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(Hg 2:17) though this was the prophet’s repeated command (Hg 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18). The outward transformation of the temple did not match an inward change in their hearts. This is why Zechariah’s preaching, which overlaps Haggai’s by a month, issues such a stern warning in Zechariah 1:4.

It may appear as though Zechariah’s ministry was a complete success. He preached. The temple was rebuilt. Everyone was thankful. And they all lived happily ever after. But this is not a correct reading of the book. Hypocritical fasting (Zec 7:1–3), idolatry (Zec 10:2; 13:2), and a lack of godly leadership (Zec 11:3–17) indicate that there would be another exile. The prophet describes this in Zechariah 14:1–2. However, Yahweh’s final word to his faithful remnant is grace and mercy (Zec 14:20–21).

Judgment is promised in Zechariah because the book’s theology is based, in large part, upon the Sinaitic covenant. The rhetorical questions in Zechariah 1:5–6 refer to Deuteronomy 28:15, 45 and announce that covenant curses overtook the community’s ancestors. This reference to texts in Deuteronomy indicates the validity of Deuteronomy 5:3; “Not only with your ancestors did Yahweh cut this covenant; but also with us, we, these ones here today, all of us alive.” The Sinaitic covenant is therefore in play with each successive generation of Israelites. And this includes the post-exilic generation living in Persian Yehud. Jeremiah’s new covenant (Jer 31:31) has not yet been fulfilled. The Babylonian destruction of the temple was not the end of the covenant Yahweh made with his people at Sinai. It was rather the covenant’s execution. The post-exilic community of Yehud was faced with a similar situation that confronted their ancestors. Shall they worship and serve the God who lovingly rescued them from their enemies or blend in with the surrounding nations and bow down to their gods?

Wenzel is largely successful in pointing out that Zechariah’s audience is different from their forefathers only in that they listened to prophetic preaching and resumed rebuilding the temple. The more fundamental change of their hearts did not happen. As a result, the prophet promises that divine wrath will fall again, only to be followed with complete restoration (Zec 13:7–14:21).

Sometimes Wenzel makes connections in Zechariah with earlier texts that appear dubious and occasionally his interpretive comments are forced. But these minor weaknesses do not detract from his trenchant defense for the unity of Zechariah as well as his numerous interpretive insights. Those who preach and teach from this, the longest of the Minor Prophets, will find Wenzel’s study to be invaluable.

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Paul Redditt has spent most of his academic career publishing monographs and articles on the book of Zechariah and so his commentary on the book’s last six chapters exhibits seasoned reflections and numerous insights on a very difficult text. Following the goal of the
International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament, Redditt brings diachronic and synchronic methods into closer discussion with each other. On each section of Zechariah 9–14 he offers a translation with notes, a synchronic and diachronic analysis, and then concludes by integrating both methods in what he calls a “concluding integrative summary.”

Redditt believes that Zechariah 9 was composed during the hopeful days of late sixth-century Persian Yehud while Zerubbabel or his Davidic successor lived in Jerusalem. Zechariah 10 possibly arose in the early part of the fifth-century while people still believed that Israel and Judah would reunite. After these hopes failed the darker and more strident chapters 11–14 were added, perhaps sometime during the latter part of the fifth century. Unfortunately, the author does not embrace the idea that the hope for a new king emerges after 9:9–10 and so he does not interpret 10:2, 4; 11:13; 12:10; 13:7 as messianic promises. The Davidic hope died and in its place the author/redactor promotes a divine theocracy (14:9, 17). Redditt does not believe that Zechariah 9–14 exhibits apocalyptic eschatology (as this term is generally understood) and his position on the Book of the Twelve is that it not “…a collection of the sayings of twelve individual prophets, but is a composite work that over time shows more and more internal dialogue among collections” (21).

Redditt’s keen synchronic analysis is on display when he notes that in Zechariah 9 Yahweh is the chief actor as well as the main speaker. Zechariah 9:1–6a and 14–17 describe what Yahweh will do in the future. In these parts Yahweh speaks in the third person. In the middle section, 9:6b–13, Yahweh speaks in the first person. Redditt then suggests a chiastic structure that accents the main theme of the chapter—God’s re-establishment of his kingdom.

9:1–6a  Yahweh’s restoration of his kingdom
9:6b–8  Yahweh speaks of his redemptive plan
9:9–10  Yahweh presents Zion’s King
9:11–13  Yahweh speaks of his redemptive plan
9:14–17  Yahweh guards his restored kingdom

Redditt pays close attention to earlier texts, believing that Zechariah 9–14 alludes to and echoes previous passages more than any other section of the OT. For instance, he points out that 9:11–17 presents an assorted array of earlier themes like imprisonment, warfare, theophany, and miraculous fertility. The movement is from ultimate despair in a waterless pit (9:11) to absolute joy in God’s provision of grain and new wine (9:17). This not only depicts Israel’s sojourn in Egypt and subsequent deliverance but also Judah’s exile in Babylon and the people’s rescue by “Yhwh of armies” (9:15). Another link to the exodus comes in 9:14 which envisions God’s march from Sinai to Zion. Since he led his people once, he will lead them again.

Throughout his commentary Redditt displays an astute awareness of how units are linked together. For example, in his comments on 11:4 he observes that the falling trees in 11:1–3 prepare readers for the fallen hope that the north and south will be reunited as envisioned in, e.g., 9:12 and 10:6–12. Moreover, the text’s mockery of the shepherds (11:1–3) paves the way for the prophetic sign-act involving shepherds (11:4–16) and judgment against the worthless shepherd (11:17).
One more example of Redditt’s synchronic analysis will suffice. He notes that 12:1–13:9 goes full circle. Promises for divine protection begin the unit (12:1–9) and are followed by thorough-going repentance and purification (12:10–13:9a). But these chapters end with a description of reconciliation between God and his people (13:9b). The journey is racked with pain and suffering but ends with gladness and joy. Chapter 14 covers much of the same territory though it concludes with a loftier destination.

Who are the uncompromising shepherds in chapter 11? Redditt thinks that they represent Yehud’s religious leaders—possibly Levites and priests—in the fifth century who took orders from governors under Persian influence and then enacted their policies. The author maintains that the text “may well have been condemning the priests at the temple for their collusion with the actual overlords, the Persians. Such a condemnation might well need to be made quietly, discreetly, even ambiguously” (84). And who are the merchants in Zechariah 11? Redditt believes that they are the Persian officials who were overseers of the shepherds, i.e., the Judean temple personnel.

In bringing together a lifetime of work in Zechariah 9–14, Redditt’s commentary sheds significant light upon a very obscure section of the Bible. His connections to the New Testament are few and far between and his fascination with diachronic issues often obscures the organic unity of these chapters. That said, Redditt’s commentary is a welcome contribution, not only in Zechariah studies, but also for those who continue to research and write on the Book of the Twelve.

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