

SESSION 5

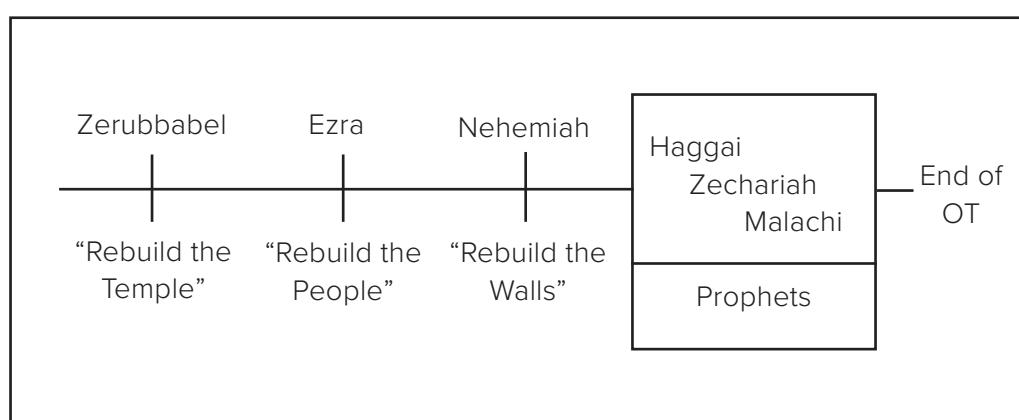
Zechariah—Part Two

I. PRAYER/REVIEW

II. CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 538-515 BC | 483-473 BC | 457 BC | 444-425 BC |
| Zerubbabel | Esther | Ezra | Nehemiah |
| Ezra 1-6 | Book of Esther | Ezra 7-10 | Book of Nehemiah |
| First Return | In Persia | Second Return | Third Return |
| | | | Haggai (520 BC) |
| | | | Malachi (ca 433-31 BC) |
| | | | Zechariah (520 ^{ff} BC) |

III. PANORAMA PLUS 9 TIMELINE



IV. CHARTS: BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

A. Broad Overview (8+4+2):

| BOOK OF ZECHARIAH | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|----|
| 8 Visions | 6 | 4 Messages | 7 | 2 Burdens | 14 |
| 1 | | 8 | 9 | 14 | |
| Pictures | Problems | | Predictions | | |

B. Detailed Chart

For a more comprehensive look at Zechariah, refer to the chart in Session 4: Appended Material A, page 115.

V. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Four Messages (7:1-8:23)

1. “Empty Ritualism” (7:1-7)

- a. A question: “the word of the Lord came” (1-3)

Zechariah 7:1-3

In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev.

² The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melek, together with their men, to entreat the LORD ³ by asking the priests of the house of the LORD Almighty and the prophets, “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”

- (1) The prophetic message came almost two years after the eight (8) visions of Chapters 1-6.

(2) The people's question concerned the practice of fasting during the exile commemorating the destruction of the first temple (cf. Jer 52:12-13). This was not a Mosaic law requirement (only the fast at the Day of Atonement—Lev 16:29; 23:27-32). Since the new Temple was about half-finished, should the Lord's people continue to fast?

b. An answer: "the word of the Lord Almighty came" (4-7)

The reply and three more messages to follow all begin with the authoritative, "the word of the Lord (Almighty) came."

Zechariah 7:4-7

Then the word of the LORD Almighty came to me: ⁵ "Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? ⁶ And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves? ⁷ Are these not the words the LORD proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem and its surrounding towns were at rest and prosperous, and the Negev and the western foothills were settled?'"

(1) The Lord challenged the motives of those who fasted (5-6). As always, God seeks the reality (authentic), not meaningless ritual in worship. Note the earlier prophetic words of Isaiah (perhaps around 700 BC).

Isaiah 1:11-17

"The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs

and goats. ¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me.

New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.

¹⁴ Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood! ¹⁶ Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. ¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Likewise, Amos shared the revealed, prophetic word and the religious hypocrisy to the northern kingdom (Israel).

Amos 5:21-23

“I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. ²² Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. ²³ Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.”

- (2) The prophets (before the captivities) had preached against self-serving attitudes of selfishness, the very condition that exiles were exhibiting. People went through the motions of worship and serving God, but it was “empty ritualism.”

2. “Past Disobedience” (7:8-14)

The second message continues the thought. Past generations had heard the corrective words of the prophets but ignored them. This attitude and resultant actions are evident again in the Lord’s people in exile.

a. Lord’s past words of exhortation (8-10)

Zechariah 7:8-10

And the word of the LORD came again to Zechariah: ⁹ “This is what the LORD Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. ¹⁰ Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’”

b. People’s past response of disobedience (11-12)

- (1) “Refused to pay attention”... “turned their backs and stopped up their ears” (11)
- (2) Hardened their hearts (“as hard as flint”) (12)
- (3) “Would not listen” to Mosaic Law or prophetic words (12)

Result? “So the Lord Almighty was very angry” (12)

c. Lord’s past judgment of exile into captivity (13-14)

Zechariah 7:14

“I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land they left behind them was so desolate that no one traveled through it. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.”

The theological point: don’t follow in the footsteps of ritualism and disobedience. The Lord will not leave his people unpunished.

3. “Restoration and Encouragement” (8:1-17)

The third message anticipates not only the ongoing return to the land and the very important task of rebuilding the Temple, it sees in this a precursor to the future blessings of the coming, far-future millennial kingdom.

This message (#3) is structured by the seven (7) occurrences of “this is what the Lord Almighty says.” The six authoritative introductions (words) are preceded by the introduction to the third message, “Again the word of the Lord Almighty came to me” (1).

- a. Word #1: Jealous for Zion (2)

Zechariah 8:2

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.”

- b. Word #2: Future return to Zion (3)

Zechariah 8:3

This is what the LORD says: “I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.”

- c. Word #3: Future tranquility of Jerusalem (4-5)

Zechariah 8:4-5

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age.⁵ The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”

- d. Word #4: Surety of the Lord’s words (6)

What the Lord promised in the future for His people might seem impossible (NIV: “marvelous”), but no more so than the threats of exile were to the stubborn people of the past.

- e. Word #5: Future regathering to Jerusalem (7-8)

Zechariah 8:7-8

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west.⁸ I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.”

Note also Jeremiah 30:7-11

How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.⁸ “In that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them.⁹ Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.¹⁰ “So do not be afraid, Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid.¹¹ I am with you and will save you,’ declares the LORD. ‘Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.’”

- f. Word #6: Future blessings to come—part one (9-13)

Zechariah 8:9, 11-12

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Now hear these words, ‘Let your hands be strong so that the temple may be built.’ This is also what the prophets said who were present when the foundation was laid for the house of the LORD Almighty... But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past,” declares the LORD Almighty.¹² “The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people.

- g. Word #7: Future blessings to come - part two (14-17)

Zechariah 8:14-15

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you and

showed no pity when your ancestors angered me,” says the LORD Almighty,¹⁵ “so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid.”

Further, the Lord reiterated the righteous deeds expected of His blessed people:

- (1) “Speak the truth” (16)
- (2) “Render true and sound judgments” (in the courts) (16)
- (3) “Do not plot evil” (17)
- (4) “Do not... swear falsely” (17)

4. “Joy in the Future Kingdom” (8:18-23)

In this final (and fourth) message, the subject returns to fasting, the very question posed in 7:1-3. With prophetic anticipation of the far future day of blessing, at that time the “fastings” of the past will become the “feastings” of the future time of blessing.

Once again, as in the previous section, each of the three (3) sections begin with “the Lord Almighty says.”

a. Word #1: Future joy (18-19)

Zechariah 8:18-19

The word of the LORD Almighty came to me.

¹⁹ This is what the LORD Almighty says: “The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.”

Since the recent fast of mourning will soon turn to joy (as the Temple will soon be completed), this happy occasion also foreshadows the extreme joy of the Messianic Millennial Kingdom. Therefore, in anticipation, the Lord’s people should exhibit what the Kingdom will be: “Therefore, love truth and peace” (19).

b. Word #2: Future esteemed status of Jerusalem (20-22)

Zechariah 8:22

And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him.

c. Word #3: Future esteemed status of Jews (23)

Zechariah 8:23

This is what the LORD Almighty says: *"In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'*"

B. Two Burdens (9:1-14:21)

The basic theme of the these last 6 chapters of Zechariah concern Messiah and Israel's future. The first three chapters (Zech 9-11) generally deal with the "Advent and Rejection of the Messiah." The final three (Zech 12-14) picture the "Advent and Acceptance of the Messiah." These final burdens (or oracles) may have been written after the completion of the rebuilt Temple (though there are no specific chronological markers).

Common to this section is the phrase "**“on that day”**" which occurs 18 times. This is a common eschatological phrase which can mean near, far or far, far future (which is likely the case in Zechariah 9-14). Additionally, there is a stylistic change in writing. Merrill (quoted by Constable, 57) notes a "change of mood, outlook, style and composition" that sets it off from the first eight chapters. Some see this as the hand of a new author, but there are some parallels to Zechariah 1-8 (cf. Lindsey, *BKC:OT*, 1561). Therefore, it is best to see one author whose style changes as the content of the Lord's revelation changes.

Eugene Merrill (*NOTS*, 827) suggests the following chiastic structure for Zechariah 9-14:

Chiasm of Zechariah 9-14

- A. God comes to protect and bless (chapters 9-10)
- B. The people reject God's shepherd (11:1-14)
 - C. The worthless shepherd hurts the flock (11:15-17)
 - C.' The nations come to destroy Jerusalem (12:1-9)
 - B.' The people repent and turn to God (12:10-13:6)
- A.' God comes to protect and bless (13:7-14:21)

1. Advent and Rejection of the Messiah (9:1-11:17)

- a. Messiah's coming (9:1-17)
 - (1) Judgment upon certain nations (1-8)

Behind the unfolding revelations of Israel's Messiah to come was the hidden, sovereign hand of God. Certain empires would rise and fall leading to the appointed time of the Christ (i.e. Messiah). These empires would intersect with God's chosen people and their rise and fall was predicted by the prophet Daniel. Note the compatible prophesies of Daniel 2 and 7 (as seen in the following charts). Consider that God uses the nations (and their leaders) to accomplish His greater purposes.

| DANIEL 2 (Statue) | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Parts | Composition | Reference |
| Head | Gold | Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) |
| Chest/Arms | Silver | Medo-Persia |
| Belly/Thighs | Bronze | Greece |
| Legs | Iron | Rome (1st Coming) |
| Feet | Partly Iron Partly Clay | Revised "Rome" (2nd Coming) |
| Rock (Stone) | Statue | Huge Mountain (Messianic Kingdom) |

| DANIEL 7 (Four Beasts) | | |
|---|--|---|
| Beast | Description | Interpretation |
| Lion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winged like an eagle • Wings plucked off | Babylon (humbling of Nebuchadnezzar) |
| Bear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised up - on one side • 3 ribs in mouth | Medo-Persia (Persia more dominant) |
| Leopard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Wings • Four Heads | Greece (Swift conquest) (post-Alexander split) |
| Terrifying Beast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron teeth | Rome |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten horns • Little horn | (Rome-revised) (Antichrist - Rev 13:1-10) |
| Son of Man's Dominion: Future Messianic Kingdom | | |

In light of Daniel's prophetic predictions of the four kingdoms that would subjugate the Jews, nonetheless the sovereign hand of God was moving world events and preserving God's people for their promised destiny. God would use foreign invaders to punish nations and even Israel (Assyria) and Judah (Babylon). Zechariah 9 predicts the arrival of Alexander the Great to bring punishment upon Damascus (Syria), Tyre and Sidon, and the five key Philistine cities (9:1-7). Each of these had oppressed Israel in the past. But in the midst of this invading mayhem, God would protect His people.

Zechariah 9:8

But I will encamp at my temple to guard it against marauding forces. Never again will an oppressor overrun my people, for now I am keeping watch.

Note that “never again” refers to a future time of divine protection, a time of the millennial reign of the Messiah.

Joel 3:17

“Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.”

(2) Advent of the Messiah (prophetically)
(9:9-10)

(a) First coming: far future (about 500 years)

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This was literally fulfilled in the Triumphal Entry of Jesus commencing the last week of His earthly life.

Matthew 21:1-5 (also Mk 11; Lk 19; Jn 12)
As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:⁵ “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to

you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The reader of Zechariah would not expect the prophetic focus to move from first coming to second, but as can happen in prophetic literature (cf. Isa 61:1-2^a and 2^b), the prophet now moves forward.

(b) Second coming: far, far future (about 2,500 years...)

Zechariah 9:10 (cf. Rev 19:11-16)

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

(3) Protection of God’s People (9:11-17)

This section of Zechariah proves to be difficult to understand. Perhaps, these descriptive verses look to the “relatively” near future of the Maccabean rebellion for independence from the Greek Seleucid dynasty (2nd century BC). This partial fulfillment would precede the far, far future completion at the time of the Second Coming (cf. 9:13-17).

Since this passage has a double-fulfillment, the far, far future fulfillment could perhaps be summarized in verse 16.

Zechariah 9:16

The LORD their God will save his people on that day as a shepherd saves his flock. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown.

b. Messiah's care (10:1-11:3)

Zechariah 9 focused on the true king that would come. Chapter 10 spotlights the people of the Messiah. Again, this passage seems to cast a “near” and “far” view. The near would be the Hebrew independence under the Maccabees. The far view would be the reign of the true king in the Davidic, Millennial Kingdom. Note the following insights.

(1) False worship negates the Lord's blessings (10:1-2^a).

(2) False worship brings the Lord's anger against false shepherds (leaders) (10:2^b-3).

Zechariah 10:2^b

Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd.

(3) True Messiah will enable His people to defeat their foes (10:4-5).

(4) True Messiah will strengthen His people (10:6-12).

Zechariah 10:6

“I will strengthen Judah and save the tribes of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.

Zechariah 10:9-10, 12

“Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return. ¹⁰ I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, and there will not be room enough for them... I will strengthen them in the LORD and in his name they will live securely, declares the LORD.”

(5) True Messiah will first bring wrath (before blessings can come) (11:1-3).

c. Good Shepherd and Foolish Shepherd (11:4-17)

This passage is a kind of allegory. Zechariah is instructed to dramatically portray the Good Shepherd who is sent to God's people. As this shepherd, he carries two staffs, "Favor" (God's blessings) and "Union" (the oneness/unity of the nation). But the people (flock) reject the Shepherd that God sent (4-14). The Good Shepherd breaks the staffs.

Next, Zechariah takes on the dramatic role of the foolish shepherd (15-17) who abuses and oppresses the sheep. Prophetically this will be fulfilled in the coming Antichrist (Rev 13:3, 12).

Zechariah 11:17

"Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!"

2. Advent and Acceptance of the Messiah (12:1-14:21)

The content of the final three chapters of Zechariah focus primarily on the Second Coming. The phrase "in that day" forecasts the far, far future (occurs 15 times).

a. Future day: physical deliverance (12:1-9)

Eugene Merrill (NOTS, 830) offers this summary: "As the end approaches, God will make Jerusalem a 'cup' that will cause nations to reel. Jerusalem also will be a rock on which the nations will 'injure themselves' as they try to move it. Jerusalem will take center stage as Israel secures its control over the city while other nations try to 'attack' it."

Zechariah 12:2-5

"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem.³ On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem

an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.⁴ On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the LORD. “I will keep a watchful eye over Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations.⁵ Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.’”

- b. Future day: spiritual deliverance (12:10-13:6)
 - (1) Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (12:10^a)
 - (2) Through the mourning over the death of the crucified Messiah (12:10^b-14)

Zechariah 12:10^b-11

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.⁶ On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be as great as the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

Note the key passages that relate to these significant verses.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Psalm 22:6-8, 16-18

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.⁸ “He trusts in the LORD,” they say, “let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”...

Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet.¹⁷ All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

(3) Through the cleansing of the nation (Israel)
(13:1-6)

Zechariah 13:1-2

“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.² “On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more,” declares the LORD Almighty. “I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land.”

c. Future day: the coming of the Messiah-King
(13:7-14:21)

(1) Flashback: the Shepherd struck (13:7-9)

In a reference to the previous passage on the Good Shepherd (11:4-14), verse 7 speaks of the striking of the Shepherd, a prophetic reference to the crucifixion. The sheep who scatter likely refers to the dispersion of the Jews at the time of Jerusalem's destruction.

(2) Flash-forward: the King returns (14:1-21)
(a) To rescue Jerusalem (1:8; 12-15): End of the Tribulation

Zechariah 14:3-4 (cf. 12-15)

Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

(b) To establish the Kingdom (9-11, 16-21)

Zechariah 14:9, 16

The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name... Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles.

VI. POINTS TO PONDER

A. Fulfilled Prophecies

The book of Zechariah makes a number of Messianic predictions that were fulfilled in His “first coming.” Additionally, there are many “second coming” prophecies awaiting fulfillment. If God can promise/predict and then bring about/fulfill, then He is all-knowing and holds the future in His hands. Can you trust a faithful God such as this?

B. Christological Pictures

“Zechariah presents Christ as the angel of the Lord (3:1), the Righteous Branch (3:8), the Crucified Savior (12:10) and the Coming King (9:9)” (N. Geisler, 295).

C. Right to Rule

As mentioned frequently before, one of the fundamental questions of the Scriptures is the theological query, “Who has the right to rule?” Zechariah demonstrates that God has that right.

He is the God of history, of prophecy and fulfillment, of judgment and deliverance, of sacrifice and provision for man's sin. Indeed, He alone has the right to rule and reign.

Will you let Him?