

***A Bible Study
on the
Book of Zechariah***



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A Bible Study on the Book of Zechariah

Zechariah: Introduction

Author:

Zechariah means “remembered by Yahweh.” Very little is known about the prophet except what is stated in his book. He identifies himself personally as "*Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet*" (1:1). He may be the same man identified in **Nehemiah 12:16** as a priest, but his name is so common that it is hard to form a definitive conclusion. It is assumed that he was a young man when he started writing this book (2:4).

Date:

It is generally accepted that Zechariah was written in November 520 BC. This is because the opening verse dates the beginning of the prophet's ministry during the reign of Darius, the King of Persia. In order to compare it to the other books written around that time consider that Esther was written between 520-490 BC, Ezra was written around 440 BC, and Nehemiah was written around 430 BC. Haggai was also written in 520, but Malachi was not written until 400 BC.

Theme:

A remnant of the Israelites, who had been exiled, returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. God chose the time for this revival and guided them back home. The Lord also blessed them with a queen (Esther), a builder (Nehemiah), a priest (Ezra), and several prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). The people were awaiting the “new covenant” as prophesied by Joel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. They were looking for the kingdom that would not perish (Daniel). Zechariah's role is to motivate the people back to their prime directive of restoring the temple.

Audience:

The intended audience is the people of Judah that had returned from the Babylonian exile. They were given permission from the Persians to inhabit Jerusalem, rebuild the temple, and fortify the walls around the city (**Ezra 7:17**). However, because of opposition they had stopped the building. Both Haggai and Zechariah could be counted as successful as they brought positive results.

Literary Notes:

Zechariah is clearly divided into two parts (possibly written at different times). The first part, chapters 1-8, seek to comfort the people with visions. The second part, chapters 9-14, seek to comfort the people with prophesy. Where Haggai used plain language to reach the masses, Zechariah uses figurative language.

Key Verses:

Zechariah 1:3, 1:13, 3:6-10, 5:4, 7:8-10, 8:11, 9:9, 11:12-13, 13:7

Contemporaries of the Prophet Zechariah:

Leaders of the people of God included Ezra and Nehemiah who would have lived in this time. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during this period.

Zechariah in the New Testament:

The book of Zechariah is large, especially for the minor prophets. Both Hosea and Zechariah have 14 chapters. With so many visions and prophesies it is no wonder that it is often quoted in the New Testament (71 quotations). Revelation has 31 references, the Gospels have 27 references (many during the Passion week), and the rest are scattered throughout. While it is a difficult book to study, it was a favorite reference to the writers of the New Testament and is worthy of our study.

Zechariah's Prophecies Concerning the Church:

- 1) His humanity and His coming in lowliness (6:12)
- 2) His Rejection and betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (11:12-13)
- 3) His being struck by the sword of the Lord (13:7)
- 4) His coming in glory (14:4)
- 5) His kingship and priesthood (6:13; 9:9; 14:9, 16)
- 6) His reign (9:10; 14:9-11, 16-21)
- 7) His building the Lord's temple (6:12-13)
- 8) His establishing peace and prosperity (3:10; 9:9-10)

Prophecies concerning Christ

(see Old Testament Prophets, Dr. R. Bruce Compton).

Zechariah's Prophecies Concerning the End Times:

- 1) Final siege of Jerusalem (12:1-3; 14:1-2)
- 2) Initial victory of Judah's enemies (14:2)
- 3) The Lord's defense of Jerusalem (14:3-4)
- 4) The judgment of the nations (12:9; 14:3)
- 5) Topographical changes in Judah (14:4-5)
- 6) The celebration of the feast of tabernacles in the kingdom (14:16-19)
- 7) Holiness of Jerusalem and the people (14:20-21)

Prophecies concerning the end-times

(see Old Testament Prophets, Dr. R. Bruce Compton)

Outline of the Book:

- I. The Call to Repentance (1:1-6)
 - A. The Date & The Author (1:1)
 - B. The Message (1:2-6)
- II. The Eight Visions of the Prophet (1:7-6:8)
 - A. The Vision of the Horsemen (1:7-17)
 - B. The Vision of the Four Horns and Four Craftsmen (1:18-21)
 - C. The Vision of the Surveyor (2:1-17)
 - D. The Vision of Joshua and the Branch (3:1-10)
 - E. The Vision of the Candlestick and the Two Olive Trees (4:1-14)
 - F. The Vision of the Flying Scroll (5:1-4)
 - G. The Vision of the Woman in the Basket (5:5-11)
 - H. The Vision of the Four Chariots (6:1-8)
- III. The Cleansing of Israel (6:9-15)
 - A. The People Offer Gifts (6:9-10)
 - B. The Coronation of the Priest (6:11-13)
 - C. The Messianic Memorial (6:14-15)
- IV. The Future Glory of Israel (7:1-8:23)
 - A. The Insincerity of Israel (7:1-14)
 - B. Jehovah's Sovereign Blessings (8:1-23)
- V. The Kingdom of God (9:1-14:21)
 - A. The Introduction of the Kingdom by Jehovah's Power (9:1-10:12)
 - B. The Judgment on False Shepherds (11:1-17)
 - C. Israel's Conflict, Deliverance, and Cleansing (12:1-13:9)
 - D. Jehovah Deals with the Nations (14:1-15)
 - E. Jehovah Is Exalted (14:16-21)

A Bible Study on the Book of Zechariah

Lesson 1: The Call to Repentance

Zechariah 1:1-6

Introductory Thoughts

The pre-exilic prophets had warned of the sins defined by the post-exilic prophets. Unfortunately the people did not learn from those prophecies. How do you think they felt when they realized they were warned about these things?

What did the people do to the prophets before the exile? How were they treated?

How were the prophets treated after the return from the Babylonian captivity?

I. The Date & The Author (1:1)

Zechariah has the same historical background as Haggai. Both of the prophets made it their mission to rebuild the temple. Were they successful?

Why do you think these prophets specifically dated their messages?

If Haggai was an older man who saw Solomon's temple, and Zechariah was a younger man of priestly lineage, what could they do together?

What do you think the temple looked like after 15-16 years of abandonment?

II. The Message (1:2-6)

What can we glean from the words of God to the people?

Why does the Lord condemn their fathers? What had they done?

God was very angry with the way their fathers treated the prophets. Why would He bring this up so early in this prophetic writing?

Concluding Thoughts

Why do people think they can run away from their sins? What should they do?

What can we know about God's character, His covenant, and His continuing promise to His people?

What else does the Bible say about repentance (**Malachi 3:7, James 4:8**)?

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Lesson 2: The Eight Visions of the Prophet **Zechariah 1:7-6:8**

Introductory Thoughts

Many of the prophecies of Zechariah had a dual fulfillment. What do we know about dual fulfillment prophecies? Can they be misunderstood?

Zechariah shares eight visions to comfort the people of God. Why does God choose methods like visions to teach His will? Why not just tell the people?

I. The Vision of the Horsemen (1:7-17)

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

II. The Vision of the Four Horns and Four Craftsmen (1:18-21)

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

III. The Vision of the Surveyor (2:1-17)

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

IV. The Vision of Joshua and the Branch (3:1-10)

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

V. *The Vision of the Candlestick and the Two Olive Trees (4:1-14)*

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

VI. *The Vision of the Flying Scroll (5:1-4)*

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

VII. *The Vision of the Woman in the Basket (5:5-11)*

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

VIII. *The Vision of the Four Chariots (6:1-8)*

What is the vision?

What is the significance of the vision?

What comfort could the people receive from this vision?

Concluding Thoughts

Each of these visions only tell one part of the story. God's plan often takes several steps before its completion. What does that teach us?

When you put the stories together you can see that the temple will be rebuilt, the wicked nations will be destroyed, Jerusalem is still special to God, the priesthood will be purified, all sins will be punished, all righteousness will be rewarded, and God will rule over the earth. Would that encourage you?

How would these visions help Judah to remain faithful? What can we learn?

A Bible Study on the Book of Zechariah

Lesson 3: The Cleansing of Israel

Zechariah 6:9-15

Introductory Thoughts

What did God have planned for the heathen nations of the world?

Would this silence the Gentiles? Why?

I. The People Offer Gifts (6:9-10)

Who were the three men staying in Zephaniah's house?

What did they offer as gifts to construct the priestly crown?

What does that tell us about their sacrifice?

II. The Coronation of the Priest (6:11-13)

Who is to be called the "Branch" (3:8, 6:12)? Why is that important?

How is the "Branch" described? Who fits that description?

Just as Joshua would build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus promised to build His church (**Matthew 16:16ff**). What does that tell us about the work of the "Branch" on Mt. Zion?

III. The Messianic Memorial (6:14-15)

What were they to do with the crown? Where was it to be kept?

All four people named symbolize the work of the kingdom. What can we learn from them and their roles?

Concluding Thoughts

How can we deduce that Judah would never again be a political state?

If we read the book of Hebrews we will have a better understanding of these events described here. What role does Jesus now fill?

A Bible Study on the Book of Zechariah

Lesson 4: The Future Glory of Israel

Zechariah 7:1-8:23

Introductory Thoughts

This section begins two years and one month after Zechariah received the eight visions. Why can we assume that things are progressing?

God promised to change the grief of the Israelites into joy. How can making future promises help this process?

I. The Insincerity of Israel (7:1-14)

What were their questions regarding fasting?

What was the answer? How did Zechariah describe fasting?

Why is it so dangerous to do things out of tradition?

How can this description of compassion compare to **Matthew 22:39**?

What happened to those who refused to heed the warnings of the prophets?

II. Jehovah's Sovereign Blessings (8:1-23)

Would the city of Jerusalem ever be safe again? Explain.

Several times in this book it challenges the readers to listen to the prophet.

Why is this such a repetitive theme? Do you think they listened?

The Lord promises international prominence, but not national recognition, what does that mean?

What are the parallels between **Zechariah 8:16** and **Ephesians 4:25**?

Concluding Thoughts

Why does God often remind us that His blessings are conditional?

What can we learn from these chapters concerning the New Testament church?

A Bible Study on the Book of Zechariah

Lesson 5: The Kingdom of God

Zechariah 9:1-14:21

Introductory Thoughts

How is this message described? Why is that significant?

Hadrach is a region in Syria near Hamath. The cities of Tyre and Sidon are popular locations in this day and referenced frequently in the New Testament. Why is this region important?

Why are these things important to the scheme of redemption?

I. The Introduction of the Kingdom by Jehovah's Power (9:1-10:12)

What will destroy the power of Tyre?

History tells us that Alexander was the first to subdue the city in 332 BC. When it was conquered, Ashkelon and the other Philistine cities were vulnerable for attack. Where did they attack the city?

How will Israel's king come into the city of Jerusalem? Who is it?

Who were the shepherds who were not leading the sheep?

Who is the Cornerstone that will come from Judah?

What are the waves of the sea?

II. The Judgment on False Shepherds (11:1-17)

What is the fire that will devour the cedars, oaks, and pride?

What did the two staffs of Beauty and Bonds represent?

What prophesy is foretold concerning 30 pieces of silver?

Why do people reject good leadership to follow after fools?

How could this have been avoided? Explain.

III. Israel's Conflict, Deliverance, and Cleansing (12:1-13:9)

How is Jerusalem a heavy stone for the nations?

Who do the governors of Judah represent? Who does God save first?

How is the Spirit of grace and supplication poured out on the house of David?

How is God pierced? Why do the people mourn?

What is the fountain that will be opened up to the house of David?

How will the idols and the prophets disappear? What will happen?

What will God do with the people after the shepherd is struck and the people are scattered?

IV. Jehovah Deals with the Nations (14:1-15)

What does the Mount of Olives signify?

Why will the Mount of Olives separate? Is there a way of escape?

Why will there be no light, no day or night there?

The prophecies of Ezekiel (**Ezekiel 47:8-12**) and John (**Revelation 11:15**) have parallels to this chapter. Can you think of any others?

V. Jehovah Is Exalted (14:16-21)

When will the Lord be king over all the earth?

What will happen to the people who were against God and His people?

Why will there be no Canaanite in the house of the Lord?

Concluding Thoughts

How will holiness permeate every part of life? Why is this God's will?

What things will you remember the most about the book of Zechariah?