Zechariah

A Call to Faithfulness and Hope, revealing God's future deliverance.

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History:

Zechariah (along with Haggai and Malachi) are the three postexile prophets who ministered to the small remnant of Jews who returned to Judah to rebuild the Temple and their nation. Like Haggai, Z encouraged discouraged people to finish rebuilding the Temple, but his message spoke far into the future. With spectacular apocalyptic imagery and graphic detail, he told of God's rescue plan through the Messiah—including the second coming and the end of time. This book provides details of Jesus' life written 500 years before their fulfillment. It is the largest book of the Minor Prophets and includes more eschatology than all the other books combined.

Zechariah is a stirring message of hope, and an invitation to return to faith—written to the first group of Jews allowed to return to Jerusalem in 538 BC under Cyrus, King of Persia, who defeated the Babylonians. The book has two main parts, which anticipate the completion of the Temple and, ultimately, the future reign of the Messiah. The first contains eight prophetic visions and two oracles (written 520-518 BC). The second part was written after the Temple was completed in 480 BC) and includes prophecies about Israel's future and God's great plan through Christ.

Zechariah means "He whom the Lord Remembers," which is appropriate and timely as He reminds discouraged people that God remembers His promises.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, declares the Lord Almighty, and \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_, says the Lord Almighty. (Zechariah 1:3)

Zechariah reverses the question of whether God will be faithful to us to the real question, will we be faithful to Him? Our relationship with God is conditional, not based on works but on faith. Rick Warren says, "every promise has a premise." Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. (9:12) Zechariah told the remnant Jews to return to God; they listened, and He remembered His promises.

1. God gives us the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we need.

Zechariah saw the people's strain and did not shake his finger at how they got it wrong; instead, he inspired them. Once they turned to God – He filled them with Hope through these eight visions, the messages, and later the Oracles. Each of these visions addresses a current issue that would motivate them to stay on task so that God would be glorified. God knew His people needed encouragement. He provided a peek into the future to give them the assurance they needed.

Zerubbabel, the governor who oversaw the Temple construction, was discouraged, as was Joshua, the High Priest. God gave them a personal word, Verse 4:9 – "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this Temple; his hands will also complete it. Vision 4 to Joshua – Restoration of the Priestly Line.

1. This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel and says to us too: Not by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ nor by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but by \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ says the Lord. (4:6) (**Key Verse)**

Zerubbabel needed God's help to build the Temple. God told Him the only way was daily dependence on God, not group might or personal power. We get into trouble when we rely on our strength versus God's. God wants His supply and our reliance on the Spirit to be continual.

We need to trust God's power and be obedient in the waiting. It is hard to wait instead of taking matters into our own hands but it is critical that we do. Zech 6:15 says, "Those who are far away will come and help to build the Temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you **diligently obey** the LORD your God."

How many of you need to know that God has your back? Sometimes God gives us a peek into the future, a word of encouragement, needed comfort, or wisdom. He has a good plan, even when circumstances don't show it.

**The Gold Lamp and the Two Olive Trees**

This vision showed how instrumental Zerubbabel and Joshua were to God’s plan, and it helped them stay faithful. The two oak trees are the never-ending oil for the lampstands (this vision is understood from past generations from the Lampstand in the Tabernacle in Exodus 25:31 and later in Revelations 11:4). The two trees are the Kingship and the High Priest. The branches from the tree are Zerubbabel (the Kingship and genealogy of Christ) and the Priest Joshua, which means "the Lord saves," a precursor to the Messiah.

1. God gives us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so we can live with hope in the here and now.

The Oracles: Judgment on Israel's enemies, Blessings for His people, The Coming of Christ, His second coming, and His Reign forever. Read Zech 9:9–11 and 14:8-9.

Zachariah is a call to be faithful. God uses words and visions to tell us He has a perfect plan that ends well.

Will we become the kind of people ready to participate in God's kingdom, the faithful remnant? God's eternal hope and blessings are conditional and will only come if we are faithful. We may never see more than a moment ahead, but we can be secure if we trust Him. Read Zechariah and strengthen your faith in God – He alone is the reason for our hope and security.

Questions:

1. Do you find it hard to look past your present circumstances and trust God?
2. What is God calling you to do: To return? To obedience? To prioritize Him? To turn from self-reliance to God-reliance?
3. Do you believe God's promises are conditional?
4. How does knowing there is a happy ending help you in the here and now?
5. How do you think your faith motivates you to give your best?
6. How does Zechariah encourage you?
7. Has the Lord spoken to you in a personal way? Through a scripture, dream, or vision?

## [Zechariah's Eight Visions (Zechariah 1:7-6:8)](https://johnmarkhicks.com/2012/01/11/zechariahs-eight-visions-zechariah-17-68/)

The visions of Zechariah renew the Abrahamic promise to post-exilic Israel—God intends to bless Israel so that all nations might be blessed.

1. Myrtle Trees – Peace among the Nations in the Earth (1:7-17).

2. Four Horns – Judgment of the Nations for their Evil (1:8-21).

3. Measuring Line – The Habitation of Jerusalem (2:1-13).

4. Joshua – Restoration of the Priestly Line (3:1-10).

5. The Gold Lampstand the Two Olive Trees - Zerubbabel – Restoration of the Royal Line (4:1-14).

6. Flying Scroll – Removal of Sin from Israel (5:1-4).

7. Woman in a Basket – Removal of Sin from the Nations (5:5-11).

8. Four Chariots – Peace among the Nations in the Earth (6:1-8).

The visions begin and end with peace among the nations. The first peace, however, is illusionary because the land of Israel and Jerusalem are still lamenting their loss. In contrast, the final peace results from God's renewal of his grace toward Israel and Jerusalem.

The second and seventh visions focus on the nations as well. While the first vision judges them for their malicious treatment of God's people, the seventh vision sees the removal of the wickedness of the nations that prepares for peace on the earth among the nations.

The third and sixth visions focus on Israel in their land. The resettlement and prosperity of Jerusalem in the third vision are connected to the removal of sin from the land by the return of God to the Temple.

The fourth and fifth visions restore the royal and priestly lines to Israel in a functioning theocratic and cultic (temple) nation. God again reigns from the Temple in Jerusalem and heals the wounds of his people.

The visions, then, move us from a picture of the earth (nations) through the Holy Land (Israel) to the cultic center of Israel (the Temple in Jerusalem) and then out of Jerusalem through the Holy Land to the whole earth. God is moving among the nations to show mercy to the land of Israel by renewing the temple presence so that Israel might be a blessing to the nations (the whole earth).