

# Zechariah - Introduction & Background

## Title

The title of the book is derived from the work's principal prophetic spokesperson. The Hebrew title of the book is *Zekar-yah*, which means "God remembers" or "Yahweh has remembered." This meaning is consistent with the book's contents that focus upon God's future program for national Israel on account of His covenanted promises to the nation's forefathers. Both the LXX and the Vulgate entitle the book Zacharias.

## Authorship

Both the book itself (1:1) as well as universal Jewish and Christian tradition indicates that Zechariah was the writer of the entire work. However, some who challenge the book's unity contend that Zech 9-14 should be assigned a pre-exilic date on account of Matthew's attribution of this material to Jeremiah (11:12-13; Matt 27:9-10). In actuality, Matthew is merging material from both Jeremiah (Jer 18:2; 19:2,11; 32:6-9) and Zechariah and attributing it to the older and better-known prophet Jeremiah. Others questioning the book's unity contend that Zech 9-14 were written as late as the Hellenistic (331-167 BC) or Maccabean period (167-73 BC). At least four arguments are used to advance this position. However, most of these arguments seem answerable.

First, Zech 9-14 exhibit different linguistic and stylistic characteristics in comparison to the rest of the book. However, these differences can be explained in terms of a change in subject matter and a later composition by the same writer. Second, this latter section fails to mention the reconstruction of the temple. However, this section is not obligated to mention items associated with the struggles of the original audience since it represents futuristic prophecy.

Third, the existence of the word "Greece" (9:13) argues for a later date when the Greek empire had come into existence. However, this argument collapses upon the realization that this same word also appears in several pre-exilic and exilic prophetic writings (Is 66:19; Ezek 27:13,19; Dan 8:21; 10:20). Interestingly, Persian troops consisted largely of Greek mercenaries.

Also, this objection betrays an anti-supernatural bias against predictive prophecy since 9:13 could be predicting the future activity of Greece. Fourth, it is contended that the Book of Zechariah represents an "apocalyptic genre" that did not flourish until the second century.

However, the book's apocalyptic features do not demand a second century date since these same characteristics are also found in the exilic prophets Daniel and Ezekiel. Further arguments favoring the unity of the book include the commonality of phrases in both

sections of Zechariah (2:10 to 9:15; 8:6 to 12:4; 1:7 to 9:1; 1:17 to 12:1), a similar evangelistic fervor found throughout the entire book, and the similarity of the book's entire message to that of the post-exilic prophet Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

As far as Zechariah's biography is concerned, his name was a common one since at least 29 other OT figures bear this same name. He was the son of Berechiah (1:1). Because he was called into the ministry as a mere youth (2:4; Jer 1:6-7), he was likely born during the Babylonian Captivity and taken to the land of Israel with his grandfather Iddo (1:1,7) during the first return (Neh 12:4,16; Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Because Iddo was a priest (Neh 12:1,4,16), Zechariah, like Jeremiah (1:1) and Ezekiel (1:3), was from the tribe of Levi and occupied the roles of both prophet and priest. This priestly background would explain Zechariah's natural interest in the temple. According to tradition, Zechariah was a member of the Great Synagogue. This august body governed the Jews prior to the advent of the Sanhedrin and collected and preserved the OT canon.

**Scope**

The book's key chronological markers are delineated on the following chart:

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Scriptural Date</b>	<b>Date</b>
1:1	8 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius	10 or 11/520 B.C.
1:7	24 <sup>th</sup> day, 11 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius	2/15/519 B.C.
7:1	4 <sup>th</sup> day, 9 <sup>th</sup> month, 4 <sup>th</sup> year of Darius	12/17/518 B.C.

The first date took place two months after Haggai's first message (Hag 1:1). The second date took place two months after Haggai had completed his ministry (Haggai 2:10,20). The chronological relationship between the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah is captured on the following chart:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Scriptural Date</b>	<b>Haggai</b>	<b>Zechariah</b>
8/29/520	1 <sup>st</sup> day day, 6 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius	1 <sup>st</sup> sermon (1:1-11; Ezra 5:1)	
9/21/520		Temple building resumed (1:12-15; Ezra 5:2)	
10/17/520	21 <sup>st</sup> day, 7 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius	2 <sup>nd</sup> sermon (2:1-9)	

10–11/520	8 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius		Beginning of ministry (1:1-6)
12/18/520	24 <sup>th</sup> day, 9 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> sermon (2:10-23)	
2/15/519	24 <sup>th</sup> day, 11 <sup>th</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius		8 visions (1:7–6:8)
12/7/518	4 <sup>th</sup> day, 9th month, 4th year of Darius		Delegation from Bethel (7:1)
3/12/515: Temple dedicated (Ezra 6:15-18)			

Thus, the Book of Zechariah at least covers the two-year period of time in between October or November 520 BC and December 17, 518 BC. However, many contend that Zechariah must have written these chapters at a later time after the temple was completed (480-470 BC). The basis of this view is the linguistic and subject matter distinctions found in Zech 9-14 in comparison to the rest of the book, the Greek influence found in these chapters, and the fact that they are undated. According to this theory, a four-decade period of time exists in between Zech 8 and Zech 9. If this theory holds, then the scope of the Book of Zechariah covers the time period in between (520-470 BC). Given this time period during which he ministered, Zechariah was a contemporary of the prophet Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14), the high priest Joshua, and the governor Zerubbabel.

### **Date**

It is likely that the book was written shortly after Zechariah experienced his visions. If Zech 9-14 were written shortly after the vision recorded in Zech 7-8, then 519–518 BC is the probable date for the writing of the book. If Zech 9-14 were written four decades after the vision recorded in Zech 7-8, then 470–469 BC is the probable date for the book's final form.

### **Recipients and Place of Writing**

While some of the book could have been written for the benefit of Zerubbabel (4:6-9) and Joshua (3:1; 6:9-15), the book as a whole was composed for the benefit of the 50,000 Jews who participated in the first return under Zerubbabel (7:4-7; Ezra 5:1; 6:14). The

book's repeated references to the temple (1:16; 3:1—4:9; 6:9-15; 8:9,20-23; 14:16-21) demonstrate that Jerusalem was the likely place of the book's composition.

### **Structure**

The Book of Zechariah contains four basic sections. First, there is an introductory call to repentance (1:1-6). Second, the book records Zechariah's eight night visions that concludes with the crowning of Joshua. Each of these night visions can be enumerated by observing the repetition of an introductory verb of perception (1:8,18; 2:1; 3:1; 4:2; 5:1,5; 6:1). These visions can be chiastically organized.

- A. The riders and horses among the myrtle trees (1:7-17)
  - B. The four horns and the four craftsmen (1:18-21)
    - C. The man with the measuring line (2:1-13)
      - D. The cleansing of Joshua the high priest (Zech 3)
      - D. The lampstand and the olive tree (Zech 4)
    - C. The flying scroll (5:1-4)
  - B. The woman in the basket (5:5-11)
- A. The four chariots (6:1-8)

The heart of the structure focuses on God's restoration of His people, symbolized by the cleansing of the high priest (Zech 3) and the promise to restore the temple by His Holy Spirit (Zech 4)." The outer boundaries of the chiasm refer to God's judgment upon Israel's oppressors. Third, the book records Zechariah's inquiry to God regarding fasting (7-8). After the initial inquiry (7:1-3), God's four responses to Zechariah are discernible through the repetition of the phrase "the word of the Lord came to me" (7:4,8; 8:1,18). Fourth, the book records two burdens focusing upon the future of the nations and Israel (9-14). The beginning of each burden is discernible through the repetition of the phrase "the burden of the word of the Lord" (9:1; 12:1). While the first burden focuses upon the interruption of Israel's deliverance due to the nation's rejection of her Messiah (9-11), the second burden focuses upon the completion of Israel's final deliverance after she has accepted her Messiah (12-14). This final section is also chiastically structured.

- A. God comes to protect and bless (9-10)
  - B. The people reject God's shepherd (11:1-14)
    - C. The worthless shepherd hurts the flock (11:15-17)
    - C. The nations come to destroy Jerusalem (12:1-9)
  - B. The people accept God's shepherd (12:10—13:6)
- A. God comes to protect and bless (13:7—14:21)

### **Occasion for Writing**

Zerubbabel led the first return of the Jews from Persia back to the land in 538 BC. In 536 BC, the returnees laid the foundation for the temple. However, in 534 BC the people of the land interrupted this Jewish construction of the temple (Ezra 4). Consequently, the building

of the temple was stalled for nearly 15 years. During this time, not only did the wall surrounding Jerusalem lay in ruin (Neh 2:17) but the temple also lay in ruins as the returnees lived in paneled houses (Haggai 1:4). During this time the people suffered from a crisis of faith due to the postponement of promised prosperity (Haggai 1:6,9-11) and the lack of divine retribution upon Israel's oppressors. In fact, because Darius of Persia asserted control over not only Persia but also Mesopotamia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and the land of Israel, the ancient Near East was resting quietly under the Persian king's authority (1:11).

However, Israel's indifference over her uncompleted temple was remedied through the prophetic ministries of both Haggai (520 BC) and Zechariah (520-518 BC) who encouraged the people to finish the temple structure (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14). While Haggai exhorted the people through open rebuke, Zechariah encouraged the people by providing visions of the temple's future kingdom and messianic significance. These prophetic efforts, coupled with Darius' confirmation (519 BC) of Cyrus' original decree (538 BC) giving the Jews permission to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:3-6:12), led to the resumption of temple construction (Haggai 1:14). Consequently, the temple was completed in 516 BC (Ezra 6:13-22).

**Message**

Zechariah predicts the Messiah's restoration of the Jewish remnant as well as the Messiah's millennial reign from the Jerusalem temple as both priest and king in order to give the returnees hope in the challenging post-exilic world and to induce them toward covenant obedience in general and temple reconstruction in particular.

**Purposes**

Zechariah likely had several purposes in mind when he penned his book. First, he wrote to encourage the returnees to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14). While Haggai and Zechariah both wrote in order to accomplish this purpose, both prophets used differing approaches in order to stimulate the remnant. While Haggai focused upon rebuke regarding the nation's covenant violations, Zechariah instead focused upon encouraging them with vision of the temple's future kingdom and messianic purposes. Other different emphases between the two prophets are captured on the following chart.

<b>Haggai</b>	<b>Zechariah</b>
Exhortation	Encouragement
More concrete	More abstract
Concise	Expanded
Present concern	Future concern
Take part!	Take heart!
Older activist	Younger missionary

Second, Zechariah wanted to give the returnees a message of hope in the challenging post-exilic world by providing a description of God's glorious eschatological purposes for

his covenanted nation. Thus, his purpose was broader than mere temple reconstruction. This point is strengthened if it is acknowledged that Zech 9-14 were written several decades after the temple had been rebuilt. Third, he wrote in order to prepare the returnees for proper temple worship after the temple was rebuilt by furnishing them with information about millennial temple worship. Fourth, he wrote in order to exhort the returnees toward general covenant obedience (1:3; 7:4-14; 8:16-17).

### **Theological Themes**

Numerous theological themes recur throughout the Book of Zechariah.

First, the book features both the First and Second Advents of the coming Messiah.

Second, the book emphasizes the temple. This theme is seen not only through temple worship as the defining characteristic of covenant obedience but also through the structure's representation as the tangible manifestation of God's presence among His people.

Third, the book focuses upon Israel's eschatology through the prophesied restoration of the remnant, the eventual revival of the priesthood and Davidic line, Zion as the future place of God's dwelling (2:10,11; 8:3,23), and the millennial prominence of the city of Jerusalem.

Fourth, the book emphasizes Israel's position as God's elect nation (1:17; 2:12; 3:2).

Fifth, the book repeatedly focuses upon the necessity of covenant obedience and renewal (1:3; 7:4-14; 8:16-17).

### **Unique Characteristics**

The Book of Zechariah boasts several outstanding characteristics. First, the book features the continual presence of an interpreting angel in order to explain the book's influence (1:9,13,14,19,21; 4:1,4-5; 5:5,10; 6:4).

Second, the Book of Zechariah is the lengthiest of all the Minor Prophets.

Third, the book features numerous messianic prophecies. In fact, the book is second only to Isaiah in terms of its emphasis upon messianic prophecy.

Fourth, the book features a multiplicity of literary styles. Such styles include messages, burdens, oracles, and visions.

Fifth, the book picks up where Daniel left off by giving even more details about the history of Israel during the "times of the Gentiles."

Sixth, the book furnishes voluminous details about Israel's eschatology. These details include Christ's first coming, Israel's rejection of Christ, the tribulation, Israel's future acceptance of Christ, Christ's Second Advent, and Christ's messianic kingdom.

Seventh, in comparison to all the other Minor Prophets, Zechariah is the most "apocalyptic."

Eighth, the section featuring Zechariah's two burdens (9-14) is quoted more times in Christ's passion narratives than any other section of the prophets.

Ninth, the Book of Zechariah is one of the most alluded to OT book in John's Apocalypse. The only other two books that rival Zechariah in this regard are Daniel and Ezekiel. Tenth, the book provides a clear example of the NT concept of the imputation of righteousness (3:1-5).

Eleventh, the book summarizes many themes developed by previous prophets.

### **Genre**

The Book of Zechariah consists of largely apocalyptic literature. It is best to call this material canonical, prophetic, or biblical apocalyptic. Pentecost offers the following characteristics of biblical apocalyptic material.

*Apocalyptic literature in the Bible has several characteristics: (1) In apocalyptic literature a person who received God's truths in visions recorded what he saw. (2) Apocalyptic literature makes extensive use of symbols or signs. (3) Such literature normally gives revelation concerning God's program for the future of His people Israel. (4) Prose was usually employed in apocalyptic literature, rather than poetic style which was normal in most prophetic literature.*

*In addition to Daniel and Revelation, apocalyptic literature is found in Ezek 37-48 and Zech 1:7-7:8. In interpreting visions, symbols, and signs in apocalyptic literature, one is seldom left to his own ingenuity to discover the truth. In most instances an examination of the context or comparison with the parallel biblical passages provides the Scriptures' own interpretation of the visions or the symbols employed. Apocalyptic literature then demands a careful comparison of Scripture with Scripture to arrive at a correct understanding of the revelation being given. [J. Dwight Pentecost, Daniel, in Bible Knowledge Commentary, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor, 1983), 1323.]*

### **Christ in Zechariah**

Christological references as well as predictions of both Christ's first and second advents predominate the Book of Zechariah. General Christological references include the following: the angel of the Lord (3:1-2), the righteous branch (3:8; 6:12-13), the servant (3:8), the stone with seven eyes (3:9), the King-Priest (6:13), and the cornerstone, tent peg, and the bow of battle (10:4).

References to Christ's First Coming include the humble king riding on a donkey (9:9-10; Matt 21:1-8; John 12:14-16), the rejected good shepherd sold for thirty pieces of silver (11:4-13; Matt 26:14-16; 27:9-10), the one the Jews pierced (12:10; John 19:37; 20:24-27), and the smitten good shepherd (13:7). References to Christ's Second Advent include the one who will be accepted by Israel (12:10-13:1; Rom 11:26), the one who cleanses Israel (13:1), the coming judge (14), the destroyer of Israel's enemies (14:3,12-15; Rev 19:11-16), the one who will split the Mount of Olives (14:4), and the one who will reign from Jerusalem (14:9,16; Rev 20:4-6).

## Outline

- I. Introductory call to repentance (Zech 1:1-6)
  - (1) Date of prophecy (1:1a)
  - (2) Author (1:1b)
  - (3) Initial call to repentance (1:2-6)
- II. Zechariah's eight night visions (Zech 1:7—6:15)
  - (1) Rider on a red horse among the myrtle trees (1:7-17)
    - (A) Date: February 15, 519 BC (1:7)
    - (B) Description (1:8)
    - (C) Explanation (1:9-11)
      - (a) Zechariah's inquiry (1:9a)
      - (b) Interpreting angel's answer (1:9b)
      - (c) Angel of the Lord's answer (1:10)
      - (d) Riders' report (1:11)
    - (D) Interpretation (1:12-17)
      - (a) God remains jealous for Jerusalem (1:12-14)
      - (b) God will judge those nations at ease who persecute Jerusalem (1:15)
      - (c) God will restore Jerusalem (1:16a)
      - (d) God will restore the Temple (1:16b)
      - (e) God will return prosperity to Jerusalem (1:17)
  - (2) Four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21)
    - (A) Four horns (1:18-19)
      - (a) Description (1:18)
      - (b) Explanation (1:19)
    - (B) Four craftsmen (1:20-21)
      - (a) Description (1:20)
      - (b) Explanation (1:21)
  - (3) Surveyor and his measuring line (2:1-13)
    - (A) Vision described (2:1-3)
    - (B) Vision interpreted (2:4-5)
      - (a) Jerusalem's repopulation (2:4)
      - (b) Jerusalem's protection (2:5)
    - (C) Exiles called to return to Jerusalem (2:6-9)
      - (a) Future worldwide return (2:6)
      - (b) Historic local return (2:7)
    - (D) Jerusalem to be God's habitation (2:10-13)
  - (4) Cleansing of Joshua the high priest (3:1-10)
    - (A) The three stages of Joshua's cleansing (3:1-5)

- (a) Satan condemns Joshua (3:1)
  - (b) God rebukes Satan (3:2)
  - (c) God cleanses Joshua (3:3-5)
- (B) Joshua's cleansing symbolizes Jerusalem's future cleansing (3:6-10)
  - (a) Future king/priest (3:6-7)
  - (b) Future branch (3:8)
  - (c) Future cleansing (3:9)
  - (d) Future peace (3:10)
- (5) Lampstand and two olive trees (4:1-14)
  - (A) Vision described (4:1-3)
    - (a) Lampstand with seven lamps (4:1-2)
    - (b) Two olive trees (4:3)
  - (B) Interpretation (4:4-14)
    - (a) God's strength (4:4-7)
    - (b) Zerubbabel to reconstruct the Temple (4:8-10)
    - (c) God's anointed servants: Zerubbabel and Joshua (4:11-14)
- (6) Flying scroll (5:1-4)
  - (A) Vision (5:1-2)
  - (B) Interpretation (5:3-4)
    - (a) Covenant judgment coming (5:3a)
    - (b) Covenant sin to be judged (5:3b-4)
      - (i) Stealing (5:3b)
      - (ii) Swearing falsely (5:4)
- (7) Woman in the ephah (5:5-11)
  - (A) Women's identity: wickedness (5:5-8)
  - (B) Woman's destination: Shinar/Babylon (5:9-11)
- (8) Four chariots (6:1-8)
  - (A) Vision (6:1-3)
    - (a) Four chariots (6:1)
    - (b) Four different colored horses for each chariot (6:2-3)
  - (B) Interpretation (6:4-8)
    - (a) Four spirits patrolling the earth (6:4-7)
    - (b) Destruction of the land of the North: Babylon (6:8)
- (9) Conclusion: crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)
  - (A) Zechariah's action (6:9-11)
    - (a) Accompany the exiles to visit Joshua (6:9-10)
    - (b) Crown Joshua (6:11)
  - (B) Interpretation (6:12-15)

- (a) Branch to build the Temple (6:12)
- (b) Branch to preside as King/priest (6:13)
- (c) Exiles to return and reconstruct the Temple (6:14-15)

### III. Question and answers concerning fasting (Zech 7:1—8:23)

#### (1) Inquiry of the men of Bethel (7:1-3)

- (A) Date of the inquiry: December 7, 518 BC (7:1)
- (B) Bethelites making the inquiry (7:2)
- (C) Question: should we continue to observe the fast in the fifth month signifying the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar? (7:3)

#### (2) God's answer (7:4—8:23)

- (A) God rebukes the people for empty ritualism (7:4-7)
  - (a) Their insincerity (7:4-5)
  - (b) Their selfishness (7:6-7)
- (B) Israel's past covenant failure (7:8-14)
  - (a) God's covenant requirements (7:8-10)
  - (b) Israel's covenant rebellion (7:11-12)
  - (c) God's covenant judgment (7:13-14)
- (C) Jerusalem's future restoration (8:1-17)
  - (a) Prediction of Jerusalem's future restoration (8:1-8)
    - (i) God's return to Zion (8:1-3)
    - (ii) Peace in Jerusalem (8:4)
    - (iii) Joy in Jerusalem (8:5)
    - (iv) Promise of restoration from exile (8:6-8)
  - (b) Present application (8:9-17)
    - (i) Courageously rebuild the Temple (8:9-11)
    - (ii) Trust in God's promise to restore Jerusalem (8:12-15)
    - (iii) Obey the covenant (8:16-17)
- (D) Prediction of future blessings (8:18-23)
  - (a) Fasts to become feasts (8:18-19)
  - (b) Jerusalem's preeminence (8:20-23)

### IV. Zechariah's two burdens (Zech 9:1—14:21)

(1) The first burden concerning Israel's victory over the oppressive nations postponed due to her rejection of her Messiah (Zech 9:1—11:17)

#### (A) Divine warrior hymn (9:1-17)

- (a) Judgment upon the nations that oppress Israel (9:1-8)
  - (i) Hadrach (9:1a)
  - (ii) Damascus (9:1b)
  - (iii) Hamath (9:2a)

- (iv) Tyre and Sidon (9:2b-4)
  - (v) Philistines (9:5-7)
  - (vi) Israel never to be oppressed again (9:8)
- (b) Messiah (9:9-10)
  - (i) First coming: gentleness and righteousness (9:9)
  - (ii) Second coming: universal peace (9:10)
- (c) God's protection of Israel during the Inter-testamental period (from Antiochus IV Epiphanes) (9:11-17)
  - (i) Prisoners liberated (9:11-12)
  - (ii) Jerusalem attacked, defended and prospered (9:13-17)
- (B) Contrast between the good and foolish shepherd (10:1—11:17)
  - (a) Good Shepherd (10:1-12)
    - (i) Unlike idols, God brings prosperity (10:1-2)
    - (ii) God will judge false shepherds and instead shepherd His own people (10:3)
    - (iii) God will restore both the northern and southern kingdoms (10:4-7)
    - (iv) God will regather His scattered people (10:8-12)
  - (b) False shepherd (11:1-17)
    - (i) The land will wail (11:1-3)
      - (a) Wailing pines (11:1-2a)
      - (b) Wailing oaks of Bashan (11:2b)
      - (c) Wailing shepherds (11:3a)
      - (d) Wailing lions (11:3b)
    - (ii) Reason for the land's wailing: Israel's rejection of her shepherd (11:4-14)
      - (a) Zechariah pastors the doomed flock (11:4-8a)
      - (b) God no longer favors the flock (11:8b-11)
      - (c) Nation rejects her Messiah (11:12-13)
      - (d) Cessation of the nation's unity (11:14)
    - (iii) God to raise up and then destroy the false shepherd who devours the flock (11:15-17)
      - (a) False shepherd raised up (11:15-16)
      - (b) False shepherd destroyed (11:17)
- (2) The second burden concerning the Messiah's coming kingdom due to Israel's acceptance of her Messiah (12:1—14:21)
  - (A) Deliverance of Jerusalem (12:1—13:9)
    - (a) Israel's physical deliverance (12:1-9)
      - (i) The nations will come against Jerusalem (12:1-3)

- (ii) God will protect Jerusalem and destroy her attackers (12:4-9)
- (b) Israel's spiritual deliverance (12:10—13:6)
  - (i) Outpouring of the Spirit (12:10a)
  - (ii) Israel to mourn over rejecting her Messiah (12:10b-14)
  - (iii) Spiritual cleansing described (13:1-6)
    - (a) Fountain (13:1)
    - (b) Idolatry removed (13:2a)
    - (c) False prophets removed (13:2b-6)
- (c) Deliverance of remnant after the period of trial beginning with Israel's rejection of her Messiah (13:7-9)
  - (i) Shepherd struck (13:7a)
  - (ii) Sheep scattered (13:7b)
  - (iii) Two thirds of the nation to perish (13:8a)
  - (iv) One third of the nation refined and rescued (13:8b-9)
- (B) Establishment of the kingdom (14:1-21)
  - (a) Second Advent at the battle Armageddon to rescue Jerusalem (14:1-7)
  - (b) Messiah's kingdom to be administered from Jerusalem (14:8-11)
  - (c) Divine judgment to be imposed upon Jerusalem's enemies (14:12-15)
  - (d) Worship to be bestowed upon the Messiah in Jerusalem (14:16-21)

## Introduction

The post-exilic prophet Zechariah was a Levite born in Babylon (Neh 12:1,16). Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai the prophet, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 5:1-2; Zech 3:1; 4:6; 6:11). Zechariah returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with almost 50,000 other Jewish exiles. He was probably a relatively young man at the beginning of his prophetic ministry (Cf. 2:4) while Haggai might have been considerably older.

- Zechariah = "Yahweh Remembers."
- Son of Berechiah = "Yahweh Blesses"
- Son of Iddo = "The Appointed Time"

Nehemiah speaks of an Iddo as one of the priestly families returning to Judah (Neh 12:4,16). Both Jeremiah (Jer 1:1) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3) were also priests.

There are 29 "Zechariahs" in the OT; at least 30 total.

Matt 23:35: *so that upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*

Zechariah, in effect, closes the OT. Luke opens with the account of another Zechariah ("Yahweh Remembers") and his wife Elizabeth ("His Oath"). Also a priest, the angel ends 400 years of silence with the announcement of the forthcoming birth of John the Baptist. Written in 520 BC; contemporaneous with Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Zechariah contains more *Messianic* prophecies than all of the other "Minor" prophets put together. Zechariah reveals more about the coming Messiah than all the other Minor Prophets combined. He is truly the minor prophet with the major message. Within the pages of Zechariah are found many of messianic prophecy's "greatest hits".

It is the longest book of the 12 "Minor" prophets, and it is the most frequently quoted:

- 71 quotes or allusions in NT; 1/3 of these in the Gospels
- 31 [name of God, *E/*] in Revelation; 20 from Chapters 1-8; 8 from Chapters 9-14

### **The Historical Background of Zechariah**

The historical backdrop to the vibrant and encouraging message of this prophet is the tremendous discouragement the returning Jewish exiles had experienced in the 16 years they had been back in their land. The previous glory of Judah and, particularly, Jerusalem could not be recaptured, and the rebuilt Temple, although sixteen years in the works, was unimpressive and still unfinished. Yet until the completion of the Temple and the full restoration of covenantal Levitical worship, neither the glory of Jerusalem nor the prosperity of the Jewish people could be reestablished.

This pervasive discouragement and passivity is the ambiance which links all the post-exilic works together and especially permeates the work of Zechariah and his contemporary, the prophet Haggai. Haggai, whose ministry has a one-month overlap with Zechariah's, having begun to motivate the people to once again take up the task of rebuilding the Temple, exits the spotlight of Jewish history, but not before passing the motivational prophetic baton to Zechariah.

The prophet Zechariah, whose name means, "the Lord remembers," is first mentioned in the list of the 50,000 returning Jewish exiles given in Ezra 5:1, 6:14. He was born in the Babylonian exile, of priestly descent, and thus is the third in the trinity of prophet/priests surrounding the Babylonian exile: Jeremiah, whose ministry was pre-exilic; Ezekiel, whose ministry was exilic; and Zechariah, whose ministry was post-exilic. He is careful to date his prophecies, which begin in late 520 BC.

## 4. Scope

<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURAL DATE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
<b>1:1</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> month, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius</b>	<b>10 or 11/520 BC</b>
<b>1:7</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> day, 11<sup>th</sup> month, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius</b>	<b>2/15/519 BC</b>
<b>7:1</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> day, 9<sup>th</sup> month, 4<sup>th</sup> year of Darius</b>	<b>12/17/518 BC</b>

In the second regnal year of Darius (520 BC) God raised up Haggai the prophet to encourage the Jews in rebuilding (Ezra 5:1-2; Haggai 1:1). Haggai preached four sermons in four months and then disappeared from the scene. Two months after Haggai delivered his first sermon, Zechariah began his prophetic ministry (Cf. Haggai 1:1; Zech 1:1), encouraging the people to spiritual renewal and motivating them to rebuild the temple by revealing to them God's plans for Israel's future. With this prophetic encouragement the people completed the temple reconstruction in 515 BC (Ezra 6:15).

### Date

- Zech 1-8 were written immediately after the visions were given
- Zech 9-14 - either at same time or possibly ~40 years later (519-518 BC or 470-469 BC)
- Scope of time: Oct/Nov 520 BC to Dec 17 518 BC
- Zechariah 9-14 written 40 years later?
  - Plausible, but not confirmed; Zechariah could've written entire book later
  - No dates given in Zech 9-14
  - If true, scope could be from 520-470 BC
- Zechariah was a contemporary of:
  - Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14) - Zechariah & Haggai prophesied together
  - High Priest Joshua
  - Governor Zerubbabel

### Audience

- Zerubbabel (Zech 4:6-9)

- Joshua (Zech 3:1; 6:9-15)
- but his ultimate audience was the Jewish returnees from the 70-year captivity in Babylon (Zech 7:4-7)
  - Ezra 5:1; 6:14

### **Dates of Key Events**

- August 29, 520 BC - Haggai's first sermon (Haggai 1:1-11; Ezra 5:1)
- September 21, 520 BC - Temple building resumed (Haggai 1:12-15; Ezra 5:2)
- October 17, 520 BC - Haggai's second sermon (Haggai 2:1-9)
- October - November, 520 BC - Zechariah's ministry begun (Zech 1:1-6)
- December 18, 520 BC - Haggai's third and fourth sermons (Haggai 2:10-23)
- February 15, 519 BC - Zechariah's eight visions (Zech 1:7—6:8)
- December 7, 518 BC - Delegation from Bethel (Zech 7)
- March 12, 515 BC - Temple dedicated (Ezra 6:15-18)

## Nebuchadnezzar's 3 Sieges of Judah

	1	2	3
<b>Year</b>	605 BC	597 BC	586 BC
<b>Scripture</b>	2 Kings 24:1 Dan 1:1	2 Kings 24:10-16 <u>Ezek 1:1-2</u>	2 Kings 25:1-2 <u>Ezek 33:21</u>
<b>Judah's king</b>	Jehoiakim	Jehoiachin	Zedekiah
<b>Those taken</b>	Daniel & some princes	Ezekiel & majority 10k	Remnant captured, Jerusalem & Temple destroyed

## Three Returns from Babylon

	DATE	DURATION	PERSIAN KING	JEWISH LEADER	SCRIPTURE	PURPOSE	NUMBER OF RETURNEES
1 <sup>st</sup> return	538–515 BC	23 years	Cyrus Is 44:28–45:1	Zerubbabel	Ezra 1–6 Is 44:28	Rebuilding the temple	50,000
2 <sup>nd</sup> return	458–457 BC	2 years	Artaxerxes	Ezra	Ezra 7–10	Adorning of the temple and reforming the people	2,000
3 <sup>rd</sup> return	444–432 BC	8 years	Artaxerxes	Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Rebuilding the wall	

As Zechariah began prophesying after the 1st return, the temple was in the process of being rebuilt.

### Israel's Four Temples

1. Solomon's pre-exilic temple (Kings & Chronicles)
2. **Zerubbabel's post-exilic temple (Ezra 1:6; John 2:20)**
3. Antichrist's temple (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 11:1-2)
4. Millennial temple (Ezek 40-48)

<b>538 BC</b>	<b>Cyrus' decree</b>	<b>520–518 BC</b>	<b>Ministries of Zechariah &amp; Haggai</b>
<b>536 BC</b>	<b>Temple foundation laid</b>	<b>519 BC</b>	<b>Darius confirms Cyrus' decree</b>
<b>534 BC</b>	<b>Temple building interrupted</b>	<b>-----</b>	<b>Resumption of Temple building</b>
<b>-----</b>	<b>Temple project stalled for 15 years</b>	<b>516 BC</b>	<b>Temple completed</b>

538 BC - Cyrus' decree

536 BC - Temple foundation laid

534 BC - Temple building stalled for 15 years - persecution (Cf. Ezra 4)

— No wall around the city (Neh 2:17)

— No temple (Haggai 1:4)

— The people had a crisis of faith:

— The prosperity that they were promised for obedience was not materializing

— Their enemies in the land who stopped the construction project seemed to have the upper hand

— The land of Israel was still under Persian authority

520-518 BC - ministries of Zechariah & Haggai

— They afflicted the comfortable and comforted the afflicted

— Their mission was motivating the people to get back to work on temple construction

— Haggai's strategy was "in your face"...motivational speech screaming at them to motivate them to start rebuilding again

— Zechariah's strategy was to motivate them by disclosing God's purpose for the temple.

Zechariah means "God remembers." He had all these visions of a future temple, and he

paints a picture about God's purpose for the temple in the messianic age and in the

millennial kingdom. His message is: Don't you want to be part of God's great work?

519 BC - Darius' confirmation of Cyrus' decree; temple construction resumes

516 BC - Temple completed

## Outline of Zechariah

I. Introductory Call to Repentance (Zech 1:1-6)

(1) Date (1:1a)

(2) Author (1:1b)

(3) Call to Repentance (1:2-6)

## II. Eight Night Visions (Zech 1:7—6:15)

### (II.) Eight Night Visions (1:7—6:15)

#### (1) Riders & Horses Among the Myrtle Trees (1:7-17)

- (A) Date (1:7)
- (B) Description (1:8)
- (C) Interpretation (1:9-11)
  - (a) Zechariah's Inquiry (1:9a)
  - (b) Interpreting the angel's answer (1:9b)
  - (c) Angel of the Lord's answer (1:10)
  - (d) Rider's report (1:11)
- (D) Explanation (1:12-17)
  - (a) God's jealousy for Jerusalem (1:12-14)
  - (b) God's anger with the nations (1:15)
  - (c) Jerusalem to be restored (1:16a)
  - (d) The Temple to be restored (1:16b)
  - (e) Jerusalem's prosperity to return (1:17)

#### (2) Four Horns & Four Craftsmen (1:18-21)

- (A) Four Horns (1:18-19)
  - (a) Description (1:18)
  - (b) Explanation (1:19)
- (B) Four Craftsmen (1:20-21)
  - (a) Description (1:20)
  - (b) Explanation (1:21)

#### (3) Man With the Measuring Line (2:1-13)

- (A) Vision (2:1-2)
  - (a) Vision (2:1)
  - (b) Question (2:2a)
  - (c) Answer (2:2b)
- (B) Jerusalem's restoration (2:3-5)
  - (a) Angelic conversation (2:3)
  - (b) Jerusalem's repopulation (2:4)
  - (c) Jerusalem's protection (2:5)
- (C) Exiles to return (2:6-7)
  - (a) Future worldwide return (2:6)
  - (b) Historic local return (2:7)
- (D) God and the nations (2:8-9)
  - (a) God's punishment of the nations (2:8)
  - (b) Israel's elevation (2:9)

- (E) God to inhabit Jerusalem (2:10-12)
  - (a) God to inhabit Jerusalem (2:10)
  - (b) Nations to be blessed (2:11)
  - (c) God to choose Jerusalem (2:12)
- (F) Concluding exhortation (2:13)
  - (a) The need for silence (2:13a)
  - (b) Divine emotions (2:13b)
  - (c) Heavenly action forthcoming (2:13c)
- (4) Cleansing of the High Priest Joshua (3:1-10)
  - (A) The Stages of Joshua's Cleansing (3:1-5)
    - (a) Satan's Condemnation (3:1)
    - (b) God's Rebuke (3:2)
    - (c) Joshua's Cleansing (3:3-5)
  - (B) Jerusalem's Future Cleansing (3:6-10)
    - (a) King-Priest (3:6-7)
    - (b) Future Branch (3:8)
    - (c) Cleansing (3:9)
    - (d) Peace (3:10)
- (5) Lampstand & Olive Tree (4:1-14)
  - (A) Vision Described (4:1-3)
    - (a) Setting (4:1)
    - (b) Lampstand with seven lamps (4:2)
    - (c) Two olive trees (4:3)
  - (B) Vision Interpreted (4:4-14)
    - (a) God's strength (4:4-7)
    - (b) Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple (4:8-10)
    - (c) God's two anointed servants (4:11-14)
- (6) Flying Scroll (5:1-4)
  - (A) Vision Described (5:1-2)
  - (B) Vision Interpreted (5:3-4)
    - (a) Covenant judgment coming (5:3a)
    - (b) Sins to be judged (5:3b-4)
      - (i) Stealing (5:3b)
      - (ii) Swearing falsely (5:3c-4)
- (7) Woman in the Basket (5:5-11)
  - (A) The Woman's Identity (5:5-8)
  - (B) The Woman's Destination (5:9-11)
- (8) Four Chariots (6:1-8)

- (A) The Vision (6:1-3)
- (B) The Interpretation (6:4-8)

Conclusion: Crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)

- (1) The Offering (6:9-10)
- (2) The Coronation (6:11)
- (3) The Branch (6:12)
- (4) The King-Priest (6:13)
- (5) The Reminder (6:14)
- (6) The Testimony (6:15)

III. Questions and Answers About Fasting (Zech 7:1—8:23)

(1) Question (7:1-3)

- (A) Date (7:1)
- (B) Questioner (7:2)
- (C) Question (7:3)

(2) Four divine answers (7:4—8:23)

- (A) Condemnation of empty ritualism (7:4-7)
- (B) Condemnation of past covenant failure (7:8-14)
  - (a) Covenant requirements (7:8-10)
  - (b) Covenant rebellion (7:11-12)
  - (c) Covenant judgment (7:13-14)
- (C) Prediction of Jerusalem's restoration (8:1-17)
  - (a) Prediction (8:1-8)
  - (b) Application (8:9-17)
    - (i) Rebuild the Temple (8:9-13)
    - (ii) Trust in God's promises (8:14-15)
    - (iii) Obey the covenant (8:16-17)
- (D) Prediction of future blessing (8:18-23)
  - (a) From fasting to feasting (8:18-19)
    - (i) New oracle (8:18)
    - (ii) From fasting to feasting (8:19)
  - (b) Jerusalem's exaltation (8:20-23)
    - (i) The gathering (8:20)
    - (ii) The reason (8:21)
    - (iii) The location (8:22)
    - (iv) The preeminence (8:23)

IV. Two Burdens (Zech 9:1—14:21)

- (1) Israel's postponed deliverance due to her rejection of her Messiah (Zech 9:1—11:17)
  - (A) Divine warrior hymn (Zech 9:1-17)

- (a) Judgment on the oppressing nations, through Alexander the Great (9:1-8)
  - (1) Hadrach (9:1a)
  - (2) Damascus (9:1b)
  - (3) Hamath (9:2a)
  - (4) Tyre & Sidon (9:2b-4)
  - (5) Philistines (9:5-7)
    - (i) Ashkelon (9:5a)
    - (ii) Gaza (9:5b)
    - (iii) Ekron (9:5c)
    - (iv) Gaza (9:5d)
    - (v) Ashkelon (9:5e)
    - (vi) Ashdod (9:6a)
    - (vii) Philistines (9:6b-7a)
    - (viii) Ekron (9:7b)
  - (6) Jerusalem (9:8)
- (b) The Messiah (9:9-10)
  - (i) First advent (9:9)
  - (ii) Second advent (9:10)
- (c) God's protection of Israel during the Inter-testamental period (from Antiochus IV Epiphanes) (9:11-17)
  - (i) Blood covenant (9:11a)
  - (ii) Prisoners liberated (9:11b-12)
  - (iii) Victories (9:13-17)
- (B) True shepherd (Zech 10:1-12)
  - (a) Messianic prosperity (10:1-3)
    - (i) Challenge (10:1)
    - (ii) Idols inhibiting prosperity (10:2)
    - (iii) True shepherd to judge the false shepherds (10:3)
  - (b) Restoration of the Northern & Southern kingdoms (10:4-7)
    - (i) The king (10:4-5)
    - (ii) The kingdoms (10:6-7)
  - (c) Messianic regathering (10:8-12)
    - (i) The regathering (10:8-9)
    - (ii) The geography (10:10-11)
    - (iii) The strengthening (10:12)
- (C) False shepherd (Zech 11:1-17)
  - (a) The personified as wailing (11:1-3)
    - (i) Cedars of Lebanon (11:1)

- (ii) Cypress & Oaks of Bashan (11:2)
    - (iii) Shepherd & Lions (11:3)
  - (b) Reasons for the wailing (11:4-14)
    - (i) Zechariah pastors a doomed flock (11:4-7)
    - (ii) God no longer favors the flock (11:8-11)
    - (iii) Israel to reject her Messiah (11:12-13)
    - (iv) Cessation of the nation's unity (11:14)
  - (c) The coming False Shepherd (11:15-17)
    - (i) Raised up (11:15-16)
    - (ii) Destroyed (11:17)
- (2) Israel's future deliverance due to her acceptance of her Messiah (Zech 12:14—14:21)
  - (A) Israel's physical deliverance (12:1-9)
    - (a) The nations that will attack Israel (12:1-3)
    - (b) The God who will protect Israel (12:4-9)
  - (B) Israel's spiritual deliverance (12:10-14)
    - (a) God's Spirit: the cause of revival (12:10a)
    - (b) Israel's remorse: the result of revival (12:11-14)
  - (C) Spiritual cleansing (13:1-6)
    - (a) Fountain (13:1)
    - (b) Idolatry removed (13:2a)
    - (c) False prophets removed (13:2b-6)
  - (D) Comprehensive deliverance (13:7-9)
    - (a) Shepherd struck (13:7a)
    - (b) Sheep scattered (13:7b)
    - (c) Two-thirds perish (13:8a)
    - (d) One-third rescued & refined (13:8b-9)
  - (E) Jerusalem's Deliverance (14:1-7)
    - (a) The theme (14:1)
    - (b) The crisis (14:2)
    - (c) The warrior (14:3)
    - (d) The return (14:4)
    - (e) The remnant (14:5)
    - (f) The darkness (14:6)
    - (g) The uniqueness (14:7)
  - (F) Kingdom Conditions (14:8-11)
    - (a) Jerusalem's waters (14:8)
    - (b) Earthly reign (14:9)

- (c) Topographical changes (14:10)
  - (i) Abundant rainfall (Ezek 34:26-27)
  - (ii) Water in the desert (Is 35:6-7)
  - (iii) Life to the Dead Sea (Ezek 47:1-12)
  - (iv) Sun seven times brighter (Is 30:26)
  - (v) Physical healing (Is 35:5-6)
- (d) Millennial Jerusalem (14:11)
- (G) Enemies' Judgment (14:12-15)
  - (a) Plague (14:12)
  - (b) Panic (14:13)
  - (c) Plunder (14:14)
  - (d) Pets (14:15)
- (H) Kingdom Worship (14:16-21)
  - (a) The Pilgrimage (14:16)
  - (b) The Punishment (14:17-19)
  - (c) The Purity (14:20-21)

### **Message**

The message of Zechariah is: The Messiah's future restoration of Israel and millennial reign is depicted through various divine visions (1:7—6:15), responses (7:1—8:23), and burdens (9:1—14:21), and these are given to induce hope and obedience among the beleaguered remnant.

Zechariah gives them a glimpse of their future and their role in building the temple that the Messiah will one day inhabit.

### **Purposes**

- (1) To encourage the returnees to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14)
- (2) To provide eschatological hope in the challenging post-exilic world
- (3) To prepare the returnees for Temple worship
- (4) To exhort the returnees toward covenant obedience

# Haggai vs. Zechariah

<b>HAGGAI</b>	<b>ZECHARIAH</b>
<b>Exhortation</b>	<b>Encouragement</b>
<b>More concrete</b>	<b>More abstract</b>
<b>Concise</b>	<b>Expanded</b>
<b>Present concern</b>	<b>Future concern</b>
<b>Take part!</b>	<b>Take heart!</b>
<b>Older activist</b>	<b>Younger missionary</b>

Wilkinson and Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible*, p. 291

## Themes

- (1) 1st and 2nd Advents
- (2) Temple
- (3) Israel's Eschatology
- (4) Israel Status as God's Elect Nation (Zech 2:8)
- (5) Covenant Renewal

## Unique Characteristics

- Interpreting angels
- Longest minor prophet
- Many messianic prophecies (only Isaiah has more)
- Multiplicity of literary styles
- Times of the Gentiles
- Israel's eschatology
- Two burdens focused upon in the Passion narratives
- In Jesus last week, Jesus quoted from Zech 9-14 often, particularly the 1st burden
- Third most alluded to book in the Apocalypse (Revelation)
- 278 out of 404 total verses in Revelation are references to the OT
- Daniel is quoted most frequently, Ezekiel 2nd most, Zechariah 3rd most
- Imputation (3:1-5)
- Zechariah gives a clear explanation of the imputation of Christ's righteousness

- Summation of prophetic themes disclosed in earlier prophets

**Additional Resources on Zechariah**

Exegetical Studies in Zechariah (16)

Zechariah: Minor Prophet with a Major Message

The Structure of the Book of Zechariah