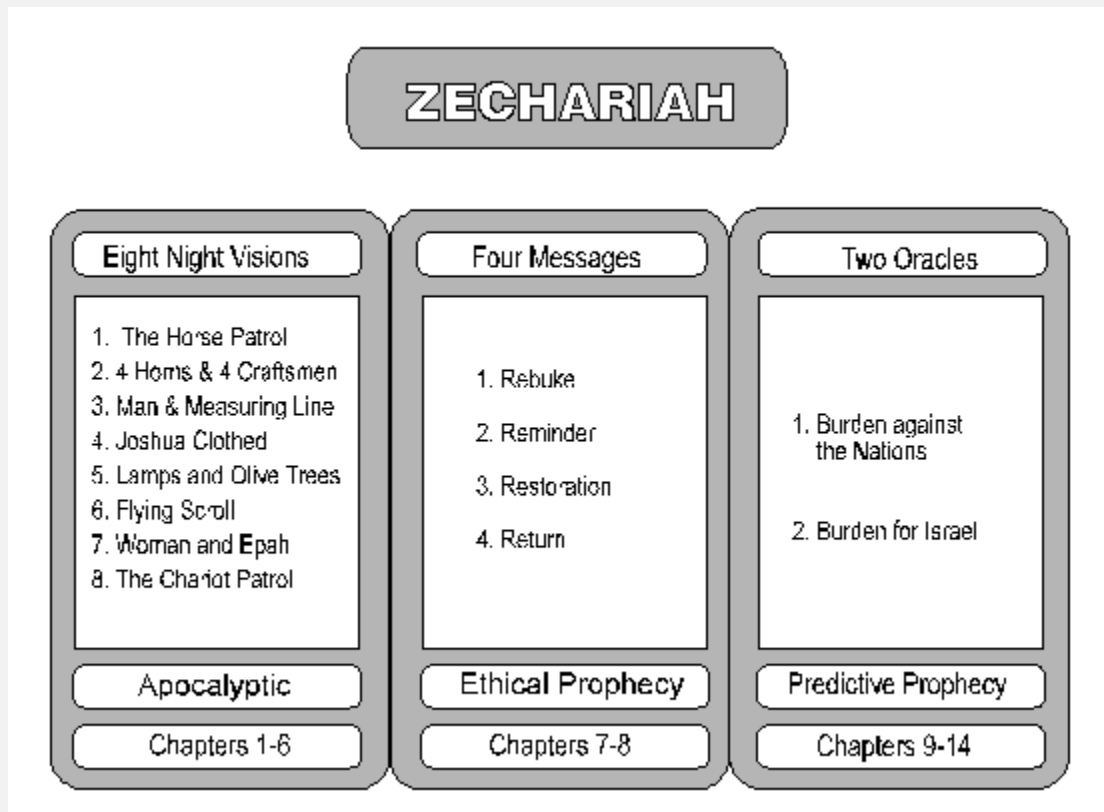


11. Zechariah

Introduction



TIME:

Zechariah's ministry began between Haggai's second and third message. If Haggai is talking about rebuilding the temple, what do you think Zechariah will write about? He is writing about the same thing.

TITLE:

The title comes from the prophets name, Zechariah, which means "Yahweh remembers." Because God remembers, there is hope for the people of Israel. God will remember His covenant with them recorded in [Deuteronomy 28-30](#) and will keep His promises.

AUTHOR:

Zechariah says he is the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo. Iddo was head of the priestly families coming back from exile (Neh 12:4,16). This would make Zechariah a priest and a prophet. It would also explain his emphasis on temple and priestly matters in the book.

PURPOSE:

Zechariah was written to comfort and encourage the returned remnant to repent of their evil ways, to return to the Lord and to rebuild the temple. The people who had just returned from exile felt like their efforts were insignificant and the future was uncertain. They weren't even an independent nation - just a client state of a mighty empire. Zechariah's message focuses on the future and proclaims that God would send the Messiah to establish His Kingdom through the destruction of the Gentile empires and the salvation of His people Israel.

THEME:

Return to me that I may return to you. [Jer 18,25,35](#) have same theme.

Is return of Israel a prerequisite of God's blessing? Yes! How many must repent? We don't know. But we do see that Israel's repentance is necessary.

Introduction (1:1-6)

A CALL TO REPENTANCE (1:1-3)

[Zechariah 1:1](#) "Zechariah" means God remembers. What does He remember? His covenant. "Iddo" means at the appointed time, and "Berechiah" means God will bless. God remembers and at the appointed time He will bless them. The names of the prophets are a summary of their messages.

A CALL TO REMEMBRANCE (1:4-6)

1:4 Look at your parents. When the prophets prophesied in the past, their fathers ignored them. They went into exile and died as a result of the discipline of the Lord. Where are your fathers? (dead) Where did they die? (in exile) Do the prophets live forever? (no) So listen up while you have a chance.

(Notice the phrase, "Lord of Hosts." It appears 261 times in OT - 80 times in post-exilic prophets. The emphasis is on God's control.)

Judgment is the righteous response of a God who has been wronged by those who were unfaithful to the covenant. You must remember that they entered into a covenant at Mt. Sinai saying, “All that the Lord has commanded we will do.” Did they keep their word? No. Did God keep his word as to what would happen if they didn’t? Yes.

1:6 “Then they repented...” - Repentance and return are always the means by which the blessing of God may be experienced by Israel. The repentance Zechariah is referring to is from [Jer 42:10-19](#). Repentance for Jeremiah’s audience meant recognizing that what God was doing in discipline was what was deserved. Jeremiah warned the people that they needed to stay and face the discipline from God (i.e. go into exile to Babylon). What is the message of Habakkuk? The just shall live by faith and faithfulness. Habakkuk said he would wait on the Lord. So the right response of the people to Jeremiah was to recognize that this was the discipline of the Lord and go submissively into exile. To resist the discipline of God would cause you to end up in a discipline that was far worse and would ultimately cost you your life. Those that went into exile were told how to live in exile (Daniel?) making the best of it and actually experiencing some of the blessing of God. Many fled to Egypt thinking that would save them, but they died there. So, repentance meant recognizing that God did to them what they deserved. When was the last time you thanked God for discipline? We should, because it is an assurance that He is actively involved in your life and will also bless you for obedience. This is a common theme in Zechariah because they are just coming out of a time of discipline.

Illustration: Discuss tendency to want to escape hard times through suicide, quitting, divorce, etc. What we are doing is demanding that God bring us relief now and if he won’t, then we will take care of it ourselves.

If you are in the middle of a bad marriage, or a bad job situation, or a struggle with drugs, alcohol, depression, eating disorder, etc. and you trust God through it, you are a testimony to God’s faithfulness because most people bail out of their marriage when the going gets tough, commit suicide, etc.

Eight Night Visions

As I said earlier, the way Zechariah motivates the depressed remnant is by focusing on the future and God’s fulfillment of His promises. He begins by recording a series of visions which portray God’s plans for Israel’s future. The visions all seem to have been seen at one time (7) - 24th day of 11th month of 2nd year of Darius (Oct 520 B.C.).

THE HORSE PATROL (1:8-17)

THE VISION (8-11)

A report of riders saying that the nations are at ease. This sounds good, but everywhere you see this phrase it has bad connotations. It really means that the nations are sitting fat and sassy, i.e. self-satisfied.

THE EXPLANATION (12-15)

God is very angry with the nations who are at ease (here we see being at ease is bad). Here we also see the interplay between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. God is angry because, although He wanted the nations to discipline Israel, they went too far. Because Babylon was too hard on Israel, God sends Persia to punish Babylon, etc. This concept of God sending Babylon to punish Israel goes back to Habakkuk. A message of blessing for Israel becomes a message of judgment for the surrounding nations.

Zion and Jerusalem¹ will again overflow with prosperity. Notice vs. 17. It says “My cities...” This is plural and therefore not a reference to the heavenly Jerusalem.

So first message of the horses on patrol is that in spite of the fact that the nations are at ease, God is going to choose, because of his jealousy, his grace and compassion to restore Jerusalem and Zion. So the religious and political restoration of Israel is in view. God will restore the prosperity to Israel, place his temple in Jerusalem because Jerusalem and Zion are the places of his choice. Why did God choose Israel? I’m sure the Arabs would like to know this. Is it because they were better than the other nations? No. Just the opposite. They were not even a vine that was planted. In fact they were to respond, when asked, My father was a wandering Aramean. We came into existence through another nation. The only explanation is God’s grace. Why do we come through a Jewish Messiah to have eternal life? Because that is what God decided to do.

Application: Why did God want me? Some of you are probably wondering. It’s purely the grace of God. We need to grab hold of this at the deepest level or we will always think we deserve it. (This is a common theme throughout the bible. Compare the parables of the Seats of Honor and the Great banquet in [Luke 14](#))

THE FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CRAFTSMEN (1:18-21)

THE VISION (18, 20)

Zechariah sees four horns and then four craftsman. He asks the angel what they mean.

THE EXPLANATION (19, 21)

The horns are instruments of discipline that God used to scatter his people. They are the foreign nations that oppressed Israel. Throughout the OT we see that the word “horn” is used for strength or military might. ([1Sa 2:1](#), [Ps 18:2](#), [Ps 75:10](#), [Jer 48:25](#)) Why does God do this? Look at verse 21. It says “so that no man lifts up his head.” The purpose was to bring humility. That is the purpose of all of God’s discipline. What does lifting up the head mean? That is the nose in the air attitude - pride.

What are the craftsmen? They come to tear down the horns that have scattered Jerusalem. What we have is a pattern. Horn #1 comes to discipline Jerusalem, but they are a little too hard on the Jews, so God sends craftsman #1 to whittle on the first horn. (The craftsman is the one who can fashion a horn.) The craftsman then becomes the next horn to discipline Israel. But they are too hard on Israel and then next craftsman comes along. The horns and craftsmen are explained to us in Daniel.

ZECH. 1:18-21

FOUR HORNS	FOUR CRAFTSMEN
Babylon Medo-Persia Greece Rome	Medo-Persia Greece Rome (?)

The first horn is Babylon. Babylon takes over Judah, but what does Nebuchadnezzar do? He is told that he is the head of gold on the statue, but he likes the idea of being the whole statue, so he builds a golden statue. Then what does God do with the head of gold? He makes it go eat grass. Belshazzar comes along and likes all the treasure from the temple in Jerusalem and decides to throw a party. God writes on the wall and says, “you have been measured, found wanting and deserving of destruction.” Along comes the first craftsman. The first craftsman is Persia. Then Greece and finally Rome.

The whole point is that the horns are the Gentile nations that come along to discipline Israel, and the craftsmen come along to discipline the Gentile nations who became arrogant in their domination. You would almost think God was in control.

THE MEASURING LINE (2:1-13)

THE VISION (1-3)

Zechariah sees a man or perhaps an angel on his way to measure Jerusalem to ensure that there will be enough space for all the people who will dwell there in the coming prosperity. This may indicate that the man is measuring in preparation for the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem during Zechariah’s time. But an angel says Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle in her midst. There will also be peace and security from their enemies provided by God, who will be a wall of fire around her, and we see God’s glory will be in her midst.

THE EXPLANATION (4-5)

There is much debate about these verses:

- Leupold says that Jerusalem represents the church and the indwelling is membership in the church of God. I think this is wrong because he is spiritualizing the passage and I don’t know where he sees the church in all this.
- Luther thought the cattle were Christians who were less sturdy in their faith.
- There is some debate over whether or not this is a reference to an earthly city or heavenly city. Does this look like a heavenly city or an earthly city? Do you think cattle go to heaven?

This is probably a reference to the millennial city. Did Nehemiah build a wall around Jerusalem? Is there a wall around Jerusalem right now? Has there ever been a time when Jerusalem was without her wall? (except when the whole city was destroyed) Will there be a wall around the heavenly Jerusalem? Yes! The significance of no wall is that there is peace. Therefore I am still expecting this prophecy to be fulfilled literally and on earth during the millenium.

What has to happen before this can happen?

You have to have the restoration of Israel to the Lord.

You also have to have retribution on Israel's enemies that would keep Israel from enjoying this kind of peace.

These things happen in the Tribulation, so this must be talking about the millenium which follows.

THE RESPONSE (6-13)

2: 6 The land of the north does not equal Russia because everyone who enters Jerusalem must come from the north. All of Israel's enemies have invaded from the north except Egypt. This includes Babylon, Persia, Syria, Assyria, Greece, Rome, etc. North becomes a symbol, not just a direction. Prophecy "experts" who always identify this as Russia are ignoring the rest of scripture. In this verse the near referent is to Babylon (vs 7). Zechariah is telling those who remained in Babylon to get out of there because God's judgment is coming on the Babylonians. Babylon also becomes symbolic of any nation that abuses Israel. And in the tribulation religious and political Babylon ([Rev 17-18](#)) are representative of all that is evil, so this could also apply to the end times when Israel is urged to flee from the Babylonian system to avoid being destroyed in the day of the Lord. Who is the daughter of Babylon? This probably refers to any nation who follows in Babylon's footsteps of evil and oppression of Israel.

2:8 This is a difficult passage to understand. Here are two options:

- It may mean that God sent Christ, after His glory (?) to judge them because they harmed Israel, who was the apple of God's eye. (cf. [Deut. 32:10](#))
- It may mean that God is sending Zechariah and God's glory would be revealed when Zechariah's prophecies come true. The reference to "the apple of his eye" really means "the pupil" which is

the most important, most easily injured, hardest to repair, part of the eye. Zechariah may be saying that messing with Israel is like sticking a sharp stick in your own eye.

2:9 When this happens, you will know that God has vindicated his messenger who gave this message.

2:10-13

- Yahweh will come to dwell in the midst of Israel. This is a comforting and encouraging message to the people.
- Notice also that other nations will become the people of God. We have seen that over and over again in the prophets.
- Judah and Jerusalem (12) will be God's dwelling place. Again we have emphasis on land promises being fulfilled which points to a future for national Israel. We don't know just from reading Zechariah that the literal fulfillment will be in the Millennium. We learn that in the NT and esp. Revelation.

THE CLOTHING OF JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST (3:1-10)

THE VISION (1-5)

The accusation of Joshua by Satan. (vs 1)

Joshua represents the nation of Israel. Satan is pointing out Israel's unfaithfulness as being unworthy of God's favor.

3:2 - But God's answer is that God has chosen Israel and Israel will be saved. What does this brand from the fire mean? (Cf. [Deut 4:20](#); [Amos 4:11](#); [Jer 11:4](#)) The imagery is that of being saved on the verge of extinction. God brought the nation through the Assyrian captivity, the Babylonian captivity, the book of Esther records how God preserved the nation from attempted extinction. Throughout history, God has preserved the Jews.

The cleansing of Joshua by the Lord (vs 3)

The dirty clothes is symbolic of their sinfulness and apostasy. What is the Lord going to do? Put clean clothes on Joshua. This is symbolic of purifying the nation. The "festal robes" may be a reference to the wedding clothes provided by wealthy hosts for those attending a banquet or wedding feast. The festive/banquet imagery is a reference to the kingdom.

THE EXPLANATION (6-10)

The clean garments are symbolic of righteous living. There is an admonition or warning given to Joshua, who is representative of the nation, which shows that Israel's restoration is dependent on her obedience.

Joshua and his friends are symbols of what God was going to do through one called the Branch. Here we see the progress of revelation. We learn more about the Messiah in the postexilic prophets. The Servant - is the Branch and different from the nation of Israel.

The meaning of the "Stone" has many different interpretations. Some say it is the church, but since the "stone" is a messianic symbol throughout the Bible, it seems best to see this as a reference to Christ. (cf. [Ps 118:22-23](#), [Isa 8:13-15](#), [Mat 21:42](#), [1Pe 2:7-8](#))

The eyes - Some think this reference to a stone with eyes is symbolic of intelligence and omniscience. (cf. [Isa 11:2](#)).

The engraving - the only place where we have engraved stones is on the garments of the priests. The stone on the priest's headband was engraved with the phrase, "Holy to the Lord." Perhaps we are dealing with the priesthood here. All this could be a reference to the Messiah removing the guilt of the nation in one day - on the cross? or in the day of the Lord?

3:10 "In that day" - an eschatological reference - some time in the future. "Under the vine or fig tree" is a symbol for the day of Messianic blessing - [1Ki 4:25](#); symbol of peace [Isa 36:16](#); and [Micah 4:4](#) - a symbol of Messianic kingdom. Some day Israel will sit under the shade of their own tree and they will invite their neighbor to sit under the tree with them - in other words - they will fulfill their God given task of being a witness and blessing to the nations. Has Israel ever done this yet? No! In fact they want every neighbor to leave. Nathaniel was sitting under the fig tree. Was that a coincidence?

THE GOLD LAMPSTAND AND OLIVE TREE (4:1-14)

THE VISION (1-4)

The question "what are these?" is unanswered until the end of the passage. Also see Swindoll - *Grace Awakening*, p. 217f

THE EXPLANATION (5-10)

It is by divine enablement that the temple will be completed. The main task of Zerubbabel is to rebuild the temple. With the apathy of the people and the amount of work left before him, the project is so big it is like a mountain before him, but it will become a plain (something easy to cross) and the top stone is a picture of finishing the task.

The Power of the Spirit (vs 6-7)

We saw in Haggai that the Spirit of God was imperative for doing the work of God. Zechariah's message is the same. Man's power and might are not enough for accomplishing the work of God.

The Promise for Zerubbabel (vs 8-9).

Zerubbabel is promised that he will see the completion of the temple. And the fulfillment of this promise would further prove Zechariah was speaking for God. This is so much like 2:9 that it lends support to the idea that Zerubbabel is the person in view there.

The seven eyes - We see the seven eyes again, and here it becomes plain that they represent God's omniscience because they range to and fro throughout the earth. The lamp stands in the temple represented the presence of God. That is why it is important that the lamps never went out. It symbolized God leaving.

The Two Olive trees (11-14) The question "what are these two olive trees?" is answered. They are two "sons of oil" or "anointed ones." The offices of priest and king were inaugurated by the anointing with oil. Zerubbabel and Joshua are God's anointed ones who are ministering to the postexilic community.

The message - Right in the center of the two visions about Joshua and Zerubbabel is emphasis on the Holy Spirit (the oil).

Principles: Doing the ministry of God requires the power of God.

God works through spiritual leadership.

THE FLYING SCROLL (5:1-4)

THE VISION

Zechariah sees a scroll with the same measurements of the tabernacle flying through the land. It has writing on both sides.

THE EXPLANATION

The purpose of the scroll was to curse the land of those who swear and steal. Swearing and stealing are probably summary terms for the two halves of the law. The first half, swearing, refers to sins against God and second half, stealing, refers to sins against man. You don't get away with sin. God sees it and will purge the land.

THE WOMAN IN THE EPHAH (5:5-11)

THE VISION

Zechariah sees an ephah or commercial measuring device which further confirms the sinfulness of the nations and the need for judgment.

The description of the woman - she is the personification of evil, so he slams the lid back down on the basket.

The destination (9-11) - two women with stork wings come and fly away with the basket and put it in Shinar on a pedestal (where tower of Babel was built) . The pedestal may refer to being set up high for the purpose of worship.

THE EXPLANATION (17-18)

[Revelation 17](#) and 18 refer to the great harlot and Babylon where Christ will take care of wickedness, so there is some connection here. Shinar represents the anti-God spirit from Gen to Rev and will one day be the center of the commercial and religious coalition against God. Wickedness is personified with the commercial basket because the major thing you have the people crying about in [Rev 17](#) and 18 is the loss of the merchandise. Economics is the tool of control for the future. I think we can see that happening today.

THE CHARIOT PATROL (6:1-8)

THE VISION (1-3)

Zechariah sees four chariots patrolling the four corners of the earth and representing God's execution of the deserving judgment on the nations. They come between bronze mountains. Bronze is a picture of judgment ([Num 21](#), [Ex 27](#), feet of bronze [Rev 1](#):)

THE EXPLANATION (4-8)

The four spirits of heaven are angelic instruments of judgment. Their purpose is to appease the anger of the Lord. When vs. 6 refers to the "north country," this is probably a general reference to the enemies of God because the enemies of Israel always invaded from the north. Is this Russia like many of the prophecy nuts claim? If Russia is the enemy of God they are probably included. But this is probably not an exclusive reference to them.

Does this last section remind you of anything? the first part of the book is very similar. Notice the structure of Zechariah's book up to this point.

#1 and #8 : The horse patrol goes out to examine the earth and finds the nations at ease and God is ticked. The chariot patrol is setting out to appease God's anger and execute judgment.

#2 and #7: The horns were Gentile powers that humbled Israel and the craftsmen were other Gentile powers that disciplined the horns. Where will the final demonstration of Gentile power be when the Lord comes back? The land of Shinar in Babylon.

#3 and #6: The measuring line is for Jerusalem prosperous and peaceful without walls. What must take place before this can happen? Israel must be purged of her sin.

#4 and #5: The cleansing of the priesthood and the empowering of Zerubbabel. the anointed ones that God has chosen to do God's work.

What we have is message to the postexilic community that is in the form of a chiasm that focuses on the ministry of God's Spirit and direct intervention of God to subjugate the nations and to empower Joshua and Zerubbabel as His ministers to the postexilic community so that they can finish the temple.

The center of the chiasm was focused on the influence and honor of Joshua and Zerubbabel. The next vision takes that focus even farther.

The Coronation of Joshua (6:9-15)

Zechariah is to make crowns (plural in MT), one of which he is to place on Joshua the high priest.

Then Zechariah is to tell Joshua about one who is a “Branch” who will “sprout” up and build the temple of the Lord. The “Branch” is certainly a Messianic reference, but it also refers to Zerubbabel who is a “branch” or descendant of David. Zerubbabel was in charge of rebuilding the temple (cf. vision five in 4:6-9).

The ultimate fulfillment of the Branch is Christ who will unite these offices of priest and king and rule on His throne in perfect peace, etc.

Some of the things we know about the Branch:

(1) The Branch will be a man. ([Isa 4:2](#); [Jer 23:3-5](#); [33:14-26](#))

(2) The Branch will be from Israel. ([Micah 5:2](#); [Isa 53:2](#))

(3) The Branch will build the temple. ([Eze 40-43](#); [Hag 2](#))

How does the Branch build the temple? vs 15 says those who are far off will come and build the temple. We know from Haggai that He will use the finances of the Gentiles. When Christ came, Herod was remodeling the temple and using Roman money to do it. Things were in place for the Israelites to accept Messiah and usher in the kingdom.

(4) The Branch will bear the honor and sit and rule on his throne and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices ([2 Sam 7:16](#); [Isa 9:7](#); [Luke 1:32](#))

The completion is conditional. The coming of the Messiah is not conditional, but their participation is conditional. This will take place IF you completely obey.

Conclusions:

- God has not forgotten his covenant with Israel. (Zechariah = God remembers)
- Jerusalem is God’s choice for the temple and the center of the Messianic Kingdom.
- Messiah, the Branch will come to assume the offices of both the king and the priest.

- Those nations which have abused Israel will be judged by God.
- As the special people of God, Israel will ultimately fulfill her mission as the channel of blessing to the world.
- There is an emphasis on obedience as a condition for blessing.
- There is an emphasis on God being in control and God's Spirit being the power behind the events. (visions 4 and 5)

Four Ethical Messages

God judged Israel for disobedience, but his purpose for the future was to bless them if they would obey Him (8:14-15).

THE MESSAGE OF REBUKE (7:1-7)

The Israelites had been observing fasts and feasts for the past seventy years. Now that they are back in the land they are asking if they should continue a certain fast. (Probably the fast of the 5th month which was for the destruction of the temple [2Ki 25:8-10](#)) God answers in verses 4-7 with a question. He asks if they had been fasting for Him or for themselves. He convicts them of their selfishness. They had only been going through the rituals and had not been doing it from the heart. That is why God says I desire mercy not sacrifice ([Hos 6:6](#)). This doesn't mean He doesn't want sacrifice, He is just emphasizing motivation. Whatever you are doing with your hands can be disqualified by your heart. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't be doing what is required.

Principles:

- Hypocritical ritual is of no interest to God.
- The record of God's judgments in the past serves as a fitting reminder that sin does not go unpunished.

THE MESSAGE OF REMEMBRANCE (7:8-14)

The Israelites relationship to others, the second emphasis of the law, had also suffered as they were characterized by the oppression of their fellow man. Zechariah calls them to remember:

(1) The requirements of God (8-10) - Over and over again we have seen the call for justice, kindness and compassion for one's fellow man.

(2) The response of the Nation (11-12)

- Pulled shoulders - Neh 9:29; [Hosea 4:16](#) - is like a horse that pulls sideways

- Stopped up ears - [Isa 6:10; 59:1; Heb 5:11-14](#)
- Hardened hearts - [Jer 17:1; Eze 3:9](#)

(3) The result for the nation - their condemnation (13-14)

- Denied answering prayers ([Prov 28:9](#))
- Dispersion of the nation ([2Ch 35:15-17](#))
- Desolated land of Israel

THE MESSAGE OF RESTORATION (8:1-17)

In spite of their sinfulness, God still desired to bring the nation of Israel back to Him and bless them and the nations through them.

It is passages like this that help form my opinion on the issue of divorce and remarriage. Some people say adultery is a valid reason for divorce, but we learned in Hosea that Hosea's marriage with Gomer was a model of God's relationship with Israel. And the reverse is true. God's relationship with Israel is the model for the institution of marriage. Although Gomer ran off and committed adultery again and again, Hosea was to be like God and keep pursuing her and loving her. Israel has been committing adultery, but God is always forgiving and jealous for her and pursuing her to bring her back. If someone divorces and remarries, there is no opportunity for restoration. That is why I think remarriage is wrong.

The blessings of the future are as sure as the judgments of the past. How literal did the cursings of the covenant take place on Israel? Then how literal will the blessings be fulfilled. It is a major hermeneutical overstep to spiritualize the future to fit my understanding and expectations. The land promises are literal and must be fulfilled. The discipline of God does not abrogate an eternal covenant.

There are seven statements of promise by the "Lord of Hosts"

(1) Yahweh is jealous for and will return to Jerusalem (1-3)

The attributes of God are the basis for the promise. I think this is always true. [Joel 3:17; Oba 17](#) What is the significance of a change of name? A change in relationship or ownership. (cf. Jacob's name was changed to Israel to signify his repentance and submission to God.)

(2) The population will increase in a setting of peace (4-5)

Two signs of blessing - old age and young age. These are the indefensible and the first to go. So if they are wandering around then that is a sign of peace. When God dwells among them, there will be truth and justice and it will be safe enough for old women and young children to go out.

(3) The power of Yahweh will be demonstrated again (6)

God is not limited by our understanding of Him.

(4) Yahweh will re-gather Israel from among the nations (7-8)

[Zec 13:9](#); [Hos 2:21-23](#), [Isa 1:26](#) “as at the first” - that does not sound like a redefinition of Israel (i.e. the church). Nor does it sound like the Israel of today, so I still expect it.

(5) Yahweh encourages them to rebuild the temple and warns of past devastation from disobedience (9-10)

(6) Yahweh will reverse the treatment of His people (11-13)

- from poverty to productivity = material
- from cursing to blessing = spiritual
- from fear to strength = emotional

(7) Yahweh commands His people to righteous living (14-17)

Zechariah reemphasizes that there will be internal peace among the Israelites, and people will treat one another with love.

THE MESSAGE OF RETURN (8:18-23)

Zechariah shows that the ultimate purpose for bringing peace and prosperity to Israel is so that God can bless the nations.

(1) Fasts will be turned into feasts (18-19) - There is much banquet and feasting imagery in the OT. Jesus uses this in many of his parables.

(2) Many will seek the favor of the Lord (20-22) - Again and again we have seen that the Gentiles will be included in the kingdom. This shows how distorted the attitudes of the Pharisees and the Jews were at the time of Christ toward the Gentiles.

(3) Israel will be the witness to the nations (23)

The national purpose of Israel is to be a witness for God to the nations. In the future that will be fulfilled. Right now Israel is not the place to find God. In fact, leading people to Christ is against the law over there.

Two Oracles

Zechariah gives two oracles which look forward to the Messiah who is initially rejected but ultimately enthroned as King of the Messianic kingdom.

One of the major problems in the book (for critical scholars) comes in chapter 9 because Zechariah names Greece as a future enemy of Israel. Most critical scholars do not accept predictive prophecy as an option for the prophets. (It sort of makes you wonder why they are called “prophets.”) They especially don’t accept the ability to name people God will use in the future. That is why they don’t accept Daniel. It is too detailed. It was too accurately fulfilled. They feel that it must be a record of history written after the fact and not a prophecy written before hand. Isn’t it amazing that the reason God’s word should be rejected is the accuracy of its fulfillment. That tells you where the mind of the unbelieving heart is.

Does God ever adopt a common form to reveal a fresh message? Yes! He used the popular Suzerain-Vassal treaty format to give the Israelites the Law. That is what the cursings and blessings sections are all about. Could God sing a song that has the same outline as a pagan hymn, but change the words? Certainly.

Finish this for me: Dunt dadadun dadaaa.....Charge! Have you heard that at baseball games or basketball games, and other places? It is a catchy tune and has several uses. Maybe God will think it is catchy and when the trumpet sounds from heaven, He may make that sound. Who knows?

Chapter 9 follows with incredible parallel the structure of a song sung for Baal. The song of Baal has the following parts: a threat, followed by combat that ends in victory. A temple is built, a banquet is celebrated, there is a manifestation of universal reign anticipated, the appearance of the divine warrior and the result is a fertility of restored order and discipline.

Now listen to [Zechariah 9](#): There will be a conflict followed by a victory. In vs. 8 the temple will be secured. In vs. 9 there will be a victory shout with a procession. A universal reign in vs. 10. The salvation that is experienced is the captives will be released in 11-13. There is the

appearance in vs. 14 of a divine warrior. There is a sacrifice and a banquet in vs. 15 and there is the fertility of restored order in 16-17.

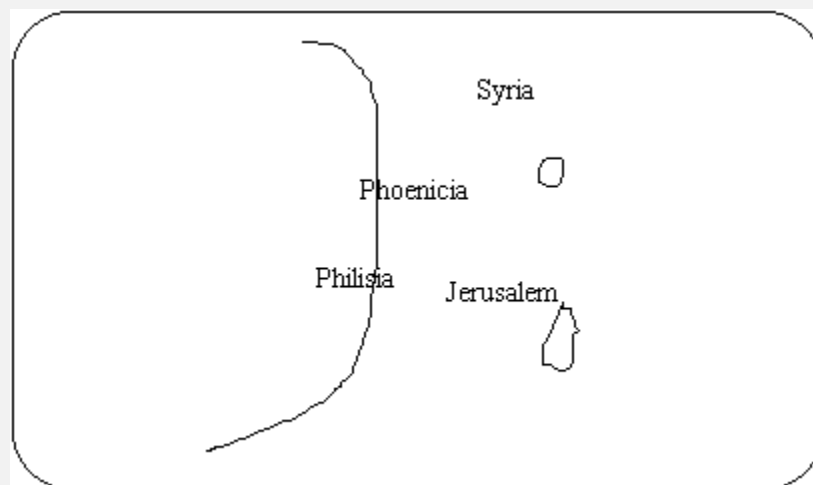
What God does is adopt the form and change the words. Why? If my son asks me if God is stronger than superman, then what am I supposed to say? Yes! It is something he can relate to and it is a good comparison. Am I at all giving credence to superman? No. God is using mythological imagery as an apologetic and polemic to say, “Whatever you think is great, God is better.” That is what we have here in chapter 9.

FIRST ORACLE: THE REJECTION OF THE SHEPHERD (9:1-11:17)

The first oracle looks forward to the day when God will send the Messiah (9:9), deliver the Israelites and pass judgment on the nations.

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS (9:1-8)

The battle campaign of the Lord is portrayed to show the completeness of the destruction. He begins by listing the nations that He will pass through on the campaign. Every time Israel has been invaded the enemies followed this route. So God says, “I’ll go over the same route and destroy all these nations but Jerusalem will be spared.” All because of the grace of God.



THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH (9:9-10)

The Messiah is portrayed entering Jerusalem with humility on a donkey and bringing salvation and peace. This is the passage that is quoted during the triumphal entry of Christ. His dominion

will be to the “ends of the earth.” It will be an earthly dominion. We don’t know it will be a 1000 years yet.

The donkey is significant. [Judges 5:](#), 10: & 12: Royalty riding on donkeys [2 Sam 16:1-2](#) David rode on a donkey when Absalom usurped the kingdom and he felt rejection by his own people. When did Christ ride on the donkey? During the week of His rejection. Vestus Testamentum vol. 12. p. 259.

THE BLESSING ON ISRAEL (9:11-10:12)

9:11 shows that the blessing is based on God upholding His end of the covenant.

a. Historical blessing

1) From Babylon (11-12) - past - they have been delivered from their enemies of the past.

2) From Greece (?) (13-17) - future - In [Gen 10:2-4](#) the term “sons of Jabon” is used as a term referring to all the nations surrounding Israel. It may refer to God’s deliverance of Israel from all her enemies. (cf. VT vol. 12, p. 248) This may not be a reference to Greece.

b. Prophetic blessing 10:1-12

1) Judgment of the false shepherds (1-3)

Restoration is always seen in the context of judgment. God saved Noah and his family against the backdrop of the flood. When God delivered Israel, it was during the judgment on Egypt. He gave them the land of Canaan while judging the pagan inhabitants. When He gets ready to reverse the judgment of the Babylonians on Israel, He does so with the Persians, then Greece, then Rome, etc. Salvation always comes in the context of judgment. Even at the cross. It brought salvation to some and judgment to others.

2) Restoration of Israel (4-12)

a) Victory vs. 5

b) Compassion vs. 6

c) Regathering vs. 8-12 - not going on today. They did not come to faith in far countries before 1948. They came back so the Man of Sin can make a covenant with them before they are again scattered in the tribulation.

Can you have a regathering before faith and redemption? From this passage it seems a little difficult, unless you understand this - If they are going to be scattered again, they must first be there in the land. They need to be a people that the anti-christ can make a covenant with. So do I get excited about 1948 (when Israel became a nation again)? Yes! But not for the wrong reason. We must keep it in perspective. We have a better set up now than before. God can make it happen when He is ready.

THE REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH (11:1-17)

God tells Zechariah to play out two roles. The first is a good shepherd that will be rejected and the second is a bad shepherd that will be destroyed. It is an announcement of the future. He sets us up for the Messiah and the antichrist. The Good Shepherd is portrayed as being rejected and the Shepherd who takes his place will destroy the nation.

a. The rejection of the true shepherd 11:1-14

1) The consequences of rejection (1-6)

a) On the land (1-3)

Zechariah mentions the three borders of Israel - Cedars of Lebanon (N), Oaks of Bashan (S) and the Jordan River (E). These were the defensive borders of Israel. God is going to allow the borders to be breached and an external force to take over Israel because they pursued false shepherds. They were victims of their own false leaders who did not care about the flock. In fact, by fleecing the flock they claimed that God made them rich. (Does that sound like Robert Tilton?)

b) On the people (4-6)

11:5 Some people will think they are doing the will of God when they mistreat Israel. "And their own shepherds will have no pity." This sure seems to be a reference to Israel's leadership who

killed the Messiah and they thought they were doing the will of God because Jesus committed blasphemy.

2) The characterization of rejection 11:7-14a) Two broken staffs - one called Favor and the other Union

If you are an Israelite in the OT, how do you know that you had the favor of God upon you? You had the blessing of God and you had a unified nation in the land ([Deut 28:](#)).

c) Annihilated shepherds (vs. 8) Some see it as the offices of prophet, priest and king, but I don't think Zechariah did away with his own office of priest. What about Malachi that comes along later?

Some see it as three leaders who lose their position. 40 different names are offered in the commentaries.

I think it is three unspecified leaders in the post-exilic community that gave Zechariah trouble. It seems to be a personal conflict with Zechariah because he says his soul is impatient and it happens in one month. Zechariah's victory is short-lived, because in vs. 9 he quits and cuts up the staff called Favor.

d) Insulting silver (12-13) In a Sumnerian text called "The curse of Agade," it was a sign of contempt to be paid 30 pieces of silver. Also cf. [Judges 17:7](#) as a symbol of contempt. This is the same amount for which Judas betrayed Christ. What is it about this context that allows Christ to use it when Judas betrayed him. Notice in vs. 13 that the Lord is speaking and he says, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which *I* was valued by them." The value of Zech's ministry was the value of the Lord to Israel. They were not just rejecting Zechariah. They were rejecting God.

Zechariah then cuts up the staff called Union. When Jesus arrives on the scene, Judah, Samaria and Galilee are anything but unified.

b. The replacement with the false shepherd 11:15-17

1) The symbol (15)

2) The significance (16-17)

a) The devastation by the uncaring shepherd - in the future God will allow a false shepherd to rise who will devastate Israel.

b) The destruction of the uncaring shepherd - God will then bring devastation to the shepherd who causes devastation.

Conclusions for first oracle:

(1) The whole section promises God's sovereign preservation of Israel for a future restoration.

(2) Though the true shepherd is rejected, the false shepherds will ultimately meet their doom.

(3) New Testament writers often quote this oracle as fulfilled at the first advent of Messiah.

(4) The apparent struggles for leadership in Zechariah's day serve as foreshadowing of the eventual conflict of Christ and His rivals.

SECOND ORACLE: THE REIGN OF THE SOVEREIGN (12-14)

God will destroy the nations who oppose Israel and bring about the repentance of the nation of Israel so that He can establish His kingdom.

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM (12:1-14)

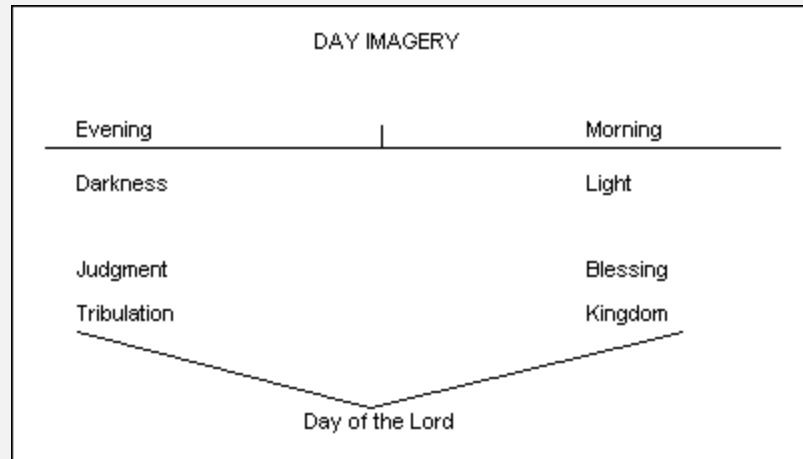
We begin this section with a reference to God as the creator because if He can create the world, then He can certainly save Israel. Jerusalem is pictured as being under siege by the nations. They are out to destroy her.

The destruction of the nations 12:1-9

This is their physical deliverance - The cup, stone and fire pot are images of destruction. The cup causes reeling because it was a stronger concoction than they thought, and the stone was heavier than they thought and causes a hernia. The fire pot they pick up burns them. They picked up more than they could handle when they mess with God's chosen city. Notice also that these are specific land references. "In that day" is used 17 times. The "Day of the Lord"

The Day of the Lord - Evening and morning were the first day in Genesis. Darkness was first and then light. This is a symbol of judgment followed by blessing. What makes the difference

between evening and morning? The sunrise. In reality it is the “Sonrise.” When Messiah comes, there will be judgment and then blessing. Zechariah doesn’t know when or how long the evening and morning is.



Preexilic Day of the Lord could have referred to exile (darkness) and return (morning).

Post exilic Day of the Lord = Tribulation / Millennium

God will destroy the nations who have opposed Judah so that there will be peace in the land.

The deliverance of Israel 12:10-14

This is their Spiritual deliverance - Israel will recognize that they were the ones who killed their Messiah (vs. 10). What day is this? Has it happened yet? No, and I am waiting for a literal fulfillment of this.

12:11 - This is a reference to the death of Josiah when he went out to meet the Egyptian army and was killed. There was national mourning in Israel because he was a great and godly king.

God will open the peoples’ eyes so that they will recognize that they had rejected their Messiah, repent of their rejection and accept Him.

THE SALVATION OF JERUSALEM (13:)

The fountain is opened (1)

This is not a new fountain. It is the restoration of one that has already been dug. The one who comes will be in the line of David and will restore his kingdom.

The false prophets are removed (2-6)

God will purge the nation so that nothing will interfere with the true worship of the Messiah. The intensity for godliness is going to be so strong that if a mother and father see their son prophesying falsely, they will be the instrument of judgment.

13:4 - putting on the hairy robe to deceive goes back to Jacob's deception of Isaac. There won't even be that type of deception

The procedure for cleansing (13:7-9)

The word Associate in Hebrew can mean kinsman. The Lord of Hosts is calling for the killing of a man who is the kinsman of the Lord and the Shepherd of the flock. When He is killed the sheep will scatter. The Shepherd is Christ. [Isaiah 53:4-7](#) The scattered sheep refers to national Israel. At some time in the future 2/3 of the Israelites will perish and God will save 1/3 of the people and the land and He will use this to refine them.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OVER JERUSALEM (14:1-21)

The final siege against Jerusalem (14:1-2)

In the last days all the nations will come against Jerusalem, but God will come to her rescue and reverse the treatment of His people and Jerusalem will become a source of blessing to all the nations.

The advent of the Lord (14:3-8)

The place of His return (3-4)

Geologists have discovered that there is a fissure running in the mountain from North to South, but here we see God will split it from East to West. There will be no natural explanation for this. It will be supernatural.

The changes at His return (5-8)

Where is Azel? Look it up in the dictionary and there is a ?. If God is going to use this place as an escape for His people, it makes sense that no one knows where it is.

14:6-7. Changes in the heavens - God will be the light

14:8-10 Changes on the earth.

The Messianic Kingdom (14:9-21)

The comfort for Israel (9-11) - Israel will live in the land

The condemnation of the enemies (12-15)

The celebration of Israel (16-19) The Feast of Booths - this can't be in heaven because there are plagues on those who don't worship.

The consecration of Israel (20-21)

So, in chapter 14, Zechariah concludes with a familiar theme or series of events:

- (1) The coming of the Lord
- (2) The deliverance of His people
- (3) The judgment on the nations
- (4) The establishment of His kingdom.

Summary:

Eight Visions - framed by God's judgment on the Nations, then God's purging of Israel, and with the focus on God's Spirit working with Zerubbabel and Joshua to complete the temple.

Coronation - picture of the Branch who would come in the offices of priest and king and rule in peace.

Four Ethical Messages

- (1) Rebuke for not worshipping with pure heart - vertical relationship.
- (2) Reminder of the requirements of the law - horizontal relationship.
- (3) Restoration - shows God's faithfulness to His promises. Just as He has faithfully and literally brought the curses, He will also faithfully and literally bring the blessings.
- (4) Return - Israel and the nations will be brought to God.

Two Oracles

(1) The first oracle looks forward to the Good Shepherd's rejection and the people's acceptance of the anti-christ.

(2) The second oracle looks forward to the Day of the Lord when the nations will finally be destroyed, the Israelites will be delivered and the Davidic line will be re-instated as the kingdom is inaugurated.

The message of Zechariah is that God remembers His covenant and will eventually fulfill all the promises. This is a message of hope for the post-exilic community.