

A&P Bible Church | Weekly Study Zechariah 1:1-6

The book is one of consolation and hope, beginning with a call to repentance and concluding with prophecies concerning the return and reign of Christ.

Zechariah predicted more about Messiah than any other prophet except Isaiah. Prophecies concerning His first coming include Zech. 3:8; 9:9, 16; 11:11-13; 12:10; 13:1, 6; and prophecies to be fulfilled at His second coming include 6:12; 14:1-21.

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Throughout the week continue to look through the scriptures, think through the questions, and apply the Word to your life. Email any questions during the week to Brandon & Travis at ap.brandongarcia@gmail.com & ap.travisjohnson@gmail.com.

MONDAY

AUTHOR: Zechariah

DATE: 520-518 B.C.

Zechariah's father, Berechiah, probably died when his son was young, making Zechariah the immediate successor of his grandfather, Iddo (Neh. 12:4). Iddo was a priest who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua and was, according to tradition, a member of the Great Synagogue (the governing body of the Jews before the Sanhedrin). The name Zechariah (used in the Old Testament of 27 other people) means "Yahweh remembers." This Zechariah was a contemporary of the prophet Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

Background and Purpose

During the reign of Cyrus, more than 50,000 Jews returned to Palestine from Babylon in 538 B.C. They laid the foundation of the Temple in 536, but opposition stalled the work for about 15 years (Ezra 1:1-4; 4:1-5). Darius Hystaspes (1:1), who came to the throne in 521, confirmed Cyrus's decree, and Zechariah, like Haggai, encouraged the people to finish the Temple (which they did in 516).

Christology of the Book

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Zechariah 1:1-6 Breakdown

Zechariah 1:1 In the eighth month of Darius' second year, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berechiah son of Iddo, as follows:

Darius was the King of Persia. Persia had conquered Babylon and was the new world power. Israel was a vassal state to Persia.

This prophecy was written in 520 B.C. by the prophet Zechariah. Zechariah was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo. Zechariah means "Jehovah remembers." Berechiah means "Jehovah blesses". Iddo means "time." Together, this genealogy means "Jehovah will remember and Jehovah will bless in his time."

2 The Lord was very angry with your ancestors.

Israel was called by God to become priests to all of the nations. Instead, they began worshipping demons. This made Jehovah very angry, because Israel had more light than the other nations.

3 Therefore say to the people: The Lord who rules over all says, "Turn to me," says the Lord who rules over all, "and I will turn to you," says the Lord who rules over all.

Jehovah called Israel to leave the worship of demons and return back to Him.

4 "Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the former prophets called out, saying, "The Lord who rules over all says, "Turn now from your evil wickedness," ' but they would by no means obey me," says the Lord.

Jehovah commanded the post-exilic generation to not be like the pre-exilic generation.

5 *“As for your ancestors, where are they? And did the prophets live forever?”*

Jehovah asked some questions to this new generation. First, where are your ancestors? The answer was that many of them died in unbelief and they are located in hell.

Israel responds, “Did the prophets live forever?” Israel is complaining that the prophets died and their messages died as well.

6 *But have my words and statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, not outlived your fathers? Then they paid attention and confessed, ‘The Lord who rules over all has indeed done what he said he would do to us, because of our sinful ways.’ ”*

God responds, “Did the messages of the prophets outlive your fathers?” The answer is yes. The messages of the prophets were still in written form for anyone to read.

Israel responded with a confession, “We sinned. The words of the prophets all came true.”

TUESDAY

Jeremiah 2:1-17 Breakdown

2:1 The Lord spoke to me. He said:

Jehovah spoke to Jeremiah, so this was not Jeremiah's human opinion. Every time that the Lord spoke to Jeremiah, He was giving him a new prophecy. In chapters 2-45, Jehovah revealed prophecies concerning Judah. In verses 2-6, Jehovah would reveal Judah's guilt and punishment. Jeremiah's message was not good. His message was not uplifting and encouraging reading. His message would not tickle Judah's ears. Most of these prophecies were recorded during the reign of the good King Josiah.

2:2 "Go and declare in the hearing of the people of Jerusalem: 'This is what the Lord says: "I have fond memories of you, how devoted you were to me in your early years. I remember how you loved me like a new bride; you followed me through the wilderness, through a land that had never been planted."

Jeremiah was commanded to take Jehovah's message directly to the capital of Judah. Jehovah would speak through Jeremiah. He would give a short summary of Israel's history.

The Hebrew word for "memories" זָכַר (zachar), meaning to remember in a fond and affectionate way. Jehovah possessed three fond memories of Israel.

First, Jehovah remembered the devotion that Israel showed him in the early years when he first brought Israel out of the slavery of Egypt. The Hebrew word for "devoted" is חֲסֵד (chesed), meaning covenant loyalty.

Second, Israel loved Jehovah like a new bride. She wanted to be around Him all of the time.

Third, Israel followed Jehovah through an unplanted desert land into the Promised Land. The unplanted land was Sinai. She trusted Jehovah to provide for all of her needs.

This early stage of love between Jehovah and Israel occurred during the exodus from Israel to Mount Sinai. There was some complaining, but no apostasy. Israel did not go after other gods.

2:3 Israel was set apart to the Lord; they were like the first fruits of a harvest to him. All who tried to devour them were punished; disaster came upon them," says the Lord.'
"

The Hebrew word for "set apart" is קֹדֶשׁ (kodesh), meaning a holy calling from God to perform a special task for God. Israel was the first fruits of God, meaning that Israel alone

was dedicated to God. Only God could touch her. All others who attempted to devour these first fruits violated the Abrahamic Covenant and were punished by the kind-for-kind curse.

2:4 Now listen to what the Lord has to say, you descendants of Jacob, all you family groups from the nation of Israel.

In verses 4-13, Jeremiah would become a prosecuting attorney sent by God to accuse all 12 tribes of Israel of apostasy. He would not tickle the ears of Judah or Israel.

2:5 This is what the Lord says: "What fault could your ancestors have possibly found in me that they strayed so far from me? They paid allegiance to worthless idols, and so became worthless to me.

Jehovah challenged Israel. Did God keep His part of the covenant? Can the ancestors of Israel bring to court one piece of evidence where God did not keep His part of the covenant? Israel paid allegiance to idols which were nothing. Israel chose the worship of nothing over God.

Evolutionists make this same mistake today. They believe that nothing created all things, including themselves. They believe that they evolved from nothing. They are choosing to place their faith in nothing instead of God.

2:6 They did not ask: 'Where is the Lord who delivered us out of Egypt, who brought us through the wilderness, through a land of desert sands and rift valleys, through a land of drought and deep darkness, through a land in which no one travels, and where no one lives?'

Israel could not have escaped Egypt without the divine aid of God. They could not have survived in the wilderness without the divine provisions of God. One person cannot walk across the Sinai desert without provisions. God provided food, water, and shelter for two million people in the desert for forty years.

2:7 I brought you into a fertile land so you could enjoy its fruits and its rich bounty. But when you entered my land, you defiled it; you made the land I call my own loathsome to me.

God brought Israel into the most fertile land on earth and Israel defiled it with her sexual sins, spiritual adultery, and infant sacrifice.

2:8 Your priests did not ask, 'Where is the Lord?' Those responsible for teaching my law did not really know me. Your rulers rebelled against me. Your prophets prophesied in the name of the god Baal. They all worshiped idols that could not help them.

The leadership of Israel was responsible for leading Israel away from God. The Levites were called to teach the Word of God, but they did not know the Word of God well enough to teach it. Many pastors and Bible teachers make this same mistake today. They teach error, because they are too lazy to study the entire counsel of the Word of God in its original language.

The rulers rebelled against God. They refused to enforce the Mosaic Law.

The prophets were prophesying in the name of Baal. This meant that Israel was getting advice and counseling from demons.

The leaders were worshiping demonic idols, which were actually nothing. They rejected the Living God and worshiped lifeless wooden and stone statues instead.

2:9 "So, once more I will state my case against you," says the Lord. "I will also state it against your children and grandchildren."

In verses 9-13, God took Israel to court and charged Israel with adultery. In Exodus 34, God had stated that these sins would visit four generations. God was bringing the fathers, sons, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to court.

2:10 Go west across the sea to the coasts of Cyprus and see. Send someone east to Kedar and have them look carefully. See if such a thing as this has ever happened:

God challenged Israel to go west and east and see if they could find any god who had ever made a covenant with their people.

2:11 Has a nation ever changed its gods (even though they are not really gods at all)? But my people have exchanged me, their glorious God, for a god that cannot help them at all!

God challenged Israel to travel around and point out any nation who had exchanged their gods for another god. The Jewish nation was the only nation on earth who was worshiping the one true God, yet they had exchanged the one true God for a god of nothingness.

2:12 Be amazed at this, O heavens! Be shocked and utterly dumbfounded," says the Lord.

In Deuteronomy 32:1, the heavens were called to be the witnesses to the Mosaic Covenant between Jehovah and Israel. The heavens had witnessed how Jehovah had faithfully kept His part of the Covenant, but Israel had continually rejected the God who sustained them. Heaven was shocked at this behavior and ingratitude of Israel.

2:13 *“Do so because my people have committed a double wrong: they have rejected me, the fountain of life-giving water, and they have dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns which cannot even hold water.”*

Israel was the only nation in the world chosen by God, yet Israel rejected Him. Jehovah was “the fountain of life-giving water,” meaning that He sustained the life of Israel. Israel rejected the water from this fountain and decided to trust in broken cisterns which were cracked and could not contain water.

2:14 *“Israel is not a slave, is he? He was not born into slavery, was he? If not, why then is he being carried off?”*

There are two different types of slaves mentioned in this passage. The first slave is עֶבֶד (ebed), meaning a Jewish slave who could possibly be set free by a kinsman redeemer or by the Year of Jubilee. The second slave is מִדּוֹא (madoa), meaning a Gentile slave who was born into slavery and would never be set free. God did not call Israel to be either of these two types of slaves. He called Israel to become “priests to all of the nations.”

2:15 *Like lions his enemies roar victoriously over him; they raise their voices in triumph. They have laid his land waste; his cities have been burned down and deserted.*

The Gentiles had become lions who were devouring Israel. They defeated Israel and cried out victory shouts. They destroyed the cities of Israel and left them as heaps of stone. They burned down the cities and deported the people out of the Promised Land.

2:16 *Even the soldiers from Memphis and Tahpanhes have cracked your skulls, people of Israel.*

Memphis and Tahpanhes were two Egyptian cities which controlled the exit entrance from Judah into Egypt. Judah will attempt to escape the Babylonian Captivity by fleeing into these two border cities. However, these two cities would crack the skulls of the Jews who attempted to migrate and dwell there.

2:17 *You have brought all this on yourself, Israel, by deserting the Lord your God when he was leading you along the right path.*

Israel has brought these judgments upon themselves. Jehovah gave them more light, but Israel rejected it.

WEDNESDAY**Jeremiah 2:18-37 Breakdown**

2:18 What good will it do you then to go down to Egypt to seek help from the Egyptians? What good will it do you to go over to Assyria to seek help from the Assyrians?

Instead of looking to Jehovah as the one who is the spring of life-giving waters, Israel would seek help from two broken cisterns who could not hold water. She would flutter back and forth like a foolish bird between these two broken cisterns. The Egyptians and Assyrians were the two broken cisterns who would be crushed by Babylon.

2:19 Your own wickedness will bring about your punishment. Your unfaithful acts will bring down discipline on you. Know, then, and realize how utterly harmful it was for you to reject me, the Lord your God, to show no respect for me," says the Lord God who rules over all.

Israel's own wickedness would cause her to harm herself. Whenever a nation lives in sin, then they are actually injuring themselves. God must execute judgment to save the rebellious nation. He must execute extreme surgery to save the life of the foolish nation.

2:20 "Indeed, long ago you threw off my authority and refused to be subject to me. You said, 'I will not serve you.' Instead, you gave yourself to other gods on every high hill and under every green tree, like a prostitute sprawls out before her lovers.

Jehovah freed Israel from her bondage, but she refused to serve Him. Instead, she spread her legs to demonic idols like a prostitute.

2:21 I planted you in the land like a special vine of the very best stock. Why in the world have you turned into something like a wild vine that produces rotten, foul-smelling grapes?

God planted Israel in the land as choice seed, but Israel produced poisonous grapes. This bad fruit looked good to eat, but instead, it brought death.

2:22 You can try to wash away your guilt with a strong detergent. You can use as much soap as you want. But the stain of your guilt is still there for me to see,” says the Lord God.

Israel has stained herself with sin. There was no soap or detergent that could cleanse her dirty stain.

2:23 “How can you say, ‘I have not made myself unclean. I have not paid allegiance to the gods called Baal.’ Just look at the way you have behaved in the Valley of Hinnom! Think about the things you have done there! You are like a flighty, young female camel that rushes here and there, crisscrossing its path.

Israel was sacrificing innocent children to demonic gods in the Valley of Hinnom. She was running to this valley of infant sacrifice, just as a female camel runs in heat to any male camel. When a female camel is in heat, she runs back and forth and in continuous circles. This camel in heat was a picture of the condition of adulterous Israel.

2:24 You are like a wild female donkey brought up in the wilderness. In her lust she sniffs the wind to get the scent of a male. No one can hold her back when she is in heat. None of the males need wear themselves out chasing after her. At mating time she is easy to find.

When a female donkey is in heat, then she sniffs the air for male urine. When she smells the urine, she runs to the male donkey and spreads her legs. Israel went after demonic gods in the same way that female donkeys in heat go after a male donkey.

2:25 Do not chase after other gods until your shoes wear out and your throats become dry. But you say, ‘It is useless for you to try and stop me because I love those foreign gods and want to pursue them!’

In order to avoid the Babylonian Captivity, then Israel will have to quit chasing after demonic idols. Israel's response was that she loved the demonic gods too much. She did not want to stop chasing these demonic idols. She must pursue these demonic idols just as an alcoholic with a dry throat chases after alcohol.

2:26 Just as a thief has to suffer dishonor when he is caught, so the people of Israel will suffer dishonor for what they have done. So will their kings and officials, their priests and their prophets.

A thief is ashamed only when he is caught. Israel was not ashamed of worshiping demonic gods, unless she was caught. The kings, governmental officials, priests, and prophets were not only worshiping demons, but they were leading Judah in this same direction.

2:27 They say to a wooden idol, 'You are my father.' They say to a stone image, 'You gave birth to me.' Yes, they have turned away from me instead of turning to me. Yet when they are in trouble, they say, 'Come and save us!'

Israel was giving credit to wooden and stone idols for bringing them into existence. However, when trouble came, the leaders wanted to return back to God and ask Him to deliver them. When the Babylonian soldiers arrived, then the leaders would turn back to Jehovah and ask Him to save them.

2:28 But where are the gods you made for yourselves? Let them save you when you are in trouble. The sad fact is that you have as many gods as you have towns, Judah.

God's answer was that the next time Israel is in trouble, she should ask the wooden and stone idols to help her out of her jam. Israel had as many demonic gods as she had towns.

2:29 "Why do you try to refute me? All of you have rebelled against me," says the Lord.

Judah possessed no legal defense in this court case. All were guilty of sinning against God.

2:30 "It did no good for me to punish your people. They did not respond to such correction. You slaughtered your prophets like a voracious lion."

Previous discipline had not worked with Judah. Instead of listening to the warnings from the prophets, Israel killed the prophets who brought them these negative messages.

2:31 You people of this generation, listen to what the Lord says. “Have I been like a wilderness to you, Israel? Have I been like a dark and dangerous land to you? Why then do you say, ‘We are free to wander. We will not come to you any more?’

When the ninth plague of darkness hit Egypt, there was still light in Goshen. God had always brought light to Israel, but they rejected it. Therefore, the fault did not lie with God. God had blessed, protected, and given more light to Judah than any other nation.

2:32 Does a young woman forget to put on her jewels? Does a bride forget to put on her bridal attire? But my people have forgotten me for more days than can even be counted.

The Hebrew word for “young woman” is בְּתוּלָה (betulah), meaning virgin. When a virgin goes out of the house, then she puts on her jewels to show that she is available. When a bride gets married, she puts on her wedding attire to show that she is married. Israel was not like the virgin or the bride. She had forgotten her husband. Israel was guilty of illogical thinking.

2:33 “My, how good you have become at chasing after your lovers! Why, you could even teach prostitutes a thing or two!

Israel was such an expert in spiritual adultery, that she could teach other prostitutes their trade.

2:34 Even your clothes are stained with the lifeblood of the poor who had not done anything wrong; you did not catch them breaking into your homes. Yet, in spite of all these things you have done,

Israel was not only a prostitute, but she was also a murderer. Israel’s clothes were stained with the blood of the poor whom they had slaughtered for greedy acquisition.

2:35 you say, ‘I have not done anything wrong, so the Lord cannot really be angry with me any more.’ But, watch out! I will bring down judgment on you because you say, ‘I have not committed any sin.’

Israel was guilty of murdering the poor, but she claimed innocence.

2:36 Why do you constantly go about changing your political allegiances? You will get no help from Egypt just as you got no help from Assyria.

Israel was indecisive in her politics. She kept changing her political allegiance back and forth from Egypt to Assyria. Neither of these Gentile nations would be able to help Israel escape the Babylonian Captivity, because they will be taken into captivity as well.

2:37 Moreover, you will come away from Egypt with your hands covering your faces in sorrow and shame because the Lord will not allow your reliance on them to be successful and you will not gain any help from them.

Israel would leave Jerusalem and hide out in Egypt. However, Babylon would defeat Egypt as well and take the Jews in Egypt into captivity.