

Zechariah 15 - Burden of Judgment of Sin on Man

Zechariah - 9:1-8

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Ancient Geography Essential

- Prophetic language requires understanding the ancient world as Zechariah or text will be incomprehensible
- Knowledge of ancient cultures increased past 200 years
- Cultures mentioned represent future cultures
- Zechariah is a study of contrasts with flexible time line

A Look at Prophetic Time (Lk 4:16-21)

- Christ reads Isaiah, stopping in mid-sentence (Lk 4:1-21)
 - He sits saying Isaiah words are fulfilled in Him
 - He does not lay claim to the remainder of Isaiah's prophecy during His first advent {Suffering Messiah}
 - Remainder will be fulfilled in His second advent {Conquering King}
 - Zechariah weaves the prophecies covering both advents

Troy – War That Shaped Empires

- Conflict between two confederations
- Protracted war exhausted both cultures
- Collapse of these cultures resulted in Sea Peoples [Colonization - Philistia]



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan_War

Phoenicia – Maritime Power

- Semitic Bahrain culture
- Developed alphabet
- Maritime traders, settlers
- Craftsmen built Temple
- Brought silver from Iberia for Solomon



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenicia>

Collapse of Ancient Cultures

- Egypt severely weakened by events of Hebrew Exodus
- Hittite Empire weakened attempting to conquer coast
- Confederation [Trojan] war collapsed their cultures
- Phoenicia able to become a strong maritime power
- Sea Peoples est. colonies such as Philistia [Philistines]

Growth of New Cultures

- God moved Hebrews into Canaan during this time
 - They struggled to est. themselves (Judges)
 - David conquered Philistia, solidifying monarchy (Israel)
 - Solomon traded with Phoenicia as far as Malaysia (1K 10:11)
- Eastern empires declined, defeated by Western empires
- Macedonia brought Hellenism to the East: Alexander

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/ancient-history/ancient-history-overview>

Gentile Empires of the East

Babylonian



Period of Judaic Exile

Persian



Period of Judaic Post Exile

Gentile Empires of the West

Hellenistic



Period of Intertestamental Strife

Roman



Period of the Gospels & Acts

Zechariah's View of Empires

- Common to use city names to denote Empires
- Phoenicia upper coast
- Philistia lower coast
- Damascus [Syria] north of Israel



Politic Point of View

- Hadrach (הַדְרָחַ) Possibly means: Hard - Soft
 - Only used here
 - Does not correlate with known deities or cultures
- Probably euphemism for Persia to protect Judea
 - Persia sensitive to prophecies of insurrection
 - Jews would lose status & power in Persian court

Division of Final Two Visions

- Contrast similar to God's answer on fastings
 - First vision - God's message of judgment heavy burden
 - Gentiles are hard - Experience God's wrath (Salvation)
 - God is soft - Christ seen as humble coming for His own
 - Second vision - God's message of Jacob's Trouble
 - God is hard - Great Tribulation to sift His people
 - Jews are soft - They mourn for Messiah - Priestly nation

Contrast Judgment & Salvation

- The **burden** of God - Judgment comes to Hadrach - Persia and by implication: all who reject Christ/God
 - **Burden** of sin weighs heavily on man
 - **Burden** is carried alone - Man rejected God (Is-1:18-32)
- In contrast the *burden* of Christ is light (Mt-11:25-32)
 - **He** bore the *burden* on the stauros
 - **He** bears the *burden* in life dwelling in us

Burden Rests on Syria

- Syria identified by:
 - Hamath (Fortress) - Area of Syria
 - Damascus - Capital of Syria
- They had the greatest witness of God - Rejected God
 - Naaman (Syrian General) leprosy healed - Elijah (2K 5:1-14)
 - Syrians acknowledged Elijah as God's prophet (2K 8:7-13)

Phoenicia: Tyre & Sidon

- Phoenicia wealthy cities
 - Sidon frequently defeated - Land based
 - Tyre rarely conquered
- Alexander built bridge
 - Razed the city
 - Survivors built Carthage (Rome - Punic Wars)



<http://www.ancient.eu/Tyre/>

Philistia Enters God's Salvation

- Philistia saw the destruction of Phoenicia knowing her time would come
 - Sons of early Mycenae victors (Troy) defeated by Greek warriors of Alexander the Great - Ruled by foreigners
 - Their idolatric system suddenly destroyed Dagon (Fish)
- In Millennial Kingdom they will be called a tribe of friends in Israel

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dagon>

Christ Camps Over His *House*

- Refers to His people (House of David); not a dwelling
 - Christ shall live in Israel to protect His people
 - Seeing with His own eyes means He is physically present
 - Late in Millennial Kingdom HaSatan and unbelievers will attempt to destroy God's people and Christ (Isa 20:7-10)
- In a few passages God moves from Zechariah's future, our past, to our future

Synopsis

- God reassures His people that Gentiles who harm them will be harmed regardless of wealth or power
- Some Gentiles enemies will become friends such as the Jebusites (Jerusalem) (Isa 15:63; Jer 1:21; 2Sa 24:18-25; 1Ch 11:4-9)
 - Hebrews told to destroy the Jebusites but could not
 - Temple built on Jebusite threshing floor in Jerusalem

Exact Declarations Not Possible

- Impossible to determine exact peoples {cultures} since some events in unknowable future context
- Those knowable peoples & events can be near-view fulfillment and still refer to far-view fulfillment
- Can be dogmatic about flow of prophetic events but not about specific participants - Danger to avoid

Some Current Issues Possible

- It is possible to draw some conclusions from current events if qualifying statements are clearly understood
 - The foreigners ruling Philistia would correspond to today's Palestinian Gaza Strip area {Approximately}
 - Islam (Sharia) is the foreign replacement of ancient religious traditions (Dagon)
 - Islam's avowed purpose is to destroy all other faiths - Rejects Scripture for distorted Talmud; Quran

What Is Learned?

- To understand prophecy:
 - History is essential {Zechariah refers to Greeks - Javans}
 - Prophetic relationships are otherwise unknowable
 - Prophetic timelines may change mid-sentence - Careful
- *Hard* Gentiles will be carry their own burden of sin
- Coming: *Soft* Christ to carry burden of His peoples