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ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET – LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION

Of the thirteen books of the “minor prophets” Daniel gets the most attention because of [1] his personal experiences and [2] the end-time prophecies which are studied in connection with Revelation. The other twelve receive little attention and almost no preaching or teaching, yet they all are important for one reason or another.

Zechariah is one of those twelve. It is the one book of prophesy, including the “major prophets” that gives the most prophecies of the Messiah who is to come. As such, it plays a large part, along with Isaiah 53 in convincing present-day Jews that Jesus was and is their Messiah. The fulfilled specific details found in Zechariah are astounding.

This prophet was born in Babylon during the exile. As a young man, he was among those who returned to Israel when the exile was finished. He was the grandson of Iddo, the high priest, who he succeeded in that position. He was both a priest and a prophet, a very rare combination.

Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries who began prophesying in 520 B.C. about 14-16 years after the return from exile (c. 538-536 B.C.). The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, and construction of the Temple had begun. Resistance resulted in the work of the temple being halted.

These two prophets were instrumental in encouraging the people to complete the building of the temple fourteen years after the work had halted.

Zechariah, whose name means “Yahweh Remembers,” was probably about twenty years old when God gave him a series of visions during the night. The visions (eight or ten, depending on how you divide them) spoke mostly to people inhabiting Jerusalem at that time. In general, the visions were to encourage the people with a future hope and inspire them about the importance of the temple and its completion. These visions are given in chapters 1-8.

Chapters 9-14 then speak of the future Messiah, both of His suffering (chapters 9-11) and His future kingdom (chapters 12-14) which is yet to come.

Any study of future events in Revelation and Daniel should also include Zechariah 12-14. Any study of Jesus’ birth, ministry, and “passion” should include Zechariah 9-11.

With this background laid, we shall study this book of prophecy in more detail. It is an opportunity to learn this book of God’s word and affirm the prophecies of Yeshuah that came hundreds of years before His birth.

It is encouraging that God (Yahweh, Jehovah) always “remembers” His own, whether the Jews of Zechariah’s time or the believers of our time.