

## Zechariah 1:1-6

### Introduction

When something has gone wrong; how do we start again? This is an issue that most of us, if not all of us, have faced at one time or another as sinners in this fallen world. This was a pressing issue for the people of Judah in the time of Zechariah, who was charged with speaking for God to a people trying to start over again.

The power to heal what is broken, to start again what is ended, and to raise up what is cast down is always and only found with the Lord.

### Thesis

**In Zechariah 1:1-6, the prophet Zechariah tells the people to turn to God in order to deal with the past, and also to deal, therefore, with the present and the future.**

#### 1. Lord's Prophet vs. 1

Zechariah, son of Berechiah, and grandson of Iddo was one of the initial party of Jews who returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon.

His name means, "the Lord remembers." His prophecy begins "in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius," 520 BC (**Zech 1:1**).

Whilst Haggai focused the people on building the temple for the Lord, God came to Zechariah and focused him on rebuilding the people and their faith.

#### 2. Necessary Repentance vv. 2-6

The opening oracle that came to Zechariah was an exhortation to turn to the Lord. The exile was not a random disaster, it was a direct act of God, an outpouring of the curses threatened in Deuteronomy on covenant-breakers (**Deut. 28:36-37**).

Concealed within the bad news, however, are the seeds of the good news.

"Turn to me," declares the LORD of hosts, "and I will turn to you" (**Zech 1:3**).

The opening verses of Zechariah highlight an important theme of the whole book: **Repentance (Zech. 1:2-3)**. Here we see four important things about repentance.

**First**, we see the need for repentance.

God judges all sin. How do we start again, when our relationship with God is damaged by sin? The answer is that we begin with repentance.

**Secondly**, we see WHAT repentance is.

Repentance is both turning from sin and turning to God (**Zech 1:3-4**).

**Thirdly**, we see that God graciously receives all who turn to him (**Zech 1:3b**).

Our great incentive for repentance, that however great our sin and backsliding, God is ready to receive those who come to him in repentance and faith

**Fourthly**, we see it is only through the blood of Jesus Christ that God forgives those who repent.

God is a holy God; he must always judge sin. God could not accept these sinners, therefore, unless atonement was made. In Zechariah's day this required the blood of lambs at the very temple they were to rebuild, but ultimately it required the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Jesus is the true Lamb of God, and his was the blood shed to take away sin.

### 3. Urgent Appeal vs. 3

This prophetic oracle describes two groups of people who respond to God's word in different ways.

**The 'fathers'**, the generations prior to the exile, heard God's word repeatedly, yet did not respond to it, in consequence, they were buried by the wrath of God.

**The present generation**, responded positively, however, to the call to turn to God and therefore may anticipate a different future.

All those who listen to this sermon are likely to include men, women, boys and girls whose situation reflects that of both groups.

This text addresses very directly those who are living carelessly sinful lives, whose position is just like that of the previous generations, and it also addresses believers who are tempted to despair by the consequences of sin (their own or that of others) in their lives.

This passage teaches us that sin has two basic dimensions: **First**, it involves the failure to listen and to respond to God's word delivered through his messengers. **Secondly**, the neglect of God's word flows out into all manner of evil habits and actions. Sinful acts flow out of a sinful attitude of turning away from God.

If it is true that we are all covenant-breakers, and we surely are, then the passage sets before us a fearful reality. God's judgement upon covenant-breakers is sure.

Zechariah reminded his hearers, however, that the past does not need to dictate the future. Restoration to God's favor is possible.

If the present generation were to return to the Lord, they would find him returning to them.

If you are a Christian, but backslidden into sin and spiritual decline, remember the history lesson Zechariah placed before his generation.

If you are not a Christian, these words are especially for you.

If God judged his chosen old covenant people, Israel and condemned them to fall to the sword, to be dragged off in chains, and the city and its temple to be reduced to ruin-what, then, will be your fate be if you continue to rebel?

The lesson is clear: You must repent at once, turn from your sin and to this God of grace who offers everyone salvation through the blood of the Savior Jesus Christ.