

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

1. This is a very difficult book compared to the book of Haggai.
2. Zechariah is a contemporary of Haggai who had a very short ministry in the post-exilic period in Jerusalem. When Haggai's ministry ended, Zechariah came in to replace Haggai.
3. Zechariah's prophecy is more about the future whilst Haggai's prophecy focussed on the then present and the need to build a temple and complete it.
4. The book of Zechariah has lots of poetry.
 - a) It has lots of apocalyptic visions speaking of the future, ie, mysteries that we do not know unless God reveals it to us.
 - b) It is like trying to explain to Adam what a cell phone is and you will probably describe it as "a box that helps to shout across a far distance".
 - c) So, to explain what the eternal Kingdom of God looks like, the best way is to describe it is using the things that people know at the time of the prophecy. However, we should note that future things are not just an improvement of current things. The cave man might think a cell phone is just an improvement of what they knew e.g. improved shouting. Hence, lots of images are used in this book to describe future things which we have not seen. Therefore, it is hard to understand Zechariah.
5. Zechariah was a priest.
6. The book of Zechariah is structured into 2 sections:
 - a) Chapters 1 to 8 are about NOW (the then PRESENT time) in Jerusalem and 8 visions.
 - b) Chapters 9 to 14 are about the eternal Kingdom.

Chapter 1

1. Zechariah 1:1-6 is the introduction. Zechariah scolded the Israelites and warned them not to be like their fathers who refused to repent.
2. Zechariah 1:7-17. Vision #1 is the Vision of 4 horsemen.
 - a) This is the first of the 8 visions that Zechariah had.
 - b) This first vision is about the 4 horsemen who were news reporters to report the condition of the world.
 - c) The report they gave was that the world was good and at peace. This is true because King Cyrus had conquered Babylon which was terrible and cruel. King Cyrus was a peaceful king. It was a time of peace where people continue building things.
3. Zechariah 1:18-20. Vision #2 is the Vision of 4 horns.
 - a) There were 4 horns sticking out of the ground. Horns are symbols of military power. 4 craftsmen came and yank the horns out (i.e. de-horned them). However, there was no killer army coming again.
 - b) It was a repeat message of peace and hence, a time to build in this window-period of peace.

Chapter 2

1. Zechariah 2:1-5. Vision #3 is the Vision of a Measuring line.
 - a) A man, with a measuring line is equivalent to a surveyor who goes into a piece of land to assess the area before building anything. So here, this man went in first to survey before expanding the walls of Jerusalem.
 - b) But why was there a need to expand the walls of Jerusalem? The reason was that God wanted to encourage more Jews to return because thus far, only 50,000 Jews had returned.
 - c) But Jerusalem is on a hill. There is a limit to its expansion geographically.
 - d) Zechariah 2:5 says, "God will be a wall of fire all around her." Basically, the message is that "Do not worry about the size, God will be our wall."
2. Zechariah 2:8 says that whoever touches Israel or His people, touches the apple of God's eye. God will not let anyone touch His people again. Enough is enough. He will protect His people just like how an earthly father protects his children.

Chapter 3

Zechariah 3:1-10. Vision #4 is the Vision of the High Priest.

1. Joshua was the high priest. Satan accused Joshua as being dirty in his garments and said he did not qualify to be a high priest.
2. Satan is the accuser of brethren and an adversary, see Revelation 12:10. Satan concealed himself as a serpent in Eden. He tempted David to do the census of his people and in the book of Job, he again appeared. Satan only appeared 3 times in the Old Testament but he is there all the time and behind the scenes, deceiving us. This great deceiver is also in the Church. But during Jesus' 3-year ministry on Earth, Satan was everywhere, frantically working.
3. God gave Joshua the new clothes. Israel was huge in immorality, injustice and idolatry. Zechariah 3:9 says, "God will remove all iniquities in a single day". This happened when Christ died on the Cross and settled all the sins of mankind as long as they trust and believe in Him.

Chapter 4

Zechariah 4:1-14. Vision #5 is the Vision of the Golden Lampstand and 2 olive trees.

1. The Golden Lampstand is the Jewish Menorah which is a symbol of Israel.
2. Zechariah, in the vision, saw a reservoir of olive oil that kept filling the lampstand. There was no longer a need for the priests to keep filling the lamp in the temple..
3. Oil refers to the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of Holy Spirit in all believers.
4. Zechariah 4:6 was the word from God given to Zerubbabel.
 - a) It says, "Not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit". The building of the temple is by God's help, not power of men.
 - b) This is also a message for Christians. We need the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- c) Therefore, the prophets spoke not only to the people of their time about their real problems but also to us now.

Chapter 5

1. Zechariah 5:1-4. Vision #6 is the Vision of the Flying Scroll.
 - a) There was a massive scroll of about 10 metres x 5 metres.
 - b) There were curses against liars and thieves on the scroll.
 - c) As the scroll flew around and found liars, they would destroy the house and its inhabitants.
 - d) This means that in the future Kingdom, we will no longer have to worry about liars. Now on Earth, we cannot trust anyone including pastors, spouses, etc. But in the eternal Kingdom of God, we can live in peace. We can trust everyone without worrying about their motives.
2. Zechariah 5:1-11. Vision #7 is the Vision of a Woman in a Basket.
 - a) A basket is for the gathering of agricultural crops typically.
 - b) The woman in the basket was named "wickedness". The woman was a personification of sin. The angel quickly closed the lid to keep the woman inside.
 - c) Then 2 other women with wings of a bird, carried the basket to Shinar in the Babylon plains and dumped it there.
 - d) This is a picture of all the sins of the world which will be dumped into Babylon. One day, sin will become history. We will live in the Kingdom of God without sin.

Chapter 6

1. Zechariah 6:1-8. Vision #8 is the Vision of four Chariots.
 - a) This is the last vision in this book of Zechariah.
 - b) Chariots speak about war. The chariots were described as being very powerful.
 - c) The 4 chariots went out to the four corners of Earth. The will of God will be done. God will be in control.
2. Zechariah 6:9-15. There is no more vision from verse 9 onwards.
 - a) Three exiles came back to Jerusalem, bringing silver and gold contributed by the rich Jews who were still in exile and did not come back to Jerusalem.
 - b) But the gold was made into a crown and placed on Joshua's head. This is weird considering that Joshua was not the king but only the high priest. Zerubbabel was the king at that time.
 - c) This has never happened before except once when Melchizedek was both king and priest (during Abraham's time). Melchizedek was the King of Salem (Jerusalem) which also means King of Peace. Melchizedek was also a priest. This is a fore-type of Jesus Christ who is also both King and Priest. This vision of Joshua (as a high priest) being crowned is preparing the people to know that one day, the High Priest and King will be One same person, that is Jesus.

Chapter 7

1. Two men came from Bethel to seek advice from Zechariah.
2. They wondered if they should still fast to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem since they were already back in Jerusalem and the temple had been built and completed.
3. These 2 men ended up getting a lecture about fasting, from God, through Zechariah.
 - a) Fasting is not the same as just abstaining from food as a ritual (like what Christians do on the Day of Lent as practised by many churches nowadays).
 - b) The purpose of fasting is not just to put away food but to put away sin in your life. It is not to cleanse your human body system by abstaining from food. But that when we fast, we will be reminded that we love food and we love sin. Fasting is to put away both food AND sin.
4. Zechariah 7:8-10 says that they should show kindness to widows and orphans.
 - a) So, do not worry about what food not to eat, what time to avoid food but do not do sinful things and do only what is good.
 - b) It is not how much we bring to God as an offering or how often we fast that matters to God but how we live our lives every day.
 - c) It is about whether a person is a faithful Christian who looks after his employees.

Chapter 8

This chapter is about the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem. It is about the then present Jerusalem with better walls but more so, about the eternal city, the New Jerusalem.

Therefore,

1. Chapters 1 to 8 is about the NOW (the then PRESENT time) in Jerusalem and 8 visions.
2. Chapters 9 to 11 is about the future of the people in Israel.
3. Chapters 12 to 14 is about the future of the world attacking Jerusalem and we will see Jerusalem as the capital of the world.

Chapter 9

1. Zechariah 9:1-8 say that enemies like the Philistines etc. will never trouble Israel again in the future.
2. Zechariah 9:9.
 - a) This verse is about Jesus coming on a donkey to Jerusalem.
 - b) It is about Jesus' First Coming as the Suffering King on a peace mission. The Jews were disappointed. They cried "Hosanna, Hosanna!" and they were seeking deliverance from the terrible Romans who were ruling them but Jesus came first as the Suffering King. They did not realize that. Donkey speaks of a peace mission, not a war mission unlike Jesus coming on a horse in His SecondComing.
 - c) Jews, like Christians, hear what they like to hear and see what they like to see. We practise selective hearing to suit ourselves. We mentally ignore or think it is our neighbour who needs that warning and not us.

3. The last part of chapter 9 is about Jesus' Second Coming as a Conquering King.
4. The prophets were not able to see the time gap between Jesus' First and Second Comings. Hence, it was all written in one chapter. This is the prophetic mountain-view where prophets were not able to see the valley between two high mountains, one behind the other.

Chapter 10

1. This chapter is about the regathering of the Jews.
2. Currently, there is a Jewish diaspora which means the dispersion of Jews out of their homeland.
3. In 1948, the beginning of regathering happened when Israel became a nation again but 90% of the Jews today still live outside of Israel.
4. But one day all Jews will all go home to Israel as prophesized in this Chapter 10.

Chapter 11

1. Zechariah 11:1-3. These verses speak about the deforestation of the surrounding nations.
2. Zechariah 11:4-17 speak of worthless shepherds. In verse 17, the "Woe" is a curse. God hates shepherds that are worthless. Worthless pastors are not the same as bad or evil pastors. They basically do not warn, teach or comfort; they just get paid their salary.

Chapter 12

1. The invading army here probably describes the War of Armageddon where Israel will be attacked.
2. Zechariah 12:10 says that Israel will cry out to the Lord and they will mourn for the Messiah whom they had crucified, whom they rejected for 2000 years. They will howl about how they wasted 2000 years when they see the One they rejected coming back to save them.

Chapter 13

1. Zechariah 13:2-6.
 - a) God hates the false prophets. The prophecy says that no one will dare to claim he is a prophet anymore. Parents will deny sons who claim to be prophets when that time comes.
 - b) The worst enemies of Israel were not the Assyrians or Babylonians but the false prophets who led the Jews astray. Similarly, there are worthless pastors who lead their sheep astray. God will deal with them.

Chapter 14

1. This chapter describes the Day of the Lord.
2. It is similar to Chapter 12 which describes the great battle and it was also described in the book of Revelation.

3. Zechariah 14:4 says Jesus will land with His feet on Mt Olives just like how He ascended from there and Mt Olives will split into 2 parts. There will be universal worship of Jesus Christ.
4. Zechariah 14:21 seems to be a strange ending, saying that every cooking pot in Jerusalem will be used to cook sacrifices to God. This is because this verse is not the real ending; the real ending is the book of Revelation.

What have we learned from the Book of Zechariah?

1. God did not make the book of Zechariah clear because God did not want us to spend time to examine all details of the future but instead to be faithful in the present.
2. So, we should NOT keep trying to decipher prophecies like scholars but to live well in the present days. The future is in God's hand. We just need to be sure we will be there with Him.
3. Today, we are to make disciples and help the poor. We have work to do. We have limited time. It is NOT about showing off our knowledge about the future.
4. We are NOT saved just for heaven but saved to be Christ-like and to shine for Him now. The future is in His hand but every moment of the present is in our hands. Be faithful today. Know just enough of the prophecies to give you peace. Therefore, Zechariah is a confusing book because God designed it that way.