**Lesson 24**

**28-29 March 2022**

**Genesis 48-50**

***Another Perspective*: Zechariah**

**Timeline and Map –** Zechariah is minor prophet number ten on our timeline, so write his name on blank number ten. The date of his prophecies were the same as Haggai’s, 520 bc And like Haggai, Zechariah was a former exile who had returned to Judah and lived in Jerusalem. Zechariah’s name means, “Yahweh remembered.”

**Some Background –** The *Women’s Study Bible* gives a good summary of the background for this book: “Nearly 20 years after returning from the Babylonian exile in the time of Cyrus (538 bc), God’s people were discouraged. [Why?]

* The foundation of the temple had been laid shortly after the initial return, in 536 bc, but powerful opposition had prevented any further progress on rebuilding the temple.
* There was little evidence of the kind of spiritual renewal that the earlier prophets had anticipated.
* Jewish sovereignty had not been restored.
* A moral reformation among the people had not occurred.
* Jerusalem was still only partially rebuilt and had no significance among the surrounding nations.

Under the circumstances, many people concluded that theirs was a ‘day of small things’ (4:10) in which God was absent from His people. Many viewed faithful obedience as useless. It seemed to make more sense to forget God and to pursue the best life possible.” *Women’s Study Bible,* page 1459

**Zechariah’s Messages –** So God sent two prophets to challenge and encourage the Israelites who had returned to Judah. We saw what Haggai had to say last week, so today we want to focus on Zechariah’s messages. Both men received their initial message from the Lord “in the second year of King Darius”. Zechariah’s first message from God, which came in the eighth month of that year, was, “Return to Me, and I will return to you. Don’t be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out…but they did not hear or pay attention.” Then on the 24th day of the eleventh month of that same year, Zechariah received a series of eight visions in a single night! Many of the objects that he saw in these visions are very similar to ones found in the book of Revelation (horses of various colors, a woman in a basket, a measuring line, a golden lampstand, etc.), so as you might expect, much of what he wrote concerns the future glory of Jerusalem. But there are also striking references to what we now know was the first coming of Jesus Christ. These include:

* Zechariah 9:9 – *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey.*
* Zechariah 11:12-13 – *Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver…the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord.*
* Zechariah 12:10b – *…when they look…on him whom they have pierced…*

**Specific Encouragement for Zerubbabel the Governor and Joshua the High Priest Concerning the Temple –** As He did through the prophet Haggai, God sent specific messages for the governor of Jerusalem and the high priest. The Lord identified Joshua the high priest as the key agent of renewal among the people (6:9-15) and said that “he shall build the temple of the Lord.” God’s message for the governor Zerubbabel was, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house (the temple); his hands shall also complete it. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel” (4:9-10).

**Encouragement for the Exiles –** Zechariah also had words of encouragement for the people in general, very similar to what Haggai had said to them earlier. We find these words in Zechariah 8:9-13: *Thus says the Lord of Hosts: “Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. For before those days there was no wage for man…neither was there any safety from the foe…But now…the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce…and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things…So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.”*

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***Bible Study Fellowship’s Perspective:*** *The following comments were taken from Lesson 29 of the BSF course on Genesis.*

**Words, Words, Words –** We are flooded by a constant stream of words every day. How do we decide which words matter? Pivotal times in our lives make what we say and how we say it even more weighty…**Jacob offered his family some well-chosen words from his deathbed.** He did not waste his words on the weather or even his regrets. He surrounded himself with the people who were important to him and he said the most important things to them. He wanted to pass on only what really mattered—his faith and God’s promises. page 1

**God’s Word and Our Words –** As you have studied God’s Word this year, God has invested truth into you. Isaiah 55:11 says, “so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” Through His Spirit, God applies the truth you have learned to your heart and life. You study the Bible not just to learn, but also to grow.

God’s investment in you has equipped you with something to say. What are you going to say and who needs to hear it? In a world of superfluous words, make your words count. **Speak the truth with boldness.** page 6