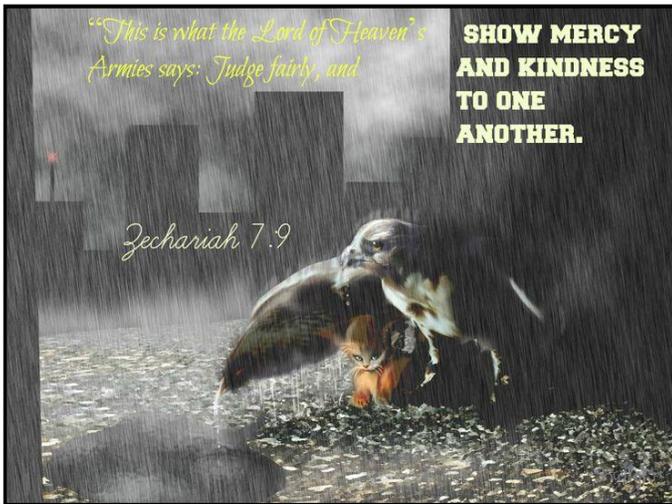


SUMMER QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2015

THEME: GOD DEMANDS JUSTICE

UNIT III – ADVOCATING GOD’S RIGHTS THE BIBLE WAY

“ZECHARIAH ENCOURAGES TOTAL RECOMMITMENT TO JEHOVAH”



Sunday School Lesson No. XII, August 23, 2015

Rev. Frank A Davis, III - Pastor-Teacher

Lesson Text: Zechariah 1:1-6; 7:1-14

Required Reading: Ezra 1:1-11; Zechariah 1:1-6; 7:1-14

Motto Text: Zechariah 7:9-10, “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compass-ions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the father-less, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.”

Reliable Resources: Preaching from the Prophets (Kyle Yates); Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Standard Lesson Commentary; Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1993); H. A. Ironside’s

Commentary on Ezekiel; John MacArthur Study Bible; Precepts for Living (UMI); The Tim LaHaye Prophecy Bible; The Outline Bible by H. L. Willmington; Children’s Ministry Resource Bible; David Jeremiah Study Bible; Word-Search 10 Electronic Library System; Logos Bible Software; New Pilgrim Bible

Introduction:

Beloved, during the previous weeks, we have examined the messages of God’s Light Bearing prophets. These messengers of Jehovah have enlightened us to the overwhelming love of the Lord – how long suffering He is and His great desire to have meaningful fellowship with His people. We have seen that Jehovah’s warnings had basically fallen on deaf ears. But, in spite of the callous, careless ways in which God’s people have responded, God remains faithful, and now seeks to restore them.

We could say that the prophets (God’s light bearers) are divided into three basic classes: pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic. The pre-exilic prophets warned Israel of God’s impending punishment through Gentile captivity. The exilic prophets were those who proclaimed Jehovah’s message while in the captivity, and the post-exilic prophets encouraged and informed the returnees to Jerusalem after the captivity. Today’s lesson is penned by a young post-exilic prophet named Zechariah. He, along with the prophet Haggai, was sent back to Jerusalem with nearly 50,000 previously captured Israelites to rebuild the city and temple. (Please read the book of Ezra for historic facts.)

According to Dr. Warren Wiersbe, “...in 536, after the fall of Babylon, King Cyrus permitted a remnant of the Jews to return to their land, and in 535 they laid the foundation for the temple. But the work stopped, and it was not until 520 that the Jews again began to rebuild God’s house.” Beloved, it was under the inspired preaching of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai that the rebuilding of the temple again commenced. Let us focus on the visionary message of Zechariah to God’s people.

Anticipated Power Points:

- Repent and Recommit. Zechariah 1:1-6
- Remember and Recommit. Zechariah 7:1-7
- Rebuild and Recommit. Zechariah 7:8-14

OUTLINE

“Zechariah Encourages Total Recommitment to Jehovah”

I. Repent and Recommit. Zechariah 1:1-6

- A. Introduction of the prophet which validates his authority. vs. 1
- B. Indignation of the Lord, which declares His immutability. vs. 2

As it had been before the captivity of Judah, and even as it is now, the Lord has not changed His disposition. Ezekiel 18:4, 20 tells us, *“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die...The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”* This new generation of post-exilic Jews is being warned not to follow the paths of their fathers, because the Lord Jehovah is the same!

C. Information from the Lord that fully spells out His expectation...total recommitment!

1. The door of grace is open to the returnees with sincere expectations from the Lord. *“Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.”* vss. 3-4
2. The dullness of compromise would not be accepted! God had proven his expectations through the judgment of the previous generation. He does not overlook the sin of a rebellious people. He will collect on the accounts of transgressors. If this new generation is to know the joy of Godly success in their former homeland, they would have to be obedient to their God!

II. Remember and Recommit. Zechariah 7:1-7

These verses are not a part of the written Sunday School text, but they are important for its comprehension. In fact, from Chapters 1:7 – 6:15, God gave Zechariah a series of eight visions that were to encourage and convince the remnant from Babylon that their future was not in jeopardy! The notes in the MacArthur Study Bible summarize these eight verses simplistically. But in Chapter 7, the returning remnant is admonished to remember what God truly expects, and recommit to rebuilding His temple and work.

In verses 1-7 of chapter 7, a delegation from Bethel came up to pray and inquire of the prophets and priests if they were to continue the annual fast and memorial during the 5th month, since the new temple is well on the way to restoration. According to Jewish historians, the Jews initiated a period of fasting and mourning after the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. The answer to their question was given to Zechariah by the Lord. They had fasted in the past not because of the Lord, but because of self-pity! (Isaiah 1:10-15) So the prophet moves to the last portion of our lesson this week...

III. Rebuild and Recommit. Zechariah 7:8-14

A. Zechariah rehearses the sermons of Micah, Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and all the prophets who were his predecessors!

God expects His people to return to a life of Godly fairness and justice. vss. 9-10.

Amos 5:24 says, *“But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.* And we find in Micah 6:8, *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”*

B. Zechariah reminds them again to refrain from following the folly of their ancestors. vss. 11-12.

They heard with the ear God’s word, but were deaf in their hearts to trust and obey it!

C. Zechariah recounts the importance of the returning remnant’s need to truly remember Zechariah 1:3, “Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.”

The consequences of rebellion are unbearable, but the blessings of repentance and returning to the Lord causes Him to be drawn back to His people. vss. 13-14

Remember God’s promise of II Chronicles 7:14-15, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.”*

Closing:

May we learn from the lesson that God is seeking the lives of those who will hear and return to Him, and recommit themselves unto His service. This closing admonition is found in Jeremiah 3:14, *“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”*

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Looking Ahead:

August 30, 2015

Malachi 3:1-10

The Sunday School Lesson is taught each Wednesday at noon at Bibleway. All are welcome!

