



**Zechariah, Repentance, and the Patrol
An Introduction to the book of Zechariah
Repentance and the Earth Patrol
Zechariah 1:1-17**

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I have always been fascinated with end times prophecy. Right after trusting in Jesus, I discovered the book of Revelation and then the book of Zechariah. As scary as they may be to someone who does not know Jesus, for those of us who believe, these books are encouraging.

As we have just seen with Haggai, he did just that to encourage the people and Zerubbabel. Now we come to the book of Zechariah, and the message of this prophet is encouragement. He talks a lot about the end of the age. For those who have studied Revelation, this book will sound familiar.

The prophecy of Zechariah has been called 'the Apocalypse of the Old Testament', because much of the book is similar in style and content to Revelation, the last book in the New Testament. As with Revelation, Zechariah is written to encourage the people of God in their work and witness. (Bentley 1989, 89)

So, who is Zechariah?

Zechariah 1:1

"In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying," (NASB 2020)



The Holy Spirit wants us to know who Zechariah is. And because this name is popular, i.e. there are between 27 and 30 different people with this name in the Old Testament, we also get a bit of his lineage so we can identify which one he is. Zechariah's name means "YAHWEH remembers." (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 249)

The name is very appropriate for his ministry since Zechariah will be telling the people that YAHWEH does indeed remember them and has a future for them. Despite everything they have just gone through, YAHWEH has been there with them the entire time and in human terms, remembers them.

He is the son of Berechiah whose name means "whom YAHWEH has blessed; blessed of the LORD; YAHWEH is blessed; bending the knee." (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 36)

His granddad's name is Iddo, his name means "in time." Put those names together, and they provide us a clue as to the theme of this entire book: The Lord remembers and blesses at His set time." (Fries, Rummage and Gallaty 2015, 81)

As we have taught before, God always answers prayer. Yes, no, and not now. This is a book of dealing with the not now. When God moves, it is overwhelming, but waiting on Him requires encouragement.

Iddo was one of the priests who came back to Jerusalem with Ezra (Nehemiah 12:4). Even Rabbi's recognize what this book is about.

Z'kharyah motivates the people to finish the Temple, by prophesying about the future judgment and restoration of Isra'el. Z'kharyah points to future apocalyptic judgments of God that would purify Isra'el and prepare for the coming of God's kingdom. In this way, the prophet motivates the people to respond to God in their present situation. (Rubin 2016, 874)

Zechariah is the second prophet we meet after the return from Babylon. His ministry began right towards the end of Haggai's short ministry with their prophetic ministries overlapping for a month or so.

The people of Jerusalem are predominately those who came back with Ezra as part of the first wave returning from Babylon. They are the remnant, and they are faithful followers of YAHWEH. Haggai's ministry was successful, and they have repented and returned to the rebuilding of the Temple.

The returnees have dealt with the disappointment of most of the Jews remaining in Babylon and not returning. Many had heard the words of Ezekiel and were expecting to experience YAHWEH's universal rule and reign but when Jews all did not come streaming back to Jerusalem, they became discouraged. Haggai dealt with this.

By this time though the Messianic hope that the group had, those who came back with Ezra, was fading. They had forgotten some of the things that Daniel had said about the 70 weeks in Daniel 9.

There is something else that will take place as the work on the Temple begins and progress is seen, those in Babylon, who should return to the land, will begin to do so. If you build it, they will come, was true.

We will see by Zechariah 7 that Bethel has been repopulated.

In Matthew 23:35, we learn the fate of Zechariah.

Matthew 23:35

"As a result, the punishment for the murder of all innocent people will fall on you, from the murder of innocent Abel to the murder of Zachariah son of Berachiah, whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar." (GNB)



Obviously, not all were happy with his message.

The central theme of Zechariah is encouragement. Yes, he steps in and encourages the people to rebuild the Temple. But for him, there is more to it than just the building. The people also need to be holy and offer appropriate worship in the Temple they are building. He is a priest and knows how this should be working. He will be pointing to events in and around the Temple in the future.

Among the Minor Prophets he stands out as the one with the most Messianic references and is surpassed in this among the prophets only by Isaiah. (Steinmann, et al. 2006, 612)

This is a Messianic book. This is an apocalyptic book. It is about the coming King, and it is also about those events taking place when He returns to rule and reign over planet earth from Jerusalem. It is a book of the remnant.

Minor Prophets

- Hosea – Israel 748 – 686 BC
- Joel – Judah 835 – 796 BC
- Amos – Israel 786 – 746 BC
- Obadiah – Edom 848 – 841 BC
- Jonah – Assyria 771 – 754 BC
- Micah – Judah 750 – 686 BC
- Nahum – Assyria 661 BC
- Habakkuk – Judah 625 – 597 BC
- Zephaniah – Judah 640 – 608 BC
- Haggai – Judah 520 BC
- **Zechariah – Judah 520 – 480 BC**
- Malachi – Judah 455 – 432 BC

The theme of the book is new beginnings. The encouragement is here because what Zechariah wants to see above all else, is that they get it right this time and not fall into the mistakes of the past. There is one more book after this one, Malachi, and once we get there, we will discover that once again, things have gone south.

The book covers the time period from 520 BC all the way to the end of the Tribulation, the battle of Armageddon and the Millennium.

It also covers the recognition of their need for the Messiah to come and save them and their repentance as a nation for that to happen.

Outline

- I. Zechariah 1:1-6 The impact of repentance
- II. Zechariah 1:7 – 6:15 Night visions
- III. Zechariah 7:1 - 8:23 The Delegation from Bethel and YAHWEH's feedback and questions answered
- IV. Zechariah 9:1 – 17 YAHWEH defends
- V. Zechariah 10:1 – 11:3 Reconstituting Judah and Israel
- VI. Zechariah 11:4 – 17 Shepherd problems
- VII. Zechariah 12:1 – 14 Israel, the remnant and Armageddon
- VIII. Zechariah 13:1 – 9 Tribulation cleansing of the remnant
- IX. Zechariah 14:1 – 21 Armageddon and the Millennium

It is now the times of the gentiles. Darius is the Emperor in Persia.

Darius the Great (Hystaspes)

Darius extended his empire to the Caucasus and by 513 B.C. marched beyond the Bosphorus and crossed the Danube. Complete Persian control over the area, however, was prevented by Scythian attacks. Though having added Macedonia to his realm, he failed to add Greece when his host was defeated at Marathon, 490 B.C. He recorded his exploits in a trilingual inscription high on the cliff near Behistun (Bisitun), along the main trade route between Ecbatana (Achmetha, Ezr 6:2) and Babylon. (Stigers 1975)

Darius is a Big Deal in Persia



(Bolen 2018, Used with Permission)

On the southeastern face of Mount Behistun, about 330 feet (100 meters) above the plain, is an inscription that has made the mountain famous. “There around 518 B.C. on a sheer cliff 69 meters (225 feet) above the plain Darius had carved a monumental record of his rise to power.” It has been recorded for us in three languages. Elamite, Akkadian and Old Persian. (Yamauchi 1996, 131)

Recording Darius’s tumultuous rise to power, its trilingual nature made it effectively the “Rosetta Stone” of the East, allowing scholars to read texts created by the ancient Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires.

In 1948 George Cameron was able to lower himself from the top of the mountain on a painter’s scaffold to make latex squeezes of the inscription. In 1957 he made additional squeezes suspended in a boatswain’s chair. It was then that he discovered that the text to the right of the relief was slavishly identical to the lower Elamite version. (Yamauchi 1996, 134)

We owe the full decipherment of Old Persian and ultimately all the cuneiform scripts to the perseverance and courage of the Englishman, Henry Rawlinson, who from 1835 to 1847 succeeded in copying almost all of the Behistun inscription, often working in total disregard for his life and limb. (Yamauchi 1996, 135)

Palace of Darius



(Bolen, Persiopolis palace of Darius from southwest 2018, Used with Permission)

Relief of Darius



(Bolen, Persiopolis palace of Darius relief of king 2018, Used with Perimssion)



Zechariah 1:3

"Therefore say to them, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "Return to Me," declares the LORD of armies, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of armies.'" (NASB 2020)

To make it clear that where the message is from, Zechariah uses a format that suggest his message comes from the Divine Council.

The messenger of the council stands as an observer in council sessions and then reports to others what he has heard as an envoy of the council. For this reason, the verb of 'speaking' is better rendered according to its past-tense form: 'Thus said the LORD of Hosts' (so JPSV). (Hill 2012, 127)

Zechariah 1:3

"Say to them further: Thus said the LORD of Hosts: Turn back to me—says the LORD of Hosts—and I will turn back to you—said the LORD of Hosts." (Jewish Publication Society 1985, Zec 1:3)

Seeing this as it appears in the Tanakh, we get the impact. Zechariah is reporting on what he has heard. YAHWEH wants to show grace, but at this point, the promises of Ezekiel and Jeremiah are still unfulfilled (Jeremiah 31:31-33, 33:14-16, Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24-28). Zechariah will get there, but he is dealing with the elephant in the room.

The more earnestly and the more thoroughly the people turned to Him, the more faithfully and the more gloriously would He bestow upon them His grace and the promised salvation... (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 508)

The remnants ancestors had that opportunity which they rejected. Thus, the discipline of the exile. All the debris you see around you is due to your parents and grandparents ignoring the prophets. The memory of the recent past is still strong.

You have an opportunity to get it correct. But even you have had some difficulty with that since Haggai had to bring you a message that you too have just responded to by repenting and getting back to work.

To emphasize this, we see the term the Lord of Hosts or as we see in the NASB, the Lord of Armies used as the title. This is meant to reflect the absolute authority of the God of the universe behind what is being said. He is calling for covenant faithfulness which their ancestors had rejected.

The expression connotes a change or shift in loyalty away from sin and self and towards God, a reorientation to YHWH and his covenant demands. The imperative form of the verb conveys a sense of urgency and places a demand for immediate and specific action on the part of those so addressed. (Hill 2012, 128)

Zechariah 1:4–5

"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.'" But they did not listen or pay attention to Me," declares the LORD. "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?" (NASB 2020)

This is a history lesson with a point to it. You have recently listened to Haggai, repented and returned to the work. That is a good start. Stop and think about what your parents and grandparents did though and just simply refuse to go down that path.

A lack of repentance in the fathers drew God's sure fulfillment of judgment that He warned would overtake them. Only after the calamity, in some cases, did repentant Israelites repent, acknowledging that He had been true to do what He said He would do. (Rosscup 2008, 1413)



And to further make His point, God asks a very direct and poignant question.

Did everything that I warned them about through Jeremiah and all of the others come true? Did they find themselves exiled away from the land in Babylon? Did they come to their senses eventually and repent?

Zechariah 1:6b

"Then they repented and said, 'Just as the LORD of armies planned to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.'" (NASB 2020)

They are in Jerusalem now because they repented. They are now working on the Temple because they listened to Haggai and repented.

The very clear message...do not be like your ancestors. Be faithful, be looking to the day of Messiah.

Your parents and grandparents were not faithful. They are not buried here in the land. Those who are faithful want to be buried in the land so at the time of the resurrection, they would be there in the land with Messiah and family.

When Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation, once Armageddon is over, the OT saints will indeed be resurrected and those who were buried in the land were looking forward to be resurrected right there with no need to travel. This continues today.

Mount of Olives, North of Zechariah 14 Landing Site



(Bolen, Mount of Olives Graves from above 2012, Used with Permission)

As the remnant looks back, they see the sin of their ancestors, and they agree that what the Lord did was righteous and just.

Sometimes we too must deal with the history of how we wound up in the hole we were in before we gave up and gave everything to Christ. They were not the good old days, not at all. As we grow in Christ and become more like Him, we are aware those days are there, but they no longer define us since Holy Spirit is now conforming us to Jesus.

Are there still some physical signs of the bc days? Yes, but He is in the business of making us new.

Just like the remnant looking around and seeing the results of disobedience all around them. The walls are still down. The Temple has not been completed. The city seems empty compared to the past. They are being ruled by a gentile King. Debris still is everywhere, but with each passing day, the scenery



begins to change. Now that repentance has taken place, the rains will return, the Temple will go up and they do not know it yet, but Nehemiah will come and help with the wall issue as well.

There is no such thing as instantly being like Christ. Positionally we are, but some things need to change.

This is what is meant by the term sanctification. I don't want to get into a theological discussion about the doctrine of sanctification, suffice it to say here we are talking about progressive sanctification, one of the elements which means we are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. There are two processes going on in the life of the believer.

First there is the gradual removal of pollution and corruption of the believer's human nature (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:14). And secondly, there is a gradual development of the new life consecrated to God (Rom. 6:4–5; Gal. 2:19; Col. 2:12; 3:1–2). (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 14)

What I am looking forward to is the ultimate, glorification also called ultimate sanctification. When Jesus takes us in the rapture, or we go to Him in death, then we are freed from the presence of all sin. No more sin nature.

That concludes Zechariah's first message. Haggai will then prophesy in December and Zechariah will not prophesy again until February.

What he receives then will be a doozy. Zechariah will not receive only one message.

In a single night Zechariah saw a series of eight visions which were interpreted by an angel and which described the future of the nation Israel. God's program of spiritual blessing set forth in the visions bridges the centuries from the rebuilding of the temple in Zechariah's day to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel under the Messiah. (Lindsey 1985, 1549)

The angel who is talking to Zechariah is an intermediary figure. He belongs to the divine sphere. Therefore, he is representing YHWH as an interpreter of the vision. (Heiser 2018, 51)

The visions that Zechariah is given all take place the evening of February 15, 519 BC. This is five months after the Temple construction project has been restarted. Three months after Zechariah's first prophecy and two months after Haggai.

Zechariah 1:7–11

"On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, that is, the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows: I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel, and white horses behind him. Then I said, "What are these, my lord?" And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are." And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, "These are the ones whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth." So they responded to the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is still and quiet." (NASB 2020)

The source of what he sees is clearly stated for us in verse 7, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah. What he sees is a man riding a red horse standing in a group of myrtle trees, large shrubs actually, in a ravine. With the man and the horse, are red, sorrel and white horses. Zechariah sees this and asks about it.

Zechariah gives us some hints and there are also something he does not say. He does not say he is asleep. It is nighttime, but we do not know the actual time.



There may have been some preliminaries too that we are not told about. Zechariah says he asked the angel who was talking to him a question. What were they talking about before he sees the horses in the ravine?

We do not see the word for vision here. He is awake and he sees this. Zechariah was awake and conscious of events transpiring around him. Nonetheless, the ambience of the scene is rather dark and obscure, contrasting the Lord's omniscience and plans for his people with human ability to perceive fully what God is doing. (Klein 2008, 95)

It appears the intent was for him to fully understand since there is an angel with him, and they have been talking already. So, Zechariah asks what does all of this mean?

The angel promises an answer and then the man who was standing in the myrtles speaks to explain. The myrtle is an evergreen shrub growing seven to eight feet in height. This shrub is best known for its use in the construction of the booths used in the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh 8:15). (Klein 2008, 98)

The colors of the horses here has no significance. Unlike in Revelation. There are some who try to go there, but there really is no significance.

Horses, at this time in the history of the middle east, were tools of military supremacy. In the Persian empire, they were also used as an integral part of the Empire Royal Communication System.

When Zechariah is told that these horses are the ones who patrol the earth, that would make sense. The one who is truly in command of the world would have whatever resources necessary to maintain order of the planet. The picture is also one of maintaining overwatch. This is one who has authority over the planet and is maintaining overwatch of Jerusalem. And with that we learn who the talking is, the Angel of the Lord.

Zechariah 1:10–11

“And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, “These are the ones whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.” So they responded to the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, “We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is still and quiet.”” (NASB 2020)

He does not say it is at peace, rather still and quiet. The Angel of the Lord is a theophany. It is the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ who is with the red horse. The picture, God is with and in the midst of His people and actively standing watch now they have begun the task of rebuilding.

In the second year of Darius there prevailed universal peace; all the nations of the earlier Chaldaean empire were at rest, and lived in undisturbed prosperity. Only Judaea, the home of the nation of God, was still for the most part lying waste, and Jerusalem was still without walls, and exposed in the most defenceless manner to all the insults of the opponents of the Jews. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 514)

Apparently, there are angelic beings riding the other horses who are involved in this patrol. Zechariah continues.

Zechariah 1:12–17

“Then the angel of the LORD said, “LORD of armies, how long will You take no pity on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant for these seventy years?” And the LORD responded to the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘This is what the LORD of armies says: “I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. But I am very angry with the nations who are carefree; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.” Therefore the LORD says this: “I will return to Jerusalem with



compassion; My house will be built in it," declares the LORD of armies, "and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem." ' Again, proclaim, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem." ' '"" (NASB 2020)

The Angel of the Lord steps into the role as an advocate on behalf of the people of Jerusalem and engages in intercessory prayer on their behalf. This is a preincarnate view of Jesus Christ performing a role that the writer of Hebrews talks to.

Hebrews 7:24–25

"But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." (NKJV)

The intercession is a repeat of the exact thing the people of Jerusalem were praying, how long. There is also a reminder of the length of time as well. We know they are praying this because of the prayer of Daniel which we have. The Darius, Daniel refers to is not the same man who is King in Zechariah's time.

Daniel 9:1–3

"In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to the prophet Jeremiah, must be fulfilled for the devastation of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned to the Lord God to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." (NRSVue)

For those of the remnant, some would be praying the same as Daniel. This is why in intercession with YAHWEH, the Angel of the Lord says what He does.

In this prayer, we see three things. We see respect at the very outset of the prayer. This is a reminder to us that when we pray, we too need to remember just who it is that we are talking to. We are addressing the Creator of everything, the God of the Universe. "Second, the prayer question is sharp, timely, relevant to the need, illustrating that prayer can be right to the mark rather than vaguely "beating around the bush" as so often happens. Third, the prayer exemplifies an intercessory concern, and the blessing strategic to resolve others' problems as God wills." (Rosscup 2008, 1415)

Zechariah 1:13–14

"And the LORD responded to the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion." (NASB 2020)

Zechariah overhears what it is the Lord says. Obviously listening in on the conversation taking place. He does not repeat it though as he too knows who the Lord is. He does tell us though that the words are filled with grace. They are not hard to hear. He is waiting for the Angel of the Lord to get back to him.

The first point Zechariah is to tell those in Jerusalem is this, the Lord is extremely jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. This is indeed very good news. He is eager to console, encourage and comfort His people who have repented and returned to Him and to the work. This is not the entire conversation though.

Zechariah 1:15–16

"But I am very angry with the nations who are carefree; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster." Therefore the LORD says this: "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it," declares the LORD of armies, "and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem." (NASB 2020)



We see a picture here of the Lord as a tender shepherd, giving comfort to His people, jealous for Jerusalem by already bringing the remnant back to it. But we also see He is a military commander concerned about the just how far the nations went with the discipline He had determined was necessary for Judah. The nations had gone too far. They took the disaster beyond what was prudent.

God has compassion for Jerusalem. He intends to live there and bless Jerusalem to the point that it will need to be measured out for streets and buildings. A building boom is still coming for the city.

Jerusalem is His city, and the Israelites are His people. He is fully aware of the worldwide woe of oppressed Israel even in our day, and He is exceedingly jealous for His people. (McGee 1997, 909)

The attitude of the nations at that time has not changed even today. The nations of the world were interested in destroying the Jews for good.

The sovereign LORD promised that the temple would be rebuilt there, and the city again would become a viable entity. The Jews finished the temple in 515 B.C., but the city walls were not complete until 444 B.C. (Neh. 7:4; 11:1). (Constable 2003, 2022, Zec 1:16)

The Lord is also talking about a future time as well. He outlines six things He will do for Israel, six blessings.

1. The presence of God is promised to return.
2. The Temple will be rebuilt.
3. The city will be rebuilt.
4. The countryside around Jerusalem will overflow with blessing.
5. All of God's promises regarding Jerusalem will be fulfilled.
6. Jerusalem and its people will be the chosen of the Lord implying a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-40).

The fulfillment of all six of these items are something we look forward to as they all indeed take place with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation. The Divine Glory did not return to Jerusalem after the completion of the second Temple. Ezekiel had already stated that would be the case until the millennium.

As we have already pointed out, the people who had returned thought these promises were about to be fulfilled.

Needless to say, all of those six things they were looking forward to have not taken place yet. They are still in the future even for us. The only difference is that everything necessary for Jesus to come and remove the church has already taken place. He has been waiting now for close to 2000 years.

Are you ready for Him to come and get all of this started?

You can be by simply trusting in Christ today.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)



Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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