



Zechariah

This new series will be a detailed study of the book of Zechariah, one of the "Twelve." The name "Zechariah" means "God remembers" and true to his name, the prophet will remind a remnant of people that returned to Jerusalem after the 70 years of Babylonian captivity that God remembers them. According to Ezra 5:1-3, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were among the approximately 50,000 Jewish exiles that returned to Israel. In fact, their ministries overlapped, with the first of Zechariah's messages occurring about a month or two before Haggai's final message. Both of them encouraged the completion of the new Temple, which was finished a couple of years after Zechariah's final message. (Ezra 6:14-15) Zechariah was both a priest and a prophet, and his ministry occurred during the reign of the Persian king Darius Hystaspes (521-486 BC). Other than perhaps the book of Isaiah, the book of Zechariah says more about the coming Messiah than any other OT book. The prophet sought to encourage the people by revealing the coming priest-king-Messiah.

1. **Outline:** At a high level the book can be outlined this way:

I. Prologue (1:1-6)

II. Eight Night Visions About Messiah (1:7-6:15)

III. Four Messages About Messiah (7:1-8:23)

IV. Two Burdens About Messiah (9:1-14:21)

2. **The Time Marker (1:1):** The prophet provides a time marker for his first message — the eighth month, the second year of Darius. We know Darius reigned from 521-486 BC, and so the first message was in late October or early November 520 BC.

3. **The Big Picture:** Through past events, including especially the destruction of Jerusalem and the 70 years of Babylonian captivity, God removed Israel's long practice of idolatry from the land. The Babylonian Empire came to an end in 539 BC (as recorded in Daniel 5) when the Persian Cyrus the Great overtook Babylon. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Sheshbazzar in 538 BC, but only a small portion of them actually returned because they had established new lives for themselves abroad. But those that returned came home to a land in ruin. In particular, Jerusalem's walls had fallen and its Temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar back in 586/87 BC. Zechariah's task is to encourage the rebuilding of the Temple. The bigger picture is that God is revitalizing the nation of Israel and fully intends to keep His promises to them, and this requires both physical and spiritual restoration.

4. **The Prologue (1:1-6):** The prologue calls upon the remnant to turn to God, and in return He will turn to them. In particular, they are called upon to consider their history and how their ancestors' actions, in defiance of God's prophets, brought about the destruction of the nation by Nebuchadnezzar. The remnant is asked to learn from their history. They are asked to recognize that everything God said through the prophets actually came to pass. By looking back, they are ready to move forward as the people of God.

5. If you want my extended notes on Zechariah you can get the book from Amazon using the QR code.

