

ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE

I: God's Call To Follow His Word Versus The Errant Fathers

(Zechariah 1:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. Zechariah along with Haggai called the returning Hebrews back to rebuilding the temple, and he gave God's directives and future hope. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Zechariah," p. 1310)
- B. The prophecy opens in Zechariah 1:1-6 with an important call for God's people to follow God's Word instead of heeding the examples of their sinful forefathers, a timeless lesson for believers of all eras (as follows):

II. God's Call To Follow His Word Versus The Errant Fathers, Zechariah 1:1-6.

- A. We know from the introduction to Zephaniah's prophecy (Zechariah 1:1) that it had been two months since the prophet Haggai had initially called the people to return to the rebuilding of the temple (cf. Haggai 1:1), and that in his lineage, Zechariah was the grandson of Iddo, another prophet of God. Iddo had likely ministered for the Lord in the days of the sinful forefathers of Zechariah's generation, seeking to call them to repent.
- B. Accordingly, Zechariah took up the mantle of the prophetic ministry that his grandfather Iddo had laid down to warn his generation in Israel that God had been very angry with their forefathers, what had resulted in their fall to [Assyria and] Babylon and to national captivity, Zechariah 1:2.
- C. Thus, the Lord directed Zechariah to call his countrymen to turn back to the Lord, Zechariah 1:3. "Their repentance two months before (cf. Hag. 1:12-15) apparently involved an incomplete commitment, resulting in delay in rebuilding the temple. Now a complete return to the Lord would bring divine blessing, expressed by the words, 'I will return to you.'" (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1548)
- D. Zechariah urged his countrymen not to be like their fathers unto whom God's former prophets had proclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings," but their forefathers had neither heard nor obeyed the Lord, Zechariah 1:4.
- E. To emphasize the importance of God's directive to Zechariah's hearers, the Lord highlighted the ultimate and great accountability of the people of Zechariah's generation to the Lord to heed His Word, Zechariah 1:5-6:
 1. First, God through Zechariah asked Zechariah's generation where were their forefathers (Zechariah 1:5a), and the answer would be that they were deceased "from sword, famine, pestilence, and natural causes, as predicted by the earlier prophets," Ibid.
 2. Second, God through Zechariah asked his generation if even the prophets of God lived forever (Zechariah 1:5b), to which the answer would be, "No!" Their ministries were righteous but historically brief.
 3. Third, however, God said that His words and decrees that He had commanded through His servants the prophets of old beyond the lives of the prophets "did overtake their fathers," the word "overtake" being a hunting term that implied "that the threatened judgment of God pursued and caught the evildoers," Zechariah 1:6a NIV; Ibid. Indeed, even the forefathers who had survived the [Assyrian and] Babylonian invasion(s) and had gone into captivity "recognized that they deserved punishment and that God had justly accomplished what He had purposed in sending them into exile (Lam. 2:17)," Ibid.; Zechariah 1:6b.
 4. Thus, Zechariah's generation in Israel needed to recognize that their ultimate responsibility was to heed God's Word, for God made sure that His Word remained fully applicable through all generations as seen in how God had already fulfilled His Word with the past generation!

Lesson: *God directed Zechariah to call his generation in Israel to realize from their nation's history that they were responsible to heed God's Word in THEIR era, for the failure of their forefathers to heed the Word of God by God's former prophets cost the forefather's great grief and pain since the effectiveness of God's Word functions independent of the lives and power of all men, be they sinners or God's godly servants!*

Application: *(1) If we note that our forefathers disobeyed the Lord in their earthly lives, may we NOT heed their errant examples, but obey God's Word, for the eternal, sovereign Lord Who infinitely outlives our forefathers and Who will outlive us in our earthly lives holds us accountable today to obey His Word for blessing. (2) Since God directed Zechariah's generation in Israel to look beyond both the history of their ungodly forefathers as well as the limited history of God's prophetic messengers to focus on the eternal importance of His Word, may we make heeding Scripture our ultimate priority EVEN IF it means NOT heeding the example of reputable godly servants of God who have erred in some particular belief or practice in their earthly lives! God will judge us according to His Word, not according to the examples of even reputable people of the past! (cf. Romans 2:16)*