

# Zechariah

## Summary

There are three distinct sections written in first-person narrative form. In chapters one through six, Zechariah describes his night visions, which contain vivid imagery that held various meanings for the nation of Israel. In the second section, chapters seven and eight, Zechariah moves his focus from visions to the word of the Lord regarding fasting and rebuilding the temple. God challenges His people to not fast if their hearts are not truly fasting for Him. Rather, they should pursue justice and mercy toward one another to align their hearts with Him. In chapter eight, God promises blessing upon Jerusalem if the people return to fasting with hearts turned toward Him. The final section of Zechariah, chapters nine through fourteen, describes how God will restore and rule over His people. These sections are sometimes referred to as eschatological oracles, and in them are found various prophecies concerning how God will care for Judah, judge and dismantle the enemies of Jerusalem, cleanse His people from sin, and ultimately come to rule and reign being worshiped by all.

## Author

Scholars agree the prophet Zechariah wrote the book of Zechariah.

## Date

The book of Zechariah gives clear dates as to when events took place, and it is likely that the date of authorship was shortly after the final date given. Verse one points to the eighth month of the second year of King Darius' rule, which would have been October/November of 520 B.C. The final vision took place on the fourteenth of the ninth month of Darius' fourth year, which would be December 5, 518 B.C. If we hold to traditional authorship, it is likely that Zechariah was written shortly after 518 B.C.

## Primary Characters

Zechariah (Zechariah 1-14)

The People of Israel (Zechariah 1-14)

## Historical Moments

Prophecy of Zechariah (Zechariah 1-14)

## Major Theological Themes

**The Sovereignty of God** - As is portrayed in chapters nine through fourteen, God ultimately has control over the nations, and it is by His hand that they will rise and fall. In His wisdom, He holds His people to higher standards, and judges them and restores them accordingly.

**God's Judgment of Israel** - As the remaining Israelites began to rebuild their culture and nation, God reminded them that they must continue to keep Him as their first priority. The position of their hearts and their failure to fast properly showed God that they had once again lost their way. His judgment was intended to bring His people back to Him.

**The Restoration of Israel** - God promises His people that through their obedience, He will restore their nation and will bless Jerusalem. His deep love for His people shines through in chapter ten as Zechariah describes how God will care for Judah.

## Lessons Learned from Zechariah

**Obedience to God Is of Utmost Importance** - When the nation of Israel was striving to please God and follow His ways, He blessed them and promised that He would take care of them. When they strayed from Him, He allowed the natural consequences of those decisions to affect them. We as Christians must strive for obedience in our daily lives. God honors obedience and loves us immensely, but also allows the natural consequences of sin to play a role in our lives. This only refines our lives further, much like it was supposed to refine the nation of Israel.

**God Is Trustworthy** - In the end, God has promised through His sovereignty that He will ultimately rule over all of creation. Just as the Israelites could cling to His promises as they walked with and relied on Him, we also can trust God to walk with us through each and every situation in our lives. He shares in both our pain and our joy and can be trusted as the closest friend one could ever hope for.

**God Values a Heart that Is in the Right Place Over Empty Religious Action** - The people of Israel were fasting during the proper months, but God was not pleased with their actions due to the condition of their hearts (chapter 7). As we follow God, we must make sure the actions of our lives are flowing out of a heart that is in love with Him and His ways. Simply following religious practices like having a daily devotional time or going to church every Sunday does not necessarily mean our hearts are in the right place.