

## Overview of Zechariah

**Author & Date:** A prophet by the name of Zechariah is the author of the book bearing his name. Zechariah was a Levite born in Babylon during the exile. He served as a priest after his grandfather, implying that his father died at a young age (see Ezra 5:1, 6:4, Neh. 12:4 and 16). Interestingly, Zechariah's grandfather, Iddo, is also identified as a prophet (Zech. 1:1, 7). The book seems to have been written during two periods in the prophet's life. The first 8 verses are early in his ministry and were written between 520 and 518 BC and he started about two months after Haggai's prophecy (Hag 1:1 and Zech 1:1), though Haggai was probably significantly older. Authorship and date for Chapters 9-14 are greatly debated. Tradition does hold to the authorship of Zechariah and no compelling argument exists to change that view. Assuming the hope of the messiah's coming was written late in Zechariah's life and well after the work of building the temple was complete, a date of around 470 B.C. seems reasonable for the latter part of this book.

**Purpose:** The message of the book is summarized in the name of the prophet, Zechariah, "The Lord Remembers". As such, the book points out that the Lord remembers His people. Chapters 1-8 deal with visions concerning the rebuilding of the temple while chapters 9-14 deal primarily with the coming Messianic Kingdom. In showing that the Lord remembers Israel, the book provides a future hope for a people returning from exile in Babylon. The book has also been described as, "The most messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and escatological of all the writings of the Old Testament."<sup>1</sup> The book of Zechariah is cited or alluded to some forty-one times in the NT primarily related to the eschatological nature of the book.<sup>2</sup> Zechariah points to the two comings of Christ, a truth more fully revealed in the New Testament.

### Outline for Zechariah<sup>3</sup>

- I. A Call to Repentance (1:1-6)
- II. Eight Visions (chapter 1:7 – 6:15)
- III. Four Messages (ch. 7 -8)
- IV. Two Burdens of Zechariah (ch. 9-14)
  - A. Messiah's Rejection at is First Coming (ch. 9-11)
  - B. Messiah's Acceptance at His Second Coming (ch. 12-14)

### Key/Interesting Passages:

3:8b. For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the Branch. (cf. 6:12)

4:6 "...not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of hosts."

9:9 "...behold your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey"

10:6 I will strengthen the house of Judah... house of Joseph...I will bring them back because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; For I *am* the Lord their God, and I will hear them."

11:12-13 "...so they weight out for my wages 30 pieces of silver...throw it to the potter..."

**12:10** "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. ..."

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<sup>1</sup> Lindsey, F. Duane, Zechariah, Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT, ed. Walvoord and Zuch, SP Publications, 1985, p. 1545.

<sup>2</sup> ISBE, Volume 4 Q-Z, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, *Zechariah, Book of*, 1988, p. 1186

<sup>3</sup> Outline adapted from MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, Thomas Nelson, 2006, p. 1308. and Lindsey p. 1546-7.

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### Food for Thought

1. In chapters 1-6, Zechariah has a series of 8 visions. The interpretation of these visions can be difficult. Identify each of the visions as listed below and its primary meaning. Note any additional observations or parallels that come to mind.

Vision	Reference	Interpretation/Message
1. Red horseman among the Myrtle trees	1:7-17	
2.	1:18-21	
3.	2:1-13	
4.	3:1-10	
5.	4:1-14	
6.	5:1-4	
7.	5:5-11	
8.	6:1-8	

- 1.a. Who is the angel of the Lord from the first vision? What is interesting about the interplay between the angel of the Lord and the Lord of Hosts in verse 12 and what insight does this give us to the nature of God?
- 1.b. In the forth vision, who would you identify Joshua to be? Why would you not conclude that he is the messiah?
- 1.c. In 4:14 we learn that the two olive branches are “the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.” What two anointings are typical throughout the Old Testament? Who then would these represent in the Old Testament system?
- 1.d. Is there any parallel between the colors of the four chariots in Zech 6 and the four horsemen of Rev. 12? What differences are there?

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2. What problem does God point out with Israel's fastings in chapter 7 (c.f. Isa 58)? How might we fall into a similar snare? Consider the fasting festivals of 8:18-23 (from the 4<sup>th</sup> message). Accepting that this refers to the millennium, what does this tell us about the future application of the feasts?
3. The second message from the Lord to Zechariah in answer to his question of 7:3 is in 7:8-14. How does this response answer the original question?
4. In 6:11-15, Zechariah is instructed to give the high priest an ornate crown, one that is normally given to the king, not the priest. What is this act supposed to symbolize concerning "the Branch?"
5. Describe in your own words the hope portrayed in 8:1-17 and 18-23? What does this message convey to the people of Judah who are returning to Jerusalem? What time does the phrase, "in those days" (v. 23) point to?
6. The fulfillment of the prophecies against the nations in chapter 9 can be seen in the conquests of Alexander the Great:  
  
*Destruction of Tyre (v. 2-4) Conquered by Alexander the Great who used the rubble of the mainland portion of the city to reach the island portion (c.f. Ezekiel 26:4-6).*  
  
*Future of the Philistines (vv. 5-7) Alexander also conquered the Philistines. This prophecy proclaims that this long time enemy of Israel would be amalgamated into Israel just as the Jebusites, original inhabitants of Jerusalem, were.*  
  
*Israel (8a): Although under the authority of Alexander, Israel itself did not suffer as other nations. Josephus describes the miraculous preservation of Jerusalem during Alexander's conquests in Antiq XI, 317-39). The story includes treaties by the Sanbaletes and a vision/dream of Alexander that led him to not destroy Jerusalem.*
6. In Zechariah 9:9-10 we have both the first and second comings of Christ spoken of together as in Isa 61:1-3 (c.f. Luke 4:16-21). What portion of this prophecy applies to each coming of Christ and how would you support the idea that these two verses provide information for both comings? Chapter 9 concludes with descriptions that are best seen as part of the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the Millennial kingdom.

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7. The conclusion of chapter 9 includes descriptions that are best seen as part of the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of the Millennial kingdom. This same theme carries over into chapter 10. What parts of the description are particularly striking? How does this help you to know God better?
  
8. Matthew 27:3-10 clarifies for us the meaning of Zechariah 11:12-13. How does the fulfillment of this prophecy help us interpret the rest of the Zechariah 11? How does the specific nature of the prophecy help the believer today?
  
9. In addition to the prophecy of the potter's field, how do Zechariah's actions in 11:7-12 foreshadow the first coming of Christ? (Note, the identification of the three shepherds in 11:8 has been subjected to various interpretations. Kenneth Barker gives 4 views in *Zechariah*, Expositor's Bible Commentary vol. 7 p. 676: (1) three leaders of Jewish factions during the 70 A.D. siege on Jerusalem by Titus, (2) three Selucid kings, (3) three high priests, and (4) three classes of leaders: prophet, priest, and king/governor/procurator. In short, we really don't know the fulfillment of this prophecy.)
  
10. Chapters 12-14 seem to be talking about the same period of time, namely the second coming of Jesus Christ and His reception as the Messiah. Barker quotes another commentator, Dods, pointing out that throughout this section both the covenant name of the Lord (YHWH) and the role of the nations of the earth are prominent as they will be at the end times.
  - a. When taken in context, what is the normal interpretation of "they will look on Me whom they have pierced"? How does the fulfillment described in John 19:37 guide us in interpreting this prophecy? (c.f. Rev 1:7)
  
  - b. The plain of Megiddo (v. 11 is likely the same as "Armageddon" in Rev. 16:16. How would you compare the description here with the events of Rev. 16?
  
  - c. How would you understand the wounds described in 13:6. Three interpretations are:
    - i. Wounds the false prophet inflicts upon himself in idol worship and then lies about the source
  
    - ii. Wounds the false prophet receives from friends and family who care for him and prevented him from making false prophecies
  
    - iii. A shift in context to speak of the wounds received by the messiah

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- d. Zech. 13:7 is quoted in Matt 26:31 and Mark 14:27 referring to the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples.
  
- e. What impact should the promise of 14:4-5 give to the believer today?

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Vision	Reference	Interpretation/Message
1. Red horseman among the Myrtle trees	1:7-17	Angel of the Lord – Messiah, Other horses/horsemen=messengers, myrtle’s – humbled Israel The Lord is going to bring judgment on the nations who scattered Israel even though they feel safe and secure.
2. The four horns and four craftsmen	1:18-21	The Lord is going to bring judgment on the nations who scattered Israel even though they feel safe and secure (last part from the previous vision) (Possible nations: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media/Persia or the four great powers of Daniel: Babylon, Medes/Persians, Greece, Rome)
3. . Man with Measuring Line	2:1-13	Rebuilding of Jerusalem and God’s protection
4.The cleansing and crowning of Joshua the High Priest	3:1-10	Israel’s future cleansing from sin and reinstatement as a priestly nation
5.The Golden Lampstand and the two olive trees	4:1-14	Israel as the light to the nations under Messiah, the King-Priest
6. The flying Scroll	5:1-4	The severity and totality of divine judgment on individual Israelites
7. The woman in the Ephah	5:5-11	The removal of national Israel’s sin of rebellion against God
8. The four chariots	6:1-8	Divine judgment on Gentile nations (see also similar horse colors in Rev. 6 – the antichrist imitating God’s judgment)

Zechariah refers to Christ as God's Servant (3:8); the Branch (3:8; 6:12); the Stone (3:9); the King (9:9); the Shepherd (13:7). His prophecies include that He (the Messiah) will come on a colt (9:9) and in battle power (14:3-4); He will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver which are then thrown in the temple for the potter (11:12-13); that there will be a fountain for cleansing (13:1); that His hands and feet would be pierced (12:10) and that His feet would split the Mount of Olives in two, making a great valley (14:4). He tells us that Jerusalem will be restored and inhabited as a city without walls (2:4), with God being a wall of fire all around her. He tells us that Israel's enemies will dissolve away in one of the most graphic depictions of total horror found in Scripture (14:12-15).<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>4</sup> Tim Binder, Outline of Habakkuk on [www.TruthSaves.org](http://www.TruthSaves.org)