

Introduction to Zechariah

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[0:00] I've never talked through the book of Zechariah before, read it a few times, been puzzled by it many times. But one of the reasons we're going to study it is because nobody ever seems to.

If you go online and look for sermons on Zechariah, you will find that they are precious few and often very confused. So this session is basically going to be quite a big introduction to the book. We will cover some scripture today, but I kind of want to set the scene for the future sessions. There are 14 chapters in this book and every single one of them is challenging or challenging to teach and challenging to understand.

If you get the notes on today, it'll say a book for our times and times yet to come. Because this book is an apocalypse. In fact, it's often referred to as the apocalypse of the Old Testament.

Now, the book that we generally refer to as the apocalypse is Revelation. So for this to be the apocalypse of the Old Testament, it's kind of going to point in the same direction as Revelation.

[1:15] And depending on how things progress, we might at some future juncture do the book of Revelation. But this is very good homework for that book.

But before we progress, I just want to deal with what we should or how we should treat apocalyptic books. And the first thing, of course, is to define terms.

What does apocalyptic mean? And it generally is generally referred to with a blanket understanding that it's end times stuff.

It speaks of what's going to happen at the end of the world. And that's supposed to be the apocalypse. But it's actually a little bit deeper than that. In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, one of the definitions says it is something revealed.

Now, it's not, as many would have you think, something hidden. It may be something that has been hidden. But the purpose of an apocalyptic literature is to reveal stuff.

[2:19] And so what you find when you look at how the book is handled by churches generally is they do one of two things with it, both of which in my estimation are wrong.

Predominantly, they either look at the imagery that's contained in it and go, I can't cope with that. Don't know what to make of that. So we won't study it at all. And there are many churches who will not study Revelation and also will not study this book for the same reasons.

Because they look at the imagery and they say, I don't know what to do with that. I don't know how to interpret that. I don't even know how. I don't even know whether what I'm being told is right.

So we don't study it. Or sometimes they'll say, well, it leads to confrontation and conjecture and therefore we'll leave it alone. Or it leads to division.

I don't believe that to be true when it's studied properly. The other thing they do with it is because of all this imagery that's contained in it, they think that they can just interpret it whatever way they want to.

[3:25] And so you get from different teachers supposedly of the same body, the body of Christ, you get lots of different interpretations which results in confusion.

And we do not serve a God of confusion. So I don't think either of these is the right way to approach the book. I think there has to be a way, as it's put in 2 Timothy 2 verse 15, there has to be a way to rightly divide the word of truth.

And therefore, it must be possible to understand apocalyptic literature. The question is, how do you go about that? And apocalyptic literature, yes, Revelation is the apocalypse.

And interestingly, Revelation is one book where God promises a blessing to those who study it. So the idea of not studying it because it's awkward is a bit silly because you're cheating yourself of a blessing.

But there are parts of the book of Daniel, a lot of the book of Daniel, that you could say are apocalyptic in their nature. There are sections of Isaiah and Jeremiah that are also apocalyptic. [4:36] And certainly we should treat Zechariah as apocalyptic. And the secret of how to interpret it, and it's the principle we'll be following right through the book, is to allow the Bible to be the interpreter of the text.

And sometimes that's really easy because, helpfully, you read something and you kind of go, wow, that's weird. And then an angel shows up and interprets it for you there and then in the same book. And we'll certainly see some of that next week. But also, sometimes you look at something and you think, well, I don't understand that imagery. And there isn't a clue in the text of this book.

So how does the rest of Scripture treat that imagery? And by seeing how the Bible treats it as a whole, you can then draw conclusions and understand what is meant by this rather esoteric or arcane imagery that we're presented with.

Now, I want to deal with to whom was this book written, because that is an interesting thing to embrace.

[5:48] There are many so-called scholars, textual critics, who express the view that Zechariah wasn't even entirely written by the man whose name is on the book.

I believe they're wrong. And I believe we'll all conclude that they're wrong by the time we get to the end of it. This is the same group of scholars that claim there were two different authors for the book of Isaiah.

Now, all of those textual critics clearly haven't read John chapter 12, verses 38 to 41, where both halves of Isaiah are referred to as if it comes from the same author.

So I'll leave you to check that one out for yourselves. But what Satan is up to behind the scenes when it comes to understanding Scripture is to get really seemingly clever, well-qualified scholarly people to give you an interpretation of the Scriptures, God's Word, upon which we depend, to give you an interpretation that undermines it.

And so there is an action, a satanic action all the time to undermine God's Word and to make you have doubt. Oh, well, if that bit wasn't from Zechariah and it says it's from Zechariah, well, how can I trust any of it?

[7:10] And if I can't trust Zechariah, what can I trust? And so there is this constant undermining of God's Word, which I'm prepared to always stand on the premise that it is infallible and that it doesn't tell lies.

And actually, it isn't even that difficult to understand once you get to grips with it. But God, you may remember that after the crucifixion and the resurrection, Jesus, it says, and I can't remember which gospel it's at the end of, I think it might be Luke, where it says, and he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And so what this does say is that in order to understand the Scriptures, you need God to open your mind. And that sounds like it's, oh, well, how on earth do I achieve that?

Actually, you achieve that only by being enthusiastic to learn it. God wants to withhold this from no one, but he will withhold it from those who disparage it and for those who don't turn to him.

So his intended audience then, as we will quickly conclude, was the Jewish people of the day. And the Jewish people of the day had just been released from captivity in Babylon.

[8:23] I say just about somewhere between 15 and 20 years prior. But there was something going on during this period of time that made it necessary for God to speak to the Jewish people.

And so that's the primary audience. But when we get to chapter 3, verses 1 to 10, we realize it was also given to and instruction for Joshua the high priest.

Now, Joshua the high priest, many of you will already know that the name Joshua was an Old Testament version, for want of a better way of putting it, of Yeshua.

So in typology and symbolism, he was representing Christ. And this was therefore aimed at someone who was representing Christ in his day.

More of that when we get to chapter 3. It was also intended for a man called Zerubbabel. In fact, I think it's supposed to be pronounced Zerubbabel because I think the B's are supposed to be V's.

[9:24] But anyway, he was the governor at the time. And it was to encourage him to continue rebuilding the temple. Because building of the temple at the time, Zechariah prophesied, building of the temple had been abandoned.

They'd been in captivity. They'd come out of captivity and had started to rebuild the temple. And it had all come to a grinding halt for a number of years.

And this was encouragement to get on with it. But as we go through, not this week, but future weeks, what you'll also realize is that this book was written to future empires that would oppress the Jews.

I won't say any more about that, except you'll see that it's prophetic. And therefore, it was telling the Jews that empires would come and would try to oppress them.

And finally, we are the intended audience for this book because the book helps us to understand the times in which we live.

[10:26] Some of the things prophesied relate to what we're in today and what we will be in in years to come. And so it prepares us to be suitable witnesses for Christ as we go forward, like the sons of Issachar, who were deemed to be a people who understood their times.

And Zechariah helps us to understand the times we're in and the times that we will be in in the very near future. Now, the Bible doesn't provide an exact birth date for Zechariah.

His prophetic ministry began. It says, in fact, if you open to the book, you'll see verse one says Zechariah right near the end of the Old Testament.

If you get to Malachi, go back one. And in Zechariah one and verse one, it says in the eighth month of the second year of Darius or Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Edo, saying, and we'll stop there.

So this, the second year of Darius is said to have been 520 BC. Some people argue over it. It might have been 519, 518, something like that.

[11:41] But the maths are easy if we use 520. And so the likelihood is that Zechariah, who many scholars think was probably in his late teens at the time that he began to prophesy.

So he was probably born a couple of decades before that. And so you're looking at the late 6th century BC when he was born. And his ministry intersected with that of Haggai.

Haggai. Scholars believe there was an overlap of about one or two months. And in fact, you don't need to be all that clever to work that out. Because if you turn to the book of Haggai, what you will read in chapter 1 is, So the Bible itself says there were about two months between these two fellows.

Haggai came first, then Zechariah. There's an interesting word play in the names. He was the son of Berechiah, the son of, or who was also the son of, Edo.

Now, Zechariah was a prophet and a priest. And the fact that he was the grandson of Edo, the priest and prophet, places him as being of both priestly and prophetic descent.

[13:13] But the name Zechariah means God remembers. The name Berechiah means, let me get this right.

Yeah, the name Berechiah, it means blessed by God. And Edo means timely. And so if you combine those names and come from Edo up through his son to his grandson, you get in God's time, God will bless those he remembers.

Now, I just want to point out something else before we move on. And that is where it says the Lord, you'll notice in your English version, it's probably capitalized.

So it means it's the name Yahweh. And Yahweh is not the way it should be pronounced. But actually, nobody knows how it should be pronounced. And lots of people take guesses at it.

Some people say Jehovah. Some people, I think it was Jacob Prash who said, and he admitted it was a guess. It could be Yahuwah. Because we don't know which vowels were used.

[14:24] And the name of God was considered to be ineffable. You didn't say it. So nobody knows how to say it. So instead, they put the Lord.

Now, I'm going to replace that with Yahweh, just so that we understand that this isn't a formal title of God. It is very much an intimate first name, a name that God would use.

Please, Lord, this is not blasphemous. A name that God might use with his mates. You know, what's your name? Yahweh. It's something that is more intimate than formal. Elohim is more formal. It's a general description of God. Yahweh is being on first names with God. And so it's where God actually craves intimacy with people that it's often used.

And the strange thing about this is that in response to this desire for intimacy, what the Jews did was didn't say the name. So they kind of shunned.

[15:26] Shunned. And it was out of respect that they did it. But it's God's name. We mustn't say God's name. And God wanted us to understand that he was trying to be personal with his people at this, at the use of his name.

So the name Zechariah, and this applies to many, many names in the scripture. If you take Zechariah as we write it, it's Zechah plus Ayah.

Now the Ayah means God. So Zechah means to remember. And Zechariah, God remembers. And lots and lots of names in the Bible end in Yah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nehemiah. They all contain this reference to God.

What I want us to do is to understand whenever we say, whenever we see these names, these are men of God and that God put his name with them.

[16:33] But also when it speaks of the Lord of hosts, it's Yahweh of hosts. And I think it's an important distinction for us to understand, because suddenly when you realize God is trying to be friendly and accommodating on first name terms, it draws you to him.

It doesn't just draw you to him intellectually, but it draws you to him emotionally. And I think you get more from it by doing that. Could I have the table up, please?

Now, leading up to the writing of this book, this book didn't start with Zechariah, at least in the great prophetic scheme of things, it didn't.

It actually started with Jeremiah a long time before. It was about somewhere between 85 and 100 years earlier that Jeremiah prophesied.

And if you turn to Jeremiah chapter 25, and you can also find it in Jeremiah 29, but we'll use Jeremiah 25. Now, one of the things I want us to get from all of this is excited about the interconnected nature of Scripture, because people read things sometimes from the Bible as if it's in isolation, when in fact the Bible expresses something that is interconnected across centuries and nations.

[18:00] These notes will be posted online, by the way, so if you, by all means, take photos of that, but you'll get them anyway. Jeremiah 25. I'm now trying to remember the verse because I didn't put it in this part of my notes.

Hold on. Verse 12. So in verse 12, the prophet Jeremiah says Babylon will be judged. He says, Then it will be when 70 years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation declares the Lord for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

So if you actually go back to verse 11, this whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon 70 years.

So it was Jeremiah that had said that they would be captive for 70 years, and it was also Jeremiah that said he would put an end to that captivity after 70 years.

Turn to the book of Daniel briefly, and chapter 9. And if you read at the beginning of chapter 9, In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolation of Jerusalem, namely 70 years.

[19:34] So Daniel at this point is about 68 and a half years into this period of 70 years. And so he's saying, my goodness, I've just read Jeremiah, and the time's almost up.

So I want to know, when's it going to end, Lord? But notice what he does. He doesn't just say, this is probably what I would do. I'd probably say, yeah, when's it going to end, Lord? But he doesn't just do that.

Verse 3. So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek him by prayer and supplications with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant and loving kindness for those who love him and keep his commandments.

And he goes on with a prayer of repentance. His prayer is, according to Jeremiah, we're coming to the end of this, and we need to repent in sackcloth and ashes.

So this is all linked because in the book of Isaiah, chapter 45, turn there, and this was about 50 years prior, book of Isaiah, chapter 45.

[20:43] And at this time, they are in Babylon. And I've done my usual and forgotten to write the verse down. Verse 45, chapter 45.

Somewhere in this chapter, in chapter 45, is a reference to Cyrus. Oh, right in the first verse. That's why I overlooked it. I thought it was further on. Thus says the Lord to Cyrus.

Now, why is that weird? Why is it weird that Lord would talk to a Gentile king called Cyrus? I'll tell you why it's weird. He hadn't yet been born. This was 150 years before he was born and about 50 years before Jeremiah's prophecy.

But what does he say? Thus says the Lord to Cyrus, his anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings, to open doors before him so that the gates will not be shut.

And we're not studying this today, but he then wrote a decree. And he wrote a decree. This is Cyrus when he was born and when he was made king.

[21 : 53] And when he took over Babylon, he fulfilled this prophecy, which was that he would assist Israel and make Israel free. And in fact, there is a kind of, I don't know whether it's mythical or not, but apparently history records that when he was shown his name in Scripture as to what he would do, it caused him to turn to the Lord.

Whether that's true, I'm not sure. But the point is this interconnected nature of Scripture started with the prophecy of Isaiah 50 years later with another prophecy from Jeremiah was confirmed by Daniel.

And then we enter this period. So if you turn with me now to 2 Chronicles 36, the very last verse, which is interesting because the last verse, the last verse of 2 Chronicles is very much the same as the first verse of the book of Ezra.

So thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord, the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Whoever there is among you, all of his people, may the Lord, his God be with him and let him go up. So King Cyrus, just as prophesied by Isaiah, got born 150 years later.

[23 : 17] To be honest, I don't know if he was born or took the throne 150 years later because I've lost track of the maths. But he then fulfilled the prophecy by facilitating that the Jews could be released from Babylon and go and rebuild the temple.

Why have we been through all that? Well, because having been released, and it's really interesting, there's a completely separate study, but when the Jews were released, it was about 50,000 of them that went back to Israel.

The majority didn't bother because they were actually living quite well in Babylon, thank you very much. So they stayed behind. And it leads me to wonder, during the time of Esther, you know, the book of Esther is a book where on the surface of Scripture, the name of God is not mentioned.

Now I can tell you the name of God is mentioned, but it's quite hidden. So on the surface, when you read it, the name of God isn't mentioned. Also, prayer is not talked about.

Fasting is, but prayer isn't talked about. And there are peculiarities. And it does make you wonder if those who stayed behind lost a blessing because they stayed behind.

[24 : 34] But that's a different study, and we won't give time to that today. There were about 50,000 who went to Israel. And initially, if you turn back to the book of Ezra, not back to the book of Ezra, but turn to the book of Ezra.

Oh, Ray, come on. Why can't I find Ezra? Yes, I know, but I'm just having a mental block. Sorry.

It's immediately after 2 Chronicles, as Denise says. This audience makes me nervous. So, chapter 1, verse 1. Now, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea.

Now, if we were studying Ezra, we would then go on and talk about how the construction of the temple began and how it progressed. But if I do that, we won't get even into the book of Zechariah today.

So, there was a decree ordained by God that you can follow through scripture up to this date, and the building of the temple began. So, that was about 537 to 538 BC.

[26 : 02] And then, in 538 BC, if we turn to Ezra, or stay in Ezra, and go to Ezra chapter 4, and if your Bible has titles on the chapters, it might say something like, Adversaries, Hinder the Work.

Now, when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the Lord God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel, and the heads of the fathers' households, and said to them, Let us build with you.

They wanted in on the act. The response of Israel, verse 3, But Zerubbabel and Yeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' households of Israel said to them, You have nothing in common with us in building a house to our God, but we ourselves will together build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us.

So the Jews made a stand. You're not going to build with us. We're going to do this. And verse 4, Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and frightened them from building. So building stops, ironically, at the point where they've decided, We don't want your help. We're going to do it. And then they get scared because they get oppressed and they get persecuted.

[27 : 23] So building actually stops. And it remained stopped for, I think, about 15 years. Some people say 20, but it was a long time. And if we were to read on in Ezra, we would find that they wrote letters to King Artaxerxes trying to make out this sort of political propaganda, trying to make out that this effort to rebuild the temple would result in bad things for King Artaxerxes.

And so in verse 11, you see, To King Artaxerxes, your servants, the men in the region beyond the river, and now let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem.

They are rebuilding the rebellious and evil city and are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations. Now let it be known to the king that if that city is rebuilt and the walls are finished, they will not pay tribute, customs or tolls.

So there is this, again, we don't need to go into it in detail, you just need to understand that there was a political pushback against the rebuilding. Could I have a picture of the cylinder up there?

Now, the Cyrus Decree was written on an ancient cylinder and this now sits in the British Museum. So the Cyrus Decree, if people cast aspersions on the Bible and say, look, you know, we don't know it's really true and so on, the Cyrus Decree is there for anyone who reads these hieroglyphics to be able to read and understand.

[28 : 57] So this doesn't only link throughout the Bible, but it links with history impeccably. So they started building the temple in response to that decree and then the people were oppressed and they stopped building.

And then after a while, two prophets almost at the same time, Haggai and Zechariah both prophesied we need to get on and build the temple. So turn to the book of Haggai first and then we'll finally get into Zechariah if I've got any time left.

Oh, I can get away with murder today then. The book of Haggai right at the start. So we've looked at the date already. In the second year of Darius the king on the first day of the sixth month the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel governor of Judah and to Joshua who was the high priest the son of Jehozadak the high priest.

Saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts the people says the time has come even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt. Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying, Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses while this house lies desolate?

Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts consider your ways. You have sown much but harvest little. You eat and there is not enough to be satisfied. You drink but there is not enough to become drunk.

[30 : 29] You put on clothing but no one is warm enough and he who earns a wage to put into a purse with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts consider your ways.

Go up to the mountains bring wood and rebuild the temple that I may be pleased with it and be glorified says the Lord. Now I'm going to leave that particular passage there.

But Haggai a couple of months before Zechariah had said God says rebuild the temple. Stop being apathetic. Go up to the mountains cut timber and start to rebuild.

And then Zechariah comes on the scene. Zechariah's work goes much further than Haggai's in that Haggai speaks only to the rebuilding of the temple not much else.

Zechariah speaks of rebuilding the temple but he also prophesies into the future about future empires and about both the first and second comings of Jesus.

[31 : 30] He is the one that identifies that the Lord would come into the city on the donkey's colt which resulted in a tradition that is still held today with our Palm Sundays although there are lots of questions about the property of Palm Sunday but that it came from this.

He was the one who said that. He was also the one who the one who in many ways forecast the descent of the Holy Spirit on people not by might nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord. He also he spoke of the second coming and spoke of a time when the Jews would be totally saved and all Israel will be saved.

Well that's written in Romans but Zechariah says and they will look upon me whom they have pierced and they will mourn as for an only son. So he was prophesying that the Jews would return to Christ and interestingly that happens twice in this book.

It happens immediately there is an outcry to the Jews after the Babylonian captivity but then he prophesies of another one right at the end of time when the Jews will turn back to the Lord.

[32 : 45] So phenomenal book starts with an opening exaltation which is what we're going to deal with today. There are then eight prophetic dream visions from chapters one to seven sorry chapters six to eight and he had eight visions in a single night.

Must have been not much sleep that night. Then in chapter seven and eight there are a couple of historical messages and then the latter part of the book the largest part of the book from chapters nine to fourteen are prophetic oracles that dealt with the future from where he was standing.

So as we look at that we'll see some things that have been fulfilled and some things that are yet to be fulfilled. Clear so far? The book is quoted 71 times in the New Testament.

31 of those quotations are in Revelation and 27 of them are in the Gospels. He's also the prophet who drew attention to the 30 pieces of silver that would be paid for Jesus' betrayal.

Right. So good so far. Right. So chapter one verses two to six is what we're going to cover now.

[34 : 06] It's not complicated. I'll try to do it justice and if I don't finish it I'll do it next time. I've got no idea what the time is. Five minutes. Oh I might not finish it in five minutes but we'll see.

Verse two the Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them thus says the Lord of hosts return to me declares the Lord of hosts that I may return to you says the Lord of hosts Yahweh of hosts do not be like your fathers to whom the former prophets proclaimed saying thus says Yahweh of hosts return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds but they did not listen or give heed to me declares the Lord your prophets do they live forever but did not my words and my statutes which I commanded my servants the prophets overtake your fathers then they repented and said as the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds so he has dealt with us so the heart cry of God here is to a people you've got to remember that God had put the Jews into captivity for 70 years because they would not respond to him and in the end and you know we should take from this that

God does get cheesed off if you push him far enough all right he is likely to judge you if you if you tempt him to but when he makes things obvious they had seen all the miracles he done they had all the history from the times in the wilderness and they had all their forefathers had done so much and they had not followed the Lord and in the end he abandoned them to captivity so this is after 70 years in fact 70 years and a bit and God is saying return to me don't do what your fathers did because they they were just deaf to my word what he was!

don't be deaf to my word but notice the way it's put return to me declares the Lord Yahweh of hosts so you can sense the intimacy in this I'm your God I'm your Yahweh return to me don't do what your fathers did there are a couple of examples of the Jews doing this the first is back when Caleb and Joshua were the only ones allowed into the land the rest of Israel was judged because they wouldn't respond to what God said and they set out needing to submit to God for 11 days and they finished up with a 40 year sentence in the wilderness and this is a similar occasion when they were cast into captivity because of their disobedience and that generation is now all dead and so the Lord is speaking to the new generation saying don't do what your forefathers did come back to me but the way it's phrased is this return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds so that I may return to you so the Lord hasn't returned to them yet he's demanding of them a repentant heart isn't this what he does to us in salvation right he doesn't force himself on you but he says turn to me and I'll come to you and they haven't yet so he's saying to them come on turn to me and then I'll come back to you and he continues to use the analogy of their forefathers your fathers where are they and the prophets do they live forever these prophets who spoke back then are now dead but my word is not dead my word continues forever!

[37 : 57] so these books Haggai are saying to the people come back to me and we haven't got to the part in Zechariah yet where he talks about rebuilding the temple but he does say the people need to come back to me and he kind of gives them an ultimatum and I think we should finish with

this otherwise I'm going to be going on all morning as the Lord of host purpose to do in us in accordance with our ways and our deeds so he has dealt with us it's a kind of an ultimatum you need to come back to me so I can come back to you but if you don't then I won't is the undercurrent there now this is redolent of what was said by the Lord in Deuteronomy 30 and verse 19 I put before you this day life and death choose life that you might live but the choice was theirs again I don't know how my Calvinist brothers and sisters deal with passages like this because they would say you don't have free will but God puts a choice before us before them and says choose but

I'm ready to come to you the minute you make the right choice where are your fathers now where are they all gone and these people realizing that their fathers led them into the captivity and now all dead they then do turn back to the Lord but it was very much this is your choice moment don't squander the opportunity and I think we should finish there and next time we will start to look at the eight visions and looking at it as I have done I don't think we're going to do much more than one vision a week but we'll see heavenly father I just thank you that you put this word there for us to read and to learn from and I pray that you will loosen up our minds that we can embrace some of the difficult imagery that it contains and get from it exactly what you wanted your people to get from it when you wrote it through Zechariah the prophet us through studying it
Amen