

## Zechariah – Review, Part 1

Zechariah has been a challenging book to understand all of the details. However, when we step back and look at the big picture, some things do come into focus. After the six introductory verses, Zechariah has eight visions of the night which occupy most of the first six chapters. After the eight visions is a sign act involving crowning Joshua the high priest and placing the crown in the temple as a memorial. Chapters 8 and 9 are God's response to the delegation from Bethel and their question about fasting in remembrance of the destruction of the first temple. Chapters 9 through 11 contain a long oracle. Chapters 12 through 14 complete the book with a final long oracle.

The Introduction (1:1-6) – Return to me and I will return to you.

The Eight Visions (1:7-6:10) – There is a focus on the temple being rebuilt. This was the task at hand.

- Vision 1 (1:7-17) – Horses have returned from a surveillance mission – the nations are at rest and that is not good because they need to be judged for their treatment of Judah. Justice is needed.
  - 1:16 – Yahweh has returned to Jerusalem
  - 1:16 – The temple will be built
  - 1:16 – Jerusalem will be rebuilt
- Vision 2 (1:18-21) – The four horns and the four craftsmen – the four craftsmen terrify and cast down the four horns of the nations which scattered Judah. Justice is executed.
- Vision 3 (2:1-13) – The man with the measuring line to measure the boundaries of Jerusalem – Jerusalem will be without walls because it will prosper so much that the old measurements of Jerusalem could not contain all the people.
  - 2:5 – Yahweh will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem for protection
  - 2:5, 10 – Yahweh will be the glory in the midst of Jerusalem
  - 2:6-7 – Flee from Babylonia and return to Jerusalem
  - 2:9 – Yahweh will judge those whom Judah served in exile
  - 2:11 – Many nations will come and join themselves to Yahweh
- Vision 4 (3:1-10) – Joshua the high priest stands before the angel of Yahweh – Joshua became unclean from the exile but is cleansed and clothed with clean garments.
  - 3:6-7 – If Joshua obeys Yahweh, he will rule the temple, have charge of the temple courts and have the right of access
  - 3:8 – The priests are a sign of the coming Branch, Yahweh's servant
  - 3:9 – Yahweh will remove the iniquity of the land in a single day
- Vision 5 (4:1-12) – The golden lampstand with the two olive trees – Zerubbabel will rebuild the temple and complete it.

- 4:6 – The temple will be completed not by might, nor by power but by Yahweh’s Spirit.
- 4:7, 9 – Zerubbabel will complete the temple with shouts of “grace, grace to it”
- 4:10 – Those who despised the day of small things will rejoice
- 4:11-14 – While some understand the two olive trees to be Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel, I understand them to be the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. They are symbolic of the pouring out of God’s Spirit on the people of Judah through the prophetic word. God’s prophetic word strengthens the people to complete the work of the temple.
- Vision 6 (5:1-4) – The giant flying scroll – God will bring judgment on disobedience and thus cleanse the land.
- Vision 7 (5:5-11) – Wickedness in a basket – God will remove wickedness from the land of Judah and return it to Babylon where it belongs.
- Vision 8 (6:1-8) – The four chariots – God will bring judgment on the nations where Israel and Judah were exiles.

The Sign Act of Crowning Joshua the high priest (6:9-15) – Zechariah made a crown and put it on Joshua the high priest and then he put it in the temple as a memorial.

- 6:12-13 – The Branch shall come and build the temple, bear royal honor, and sit and rule on his throne. Like in 3:8, the Branch is associated with the priesthood but, based on Isaiah, Jeremiah and other parts of Zechariah, he is descended from David.

The Question of the Bethel Delegation and God’s Response (7:1-8:23)

- The Question (7:1-3) – a delegation sought Yahweh’s favor and asked if they should continue the fast of the fifth month in memory of the destruction of the first temple. Their statement that they had been doing it “so many years” revealed their hearts. They were tired of suffering the consequences of the seventy years of punishment prophesied by Jeremiah, but if they didn’t turn to God, they would suffer the same punishment as their fathers in exile.
- God’s Response (7:4-8:23) – just because the second temple was nearing completion, they should not relax and think that God’s eternal favor would be on them despite their disobedience.
  - 7:8-10 – They needed to obey God with all their hearts or they would become like their evil fathers. They needed to treat others with justice and mercy – the widow, the orphan, the sojourner and the poor.
  - 7:11-14 – God reminded them of their father’s evil. God said that as they refused to listen to God, so he no longer listened to them. For their stubborn evil, God scattered them among the nations and the land became desolate.
  - 8:1-3 – God is jealous for Jerusalem and has returned to dwell in it
  - 8:4-6 – Jerusalem will be safe and will prosper
  - 8:7-8 – God will gather his people who are scattered and they will be his people and he will be their God
  - 8:9-17 – God encouraged them to complete the temple. Their former cursing would be turned to blessing.
  - 8:18 – The fasts related to the exile will become feasts
  - 8:19-23 – People will come from the nations to Jerusalem to seek the favor of Yahweh

## First Long Oracle (9:1-11:17)

- 9:1-7 – God fights for Judah from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and reestablishes the borders of the kingdom to what they were in the days of David and Solomon
- 9:8 – God encamps at the temple and will be the guard and protector
- 9:9 – Rejoice greatly, Jerusalem, because your king is coming. He is humble and rides on a donkey.
- 9:10 – The king is a man of peace and will rule from sea to sea
- 9:11-12 – The prisoners are set free and given a double portion
- 9:13-15 – Yahweh will strengthen his people, fight for them, protect them and make them victorious
- 9:16 – Yahweh will save the flock of his people
- 9:17-10:1 – Yahweh will answer prayers for rain and prosper the land
- 10:2-3 – Yahweh's people lack good leadership and suffer as a result
- 10:4 – Yahweh will produce good leaders for his people
- 10:5-6 – Yahweh will strengthen Judah
- 10:6-12 – Yahweh will save the northern tribes, Israel. He will gather them from all the places where they were scattered and they shall return home. Yahweh will punish the nations where they were exiled.
- 11:1-3 – Yahweh will make the proud leaders of the nations fall into ruin.
- 11:4-14 – Yahweh told Zechariah to perform a sign act. The good shepherd will tend the flock destined for slaughter. He will take two staffs. One is named Grace and the other is named Union. He will be rejected by the sheep and he will bring in a price of thirty shekels of silver which will be cast into the temple for the potter.
- 11:15-17 – Yahweh told Zechariah to perform another sign act. He was to take the equipment of a foolish shepherd. The foolish shepherd does not care for, protect or nourish the flock. Instead he devours the flock himself. Yahweh condemned and judged the foolish shepherd.

## Second Long Oracle (12:1-14:21)

- 12:1-9 – Jerusalem will be under siege but God will protect Jerusalem. God will make Judah an instrument of fire which consumes everything around it. God will save Judah and Jerusalem. God will protect Jerusalem. The weakest will be as strong as king David and the house of David will be like the angel of God. God will destroy the nations that come against Jerusalem.
- 12:10-13:1 – The victory will come at a cost. They will look on the one they pierced. Yahweh will pour out a spirit of grace and supplication so that they will greatly mourn for the one who was pierced. The prominent mention of the house of David (12:12, 13:1), the previous mention of the Branch (3:8, 6:12-13), the coming king (9:9) and the possible association with king Josiah (12:11) alone would lead one to think that the one pierced was the Messiah. For me, John 19:34-37 and Revelation 1:4-7 make the association of this passage with the Messiah an absolute certainty. God the Father is symbolically pierced when God the Son is physically pierced. The mourning will be intense and also wide spread. On that day a fountain will be opened for the cleansing of sin and

uncleanness. This reminds us of the promise in 3:9 that Yahweh would remove the iniquity of the land in a single day.

- 13:2-6 – Yahweh will cleanse the land of idols, false prophets and the spirit of uncleanness.
- 13:7-9 – Yahweh calls on the sword to strike “my shepherd” so that the sheep will be scattered. Some will perish and the remnant that is left shall be refined, purified and tested.
- 14:1-2 – Yahweh will call the nations to fight against Jerusalem and they will loot the city and take half the inhabitants into exile.
- 14:3-5 – Yahweh will fight against the nations and defeat them
- 14:6-11 – the earth and sky will be changed, Jerusalem will be secure and Yahweh will be king over all the earth
- 14:12-15 – Yahweh will send a plague upon the people who fight against Jerusalem and a plague upon the animals in their camps. Yahweh will turn the enemies against each other so that they fight each other. The nations shall be looted.
- 14:16-19 – All the surviving nations shall go to Jerusalem each year to worship Yahweh and to observe the Feast of Booths. If they do not do this, Yahweh will send drought and a plague on them.
- 14:20-21 – On that day even common things will be considered holy.