



Overview for Zechariah

Purpose: The prophet encouraged the people of Judah to continue their rebuilding of the Temple, and reassured them that God would deliver and bless them in a future kingdom in which the Messiah would reign throughout the world.

Author: Zechariah, the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo the prophet

Date Written: Chapters 1-8 were written in 520–518 B.C., during the early years of the reign of Persia’s King Darius I. Most Bible scholars agree that chapters 9-14 were written sometime after 480 B.C., based on the reference to Greece in Zechariah 9:13.

History: Zechariah delivered his messages to the post-exilic community in Judah which had resumed the task of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. After their seventy-year captivity in Babylon, the people had been allowed to return to their native land, beginning in 538 B.C. when Babylon fell to the conquering Persians. The exiles had begun the Temple rebuilding soon after their arrival but had become discouraged when they faced opposition. After a lapse in the construction efforts for almost ten years, Zechariah joined the prophet Haggai in attempting to encourage the people to finish their work of rebuilding.

Key People: Zechariah, Zerubbabel (the political leader of Judah who led the first group of exiles back to Jerusalem), and Joshua (the high priest)

Summary: The fourteen chapters of Zechariah divide naturally into two major sections: chapters 1-8 and 9-14.

The first section begins with the prophet’s call to repentance and focuses on his encouragement to the people to finish the work of rebuilding.

Zechariah’s first messages, found in Zechariah 1:1-6:8, were based upon a series of eight symbolic night visions. These messages focused on the need of the people to repent, emphasized the reality of sin, and pointed to the Spirit of God as the power that would banish it. These allegorical visions were

followed in verses 9-15 of chapter 6 by a description of the dual crowning of the high priest Joshua, prefiguring the dual role of the Messiah who was to come as priest and king. In chapters 7-8, Zechariah answered an inquiry regarding a national fast instituted during the captivity. These chapters also allude to another important element of the Messianic hope by indicating that the One to come will reign in justice from the city of Jerusalem.

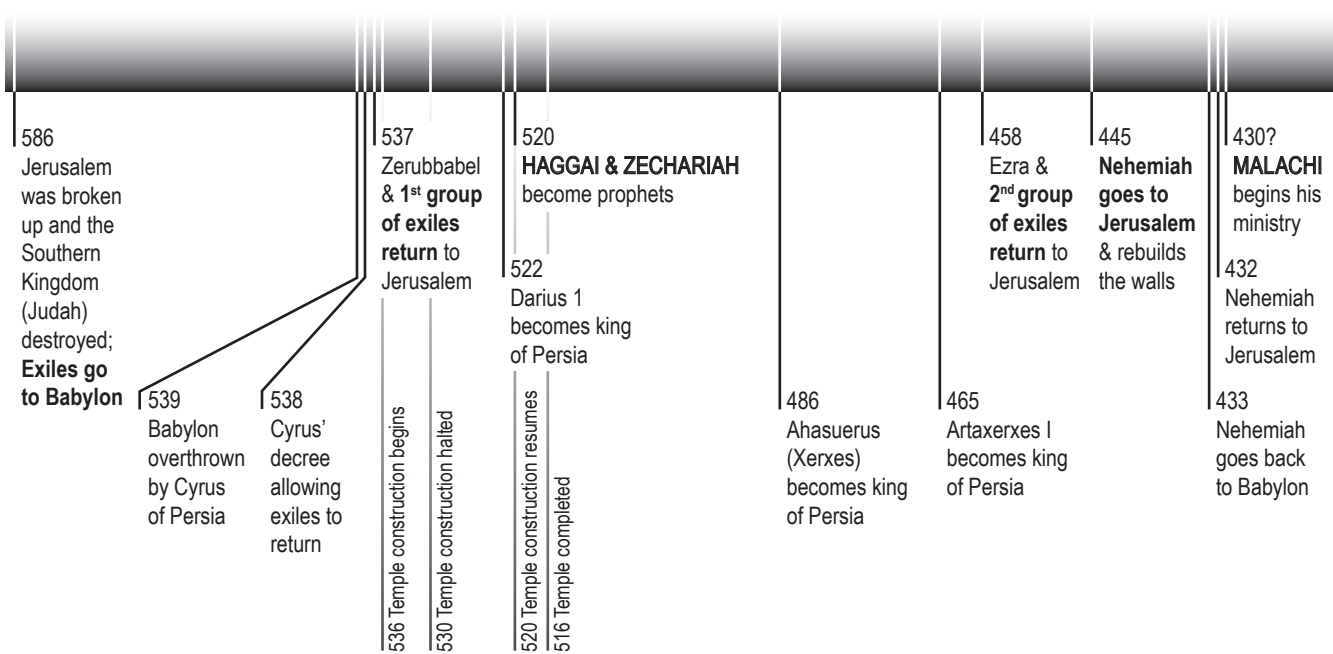
The second section of the book, chapters 9-14, consists of two “burdens,” or announcements of a grievous or threatening nature. The first foretells judgment against heathen nations and presents God’s promises regarding Israel’s glorious future. It references the first and second advent of the Messiah and also foretells the people’s rejection of their Messiah. The second burden, which begins in chapter 12, describes Jerusalem’s deliverance from her enemies and the subsequent repentance of Israel. The message closes in chapter 14 with a description of the universal reign of Christ when all nations will come to worship Him, and He will rule throughout the world.

Style and Unique Features: The language and style of Zechariah’s writings is simple and direct, except for the prophet’s retelling of the eight apocalyptic visions. Two expressions occur frequently in the book. In chapters 1-8, the prophet used “thus saith the LORD” a number of times. Since that was the portion of the book written in his early prophetic ministry, it is thought that it may have served to validate his messages to the people. In chapters 9-14, he used “in that day” several times, indicating events that would happen in the end times.

The Book of Zechariah contains more Messianic prophecies than any other of the minor prophetic books, and the prophet repeatedly mentioned both the first and second comings of Christ. He dwells more comprehensively on the person and work of Christ and mentions the “angel of the LORD” more frequently than any of the other minor prophets. The Book of Zechariah is quoted in the New Testament more times than any other Old Testament book.

Timeline

Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.



Outline

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A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

- I. Introduction (1:1-6)
 - A. The superscription: time and author (1:1)
 - B. The call to repentance (1:2-6)
- II. The eight night visions (1:7—6:8)
 - A. The vision of the man among the Myrtle trees (1:7-17)
 - B. The vision of the four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21)
 - C. The vision of the man with the measuring line (2:1-13)
 - D. The vision of the cleansing of Joshua (3:1-10)
 - E. The vision of the candlestick and olive tree (4:1-14)
 - F. The vision of the flying roll (5:1-4)
 - G. The vision of the woman in the ephah (5:5-11)
 - H. The vision of the four chariots (6:1-8)
- III. The crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)
 - A. The offering of the Exiles (6:9-11)
 - B. The presentation of Messiah, the Branch (6:12-13)
 - C. The provision for a permanent memorial (6:14)
 - D. Millennial blessings: Gentile help in building the Temple, confirmation of God's word, absolute obedience (6:15)
- IV. The question of the fasts (7:1—8:23)
 - A. The question (7:1-3)
 - B. The reply (7:4-8:23)
- V. The two burdens (9:1—14:21)
 - A. The first burden (9:1-11:17)
 - B. The second burden (12:1—14:21)