

ZECHARIAH

Building for the Future

I. Introduction

A. History

1. Timeline¹

612 NABOPOLASSAR destroyed Nineveh.

609 JOSIAH was slain in battle by PHARAOH-NECHOH of Egypt, succeeded by his son JEHOAHAZ (SHALLUM), age 23. He ruled Judah 3 months and was taken captive to Egypt.

608 ELIAKIM, son of JOSIAH, age 25, was made ruler of Judah by PHARAOH-NECHOH, who changed his name to JEHOIAKIM. He ruled Judah 11 years. The Prophet JEREMIAH delivered his Temple Sermon.

606 The Assyrian Empire ended as Nineveh fell to the Medes.

605 JEHOIAKIM was taken to Babylon in fetters, along with DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL and AZARIAH, and NEBUCHADNEZZAR of Babylon attacked Jerusalem. The Prophet HABAKKUK wrote "Habakkuk" during his reign.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR became ruler of the Babylonian Empire and defeated Egypt at Carchemish. He built Babylon's Hanging Gardens.

597 JEHOIACHIN, also known as JECONIAH and CONIAH, age 18, the son of JEHOIAKIM, was placed over Judah by NEBUCHADNEZZAR during his siege on Jerusalem. He ruled 3 months and 10 days before he was taken to Babylon. His uncle was renamed ZEDEKIAH and made ruler of Judea for 11 years.

593 EZEKIEL prophesied. His book, "Ezekiel", was written about 575 B.C. among the Judean captives in Babylon.

588 ZEDEKIAH formed an alliance with the Egyptians and revolted against the Babylonians. The Babylonians surrounded Jerusalem on Jan. 15th and lay siege to the city.

586 The 70-year Babylonian Captivity began when, on July 9th, the Chaldeans destroyed Jerusalem. NEBUZARADAN burned the Temple, the palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem. ZEDEKIAH'S sons were killed before his face, his eyes were put out and he was led in fetters to Babylon.

JEREMIAH wrote "Lamentations" on this occasion of Jerusalem's destruction.

571 EZEKIEL uttered the last of his prophecies in Babylon.

563 SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA (BUDDHA), founder of Buddhism, was born in Nepal, India on April 8th.

561 NEBUCHADNEZZAR died and his son EVIL-MERODACH ruled Babylon.

JEHOIACHIN was released from prison. Jewish scribes assembled the Historical Books of the Old Testament.

551 K'UNG FU-TZU (CONFUCIUS) was born in Shantung, China.

550 ZOROASTRIANISM became the official religion of the Persian Empire. The Temple of Diana was constructed at Ephesus.

544 The Public Library was built at Athens.

538 CYRUS invaded Babylon.

536 CYRUS issued a decree allowing 42,360 Jews to return to Judea under SHESHBAZZAR (ZERUBBABEL).

529 CYRUS died and CAMBYSES (AHASUERUS) ruled the Medo-Persian Empire.

520 HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH prophesied and wrote "Haggai" and "Zechariah" (ch. 1-8). ZERUBBABEL led a group of Jewish returnees to Jerusalem.

519 Work on the Jerusalem Temple began.

516 The Second Jerusalem Temple was dedicated and the 70-year captivity of the Jews ended.

509 The Republic of Rome was established by Valerian Law.

486 DARIUS I died and XERXES I (AHASUERUS) ruled Persia. He was the king who married ESTHER.

¹Wetzel, *A Chronology Of Biblical Christianity*

485 The Prophet DANIEL wrote “Daniel” in Babylon, covering 605-485 B.C. XERXES crushed the Egyptian and Babylonians revolts and deposed his Queen VASHTI.

483 BUDDHA died.

479 ESTHER became Queen of Persia. Persia lost Sestos and the Hellespont.

478 CONFUCIUS died.

474 HAMAN plotted to kill the Jews.

473 ESTHER established the Purim Feasts.

471 SOCRATES was born.

470 “Zechariah” ch. 9–14 finished around this time.

465 XERXES was assassinated and ARTAXERXES I LONGIMANUS ruled Persia. He was the king who issued the decree of March 5th, 445 B.C. granting the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem.

458 The Holy Scriptures assumed a settled form. “Psalms”, a collection of spiritual songs and poems used in worship and devotion, written by different authors from 1500-450 B.C., were compiled.

447 The building of the Parthenon began.

445 NEHEMIAH returned to Jerusalem under the decree of ARTAXERXES.

444 The Jews began to rebuild Jerusalem under the decree of ARTAXERXES.

2. Authenticity

a. Universal acceptance by Jewish & Christian tradition

B. Author

1. See 1:1

2. Part of priestly line: 2Ch 9:29, 2Ch 12:15, 2Ch 13:22, Ezr 8:17

3. Jesus verifies: Mt 23:35, Lu 11:51

C. Theme/Purpose

1. Temple

2. Prepare for the Messiah

II. Setting

A. Jerusalem

B. While Building the Temple: 520–518 B.C. (ch. 1–8)

C. After Building the Temple: 480–470 B.C. (ch. 9–14)

III. Main Characters

A. God (“Yahweh Sabaoth”: Lord of Hosts)

1. The Messiah

B. Zechariah

C. Joshua, the High Priest

438 The Parthenon was completed at Athens.

437 NEHEMIAH completed the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

436 NEHEMIAH organized the “Great Synagogue” in Jerusalem.

432 Priest MANASSEH was expelled from Jerusalem by NEHEMIAH for his refusal to put away his wife, SANBALLAT’S daughter. MANASSEH built a Temple on Mt. Gerazim in Samaria and used the Pentateuch.

427 PLATO was born.

425 The Prophet MALACHI, the last of the Old Testament prophets, wrote “Malachi”, covering 431-425 B.C.

424 The Priest EZRA wrote “Ezra”, covering 538-424 B.C. “Nehemiah” was written by NEHEMIAH covering 485-425 B.C. “Esther” was probably written by EZRA and covers 479-424 B.C. EZRA is credited with also writing “I and II Kings”, originally one book, and “I and II Chronicles”, also originally one book. I Kings covers events from 985-868 B.C.; II Kings covers 868-561 B.C. I Chronicles covers 3975-985 B.C.; II Chronicles covers 985-539 B.C.

IV. Preliminary Questions**A. How is Zechariah's time like ours?****B. How is Zechariah's message particularly applicable to our daily lives?****C. Why is Zechariah relevant to all eras of God's people?****V. The text****A. The Call to Repentance..... 1:1-6**

Why was the Lord angry with their fathers? (cf. Eze 8:9-18; 2Ch 36:16, Jer 44:2-6)

1:3 sounds like works righteousness. Is it?

Does God deal with us according to our ways and our deeds? (1:6)

B. The Eight Visions of Zechariah.....1:7-6:8**1. The Horses among the Myrtle Trees1:7-17**

Where else do we see horses of various colors in the Bible? (Zech 6:2ff, Rev. 6:4ff) How are they the same? How are they different?

Was the earth truly peaceful and quiet at this time (1:11)?

Why doesn't God want the nations to be at ease (1:15)?

In what way is the Temple "God's house" (1:16)?

How is our church related to the temple? Is it God's house? In what way?

What is the significance of stretching a measuring line over Jerusalem? (q.v. Rev 11:1)

Where is "Zion" and what is its significance (1:17)?

2. The Four Horns & Four Craftsmen.....1:18-21

What do horns represent in the Bible? (cf. 1Sa 2:10; Ps 18:2, 132:17; Mic 4:13; Lu 1:69)

To what do these horns refer (1:19)?

What/who do the craftsmen represent?

Why did God send the craftsmen to “throw down” the horns?

What do nations that conquer Israel have to do with the New Testament church? What are the horns and craftsmen of our day?

3. The Man with the Measuring Line.....2:1–13

What are measuring lines used for? What does it represent?

What does the measuring line signify? (q.v. Rev 11:1; Lam 2:8; Jer 31:38–40)

Is 2:4 Law or Gospel?

Did Jerusalem have an actual wall of fire around it (2:5)?

Was God’s salvation only for the Jews (2:11)?

What does it mean that Judah & Jerusalem are “holy land” (2:12)?

Where do you find “holy land” today?

4. The Cleansing of Joshua, the High Priest3:1–10

Who is the Angel of the LORD? (q.v. Ex 3:2; Nu 22:35; Jud 2:1, 6:22, 13:18)

Where is Satan standing? (3:1) When & how did this change? (Job 1:6,7; Lu 10:18; Re 12:5-11)

Does Satan have the right to accuse Joshua? (3:1) Who silences him and why? (3:2)

Who is a brand plucked from the fire (3:2)?

Who is Joshua (3:3)? Whom does he represent? What about Joshua makes him an appropriate symbol?

What are the rags? In whose presence are they removed? (3:3ff)

Who is the Branch? (3:8) (cf. Is 11:1; Jer 23:5; Zec 6:12; Mt 2:23; Joh 15:5; Ro 11:16–24)

What is the stone with seven eyes (3:9)?

When is “that day” (3:10)?

Have you sat with your neighbor under your vine & fig tree lately (3:10)?

5. The Golden Lampstand & Olive Trees4:1–14
 How many flames were there and what’s the significance (4:2)?

What do each of the symbols represent:

Lampstand:

Lamps:

Olive Trees:

“Might” and “power” specifically refer to a person (4:6). Whom? Why?

Who will receive the credit for Zerubbabel’s accomplishments (4:6)? Why?

What does the plumb line represent, and why does Zerubbabel have it (4:10)?

How do the olive trees point us to Jesus (4:14)? Hint: the reference to oil.

6. The Flying Scroll5:1–4
 Why is the scroll so large, and why is it flying? (5:2–3)

Why was the scroll written on both sides (5:3)? (cf. Ex 32:15)

Which commandments are specifically mentioned on the scroll (5:3)? Why are these two particularly cited? Hint: What’s the historical context?

Why are only two laws cited? Are these more important than the others? cf. James 2:10

What will God make to go forth (5:4)? For what purpose?

How is it fitting that the thief & perjurer are struck in the *house* (5:4)?

7. The Woman in the Ephah5:5–11
 What’s an ephah?

What does the woman in the ephah represent?

Are the “women with wings like storks” angels (5:9)? What do they represent, and why women?

Why do they take the woman in the ephah to Shinar (= Babylonia) (5:11)?

Are “women in ephahs” put on pedestals today?

8. The Four Chariots.....6:1–8

How is the eighth vision like the first?

What are the mountains? Why are the mountains bronze? (q.v. Nu 21:9)

What are the four spirits of heaven (6:5)? What do they do?

What is the land of the north (6:8)? How has God been appeased in the land of the north (6:8)?

C. The Crowning of Joshua6:9–15

Who are these people (6:10, 14)? (cf. 1Ch 7:35, 2Ch 17:8, Ne 12:7)

Who is Branch (6:12)? Why is He called “Branch”?

How will He build the temple of the Lord?

Does a priest have a throne (6:13)?

Who joins in the building of the temple (6:15)? What is the significance for us today?

Is this event dependent on our obedience (6:15)?

D. The Question of Fasting 7:1–3

7:1 fourth year... Dec. 7, 518 B.C.: Almost two years after the eight night visions, and over a year before the completion of the temple.

What was the reason for the question?

E. The Four Messages of Zechariah..... 7:4–8:23**1. Rebuke of Hypocrisy.....7:4–7**

Have you ever “fasted” (or gone to church, etc.) for yourself when you claimed to be doing it for God? (7:5) (cf. Matt 6:16–18)

Why do we do good works? Does God need our works? Do we need them? Who needs them? (7:6)

2. Repent of Disobedience.....7:8–14

Why are orphans and widows singled out repeatedly throughout the Old Testament as in need of aid? (7:10)

What does it mean to have a flint heart? (7:12)

How does God bring His Word to us? (7:12)

If we turn from God, when we call on Him, will He hear us? (7:13)

What “storm wind” scattered Israel? (7:14)

3. Restoration of Israel.....8:1–17

Is it good to have “Old men and old women...sit in the streets”? (8:4)

What causes the somber fasting of ch. 7 to become the joyous feasting of ch. 8? (8:6–7)

If Israel is on the west coast, how can there be a “land of the west”? (8:7)

What is the purpose of building the temple? (8:9) Is this Law or Gospel?

How was Israel a “curse among the nations”? How could they be a blessing? (8:13) (cf. Gen 12:2)

4. Rejoice in Israel’s Future8:18–23

To whom do v. 20–23 refer?

What is the significance of v. 23 to today? Have you grabbed a Jew’s robe lately?

F. The Two Burdens of Zechariah 9:1–14:21

1. The First Burden: The Rejection of the Messiah9:1–11:17

a. Judgment of Surrounding Nations.....9:1–8

Why was God upset with these cities?

What are Ashkelon, Ekron, & Gaza? (9:5–7)

When was this propheet fulfilled?

What was God’s purpose in judging these nations? (9:6–8)

Why do they have blood in their mouth? (9:7)

Would you like to be “like a Jebusite”? (9:7)

b. Coming of the Messiah 9:9–10:12

i. First Coming of the Messiah.....9:9

Where is the fulfilment of this prophecy?

How does it relate to the context of Zech. 9?

How is God’s kingdom (9:9) different than the kingdoms listed (9:6b)?

ii. Second Coming of the Messiah.....9:10–10:12

To what does the reference to Ephraim & Jerusalem refer? (9:10) Has this happened yet?

Compare/contrast the references to blood in 9:7 and 9:11.

Who does the fighting in God’s war? (9:13–15)

How is this emphasized in 10:1–2? To what is the Lord being contrasted?

Who is the cornerstone/tent peg? (10:4) What do cornerstones & tent pegs do?

Are we in Egypt & Assyria or Gilead & Lebanon? (10:10)

What does it mean to “walk in His name”? Are you doing that?

iii. Rejection of the Messiah.....11:1-17
 What is the impending doom in vv. 1-3? When is this prophecy fulfilled? Why does it happen?

What are the shepherds? The lions? (v. 3) Why are they destroyed?

According to v. 4, identify the Shepherd. What does this tell us about the nature of the Messiah?

Who is killing the flock? (v. 5) Do we see that today?

Who delivers Israel into slavery? (v. 6) Why?

Who does the shepherding in v. 7? Is Zechariah the Messiah?

What tools are used to shepherd the sheep? (v. 7) What are they called? How are these names fitting?

What are the 3 shepherds in v. 8? When are they removed?

What do the staves "Beauty" and "Union" represent? (v. 8)

What does their being broken signify? (v. 10 & 14)

Would God abandon His people? Can He break His own covenant? (v. 10) (cf. Matt. 24:15-16)
 Why does He do so?

Who are the "poor"? (v. 11)

What is the significance of 30 pieces of silver? (v. 12) (q.v. Ex 21:32) When was this prophecy fulfilled?

Is 30 pieces of silver a "handsome price"? (v. 13)

Why does Matthew 27:9 credit this passage to Jeremiah? (q.v. Jer 32:6-8)

2. The Second Burden: The Reign of the Messiah12:1–14:21**a. Deliverance of Israel 12:1–13:9****i. Physical Salvation of Judah12:1–9**

What do Jerusalem & Judah represent? (12:2)

How does “Jerusalem” cause the peoples to reel/shake? (12:2) How is it a heavy stone? (12:3)
Can this stone be moved?

How does God relate to Judah compared to “the peoples”? (12:4)

What does the pot of coals do to the wood & sheaves? (12:6) What does this mean for the church?

Who wins the victory for Judah? (12:7–8)

Who is the angel of the Lord, and how is “the house of David like God, like the angel of the Lord”? (12:8)

In v. 9, who is being destroyed? (i.e. Who are the enemies of God?) How are they destroyed?

ii. Spiritual Salvation of Judah12:10–13:9

In v. 10, whom have they pierced? (Who are “they”?) Why like a firstborn son? What does this tell us about the Messiah?

12:11: נַמְרֹדִים Hadadrimmon: "Hadad of the pomegranates": a place in the valley of Megiddo where a national lamentation was held for the death of King Josiah; named after two Syrian gods²
(See 2 Chron 35:24–25) Who was Josiah, and why would Jerusalem mourn “in that day” as they mourned for Josiah?

What does the long list of mourners mean? (12:12–14)

What does the fountain do? (13:1)

In 13:2–6, to what prophets is Zechariah referring? What are the wounds? (13:6) (cf. 1Ki 18:28)

²Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius - Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon

What about the true prophets of Yahweh? (q.v. Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:17–21)

Is the man with wounded hands Jesus? (v.6)

What about the Shepherd? (v.7) (cf. Mt 26:31)

In what sense are the sheep scattered? (v. 7) Is it good for the sheep to be scattered? (Gen 11:4) Why?

Are 13:8–9 Law or Gospel? What “refiner’s fire” have you been through? What was its effect on you? What is the name of the Lutheran doctrine expressed here by Zechariah?

b. Reign of the Messiah.....14:1–21
i. Final Siege of Jerusalem.....14:1–2
 When was this literally fulfilled?

Have you ever felt surrounded by all nations? What about Jerusalem: the church?

ii. Second Coming of the Messiah.....14:3–8
 What is the purpose of the valley? (14:4–5)

What is the day described here?

iii. Kingdom of the Messiah.....14:9–21
 Is Jesus’ kingdom of this world? (14:9)

What does v. 12–15 describe?

What is the Feast of Booths (14:16–19)? (q.v. Lev 23:42–43) How is this appropriate?

What is the meaning of all the common utensils being holy? (14:21–22) How is this different from now?

Why aren’t Canaanites allowed in the House of Yahweh Sabaoth? (14:21)