

# A LOOK AT THE BOOK ZECHARIAH GOD REMEMBERS

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## Psalm 63:1

David was in the desert of Judah.

He was experiencing the hot sun and the thirst that the desert dryness produces.

His physical condition makes him think about his spiritual condition.

He felt like he was in a spiritual desert, far from God, far from God's house and far from God's people.

He desired to go back and enjoy the intimate fellowship with God he had known so well in the past.

Have you ever been out on the desert?

You know about the hot sun, the dry wind, and the lack of water?

We will probably never have to pass the long time on the desert that David did.

But we all know something about being on that spiritual desert David was talking about.

We have all passed long periods under the hot sun of life in the world, without enjoying the refreshing springs of living water which David was desiring to enjoy again.

Israel had just come through more than 70 years in a spiritual desert.

God punished them for their disobedience and idolatry by sending them into captivity where they could recognize the spiritual "dry spell" they were living in.

Although they were far from God, He had not forgotten them.

He was aware of their physical and their spiritual state.

He had a program to restore them, *if they would just turn back to Him!*

In order for Israel to enjoy God's blessing, they would have to obey His Word.

They were at a decisive point in their history—a new generation was beginning, a new relationship with God, a new affirmation of God's promises.

**God was beginning a program that would culminate in the fulfillment of the covenants God made with previous generations.**

Zechariah prophesied in order to announce the good news to them.

## AUTHOR, DATE AND BACKGROUND

The author of the book is identified as Zechariah, a contemporary prophet of Haggai. Therefore, the historical setting is the same as that of Haggai.

They worked together to motivate those who had returned to Israel under the edict of Cyrus to build the temple.

Zechariah extends to a later period in the work than Haggai does.

## PURPOSE AND THEME

The theme of the book of Zechariah is found in his name.

The meanings of the names of his genealogy recorded in verse one combine to reveal the message of the book:

<i>Zechariah</i>	=>	"Yahweh remembers"
He is the son of <i>Berechiah</i>	=>	"Yahweh will bless"
He is the grandson of <i>Iddo</i>	=>	"His appointed time"

From these names can be drawn the following theme:

*Yahweh remembers His people and will bless them in His appointed time."*

The prophecy is given to encourage the people to rebuild the temple.

It contains a detailed description of the judgment of the nations and the resultant blessings for Israel.

The book also calls the attention of the people to God's covenant program

**YAHWEH HAS REMEMBERED ISRAEL AND IS INSTITUTING A PROGRAM WHICH WILL CLIMAX IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANTS, THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.**

*1:14, 16, 17; 2:5, 10, 11-12; 3:2, 8; 8:3, 8, 13, 15; 9:14, 15; 10:6, 12; 13:9; 14:21*

**They are at a turning point in Israel's history:**

They have been judged and are starting a new generation, a new relationship to God, a new challenge and a fresh renewal of the promises.

God has turned back to Israel.

For this reason, they should repent and submit to his authority, in order to experience the blessings He has promised them.

The book is important to the formation of eschatology.

It is parallel to Daniel.

Daniel traces the story from the beginning of the captivity.

Zechariah traces it from the end of the captivity.

Zechariah emphasizes God's program for Israel,

Daniel emphasizes God's program for gentiles in the same period.

The two overlap considerably, but the emphasis of their presentation is different.

## **ORGANIZATION**

Zechariah's structure is divided in three sections.

The book begins with **EIGHT VISIONS** which reveal God's program for Israel from the rebuilding of the temple to the establishment of the millennium. **1-6**

**FOUR MESSAGES** follow which answer questions raised concerning the continuation of the fasts. **7-8**

Finally, **TWO BURDENSOME PROPHECIES** which reveal God's program for Gentiles are proclaimed.  
9-14

## **ARGUMENT**

### **EIGHT VISIONS REVEALING GOD'S PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL 1-6**

Zechariah begins with the description of eight night visions the prophet saw.

The visions, combined with the introduction and appended coronation of Joshua, reveal the prophetic outline of God's dealings with Israel from the prophet's day to the institution of the kingdom.

They are intended to reveal God's program and to assure them of His faithfulness and of the fulfillment of previously revealed prophecy.

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE VISIONS 1:1-6**

#### **Historical preface 1:1**

#### **Appeal for repentance 1:2-6**

The visions are preceded by an introductory call to repentance.

Until the people recognize their condition under God's wrath, they will not experience the blessings God has promised them.

They are reminded of God's judgment on their ancestors and of the abiding presence of His laws.

They are exhorted to turn to Him.

### **EIGHT NIGHT VISIONS 1:7-6:8**

#### **1. Man among the myrtle trees 1:7-17**

Recognizes the present sunken and dispersed condition of Israel and promises deliverance.

Points forward to the immediate restoration of Israel at that time, but also, beyond that, to the final restoration.

Description of the vision 1:7-8

Explanation of the vision 1:9-13

Question from Zechariah 1:9a

Response of the angel 1:9b

Commission of the patrol 1:10

Report of the patrol 1:11

Appeal for mercy 1:12

Reply of comfort 1:13

Proclamation to the people 1:14-17

Yahweh's attitude toward His people 1:14

Yahweh's attitude toward the nations 1:15

Yahweh's promise to restore Israel 1:16-17

## **2. Four horns and four craftsmen 1:18-21**

Pictures four Gentile rulers that God would use to subdue Israel.

These four rulers are succeeded by four deliverers whom God would use to rescue Israel.

Four horns 1:18-19

Four craftsmen 1:20-21

## **3. Man with the measuring line 2:1-13**

Views the ultimate restoration and expansion of Jerusalem.

The cities will overflow from the increased population.

The presence of Messiah is predicted which carries the ultimate fulfillment into the millennium.

The near view applies to the growth of the city in Zechariah's time.

The vision 2:1-5

Description of the vision 2:1-4a

Message of the vision 2:4b-5

The appeal 2:6-13

To those in Babylon 2:6

To those in Jerusalem 2:7-12

To all flesh 2:13

## **4. Cleansing of Joshua 3:1-10**

Foresees, in the cleansing of the high priest, the cleansing of the nation.

It pictures the restoration of Israel as the high priestly nation.

It illustrates her restoration and redemption.

Description of the vision 3:1-7

Joshua's trial 3:1-3

Description of the scene 3:1a

Participation of Satan 3:1b

Participation of the Angel of Yahweh 3:2

Condition of Joshua 3:3

Joshua's transformation 3:4-5

Removal of polluted garments 3:4

Restoration of pure garments 3:5

Joshua's challenge 3:6-7

Promise of Messiah's coming 3:8-10

The promise of His coming 3:8-9a

The results of His coming 3:9b-10

Removal of guilt 3:9b

Peace and security 3:10

## **5. Golden lampstand and two olive trees 4:1-14**

Designed to show how the people are enabled to do the things which they are going to do.

Their function as lights will be performed by the power of the Spirit under the direction of Messiah.

The near view promises divine enablement through Joshua and Zerubbabel.

It anticipates the coming of Messiah who will unite the two offices in one.

Description of the vision 4:1-3

Introduction 4:1

Lampstand 4:2

Olive trees 4:3

Message of the vision 4:4-10

Message of the olive trees 4:11-14

## **6. Flying scroll 5:1-4**

Reveals the judgment of sin.

The measurements of the scroll are equal to those of Solomon's porch and to those of the temple.

The vision applies to the cleansing of Israel at the time they become priests.

It occurs at the beginning of the millennium.

Description of the vision 5:1-2

Message of the vision 5:3-4

## **7. Woman in the ephah 5:5-11**

Refers to the removal of the false religious system.

An idolatrous system was symbolized by a woman.

The woman is carried to Babylon by two other women with wings like a stork, an unclean animal.

There she is established and set on a base.

The vision is concerned with her removal from God's land and people, not the place to which she is carried.

Nevertheless, it is significant that she is taken to the place where false religion was first originated and where false religious systems were notably present.

## **8. Four chariots 6:1-8**

Pictures judgment.

The chariots and horses are instruments of judgment God uses to bring Israel and Jerusalem to the place of confession.

Description of the vision 6:1-3  
Message of the vision 6:4-8  
Summary of the message 6:4-5  
Elaboration of the message 6:6-7  
Results of the mission 6:8

## **CORONATION OF JOSHUA 6:9-15**

The first section of the book which lays out God's program for Israel from the time of Zechariah to the beginning of the millennium, concludes with the symbolic coronation of Joshua.

Certain individuals come from Babylon to Jerusalem to bring an offering.

It was evidently a contribution from those still in Babylon for the temple.

They use the offerings to make crowns for the head of the priest.

Zerubbabel was not crowned, lest the institution of the Davidic kingdom occur.

Joshua receives a double crown which points ahead to the crowning of Messiah who will serve both offices.

The crowning of Messiah is the climax of the program which Zechariah has revealed.

## **FOUR MESSAGES CONCERNING ISRAEL'S FASTS 7-8**

Two years pass between the visions and the four messages.

The work on the temple is half done.

The decree of Darius has been pronounced and the hardships are over.

Practical problems arise.

The people want to know if they should observe the fasts commemorating the destruction of the city.

The purpose of those fasts seems to be gone.

Though they only inquire about one fast, the whole system is in view.

The four messages were given to answer their question.

## **FIRST MESSAGE 7:1-7**

**The first message rebukes them for misusing the fasts.**

**Request concerning continuation 7:1-3**

**Rebuke because of misuse 7:4-7**

The fast was designed to represent repentance for their sin, but they were using it to memorialize their own suffering.

## **SECOND MESSAGE 7:8-14**

**The second message focuses their attention on the cause of their suffering.**

### **Requirements of God 7:8-10**

They ought to repent of the cause of their suffering.

God has established certain responsibilities for His people.

God wants them to turn back to Him—NOT lament their own condition!

### **Response of the nation 7:11-12a**

The people had deliberately rejected God's desire.

### **Results for the nation 7:12b-14**

Therefore, God judged them in great wrath.

## **THIRD MESSAGE 8:1-17**

**The third message promises restoration for Israel.**

### **Promise of restoration 8:1-15**

He encourages them in their work with the promise of completion of the temple.

He promises them blessing for obedience.

### **Conditions for restoration 8:16-17**

Again He reminds them of God's requirements.

Positive conditions 8:16

Negative conditions 8:17

## **FOURTH MESSAGE 8:18-23**

**The fourth message gives an answer for their question.**

What now depicts disaster will eventually bring joy, when He sends His blessing on Israel.

Past suffering will be forgotten in the light of their rejoicing.

Messiah will be present with them and their city will be the source of blessing.

### **Promise of future celebration 8:18-19**

## **Results of future celebration 8:20-23**

The answer to their question is now complete. So what's the answer?

Your fasts have been for the wrong motive.

God is going to bless you so that you will forget the suffering.

God doesn't care what you do with *your* fasts.

They're going to become *irrelevant!*

Their decision should be made in the light of what God is going to do for them.

God will correct the situation they were remembering.

## **TWO BURDENS REVEALING GOD'S PROGRAM FOR GENTILES 9-14**

The book concludes with two burdensome messages (9:1; 12:1) which outline God's program for Gentiles.

The prophecies relate to the future of Israel also, but they emphasize the role of the Gentiles.

### **FIRST BURDEN 9-11**

**The first burdensome prophecy describes the judgment of God on Gentiles which delivers Israel from Gentile dominion.**

#### **Judgment on surrounding nations 9:1-8**

The judgment on the surrounding nations, and the resultant preservation of Israel, is described.

This prophecy has a dual-fulfillment:

in the conquests of Alexander which bypassed Israel, while hitting the surrounding nations;  
and *ultimately*, in the tribulation.

Judgment on Gentiles 9:1-7

Concerning cities of Syria 9:1-2a

Concerning cities of Phoenicia 9:2b-4

Concerning cities of Philistia 9:5-7

#### **Appearance of Israel's Messiah 9:9**

He predicts the coming of Messiah and the peace He will bring (9-10).

#### **Blessing for Israel 9:10-10:12**

Blessings Israel will receive at the appearance of her Messiah are described.

Specific blessings promised 9:10-10:8

Peace 9:10

Restoration to land 9:11-12  
Victory over Gentile dominion 9:13-17  
Removal of religious deception 10:1-4  
Divine presence in battle 10:5  
Restoration as God's people 10:6-7  
Regathering 10:8a  
Population explosion 10:8b  
Summary of God's participation 10:9-12

### **Rejection of true shepherd 11:1-17**

However, even at this early point it is predicted that when Messiah appears, the process of restoration will be interrupted.

Israel rejects Him and claims a false shepherd.

The result is affliction and desolation.

Effect: Destruction of the land 11:1-3  
Cause: Rejection of Messiah 11:4-14  
Prophet's commission 11:4  
People's punishment 11:5-6  
Messiah's ministry 11:7  
Messiah's response to their rejection 11:8-11  
Rejection 11:8  
Judgment 11:9-11  
Messiah's response to their evaluation 11:12-14  
Their low opinion 11:12  
His response 11:13  
Their judgment 11:14  
Contrast: Acceptance of the false shepherd 11:15-17  
Commissioning of Zechariah 11:15  
Description of false shepherd 11:16  
Judgment of false shepherd 11:17

### **SECOND BURDEN 12-14**

**The second burdensome message describes the movement of Gentiles against Israel, which will force them to confession and repentance.**

#### **Israel's deliverance 12:1-13:6**

God is going to bring the nations together against Jerusalem.

The nations who oppose Jerusalem will be ground to pieces.

God will deliver Israel from them.

This is a picture of the battle of Armageddon.

Physically 12:1-9  
Authority for message 12:1  
Attack from nations 12:2-3

Confusion of enemies 12:4  
Faith of Judah 12:5  
Response of Yahweh 12:6-9  
    Judah enabled 12:6a  
    Jerusalem preserved 12:6b  
    Yahweh glorified 12:7  
    Judah triumphant 12:8  
    Nations defeated 12:9

Spiritually 12:10-13:6

National confession of Israel 12:10-14

At that time, Israel will experience national confession and repentance.

Outpouring of the Spirit 12:10a  
Mourning over the crucified 12:10b-14

National cleansing of Israel 13:1-6

The land will be cleansed and the false prophets made ashamed.

Fountain opened for cleansing 13:1  
Removal of idols 13:2a  
Removal of false prophets 13:2b-6

A parenthetical flashback is given to explain God's method of bringing them to repentance which prepares the way for the second advent. 13:7-9

### **Second advent and consummation of God's program 13:7-14:21**

The latter half of this burdensome message describes the return of Christ and the consummation of God's program.

Events leading to second advent 13:7-9

Realization of second advent 14:1-5

Israel's condition described 14:1-2

Describes the effects of the occupation of Jerusalem by the beast.

Christ's coming described 14:3-5

Christ returns to earth and accomplishes various changes.

Results of second advent 14:6-21

Physical blessings 14:6-8

Theocratic blessings 14:9-11

The new millennial government is established.

Political blessings 14:12-15

Israel's enemies are removed and all nations pay their debts to Israel.

Spiritual blessings 14:16-21

Nations go there to worship 16-19

In that day the separation of sacred and secular will be removed.

Everything will be holy before the Lord. 20-21

Zechariah has brought his people from the time of the rebuilding of the temple to the time of the institution of Christ's kingdom.

He encourages the people in their work on the temple by reminding them of God's faithfulness to them in spite of their failures.

He reminds them that God remembers Israel.

#### **WHAT PRACTICAL LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES TODAY DO WE LEARN FROM ZECHARIAH?**

In order for Israel to enjoy this blessing, they would have to obey His Word.

We, too, have to learn this lesson.

To enjoy God's blessing, we have to hear His voice.

If we refuse to pay attention to God, we will live in a spiritual drought, similar to the one that affected Israel.

This should encourage us to recognize God's authority over our lives and motivate us to live by His Word.