



Zechariah

Get Started

To build the first Temple, Solomon needed a work crew of nearly 200,000, working for seven years. How could a few thousand returned refugees rebuild the Temple, let alone the entire city?

They couldn't.

But God could. How? "You will not succeed by your own strength or by your own power," God said, "but by my Spirit" (4:6 NCV).

It's a mystery how God works through human beings to accomplish what seems impossible. But he does. He's been doing it for thousands of years. And he promises to do it until kingdom come.

He can do it... Through you; through us.

Get Studying

God raised up Haggai the prophet to encourage the Jews who returned from exile in Babylon in rebuilding. Haggai preached four sermons in four months and then disappeared from the scene.

Two months after Haggai delivered his first sermon, Zechariah began his prophetic ministry, encouraging the people to spiritual renewal and motivating them to rebuild the temple by revealing to them God's plans for Israel's future. With this prophetic encouragement the people completed the temple reconstruction in 515BC.

Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet. Zechariah's grandfather Iddo was a priest who returned with Zerubbabel, making it likely that Zechariah was Haggai's younger colleague.

Zechariah contains more Messianic prophecies than any other Old Testament book except Isaiah. It is quoted some 40 times in the New Testament.

Prophecies about Jesus unique to Zechariah are His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey; the betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver; and the use of that blood money to purchase a potter's field.

The book is arranged in three sections:

1. In chapters one through the middle of chapter six, Zechariah shares a series of eight night visions.
2. In the remainder of chapter six he shares the crowning of Joshua the high priest.
3. The rest of the book involves two prophecies concerning the future kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The night visions apparently were all received February 15, 519BC, about six months after the construction had resumed.

Zec 1:7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet:

Zec 1:8 I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him were horses: red, sorrel, and white.

Zec 1:9 Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they are."

Zec 1:10 And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are the ones whom the LORD has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth."

Zec 1:11 So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly."

In his first vision Zechariah saw several horsemen in a grove of myrtle trees, who reported that "the whole earth is resting quietly" - indicating that there was nothing to hinder the Jews from rebuilding the Temple.

Zec 1:18 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns.

Zec 1:19 And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" So he answered me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

Zec 1:20 Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen.

Zec 1:21 And I said, "What are these coming to do?" So he said, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it."

Zechariah saw four horns, representing the nations that had helped destroy and disperse Israel, followed by four craftsmen, representing the nations that would punish Israel's oppressors. Once again, the implied message was that Israel was now free from oppression and therefore free to rebuild the Temple.

Zec 2:1 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand.

Zec 2:2 So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length."

Zec 2:3 And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him,

Zec 2:4 who said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it.

Zec 2:5 For I,' says the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.' "

Zephaniah saw a man measuring Jerusalem. An angel declared that Jerusalem would soon overflow its walls, but that God would be a "wall of fire" protecting all its inhabitants. The angel of The Lord called on the Israelites still in exile to flee their lands of captivity, for God would judge those nations.

Zec 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

Zec 3:2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Zec 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.

Zec 3:4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

Zec 3:5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

The fourth vision describes the high priest Joshua's appearance before the angel of the Lord, who is also the Lord Himself. Satan appears in his role as "accuser" of God's people.

Joshua, who represents the remnant is disqualified from worshiping the Lord by his "filthy" (or "excrement-covered") attire, representing the defilement caused by Israel's past sins.

The change of attire to "rich garments" and "turban" shows God's intention not only to cleanse the priesthood and the people but also to bless and honor them by His sovereign grace.

Zec 4:1 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.

Zec 4:2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.

Zec 4:3 Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left."

The fifth vision of the lampstand and olive trees encourages Zerubbabel and Joshua, represented by the two olive trees, to trust not in financial or military resources but in the power of God's Spirit working through them.

Zec 5:1 Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll.

Zec 5:2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits."

Zec 5:3 Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to that side of it."

Zec 5:4 "I will send out the curse," says the LORD of hosts; "It shall enter the house of the thief And the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house And consume it, with its timber and stones."

Zechariah saw a giant scroll (the law) flying through the sky, signifying to both present and future Israel that God is quite capable of removing sin from their land in order to fulfill his plans for them.

Zec 5:5 Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth."

Zec 5:6 So I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "It is a basket that is going forth." He also said, "This is their resemblance throughout the earth:

Zec 5:7 Here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket";

Zec 5:8 then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth.

Zechariah then saw a woman whom he was told personified Wickedness. She was thrust into a basket and carried away to Babylon.

Like the previous vision, this symbolized God's ability simply and efficiently to remove all sin from Israel - implying once more that there should be nothing to hinder the rebuilding of the Temple.

Zec 6:1 Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze.

Zec 6:2 With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses,

Zec 6:3 with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses - strong steeds.

Zec 6:4 Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

Zec 6:5 And the angel answered and said to me, "These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth.

Zec 6:6 The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country."

Zec 6:7 Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth.

Zec 6:8 And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country."

In his final vision of the night, Zechariah saw four chariots drawn by horses of various colors, coming from Heaven and going "back and forth across the earth," by which action they "vented the anger of [God's] Spirit," especially concerning the "north." This suggests that Babylon had been finally and completely judged, and therefore the people should not be deterred from their rebuilding of the Temple.

In the remainder of chapter six Zechariah is told to make royal crowns (in Hebrew the word is plural) and to crown Joshua. Then the crowns are to be placed in the Temple as a reminder of what God was going to do.

But first Joshua receives a divine message that “the Branch” would build the Temple, be glorified, and rule. Now the building of the current Temple was already assigned to Zerubbabel. But the Messiah would build the temple associated with His earthly kingdom of righteousness, a future temple prefigured by Zerubbabel’s.

In chapters seven and eight Zechariah responds to questions about whether or not the returned exiles should continue certain fasts they had established. He answers with a series of four messages that take us forward to the joy of the future kingdom in which fasting will be unnecessary.

Chapters nine through fourteen are two prophecies:

1. The first (9-11) predicts the rejection of Jesus in His first coming.
2. The second (12-14) concerns His Second Coming to establish the kingdom

One commentator called chapter 9:9-10, “one of the most Messianically significant passages of all the Bible.”

Zec 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zec 9:10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

Summarizing Zechariah, one commentary reads,

Zechariah has been called “the most Messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological, of all the writings of the OT.” Messianic prophecies and detailed descriptions of the dawning of the messianic kingdom give the book an exciting quality. Zerubbabel and Joshua represent the Messiah in His royal and priestly roles. Reflecting on how God’s sovereign program of redemption unfolded in the life and ministry of Jesus should lead to eager anticipation of the completion of His plan, expressed in celebratory worship and zealous obedience.

Get Spiritual

Zechariah’s vision of the lampstands forever gives you the eternal perspective on the supply of the Spirit within and through individuals and groups to accomplish God’s work on earth. It does so in a language of simple symbols:

- The congregation of Israel is represented by the symbol of the lampstand.
- The individual Jews are represented by the symbols of the two olive trees.
- The work of God is represented by the light revealed by the lampstand. The congregation of Israel, under the individual leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, was to reveal the light of the glory of God to the surrounding nations and to the whole world.

- But this was only possible as God supplied His Spirit to them and through them – represented by the symbol of the oil.

Without ignoring the original application of this vision to Israel, we can also apply it to the church. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the church on earth is symbolized by the lampstand. The congregation of each church, under the individual leadership of its pastor, is to reveal the light of the glory of God to the whole world. *But this is only possible as God supplies His Spirit to us and through us.*

Zec 4:6 ... "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

1. "Might" is a word often used to describe strength in numbers; it is our collective strength as a congregation.
2. "Power" is a word often used to describe strength without numbers; it is your personal strength as an individual.

Neither the strength of our numbers as a group, nor your personal strength as an individual, can accomplish the work of God. God's work can only be accomplished by God's "Spirit."

But it *can* be accomplished as we yield ourselves to Him.