

Zechariah (name means “The Lord is Renowned”) was a contemporary of Haggai, the prophet who was chiefly responsible for spurring reconstruction of the Temple after the Return from Babylonian exile. Zechariah, son of the priest Iddo (Ezra 5.1; 6.14; Neh 12.16), emphasized three things: Reconstruction of the Temple; a pure Jewish community; and the approach of the Messianic Age.

The style of the Book is interesting both in its Apocalyptic imagery and its dramatic form, in which night visions, dialogues between divine and earthly parties, and historical references provide a vivid narrative. The Book as we have it is not a unitary whole; the early section is set in the Persian period (Cyrus, who conquered Babylon and released the exiled Jews to return to their homeland, was a Persian); Chs 9-14 are set in the centuries-later Greek context corresponding to the conquest of the region by Alexander (“the Great”) of Macedon.

The first “period” of the Book is set in an atmosphere of rebuilding and recovery of “authentic Judaism;” the second, emphasizing Messianic hopes, is under the clouds of conflict and a changed religious environment: rather than priests and a Temple, “shepherds” lead the faithful. This second section, while separate in setting and style, nevertheless reflects authorship by unknown writer or writers whose thoughts and goals reflect those of Zechariah.

Part 1: The Eight Night Visions

First Vision (1.8ff): Otherworldly mounted “observers” range over the earth as God’s “eyes and ears”
NOTE: 1.16, “My house” – Temple; but could there a second meaning as well?

Second Vision (1.18-21): Four horns and four smiths, the fate of earthly “great powers”

Third Vision (2.1-5): The man with a measuring line (what is his function?)

NOTE: 2.5, the Lord will do two things: *protect* and *dwell there*

Also note: 2.11, “many ethnos” (nations)—Gentiles.

Also note: 2.12, only mention in the Old Testament of Palestine as the “Holy Land.”

Fourth Vision (3.1-10): Joshua (High Priest after the Restoration, Haggai 1.1) and “Satan”

NOTE: literal translation not “Satan” but “the Adversary”—a functionary of the “heavenly court”

Also note: 3.8, “Branch” (Davidic/Messianic sign) and 3.9, “stone” –remind of anything?

Fifth Vision (4.1-4): Golden lampstand and two olive trees (compare 4.10b with Rev 5.6)

NOTE: Seven lamps significance: Unified community? God’s Presence in the whole world?

Also note: 4.14, “anointed”—lit., “sons of oil” (Jews and Christians?)

Sixth Vision (5.1-4): The flying scroll (cf. Is 55.11): the “unhindered, freely moving Word of God”

NOTE: “the curse” (5.3) is *judgment* meant to purify both communal and public life. See Dt 27.14-26: this reflects Zech’s vision of “a pure community.”

Seventh Vision (5.5ff): The woman in an ephah (Heb dry measure, approx. one bushel or 35 liters)

Wickedness shall be removed from restored Judah, transported to Babylon (emblematic of paganism), where evil will be worshiped (v.11, “house” = “temple”). Contrast the women (personification of impurity vs servants of holiness): thus Judah will be purified.

Eighth Vision (6.1-8): The four chariots (four horse colors): these are bringing the Messianic Age
NOTE: This Age is coming to “the four corners of the earth”) and will “patrol” everywhere
Also note: What is the *unidentified* direction of the “red” horses? What may this signify?

A Command: (7.11ff): The Priest crowned King: Joshua, “whose name is the Branch”
NOTE v.13d . . . “and peaceful understanding shall be between them both.” Implication?
Also note 6.15: “those far off” (returning exiles and Gentiles; no distinction).

Answers to questions: Prophetic preaching as one serving as *oracle of the Lord* (7.4)
NOTE (7.8-9): This is the essence of moral preaching.

Divine Promise: 8.1-23: the Lord will return to Zion and do good to Jerusalem and Zion (10 sections:
8.2; 8.3; 8.4; 8.6; 8.7; 8.9; 8.14; 8.18; 8.20; 8.23).

The “Macedonian” Component (Chs 9-14) NOTE: the sequence presented corresponds to the itinerary of someone moving down the coast and creating disaster. This was Alexander’s route of invasion and conquest, moving toward Egypt, around 332 BC.

Messianic Signposts:

9.9-10: One young animal: the Messiah, the Triumphant King, comes as a humble and peaceful Monarch; contrast this with Alexander’s arrogance and havoc!

9.11ff: Blood of the Covenant . . . freedom from captivity . . . “prisoners of hope” . . . deliverance from the “waterless pit” (without prospect of life or escape).

10.1ff: It is the LORD Who controls nature (10.2, “teraphim”—some sort of device and its users, tool of divination) and *dispenses the Means to sustain life*.

10.3: God’s wrath upon the “shepherds” (recall Jesus’ anger at the “blind guides” and “hypocrites”)
Following verses: It is the LORD Who controls the outcome of historical events. God will recall His people Israel from the Diaspora and reconstitute them before Him in The Land.
NOTE 10.11d and e: explicit reference to the “Successors” of Alexander: the Seleucids (Assyria) and the Ptolemies (Egypt).

11.1-3: The Fall of the Tyrants

11.4-17: The disastrous shepherds: many have been *false* (secular AND religious); the *true* were rejected out of greed and abuse of power. Ultimately this came about due to Israel’s choice to break Covenant with God.

NOTE: 11.12b, “thirty shekels of silver” —the cost to buy a slave.

Note also 11.14, which refers to the Judah-Samaria conflict.

Note also 11.17, description of a “proto-antiChrist”, also the end of “Booklet I” of Zechariah.

Booklet II *Another oracle of the Lord, concerning what the LORD will do . . . with “on that Day” language.*

12.1-13.6: These are the things that the Lord will do in order to purge evil, establish righteousness and justice, and establish His Reign over all the earth.

NOTE 12.7; **12.10**; 13.1; **13.6**; **13.7**; **14.6-9** (cf Rev 21); **12.21b** (did Jesus think of this verse?)