

## ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE

### II: God's Message To Reverse The States Of The Gentiles And Israel

(Zechariah 1:7-17)

#### 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. Zechariah 1:7-17 begins a series of prophetic visions on the judgment of the Gentiles and Israel's restoration and the institution of the Messianic Kingdom. (Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 25)
- C. This first vision is about a red-horse rider among the myrtle trees in a ravine with fellow horse riders behind Him, and we view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

#### II. God's Message To Reverse The States Of The Gentiles And Israel, Zechariah 1:7-17.

- A. To understand the symbolism in this first vision, we recall that in the historical context, the returned Hebrew exiles faced a struggle "to establish themselves in a ruined city under the heel of a foreign power," *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- B. Since the time of the vision was the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month in the second year of the Persian emperor Darius' reign (Zechariah 1:7), **exactly** five months after the reconstruction work on the temple had first resumed under Haggai's ministry (cf. Haggai 1:14-15) and **exactly** two months after Haggai's rebuke to the priests for their delay in rebuilding the temple (cf. Haggai 2:10-17; *Ibid.*, p. 26), this vision was given to encourage the remnant that had obeyed God's call to return to the work of rebuilding the temple.
- C. In the vision, Zechariah saw a man riding on a red horse that stood among myrtle trees in a low ravine, and behind him were riders on red, sorrel (*seruqqim*, from the root *saraq*, "to intertwine," "plait" in the sense "of mixed color," a combination of red and white) and white horses, Zechariah 1:8; *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- D. We interpret the symbolism from information given in the immediate and the extended contexts (as follows):
  - 1. The Rider on the red horse stood in front of the other riders as their superior and He is called the "angel of the Lord" in verse 11a, so that Rider is the Preincarnate Christ! (*Ibid.*)
  - 2. The myrtle trees typify Israel in view of her Messianic hope, for they are in a low ravine, the picture of Israel's then downtrodden state, and the branches of myrtles were used for the booths for the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. 8:18; Lev. 23:33-44), which typified Israel's future Millennial Kingdom blessings, *Ibid.*
  - 3. The other riders were angels God had sent out to scout the earth (Zechariah 1:10-11), their colored horses symbolizing divine actions regarding the nations before God could establish the Messianic Kingdom:
    - a. The red horses "symbolize war, bloodshed, and judgment" needed to punish sinful Gentiles, *Ibid.*, p. 27.
    - b. The sorrel horses of mixed red and white colors were to be sent on "a variegated mission of judgment and mercy" toward the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, *Ibid.* (cf. Matthew 25:31-46)
    - c. The white horses "portray victory and triumph (Rev. 6:2)" needed to be expressed in regard to the Gentile nations before the institution of the Messianic Kingdom of Israel, *Ibid.*
- E. Thus, the Preincarnate Christ received word from the angels who had patrolled the earth that the whole earth sat still and was at rest under the rule of oppressively wicked Gentiles, sad news for Israel, Zechariah 1:9-11.
- F. The Preincarnate Christ responded to this report, asking God the Father how long would He not have mercy on Israel against whom He had been angry for the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity, Zechariah 1:12.
- G. God the Father answered the Preincarnate Christ with kind and comforting words, Zechariah 1:13 NIV.
- H. The Preincarnate Christ Who was speaking to Zechariah then instructed him to cry out, saying that the Lord of Hosts was very jealous of His people who had been mistreated by the Gentiles during their captivity, for the Gentiles had surpassed the mistreatment God had intended that they administer on His people, Zech. 1:14-15.
- I. Consequently, the Preincarnate Christ announced that He would return to Jerusalem [in His Second Advent] with mercies (Zechariah 1:16a), that His temple would be rebuilt in it (Zechariah 1:16b), that Jerusalem would greatly grow and expand (Zechariah 1:16c), that God would surely comfort Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:17a) and that God's divine election of blessing on Israel would be vindicated (Zechariah 1:17b), *Ibid.*, p. 25, 32-34)

***Lesson:*** Since the returned exiles had committed themselves to God's assignment to rebuild the temple of their era, God encouraged them by promising to provide the eventual judgment that was needed on Israel's Gentile enemies to establish Israel's long-expected Messianic Kingdom and its blessings.

***Application:*** May we learn from this message to the returned exiles always to abound in the work of the Lord in our era, for our labor in God's will, like the labor of the returned exiles, is also not in vain, 1 Corinthians 15:58!