characteristically Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah. But there will be a future revival (Zechariah will address this in chapter 12 in detail) in which they repent (“turn again”). Remember that the message of John the Baptist was to repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus also preached this message to the Jewish nation. (Matthew 4:17)

10:10 “I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and *place* shall not be found for them. **11** And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.”

In their past, the Jewish people had been enslaved by the Egyptians and the Assyrians, and in Zechariah's day they were still scattered abroad (as they are today) among these nations. Messiah will bring them out of these places; he will bring them home, into the land of Gilead and Lebanon. The point is that the population will overflow the old boundaries (“*place shall not be found for them*”) so that the people will occupy the land to the north (Lebanon) and west (Gilead). All of the obstacles that might prevent the people's return to Israel will be removed. Verse 11 pictures Messiah passing through the sea (like when he brought them through the Red Sea), drying up the rivers so that they can make an easy passage. Israel's enemies, typified by Assyria and Egypt, will be rendered powerless and thus in no position to oppose the regathering.

10:12 “And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.”

The people will be strengthened in the LORD so that they can return to Israel. This promise of blessing speaks not only of physical blessing, but also spiritual blessing. They will identify with Messiah and follow his leadership in the totality of their lives (“they shall walk up and down in his name”). This will be a time of revival, a theme Zechariah will return to.

QUESTION

3. Do you think that in “Christian circles” today there is too much or too little emphasis on Jesus’ return and His kingdom? Is the issue important today (and how can we determine its importance)? Was the issue important to first century Christians?
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