

December 1

Scriptures: Read Zechariah 5 & 6

Key Verse: “Yes, He [Messiah] shall build the Temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, ...He shall be a priest on His throne...” (Zechariah 6:13)

Overview

In chapter five, we read of two new visions that Zechariah was given by the Lord. When he looked up into the sky he saw a very large flying scroll that must have been unrolled, since Zechariah saw both the contents and size (9 meters by 4.5 meters). The message of the scroll was God’s judgment upon transgressors of His Law. The fact that it was flying overhead indicated that the judgments were soon to fall upon the wicked people, including those in Isreal, be they heathens or Jews; they would be expelled from God’s land. For Zechariah’s audience, this was to show them that those who sin will not hinder God’s work, for He has prepared a plan of judgment upon them.

The two specific transgressions written upon the scroll are (1) stealing, and (2) swearing falsely by God’s name. These are most likely representative of all the Ten Commandments. The sin of stealing is the middle commandment in the second table of the law, violating man’s duties toward man (Ex. 20:15). The sin of swearing falsely (including using God’s name in vain and hypocrisy) is the middle commandment in the first table of the law, violating man’s duties toward God (Ex. 20:7). Disobedience to God’s laws carries with it a curse which will come to each guilty person (cf. Deut. 27:15-26; 28:15-68). If one has not repented on the appointed day of God’s coming judgment of the world, then they will be expelled from the holy presence of God and the curse of sin will come upon them, remain with them, and consume them (5:4).

In the second vision of chapter five, Zechariah saw a basket (ephah, the largest dry measurement for grain of the ancient Hebrews, just a little larger than a bushel). In the basket was a woman, who symbolized wickedness (5:8; cf. Prov. 2:16; 5:3-4). Just as grains are put into a bushel, so all forms of sin and godlessness would be gathered together, with none escaping (the lead cover), and removed to a place (represented by Babylon) where God would detain them forever. Sinners from every nation, including Israel, will find their place there. Zechariah saw two women who carried away the full ephah with ease, according to God’s will. Thus, the land of Israel was purified from all wickedness, which must be the case when the Messiah King Jesus reigns from Jerusalem. The message of this vision for Zechariah’s audience is similar to that of his previous one: they are not to allow any wickedness to prevent them from building the Temple of God, for God is sovereign, even over the wicked with whom He will certainly deal according to their ways.

The four chariots in chapter six represent the Lord’s sovereign activity throughout the whole earth. Some commentators give certain meanings to the different colours of horses, such as the red signifying war; the white, joy and victory; the black, calamity and distress; the grizzled (spotted), plagues and pestilence. However, the most simple explanation is that they represent various forms of the work of God throughout the world, and their goals cannot be overcome or thwarted. To Zechariah’s audience, they would understand that God was in control, even over

Babylon, who had been permanently defeated. Therefore, the Jews were not to have any fear of Babylon rising again as a world power (6:8).

The eight symbolic visions (1:7-6:8) conclude with a symbolic act (6:9-11) and the commissioning of Joshua, the High Priest, which clearly foreshadowed the future ministry of the Messiah/High Priest/King (6:12-15). Since Zechariah was a priest, possibly in charge of the Temple treasury, he was to receive the gifts of silver and gold from the three men from Babylon. This would have been a collection that had been taken up among the Jewish community (who once were captive, but had chosen not to return with Ezra), and some donations possibly came from Gentiles (cf. as in the past; Ezra 1:6). The gift was likely meant for the beautification of the Temple, which was presently under construction.

The Lord's purpose for the silver and gold was for Zechariah to make an elaborate crown which would remain in the Temple; it would be a memorial to the faithful Jews and Gentiles who contributed, but more importantly it would remind them of the ceremony wherein Joshua was symbolically crowned. The words of the ceremony clearly reveal that Zechariah is referring to the Messiah. Once again He is called "the Branch" (6:12; 3:8), who would spread out from Israel to bless other nations as well and would build the Temple of the Lord (i.e. His Church; Eph. 2:20) and receive the glory for it. Like Melchizedek (Heb. 5:10), He shall be a Priest/King, something unknown in the Levitical priesthood. The high priest wore a turban, but not a crown. The Messiah, however, will combine both offices in perfect unity. His Messiahship would be proven by the many from "far away" (Gentiles), who would help to build His Temple (the Church). Zechariah tells Israel that their enjoyment and participation in the blessing of the Messiah are conditional upon diligent obedience to the voice of the Lord. That voice was and is the voice of Jesus.

Prayer

Lord God, day by day, even as we read this daily commentary and assigned scripture, we are learning to hear and know Your voice. Enable us, Lord, not just to be hearers of the Word but doers also.