

Old Testament Survey—Zechariah

Thinking about the *future* is one of the most significant things we can do to live well in the *present*. We can't *live* in the future (to the point of wasting present opportunities), but we ought to think about it, and regularly. How do I know? God Himself had a lot to say about *the future* in His Word. The final section of the Old Testament is called "The Prophets," and through these men the Lord revealed truth about the future intended to affect living in the present.

Discuss: Glance through the book of Zechariah. What stands out to you about this book? Share your "first impressions" of the book...

Why study a book like Zechariah? A few years ago, 37 people took their lives because of their fascination with the apocalyptic. The actions of the Heaven's Gate reveals mixed responses towards the supernatural. Many are skeptical of anything they cannot see, hear, touch, etc. Others become fascinated with cultic perversions of the truth.

We need to know about life beyond this life. God wants us to know. That's one key reason He gave us the book of Zechariah.

Who wrote the book?

--Zechariah ("Yahweh has remembered")

--He was a contemporary of Haggai.

--He was a priest as well as a prophet (as was Jeremiah and Ezekiel).

--Zechariah was a very common name.

Note: Some have questioned whether Zechariah was the author of chapters 9-14, due to differences in style and composition. These objections, however, can be explained without denying the unity of the book (see *NIV Study Bible* note).

When was the book written?

--Zechariah began his ministry in 520 B.C. (see 1:1)

--The book is post-exilic. Zechariah was born in Babylonia and was among the Jews who returned to Judah in 538 B.C. under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua. His grandfather Iddo was among the returnees, acc. to Neh. 12:4.

--He began his ministry as a young man (2:4), which makes it possible that he ministered even into the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424).

Time-frame (see NIV Study Bible):

Aug. 29, 520 B.C. Haggai's first message (ch 1)

Sept. 21, 520	Temple rebuilding resumes after 16 year delay
Oct. 17, 520	Haggai's second message (ch 2)
Oct/Nov, 520	Zechariah begins his preaching ministry (1:1-6)
Dec. 18, 520	Haggai's third & fourth messages (Hag. 2:10-23)
Feb. 15, 519	Zechariah's eight night visions (1:7-6:8)
Feb. 16 (?), 519	Joshua crowned (6:9-15)
Dec. 7, 518	Repentance urged (chs. 7-8)
Mar. 12, 516	Temple dedicated (Ezr. 6)
After 480 (?)	Zechariah's final prophecy (chs. 9-14)

Why was the book written?

Zechariah ministered with the same aims in mind as did Haggai:

1. To motivate the people to complete the rebuilding of the temple (4:8-10)
2. To see spiritual renewal
3. In addition, Zechariah's message is apocalyptic.

For the setting, see 1:2-6

Q: How does Zechariah describe the Lord in v 2? Very angry

Q: Why was He angry? V 3

Q: What did God want His people to do? Verses 3-5

Q: How did the people respond? V 6 Repented

What is the outline of the book?

The book divides into two parts. The first section contains dated prophecies. The second contains no dated prophecies.

Outline (adapted from Archer, 432, and NIV Study Bible)

I. Messages during the Building of the Temple (chs. 1-8)

A. First Message: Call for national repentance (1:1-6)

B. Second Message: The Eight Visions (1:7-6:15)

C. Third Message: The Problem of Fasting and the Promise of the Future

(chs. 7-8)

II. Messages after the Building of the Temple (chs. 9-14)

A. First Oracle: The Advent and Rejection of the Messiah (chs. 9-11)

B. Second Oracle: The Advent and Reception of the Messiah (chs. 12-14)

Discussion: What kind of impression do you think the "big picture" of Zechariah's message would have had on the Jews to which he ministered? What kind of impression does his message have on *you*?

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

Zechariah encourages God's people to obey Him now by reminding them of the glorious future that's coming.

Discuss: How does knowing the future bring encouragement to God's people?

Zechariah: An Apocalyptic Book

Q: What does apocalyptic mean? It comes from a Greek term meaning "revelation" which refers to future judgment.

Q: What other places in the Bible do we find apocalyptic literature? Revelation, Daniel. In these sections, two main truths are established about the future. One, God is going to act in the future to save His people, and two, God will act in the future to punish those who oppose Him.

Q: What are the features of apocalyptic literature? See Rev. 1:1ff.

1. A revelation given by God
2. A revelation given through a mediator (i.e. an angel)
3. A revelation given to a seer/prophet/spokesman for God
4. A revelation concerning future events
5. In a vision, God allows the seer to peer into the heavens to see events which will determine future happenings
6. An angel gives the interpretation of the vision.
7. The seer responds with awe.
8. The revelation of the future has relevance for present living.

Discuss: When we are studying the Bible why is it important to note the type of literature utilized by the human authors?

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

1. *Zechariah teaches us about the end of the world.*

Some people are skeptical, and others hysterical when it comes to the subject (i.e. Heaven's Gate). We need the message of Zechariah.

He reveals a lot about the future, but it's very difficult from his book to interpret a scheme or program of events concerning the end of the age. What future events (future from Zechariah's perspective) do you see in the following (see LHB, 498)?

9:9 Coming of Messiah king (Palm Sunday)

9:10 Universal rule of the Messiah

9:14-17 The Lord will fight for His people

10:6 Regathering of exiles

13:7 The striking of the Shepherd and scattering of the sheep

14:2 The gathering of the nations to fight against Jerusalem

14:4 Second coming of the Messiah to Mount of Olives

14:9 The LORD will be king over the earth.

14:20 The day is coming when everything in Jerusalem will be holy to the Lord.

2. *Zechariah teaches us of the unity of the Bible.*

There are 71 quotations of Zechariah in the NT (31 from chs. 1-8; 40 from chs. 9-14). Most are found in Revelation (31 times). Another 27 are found in the Gospels, and many of these are found in the record of the last week of Jesus' ministry.

Discuss: What does this tell us about the Bible?