

A Study Outline of Zechariah

His name means "whom Jehovah remembers."

The book itself dates it to about 520 BC. He was a contemporary of Haggai in the process of Israel rebuilding the temple (Ezra 5:1).

1. It is the longest and most difficult book of the minor prophets.
2. It is the most apocalyptic book of the OT.
3. The Messiah is presented throughout the book.
4. It can be linked to Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation in regard to style.

1:1-6 - The book opens abruptly with an appeal for Israel to return to the Lord. The mention of the "former" prophets refers to those who preached to Israel before they were taken into captivity (v. 4). Those who did not listen and those who spoke were all dead (v. 5), but God's word still stands true (v. 6).

1:7-17 - First Vision. A vision of horses.

The horses and riders represent God's servants that watch over the events of the nations. While the nations were "resting quietly" God's people were still suffering in captivity (v. 12). Verses 14-17 contain God's reply to the question of verse 12. These things would partially be fulfilled with Zerubbabel and the people rebuilding the temple. They would ultimately be fulfilled in Christ establishing the church in Jerusalem.

1:18-21 - Second Vision. Four horns and four craftsmen.

Horns often represent governing authorities or powers. Amos 9:9 shows that many nations were involved in the scattering of God's people from their land. Verse 21 does not specifically answer for us who the craftsmen are, but it does show us that God will avenge His people.

2:1-13 - Third Vision. Jerusalem is measured, inhabited, and protected by God.

Jerusalem will be filled with a multitude (v. 4) and God will be the source of protection around her (v. 5). This obviously has a spiritual application. Those who have inhabited spiritual Jerusalem throughout the years is innumerable. Verses 6-13 make even clearer the spiritual application of the passage. Verse 8 reveals how God feels about His people and those who persecute them.

3:1-10 - Fourth Vision. The high priest and Satan.

Verses 1-5 show the rebuke of Satan and the purification of the high priest, Joshua. Satan is pictured in opposition to God's priest and is rebuked by God Himself. The filthy garments represent the sins of the nation and the priesthood (v. 3). The clean clothes are an answer to Satan's accusations. Verses 6-10 contain a promise from God to Joshua. He was to faithfully fulfill his role as priest and God would bless him in those efforts. Verses 8-10 show us that the OT priesthood was symbolic of the priesthood of Christ. He is referred to as the "Branch." Isaiah and Jeremiah had used this terminology (Isa. 11; Jer. 23). He would be a servant of the Lord and a descendant of David. The stone with seven eyes (v. 9) represents God's watchful eye over His people (4:10). The "vine and fig tree" represent a time of peace and prosperity (1 Kg. 4:24-25). 7 is a prominent number in apocalyptic literature (Rev. 1:20).

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4 - Fourth Vision. The lampstand and olive trees.

This part of Zechariah's vision fits into Ezra 3:8-10. The foundation for the restored temple was completed, but resistance came from the people of the land (Ezra 4) and Israel became discouraged in her efforts. The vision is given to reassure Zerubbabel that he will complete the work on the temple. The pattern for the original lampstand is recorded in Exodus 25:31-40. The finishing of the work would be accomplished by the Spirit of God (v. 6). The "mountain" of verse 7 represents the challenges that were being faced at the time and he is told that they would be flattened. *The day of small things* (v. 10) is a reference to the laying of the foundation. The old men who saw the first temple wept when they saw the new foundation completed (Ezra 3:12). The end of verse 10 shows God's providence over the situation. The two anointed ones (v. 14) represent Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor.

5 - Fifth Vision. The flying scroll.

The scroll is 30'x15'. The scroll pronounces a curse on thieves and liars. Hosea 4:2-3 and Micah 2:1-3 show that these sins were prevalent in Israel and Judah. Oaths taken in the Lord's name (Deut. 6:13) were not to be false (Lev. 19:12) because they would profane His name. Wickedness is pictured as a woman in a container (v. 5-11) that was to be removed from the land. Shinar is one of the oldest inhabited areas of the world (Gen. 10:10) and is pictured here as a place where sin dwells. The point of this vision is to show that God expected His people, who were rebuilding His temple, to be holy (Lev. 11:44-45).

6 - Sixth Vision. Chariots and horses.

Chariots and horses are images of war in the Bible. Revelation 6 gives an image of different horses and their coloring has some significance. There seems to be no great importance of the color of the horses in this text. The angel explains in verses 5-8 that this vision signifies God's knowledge and control over the events of the earth. This is something we must understand. 6:9-15 is a prophecy of the Branch (Christ) who would build the temple (church). *Joshua* was serving as the High Priest during Zechariah's day. Christ serves as the Christian's High Priest today (Heb. 4:15). Christ is referred to here as a priest and king (v. 13). The Gentiles were to be included in the building of the temple (v. 15; Eph. 2:11).

7 - Obedience is better than fasting.

The people had been fasting during the fifth month. 2 Kings 25:8 reveals that Nebuchanezzar burned the temple to the ground in the fifth month. Israel had appointed this as a time of fasting during the 70 years of captivity. The question presented was, "Are you doing this for Me or for you" (v. 6)? What Israel needed to do was to obey the words of the Lord (v. 7). Verses 8-14 show why Israel had suffered so much trouble. They would not listen to the prophets (v. 11-12).

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8 - Jerusalem will be restored. Verses 1-8 seem to be a prophecy of spiritual Zion, the church. Jerusalem had been destroyed because of iniquity, but one day it would be called the "city of truth" (v. 3). Hebrews 12:22-24 shows the church to be the "holy mountain" today. Verses 4-5 picture the new Jerusalem as a place of peace and safety. Verses 9-13 encourages the people to finish building the temple. Verses 14-17 reveal that God desires to bless His people, not punish them. Verses 18-23 show future blessings for God's people, the church.

9 - Enemies of God's people will be judged (v. 1-8). Verses 9-10 are a prophecy of Christ and the nature of His kingdom. Matthew 21:1-11 records the fulfillment. Verses 11-17 contain the promise of God restoring and protecting His people.

10 - God expresses His desire to bless His people, but the problem has been the wicked leadership (v. 1-5). God promises four things to come from Judah:

1. The cornerstone - Ephesians 2:20.
2. The nail/peg - Isaiah 22:23-24.
3. Battle bow - Revelation 6:2.
4. Every ruler - Psalm 110.

Verses 6-8 show that God would restore both Israel and Judah in the return from captivity (Ezra 2:70). Verses 9-12 shows a further fulfillment of the promise of restoration.

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11 - A picture of the future of Israel. 11:1-3 - The cypress and oak trees being cut down is symbolic of the destruction of Israel in the future. The temple in Jerusalem was constructed with some of this material.

11:4-9 - The "owners" of the flock were taking advantage of their position and feeling no pity for the people. Most commentators agree that this is speaking in reference to the state of Israel when Christ came to earth. The "poor" were taken advantage of (v. 7). There are differing opinions on the three shepherds of verse 8. Some say it is the scribes, elders, and chief priests. Others say it is the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians. Whoever they are, they were unholy people who did not care for the flock.

11:10-14 - The staff called "Beauty" was broken by Zechariah. It was symbolic of God's covenant and the poor realized it was done according to God's word (v. 10-11). Zechariah is paid 30 shekels for his service (Ex. 21:32; Matt. 26:14-16). The staff of unity is broken (v. 14) symbolizing the breaking of the Jewish nation. When Rome destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 the temple was destroyed and the tribal identities were lost.

11:15-17 - Zechariah is told to play the part of a foolish shepherd, symbolic of the leadership of Israel after the rejection and crucifixion of Christ.

12 - "In that day" is used 17 times in the last three chapters. 12:1-9 - God will defend His people. This passage is speaking in reference to spiritual Jerusalem. She (the church) will not be defeated by any of her enemies. God appeals to His creative powers in the beginning of this prophecy (v. 1).

12:10-14 - Mourning for the one who was pierced. God revealed His grace in the offering of Christ on the cross (Rom. 3:24-26). John 19:37 applies this passage to Christ.

13 - A continuation of the thought.

13:1 - A fountain for sin and uncleanness.

13:2 - Idolatry will perish. The true Israel worships God alone.

13:3-6 - False prophets will be easily recognizable.

13:7-9 - Persecution will come against the sheep. Mark 14:27-28 applies this passage to Christ.

14:1-2 - Spiritual Jerusalem is going to be attacked and spoiled.

14:3-5 - A picture of security for God's people. Matthew 24:15-22 reveals warnings that Jesus gave to the disciples for when Rome came up against Jerusalem.

14:6-9 - Living waters will flow from Jerusalem during a dark time. The book of Revelation paints a picture of this time of persecution against God's people.

14:10-11 - Jerusalem will be protected by God. Considering the physical history of Jerusalem, this passage can only be understood to refer spiritual Jerusalem.

14:12-15 - There are some who believe this to be a prophecy of nuclear warfare sometime in the future. God is simply revealing that His people will be protected. The church is not a physical, political, warring body. The church is a spiritual kingdom of peace and love.

14:16-21 - People from all over the world will come to Jerusalem (the church) to worship. Tabernacles was the feast of thanksgiving for deliverance from Egypt (Lev. 23:39-44) and is here symbolic for the Christians thanks to God from deliverance from sin. Everything in the church is set apart for a holy use.