

Major Lessons from Minor Prophets Heaven's Best Gift (Zechariah)

Lesson #12 for June 22, 2013

Scriptures: Zechariah 8; 9:9; 12:1-10; 13:7-9; 14; Matthew 21:9; John 19:37.

1. In the last seven chapters of Zechariah, there are a number of very famous Messianic prophecies. Let us see if we can discover what these prophecies are supposed to teach us.
2. When studying the works of a prophet, it is very important to look first at the prophet's situation and try to determine what his words might have meant to his original readers or listeners. For these last chapters of Zechariah, do you think it was clear to his listeners that these were Messianic prophecies? Were these prophecies full of hope?
3. Most of these prophecies are prophecies of events connected with the final week of Christ's life on this earth. Several of them are connected with His actual crucifixion! Is that important for us to know?
4. Read Zechariah 8:4,5. What is this prophecy referring to? Has there been a time in Israelite history since their return from Babylonian captivity or in the history of our world so far when it was perfectly safe for children to play in the streets while the elderly sat and watched them? In Zechariah's day when Judah was still under the domination of the Persians and there were enemy nations all around, a picture like that must have seemed like a dream.
5. Several of these prophecies suggest that the country of Israel will be a kind of magnet, drawing people from all over the world. (Zechariah 14:9; 8:23) Was the idea that all nations should come together and worship in the temple at Jerusalem a part of the ordinary thinking of the Jews in Zechariah's day? This must be still in the future!
6. Like these passages in Zechariah, Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 suggest that someday the entire world will be drawn to Jesus Christ. Did Jesus have anything to say about that? Read John 12:28-32. Has the time yet come when Christ has drawn, or will draw, **everyone** to Him?

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that **the inhabitants of this little world** might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before **the universe**. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon **the intelligences of other worlds**, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31,32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would **not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe** it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—*Patriarchs and Prophets* 68,69 (1890); *Reflecting Christ* 60 (1985)

7. Are we supposed to be a part of fulfilling this prophecy from Zechariah as well as those words of Christ? (Galatians 6:16; Matthew 24:14; 28:19,20; Ephesians 1:7-10; 3:7-10)
8. Like Micah 6:8, Zechariah 8:16,17 suggests that the way we treat others impacts our relationship with God. God hates lying, injustice, and violence. Do we?
9. Read Zechariah 9:9. To Christians familiar with the story of the final week of Christ's life,

the idea that He would come “riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” reminds us of the triumphal entry. (Matthew 21:5; Mark 11:9,10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13-15) Why not a horse? Horses were used in war and conquest. That was not Jesus’ plan.

10. How do you think the disciples of Jesus and His many other followers felt as Jesus rode over the brim of the Mount of Olives and looked over at the magnificent temple in Jerusalem? Read *Desire of Ages* 570.1.
11. While the followers of Jesus were poor in terms of this world’s goods, they were very rich in their hope for the future. They were more than happy to place their garments on the ground to allow the colt carrying Jesus to walk over them. The triumphal entry came five days before Jesus was crucified. Will there be a time just before this world comes to an end when Christians will seem to be triumphant and the true people of God will be honored?
12. Even the disciples were so carried away by the idea that Jesus would become a temporal King that right in the upper room, they were arguing about their positions in the kingdom! (Luke 22:24)
13. Read Zechariah 12:10. This verse marks the dividing line between physical deliverance—apparently the deliverance the children of Israel were hoping for—and talking about the spiritual deliverance of God’s faithful people. In the original Hebrew, the word for *pierced* in this verse always describes a violent action. See Numbers 25:8; 1 Samuel 31:4. Notice how John referred to this experience in the life of Christ. (John 19:37; Revelation 1:7) This is an important link between John’s Gospel and Revelation. John was the only one who referred to this “piercing.” Wasn’t he the only disciple or Gospel author there at the cross?
14. How do you compare the Messianic prophecies in the last three chapters of Zechariah with those in Isaiah 53?
15. In their original context, some of these prophetic passages do not seem like Messianic prophecies at all. New Testament writers have snatched key phrases out of Zechariah and applied them to the life of Christ. Does that always mean that the passage was originally intended as a Messianic prophecy? Or, were the biblical writers doing what we so often do, using familiar phrases to describe events in their world without worrying too much about what the original passages were intended to mean? How many of these prophecies in Zechariah are clearly prophecies of a coming Messiah and not of anything else? Did the Jews in Jesus’ day recognize that these passages suggesting violence against the coming Messiah might be fulfilled in their day? (Zechariah 12:10; 13:7-9)
16. What do you think is the primary fulfillment of Zechariah 13:7-9? Compare Matthew 26:31,56 and Mark 14:27,50-52. Does the context sound like the life of Jesus? No doubt, Mark wanted to point out that he was there, too!
17. Jesus told Peter and the arresting mob that He could have called 12,000 angels to His aid, but He did not. (Matthew 26:53) How did Jesus manage to remain calm through that incredible experience of the trials, the torturing, and the crucifixion? Does your understanding of why Jesus had to die lead to greater appreciation of His character?
18. Read Zechariah 14. In this chapter we discover several interesting problems. Just as we noted in Zechariah 8:4,5, in Zechariah 14 we notice prophecies that seem to be clearly referring to events which did not occur at the first coming of Christ and will not even be at His second coming but refer to events which will take place after the third coming! Did Zechariah have any idea at all that there would be three separate comings? Is there any hint in the Old Testament that there would be a second coming after the first? Prior to Revelation 20, is there any hint in the New Testament that there would be a millennium

between the second coming and the third coming? Why do you suppose God did not make it clear to these biblical writers—his faithful prophets and apostles—concerning all the details of the first, second, and third comings?

19. Do these Messianic prophecies in Zechariah give you hope today?

In the darkest days of her long conflict with evil, the church of God has been given revelations of the eternal purpose of Jehovah. His people have been permitted to look beyond the trials of the present to the triumphs of the future, when, the warfare having been accomplished, the redeemed will enter into possession of the promised land. These visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, should be dear to His church today, when the controversy of the ages is rapidly closing and the promised blessings are soon to be realized in all their fullness. . .

The nations of the saved will know no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy, [Job 38:7] while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, "There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 722,732,733.

20. Was God trying to teach us how closely the events of the first coming, the second coming, and even the third coming are linked in His mind? Or, was He afraid that if they had known back then about the long time periods separating these comings that they might have gotten discouraged? If there had been no first coming, could there be a second coming? And if there were no second coming and no eternal salvation, would there have been any reason for coming the first time? None of God's predictions have failed yet! We can trust that the second coming and even the third coming events will, in fact, take place!

21. What kind of emotions come to your mind when you realize that the Prince of Heaven died for you? How does God feel about you? Ellen White puts that in very specific terms:

"One soul saved in the kingdom of God is worth more than ten thousand worlds like this." (*RH*, April 1, 1880 par. 1) "One soul is of infinite value; for Calvary speaks its worth." (*GW*92 337.1) "One soul saved, to live throughout the ages of eternity, to praise God and the Lamb, is of more value than millions in money." (*2T* 246.1) "Christ would have died for one soul in order that that one might live through the eternal ages." (*8T* 72.3)

Christ would have died for any one of us!

22. Read Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7. Is it your understanding of these verses that those who killed Jesus will weep and mourn over Him?

23. Look at the seven Messianic prophecies in the book of Zechariah (based on the *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*):

Though Zechariah's Messianic prophecies can be challenging and sometimes enigmatic, the main thrust is clear: Christ is coming. It is interesting, though, that the prophets Isaiah and Zechariah have more to say about the coming Messiah than any other Old Testament prophets.

1. The First Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 3:8-10): Three stunning titles for the Messiah appear in this passage (the prophet Isaiah has already mentioned them). The Messiah is called ""**My [God's] Servant**"" (vs. 8, *NKJV*; see also *Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52, 53*), ""**the BRANCH**"" (vs. 8; see also *Isa. 4:2*), and

- “**the stone**” (vs. 9; see also *Isa. 28:16*), but this time a unique description is added: the Stone has seven eyes and an inscription is engraved on it (vs. 9). Later, the Messiah also removes sin and cleanses people. The vision concludes with a picture of security, peace, and happiness in which people enjoy a fellowship together because the Messiah reigns (vs. 10). [Haven't you seen a stump with a new shoot growing up out of it?]
2. The Second Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 6:12-13): The crowning of the high priest Joshua (vs. 11) is portrayed here as a type for the Messiah. Jesus Christ, the Branch, will be ultimately crowned as the King and be simultaneously the Priest. In Israel these two offices were separate, but the Messiah will combine them in His Person. He Himself will be the King-Priest and rule on His throne. Only Jesus Christ has this unique position; He is the Priest who sits on the throne as the King (see *Psalms 110, Hebrews 7*).
 3. The Third Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 9:9-10): Zechariah pictures the Messiah as the righteous and gentle King riding a donkey. The fulfillment is described in Matthew 21:5 and John 12:15, and it is applied to the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the Sunday of His last week before the Crucifixion. [Notice that this describes a very peaceful scene. How is He going to rule the world without conquering many nations through war? This cannot be talking about worldly conquests.]
 4. The Fourth Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 10:4): Verse 4 begins: “From him,” which raises the question of who is meant by “him.” The best-suited antecedent is the Lord (see vs. 3). This means that the Messiah will come from the Lord, i.e., from the heavenly Father. This very brief Messianic verse presents four marvelous titles for Jesus Christ. He is the “**cornerstone**,” i.e., the foundation of everything (see *Ps. 118:22, Isa. 28:16; compare with Matt. 21:42*); He is the “**tent peg**,” who fastens us to Him in righteousness and on whom people can hang all their worries, fears, anxiety, and burdens (see *Isa. 22:22-23*); He is the “**battle-bow**,” that is, as the Divine Warrior He is the symbol of strength (*Exod. 15:2-3; Psalms 7:1; 27:1*); and He is the (absolute or sovereign) “**ruler**.” On Him you can rely completely.
 5. The Fifth Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 11:4-14): In this more difficult passage, the Messiah is depicted as the rejected good Shepherd whom the Lord asks to tend after the flock. [How much of this prophecy seems to relate to Jesus?] Without going into the details of the complex imagery of this biblical section, verse 12 mentions the phrase “they paid me thirty pieces of silver” (*NIV*) and verse 13 states “so I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter” (*ESV*). Phrases from these verses are used in Matthew 27:3, 6-9 and are applied to both Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ for the thirty pieces of silver and to what the chief priests did with the money after Judas threw it back. [Is this obviously a Messianic prophecy? Could it be describing something else?]
 6. The Sixth Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 12:10-14): Zechariah prophetically states that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem “will look on me, the one they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child” (vs. 10, *NIV*). The picture is gloomy: people look at the Messiah and mourn bitterly for Him, because they have pierced Him. This portrait of the Messiah's death is used in John 19:37 (*compare with Ps. 22:16, Isa. 53:5*). Our need to look on Jesus in faith is underscored in John 3:14-15 (*compare*

with Num. 21:9, Isa. 45:22, Heb. 12:2).

7. The Seventh Messianic Prophecy (Zechariah 13:6-9): The prophecy concerning the way that the Messiah's "feet will stand on the Mount of Olives" (*Zech. 14:4-5, NKJV*) goes beyond the scope of the first coming of Jesus Christ. Even though Jesus Christ walked on the Mount of Olives during His first coming, this prediction proclaims that the Mount of Olives will be split in two. Its fulfillment surpasses even Jesus' second coming, because at the time of the Second Coming, He will not touch the ground but stay in the air (*1 Thess. 4:16-17*). The whole scenario best fits His third coming after the millennium when the New Jerusalem will come down and "all the holy ones with him" (*Zech. 14:5, NIV*). Zechariah 14:6-9 then describes the conditions of the new earth (see *Revelation 21-22*). (Adapted from *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, pages 145-147)
24. Does it increase your trust in the Scriptures to know that God could predict hundreds of years—in fact, 3500 years—in advance what would happen in connection with His Son's life and death on this earth? Isaiah 40-55 suggest that two things that separate God from all imitators are His ability to create out of nothing and His ability to predict the future far in advance. Would you agree with that assessment?
25. Four books in the Old Testament that are quoted quite extensively in the New Testament are the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Zechariah, Ezekiel and Daniel are quoted especially in the book of Revelation. Why do you suppose these books are quoted so frequently? Have you learned anything new about the book of Zechariah in these last two weeks? What about biblical prophecy? Do you understand it better?

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