

Notes & Outlines

ZECHARIAH

J. Vernon McGee

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WRITER: Zechariah

Zechariah, whose name means *whom Jehovah remembers*, is identified (1:1) as the son of Berechiah, which means *Jehovah blesses*, and his father was the son of Iddo, which means *the appointed time*. Certainly this cluster of names with such rich meanings is suggestive of the encouragement given to the remnant — God remembers and blesses in the appointed time. The Jewish Targum states that Zechariah was slain in the sanctuary and that this Zechariah was both prophet and priest. In Nehemiah 12:4 Iddo is mentioned as one of the heads of a priestly family. Josephus states that Zechariah, the son of Baruchus, was slain at the temple. There are those who identify Zechariah as the one mentioned by our Lord as having been martyred (Matthew 23:35).

DATE: About 520 B.C.

Zechariah was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1, 6:14), although he was younger (Zechariah 2:4).

CHARACTERISTICS:

This book has the characteristics of an apocalypse. The visions resemble those in the Books of Daniel and Revelation. Daniel was born in the land of Israel but wrote his apocalypse outside of it. Zechariah was born outside of the land but wrote his within the land. Daniel, Ezekiel, and John all wrote outside the land. Only Zechariah was in Israel when he wrote his apocalypse. In the dark day of discouragement which blanketed the remnant, he saw the glory in all of the rapture and vision of hope. He has more messianic prophecies than any of the other minor prophets.

OUTLINE:

I. APOCALYPTIC VISIONS (messianic and millennial), Chapters 1 — 6

A. Introduction and message of warning, Chapter 1:1-6

B. Ten visions (all in one night), Chapters 1:7 — 6:15

1. Riders under myrtle trees, 1:7-17
2. Four horns, 1:18, 19
3. Four smiths, 1:20, 21
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5. Joshua and Satan, 3:1-7
6. The Branch, 3:8-10
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10. Four chariots, 6

II. HISTORIC INTERLUDE, Chapters 7, 8

A. Question concerning a religious ritual (fasting),
Chapter 7:1-3

B. Threefold answer, Chapters 7:4 — 8:23

1. When the heart is right, the ritual is right, 7:4-7
2. When the heart is wrong, the ritual is wrong, 7:8-14
3. God's purpose concerning Jerusalem unchanged by any ritual, 8

III. PROPHETIC BURDENS, Chapters 9 — 14

A. First burden: Prophetic aspects connected with first coming of Christ, Chapters 9 — 11

B. Second burden: Prophetic aspects connected with second coming of Christ, Chapters 12 — 14

COMMENT:

I. APOCALYPTIC VISIONS (messianic and millennial),
Chapters 1 — 6

A. Introduction and message of warning, Chapter 1:1-6

v. 1 — (See WRITER.) The date was November 520 B.C. He was contemporary with Haggai.

v. 2 — The returned remnant is warned not to follow in the footsteps of the pre-captivity fathers.

v. 3 —“LORD of hosts” occurs 52 times. “Hosts” is the Hebrew *tsaba* (Sabaoth), meaning *service, strength, warfare*. “It implies the boundless resources at His command for His people’s good” (Fauset).

v. 4 — Their fathers had not heeded the former prophets.

v. 5 — Where were their fathers? Buried in Babylon.

v. 6 — “Take hold” means *overtake*. The prophet’s words were accurately fulfilled.

B. Ten visions (all in one night), Chapters 1:7 — 6:15

1. Riders under myrtle trees, 1:7-17

v. 7 — Date: February 24, 520 B.C. (the Hebrew year begins in the April of our year).

vv. 8-11 — In the vision Zechariah sees a man on a red horse with other red horses behind him. They were speckled because they were in the shadow of myrtle trees. The “man riding upon a red horse” is “the angel of the LORD” in vv. 9 and 11. “A red horse” is a picture of war. These red horses are the gentile nations that have ruled the world by warfare for 2500 years. They were at peace (v. 11) in Zechariah’s day, and it was a right time to build the temple. They had no concern for the desperate plight of God’s people — neither then nor now.

vv. 12-17 — God is displeased with the nations who are at peace and ignore Jerusalem’s plight. God is jealous for Jerusalem; the nations are indifferent to her. God had returned to Jerusalem (v. 16) with mercies, and the nations have a responsibility also.

Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. (Romans 3:29)

The promise of v. 17 looks forward to the future kingdom age.

2. Four horns, 1:18, 19

v. 18 — A horn represents a gentile ruler (cp. Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12).

v. 19 — The 4 gentile world powers: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

3. Four smiths, 1:20, 21

v. 20 — “Artisan” is a craftsman or smith.

v. 21 — These 4 smiths perhaps represent the judgment of Ezekiel 14:21 —

For thus saith the Lord GOD, How much more when I send my four severe judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

Compare with the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse of Revelation 6.

4. Man with measuring line, 2

v. 1 — See Jeremiah 31:38, 39; Ezekiel 40:3-5; Revelation 11:1, 2. When God begins to measure the temple and Jerusalem, He is getting ready to move again in behalf of both.

v. 2 — Jerusalem is to be rebuilt in Zechariah’s day.

v. 10 — Jerusalem is to be rebuilt and restored in the kingdom, and the Lord Jesus Christ will reign there in person.

v. 11 — The nations will come there to worship (see 14:16; Isaiah 2:1-5).

5. Joshua and Satan, 3:1-7

v. 1 — Joshua is representative of the nation Israel. Satan seeks to destroy the nation (Revelation 12:1-6).

v. 2 — “A brand plucked out of the fire” means they are rescued for future service.

vv. 3-7 — Neither Joshua nor Israel were contenders with Satan while clothed in their own righteousness. They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Even a new patch on the old garment will not avail.

6. The Branch, 3:8-10

v. 8 — “The Branch” is a familiar figure of Christ in His many offices. Here He is the servant. Israel rejected Him the first time because they trusted their own righteousness (see Romans 10:3, 4).

v. 10 — This refers to the kingdom age.

7. Lampstand and two olive trees, 4

v. 2 — The lampstand is identical to the one that was in the tabernacle and has the same meaning. It is a perfect type of Christ, the Light of the world (see author’s book, *The Tabernacle, God’s Portrait of Christ*).

v. 3 — The 2 olive trees are the “something new has been added.” The olive trees (vv. 11-14) are obviously Zerubbabel and Joshua at that time. The final fulfillment is in Revelation 11:3-12.

v. 6 — The interpretation for Zechariah’s day, for the future, and also for our day is a great principle — “Not by brawn nor by brain, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord” (my paraphrase). God’s work is done only in the power of the Holy Spirit. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. The 2 olive trees speak of witnessing. Effective witnessing is done only in the power of the Holy Spirit.

v. 7 — “The headstone” is Christ.

vv. 8-10 — The present and practical application is that Zerubbabel will be given power to finish the temple. It will be an occasion for joy, for “who hath despised the day of small things?”

8. Flying scroll, 5:1-4

v. 1 — “A scroll” speaks of the Word of God (cp. Ezekiel 2:9, 3:1-4).

v. 3 — The scroll represents the Ten Commandments.

“Curse” — God will judge according to law. There is judgment, not blessing.

On one side are the commandments that have to do with a man’s relationship to God — “every one that sweareth” represents the first 4 commandments. On the other side are the commandments that have to do with a man’s relationship to his fellowman — “for every one that stealeth” represents the last 6 commandments.

9. Woman in the ephah, 5:5-11

vv. 5, 6 — The ephah corresponds to our bushel. This means that sin has filled up the measure and must be judged.

v. 7 — A woman in an ephah is a type of that which is evil (Matthew 13:33; Revelation 2:20). The lead weight means that iniquity is sealed within the measure.

v. 8 — “Wickedness” is the *wicked one*, the *man of sin*.

vv. 9-11 — Two winged women carry the measure (with the woman in it) to Babylon.

Israel’s great sin was idolatry. Babylon is the fountainhead of idolatry. This sin is to be forsaken and returned to Babylon. Babylon is

to be judged (see Revelation 17, 18).

10. Four chariots, 6

vv. 1-5 — These 4 multicolored chariots are the angels who execute the judgment of God on the gentile nations (see Revelation 7:1-3; 9:14, 15).

vv. 9-15 — After the judgment of the nations comes the glory of Christ in the setting up of His kingdom (Daniel 2:44, 45).

v. 10 — “Heldai” means *robust*;
“Tobijah” means *God’s goodness*;
“Jedaiah” means *God knows*.

v. 11 — Joshua is a type of Christ.

v. 12 — “The Branch” here reveals Christ in His glory, the second coming of Christ.

II. HISTORIC INTERLUDE, Chapters 7, 8

A. Question concerning a religious ritual (fasting), Chapter 7:1-3

v. 1 — The date here is December 4, 518 B.C.

v. 2 — A delegation had come to Jerusalem from Babylon.

v. 3 — They bring a problem to the priests: Should they continue to fast?

B. Threefold answer, Chapters 7:4 — 8:23

1. When the heart is right, the ritual is right, 7:4-7

v. 4 — God will answer their question.

v. 5 — God never gave fast days; He gave feast days. It was their own idea to fast. They never fasted unto the Lord.

v. 6 — Before the 70-year captivity, their feasting was not unto God either, and He sent them into captivity.

v. 7 — Before the captivity, God judged Jerusalem when the heart of the people was far from Him — though they went through the rituals. A ritual is right when the heart is right.

Lange wrote, “God’s eye of grace and our eye of faith meet in the sacraments [rituals].”

2. When the heart is wrong, the ritual is wrong, 7:8-14

v. 8 — This is God’s answer.

vv. 9, 10 — Conduct denies confession. It is not our hymn singing on Sunday but our action on Monday that is the real test.

vv. 11-14 — The people before the captivity went through the ritual, but their lives were wrong.

3. God’s purpose concerning Jerusalem unchanged by any ritual, 8

Certain words are emphasized by repetition:

“LORD of hosts” 18 times in this chapter;

“Jerusalem” 6 times;

“Zion” twice;

“Jealous” 3 times;

“Remnant” twice;

“Thus saith the LORD” 10 times.

Some Bible students see in this chapter the restatement of the Ten Commandments.

vv. 1-8 — God’s ultimate purpose is not changed concerning His people, the land, and Jerusalem.

v. 3 — Jerusalem will be the world capital (Isaiah 2:1-5).

vv. 4-8 — His people will dwell in Jerusalem.

vv. 9-19 — The remnant from Babylon are to hear the prophets Haggai and Zechariah in view of the perspective of the glorious future (note v. 9). Also they are to keep the Commandments (see vv. 16, 17).

Fasts will be turned back into feast days (vv. 18, 19).

vv. 20-23 — Jerusalem will become the religious capital as well as the center of God’s government (note again Isaiah 2:1-5).

III. PROPHETIC burdens, Chapters 9 — 14

A. First Burden: Prophetic aspects connected with first coming of Christ, Chapters 9 — 11

Chapter 9

vv. 1-8 — Judgment came upon:

Hadrach and Damascus (v. 1)

(Hadrach was north of Damascus)

Tyre, Sidon and Hamath (vv. 2-4)

(Hamath is inland and north of Sidon)

The Philistines (vv. 5-8)

v. 9 — This is quoted in connection with the so-called triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem (cp. Matthew 21:5; John 12:15). The parts omitted by Matthew are: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout...he is just, and having salvation [victory].” This part of the verse will be fulfilled at His second coming. The rest of the verse was fulfilled at His first coming.

v. 10 — Peace can come to the earth only when Christ comes the second time.

vv. 11-17 — The Lord will at that time deliver His people.

Chapter 10 — Judah and Israel are to be scattered again, but they will be finally regathered.

v. 1 — “Rain” is literal rain. The rainfall is to be restored to the land when God regathers them.

vv. 2, 3 — This is a condemnation of the sweet-talking false prophets.

v. 4 — This is a reference to Christ in both His first and second comings.

v. 6 — By His mercy the Lord will regather them.

vv. 9-12 — The Lord will not only scatter them (v. 9), but He will regather them.

Chapter 11 — The Lord Jesus Christ is to be rejected as the King at His first coming.

vv. 1-6 — False shepherds deceived the people. Possibly this is a reference to Rome as the conqueror.

vv. 7-14 — The true Shepherd with 2 staves:

“Beauty” is literally *grace* — He is the Savior and will save His people.

“Bands” is literally *union* — He will unite Judah and Israel.

He rejects false shepherds (vv. 8, 9).

vv. 12, 13 — This is a reference to the betrayal of Christ by Judas.

See Matthew 26:15; 27:3-10; Acts 1:17-20.

vv. 15-17 — The Antichrist is a false shepherd.

B. Second burden: Prophetic aspects connected with second coming of Christ, Chapters 12 — 14

Chapter 12 — The final siege of Jerusalem and the lifting of the siege. “Jerusalem” is mentioned 10 times. “In that day” is mentioned 7 times and is a reference to the day of the LORD, specifically the Great Tribulation Period.

vv. 1-3 — Jerusalem is to be a constant irritant to all the nations that presume to make decisions that affect it. God’s policy for the nations is “hands off” Israel (too bad the United Nations is not aware of this). All the nations in the Great Tribulation will march against Jerusalem — and be destroyed.

vv. 4-9 — Jerusalem will be delivered in the final siege by the coming of the Lord personally.

vv. 10-14 — They will know Him by the print of the nails in His hands. This is the One they rejected and delivered to be crucified. This will be a real day of atonement.

Chapter 13 — What will the return of Christ mean to Israel?

v. 1 — The remnant will turn to the redemption of Christ for their salvation.

vv. 2-5 — The false prophet and his followers will be taken (see Revelation 19:20). This is the end of all false religion.

vv. 6, 7 — The nail-scarred Christ will be present. His followers will not desert Him but will rally around Him.

vv. 8, 9 — These are those who come out of the Great Tribulation and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

Chapter 14 — Features and facts connected with the coming of Christ to the earth.

vv. 1-7 — This is the consummation of the campaign of Armageddon and the return of Christ.

When Christ returns to this earth, He will touch down on the Mount of Olives (v. 4). This is the same place from which He ascended into heaven. There will be great physical changes in the topography of the land. There will be a great earthquake at His coming (v. 5). There will be changes in the lighting of the earth (vv. 6, 7).

v. 8 — There will be a new waterway through Jerusalem, making it a seaport city.

v. 9 — The Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the earth.

vv. 10, 11 — The land will become the land of milk and honey.

v. 12 — This is a living death against the enemies of God.

vv. 16-21 — The people of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, will go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast will mean that every man is dwelling safely under his own vine and fig tree.

True holiness will be on the earth. Every pot and pan will be holy.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Baron, David. *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*. London, England: Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, 1918.
- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
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- Ironside, H. A. *The Minor Prophets*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
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- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Zechariah*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963.

These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.

SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter—
2. Most important verse—
3. Most prominent word—
4. Teaching about Christ—
5. Command to obey—
6. Promise to claim—
7. New truth learned—



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