

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
INTRODUCTION
ZECHARIAH 1:1-3

The Old Testament book of *Zechariah* was written around 520 B.C.

The name *Zechariah*, means "*the Lord remembers.*" He came from the tribe of Levi. He was a priest, born in Babylon. So, like *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, *Zechariah* was both a priest as well as a prophet.

Zechariah contains a tremendous revelation regarding the Name of God. The Name of God that is used most frequently by him is "*the Lord of hosts*" which occurs approximately 50 times. In fact, it appears 3 times in 1:3!

We are going to see in our journey through this book that *Zechariah* wrote in great detail about various aspects of Israel.

- 1. Israel's restoration is discussed 19 times!**
- 2. Israel's future forgiveness is mentioned 7 times!**
- 3. 9 times it says that the Lord will dwell in the midst of His people!**

There are also other striking repetitions of terms:

- 1. The words "*nations*," "*peoples*," and related terms appear 24 times!**
- 2. The words "*Jerusalem*," "*Zion*," and other references to the city of *Jerusalem* appear 44 times!**
- 3. References to Jesus as the "*stone*," "*headstone*" or "*cornerstone*" appear 5 times!**

When we went through the book of *Haggai*, we saw that *Zerubbabel* was the governor in charge during the rebuilding of the Temple.

By finishing the *Temple* at that time, *Zerubbabel* serves as a hidden pointer to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith! (Cf. *Haggai* 2:23)

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- 1. At least 12 times it is written that the Lord will reign over the entire world in the future, that He has His eye on all of the nations, and that He is their Judge!**
- 2. 6 times we read that *Israel* will know the Lord and will repent!**
- 3. 5 times we read about the Lord's return!**

Together with *Haggai* and *Malachi*, *Zechariah* belongs to the three prophets who are known as the "*post-exile prophets*" or "*prophets of the return.*"

Zechariah belonged to a group of 42,360 people (*Ezra* 2:64) who returned to *Jerusalem* from *Babylonian captivity* through the decree of *Persia's King Cyrus* (*Ezra* 1:2-4 and *Isaiah* 44:28). *Ezra*, *Zerubbabel*, *Joshua*, and *Nehemiah* also belonged to the number who returned.

Zechariah was a contemporary of the prophet *Haggai* (*Ezra* 5:1 and 6:14). He began his ministry as a prophet only two months after *Haggai's* first message (cf. *Haggai* 1:1 and *Zechariah* 1:1).

Haggai rebuked and admonished the Jewish people in *Jerusalem* not to be negligent in rebuilding the *Temple*, but *Zechariah's* message is more one of glad tidings regarding the future.

The prophets presented two quite different, yet complementary, messages, and both were important and necessary for the people.

Haggai only wrote 2 chapters; *Zechariah* wrote 14 chapters.

Zechariah, like *Jeremiah*, was called to be a prophet as a very young man (*Zechariah* 2:4, also see *Jeremiah* 1:6-7).

On the other hand, we understand that *Haggai* was probably older.

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While *Haggai* only prophesied for a few months, *Zechariah's* ministry is believed to have lasted 30 or more years.

Haggai proclaimed more practical application of God's Word. His message focused on the *Israelites* negligence in rebuilding the *Temple*.

Zechariah spoke more about prophecy, dealing with Israel's future and her spiritual restoration.

Regarding Israel's future, *Zechariah* says more in his 14 chapters than any other prophet.

This, however, does not mean that *Haggai's* message was not prophetic; nor does it mean that *Zechariah's* message was without instruction or correction.

The book of *Zechariah* is described as the most *Messianic*, apocalyptic and eschatological of all *Old Testament Scriptures*; therefore, *Zechariah* is the most *Christ-centered* prophet of the *Old Covenant*.

He speaks more about *Christ*, His work and glory than all of the other minor prophets combined. The *Scofield Bible* says that no prophetic book in the *Old Testament* contains so many prophecies concerning *Christ*, *Israel* and the nations, in such a short amount of space as *Zechariah*.

With regard to the person of *Christ*, *Zechariah* writes about the ***Branch*** who will come as the crowned *Priest* and *King*.

We also find a vision of *Jesus'* entry into *Jerusalem* on a donkey, which combines the *First and Second Coming of Christ*.

We see Him as the One Who was pierced on the Cross, the One Who was smitten by God.

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We see Him as the true Shepherd, in contrast to the foolish shepherd, who is a picture of the Antichrist.

Jesus is portrayed as the One Who will return to the Mount of Olives for the salvation of His people.

Zechariah's prophecies concern *Jesus'* First and Second Comings, including His future rule, His priesthood, His kingship, His humanity, His divinity, His building of the Temple, His coming in humility, His bringing of peace, His rejection and re-acceptance, His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver and other things.

Further, in his general prophecies, *Zechariah* describes the last attack of *Jerusalem* by the nations, the initial victory of the enemies, the division of the *Mount of Olives*, the defense of *Jerusalem* through the Lord's return, His judgment upon the nations and the changing of the earth's surface in the land of *Israel*.

He also describes the glory of the Lord that fills the *Temple*. He explains the *Feast of Tabernacles* in the millennium of peace, in which other nations will be joined to His people. And finally, He explains that living water will flow from the *Temple* in *Jerusalem*.

He prophesies that all *Israel's* sins will be forgiven and speaks of the ultimate holiness of *Jerusalem* and the *Jews*.

So, we shouldn't be surprised to that there are over 40 quotations and references to *Zechariah* in the *New Testament*. Also, this could be one of reasons why that the Jewish rabbis do not know what to do with this book.

For instance, *Abrabanel*, a great Jewish exegete and author of many commentaries, confessed that he was not capable of explaining *Zechariah's* visions.

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This is no wonder, considering that he denies that *Jesus of Nazareth* is the Messiah! Peter said in *Acts 2:36*—“*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*”

Solomon ben Yarchi, another exegete that is highly esteemed by the *Jews*, declared that *Zechariah's* prophecy is very hard to understand because it contains dream-like visions, the interpretation of which is not available to us, so we shall never be able to find its true exegesis until the *Teacher of Righteousness* comes.

From such statements we see that the *Old Testament* remains closed to all who do not possess the key — the key is *the Lord Jesus Christ!*

For instance, remember how the Ethiopian eunuch was unable to understand *Isaiah 53* because he did not know *Jesus!* (*Acts 8:30-39*)

Zechariah's message contains God's plans for *Israel's* future and relevant promises for the future salvation of the *Jews*. This is why *Zechariah* is also called “*the great prophet of restoration.*”

Four men are named in *Ezra 5:1-2* who played main roles in the rebuilding of the *Temple: Zerubbabel, Haggai, Joshua* and *Zechariah*. They are a picture of *Jesus Christ* as He is presented in the four Gospels in their prophetic portrayal.

1. *Zerubbabel* was the governor and ruler of *Israel*. He is an example of the *Lord Jesus* as He is portrayed in *Matthew's Gospel* account. He is God's anointed King, to whom the future power as ruler in *Israel* is given.
2. *Haggai* was a servant and prophet, and so is he is a picture of the Lord in *Mark's Gospel* account: *Jesus*, the humble servant of God.

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3. *Joshua* was the high priest. He presents *Jesus* as we see Him in *Luke's Gospel* account: The sinless Son of man, high priest and mediator between God and man.
4. *Zechariah* the prophet particularly emphasizes *Jesus'* divinity.

So, he is a picture of *Jesus* as shown in *John's Gospel* account: *Jesus, the Son of God*, Who came to this earth.

What can we learn from these sketches?

1. As *New Testament* kings and priests, we should be bearers of the revelation of *Jesus' Name*. He is the Savior of the world!

In *Acts 4:12*, Peter said: “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*”

2. Understand that God, in His wisdom, places young and old beside one another in His service.
If God speaks to your heart to serve Him, then you are old enough! (Cf. *Samuel* in *1 Samuel 2*)
3. We learn that all diverse gifts and tasks come from God, the Giver of all gifts.
Zechariah could have hounded *Haggai* to preach more on prophecy and hope for the future.
Haggai could have ragged *Zechariah* about preaching too much on the future and tried to get him to focus more on what the people needed to build the *Temple*.

But they did not quarrel. They both fulfilled their tasks faithfully and with endurance, just as God had commissioned them.

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The book of *Zechariah* also stresses the importance of a Christ-centered life and of a message and work, that point people to Him.

We need to be like the Apostle Paul in *1 Corinthians 2:2*—"*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*".

We must be aware that without *Jesus*, the *Bible* is a sealed book. This is especially true with regard to Israel. Only the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of truth, can guide us into all truth! (*John 16:13-14*)

Finally, we learn that we must not lose our vision of the future. The day is coming when Jesus will return and the light of His kingdom will surpass everything we have ever seen!