

Zechariah

WHAT'S THIS BOOK ABOUT? Through a series of visions, Zechariah calls the people to repentance. He also gives detailed prophecies about the coming Messiah.

WHO WROTE IT? Zechariah, a prophet who was also a priest.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN? The writing in this book covers about 40 years, beginning around 520 B.C.

WHERE DOES THIS BOOK FIT? At the end of the Exile, after King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Hebrew exiles to return home.

THE BREAKDOWN

- Chapters 1-6: God gives Zechariah a series of night visions
- Chapters 7-8: God calls for repentance and promises blessing
- Chapters 9-11: The Messiah will come and be rejected
- Chapters 12-14: The Messiah will come and reign

KEY CONCEPTS

- Vision (God used this means to communicate to Zechariah)
- Shepherds (the leaders of Israel)

SCORECARD

- **Zechariah:** A prophet who lived at the same time as Haggai
- **Jeshua:** A priest featured in several of Zechariah's messages
- **Zerubbabel:** The leader who supervised the rebuilding of the Temple
- **Darius:** The king of Persia at the time of Zechariah's ministry

WORTH MEMORIZING

- 4:6-7 "This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel's way; it will become a level plain before him!"
- 9:9
Rejoice, O people of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!
Look, your king is coming to you.
He is righteous and victorious,
yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey's colt.

THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

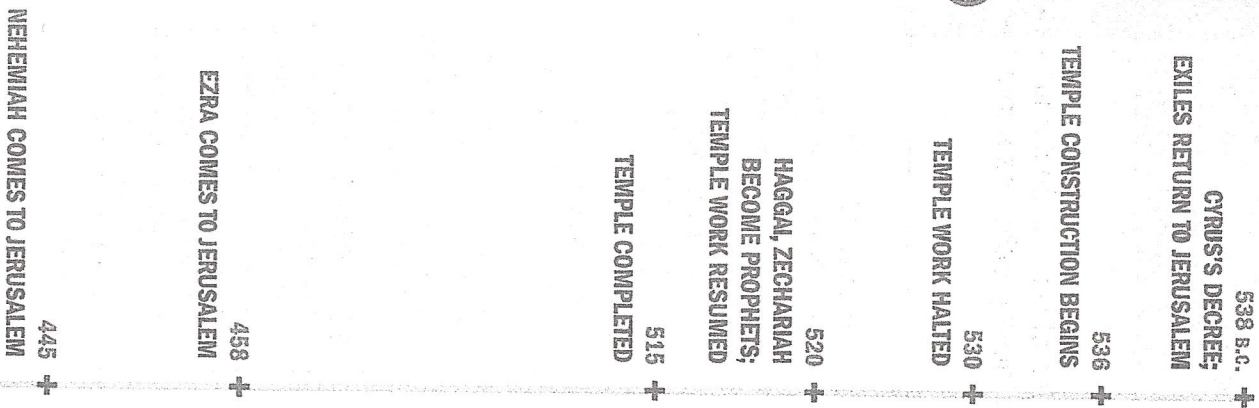
- **POSITIVE ROLE MODELS.** This book contains several role models of men who were faithful to God. Zechariah delivered God's message, even though it contained rebuke. Jeshua the priest was an example of a good "shepherd" to Israel. Zerubbabel took on a difficult task and persisted until the job was completed.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF

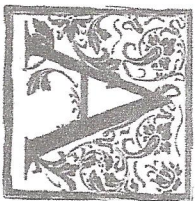
Zechariah?

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The coming
Messiah gave
Israel a reason
for hope.

Timeline



READING TIME 20'
IN HOURS 1:30 1:00 1:30 2:00 2:30



uthor Muriel Anderson credits four words with launching her career as a writer: *Of course you can!* "I was fortunate to have had a father," she said, "who was good at shouting of *course you can* at just the right moments."

That was the message of Zechariah. According to the book of Ezra, the exiles returning to Jerusalem after the captivity began rebuilding the temple, but gave up in discouragement. The project was abandoned for years. Then the post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, came preaching, saying, in effect: "Of course you can rebuild this temple." The people of Jerusalem, spurred on by these prophets, resumed and completed the work.

Much of Zechariah's encouragement involved his emphasis on the Messiah. No other Old Testament book gives more information about Christ: His humble appearance and humanity, His rejection and suffering, His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, His priesthood and kingship, His glorious return to earth, and His ultimate victory and reign.

The first six chapters of Zechariah present visions of God in control of the world. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the responsibilities of God's people. The last five chapters are a series of prophetic visions of the future and the culmination of God's program in human history.

When it comes to fulfilling the will of God, the message of Zechariah is: "Of course you can." As chapter 4:6 says: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts."

KEY THOUGHT:

Rebuilding the post-exilic temple was nothing less than a vital and visual preparatory step for the coming Messiah and the ultimate Day of the Lord.

KEY VERSES:

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "'Grace, grace to it!'"
Zechariah 4:6-7

KEY ACTION:

Never be discouraged when the work seems small or slow, for God's Spirit uses little events and unknown people in powerful ways.

KEY PRAYER:

Lord, remind me that little is much if You are in it.

BASIC SURVEY

ZECHARIAH

AUTHOR: Zechariah, son of Berechiah (1:1); some believe a second, unnamed writer contributed chapters 9-14.

DATE: Approximately 520-475 BC.

IN TEN WORDS OR LESS

Jewish exiles should rebuild their temple—and anticipate their Messiah.

DETAILS, PLEASE

Like Haggai, another postexilic prophet, Zechariah urges Jewish people to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. He also gives several prophecies of the coming Messiah, including an end-times vision of a final battle over Jerusalem: Then “shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations. . . . And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives. . . . And the LORD shall be king over all the earth!” (14:3-4, 9 KJV).

QUOTABLE

> “Return to me,” declares the LORD Almighty, “and I will return to you!” (1:3 NIV).

UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL

Zechariah’s prophecy of the Messiah riding a donkey into Jerusalem (9:9) was fulfilled to the letter in Jesus’ “triumphal entry” (Matthew 21:1-11). The prophecy “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced” (12:10 KJV) refers to the Roman soldiers’ spearing of Christ after the Crucifixion (John 19:34).

SO WHAT?

Knowing that many of Zechariah’s specific prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus, we can trust that his other predictions—of the end time—will come true, too.

READ ZECHARIAH 1 AND 8.

- One-Month Course: your next reading is on page 173. →
- Three-Month Course: your next reading is on page 173. →
- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 171. →

CLOSER LOOK

ZECHARIAH’S MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

The book of Zechariah makes some astonishing prophecies about Jesus. First, it says, “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9 NIV). As Matthew 21:1-5 states, these things were fulfilled to the letter in Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

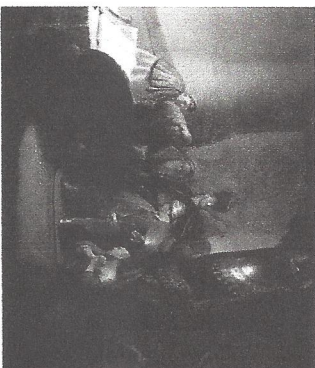
Another prophecy says, “So they counted out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—this magnificent sum at which they valued me! So I took the thirty coins and threw them to the potter in the Temple of the LORD” (Zechariah 11:12-13 NIV). This was fulfilled when Judas betrayed Jesus in Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-10.

In Mark 14:27 (NKJV) Jesus predicted that all His disciples would abandon Him, saying, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” He was quoting Zechariah 13:7. And it was fulfilled. When the mob came and arrested Jesus, “all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26:56 NKJV).

Finally, a fourth prophecy states, “Then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10 NKJV). The Gospel of John explains how this prophecy was fulfilled after Jesus had died on the cross (see John 19:31-37).

READ ZECHARIAH 9 AND 11.

- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 173. →



The book of Zechariah features prophecies about Jesus, including the betrayal of Judas. This painting by Rembrandt (1666-1669) is titled *Judas Returning the Thirty Silver Pieces*.

HIDDEN TREASURES

JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST

God had highly exalted Zerubbabel, the Jewish governor. God now exalted Joshua the high priest and described his great value. The Lord planned on mightily using Joshua, yet Zechariah saw Satan standing at his right hand, accusing him of sin and of being unworthy. But the Angel of the Lord rebuked Satan and called Joshua “a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire” (Zechariah 3:2 NLT). God then forgave Joshua’s sins and had him clothed in clean garments. He instructed Zechariah, “Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua. . . the high priest. . . He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne” (Zechariah 6:11, 13 NKJV).

READ ZECHARIAH 3 AND 6.

HIDDEN TREASURES

WHERE SPIRITS COME FROM

Some people imagine that human spirits preexist with God before coming to earth and are sent from heaven into a human body sometime before birth. However, if all spirits originate in heaven, this would mean that all human spirits are saved. All come from heaven and are therefore automatically destined to return there. Many people would gladly agree with this thought, but this isn’t the picture scripture gives. Where then do human spirits come from? The prophet Zechariah said that the Lord “stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1 NKJV). God literally forms a new eternal human spirit within the fertilized egg at the moment of conception.

READ ZECHARIAH 10 AND 12.

INTRODUCTION TO
ZECHARIAH

BACKGROUND

Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel prophesied of a remnant returning to their homeland after the exile. The Jews who return from Babylon to Jerusalem may have expected the promise to be fulfilled immediately. Instead, they still live under foreign rule and experience economic hardships. Out of discouragement, they stop rebuilding the temple. Prophets Haggai and Zechariah speak to this situation, challenging the people to finish the temple and worship their God.

Like the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, Zechariah, the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo (1:1, 7), is a priest. Zechariah’s name means “Yahweh remembers” or “Yahweh has remembered.” Born in Babylon, Zechariah moves to Jerusalem when Iddo returns as part of the group of returnees led by Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest (Neh 12:4). When he begins his ministry in 520 B.C. (1:1), Zechariah is considered a young man (2:4). He is mentioned by name in the Historical Book of Ezra (5:1, 6:14). According to Matthew 23:35, Zechariah was murdered.

OUTLINE

I. Zechariah’s Visions

- A. Introduction
- B. A series of eight visions
- C. Coronation of Joshua

II. Zechariah’s Messages

III. Judgment and Redemption

MESSAGE

Zechariah is considered the most Messianic book of the Old Testament—and one of the most difficult to understand. By relating visions—some apocalyptic—proclaiming messages, and delivering “burdens,” he draws the people to repentance, encourages them to rebuild the temple, looks to the coming Messiah, his triumph as well as his rejection, and describes how God will defeat the nations and cleanse his people through the Messiah. A coronation scene (6:9–15) of the priest Joshua is viewed as a Messianic passage.

TIME

Some of Zechariah’s ministry can be pinpointed by dates given in relation to the reign of King Darius: November 520 B.C. (1:1), February 519 B.C. (1:7), and December 518 B.C. (7:1). (See also the introduction to the book of Haggai.) Scholars tentatively give 510 B.C. as the end of Zechariah’s ministry, but chapters 9–14 may have been written even later. Zechariah most likely served longer than his contemporary Haggai.

1:1–6

1:7–6:8

6:9–15

7:1–8:23

9:1–14:21

Zechariah

"In three years, our school will have a new principal named Max, and he's going to make it an awesome school to attend," you tell your friends one day between classes. If your principal comes true, would your friends take your words seriously and think the new principal was something special?

You bet! And that's exactly what happened in the book of Zechariah.

Zechariah was a priest and a prophet, just like Jeremiah and Ezekiel. So it should come as no surprise that the book named after him focuses on the temple, priesthood, and the purification of the people. Haggai, his colleague, prophesied about rebuilding the temple and restoring their sacrificial offerings to God. Zechariah, on the other hand, focused on the people's relationship with God.

Three specific dates given in the book enable scholars to determine the approximate time it was written. The first two dates (1:1, 7) refer to the second year of King Darius (also known as Hystaspes) which scholars say occurred in 520 B.C. Incidentally, this prophecy correlates with the prophet Haggai (see the introduction to the book of Haggai). The third date (7:1) refers to King Darius's fourth year, giving it a date of 518 B.C.

Chapters 1–8 deal with rebuilding the temple, the priesthood, and the future of Jerusalem while chapters 9–14 address the distant future and the coming of the Messiah. Some skeptics question the change in direction of the last half of the book, speculating that chapters 9–14 were written by a different author. However, prophets were known to address the ever-changing social and political climate of the time. But a closer look at chapter 3 reveals that the messianic prophecies in Zechariah weren't limited to the last half of the book. This is where it gets exciting.

In chapter 3, God gives Zechariah a vision of the high priest Joshua, dressed in filthy clothes, standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan. The angel tells Joshua to exchange his filthy clothes with clean clothes, and then speaks on behalf of God saying, "If you walk in My ways and keep My instructions, you will both rule My house and

take care of My courts" (3:7). Think for a moment: who exchanged the filthiness of our sin for His holiness (2Co 5:21)? Who perfectly walked in God's ways (1Jn 2:6) and rules over His house (Heb 10:19-23)? Need a hint? The English translation of Joshua's name is Jesus!

Zechariah's messianic prophecies also give specific details regarding Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem (9:9, Mt 21:1-11), the blood money used in His betrayal (Zch 11:1-3), and His crucifixion on the cross with a spear thrust into His side (12:10).

Considering that the prophecies about Jesus were given 500 years before He fulfilled them, we can't help but take Scripture—and Jesus—seriously. That's even more amazing than if you had been able to predict your school's next principal three years ahead of time! Besides, where do you think your school will be in 500 years?

Author: Zechariah

Date: After the exile (around 520–518 B.C.)

What in the world is going on?

- 536 B.C. Construction begins on the second temple in Jerusalem
- ca 525 B.C. Buddhism founded by Siddhartha Gautama
- 525–524 B.C. Cleisthenes of Athens is archon (ruler) of the city-state of Athens
- 522–486 B.C. Darius I rules in Persia
- 520 B.C. Darius I rules the Persian Empire; Haggai prophesies in Jerusalem
- 520–518 B.C. Zechariah prophesies to the returned exiles in Jerusalem
- 520–486 B.C. During his reign over the Persian Empire, Darius I takes over the Punjab region in India; he controls Egypt as well
- 520 B.C. Haggai prophesies in Jerusalem
- ca 500 B.C. Democracy begins in Athens
- ca 500 B.C. Alexander I rules Macedonia
- 500–300 B.C. The Classical Age in Greece (conflicts with Persia through the conquests and death of Alexander the Great)
- 499 B.C. In Anatolia, Greek tyrant Histiaeus leads the Ionians in a revolt against the Persians; this led to the Greco-Persian Wars (492–449 B.C.) (A tyrant was a ruler who seized power)
- 496 B.C. Greek playwright Sophocles (*Oedipus the King*) is born
- 495 B.C. Athenian statesman Pericles is born; he had a hand in the construction of the Acropolis
- 494 B.C. Within the Roman Republic, the plebeians (Roman citizens) secede from Rome and form a tribunate
- ca 484 B.C. Noted historian Herodotus is born

Zechariah

Timeline	539 BC	538 BC	522-486 BC	October/November, 520 BC	February 15, 519 BC	December 7, 518 BC	March 12, 515 BC	445 BC
World Events	Cyrus capture of Babylon	Cyrus's decree allowing the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem	Reign of Darius I	Zechariah's first prophetic message	Zechariah's night visions	Zechariah's message on fasting	Completion of the temple	Reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls under Nehemiah's leadership
Biblical Events								

"I will put this third through the fire; I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say: They are My people, and they will say: Yahweh is our God" (1:3).

Who wrote Zechariah?
The prophet Zechariah (1:1)

Who were the recipients?

Zechariah spoke to the people who had returned from Babylonian exile to Jerusalem and Judah. About 50,000 people arrived in Jerusalem and the surrounding area in 538-537 B.C.

Where did it happen?

Zechariah's ministry takes place in Judah at the time of the return to Jerusalem by the Babylonian exiles, known as the postexilic period. When the time in exile was complete (Is 40:2), God prompted Cyrus, the king of Persia, to allow Judah to return to the promised land and rebuild the temple of the Lord (Is 44:28). Zechariah's ministry began with Cyrus's capture of Babylon (539 B.C.) and continued through the restoration of the temple. Shortly thereafter, Cyrus allowed Judah to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the temple (2Ch 36:21-23; Ezr 1:1-4; 6:3-5). According to Ezra, the first group of exiles returning to the land laid the foundation of the temple but then encountered many obstacles, which brought construction to a halt.

When was Zechariah written?
520-480 B.C.

What is Zechariah about?

- The people's need to return to the Lord. The prophet's eight visions reveal that God was calling His people to return wholeheartedly to Him.
- The coming of the Messiah. Zechariah is arguably the most messianic book in the Old Testament.

Why should women read Zechariah?

God does not desire His army of saints to be unprepared or unfit for battle. Obedience to the Lord often comes with opposition from the Devil. Women are not exempt from spiritual warfare—the war over souls. Even in the midst of great hostility, a past fraught with sin and disobedience by Israel's ancestors and a present heavily burdened with oppression, Zechariah's message is one of repentance in the face of the enemy. Zechariah is a reminder that there is great hope in the Lord for those who follow Him, and our ultimate hope is in Christ. There will be victory!

How do you read Zechariah?

Like the books of Daniel, Revelation, and portions of Ezekiel, Zechariah is an example of apocalyptic literature. It communicates revelations through visions or symbols and describes the consumption of history with graphic imagery. Zechariah spoke to the people who had returned from Babylonian exile to Jerusalem and Judah. Through Zechariah, the Lord exhorted the high priest Joshua and the people to be obedient and to complete the temple. Zechariah's visions have both present and future implications. The book's chiasm structure reveals the central focus of each vision (see "How do you read Ruth?", p. 394, for discussion of chiasm):

- (A) Jerusalem is comforted/anger toward the nations is displayed (1:8-17).
- (B) The enemies of Jerusalem/Judah are judged (1:18-21).
- (C) Jerusalem is restored (2:1-13).
- (D) Joshua foreshadows the high priesthood of Christ, the Branch (3:1-10).

Outline

- I. Visions in the Night (1:1-6:15)
 - A. A Call to Repentance (1:1-6)
 - B. Eight Visions (1:7-6:15)
 1. The First Vision: Horsemen (1:7-17)
 2. The Second Vision: Four Horns and Craftsmen (1:18-21)
 3. The Third Vision: Surveyor (2:1-13)
 4. The Fourth Vision: High Priest and Branch (3:1-10)
 5. The Fifth Vision: Gold Lampstand (4:1-14)
 6. The Sixth Vision: Flying Scroll (5:1-4)
 7. The Seventh Vision: Woman in the Basket (5:5-11)
 8. The Eighth Vision: Four Chariots (6:1-15)
- II. Covenant Expectations and Blessing (7:1-8:23)
 - A. A Question About Fasting (7:1-3)
 - B. A Perspective of the Past and the Future (7:4-8:23)
- III. The Coming of the Messiah (9:1-11:17)
 - A. Judgment on Zion's Enemies (9:1-8)
 - B. The Coming of Zion's King (9:9-17)
 - C. The Lord Restores His People (10:1-12)
 - D. Israel's Shepherds: Good and Bad (11:1-17)
- IV. The Return of the Messiah (12:1-14:21)
 - A. Judah's Security (12:1-9)
 - B. Mourning for the Pierced One (12:10-14)
 - C. The Cleansing of God's People (13:1-9)
 - D. The Establishment of the Lord's Kingdom (14:1-21)

- (D) The power of the Spirit of the Lord (4:1-14).
- (C) Sinners are removed from Jerusalem (5:1-4).
- (B) Wickedness is removed to Babylon (5:5-11).
- (A) The nations are judged, and Jerusalem's rightful king is restored (6:1-15).

The book, which many falsely believe is too difficult to understand, is essentially one of encouragement regarding God's final victory over the forces of darkness and evil in this world. The Gospel writers quoted from the book of Zechariah more than from any other book of the Minor Prophets because Zechariah foretold the ultimate triumph of the Messiah. Chapters 1-8 address how Israel will return to her God, and chapters 9-14 reflect how God will return to Israel, penultimately in Christ and ultimately in the eschaton. The book demonstrates that the Lord remembers His covenant promises to Israel and works to fulfill them.

ZECHARIAH

A. THE PROPHET'S INTRODUCTION (1:1–6)

B. A PLAN FOR THE PEOPLE'S RESTORATION (1:7—6:15)

1. A Vision of Preparation (1:7–17)
2. A Vision of Reflection (1:18–21)
3. A Vision of Reconstruction (2:1–13)
4. A Vision of Justification (3:1–10)
5. A Vision of Evangelization (4:1–14)
6. A Vision of Liberation (5:1–11)
7. A Vision of Fretfulness (6:1–8)
8. The Coronation of Joshua (6:9–15)

C. A SPIRITUAL PROBLEM IN THE PEOPLE'S RESTORATION (7:1—8:23)

1. The Problem of Religious Formality (7:1–14)
2. The Solution of Genuine Spirituality (8:1–23)

D. A SPECIFIC PROCESS IN THE PEOPLE'S RESTORATION (9:1—14:21)

1. The Way of Failure: Rejection of the Savior (9:1—11:17)
2. The Way of Deliverance: Receiving the Savior (12:1—14:21)

THE BIG PICTURE

A past filled with difficulty and broken relationships can overshadow the present. Though we have been forgiven for our sins and have turned away from them, we are not automatically freed from the struggles with sin. If we are not careful, these struggles can sap our enthusiasm for life and douse our hope for the future.

God's people in Judah probably experienced such a lack of hope. As a result of the repeated sins of their fathers, their families had been exiled from the promised land to Assyria and Babylonia. Seventy years later, because of a decree issued by King Cyrus, a remnant of Jews returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel. Their first goal was to rebuild God's house, but opposition from local residents dampened their initial enthusiasm. The work of rebuilding the temple was soon stopped.

To counter this hopelessness, God appointed the elderly Haggai and the young Zechariah to bring a message of encouragement to the returned exiles. They needed to continue rebuilding God's temple in Jerusalem. Zechariah, whose name means "God remembers," reminded the Jews that God had not forgotten them. Rather, God had a certain and dynamic plan for their restoration.

Hope for future blessing can provide great encouragement for persevering through present suffering. The promise of deliverance makes it possible for us to continue in the process of spiritual renewal. The book of Zechariah is a fascinating study of how God, through his prophets, led his hurting people from hopelessness to commitment, from self-examination and transformation to a deepening spiritual perception. Zechariah is an uplifting account of rebuilding and spiritual renewal.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL THEMES

DISAPPOINTMENT CAN LEAD TO DESPAIR

When faced with disappointment we have a choice: We can nurture our negative feelings, or we can confront them and find a solution. The people of God chose to hold on to their disappointments. This led to despair. To avoid despair we need to release our disappointments to God and confront those aspects of our pain that we can change. As we utilize the keys to spiritual renewal, our feelings of despair will pass. But we cannot just passively wait for our transformation. We need to become actively involved in God's plan for our spiritual renewal.

HOPE ENCOURAGES US TODAY

Zechariah's visions of the future gave hope to the people, helping them meet the tasks they faced each day. Our hope of God's complete transformation in our lives can encourage us to endure the pain that may be part of our spiritual growth today. If we follow God's will for us in faith, we will experience his transforming power, our hurt and confusion will fade, and we will discover the joy that only he can give.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL INVOLVES THE HEART

Zechariah told the people that God did not care about their facts or religious observances. What concerned God greatly was the attitudes of their hearts. Just as this was true for the people in Jerusalem in Zechariah's day, it is true for us today. Our spiritual renewal is not a matter of just doing and saying the right things either. Spiritual renewal can only occur as God changes our minds and hearts. As our hearts are transformed, our attitudes and actions will also be transformed. If we go through the motions without experiencing inner change, our spiritual renewal will be superficial. We need to be changed from the inside out.

Essential Facts

PURPOSE:

To encourage God's people to complete the task of rebuilding God's temple, their community and their lives.

AUTHOR:

The prophet Zechariah.

AUDIENCE:

The people living in Jerusalem, including those who had returned from Babylonian exile.

DATE WRITTEN:

Chapters 1–8 were written between 528 and 520 BC; chapters 9–14 were written around 480 BC.

SETTING:

The people had started to rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem but had failed to complete the task.

KEY VERSE:

"Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you" (9:12).

KEY PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS:

Zerubbabel, Joshua the priest and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

KEY PLACES:

Jerusalem and the temple.

ZECHARIAH

FOR A DOZEN YEARS OR more, the task of rebuilding the temple has been half completed. Zechariah is commissioned by God to encourage the people in their unfinished responsibility. Rather than exhorting them to action with strong words of rebuke, Zechariah seeks to encourage them to action by reminding them of the future importance of the temple. The temple must be rebuilt, for one day the Messiah's glory will inhabit it. But future blessing is contingent upon present obedience. The people are not merely building a building; they are building the future. With that as their motivation, they can enter into the building project with wholehearted zeal, for their Messiah is coming.

Zakar-yah means "Yahweh Remembers" or "Yahweh Has Remembered." This theme dominates the whole book: Israel will be blessed because Yahweh remembers the covenant He made with the fathers. The Greek and Latin version of his name is *Zacharias*.

WATCH WORDS

- inheritance (allotment or portion; rightful possession)—2:12
- might (force, human strength)—4:6
- wickedness (the bent and intent to practice evil)—5:8
- branch (shoot, limb, or twig from the main stem of a plant)—6:12
- grace (undeserved favor)—12:10 (also 4:7)

O N S C R I P T U R E

And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong. —Zechariah 8:13

Christ is to His people so many wonderful things and brings to them such a wealth of benefits as the mind cannot comprehend nor the heart find words to express.

These treasures are both present and to come. The Spirit of Truth, speaking through Paul, assures us that God has in Christ blessed us with all spiritual blessings. These are ours as sons of the new creation and are made available to us now by the obedience of faith.

Peter, moved by the same Spirit, tells us of an inheritance guaranteed us by the resurrection of Christ, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and undimmed, reserved in heaven for us. There is no contradiction here, for one apostle speaks of present benefits and the other of benefits yet to be conferred upon us at the coming of Christ. And both exhaust human speech to celebrate the many blessings which we have already received.

—Of God and Man

Personal Gold

from JAMES ROBISON

WHAT PRICE AUTHORITY?

Selfishness is epidemic in our day. Our culture teaches us from our earliest days to look out for number one, to pamper ourselves, and to encourage self-actualization, self-awareness, and self-esteem. As a result, we have become self-absorbed, self-concerned, and self-consumed. We also have become supremely unhappy and unfulfilled. The reason, says psychologist Paul Kellerman, is that "the only path to genuine happiness and fulfillment is through service to others. It is only as we give ourselves away that we can truly discover ourselves."

The whole of history contradicts our society's emphasis on self-service and self-satisfaction. We can learn some great lessons about servanthood and significance by observing the lives and work of men and women who put the interests of others before their own, who put the safety of others before their own, and who put the happiness of others before their own. Compare the lives of men like George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt with our modern-day obsession with self. The enormous contrast quickly becomes clear.

Our contemporary culture beckons us to "find ourselves" by turning inward. It entices us to "satisfy ourselves" by "being true to ourselves." But these heroes resisted the siren song of self-aggrandizement. They fought for justice, cared for the needy, worked for mercy, fed the hungry, and rescued the perishing. Their greatest accomplishments were the result of their servanthood—the key to significance, success, and even authority.

Sociologists have identified a link between social service and social authority. Whoever meets the needs of the people will gain the allegiance of the people. The administrators of many of our social service institutions understand this concept of social development very well. As a result of the entitlements they have bestowed on others, they have gained increasing authority.

But as Jesus taught his disciples, real authority comes when we humbly serve others:

"In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:25-27, NLT)

*We have become
self-absorbed,
self-concerned,
and self-
consumed. We
also have become
supremely
unhappy.*

Sadly, all too many of us have not fully grasped the link between charity, mercy, kindness, and authority. We have not fully understood that authority comes through service.

Lee Strobel: Reporter Turned Apologist

Lee Strobel graduated from Yale University and served as legal reporter for *The Chicago Tribune*. A spiritual cynic, he had lived as an atheist since high school and saw no need for God.

Several years into marriage, however, Lee's wife announced she had become a Christian. Over time, Lee noticed significant changes in his wife's life and decided to investigate Christianity for himself.

Lee's unexpected journey led him on a two-year mission to follow the evidence no matter what the conclusions. As he mentions in greater detail in his book *The Case for Christ*, Lee became convinced by the evidence that science supports the existence of a Creator who fits the Bible's description of God. In addition, he became persuaded through Jesus' fulfillment of numerous OT prophecies that Jesus really was the Messiah, the one God had promised to send.

Most importantly, Lee discovered that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus was based on historical facts from numerous eyewitnesses, not blind faith. All of this pointed to the conclusion that Jesus had suffered on the cross for our sins and conquered death on the third day.

On November 8, 1981, Lee took the step of faith to follow Jesus based upon the evidence that pointed toward Christ as God's Son. As a result, his story has influenced millions of people around the world. Through his writing and speaking, Strobel has helped many people find answers for their doubts and embrace the Christian faith.

A Warning against Oppression

Zechariah 7:8-10

IN THIS PASSAGE, the prophet Zechariah offers some generalized instructions for how we are to treat others ("Judge fairly" [Zechariah 7:9]). But he also gives a very specific command: "Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor" (7:10).

To oppress means to take advantage of, to victimize. In ancient times as well as today, it is usually the strong and powerful who oppress the weak and powerless. In some cases, oppression involves racial or socioeconomic differences. Another kind of oppression involves men and women—particularly single women, who are all too often oppressed financially or sexually.

Zechariah specifically mentions widows as victims of oppression. The equivalent social status in our time is single moms. Currently, many single mothers are desperately trying to juggle the conflicting demands of parenting and providing. Whether they are single because of divorce or the death of a spouse, such women are very often vulnerable to abuse and injustice at the hands of their employers and other authorities in their lives.

If God had spelled out every kind of moral infraction in the Bible, it would be millions of pages long. Instead, he commands us to practice general fairness and honesty in all we do. And in those cases when we have power or authority over others, we must take extra care to make sure we treat them as God wants us to.

ZECHARIAH

SPEAK THE TRUTH

Speaking the Truth About Our Future

Zechariah 9:9-17

No one knows what tomorrow may bring. We will go through many battles in our pursuit of spiritual renewal. There will be days when we face tremendous challenges, and we may lose courage and become fearful of our future. But we can find security in the future God has waiting for us by knowing the truth of God's promises and confessing this truth to ourselves and others.

Five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Zechariah wrote: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). This prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ (see Matthew 21:4-11). The prophet continued: "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit" (Zechariah 9:10-11).

Jesus fulfilled part of these prophecies when he came and lived on earth with his disciples. He delivered us from death by shedding his own blood to seal our pardon. And Jesus will come again, just as he promised (see John 14:3; Acts 1:11). When he comes, Jesus will bring peace on earth. Reminding ourselves of these truths and speaking these truths to others will give us courage to persevere through our spiritual battles.

Move on to Key 4 and turn to Genesis 33.

Self-Assessment on Fasting

Read: Zechariah 7:4–5

Habit: Fasting

Before beginning this exercise, review “A Model for Self-Assessment” on page 303.

▶ *Quote for reflection*—“If you say ‘I will fast when God lays it on my heart,’ you never will. You are too cold and indifferent to take the yoke upon you.”—D. L. Moody.⁴

▶ *Definition*—Fasting means going without food or drink for a specific period of time and for a Biblical purpose. (See “4 Things to Know about Fasting” on page 333.)

▶ *Meditate on the following passage*: “Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me: ‘Ask all the people of the land and the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?’” (Zec 7:4–5).

▶ *Evaluation*—Throughout history and in many cultures, fasting is considered a natural religious practice. Many Christians today, however, rarely if ever undertake the discipline of fasting. While Jesus expected we would fast, the Bible does not specifically mandate that we fast regularly. Still, if fasting is completely foreign to your way of life, you ought to examine the reasons you’ve never tried it. What is your primary reason for not fasting?

Drill-down questions:

1. Do I have any health-related issues that would prevent me from fasting? Any psychological issues (e.g., anorexia) that would be cause for concern?
2. What concerns or fears do I have about fasting?
3. When was the last time (if ever) that I fasted?
4. Do I fast for spiritual motives or do I seek additional benefits (e.g., losing weight)?
5. How has fasting affected my prayer life?
6. Am I able to fast in secret, without letting other people know what I’m doing?
7. Do I become more emotional when I fast? Does the hunger that comes with fasting cause me to be more sensitive, more prone to anger and frustration and so on?

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY: We miss out on the potential benefits of fasting when we never even attempt this discipline.

Fasting means going without food or drink for a specific period of time and for a Biblical purpose.

How to Return to God

Read: Zechariah 1:3

Habit: Obedience

What must a believer do when they find they’ve become mired in sin and ceased to be faithful to God? For the Israelites, this falling away was a common pattern and an all-too-common problem. But God tells Zechariah to offer his people the solution: “Return to me,” declares the Lord Almighty, “and I will return to you.” (Zec 1:3).

God only accepts true repentance that is accompanied by a commitment to following him in obedience.

▶ *Return truly repentant*—The question every believer must ask is, “Am I truly sorry for my sin or only sorry I got caught?” True repentance is accompanied by a heartfelt remorse over rebelling against our holy and sovereign Lord. As Charles Stanley says, “Christians shouldn’t just say, ‘Lord, I’m sorry for my mistake.’ Rather, they should acknowledge, ‘Lord, I have sinned against You.’”¹¹

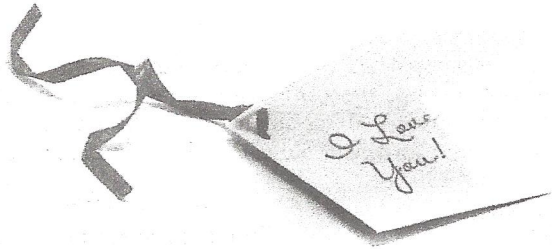
▶ *Return with a commitment to be obedient*—God only accepts true repentance that is accompanied by a commitment to following him in obedience. Our return to God is an “unconditional surrender.” We don’t get to set the conditions of our return; that is left to God. We either return willing to be faithful in obeying his commands or we are not really returning at all.

▶ *Return as you are*—Billy Graham claims he was saved in 1934 in a revival meeting after hearing the hymn “Just As I Am.” Graham would later use the song as an altar call song in the Billy Graham crusades throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.² The second verse of the famous hymn reads,

Just as I am—and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
—O Lamb of God, I come!³

Too often we believers think we can’t return, “Just as I am.” Instead, we feel we have to “get our life straight” before we come back to God and reenter fellowship with other believers. But the offer of grace extends to us too. If we are truly repentant and committed to obedience, all we have left to do is to say, “O Lamb of God, I come!”

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY: Believers who have fallen away can return to the Lord by repenting and committing to being obedient.



7 minutes on
celebration

celebration

Good Medicine

Laurie scooped her fussy baby out of the bath. It had been days since she'd been out of the house or had an adult conversation. She was elated that tonight was her friend's birthday celebration. *Finally, a night off!* she thought.

Laurie laid Maggie on the vanity, squeezed a glob of medicated cream into her palm, capped the tube, then tossed it by the sink. By the time Brad sauntered into the bathroom to get ready for work, Maggie's diaper was securely in place, but she was still crying.

"Remember, tonight is Gloria's party!" Laurie shouted over the wailing.

Brad took his toothbrush out of the holder. "Sorry, sweetheart, but I've got a late meeting."

"But you promised you'd watch Maggie." Laurie jostled the baby, tears welling up in her eyes. "I really need a break."

Brad jammed his loaded toothbrush into his mouth but suddenly yanked it out. "Yuck!" He sputtered, spitting into the sink. "What the—?" He pawed at the white film on his tongue, then snatched the tube. "Diaper cream?"

Laurie's eyes darted from the tube to the foam around Brad's mouth. She bit her lip to hold back the tiny giggle, but it escaped. A snort of laughter quickly followed. Brad spit into the sink, then he began to chuckle too. Before they knew it, both of them were laughing so hard, Maggie started to clap her chubby little hands.

Brad lifted their daughter out of Laurie's arms. "I think I just got a taste of your day, sweetheart." He leaned over and planted a medicated-scented kiss on Laurie's lips. "I'll rearrange the meeting and be home early."

Laughter is the best medicine—an integral part of emotional health, and an integral part of any marriage.

Today's Thought

based on Zechariah 2:10

"Any good friend will tell you that laughter is the shortest distance between two people, especially in marriage."

Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott,

Joy Breaks for Couples

Read Together:

He Reads: Proverbs 15:30

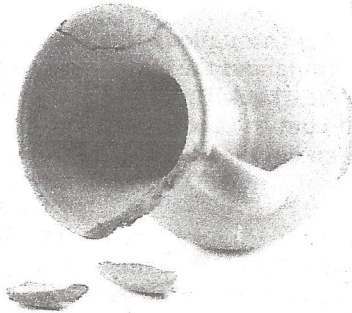
She Reads: Proverbs 17:22

Pray Together:

Thank you, Lord, for the restorative gift of laughter! May it find its way into our lives more frequently.

For more on this topic, turn to page 1171.
For the next reading, turn to page 1031.

7 minutes on
unconditional
acceptance



unconditional acceptance

Replacing Self-Reliance

Marlena was a young widow with four children to rear and no real employment skills. She continually preached to her kids to get an education so they could rely on themselves and not end up in her situation.

Lisa, the eldest, began earning money babysitting when she was ten, and worked her way through college and up the ladder to supervisor as a nurse at the hospital. A confirmed workaholic, she hadn't developed many interests outside of work.

She married Brent, an anesthesiologist who loved all things outdoors. Issues started creeping into their marriage when she refused to cut back her overtime in order to enjoy days off with him. Yet he frequently displayed his unswerving love for her and patiently repeated that she could trust him to provide financially for their family. He wanted her to find balance in life, enjoy friends and hobbies, and above all, trust him as her partner.

Eventually Lisa realized, much to her dismay, that she had always focused on her earning power while ignoring other aspects of her life. After exploring her options, she signed up for a continuing education class in photography and soon fell in love with a hobby that complimented Brent's love of the outdoors. She also joined a women's Bible study and intentionally sought to be more dependent on God's provision.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 lauds the value of interdependency: "Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor." Brent's unconditional acceptance, patience, and persistence offered Lisa the security to nurture her own development as a woman. In turn, Lisa moved beyond self-reliance to a stronger, interdependent relationship with Brent. For the richest marriage, each partner needs to nurture their spouse and themselves. Doing so produces a wonderful cycle of growth that promises to bear much fruit.

Today's Thought
based on Zechariah 4:6

"Wholeness is found [when] . . . two people with self-respect and dignity make a commitment to nurture [their] own growth as well as [their] partner's."

Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott,
Saving Your Second Marriage

Read Together:

He Reads: Jeremiah 17:7-8

She Reads: John 13:14

Pray Together:

All-knowing God, lead us to wholeness and a rich interdependent relationship.

For more on this topic, turn to page 1055.
For the next reading, turn to page 1035.

Answered Prayer

A For Sale sign hung in front of the house Samantha thought she wanted more than anything in the world. It was calling her name. She phoned Mike to tell him the news.

Mike knew her feelings about the house and drove by later that day to get the realtor's number. They made an appointment to look at it after work the following day. Samantha prayed all day that it would be as perfect on the inside as it was on the outside.

After visiting the house, Mike and Samantha agreed it was right for them and signed the contract. They were almost ready to complete the sale when Mike came home with the news that his long-awaited job promotion had finally come through. Though it had taken a year for the company to choose him, he was expected to report to his new position in two weeks . . . in Seattle, nearly two thousand miles away.

Samantha was torn. God had seemed to answer her prayer and make all things come together when their dream home came along, but now Mike was willing to move away. Yet before the dream home, they'd both been praying for this promotion. It not only doubled Mike's salary, but Samantha could quit working and they could start their family.

When they finally talked it through, Samantha agreed that a family was more important than a house, and they moved to Seattle. Learning to decide and pray together for what is most important was a lesson that helped their marriage—and that can be invaluable to yours too.

All couples face times when they can't agree. Sometimes it's trivial, like what to have for dinner. But, like Samantha and Mike, you and your spouse will, at some point, have to decide how to deal with two conflicting sets of desires and dreams. It is better to go to God in agreement on things that affect you both.

Today's Thought

based on Zechariah 10:1

"The strength of a man and woman joined together in God's sight is far greater than the sum of the strengths of each . . . because the Holy Spirit unites them and gives added power to their prayers."

Stormie Omartian,
The Power of a Praying Wife

Read Together:

He Reads: Romans 12:10

She Reads: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Pray Together:

Lord, help us to hang on to the cord of three strands as we pray to ensure our connectedness with each other and with you.

For more on this topic, turn to page 1093.
For the next reading, turn to page 1041.

How Were People Saved before Christ?

Jim Wallace

As Christians, we believe that we are saved by the grace of God, through faith in the Savior (Jesus Christ). But what about all those people who lived and died before Jesus was ever born? If faith in the Savior is required, how could they be saved prior to His appearance?

Well, those who lived before Jesus were saved in the same way that you and I are saved; by grace through faith in the God who saves. These early believers understood the nature of grace; David wrote about God's forgiveness and grace (Ps 32:1-5), and he was fully aware of the nature of God's free gift of salvation (Rm 4:6-8). Ancient followers of God knew they were saved by faith, even though the Savior had not yet arrived (Heb 11:13). They certainly knew that their good works couldn't save them; Isaiah knew that all his righteous acts were like "a polluted garment" (Is 64:6), and David knew that animal sacrifices weren't enough to earn God's favor (Ps 40:6).

Followers of God who lived before Jesus placed their faith in the coming Savior, who was described from the earliest of times. God told Adam and Eve that one of their descendants would eventually defeat Satan (Gn 3:15), and Abraham understood that God would provide a sacrifice for sin (Gn 22:8). We know that Abraham's faith saved him (Gn 15:6; Rm 4:3) and we know that he placed that faith in a Savior he eagerly expected God to send (Jn 8:56). Job also had faith in a Redeemer (Jb 19:25-26). Moses not only believed in the coming Messiah, but also anticipated the reward of salvation (Heb 11:26) and wrote Scripture that pointed to the coming Savior (Jn 5:46).

The prophets also spoke about the coming Savior. Enoch, we are told by Jude, talked about the second coming of the Messiah (Jd 14) even though he didn't write about it in Scripture. It is reasonable to assume that Enoch also talked about Jesus' *first* coming and His mission on earth. Believers heard about the Messiah from their prophets who described where He would be born (Mc 5:2), how He would be betrayed (Zch 11:12), how He would die (Is 53:5) and the fact that He would be resurrected (Ps 16:10; Is 26:19). So much was written and foretold about the Savior that even those who preceded Jesus were capable of recognizing His arrival (Ac 10:43). The details were noticed by those who earnestly searched the Scriptures in search of God's will. That's why Jesus expected that someone like Nicodemus, an expert on the Scriptures, should understand the truth of the gospel beforehand (Jn 3:10).

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was planned by God from the beginning of time (Rv 13:8), and those who loved God and lived before Jesus believed that their sins would be atoned by the Savior (Is 53:6; Rm 3:25). Just like us, these early believers were saved by grace alone, through the Savior alone, even though their understanding was not as complete as ours is today.

REFLECTIONS

Not by the eloquence of a man, not by good music, not by good preaching, but it is by the Spirit that God works His mighty works.

Oh, that we could realize now the importance of throwing ourselves back on God and on the power of His Spirit, for there will be a day when we will have nothing but God. We had better act now while we can do something about it and bring the Holy Spirit of God back into the Church.

Bring Him back by prayer, by obedience, by confession—until He takes over in our midst! Then there will be light, life, power, victory, joy, and blessed fruit that will come to us. With His guidance and power we can live upon a different level altogether—a level that we never dreamed possible before. Yes, it is so!

—The Counselor

1:1-6 Zechariah confronted the Jews with their sin. These people had recently returned from Babylonian exile, so the prophet reminded them that God would deal with their sins just as he had punished their ancestors with the captivity they had recently escaped. It is never safe to ignore such a call to turn back to God. Hearing demands heeding! God's promises of future comfort, victory, and deliverance must not lead us to a false sense of security. Neglected spiritual opportunities are lost opportunities.

1:18-21 Similar to one of Daniel's visions, the vision of the four horns (the horn being a symbol of power) and the four blacksmiths gave hope to the Jewish people. Eventually their oppressors would be overthrown. Today we, too, can find courage and hope in the fact that God will eventually overthrow the oppressive powers that seek to dominate us.

2:1-13 The vision of the man with a measuring line concerned the reconstruction and repatriation of Israel. Many of the Jews had become comfortable in exile and were reluctant to return to Palestine. They were probably afraid they would return to a land of confusion and strife. There was no need to fear, however, for God had promised a future of prosperity and peace. We also are given the assurance of God's special protection. If we want to escape our bondage, we need to trust God and follow his plan for our deliverance.

7:8-10 For the exiles, the test of their faith was simple: love for others (Leviticus 19:18), especially the helpless—widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. The final step—and ultimate proof—of our spiritual renewal is our desire to help others who are suffering. As we reach out to offer them the second chance that we have already received, we will discover the joy of loving others, and our own spiritual lives will be strengthened as a result.

7:11-14 Here we are reminded of how the ancestors of Zechariah's Jewish audience had ignored all of God's appeals to show compassion to the poor and helpless. Because they would not listen to God, he refused to listen to their prayers. Merely attending church or performing religious acts will be of no profit if our hearts are not willing to obey God and our lives are not surrendered to him. True emotional and spiritual healing always involves obedience to God's revealed will.

8:1-17 The most important way to identify true religion is to see how it affects our daily lives. God promised wonderful blessings should the Jews complete the task of rebuilding his Temple. Their action in rebuilding God's house would prove their commitment to his revealed will. We cannot stop once we

>WORD|study

1:2 Extremely angry (cp. "fiercely angry," v. 15; "provoked . . . to anger," 8:14) captures the emphasis of the Hebrew sentence, which begins with the verb (Hb *qatsaph*, "break out, break forth" into anger)—"he was angry"—and ends with its nominal form (Hb *qatsaph*, "anger"; cp. 7:12). Use of either the noun or verb typically conveys a level of anger that moves someone to action. Such anger cannot be contained as an emotion or expressed only in words. Therefore, the word is used of God's wrath, particularly when He inflicts punishment or is likely to demonstrate His anger in acts of judgment (e.g., Nm 16:46; Jos 22:20; 2Ch 24:18; 32:25-26; Ps 38:1; Is 34:2). Even though in the Old Testament these two forms of the word (i.e., the verb with its "cognate" as an object) appear together only in Zch 1:2 and 15, God's disposition toward Israel's ancestors was the result of the nation's apostasy as predicted in Dt 29:24-28.

1:3 The command to return (Hb *shuv*) conveys what happens when people repent. They stop walking away from the Lord and "turn around." Abandoning their disobedient and rebellious way of life, they receive God's grace and embrace His standards of holiness. The Lord's promise to "return" (Hb *shuv*) recognizes that God, who is holy, turns His back on sin but longs for restored fellowship with those who will do the same. Therefore, He had told His people through "the earlier prophets" to "turn (Hb *shuv*) from [their] evil ways and . . . evil deeds" (cp. 2Kg 17:13; Jr 18:11; 25:5; 35:15; Ezk 33:11). These "ancestors" had "repented" (Hb *shuv*, Zch 1:6) but not in time to escape His judgment (see Ezr 9:1-10:17; Dn 9:1-19).

1:6 The verb overtake (Hb *nasag*, "reach, attain"; cp. Gn 44:4; Ex 14:9) vividly depicts the covenant promises of the eternal God pursuing or chasing down His people as they tried to get away from Him and go their own way. God had done what He had purposed (Hb *zamam*, "have in mind"; cp. 8:14-15) to do in the description of the blessings (Dt 28:2) and curses (Dt 28:15,45), which would "overtake" His people according to their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the covenant (cp. Jr 4:28; 51:12; Lm 2:17).

9:9-10 Matthew quoted Zechariah's prophecy of a coming king when describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:4-5; cp. Jn 12:14-15). Verse 9 applied to Jesus' actions at that time, but verse 10 referred to the end of warfare against Ephraim (i.e., Israel) and Jerusalem, and peace among nations. These things did not occur before Jesus' crucifixion, and in fact warfare against Jerusalem took place when the Jews revolted against Rome in A.D. 66-70. Obviously, such warfare has not ended in our time.

Like many messianic prophecies in the OT, verses 9-10 appear to combine more than one appearance of the Messiah. That is, it did not distinguish between Christ's first coming and triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His second coming when He will establish His kingdom on earth. Other places in Zch predict things that would happen to Jesus Christ either in His first coming (11:4-14) or in His second coming (14:4).

KEY VERSE

"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (13:1).

ZECHARIAH

What's in a Name?

The name Zechariah means "the LORD remembers."

INSPIRATIONS

Zechariah related nine different supernatural visions given to him regarding the rebuilding of the nation of Israel.

In the Word

- ▶ Several prophetic references to the Messiah are found in Zechariah: Jesus' triumphal entry, riding on a donkey (9:9); Jesus, pierced on the cross (12:10); the arrest of Jesus and the scattering of his disciples (13:7).
- ▶ Zechariah and Haggai were both written to encourage the returned remnant of Israel to complete the rebuilding of the temple and serve the Lord.

BY THE NUMBERS

14 CHAPTERS
211 VERSES
5,590 WORDS

LIFE LESSONS: God sees when his people are mistreated, and he will right every wrong (12:1-5).

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI?

ZECHARIAH IN REVIEW

- ⌚ TIME TRAVELER**
1. You are Zechariah the prophet. God gave you the word, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." Who are you to give this message to?

- **MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY**
2. Zechariah saw a man standing among myrtle trees, and behind him were horses of three different colors. Which of the following was not one of the colors?

- A. Red
- B. Black
- C. Brown
- D. White

- **HOT SEAT**
3. My son is Berechiah, and his son is Zechariah the prophet. What is my name?

- **HOT SEAT**
4. I (Zechariah) saw a solid gold lampstand with a tree on each side. What kind of trees do I see?

- ⌚ TIME TRAVELER**
5. In Zechariah, what does God say Jerusalem will be called?

- ⌚ TIME TRAVELER**
6. You (Zechariah) looked up again, and there before you were "four chariots coming out from between two mountains." What were the mountains made of?

- **MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY**
7. What does God say will make the young men thrive?

- ⌚ TIME TRAVELER**
8. You are the staff that represents the family bond of Israel and Judah. What is your name?

- **MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY**
9. How much of the population of the land does God say will be struck down and perish?

- A. One-fourth of the people
- B. Three-fifths of the people
- C. Two-thirds of the people
- D. One-half of the people

MALACHI IN REVIEW

- ⌚ TIME TRAVELER**
1. God said he would leave Edom's inheritance to you. Who are you?

- A. Prophets of Israel
- B. The desert jackals
- C. Children of Israel
- D. Sons of Pharaoh

- **HOT SEAT**
2. I am what the one true God seeks. What am I?

- A. Godly offspring
- B. Righteousness
- C. Forgiveness
- D. Sacrifice

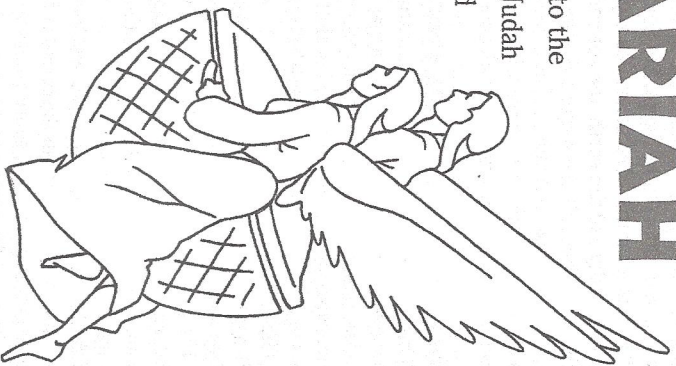
- **MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY**
3. God says he will be quick to testify against three things. Which of the following is not one of them?
- A. Sorcerers
 - B. Adulterers
 - C. Oppressors of the fatherless
 - D. Those who are stumbling blocks

ANSWERS:

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AN INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH

Zechariah was a prophet to the exiles who returned to Judah from Babylon. He encouraged the people to commit themselves to God and finish rebuilding the temple. The first half of this book reports Zechariah's visions which contained many strange symbols. The second half contains many prophecies about Jesus Christ, the Messiah.



WHO'S THE WOMAN IN THE FLYING BASKET?
SEE ZECHARIAH 5:5-11.

Headlines

ANGELS PATROL THE EARTH
Zechariah 1, page 1297

SCROLL FLIES AWAY
Zechariah 5, page 1299

KING TAKES A DONKEY RIDE
Zechariah 9:9-17, page 1304

SHEEP WANDER, BUT GOATS PUNISHED
Zechariah 10:2-3, page 1305

What's In It For Me?

WHY I HAVE HOPE . . . ALL
GOD MY FAILURES.
GOD MY SIN. AWAY
GOD SAVE ME. JESUS TO
JESUS TO RULE THE WORLD.

ZECHARIAH

TURN FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS

In the eighth month of Darius' second year as king, the Lord spoke his word to the prophet Zechariah, who was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo. He said, ²"The Lord was very angry with your ancestors. ³Tell the people, 'This is what the Lord of Armies says: Return to me, declares the Lord of Armies, and I will return to you, says the Lord of Armies.' ⁴Don't be like your ancestors, who heard the earlier prophets preach to them, 'This is what the Lord of Armies says: Turn from your evil ways and your evil deeds.' But they didn't listen or pay attention to me, declares the Lord. ⁵Your ancestors—where are they now? And the prophets—are they still alive? ⁶Didn't my warnings and my laws, which I've commanded my servants the prophets to preach, finally catch up with your ancestors? Then your ancestors turned away from their sins and said, 'The Lord of Armies has done to us what he had planned to do. He has dealt with us as our ways and deeds deserve.'"

THE LORD WILL COMFORT ZION

⁷On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (the month of Shebat) in Darius' second year as king, the Lord spoke his word to the prophet Zechariah, who was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo.

⁸During that night I saw a man riding on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, chestnut, and white horses.

⁹"What do these horses mean, sir?" I asked.

The angel who was speaking with me answered, "I will show you what they mean."

¹⁰The man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They're the horses the Lord has sent to patrol the earth." ¹¹Then they reported to the Messenger of the Lord standing among the myrtle trees, "We have patrolled the earth. The whole world is at rest and in peace."

¹²Then the Messenger of the Lord said, "Lord of Armies, how much longer until you show compassion to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? You've been angry with them for 70 years." ¹³The Lord responded to the angel who was speaking with me, using kind and comforting words.

¹⁴The angel who was speaking with me said, "Announce: This is what the Lord of Armies says: I'm very jealous about Jerusalem and Zion, ¹⁵and I'm very angry with the nations who think they are at ease. I was only a little angry, but they made things worse. ¹⁶This is what the Lord of Armies says: I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion. My house will be rebuilt in it, declares the Lord of Armies. A measuring line will be used to rebuild Jerusalem.

¹⁷"Announce again: This is what the Lord of Armies says: My cities will overflow with prosperity once more. The Lord will again comfort Zion and will again choose Jerusalem."⁷