

ZECHARIAH

“The LORD (JHVH) Remembers”

Z*echariah* means “Remembered of the Lord,” or “the LORD remembers,” “Yahweh Remembers,” “He whom Yahweh remembers.”

AUTHOR: Zechariah the prophet (1:1; 7:1) was a young man born in Babylonia (2:4) of the priestly family of Iddo (Neh. 12:4). He was one of the exiles who saw Jerusalem for the first time with the returning exiles. Zechariah was head of a “father’s house” and a man of great influence. Zechariah was serving as a priest when God called him as a prophet. “God had called him and the time was ripe for preaching,” says Yates.

DATE: B.C. 520. John R. Sampey suggested that “the youthful Zechariah of 518 B. C. probably composed chapters 9-14 in later life” (also Francisco). Haggai prophesied from the sixth to the ninth month of 520 B. C.; Zechariah began his work in the eighth month and went on at intervals of several years.

PURPOSE: This is a message of encouragement to the rebuilders of the Temple who had returned with Zechariah under the leadership of Zerubbabel in 535 B.C. He furthers Haggai's work by seeking to bring about spiritual revival and to motivate the people to complete the Temple. “His passionate enthusiasm for the restoration of the Temple challenged the people to carry on to the hour when the building was completed,” says Kyle M. Yates.

An important part of that message is the Messianic component. He interprets the meaning of the Temple to the people of JHVH. Messianic interpretation dominates the book. G. L. Robinson said, “No other book is as Messianic.” “There is a deep-flowing messianic strain underlying his message that gave him confidence that what he urged was in line with God's destiny for the nation,” says Clyde Francisco. The fulfillment of those hopes depended on the completion of the Temple.

THEME: In place of the pain God’s saints experience today, they will one day worship the LORD in His holy city forever.

STYLE: The book has been described as “difficult, profound, cloudy, eschatological, apocalyptic, messianic, exaggerated, confused, unusual.” Some of these words are more aptly applied to content than to style, but shade from the former to the later” (B. O. Herring). “Zechariah differs from his predecessors in the emphasis which he placed upon visions as a means of divine communication, in apocalyptic symbolism, and in the large place occupied by angelic mediation in his intercourse with God” (Francisco). Zechariah proclaimed the coming of that golden era when God's promises would be realized. He places a strong emphasis on the holiness of God. No other prophet makes so large use of the Sacred Writings as he does. He has a fondness for vision and symbols, yet his leading ideas are simple and practical.

KEY VERSES: 8:3; 14:9

KEY WORDS: shepherd, king, Branch, Jerusalem, Israel.

MESSIAH IN ZECHARIAH

“Zechariah's picture of the coming Messiah stirs the soul,” writes Yates. “This great King is to come as the

Prince of peace (9:9-10) *vindicated, victorious and lovely*. He comes triumphantly and yet in the guise of peace. Instead of riding a war horse he rides a humble beast used by kings and notables on missions of peace. . . . the references to the Messianic King and the Good Shepherd point forward to the life and ministry and death of our Lord." The great conflict will end in a glorious victory when the King Messiah comes in glory. "The temporary victory gained by the enemies of God will be forgotten when the Messiah in all His might shall put all enemies under His feet and establish His kingdom in Jerusalem. As the capital Zion shall then be the holy city of God. *At evening time three shall be light*" (*Preaching from the Prophets*, p. 211).

- The Branch or Sprout (3:8f; 6:12f; Heb. 6:20-7:1)
- Entry of Zion's Lowly King (9:9-17; Matt. 21:4-5; Jn. 12:13-16)
- Sale of Jesus by Judas (11:4-14; Matt. 27:9)
- Mourning over the Pierced One (12:10; Jn. 19:37)
- Fountain opened for sin (13:1)
- The Smitten Servant (13:7-9)
- Glory of Jerusalem the Center of World Worship (2:10-11; 14:8f, 20f)
- At His Second Coming He will be crowned King (14:5, 9; Rev. 11:15; 21:27)

BACKGROUND: Cyrus, King of Persia, allowed more than 50,000 Jews to return to Palestine from Babylon in 538 B.C. In 535 B.C. the foundations for the Temple were laid and was met with intense opposition which delayed the construction for another 15 years (Ezra 1:1-4; 4:1-5). Darius Hystaspes (1:1) came to power in 522 and ruled until 486 B.C. A reign of great prosperity gave him a place among the outstanding rulers of all history. He confirmed Cyrus' decree to allow the Jews to leave and rebuild Jerusalem. The Temple was completed in 516 B.C.

Yates says, "A serious depression, with crop failures and apparent ruin, faced the Jewish people who had responded to the call of Haggai to build the house of God. Under the pressure of discouragement and want that faced them they found it was easy to fall out. . . . A new voice was needed to lift them into the kind of enthusiasm that would keep them working to the finish line. Zechariah came to the rescue to supply the needed help."

HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries who present an interesting contrast with only one thing in common—"a passionate enthusiasm for the restoration of the Temple." Haggai was old and spoke straight and to the point; Zechariah was youthful and visionary. Haggai was prosaic and practical; Zechariah was idealistic and full of color. "While Haggai had both feet firmly planted in the *present*, Zechariah and his message gaze toward the *future*. Haggai prods the people to use their *hands*; Zechariah encourages them to open their *hearts*. Haggai is concerned about the *physical* dwelling place of God—the temple in Jerusalem; Zechariah's passion is for God's *spiritual* abode—the hearts of his people," observes Irving Jensen. Together the two prophets "did a magnificent work in keeping the interest high and the hands working through all the troublous days. It was a mighty undertaking carried on under the most trying circumstances to its completion in 516 B. C.," says Yates.

NEW TESTAMENT USE OF ZECHARIAH:

Zech. 1:8 with Rev. 6:1-8
Zech. 3:2 with Jude 9
Zech. 3:9 with Rev. 5:6
Zech. 8:16 with Eph. 4:25
Zech 9:9 with Matt. 21:5; Jn. 12:14ff
Zech. 11:12f with Matt. 27:9f
Zech. 12:10 with Jn. 19:37; Rev. 1:7
Zech. 13:7 with Matt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27
Zech. 14:11 with Rev. 22:3

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