

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

May memory verse Romans 6:8 (NKJV)

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

June memory verse Romans 6:9 (NKJV)

knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.

Death no longer has dominion over Him.

July memory verse Romans 6:10 (NKJV)

For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

**Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24
Includes, John MacArthur :: Bible Introductions - Zechariah**

Chapter 1

Now if you remember when we studied the book of Haggai last week, Haggai was dating his prophecies in the second year of Darius the king. His first prophecy was in, I think, the sixth month of the second year. He had another prophecy in the seventh month, and his last prophecy was in the ninth month.

Now Zechariah also dates his prophecies in the reign of Darius, the Medo-Persian king. So between... and at the same time that Haggai was prophesying, you remember he prophesied in the seventh month, in the ninth month.

In the eighth month, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, the eighth month, and the second year of Darius ([Zec 1:1](#)).

So Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries. They were both prophets of the post-exilic period. The children of Israel had returned, that is a portion of them, 50,000 of them from their exile in Babylon. Seventy years of Babylonian captivity had more or less weaned them from their idolatry. For it was because of their idolatry that they went into captivity. But the Jews learned something in Babylon of commercialism. It seems that the Jewish people are very adaptable, and whatever they do, they learn to do it well. Babylon was the commercial center of the world. When the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, they began to go from the agrarian culture to a more commercial, and they began to excel in the commercial field. So much so, that by the time the seventy years of captivity was over, many of them had no desire to return to the land at all. They were

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

now wealthy merchants. They controlled the commerce of Babylon. They had learned well the lessons of commerce, and they have not forgotten them and still are very successful many times in the commercial field.

It is interesting that when the nation Israel was reborn and the people went back to the land, that these people who had excelled so much in the commercial field, wherever they went in the world, they were always involved in commerce. But when they returned back to the land, many of them returned to the soil, and some of the most advanced agricultural techniques in the world are now being practiced in Israel, and they teach the world the art of agriculture.

Now here were a bunch of bankers, and businessmen, and store owners, and all, they go back to Israel, and they go back to the farm, and it isn't long before they've developed the drip system of irrigation. They've developed the sprinkling system of irrigation, and they've begun to farm the desert, and they have become extremely profitable now in their farming interests. And they actually fill Europe with fresh fruit and vegetables all year round. So they're a fascinating people. They were so successful, as I said, in their commercial ventures that many of them did not return. This will be brought out in some of the prophecies here in Zechariah.

Those who returned came back to a desolation like they never dreamed. The destruction of Jerusalem was so thorough by Nebuchadnezzar that there wasn't any rebuilding, really, of the city. All they could do was cover the rubble and the waste of the past and start building anew on top of it. They started the rebuilding of the temple, but they soon became discouraged.

When Solomon built the temple, he had hired 150,000 men with 3,000 superintendents and an unlimited supply of money. He was able to build a beautiful, glorious temple unto the Lord, which was one of the sites of the ancient world. The queen of Sheba, when she came and saw it, she said, "Oh, I heard of the glory, but the half was not told to me!" He used great stones, cedars from Lebanon, covered everything with gold. But, of course, the gold was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. The huge brass pillars were broken up and taken to Babylon. All that was left were the huge stones that they could hardly move around.

After a time of attempting to build the temple, there were a lot of people that were there in the land that were harassing them. They finally just gave up. They thought, "Oh, it can't be done. We're just not strong enough. There's not enough of us." They just gave up the attempts to build the temple.

That's when Haggai started them. "Hey, you people look around, check things out. Your crops have been bad; you're planting a lot of seeds, harvesting a little. Does it seem like your purses have holes in the bottom? Your money is just disappearing? The reason why is that you are dwelling comfortably now in your ceiled houses, while the house of God lies desolate." Haggai was encouraging them to get back to the building of the temple. Promising them that when they would, that God would begin to bless them.

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

"Mark this date, put it on your calendar, and see if from this time God doesn't begin to bless you as you return to the work of building His house."

At that same time, Zechariah came on the scene. Zechariah was probably a young man at the time that he prophesied. Zechariah of the minor prophets has the clearest insight concerning the coming of Jesus Christ than any of the other minor prophets, and writes more concerning Jesus Christ than all of the rest of the minor prophets combined. As we get into Zechariah, you'll be amazed at his prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, both the first and the second coming. Zechariah makes amazing predictions. Predictions that are coming to pass right now. Predictions that have come to pass in the last few years. And as we read them, you'll see how clearly God gave him an insight into the history of the nation of Israel at the present time.

So let's get into Zechariah. "The eighth month, the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah,"

the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts (Zec 1:1-3).

This basically is God's message to the people through the ages. "If you'll turn to Me, I will turn to you." When the king Asa had come back from great victory over the Ethiopians and the Nubians, the prophet of God came out to meet him and he said, "The Lord is with you while you are with Him, and if you seek Him, He will be found of you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (II Chronicles 15:2). Through the ages this is always the case. God is always waiting for man to come. And if you will come to God, you can have fellowship with God, and the Lord will be with you. But the Lord does not force Himself on people. God does not force you to love Him. God does not force you to come to Him. He does not force you to serve Him. He just tells you of His love for you. And because of His love for you, this is what He will do for you if you're walking in fellowship with Him. But when it comes right down to it, you are the one that has to make the decision. God has done all that He will do to save you. He has provided all that you need. But you must initiate now. God has already done all the initiating He will in providing the way. Now He waits for you to come, and He invites you to come, but you have to do it.

So, "Turn to Me, saith the Lord, and I will turn to you. Your fathers, they forsook Me. I was displeased with your fathers. But now if you'll just turn to Me, I'll turn to you."

Don't be as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings (Zec 1:4):

That's what they were crying to their fathers, but their fathers did not turn.

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. And your fathers, where are they? (Zec 1:4-5)

Learn the lesson. Your fathers perished because they did not turn to Me; your fathers were carried away to Babylon because they would not turn to Me.

But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, they did not take hold of your fathers? [Your fathers wouldn't listen.] and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do to us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us (Zec 1:6).

So that which the prophets had warned them would happen, did happen. They were defeated; they were carried away captive.

Now the first of the ten visions that Zechariah received. A vision is similar to a dream with the exception that you are awake and conscious, that you are awake when you have a vision. But it is much like a dream in that you have a picture in your mind of things like you do in a dream. But as a dream is so often disjointed, and seemingly unrelated, so with visions. In God communicating to men through dreams, there needed to be the interpretation of the dream, because the dream was in symbols, and thus, needed interpretation. So with visions, so often they are in symbolic form, and a vision must be interpreted.

Now with Zechariah, the Lord gave him the visions, and in many places gave him also the interpretation. The Lord said, "You understand that Zechariah?" He said, "No, I don't. What's it mean?" "You don't know what it means?" "Nope, tell me." So the Lord would have to interpret for Zechariah the visions that he saw. Wherever God interpreted, then we understand the visions. Where God did not interpret, we can only guess. However, with parables, allegories, dreams, and visions, there is what is known as expositional constancy. Now that is a word of hermeneutics that I don't expect you to remember. But what it means is that in an allegory in a parable in a vision, in a dream, where you have symbolic language, if for instance in parables where the Lord is explaining the parable of the field and the types of seed that were planted in it. He said, "Now the seed is the Word of God, and the field is the world. The bird is the enemy who comes and plucks up the seed." So in parables, allegories, visions, and dreams, wherever you find the field, the field represents the world. Wherever you find birds, they are always in a bad sense. Wherever you find the seed being planted, that is the Word of God. Thus, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, as the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. There are those what are called expositional constancies. That is, wherever they're used in an allegorical form, it remains through the whole Bible, so that if you are trying to understand a parable, or an allegory, or a vision, and you are dealing with a oil, you are dealing with the subject of the Holy Spirit. If you're dealing with birds, you are dealing with the enemy to the true child of God. Where you are dealing with the field, you're dealing with the world. So expositional constancy.

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

Now on the twenty fourth day of the eleventh month, the second year of Darius, there came the word of the Lord to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, I saw at night, and behold there was a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him there were there red horses, speckled, and white horses (Zec 1:7-8).

So different horses behind him. So here is a man riding a red horse and horses behind him, and he's standing there under the myrtle tree.

Then said I, O my lord, what is this? (Zec 1:9)

Just from the outset you see a vision of a guy sitting on a horse, and these other horses behind him under the myrtle trees, and what can you make of that? Now there is a type of sermonizing which I do not follow, nor do I advocate, and that is the spiritualizing of a text in order to interpret it. Where a person will take a parable, for instance, and he will make every part of that parable symbolic. "And this is like," and he preaches this sermon using the parable as the basis for the sermon. Just, "This represents, and this represents, and this represents," and you're spiritualizing the whole thing. The Bible doesn't say that it represents those things, but you can actually get good sermons out of the parables if you'll spiritualize them, because you can make them say anything you want them to say. But you really don't have real solid teaching of the Word of God. But there are many who do follow that practice of just spiritualizing things. But really, if you do that you can also, if you run out of parables, use The Three Little Pigs, and preach a tremendous sermon from The Three Little Pigs, and the importance of building a strong house, one that will stand because the devil will huff and puff and blow your house down if you haven't really built a strong house. So you need to build a house of faith, mingled with the Word of God, the bricks, and the mortar. I mean you can go on and on with these things, and you can spiritualize almost anything, and read into it whatever you want.

As I say, I do not practice that kind of preaching. Because if I did not have the interpretation of this rider on a red horse with a speckled and white and red horses behind him, I'm sure that I never would've come to what it is. So Zechariah, when he saw the thing, very wisely said, "What in the world is this?" The angel that talked with me, said unto me, "I will show you what this is."

And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest (Zec 1:10-11).

Now the children of Israel at this time had been dispersed through the whole earth. So these who were sent more or less to oversee, and to see the conditions of the earth, and they came back and reported, "Everything is at rest, and peaceful throughout the earth."

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

Now, here were God's people scattered, dispersed, and the world was resting and happy with that fact, and so God was displeased with the treatment of His people that they were receiving through the world.

Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which you have had indignation these seventy years? And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words (Zec 1:12-13).

So the angel said to Him, "Lord, how long until You have mercy on Jerusalem and on Judah? How long, O Lord, are the people gonna be dispersed and scattered?" The Lord talked with him, and I love this, with good words, and with comfortable words. It seems whenever we're distressed and we come to the Lord, He is so patient with us. I've always found that He talks with me with good words, and with comfortable words. Oh, what comfort!

So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was just a little displeased, and they helped to forward the affliction (Zec 1:14-15).

In other words, God was using the nations as an instrument of judgment against Israel. But they, in their destruction, went beyond.

And therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem (Zec 1:16).

So the Lord promises that the house will be built. Now, they who had been working on it were convinced at this time that it wouldn't be built, "Too much, can't do it. The job is too big; it's too great." But the Lord is here declaring, "The house will be built."

Now, there is yet another temple to be built, and this prophecy not only dealt with the times then, but has a double fulfillment. Because, again, the Lord has declared that His house will be built in Jerusalem, and there will be definitely a temple built again in Jerusalem. In the eleventh chapter of the book of Revelation, John has given a ruler, and he is told to measure the temple and the courts. Now this is during the period of the Great Tribulation. So I expect work to start most any time on the new temple in Jerusalem.

"The house of the Lord will be built in Jerusalem," He promised. He said,

Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem (Zec 1:17).

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

Though at this time Jerusalem was such a rubble, such a wasted ruin, yet the Lord promises the rebuilding.

Now the second of his visions:

Then I lifted up my eyes, and I saw, and behold there were four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem (Zec 1:18-19).

Now the four horns represent four kingdoms, for the horns symbolically are representing kings, or powers. They are equivalent to the four metals in the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, or the four beasts of Daniel's dream. The four kingdoms by which Israel was dispersed into the world beginning with the Babylonian Kingdom, and then the Medo-Persian Empire, and then the Grecian Empire, and finally the Roman Empire. These nations under which God's people suffered.

And then the LORD showed me four carpenters (Zec 1:20).

Now his visions are flipping from one to another. First the red horse with the rider on it, and the other horses under the myrtle tree. Then the next thing all he saw were these four horns. Now what can you make out of four horns? So the angel told him what it was. Now the third vision, "The Lord showed me four carpenters," or literally, hewers, or carvers.

Then I said, What come these to do? (Zec 1:21)

What are these guys coming to do, Lord?

and he spake unto me saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man could lift up his head: but these are coming to fray them [to carve them up], to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it (Zec 1:21).

So those carvers that are coming to fray the kingdoms that scattered God's people.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2, the next vision, the fourth in the series of ten.

I lifted up my eyes again, and I looked, and behold there was a man with a measuring line in his hand [He had a ruler]. I said, Where are you going? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, And he said unto him, Run and speak to this young man (Zec 2:1-4),

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

Calling Zechariah a young man, and that is why I said he was probably a young man when he prophesied. He said, "Run and speak to this young man,"

saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein (Zec 2:4):

In other words, Jerusalem is going to grow far beyond the boundaries of the walls. Now, if you go to Jerusalem today, you'll find that this prophecy is fulfilled. It wasn't really fulfilled until more recent years. Until really the last century. But Jerusalem has expanded tremendously. In fact, there are new settlements in Jerusalem way out towards the city of Jericho. Probably eight miles out of the center of Jerusalem. New settlements, huge settlements. Jerusalem has new settlements almost to Bethlehem. They have settlements almost to Ramalah. Jerusalem has expanded her borders tremendously. So this prophecy of Zechariah was not really fulfilled until our day, and you can go over now and see how it is being fulfilled even now.

For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about (Zec 2:5),

In other words, they will expand from the walls. And the walled city of Jerusalem is now just a small little portion there in the center, and it comprises just a little area of about one square mile, where I would imagine that the city limits of Jerusalem proper now are probably now somewhere in the neighborhood of 150 to 200 square miles, as it has expanded so large. So the Lord said, "I will be a wall of fire around them. They won't have to build a wall around it, for I will be the wall of fire round about."

and I will be the glory in the midst of her (Zec 2:5)

Of course, that has not yet taken place, will not take place until Jesus comes again, that is His being the glory in the midst of her.

O come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD (Zec 2:5-6).

So He speaks of their dispersion; He had spread them abroad as the four winds.

Now, as Jesus went on in Matthew 24, He told of the Great Tribulation that was going to come, such as the world has never seen before or will ever see again. He begins to tell them some of the things that are gonna happen in the Great Tribulation. The moon will be turned to blood, and the sun into darkness before the day of the Lord come. The stars are gonna fall from heaven like a fig tree casts forth her untimely figs. Jesus said, "And immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall they see the Son of man coming with clouds and great glory." That is the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ; it's gonna come right after the Great Tribulation period. Then Jesus said, "And then shall they gather together His elect from the four corners of the earth."

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

Now those people who declare that the rapture of the church will take place after the Great Tribulation use this as one of their key proof text. That the Lord gathers together His elect from the four corners of the earth, after He returns in power and great glory.

But here in Zechariah we find that those elect that God will be gathering together from the four winds of the earth are actually the nation Israel, not the church. That is also confirmed by parallel prophecies in Isaiah.

So the Lord is saying, "Come forth!" Now there are thousands of Jews in Russia today wanting to immigrate to Israel. But, of course, at the present time Russia has a very restrictive quota against them, and it's been holding them back. But God says, "Oh, let them go. And they will flee from the land of the north," as God has spread them to the four winds of the heavens.

Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon (Zec 2:7).

That is, deliver yourself out of that commercialism into which you have fallen.

Now in the book of Revelation, God expresses His anger against commercialism as we know it that has been guilty of enslaving the souls of men. Those who have been taking advantage of other people and taking more profit than is necessary from their products. God speaks of the destruction of that commercial Babylonian system in Revelation, chapter 18. Chapter 17 is the destruction of the religious Babylonian system, chapter 18 the destruction of the commercial Babylonian system.

Now in Revelation, when He speaks of the commercial, He said, "Come out of her My people." That is the same thing that He is saying here. Calling His people to come out from that Babylon commercial system.

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that touches you touches the apple of his eye (Zec 2:8).

Now God is saying that concerning the Jewish people. And I don't know what your particular opinion of the Jews may be, but if you touch them you are touching the apple of God's eye.

Now, because I have taken a supportive position towards the Jews and towards Israel, because I come from a biblical base, you would be amazed at the mail that I get and how many ministers even write to me, and castigate me for my pro-Israel stance. I get hate mail all the time because of my support for the Jews and the nation of Israel. But I do believe that God said, "He will bless those that bless them, and curse those that curse them." The Lord said, "If you touch them, you are touching the apple of My eye."

Yes, I know that they have turned their backs upon God; yes I know that they have been guilty of corrupting the morals of the world. I know that they've controlled Hollywood, and I know that they've controlled a lot of things that have brought corruption into the

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

world. And yet, I know that God has chosen them, and you just better not touch them. Now, a lot of people have become extremely angry because of the dealings that they've had where they've been taken. There are a lot of people who just have a bitterness towards the Jewish people. But don't touch them, for the Lord said you're touching the apple of His eye.

For behold, I will shake my hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me. [Turning to Israel he said,] Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD (Zec 2:9-10).

A glorious prophecy of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and they're exhorted to sing and rejoice because the Lord is gonna come and dwell in the midst of them.

And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know the LORD of hosts has sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation (Zec 2:11-13).

So according to the scriptures, Jesus is going to come again and He's going to dwell upon the earth for a thousand years. He's going to reign over the earth during this time, and He will set His throne in Jerusalem. Judah, the area of Judah will be His portion. And it says the kings of the earth will come annually and present their gifts unto Him. And He will be the Lord over the earth at that time, and the peoples of the world will worship Him.

Now in that glorious Kingdom Age, we will be here to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. In fact, in the book of Revelation it says, "Unto Him who loved us and washed us with His blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God" (Revelation 1:5-6). Then in the fifth chapter of Revelation, when we are singing praises unto the Lamb for His worthiness to take the scroll and loose the seal because He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood, and the song goes on to say, "And we shall reign with Him and has made us kings and priests unto our God, and we shall reign with Him upon the earth."

So when you read of the kings of the earth coming and presenting their gifts unto the Lord in the Kingdom Age, that's you that it's talking about. But the kings of the earth gathering, and how glorious that's going to be when the Lord reigns over the earth, and righteousness covers the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

You know, if you miss that, you miss the whole reason for living! You miss the whole purpose of life. The purpose of your being here is that you might come to know Jesus Christ now as your Lord and as your King, in order that loving Him, living for Him, and serving Him now, you might continue loving Him, living for Him, and serving Him forever. That's why you're here. If you miss knowing the Lord now, you've missed the

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

whole purpose of life, and your life is in vain. It's empty. It's worthless. So many people have wasted their lives because they've lived for the present pleasures, for the present glories, for the present age, and they haven't taken eternity into view at all.

John MacArthur :: Bible Introductions - Zechariah

Title

The universal tradition of both Jews and Christians endorses the prophet Zechariah as author. His name, common to more than 29 OT men, means "The LORD remembers." This book is second only to Isaiah in the breadth of the prophet's writings about Messiah.

Author and Date

Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Zechariah was also a priest (Neh. 12:12–16) According to tradition, he was a member of the Great Synagogue, a council of 120 originated by Nehemiah and presided over by Ezra. This council later developed into the ruling elders of the nation, called the Sanhedrin. He was born in Babylon and joined his grandfather, Iddo, in the group of exiles who first returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the High-Priest (cf. Neh. 12:4). Because he is occasionally mentioned as the son of his grandfather (cf. Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh. 12:16), it is thought that his father, Berechiah, died at an early age before he could succeed his father into the priesthood.

Zechariah's opening words are dated from 520 B.C., the second year of Darius I (cf. 1:1). The Persian emperor Cyrus had died and was succeeded by Cambyses (ca. 530–521 B.C.) who conquered Egypt. He had no son, he killed himself, and Darius rose to the throne by quelling a revolution. He was a contemporary of Haggai, and began his prophesying 2 months after him (cf. Haggai Introduction). He is called a young man in 2:4, suggesting that Zechariah was younger than Haggai. The length of his ministry is uncertain; the last dated prophecy (7:1) came approximately two years after the first, making them identical in time with Haggai's prophecy (520–518 B.C.). Chapters 9–14 are generally thought to come from a later period of his ministry. Differences in style and references to Greece indicate a date of ca. 480–470 B.C., after Darius I (ca. 521–486 B.C.) and during Xerxes' reign (ca. 486–464 B.C.), the king who made Esther queen of Persia. According to Matt. 23:35, he was murdered between the temple and the altar, a fate similar to an earlier Zechariah (cf. 2 Chr. 24:20, 21), who had been stoned to death.

Background and Setting

The historical background and setting of Zechariah are the same as that of his contemporary, Haggai. In 538 B.C., Cyrus the Persian freed the captives from Israel to

Commentary on Zechariah Chapters 1 and 2, by Chuck Smith 7.24.24

resettle their homeland (cf. [Ezra 1:1–4](#)) and about 50,000 returned from Babylon. They immediately began to rebuild the temple (cf. [Ezra 3:1–4:5](#)), but opposition from neighbors, followed by indifference from within, caused the work to be abandoned (cf. [Ezra 4:24](#)). Sixteen years later (cf. [Ezra 5:1,2](#)), Zechariah and Haggai were commissioned by the Lord to stir up the people to rebuild the temple. As a result, the temple was completed 4 years later in 516 B.C. ([Ezra 6:15](#)).

Historical and Theological Themes

Zechariah joined Haggai in rousing the people from their indifference, challenging them to resume the building of the temple. Haggai's primary purpose was to rebuild the temple; his preaching has a tone of rebuke for the people's indifference, sin, and lack of trust in God. He was used to start the revival, while Zechariah was used to keep it going strong with a more positive emphasis, calling the people to repentance and reassuring them regarding future blessings. Zechariah sought to encourage the people to build the temple in view of the promise that someday Messiah would come to inhabit it. The people were not just building for the present, but with the future hope of Messiah in mind. He encouraged the people, still downtrodden by the Gentile powers ([1:8–12](#)), with the reality that the Lord remembers His covenant promises to them and that He would restore and bless them. Thus the name of the book (which means "The LORD remembers") contains in seed form the theme of the prophecy.

This "apocalypse of the OT" as it is often called, relates both to Zechariah's immediate audience as well as to the future. This is borne out in the structure of the prophecy itself, since in each of the 3 major sections ([chaps. 1–6](#), [7-8](#), [9–14](#)), the prophet begins historically and then moves forward to the time of the Second Advent, when Messiah returns to His temple to set up His earthly kingdom. The prophet reminded the people that Messiah had both an immediate and long-term commitment to His people. Thus the prophet's words were "good and comforting" ([1:13](#)), both to the exiles of Zechariah's day as well as to the remnant of God's chosen people in that future day.

This book is the most messianic, apocalyptic, and eschatological in the OT. Primarily, it is a prophecy about Jesus Christ, focusing on His coming glory as a means to comfort Israel (cf. [1:13](#), [17](#)). While the book is filled with visions, prophecies, signs, celestial visitors, and the voice of God, it is also practical, dealing with issues like repentance, divine care, salvation, and holy living. Prophecy was soon to be silent for more than 400 years until John the Baptist, so God used Zechariah to bring a rich, abundant outburst of promise for the future to sustain the faithful remnant through those silent years.