

Zechariah

A. The Man

1. Zechariah has been called “the Prophet of Night Visions.” His book is a series of eight visions received in one night. Other names referred to him are “the temple builder”, “the idealist” and “the enthusiast.”
2. His was a very common name. At least 30 individuals in Scripture bore the name Zechariah. The name means “Yahweh has remembered.”
3. He is said to be the son of Berechiah the son of Iddo. In the book of Ezra (5:1; 6:14) he is simply called the son of Iddo. It could be that his father died while he was very young and that he was raised by his grandfather, Iddo. However, the word “son” can also merely mean “descendant.” In Neh. 12:4 a priest named Iddo was among those returning with Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. According to Neh. 12:6, he had a son named Zechariah. Zechariah’s actions are dated in the same manner as Haggai’s, by the reference to a certain “year of Darius.”
4. Traditionally, he is associated with Haggai in the titles of certain psalms. Tradition also indicates he was a member of the “Great Synagogue,” a law-making body supposedly guiding the people in post-exilic times. Patristic tradition indicates that he returned to Jerusalem at an old age and served in the priesthood. He was supposedly buried beside Haggai.
5. In Matt. 23:35, Jesus referred to a Zechariah, son of Berechiah who was killed in the courts of the temple. The phrase “son of Berechiah” is absent from Luke’s account (Lk. 11:51). It is also absent from some manuscripts of Matthew’s account. Suffice it to say that there is a great deal of debate over this issue.

B. The Mission

1. Haggai had been preaching in Judah since August 29, 520 B.C. Zechariah joined him in October or November of that same year (1:1).
2. The last dated message in the book is said to be from December 4, 516 B.C. There is no doubt that he lived to see the temple rebuilt and dedicated (March 12, 515 B.C.). However, his ministry probably extended much longer.
3. He would have been in his 60’s when the Persians were defeated in their attempted invasion of Greece in 490 and 480 B.C. He would easily have seen the signs of Greece rising in world prominence.

C. The Message

1. The book can be classified as apocalyptic literature. There is a progression from a local scene to a world scene; from a point in time to the end of time. Visions and angels are prominent features. There is a clear sense of determinism. God has settled and worked out His purposes in heaven. All that remains is for Him to initiate these things on earth. This apocalyptic literature uses animal symbolism and the symbolic use of numbers.
2. Zechariah is one of the most difficult of the prophetic books to interpret. Much of the material is obscure and difficult to fit into any system of eschatology. Therefore, there is a great deal of difference among the views of scholars today.
3. The book consists of 14 chapters. It normally falls into 2 basic divisions: Chapters 1-8 is generally regarded as the early work of Zechariah while 9-14 is said to be vastly different in style and subject matter. For this reason many argue that the last six chapters were written by a different person before the exile. Conservative scholarship, however, has little difficulty explaining these things and seeing the work in a unified sense.

The Structure of Zechariah				
Message during the Construction of the Temple			Message after the Construction of the Temple	
Introduction 1:1-6	8 Visions And a Symbolic Action 1:7-6:15	Four Messages Chs. 7-8	Cycle One Chs. 9-11	Cycle Two Chs. 12-14

D. Historical Background

1. The return from exile began under Zerubbabel in 538-36 B.C., though many Jews remained in Babylon. The temple had lain in ruins since destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The returned exiles had begun reconstruction (Ezra 5:16; 3:1-6), but the effort had been blocked for 15 years by opposition.
2. Haggai had been commissioned to stir the people back into activity in 520 B.C. However, after some two months, enthusiasm was low. At that point Zechariah added his voice to Haggai's, urging the people to complete the project.
3. The result of the two prophets' work was that the temple was completed in 516 B.C. (Ezra 6:15). We know nothing else of this post-exilic community for 59 years (457 B.C.), at which time Ezra returned to Jerusalem to carry through reforms.

E. The Visions (Steven Lloyd)

1. He sees a man sitting on a red horse among myrtle trees...behind him he sees a red, brown and white horses (1:7-17)
2. Four horns and four blacksmiths (1:18-21)
3. A measuring line (2:1-13)
4. New clothes for Joshua, the High Priest (3:1-10)
5. A gold candlestick and two olive trees (4:1-14)
6. A flying scroll (5:1-4)
7. A woman called "wickedness" (5:5-11)
8. Four chariots from between two bronze mountains (6:1-8)

Zechariah: Outline

I. Opening Words and Visions (Chaps. 1-2)

A. Prerequisite for Spiritual Blessing (1:1-6)

1. An exhortation (vs. 1-3)
2. An example (vs. 4-6)

B. Vision One: The Men Among the Myrtles (1:7-17)

1. That which the prophet saw (vs. 7-9)
2. That which the prophet heard (vs. 10-13)
3. What the prophet was to proclaim (vs. 14-17)

C. Vision Two: The Four Craftsmen (1:18-21)

1. The imagery of the vision (vs. 18-20)
2. The interpretation of the vision (vs. 21)

D. Vision Three: The Measuring of Jerusalem (2:1-5)

1. Presentation of the vision (vs. 1-4a)
2. The meaning of the vision (vs. 4b-5)

E. Amplification of the Third Vision (2:6-13)

1. An appeal to the exiles (vs. 6-9)
2. Announcement to the remnant (vs. 10-13)

II. The Visions Continue (Chaps. 3-4)

A. Vision Four: Joshua Reinstated (3:1-7)

1. The condition of Joshua (vs. 1-3)
2. The cleansing of the priesthood (vs. 4-5)
3. The covenant with the priesthood (vs. 6-7)

B. Messianic Application of the Third Vision (3:8-10)

1. The sign (vs. 8a)
2. Servant and shoot (vs. 8b)
3. The stone (vs. 9-10)

C. Vision Five: The Lampstand and the Olive Trees (5:1-5)

D. A word to Zerubbabel (4:6-7)

1. A general principle (vs. 6)
2. A personal promise (vs. 7)

E. Another Word for Zerubbabel (4:8-10)

1. The declaration (vs. 8-9a)
2. The vindication (vs. 9b)
3. The intimation (vs. 10a)
4. The revelation (vs. 10b)

F. Messianic Explanation of the Fifth Vision (4:11-14)

1. The prophet's requests (vs. 11-13)
2. The angel's explanation (vs. 14)

III. Visions of Future Glory (Chaps. 5-6)

A. Vision Six: The Flying Scroll (5:1-4)

1. The vision (vs. 1-2)
2. Meaning of the vision (vs. 3)
3. Application of the vision (vs. 4)

B. Vision Seven: The Woman in a Basket (5:5-11)

1. Symbolism of the vision (vs. 5-8)
2. Significance of the vision (vs. 9-11)

C. Vision Eight: The Chariots of Wrath (6:1-8)

1. The vision presented (vs. 1-3)
2. The vision explained (vs. 4-5)
3. The vision amplified (vs. 6-8)

D. A Symbolic Coronation (6:9-15)

1. The actions of Zechariah (vs. 9-11)
2. Explanation of the actions (vs. 12-13)
3. The memorial to the event (vs. 14)
4. A final Messianic note (vs. 15)

IV. Fasting or Feasting? (Chaps. 7-8)

A. First Oracle: A More Basic Issue (7:1-7)

B. Second Oracle: Focus on the Word (7:8-14)

1. Summary of the Divine Word (vs. 8-10)
2. Rejection of the Divine Word (vs. 11-12)
3. Results of that rejection (vs. 13-14)

C. Third Oracle: The Potential for Blessing (8:1-23)

1. Yahweh's zeal for Jerusalem (vs. 1-2)
2. Yahweh's return to Zion (vs. 3)
3. Jerusalem peaceful and secure (vs. 4-5)
4. Marvelous promises (vs. 6)
5. Gathering the dispersed (vs. 7-8)
6. Conditions reversed (vs. 9-13)
7. Promise of good (vs. 14-17)
8. Fasts to become feasts (vs. 18-19)
9. The conversion of Gentiles (vs. 20-22)
10. Prominence of the Jews (vs. 23)

V. Yahweh's Triumphant Intervention (9:1-10:2)

A. The Coming of the World Conqueror (9:1-8)

1. Judgment on Syria (vs. 1-2a)
2. Judgment on Phoenicia (vs. 2b-4)
3. Judgment on Philistia (vs. 5-7)
4. Protection for Jerusalem (vs. 8)

B. The Coming Prince of Peace (9:9-11)

1. The promise of His coming (vs. 9a)
2. The character of the ruler (vs. 9b)
3. The nature of the Kingdom (vs. 10)
4. Redemption of the Coming Ruler (vs. 11)

C. The Coming Divine Warrior (9:12-10:2)

1. A glorious promise (vs. 12-13)
2. A mighty intervention (vs. 14-15)
3. A wonderful relationship (9:16-10:2)

VI. Messiah is Coming! (10:3-11:17)

A. Provision for Messianic Salvation (10:3-4)

1. Old leaders removed (vs. 3)
2. New leaders raised up (vs. 4)

B. Messianic Victory (10:5-7)

1. Role of Judah (vs. 5-6a)
2. Role of Ephraim (vs. 6b-7)

C. Messianic Liberation (10:8-12)

1. Promise of the gathering (vs. 8)
2. Prelude of the gathering (vs. 9)
3. Picture of the gathering (vs. 10-12)

D. Judgment on National Israel (11:1-6)

1. Approach of the enemy (vs. 1-3)
2. Punishment of the people (vs. 4-6)

E. Ministry of the Good Shepherd (11:7-11)

1. The ministry portrayed (vs. 7)
2. Relationship with the shepherds (vs. 8)
3. Reaction of the flock (vs. 9)
4. Abandonment of the flock (vs. 10)
5. Reaction of the remnant (vs. 11)

F. Reaction of the Good Shepherd (11:12-14)

1. Request for wages (vs. 12)
2. Rejection of wages (vs. 13)
3. Rending of the nation (vs. 14)

G. The Coming False Shepherd (11:15-17)

VII. The New Jerusalem (Chaps. 12-13)

A. The Great Siege (12:1-9)

1. Security of Jerusalem (vs. 1-4)
2. Strength of Jerusalem (vs. 5-6)
3. Deliverance of Jerusalem (vs. 7-9)

B. The Great Salvation (12:10-13:6)

1. Process of conviction (12:10-14)
2. Provision for cleansing (13:1)
3. Picture of consecration (13:2)
4. Proof of commitment (13:3-5)
5. Explanation (13:6)

C. The Great Smiting (13:7-9)

1. The call for smiting (vs. 7)
2. The results (vs. 8-9)

VIII. The Triumph of Spiritual Jerusalem (Chap. 14)

A. The Great Deliverance (14:1-7)

1. Antecedents of His coming (vs. 1-2)
2. Results of His coming (vs. 3-5)
3. Time of His coming (vs. 6-7)

B. Glory of Messianic Jerusalem (14:8-21)

1. An exalted city (vs. 8-11)
2. A secure city (vs. 12-15)
3. A worship center (vs. 16-19)
4. A holy city (vs. 20-21)