

ZECHARIAH

There are more than twenty-nine Zechariahs mentioned in the Old Testament, but *this* Zechariah is the most prominent. In fact, his prophecy is second only to Isaiah in relation to the revelations relating to the future of Israel and the Messiah. His name means “The Lord remembers”.

Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Zechariah was also a priest, - he was a priest *and* a prophet, **Neh. 12:12** And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of *Jeremiah*, Hananiah; **13** Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; **14** Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; **15** Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; **16** Of Iddo, Zechariah ... **Zech. 1:1** In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet. He was a member of a ruling Jewish *authority* known as the Great Synagogue, which was a council consisting of one hundred and twenty men originally established by Nehemiah and presided over by Ezra. This council later became known as the Sanhedrin.

Zechariah was born in Babylon but joined his grandfather (Iddo) in the first wave of Jews who accompanied Zerubbabel and Joshua to resettle in Jerusalem, after permission had been granted them by King Cyrus of Persia in 538 BC (cf. Neh. 12; Ezra 1:1-4). His father was Berechiah, but because he is more often identified with his grandfather Iddo, it is thought his father had died, and his grandfather was the great influence in his life.

Zechariah's opening words set the date at 520 BC, the second year of the reign of King Darius I. ... Just to clarify ... This is a different King Darius to the one mentioned in the Book of Daniel. The Darius in the Book of Daniel was a Mede who was born in the seventh century BC, whereas *this* Darius (titled Darius I Hystaspes) was a Persian who lived c. 550-486 BC, ... at the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. ... Also, from a further historical viewpoint, Zechariah began his prophecy two months *after* Haggai began his, **Haggai 1:1** In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month ... **Zech. 1:1** In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah ... In other words, they were both prophesying at the same time, that is, from 520-518 BC.

Before we go any further ... One hundred and ninety-two years earlier, - in 712 BC, - Isaiah had prophesied into the future concerning this Cyrus who had given permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem, **Is. 44:21** Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O

Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. **22** I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. **23** Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. **24** Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; **25** That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; **26** That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: **27** That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: **28** *That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed [mashiyach], to Cyrus...* Before Cyrus was born, God had a purpose written for him to fulfil, concerning the plans for His people. ... It is a reminder how God is away ahead of where we are ... As James, the brother of Jesus said to the Council of Jerusalem, **Acts 15:18** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

And so, this King Cyrus had freed about fifty thousand Israelite exiles to resettle in their own land. For the first two years, the people had been excited about rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. However, after a proliferation of obstacles, - including various types of opposition from local tribesmen, - they left off from building the temple and, began to give priority to building comfortable houses for themselves. This resulted in God's displeasure towards them, for example, **Haggai 1:2** Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built. **3** Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, **4** Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled [*specially-panelled, 'top of the range'*] houses, and this house [*God's house, the temple*] lie waste? So, God judged them, **5** Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. **6** Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. ... Your work is coming to nothing because you are not putting Me first! ... This changed though, in 520 BC when they began to listen to the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, and as a result, the temple was completed four years later in 516 BC (Ezra 6:15). These two faithful prophets aroused the people from out of their indifference and apathy.

Zechariah, in particular, encouraged the people to build the temple in the blessed hope that a great day would arrive when the Messiah would come and

dwell within it. This promise was given to the Jews when they were still under the yoke of the Gentiles (Zech. 1:8-12), but he assured a day was coming a day when God would restore the land to His people, and He would come and be with them, and reign over them, in their midst. ... That was their motivation! He did not promise it immediately, but He did promise it unequivocally! ... It *would* happen ... and therefore, the meaning of Zechariah's name is very appropriate, "The Lord remembers" ... He had not forgotten Israel were His people, and He will never forget His ancient covenant with their fathers, and that is further illustrated in **Zech. 1:13** And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with *good words and comfortable words*.

This prophecy of Zechariah foretells and promises *Jesus* ... For example, **Zech. 3:8** **8** Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, *behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH* ... **6:12** And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, *Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH*; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: **13** Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and *he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne [i.e. a Kingly-Priest]*: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both ... **9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: *behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass* ... **11:12** And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So *they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver*. **13** And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took *the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord* ... **12:8** *In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.* **9** And it shall come to pass *in that day*, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. **10** And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and *they shall look upon me whom they have pierced*, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. ... **13:1** *In that day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. **2** And it shall come to pass *in that day*, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. ... **7** Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. **8** And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. **9** And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold

is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God. ... **14:1** *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh*, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. **2** For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. **3** Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. **4** *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east ... **7** But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. **8** And it shall be *in that day*, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ... **9** *And the LORD shall be king over all the earth.*

Again, what does the name Zechariah mean? In case we forget, it means “the Lord remembers”. ... For those Jews in captivity in Babylon, and for those battling against the opposition to their rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, it could be easy to forget ... nevertheless, “the Lord remembers” ... He has never forgotten what He has promised, and He will keep to His word, **10:8** I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. **9** And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. **10** I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. ... **12** And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD. ... *I will, I will, I will ...!* ... As Job affirmed, **Job 23:13** But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

Where do we as Gentile believers feature in this plan? Well, we are His redeemed people through His grace, and Paul describes us in the letter to the Romans (ch. 11) as ‘the wild olive tree’ who, - through God’s grace, - are grafted in to the original olive tree, God’s true Israel. As we look out from this place today, we see God’s Name being vilified, and His ways and commandments increasingly being *stamped* into the ground ... pay attention to Zechariah’s message though, for He assures us our God never forgets the promises He has made, - “the Lord remembers”, - and He has *guaranteed*, **Zech. 2:11** many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

I. God calls His people, - the Jews, - to repent (1:1-6)

II. God encourages His people to trust Him (1:7 - 6:15) ... Eight night-visions

A. *God and His People*

- i. The horsemen, - God watches the nations (1:7-17)
- ii. The four horns and the four craftsmen, - God judges the nations (1:18-21)
- iii. The measuring line, - God restores Jerusalem (2:1-13)

B. *God and His Leaders*

- iv. The high priest, - Israel cleansed (3:1-10)
- v. The golden lampstand and the two olive trees, - God gives power to His people (4:1-14)

C. *God and the Nations*

- vi. The flying scroll, - evil purged from the land (5:1-4)
- vii. The ephah, - the woman in the basket ... evil taken to Babylon (5:5-11)
- viii. The four chariots, - God judges the Gentiles (6:1-8)
- ix. The coronation of Joshua the high priest, depicting the Messiah Who will reign (6:9-15)

III. God instructs His people (7:1 – 8:23)

D. *Truth, Traditions, and Promises*

- i. Concerning true fasting (7:1-3)
- ii. Rebuke for wrong motives (7:4-7)
- iii. Repentance required (7:8-14)
- iv. Restoration of God's favour, through obedience to His Word (8:1-17)
- v. Concerning Israel's future, when fasts become feasts (8:18-23)

IV. God redeems His people (9:1 – 14:21) ... Two oracles)

E. *Messiah, the Shepherd King*

- i. The rejection of Messiah, at His first coming (9:1 – 11:17)

F. *Redeemed, Refined, and Restored*

- ii. The return and reign of Messiah, at His second coming (12:1 – 14:21)