

From Babylon to Jerusalem - (Zechariah) ch.1 & 2

by Zac Poonen

The book of Zechariah emphasizes the importance of God's Word as a guide for life, a warning for the future, and a message of repentance and hope.

Duration: 1:00:32

Scripture: Zechariah 1:1-2, Zechariah 2:10, Zechariah 2:13, Zechariah 8:16-17, Zechariah 8:19, Zechariah 8:23

Topics: "From Babylon To Jerusalem"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Zechariah and highlights the importance of understanding God's sovereignty and His commitment to building His church. The preacher emphasizes that despite the enemies and challenges that may arise, the gates of hell will not prevail against the body of Christ. The sermon also addresses the temptation to get discouraged and lose hope, reminding listeners that the Lord is present and will help suppress the enemies that have ruled over them. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the importance of repentance and obedience to God's message, which brings victory over sin and leads to true joy and gladness.

Transcript

In the book of Zechariah, chapter 1, we saw in our study of Haggai that there were two prophets whom God raised up at the time when the people who had come back from Babylon to Jerusalem had been very lazy about building the superstructure of the temple. They had laid the foundation in the time when the captives came back, and then for sixteen years they did nothing, and then the whole movement of building God's house was started again through the prophesying of two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai was, obviously, the older person mentioned first in the book of Ezra, and Zechariah was a younger person.

We see here in chapter 1, verse 1, that in the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying, Now, it's very instructive to compare these dates with the dates in Haggai. The Lord reveals truths to those who dig into the word as people dig for hidden treasures, and if we are willing to take some pains in comparing scripture with scripture, we can learn much. If you turn back to Haggai chapter 1 and verse 15, the last verse, it says that the people, verse 14, Zerubbabel and Joshua and the high priest and the people, verse 14, all came and worked in the house of the Lord, verse 15, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

And in the first verse of that chapter, Haggai chapter 1, verse 1, it says, The first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius, Haggai prophesied. And what we read in Zechariah is the eighth month, that means two months later. And, during those first two months, before Zechariah began his prophecy, Haggai had prophesied.

And when Haggai prophesied, the people responded to the word of God that Haggai brought. And because they responded to the word of God brought by the first prophet, God sent them a second prophet. Whenever God sends a prophet to his people, that is an indication of God's blessing.

There's a verse in Psalm 74, which I'd like you to see, Psalm 74, where it speaks about God rejecting his people, and some of the signs of God rejecting his people. Psalm 74, verse 1, Why hast thou rejected us forever? And here are some of the signs and indications that God has rejected his people. Verse 3, the middle, the enemy has damaged everything within the sanctuary.

When the devil is able to come into the midst of God's people and cause confusion, you can be sure that God has rejected that group, even if it calls itself a church. And God's enemies roar in the midst of your meeting place, verse 4, when in the meeting of God's people there is confusion and strife, that is an indication that God has forsaken his people. And, verse 7, they've burned the sanctuary to the ground.

Verse 9, we don't see any signs. God is not working in any supernatural way to help us. And here is another sign, middle of verse 9, there is no longer any prophet.

When there is no prophet, that means God has forsaken his people, and that is a pretty sad condition. And when God sends two prophets, that's really a sign of blessing. And God sent a second prophet because they had responded positively to the first one.

And when they responded and they humbled themselves, we see that God sent another prophet in the person of Zachariah. Now, Zachariah prophesied, and one of the results of the prophecy of Haggai and Zachariah was that the temple was built, the superstructure, on the foundation. So we see that Zachariah's burden also, like Haggai's, was the building of the superstructure.

They did not speak about the foundations, because the foundations were laid. They were speaking about the superstructure, which we have seen from Hebrews 6, verse 1, refers to pressing on to perfection in relation to us in the New Testament. Now in verse 1, we are told that Zachariah was the son of Berechiah.

And when you turn to Matthew 23, we find that Jesus refers to this prophet. When he was speaking to the Pharisees in Matthew 23, Matthew 23 is one of those great chapters in the New Testament where you find Jesus really hitting out at the Pharisees. The whole chapter is lambasting the Pharisees for their hypocrisy.

And then he says in Matthew 23, verse 34, I am going to send you prophets, and some of them you will kill and crucify, verse 35, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Now there are many Zachariahs in the Old Testament, but Jesus specified that this was the son of Berechiah, which is what we saw in Zachariah chapter 1, verse 1, that this is referring to this prophet Zachariah, who came up towards the end of the Old Testament. Abel, you know, was at the beginning of the Old Testament.

And Jesus said that this man Zachariah was murdered between the temple and the altar by the Jews. So he paid quite a price for his prophecy. The Jews who heard that prophecy in the beginning responded, and the temple was built.

In the beginning, the response was good to his prophecy, but after a while, the Jews were stirred up as they backslid, and finally they murdered this man, but he stood faithful. So as we read through the prophecy of Zachariah, we can bear that in mind, that this was a man who was finally murdered for his prophecy. He stood and he spoke the truth, like John the Baptist was murdered for his prophesying.

And we can sense that the way Zachariah begins. Zachariah chapter 1, verse 2. The Lord was very angry with your fathers. I can imagine a man who starts off like that, not going to last very long, is sooner or later going to be murdered.

That's how he started. He says, the Lord was very angry with your fathers. You can see that there was no introduction, and I'm very happy to be here and speak to you, or any of that sort of thing.

It's just straight to the point. And that's how these prophets were. The Lord was very angry with your fathers, he says.

This new prophet just beginning to prophesy, and that's the first sentence that comes out of his mouth. And, therefore, say to them, thus says the Lord of hosts, return to me, in other words, repent, like John the Baptist. The message of repentance.

That I may return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaim, saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds. But they did not listen, or give heed to me, declares the Lord.

Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants, the prophets, overtake your fathers? Then they repented, and said, as the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so he has dealt with us. They repented when they finally ended up in Babylon. You see, Zechariah was saying, what he was essentially saying was, remember what Jeremiah prophesied to your fathers.

The fathers of these Jews who had come back from Babylon, were the people who were taken captive to Babylon, and Jeremiah was the man who prophesied to them, and other prophets. But Jeremiah was the main one, who had prophesied for more than 40 years. And he said, did not Jeremiah's words come true? Yeah, Jeremiah's words came true.

And there are other indications from the prophecy of Zechariah, that Zechariah was a great admirer of Jeremiah. And he referred to that prophet, who spoke to the fathers, and he said, what Jeremiah said came true. The prophecies he prophesied, finally, when the word of God caught up with your fathers, and they landed up in Jerusalem, in Babylon, sorry, exactly like Jeremiah prophesied, well, then they realized that what the Lord has said came true.

And he says, the Lord was angry with your fathers. Now we know from 1 Corinthians 10, that the word of God says that the Lord was also angry with the Israelites, when they wandered in the wilderness. From Hebrews chapter 3 also it says that, Hebrews 3.17, God was angry with the Israelites who fell in the wilderness.

But these people had not learned a lesson from that. And again, God had to be angry with His people. Now today we are living in the ends of the ages, and we have these examples given for our warning.

And you find that Zechariah, as a prophet, pointed the people to that, to the example of previous generations. And God points us to the examples that He has given us in His word, of where He was angry with His people, where He was pleased. For example, it says about Jesus, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And the Israelites, He was not well pleased. Now these are examples given us in His word. That's exactly what Zechariah was doing.

Pointing God's people to the example that God had given them in previous generations and say, see what happened to them. And see the word of God that was preached to them, which they didn't take seriously, finally caught up with them and brought judgment upon them. And that's why it's very important for us, as God's people today, to look into the word of God and see the examples, the warnings given there, the way God dealt with previous generations, how He dealt with the Israelites, how He dealt with the early church, the judgments that came upon various people.

And all that's written for our warning. And the sad thing is that many believers do not take those warnings seriously. The message that we find in the book of Zechariah is the message that we find in the book, in the end of the New Testament.

There's a sense in which there's a lot of similarity between the book of Zechariah and the book of Revelation. Because when you come to the end of the book of Zechariah, you see about the Lord coming down in battle and fighting with the forces of the Antichrist around Jerusalem. We could say that Zechariah is the book of Revelation of the Old Testament.

And in the book of Revelation in the New Testament, you know that chapters two and three begin with the message of messages to the churches, and the constant message in all those letters is primarily, repent. And that's how Zechariah begins too. Repent, he says in verse three, that you repent and turn to me, and I will turn to you.

And that was the message that finally John the Baptist picked up, repent. And thus he prepared the way for the first coming of Christ. And that's the message with which the book of Revelation also closes, chapters two and three.

And now that we are called to prepare the people for the second coming of Christ, we are to preach the same message, return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord. And see how my word brought judgment on previous generations. And therefore I believe the book of Zechariah has a very relevant message for us in the times in which we live, for he speaks about the building of Jerusalem.

And this, which I mentioned in our study of Haggai, this phrase, the Lord of hosts, mentioned in verse three, occurs fifty-three times in this book. There is no book in the entire Bible that I can think of where this phrase occurs fifty-three times in just a few pages. And we saw that it occurred a number of times in the book of Haggai too.

And so we find that these two prophets who were used in the building of the superstructure spoke much about the Lord of hosts, which is a phrase that refers to the sovereignty of God, which is, as I mentioned last time, the great truth that we need to learn in these days if we are to believe and endure in faith until

the end, particularly as we approach the end and turmoil is there in the nations and violence and strife and all types of confusion. The truth I need to know about God is that he is the Lord of hosts, the Lord God Almighty who reigns upon the throne. No matter what happens, he reigns upon the throne.

And to see him like that will keep us going steadfastly on until the end. He is the Lord of the armies of heaven. And so, having spoken about the word of God that it says here in verse six, my words and my commandments overtook your fathers, that means, can you picture that in your mind, this phrase, overtaking your fathers, that means God's word, these Jews thought they could escape it, escape the judgment by trying to run away from it, and for a little while they did escape, but finally God's word overtook them and caught up with them.

Be sure your sin will find you out. That's how God's word is, you know, for a long time it looks as though we've done something and we've got away with it. There are people who have committed secret sins which they have not set right.

There are things that are financial matters not set right in one's past life, and for a long time it looks as though nothing's happening. God's answering our prayer and he's very good to us, but one day God's word catches up with the people who haven't set things right in their lives. Be sure your sin will find you out.

If it's not being confessed and forsaken, if your conscience is not being cleared with God and with men, one day God's word is sure to overtake us. God, in his grace, may allow it to lag behind for some time, but when God's time comes it overtakes and catches up with everyone, without a doubt. And that's written in God's word as an example for us, and that's what we need to preach in the church.

Remember, Zachariah was preaching about building this infrastructure, pressing on to perfection. That's what we need to preach, that God's word will overtake us if we are not wholehearted about setting things right concerning our past life. And then we read, about three months later, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, verse seven, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, The word of the Lord came to Zachariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Ido, as follows.

And here begins a series of eight visions that Zachariah was given at that particular time. As far as we can see, he had all these visions on the same day, one after the other, and that goes on right up to chapter six, these eight visions that he had. And here is the first of these, and all these eight visions have some message for us.

These visions, remember, are spoken in the context of people who have just begun to build this structure. We could say just begun to press on to perfection, and therefore we can see the relevance of the message for us. Here was the first vision, I saw at night, and that speaks of the spiritual darkness of the world in which we are living.

A man was riding on a red horse, and the subsequent verses seem to indicate that that man symbolizes the Lord Jesus Christ. And he was standing as a man, you see, this is Jesus as a man, riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine. Now, when we read the Old Testament, we find in a lot of commentaries and books, there are so many interpretations of these various things, like myrtle trees, what does the myrtle tree stand for? Now, I have personally found that the best thing is to compare scripture with scripture, and if some other portion of scripture does not interpret the scripture, then we have to just leave it aside and say, well, we don't know.

Maybe it means this, but we can't be sure. But in the case of the myrtle trees, there is a very beautiful reference in Isaiah 55 which seems to indicate what this myrtle tree symbolizes. In Isaiah 55, he is speaking about the word of God, verse 11, which goes forth out of God's mouth and accomplishing God's purpose.

And when it accomplishes God's purpose, it says here, verse 12, you'll go out with joy, Isaiah 55, and then verse 13, instead of the thorn bush, the cypress will come up. That is the curse. The thorn speaks of the curse, and this is something replacing the curse, in other words, the new creation.

And instead of the nettle, the nettle is another type of thorn, the myrtle will come up. So there we see that the myrtle symbolizes the new creation, as opposed to the curse which came upon the old creation. So there we get a little understanding of what these myrtle trees mentioned in Zechariah 1, verse 8, refer to.

They refer to those who have experienced something of the new creation here in the darkness of the world. And therefore, they refer to those who have come to the experience of the new birth in this New Testament age. And it says here, I saw a man riding on a red horse, and he was standing in the middle of these myrtle trees.

It's a picture of Jesus in the middle of the church, just like John saw in the book of Revelation chapter 1, the Son of Man standing in the middle of the lamb stands. And these myrtle trees were in the ravine. The ravine means a deep valley, a low place, symbolizing the church despised by the world, persecuted, cast down in the eyes of the world.

God has chosen the weak and the lowly and those who are nothing, the people down in the valley, not the great people, not the noble people who are on the mountaintops, but they are down there and it's very easy when we see the type of people God has chosen and the despised, ridiculed position the church has in the eyes of the world and the small number of people who are seeking to walk the new and living way, it's very easy to get depressed, very easy to get discouraged, very easy to get weary and to lose heart. That's the great temptation that faces all these myrtle trees that are down in that deep place. And therefore, there is a message for them.

And this is exactly what these people who had come out of Babylon needed. They had built a foundation and they had stayed there for 16 years thinking we are just despised people and we are not the great big power like Babylon and Persia and all are, we are just a despised people. And Zechariah says, here is a message for you.

And that's a message for us, that the Lord is there in the midst with red sorrel and white horses behind him. Then I said, my Lord, what are these? And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, I will show you what these are. In other words, he was asking, what are all these different horses? And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, this is the answer the Lord gives, these are those whom Jehovah has sent to patrol or walk about the earth.

These are the sovereign agents of God, going around the whole world, controlling the world. He is the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies of heaven. And it's the armies of heaven that are described in these horses.

You remember when Elisha was, we saw that in 2nd Kings chapter 6, was surrounded by the armies of Syria, they came to capture him and Elisha could see the horses or the armies of heaven around him,

protecting him, but his servant could not see them. So God was opening Zechariah's eyes to see that this low despised people was surrounded by the hosts of heaven who were sent to work on their behalf. They are sent throughout the whole earth.

And this also has connection with this verse in 2nd Chronicles 16, verse 9 it says, the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself to strongly support those whose heart is completely his. In other words, God's sovereign agents are working throughout the whole world to strongly support those who are completely his. If I am one of God's people, even if I am in the eyes of the world, deep down in a valley, in a despised situation, a small group of myrtle trees there, but the message of the prophet Zechariah tells me that the Lord is in the midst there and his agents are patrolling throughout the whole earth, his eyes are running throughout the whole earth working on my behalf, making all things work together for our good, because he is building his church.

Everything in the world is like a scaffolding on which God allows us to stand in order to build the church. And so these agents who were sent across the whole earth, we can look at a verse in Hebrews 1, verse 14, which tells us about these agents, Hebrews 1, verse 14, it says that the angels are, it's referring to the angels in verse 13, the angels are, verse 14, ministering spirits sent out, sent out where? Throughout the whole earth, to render service, in other words they are servants for the sake of those who will inherit salvation. The angels are our servants, we are the ones who are inheriting salvation, and the angels have been sent throughout the whole world, whole earth, whole world, to serve us, wonderful.

This is the thing that will make us lift up our heads in the midst of a world which is, which despises us, and a world which lies in darkness. And these angels that have gone around the earth answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, and that phrase, angel of the Lord, means messenger of the Lord, the word angel can also be translated messenger, and it's an Old Testament phrase that refers to the Son of God. It's an Old Testament phrase that refers to Jesus Christ.

And so we see that the man who was standing in the middle of the myrtle trees referred to verse 8, is actually the messenger of the Lord, that is, Jesus. And they replied to him and said, we have patrolled the earth, or we have walked about the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet. Not peaceful and quiet in a good sense, but complacent about their sinful condition, that is, they are not concerned, they are not worried, disturbed about their sinful condition.

And it says later on in verse 15, the Lord says, I am very angry with these nations who are peaceful and quiet, even though they are in sin. We read in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 3, that it is when people are saying peace and safety in the world, that destruction will come upon them suddenly, that is, speaking about the coming of the Lord, in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 2 and 3. So it seems as though in the world they will talk about peace and safety, they will have peace conferences, and there will be a condition of being satisfied and complacent about their sinful states. In the Old Testament, Jeremiah prophesied about Moab.

In Jeremiah 48 verse 11, he said, Moab is at ease since his youth, he has been undisturbed on his lease, he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, therefore his aroma has not changed, he remains with a sinful aroma, settled and at ease. That is the report that the angels gave to the Lord about the world, and that is very true, a world that is lying, undisturbed, even though it is in such deep rebellion against God and against sin. And then the angel of the Lord, Zechariah 1 verse 12, answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long will you have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? There we find that the messenger of the Lord prays to the Father, with a burden for Jerusalem.

And there we see the burden that Jesus himself has for Jerusalem. How long will you have no compassion for Jerusalem? This is what Daniel prayed. You remember? When we studied Daniel, O Lord, won't you have compassion for Jerusalem? Because it has been with whom you have been indignant for these 70 years, 70 years have gone by.

The burden that Daniel had was a sharing of the burden that this messenger of the Lord had. That is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had for Jerusalem. And that is the thing that encourages us in the world today.

As we look out over Christendom, as we find it in our country, the thing that encourages my heart is a passage like this that teaches me that Jesus himself is interested in building his body. He is concerned about the building of Jerusalem, and if I have a little bit of a burden for the building of the body of Christ, it is only a small fraction of the burden that Jesus has. And that is what encourages us.

That the burden we have, brothers and sisters, for the establishing of the body of Christ in India, is not something we generated, it is a small, a few drops of that great burden that Jesus has in his heart for establishing Jerusalem, for bringing God's people out of Babylon into Jerusalem. What is the burden there in the heart of Jesus described in Zechariah 1.12? That God's people may come out of Babylon and be in Jerusalem. And we need to remember that and bear that in mind, lest we get discouraged.

The Lord is committed to the building of his church. And the Father replies, we read in verse 13 to 17, and we see the Father himself is also committed to the building of Jerusalem. That's what we see in verse 13 to 17.

Verse 13, the Lord, that is the Father, answered the messenger, the Son of God, who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, proclaiming, I was only a little angry. They furthered the disaster.

We find that God was angry with his people, verse 15, but the nations sort of thought that Jerusalem and the Jews are now in our hands and they punished them and pushed them much further than God intended. And the Lord says, now I am angry with the nations whom I used to punish my people. Therefore, thus says the Lord, I will return to Jerusalem with compassion and my house will be built in it.

Just think of that. Think if we can hear those words from God himself. My house is going to be built.

My body is going to be built on earth. To hear that word is the thing that will encourage us in much that discourages us in the work of the Lord in building the body of Christ. That God himself is committed to it, my house will be built.

So we see that Zachariah was not just a man who preached repentance and judgment and thunder and lightning. He was also a man who spoke about the compassion of the Lord, the commitment of the Lord to the building of God's house. And a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.

You know what that means. When you see people in a plot of land taking out a measuring line and measuring something there, what does it indicate? It indicates that they're beginning a construction there. That's so clear.

That's what it means here. That when you, a measuring line is going to be measured out in Jerusalem means construction is going to start here on all these empty, broken down plots. And again proclaimed

saying a second time, thus says the Lord of Hosts, the Sovereign Lord who is in control of all the affairs of the earth, my cities will again overflow with prosperity.

And that applies to us today. Spiritual prosperity. For the Jews, it was material prosperity.

For us, it is spiritual prosperity. And the Lord will again comfort, comfort has got many meanings, strengthen, encourage Zion, and he will again choose Jerusalem. The sum and substance of all that we read here is the Lord is committed to building his church.

Father and son are committed, even in the land of India today, to build the body of Christ in different places. We need to see that clearly, otherwise we'll get discouraged and we'll give up hope. Then, what did Jesus say in Matthew 16, 18? I will build my church, and what's the next thing, and the gates of hell or Hades will not prevail against it.

Jesus immediately spoke about battle, and that's the next thing we see here also. As soon as he finishes this first vision, the first vision is of the sovereignty of God, Jesus in the midst of this new creation, and saying, and the word of the Father saying I'm committed to the building of my body, and what's the next thing we see, the enemies. The enemies of the Lord.

I lifted up my eyes in the second vision, and he saw four horns, and he said to the angel who was speaking with me, who are, what are these? Remember the horns that Daniel saw, the enemies of God's people. The gates of hell, and four symbolizes from four sides, north, south, east, west. That means the gates of hell, the powers of spiritual death are seeking to crush the building of the body from all sides, and horns speaks of strength, as powers of spiritual wickedness.

These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And that teaches us that the powers of spiritual death, the gates of hell, their main work is to scatter God's people, or in other words, to bring division among God's people. We could paraphrase these words like this, Zechariah asking, what are these four horns? And the Lord saying, these are the powers of spiritual darkness and wickedness that are attacking the church from all four sides with one aim, to bring division, to divide husband and wife, to divide brother and brother, to divide sister and sister.

These horns are coming to bring division, to bring separation, to scatter, to separate. And when we look at much that is called Christendom today in our land, we can see what a fantastic work these four horns have accomplished in Christendom, bringing division, scattering. Turn to Matthew chapter 12, Jesus spoke there about the strong man, Matthew chapter 12, the strong man, he guards his house, it says, verse 29, how can you enter, anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property unless he first binds the strong man.

The strong man is the devil, and he's guarding his property. But then Jesus said, you've got to bind the strong man, and then you can plunder his house. And in that connection he said in Matthew 12, 30, he who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Notice the same word, scattering, that we saw in Zechariah. The work of the four horns is scattering. Those who are with Jesus, what is their work? Gathering, Matthew 12, 30.

There are only two ministries in the church, gathering and scattering. We can think that there is also a third group of people who do nothing, who neither gather nor scatter. But Jesus says, no, there are only two groups.

If you don't gather, verse 30, even if you do nothing, you belong to the other group, that is those who bring division. How do we bring division? You can go to a house and gossip, and speak something bad about another brother, and thus separate the people in that house from that brother. You have accomplished a ministry of scattering.

You have cooperated with the horns in separating God's people. On the other hand, what about those who visit a house and say nothing, do nothing, they are also scattering. Jesus said, if you do nothing, you are a scatterer, but if you are with me, you gather, that means you go into a house and you seek to speak good about a brother, so that you have brought that brother a little closer to the people in that house, that is the work of gathering.

This work of gathering people together. Then we understand what Jesus said in Matthew 18, 20, those two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst. So this word gathering speaks about unity, and scattering speaks about division.

And there are only two ministries, we cannot do nothing, that's impossible. If I do nothing, I am a scatterer. The only other ministry that is open to me is gathering.

To gather. And we see here the four horns are scattering, and the Lord showed me, Zechariah 1, 20, four craftsmen, four craftsmen, four workmen, and these are the Lord's instruments. And I said, what are these coming to do? And He said, these are the horns which have scattered Judah, those are the enemies who have come and brought division among God's people, but I have raised up four, not a big number, four overcomers, we can say these craftsmen are the overcomers, who have come to terrify these horns, and who will throw down the horns of the nations, who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.

Just think of that. To be an overcomer, what does it say there, in the middle of verse 21, an overcomer who has come to terrify Satan. What a ministry that is, to terrify Satan.

We have heard of believers who are terrified of Satan, but this is quite the opposite. These are people whom the devil is scared of. Just think brothers and sisters, to be a man and a woman like that, in the church, whom the devil is scared of, because he knows that he cannot touch you with sex, he cannot touch you with money, he cannot touch you with earthly honor, he cannot touch you with selfishness, he cannot touch you with pride, and he is scared of you, because you are a workman.

A workman, working on what? Working out your own salvation with fear and trembling from all these wrong attitudes which are in your flesh. Therefore, a workman, a craftsman, a man whom God can pick up and use to terrify Satan, not only to terrify him, but to throw down these powers of darkness. Now, in that particular day, I think those four craftsmen were, as we have considered earlier, Zerubbabel and Joshua, and Haggai and Zechariah.

Those are the four people at that particular time whom God raised up with different ministries. Haggai, an older prophet, Zechariah, a junior prophet, Zerubbabel, an administrator, and Joshua, the high priest. Four different ministries, but whom God raised up to terrify the enemies and to cast down those horns so that a house could be built.

And there is a great need even today for those whom the Lord can find like this. Workmen, workmen, not lazy people. Now, when we speak about laziness, most people think about giving out tracts or running

around here and there, doing, as they say, something for the Lord.

That's not what I'm talking about. We're talking about being diligent to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling so that the devil has no power over us. We read in 2 Timothy 2, Paul said to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2, verse 15, he said, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman, as a craftsman, as one of those craftsmen like we read in Zechariah chapter 1. Be diligent that you present yourself to God as one whom God can use, a workman who has no need to be ashamed.

That means the devil can't put you to shame, you terrify him. And you've got the word of truth in your hand. What a wonderful ministry this is, brothers and sisters, and I believe that God seeks to raise up such overcomers, even in the church today, to terrify Satan, to drive out his power, the spirit of the Antichrist, from the church, from Christendom, and may you and I be in that number.

Now we come to Zechariah chapter 2. We see he has another vision here in Zechariah chapter 2, and that's the third vision. I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand, and this is the construction of Jerusalem, the building of the body of Christ, the bride of Christ. So I said, Where are you going? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is.

And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, and said to him, Run, speak to that young man. And that's the verse that teaches us that Zechariah was a young man. There was a word that came to him, Speak to that young man.

Haggai was an older person, but Zechariah was a young man. And that's something we have seen consistently as we have studied this movement of God's people from Babylon to Jerusalem, that in the book of Daniel we read God picked up a young man, Daniel. Ezekiel, we read in Ezekiel chapter one, was thirty years old, a young man.

And Jeremiah, who tried to prevent God's people from going to Babylon, we read in Jeremiah chapter one, was so young, he said, Lord, I'm so young, I'm a child, a young man. And so we believe were all the people whom God raised up at that time. Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra, Nehemiah, I believe they were young people, just like on the day of Pentecost.

They were young people who were the twelve apostles. Don't you believe all these pictures you see of white-haired, white-bearded apostles sitting around the Last Supper. They were not white-bearded.

There was not one gray hair in their beard or in their hair on the Last Supper or the day of Pentecost. That's a great deception the devil has put upon believers by giving the impression that Peter was sixty-five years old or seventy years old on the day of Pentecost. It's a lot of rubbish.

They were all younger than Jesus Christ. Jesus was the master and he was only thirty-three when he died, and all of them were younger than him. People like John may have been in their late twenties.

Those are the ones whom God raised up. So that's an encouragement. We can be wholehearted.

It doesn't say that God will use a man just because he's young, but if he's wholehearted and zealous, God can pick up a person in his late twenties and begin to use him. Here was this young man, and it says here that Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it, because I will be a wall of fire around her, I will be the glory in her midst. Now that teaches us something about the

body of Christ.

What do we mean by walls? Now this is a spiritual truth here, because we know later on that the physical Jerusalem, Nehemiah, built a physical wall around it. So when it says here that Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls in verse four, it's not referring to that physical Jerusalem, but that spiritual Jerusalem which is going to come in the New Testament, which is referring to us. So that teaches us that that could not refer to the physical Jerusalem.

And what do we mean by walls? When you build a wall around a city, thereby you say, these are the people who are inside and these are the people who are outside. Now what is the equivalent of a wall in today's Christianity? The equivalent of a wall is a membership list. You make a membership list, and if you pay your donation or whatever the condition is, your name comes in that membership list of that particular church.

So we can say that particular church has got four walls around it, and you're either inside it or outside it. You're either in that membership list, or you are not in that membership list. But here it says that Jerusalem is not going to have any such walls.

That when the body of Christ is built, we don't keep a membership list. And wherever people have a membership list, I say that can't be the body of Christ, impossible. Then we say everybody will come in.

No, everybody won't come in. Because the Lord says, I'll give you something better than walls, verse five, I myself will be a wall of fire on all four sides. And you know how tough it is to go through a wall of fire.

Imagine a city surrounded by fire on all four sides, and the only way to get in is by going through this fire. You can be pretty sure not very many people want to get in there. The Lord says, I will be a wall of fire, and when you want to come in, you've got to come through this fire, and everything that is of Adam has got to be burnt up there before you get in and become a part of this Jerusalem.

Isn't that better than any membership list? And that is the fire that we have to keep burning in the church that will prevent everybody from joining us. And when we reduce the temperature of that fire, then of course all types of people can come in. But if we keep it hot, so that it's difficult for people to sit there comfortably, then you'll find that people realise, we can't join this, it's a bit hot here.

You see that in Isaiah 33. Isaiah 33, we read there, verse 13, you who are far away, hear what I have done, and you who are near, acknowledge my might. Now listen to this, sinners in Zion are terrified.

Are there sinners in Zion? Unfortunately there are. But they must be terrified. Now we can have sinners sitting in the midst of the congregation, but they must be terrified when they sit there.

And trembling has seized the hypocrites and the godless, in the King James Version it says hypocrites. Trembling, hypocrites can come and sit in the congregation, but they must tremble there when they hear the word of God. Because the message in the church is, who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning? He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, he who rejects bribes and shakes his unjust gain and shakes his hand so they hold no bribe, he who stops his ears from hearing slander about others, he who shuts his eyes from lusting after women and looking upon evil, he will dwell on the heights.

You preach all this, and the fire is pretty hot, and the sinners and the hypocrites sitting there not feeling very comfortable, they come to hear, like Herod liked to hear John the Baptist, they may come to hear fiery messages, but they are a bit uncomfortable there all the time, and that's how they must always feel, until they are willing to get rid of their sins, until they are willing to get rid of all their worldly traditions. God himself must be a wall of fire around the church at all times, and we say, brother, you can't come in here and be a part of us, unless you are willing to live with the continual burning, unless you are willing to be righteous and money matters. That's what's mentioned here.

Righteous and money matters, your hands are clean, righteous with your eyes and your ears, purity, and the fire is constantly kept burning with the oil of the Spirit, and that's better than any membership list. That's the body of Christ, brothers and sisters. That's the message of the book of Zechariah.

We've got to preserve that purity, and it says here, two things in Zechariah 2.5 that we have to preserve. Very, very important, Zechariah 2.5. Two very important things. One, the Lord himself will be a wall of fire around us.

That's number one. You've got to keep that fire burning hot, God's standards. The Sermon on the Mount, for example.

The second thing. In the middle of the church, the glory is not some preacher, it's not some choir, it's not some special number, it is not some converted astronaut, it is Jesus Christ. I will be the glory in the midst of her, not the building, not the big shots who are sitting there.

No, we care nothing for the big shots. We don't care for them. They're all the same.

The music, we're not bothered if the music is off-key and people sing at all different speeds. That's not our glory. Our glory is not the clever people or the wonderful Bible teachers.

Our glory is God himself. I will be the glory. That glory that was manifested in Jesus Christ, full of what? Grace and truth.

That is the glory in the midst of the church. Not that we have so-and-so and so-and-so as members of our congregation, and that this is our offering, and all this stupid Babylonian things have no place in the church of the living God. No.

The glory is Jesus himself. That glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and that is the glory we have to preserve in the midst. That's the only glory we want.

We don't want any other glory. We don't want a name that we have good preaching or good singing or great men or rich people or anything, but we want that glory that was seen in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. These are the two things that we must always keep in mind to preserve the church in its purity.

A wall of fire right round, and Jesus himself is the glory in the midst, and no attachment to anybody else but to that, to the Lord who is in the midst. So that is what the word of God says, that holiness, that purity, is the glory of the church. And then the message comes, ho ho, he says, flee from the land of the north, ho there, for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens, ho Zion, escape you who are living with the daughter of Babylon.

That's a sad thing, when the children of Zion are fooling around with the daughters of Babylon, the harlots, the harlots of Babylon, the spiritual harlots, who say that you can accept Christ and live after the flesh and you will not die. Spiritual harlotry, escape, this is like Revelation 18.4, come out of her, my people, come out of her. And that's the call that the Holy Spirit and the bride say, come, come, come out of her.

For thus says the Lord of hosts. That is the call to separation, there's something I just want you to notice here, escape, or as some translation says, deliver yourself. In other words, you have to do it, it's no use saying Lord you take me out, the Lord's not going to take you out.

You deliver yourself, you escape, you get out of it, I've made the way, the Lord says, you get out of it. If you want to stay there, you can stay there. Verse 8, thus says the Lord of hosts, after the glory he has sent me against the nations which plunder you.

Here is the Lord's promise to his church, the church may be despised and rejected down there in the dumps as it were, and the Lord says, if he who touches you, touches the apple of his eye. You know what the apple of our eye is, that center part of our eye, and you know that if somebody pokes you in the eye, that's pretty painful, and the Lord says, do you know that if anybody touches you, they're touching something tender in my body, they're not going to get away with it, they're touching the apple of Jehovah's eye. We praise God that that is our position as children of God, and as younger brothers of Jesus Christ, who have decided to come through the wall of fire and be a part of Jerusalem.

There's a price to be paid, but there's also a blessing, the blessing is that as he cared for Jesus, he will care for us. Jesus was the apple of his eye, and I'm also the apple of his eye. You can also be the apple of his eye, if you're a younger brother of Jesus, you're the apple of his eye.

If you've decided to be a disciple of Jesus, you're the apple of his eye, and one who touches you is touching Jesus. You remember when Saul of Tarsus persecuted the Christians, and he met Jesus on the Damascus road, Jesus said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? He didn't say, why are you persecuting my believers, he said, why are you persecuting me? Why are you touching the apple of my eye? Just think of that, that when a person dares to touch me, he touches the apple of God's eye. When a person speaks evil about me behind my back, I don't have to worry about it, he's touching the apple of God's eye, God will deal with that.

We've got to just sit back, do nothing. The eye does not fight back when somebody pokes it, do you know that? And we don't have to do anything, we are the apple of God's eye, and God says, I'll take care of that. I will go against those nations, verse 8, he says, I will deal with them, I will wave my hand over them, means, I'll give them a real hammering with my hand, so that they will be plunder for their slaves.

In other words, you who were their slaves, now they will be your slaves. It's a very beautiful picture of victory over sin. You who were once their slave, now they will be your slaves.

Apply that to sin, and see how it goes. I was once the slave of sin, and now sin will become my slave. I will rule over sin.

Sin ruled over me, now I will rule over sin. That's the message of the new covenant. That's what he says there.

Those who ruled over you, now you will rule over them. Romans 6, verse 14, sin ruled over you, but now sin will not rule over you. You will be the master over sin.

Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me, and that's the proof that the Lord, Jesus, has come, that grace has come, that the Father sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world, because the Lord fights for us. I will wave my hand over them. I will be the one who will help you to suppress those enemies that have ruled you for so many years.

It's a wonderful passage, and that is the proof of the message. He says, thus you will know, the Lord of hosts has sent me. In other words, you know that the message is true by the fact that sin does not have dominion over you.

Like it says in Romans 6, verse 17, you were obedient from the heart to that message which you received, and you became free from sin. The proof of the truth is that you are set free. The truth will set you free.

Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me from you. How do you know whether the Lord of hosts has sent someone? Well, does his message bring you to victory over sin? That's the proof according to this verse. And then, what is the result of this life? Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion.

It's no use singing for joy in a charismatic way if you are defeated by sin. That's no use. No use singing when the enemies are still triumphing over you.

But when verse 9 has been accomplished and the enemies have stopped ruling over you, that's the time to sing. And be glad, O daughter of Zion. You see, this is the trouble with a lot of charismatic people, that they are singing before they have overcome their enemies.

That's stupid. To shut our eyes and imagine that the enemies are not there and sing is the height of stupidity. Sing, be glad, because I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord.

Where two or three are gathered together like that, the Lord is in the midst. And many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day. There will be barbarians and Greeks and Scythians and Anglo-Indians and Punjabis and Malayalis and Tamilians and they will all be one, because He says, they will become my people and I will dwell in your midst.

And it says here in verse 11, they won't join themselves to each other. What does it say? They'll join themselves to the head. That's why they're one.

They're joined to the head. They all come from different nations, different backgrounds, but they're all joined to the head. And then I will dwell in your midst and that's another proof that the Lord of Hosts has sent me unto you.

The first proof is verse 9, that you get victory over those sins that rule you. The second proof is that when you all come together, you become one. And these are the two messages we preach in the church in any case.

Victory over sin and that we from different backgrounds can become one. Then you will know that the Lord of Hosts has sent me unto you. Just think of those two verses and see how relevant it is to the message we preach in the church today.

And the Lord will possess Judah as His portion in the Holy Land. By the way, when people speak about the Holy Land, I hope you realize the Holy Land is the church, not out there in Israel. People say they're taking a trip to the Holy Land.

Garbage. The real Holy Land is the bride, the body of Christ. That's the Holy Land.

We're in the Holy Land right here. We don't have to take a flight anywhere. We're right here.

If you take a flight from Babylon and come here, you'll come to the Holy Land. And He'll again choose Jerusalem. And then it says, verse 13, a wonderful word of the New Covenant.

Be silent, all flesh. What a wonderful word. You see, there's a connection between verse 10, sing for joy and be silent, all flesh.

You can't sing for joy if you haven't silenced the flesh. When the flesh is silenced, that's the time you can sing and shout for joy. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation.

Praise God for that word. The church shouts in verse 10 because it has learned to keep the flesh silent. Brother, have you learned to silence the flesh in your life?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15042.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/from-babylon-to-jerusalem-zechariah-ch1-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net