

# Zechariah



Messiah

IN THE DISTANCE

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# There and Back Again: An Exile Timeline

## 625-525 BC

- ❖ **605** - Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invade Judah and exile people to Babylon for the first time. Jeremiah prophesies that the exile will last 70 years.
- ❖ **597** - Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invade Judah and exile people again.
- ❖ **586** - Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the temple and exile more of the people to Babylon.
- ❖ **539** - Babylon falls as the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians conquer them.
- ❖ **538** - Cyrus issues a decree allowing the return of the Jews from exile. 42,360 return.
- ❖ **536** - Second temple construction begins under Zerubbabel the governor's and Joshua the high priest's leadership.
- ❖ **536-520** - The rebuilding seems to have been hindered by transplanted people from 536 to c. 530 [Ezr 4:1-5], and the work ceased altogether [Ezr 4:24].

## 525-500 BC

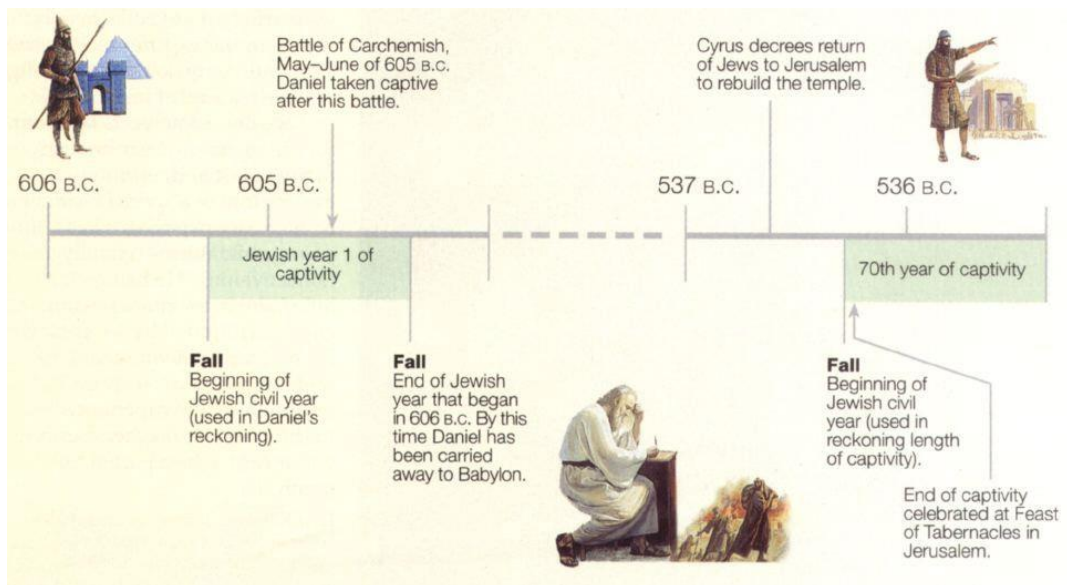
- ❖ **520-518** - The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume construction of the temple.
- ❖ **Aug. 29, 520** - Haggai's first message (Hag 1:1-11; Ezr 5:1).
- ❖ **Sept. 21, 520** - The building of the temple resumes (Hag 1:12-15; Ezr 5:2).
- ❖ **Oct. 17, 520** - Haggai's second message (Hag 2:1-9).
- ❖ **Oct./Nov., 520** - Beginning of Zechariah's preaching.
- ❖ **Dec. 18, 520** - Haggai's third & fourth messages (Hag 2:10-23).
- ❖ **519-518** - Tattenai's letter to Darius concerning the rebuilding of the temple (Ezr 5:3-6:14). There must have been a lapse of time between the resumption of the building and Tattenai's appearance.
- ❖ **Feb. 15, 519** - Zechariah's eight night visions (chs. 1:7-6:8).
- ❖ **Feb. 16 (?), 519** - Joshua the high priest crowned (chs. 6:9-15).
- ❖ **Dec. 7, 518** - Repentance urged, blessings promised (chs. 7-8).
- ❖ **Mar. 12, 516** - Dedication of the temple (Ezr 6:15-18).

## 500-460 BC

- ❖ **490** - Greeks, outnumbered almost five to one, defeat Persians in Battle of Marathon through superior military intelligence and strategy, forestalling Persian expansion into Europe.
- ❖ **c. 480** - Zechariah's final prophecy (chs. 9–14).
- ❖ **460** - Malachi's prophecy takes place and is the last book of the Old Testament.

## 460-400 BC

- ❖ **458** - Second group of Jewish exiles returns to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra.
- ❖ **445** - Third group of exiles return under Nehemiah's leadership. Jerusalem's walls rebuilt under Nehemiah's leadership
- ❖ **432** - Nehemiah returns to Persia.
- ❖ **431–404** - The second Peloponnesian Wars between Athens and other Greek city-states.
- ❖ **425** - Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem.



## Setting

Zechariah's ministry took place at the time in Israel's history when they were given the opportunity to return once again to the Promised Land after the Babylonian captivity. In 538, Zechariah returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. This happened under the rule of Cyrus King of Persia after the Israelites had spent 70 years in captivity. Zechariah's chief concern was to encourage and motivate the people of God to complete the rebuilding of the Temple and to rebuild spiritual lives of the Israelites. The book of Zechariah is a beautiful book with many encouraging words and filled with Messianic prophecies. The book begins with a call to repentance. Then, the book launches into a series of eight night visions. The content of these visions is beautiful, picturesque, and sometimes confusing.

## Outline of Zechariah

The book of Zechariah is complex, sometimes with seemingly disjointed units, like a series of snapshots that need to be put in order. The apparent lack of organization may reflect the oral origin of the book, a collection of sermons that were patched together in written form. But it may also have been intentional. With the goal of shocking the hearers and bringing them to their senses, rapid-fire movement from one thought to another may have been part of Zechariah's technique. Chapters 1–8 contain carefully dated visions and sermons, while chaps. 9–14 consist of undated poetic oracles and narrative descriptions of judgment and blessing.

Zechariah used a mix of genres. His sermons, poetry, and oracles of judgment and salvation were typical of the prophetic genre. But his visions had similarities with apocalyptic literature, best represented in the OT by the book of Daniel. The content of some of his oracles, describing divine intervention and a radically different world, are also typical of apocalyptic literature. Thus, Zechariah may represent a stage of development between a prophetic form and an apocalyptic form.

The book is easily divided into two major parts. Chapters 1–8 address the situation at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple in 520 to 516 BC. After an introductory call to repentance, the eight night-visions give encouragement to rebuild the Temple, and the oracles regarding fasting give guidance to true God-pleasing worship. Chapters 9–14, a double set of oracles directed to the more distant future are subdivided into two sections, 9–11 and 12–14.

## Theme: Messiah in the Distance

### Part One: Build the Temple

#### I. Eight visions to encourage the building of the Temple (1–6)

These eight visions are arranged in a chiasmic pattern. The first and last visions (A) are about the angel patrol that protects God's people. The middle two visions (C) focus on the blessings that come through the Angel of the LORD. The surrounding visions (B) describe and then remove threats to God's people.

- A Vision one: Horses and Riders (1:7–17)
- B Vision two: The Horns and the Craftsmen (1:18–21)
- B Vision three: The Measuring Line (2:1–13)
- C Vision four: The Angel of LORD (3:1–10)
- C Vision five: The Lamps (4:1–14)
- B Vision six: The Scroll of Guilt (5:1–4)
- B Vision seven: The Basket for Wickedness (5:5–11)
- A Vision eight: Horses and Riders (6:1–8)

#### II. The Coronation (6:9-15)

#### III. Questions regarding the proper use of fasting (7–8)

### Part Two: Symbolic predictions about Israel's future (9–14)

#### IV. The battle between good and evil (9–14)

- A. The Coming King (9)
- B. Bad shepherds versus the Good Shepherd (10–12)
- C. Battles and Blessings (13–14)

# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 1:1-6



The 8<sup>th</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius  
=

Zechariah =

Why was the LORD very angry with Israel's ancestors?

In **verse 3**, the LORD Almighty declares, "Return to me, and I will return to you." How is the LORD transactional? What's his economy? What does that mean for you and me? (Hint: Look ahead to **verses 12-13, 16-17**.)

In **Verse 6**, the LORD declares, "Did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?" How are these words terrifying? How are they comforting?

What other prophets would the Jews have heard at this point?

# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 1:7-17 The First Vision



The 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius =

Myrtle trees =

Red, brown, and white horses =

The man =

70 years =

God will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there his house will be rebuilt =

The measuring line stretched out over Jerusalem =

In **verse 14**, what does it mean that God is very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion?

Though the nations feel secure, what is about to happen to them? How is that a comfort for us today?

Overall meaning of the first vision =



# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 1:18-21 The Second Vision



The four horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem =

The four craftsmen =

Overall meaning of the second vision =

# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 2:1-13 The Third Vision



The man with the measuring line =

Jerusalem will be a city without walls =

Flee from the land of the north =

The apple of his eye =

I am coming, and I will live among you =

Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people =

The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem =

Overall meaning of the second vision =

# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 3:1-10 The Fourth Vision



ZECHARIAH 3:1-5

Joshua =

Satan accuses Joshua =

The LORD rebukes Satan =

The LORD has chosen Jerusalem =

Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire? =

Joshua's filthy clothes =

Joshua's new fine garments =

If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here  
=

The Branch =

The stone with seven eyes =

I will remove the sin of this land in a single day =

In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree =

Meaning of the fourth vision =

What sorts of accusations does Satan make against us? Read Romans 8:31-34. What response can Christians make to Satan's accusations?

How did Joshua and his fellow priests symbolize Jesus (cf. **Hebrews 7:26-28**)?

Why did Jesus have to be a priest to be our Savior? How does this connect to having an altar in the front of church?

# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 4:1-14 The Fifth Vision



Gold lampstand with bowl at the top, seven lights on it, seven channels to the lights =

Two olive trees by the lampstand, one on the right and left of the bowl =

Zerubbabel =

The plumbline or chosen capstone in Zerubbabel's hand =

The seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth =

Meaning of the fifth vision =

In **verse 10**, why did the angel ask, "Who despises the day of small things?" How does apply to us today? (c.f. **Ezra 3:10-13**)

How could **verses 6-7** help you the next time you're feeling discouraged by some daunting challenge or task that lies before you? How does this promise overcome a defeatist attitude in the church?

In what way are pastors and teachers a source of oil for the church today?



# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 5:1-4 The Sixth Vision



The flying scroll =

20 cubits long x 10 cubits wide (30 feet long x 15 feet wide) =

Meaning of the sixth vision =

# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 5:5-11 The Seventh Vision



"Measuring" basket =

Woman in the basket =

Cover of lead over the basket =

Two women with the wind in their wings =

Basket taken to Babylon to build a house for it =

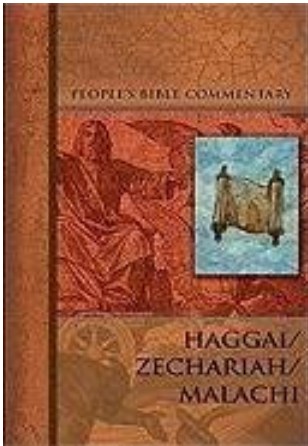
Meaning of the seventh vision =

# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 6:1-8 The Eighth Vision



### PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: The Color of the Horses



It is difficult, if not impossible, to attach any significance to the color of the horses strictly on the basis of what we read here in Zechariah. The book of Revelation, however, does speak of different colors of horses and lists the connection of the colors to what the colors represent. In chapter 6 it speaks of a white horse—white for conquest. We know that white is also a symbol of rightness and of purity. It speaks of a red horse—red for bloodshed and fighting. It speaks of a black horse—black for want and famine. It speaks of a pale horse (comparable to our spotted horse), signifying the awful paleness of death. If we can use the Revelation of John mentioned above to decode the colors of the horses, then the north and south particularly were hit hard. One got death, and the other got famine.

Chariots coming out from between two mountains, mountains of bronze =

First chariot with red horses heading north? Maybe east? =

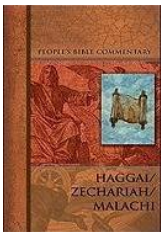
Second chariot with black horses heading north =

Third chariot with white horses heading west =

Fourth chariot with dappled horses heading south =

The horses are powerful =

**PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Verse 8**



It is difficult to interpret verse 8 with a great deal of certainty from our place in history. Exactly how and when the spirit of God rested in the land we can't say. We can see from the book of Isaiah that God's spirit is also described as a spirit of judgment: "He will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire" (4:4). This certainly fits with the picture of judgment already drawn in the appearance of the chariots and horses and by the woman in the basket at the end of chapter 5.

Meaning of the eighth vision =

# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 6:9-15 The Coronation



Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, Josiah son of Zephaniah =

Take the silver and gold and make a crown and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak =

Here is the man whose name is the Branch =

Look up **Isaiah 4:2-6**; **Isaiah 11:1-9**; **Jeremiah 23:5-6**; & **Jeremiah 33:14-18**.

The Branch will build the temple of the LORD =

Look up **1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:19-22; & Revelation 21:22.**

He will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne =

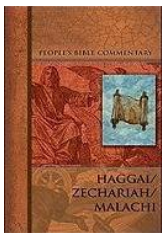
Look up Luke **1:26-33** & **Ephesians 1:18-23.**

The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the LORD =

Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you =

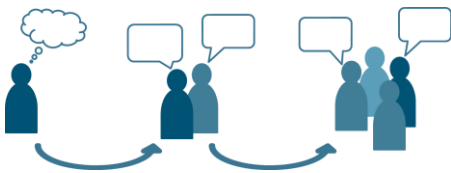
(C.f. **Isaiah 60:4-7**)

### **PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: This Will Happen if You Diligently Obey the LORD**



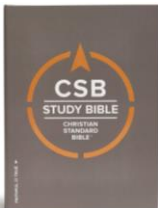
The section closes with the words “This will happen if you diligently obey the LORD your God.” In the Hebrew language the condition is stressed by saying, “If you really, really listen!” Obedience is really, really listening to the Word of God. Our lives exist properly on a careful, diligent obedience to God’s Word. That seems self-evident to even a casual student of God’s Word. But we find ourselves in trouble time and again because we slipped in this most important condition to happiness and success—did we listen, really?

How does this section challenge the idea of the separation of church and state?



**Think, Pair, & Share:** What are some advantages to the separation of church and state? What are some disadvantages?

### **CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE STUDY BIBLE: End of Part One**



This passage concludes the first section of Zechariah, presenting three prerequisites for rebuilding the temple. (1) There will need to be harmony between the civil and priestly leadership. (2) Israelites who have not returned from captivity should lend their support. (3) Everyone will need to be obedient to God's law.



# Z E C H A R I A H

## **Zechariah 7:1-14**

Fourth year of King Darius on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev =

People of Bethel: should I mourn and fast in the fifth month as I have done for so many years? =

(c.f. **2 Kings 25:8-9**)

The LORD Almighty: When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? =

How does this question about fasting apply to us today? Read **Isaiah 1:11-19** & **Matthew 6:16-18**.

Looking at **verses 9-10**, how would you answer the question: What is worshiping God? (c.f. **James 1:26-27**)

What, finally, is the answer to the question, "Should I mourn and fast as I have done?"

## **Nutrition and Formation: More Worship Words to Wrestle With**

<https://wels.net/wtl-nutrition-and-formation/>

The great questions of life pursue us. When they catch up to us, they grab ahold of us and do not let go. Philosophers muse upon them. Theologians preach about them. Politicians manipulate them. Laypeople think about these big questions too. What is the good life? How shall we live? Where did we come from and where are we going? How do the physical and spiritual interact? At the core of all these questions is an anthropological question: Who am I? This question pursues every person. It can even haunt us.



### **Genesis Anthropology**

The early chapters of Genesis address this anthropological question. We are embodied souls. We are created in the image of God. This image is lost but a shell remains. This image is regained in Christ. We were created with original righteousness but now have original sin. It is all there. Genesis provides the reader with new angles on this existential question seemingly every time we take it up and read it. No wonder some of the great theologians like Luther and Augustine found their way back to Genesis late in their careers. The great questions grab ahold of us and do not let go.

Among other important doctrines, Genesis subtly tells us that humans are 1) psychosomatic people, 2) people of words, 3) eaters, and 4) worshipers. First, we are psychosomatic people. We are not simply brains on a stick. We have bodies. You cannot get around it. A person cannot simply assert, "I am not spiritual." We do not have a choice. This is as ridiculous as saying "I don't have a body." Yes, you do!

We are people of words. We were created by words. We primarily gain knowledge through words. We interact with each other primarily with words. We interact with God with/through words and are to take him at his Word. No wonder Jesus is the Word through whom all things were made.

We are also eaters. We eat not only to survive physically but to interact with one another. Try to think of a culture that does not gather around the table for important events. You can't. It is how we mark occasions and enjoy each other. Eating is as much spiritual as it is physiological. No wonder God chooses to eat with us and not just speak with us.

Finally, we are worshipers. Every person has a number one in their life. They might not call it a god but it sure acts like one. It might be their nation-state, their political party, their family, their career, or anything else that gives them their identity and answers for them the great

anthropological questions. These gods demand their time, their money, and their energy. Another way to say it is that they demand worship. But none of these gods love them back.

### **Nutrition and Formation**

This Genesis anthropology is quite different than late modern anthropology. Late modern anthropology describes humans as evolved animals, as machines, or, more applicably, as consumers. Work is for production. Rest is to prepare us for work and not contemplation. Eating is for nutrition or fuel. Modern anthropology also tends to see humans as consumers of information. We are learners. Most of our activity is located in the brain, not in the heart or the stomach as the ancients saw it. This affects our view of ourselves, the world, God, and worship.

We need spiritual nutrition or as Ambrose famously stated, "Because I always sin, I ought always take the medicine."<sup>2</sup> He was speaking about Holy Communion, but it applies also to absolution and to the Word of God. We need it. Why? Because we are sinner-saints. We need the medicine. We need the nutrition. Jesus quotes a portion of this Old Testament passage during his temptation, "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Dt 8:3). Jesus is the Bread of Life that keeps us alive spiritually. We need it as much as we need physical bread and water, even more.

We also know that health is not just about putting the right food into our bodies (we are more than machines); it is also habitual. Healthy habits matter as much as calorie counting. We rightly speak about being fed by God's Word, but perhaps a fuller concept than "nutrition" is "formation." We are psychosomatic people that eat, use words, and worship. This means that words, eating, and physical realities like rituals, rites, architecture, and art form us. They make us who we are.

We can be malformed, or we can be formed beneficially. A child who lives in a violent home is malformed. As he grows, he might only express his emotions through violence. A child who grows up surrounded by books is more apt to be a seeker of knowledge. These things form us. Let's take a look at two modern views of humans that (mal)form us. The first is the idea that we are primarily consumers. Advertisers want us to believe that certain products will change our lives and even give us an identity. "I am a Dodge guy" or "We are an Apple family." We are even told in times of economic crises that it is our patriotic duty to play our consumer role in the economy. Our patriotism is connected to our consumerism. The second is that we are thinking-things or, more charitably, students. We take in information, and this makes us better people. We are smarter and more apt to be successful. Notice that these two views are connected. We consume information.

Notice also that both consumerism and information-ism affect our view of worship. We are consumers of the spiritual. This is different than seeing ourselves as embodied souls that need to

be fed both physically and spiritually. We tend to choose what information we want to consume rather than approaching God to be formed.

The information matters, but we need to be more than informed; we need to be formed. We tend to privilege the information over the formation. We privilege the teaching over the ritual. This is an anthropological mistake. It assumes that we are primarily thinking-things, hearers, or, at best, students. It assumes that we are consumers of information. This is a mistake because we are embodied souls. The body matters. Christ comes to us not just in Word but in physical-Word. He knows who we really are despite our modern anthropology.

Let's think about ritual and teaching for a moment. There are three options when it comes to the relationship between information and formation. Option number one is ritual without teaching. Scripture repeatedly warns us about this. "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings" (Ps 51:16). This only ends in shallow work-righteousness. We go through the motions, and this somehow benefits us. The second option is teaching without ritual. Theoretically this can work. A person can hear the Word of God and believe it. But this option is mediocre and, I would argue, not possible. We still occupy time and space. Every church is liturgical. The pastor has to wear something! The congregation has to gather somewhere! There must be an order of service even if it is sitting with Quakers in a bare room waiting for the Spirit to move someone to speak. That's a liturgy and that liturgy proclaims a theology and forms the worshiper. The third option is ritual with teaching. This is the best option because it fully embraces our anthropological reality: we are embodied souls that occupy time and space and are formed not just by information but by art, architecture, movement, song, and prayer.

Explaining ritual also provides an opportunity to teach that forgiveness is not a reminder of an ancient event but a delivery of that forgiveness. The saving actions of Christ are not merely for us to recall intellectually but for us to receive in the here and now with real ears from real voices. Forgiveness is a present reality, medicine, and nutrition that continually forms us and maintains our status with God. Absolution is a good case study. I prefer when the absolution is spoken in the first person, present tense, "I forgive," rather than in the third person, past tense, "God forgave." I am not arguing that one is more valid than the other. It's not. Yet there is something special about the pronouncement of forgiveness in the present moment instead of a slight degree of separation between the repentant Christian and the forgiveness. It is as if the minister says to the penitent, "Make no mistake about it, right here and right now, these sins are forgiven." It is not a reminder of a past event or even a declaration of a present event occurring elsewhere. It's an event that is occurring right here and right now.

Not only does the different subject in the absolution teach us about the tangible means by which God delivers his grace, but ritual can as well. If taught properly, liturgical actions like kneeling for confession, the sign of the cross employed with absolution, and bowing the head also teach the

present reality of the forgiveness delivered through the voice of the minister (Jn 20:21-23). The same can be true of other rituals. Think of an eight-sided baptismal font that points to the eight people in the ark (1 Peter 3:20) and to our eternal life.<sup>3</sup> Or consider the musical contrast between the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei? The heavenly “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Rv 4:8) joins the heavenly choir with the choir of worshipers in the local congregation in great anticipation of a foretaste of the heavenly banquet while the Angus Dei sobers the worshiper. Christ must die and we must carry a cross. All of this forms us.

With this reality in mind, it seems that the best course of action is to thoughtfully and deliberately plan—and teach—worship so that all five senses are engaged, proclaiming the gospel clearly and boldly to embodied souls. What follows are a few simple examples of how we can be thoughtful about such matters without falling into the trap of empty ritual. As we go forward, remember that we are either formed or malformed. Everything we do matters. It is a heavy burden for the worship planner to carry but a delightful cross at the same time.

### **Examples**

Let’s start with hymnody. What follows is an oversimplification but helpful. Early Reformation hymnody was largely didactic. Think of Luther’s hymns based on the Small Catechism. There was a need for teaching at that moment. When we jump to Pietism, we see a move from the objective to the subjective. The subject of the sentences becomes “I” instead of “God.” These hymns reflect the heart. Then there is the sweet spot exemplified by the hymns of Paul Gerhardt. The doctrine is applied. The information doesn’t only teach but forms as it engages the heart.

Movement and posture matter as well. Whether you sing an introit, process in behind a crucifix, or walk up the steps to the altar at the beginning of the service, this movement teaches the observer about the presence of God. Yes, God is everywhere but he chooses to be sought in certain places. For New Testament believers, it is in Word and Meal, Baptism and Absolution. Our liturgical movements form us. If we truly believe that Christ is present in the Supper, our actions around the elements will form the worshipers’ view of the reality of the Supper. We stand to show respect. We also stand to confess the faith and be counted among the faithful who have gone before us. We kneel to confess our sins and ask for mercy. We sit to receive. Movements and posture matter.

Some congregations no longer “pass the plate.” It is an archaic tradition considering online giving (and COVID), but there is still value in bringing the offering up to the Lord’s altar. Does not this physical movement teach us about stewardship and therefore form us as we watch the movement to the altar?

The Prayer of the Church is a general prayer. It may connect to the theme of the day but also should include petitions for the world, the congregation, and individuals in the worshiping

community. It is a good practice to consistently pray for governmental officials by name especially those elected officials for whom some congregants didn't vote. This teaches us about God's Two Kingdoms. It forms us. It helps the worshiper broaden their sympathy as well. It is also a good practice to pray for disasters and tragedies around the globe and not just events in America or Europe. Can we pray for Ethiopia as much as we do for Ukraine? This forms us.

Finally a word on preaching. There is a difference between preaching the gospel and preaching about the gospel. The former proclaims, "This is for you!" The latter informs. It tells us about the gospel in an academic way, but there is a subtle degree of separation between the gospel and the listener. It is primarily for the brain and not the whole person. The sermon may be considered an extension of confession/absolution. It terrifies and then heals. This is the dynamic Word Paul speaks about in Romans 1. It is the power (dynamis) to save. It does something. It is dynamic. It is not merely to be learned. If we see the listener as a person with a free will who only needs the correct information to change their lives or make the right decisions, we have the wrong anthropology. We preach to sinner-saints who need to die and who will rise. Perhaps the language should be less "Here is some information" and more "This is who you already are in Christ, a saint." It is the difference between proclamation and formation on the one hand and mere information on the other hand.

### **Embodied souls or thinking-things?**

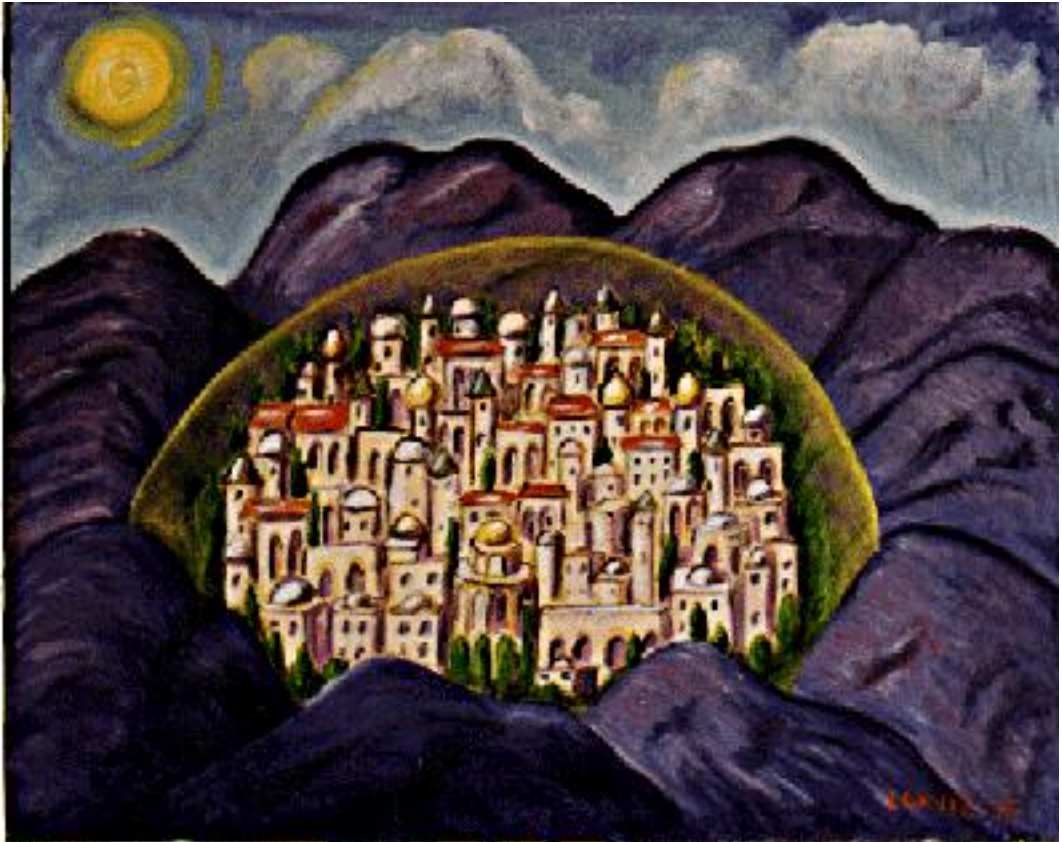
Genesis anthropology insists that we see ourselves as embodied souls and not just thinking-things. Biblical worship always involved movement, rituals, a meal or sacrifice, along with hymns, prayers, readings, and preaching. It is healthy for us to examine and critique the anthropology we inherit from our culture. There simply is no such thing as a spiritual but not physical being or the opposite, a physical but not spiritual person. Nor is there such a thing as a church without liturgy or ritual. We are therefore called to plan worship with this anthropological reality in mind with the sober reminder that all we do will form or malform the worshiper. A heavy burden, indeed. But also an opportunity. Let's teach the ritual. It will bear much fruit as we both provide the nutrition burdened souls so desperately need and help them answer the great anthropological questions that pursue us all.

By Michael Berg

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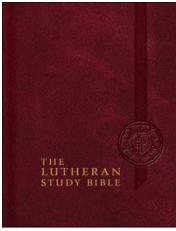
# ZECHARIAH

**Zechariah 8:1-23**



What good things does the LORD promise to do in this chapter?

## THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE: Fasts on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 10<sup>th</sup> Months



The Judeans evidently observed four fasts connected with the fall of Jerusalem. The **fourth-month** fast commemorated the breaching of Jerusalem's walls (**2Ki 25:3–4**). **fifth**. Lamented the burning of the temple and other important buildings (**2Ki 25:8–10**). **seventh**. Marked the anniversary of the assassination of Gedaliah, provisional governor of the occupied territory (**2Ki 25:22–25**). **tenth**. Mourned the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (**2Ki 25:1**).

How were these blessings fulfilled for the people in Zechariah's day?

It is clear from these verses that the Lord is speaking of another, long-term fulfillment. When would this fulfillment take place?

Remember the context of Zechariah. God was encouraging the people to build the temple, which he clearly commands in this chapter. How does the Lord today go about encouraging his people—by commands or by promises? Explain. What is the application for us?



# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 9:1-17

### **EHV STUDY BIBLE: Looking Ahead to the Messianic Era**



The Evangelical  
Heritage Version  
Study Bible

A special feature of this book is that much of the message is presented in symbolic visions, similar in style to those in Revelation. Especially in chapters 9–14, events of the New Testament era and of the End Times are described in language borrowed from pre-exilic Old Testament history. Similar descriptions of the events of these time periods are found in Ezekiel 38 and 39 and in Revelation 17–20. What makes these visions especially difficult to follow is that they do not form one consecutive story. Like the book of

Revelation, these visions move in cycles and repeat the same scenes numerous times. Zechariah sees scenes from his own times, from Jesus' first coming, from the New Testament church, and from the End Times, without a clear indication of the time relationship between these events. As you read each vision, try to determine the main point of comparison of each vision and interpret them with the help of the more literal descriptions of the New Testament era and of the End Times that are found in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament.

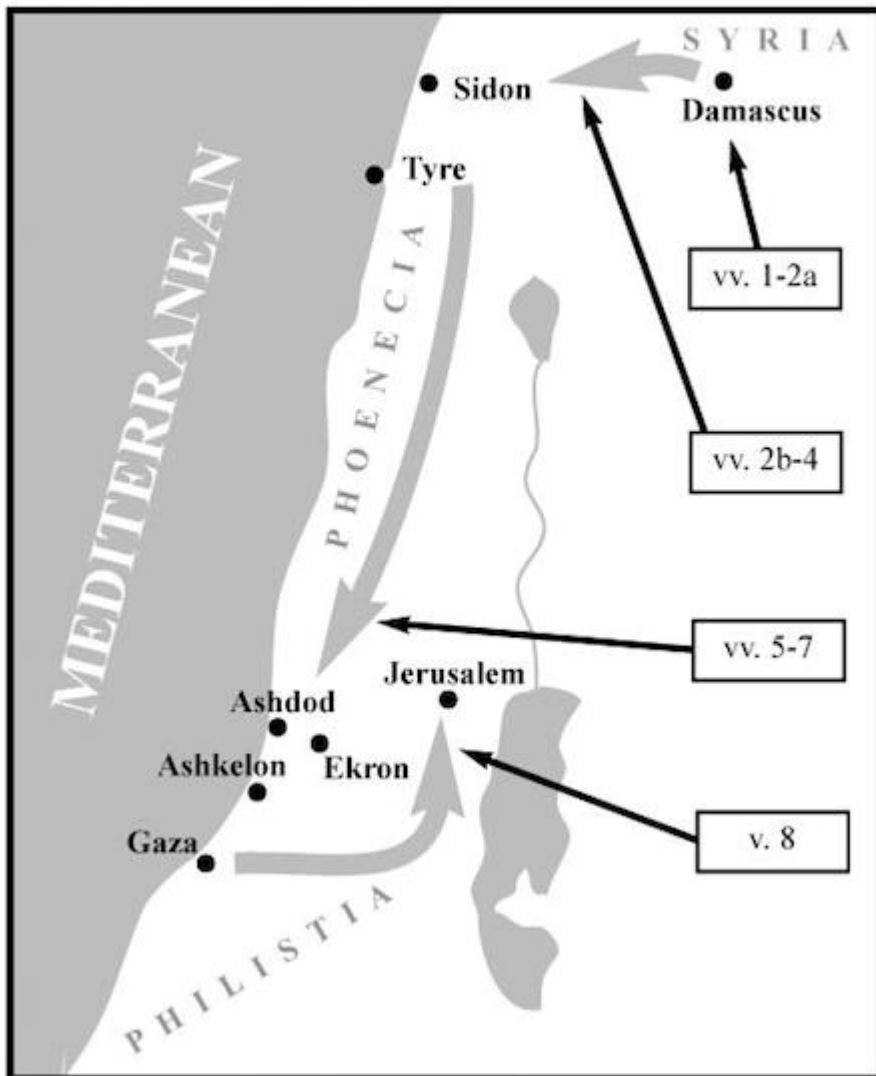


The Evangelical  
Heritage Version  
Study Bible

### **EHV STUDY BIBLE: When Does Zechariah 9ff Take Place?**

Chapters 9–14 seem to come from later in Zechariah's ministry when the enthusiasm for building the Temple and the people's favorable view of Zechariah had begun to decline. The spiritual decay that was evident when Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the 450s is beginning to set in.

# ALEXANDER'S ROUTE IN ZECHARIAH 9:1-8



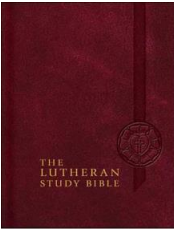
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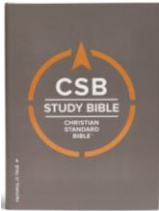
### **EHV STUDY BIBLE: Hadrak, Damascus, & Hamath**

Hadrak, Damascus, and Hamath are Aramean cities in Syria, north of Israel. Damascus was the chief city of the southern Aramaeans, and Hamath was one of the chief cities of northern Syria. Hadrak does not appear elsewhere in the Bible but it appears to refer to a city and a region in the north.



### **THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE: Hadrak, Damascus, & Hamath**

Hamath. City on the Orontes River, c 150 mi N of Damascus. Hadrach. Not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, but Assyrian military records identify Hadrach as a country near Damascus. Damascus. Capital of Syria, c 60 mi NE of the Sea of Chinnereth.



### **CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE STUDY BIBLE: Tyre & Sidon**

Tyre was well known as a naval and commercial power with an impregnable fortified island one-half mile off the Mediterranean coast. Alexander the Great and his army spent seven months dismantling the city on the mainland and building a causeway to the island. Tyre came under frequent prophetic judgment in the Prophets (**Is 23; Jr 25:17–22; Ezk 26–28; Am 1:9–10**).

### **EHV STUDY BIBLE: Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, & Ashdod**



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The cities of the Philistines were along the southwest coast of Israel. The Philistines would be deprived of their land just as the Jebusites had been deprived of Jerusalem centuries earlier at the time of David. There is no evidence of major hostilities between Israel and these specific nations at this time. All of these nations remained under Persian rule until the arrival of Alexander the Great around 330 BC. The three groups here seem to represent all the nations of the world which are hostile to God's people throughout history. The LORD will protect his people from all such nations, and many people from such nations will join with God's people and become citizens of Jerusalem (See **Psalms 47 and 48**, and **Ephesians 2:11–22**).

What is the good news of **verses 7 & 8**?



How do **verses 9 and 10** get fulfilled both in Jesus' first coming and second coming?

Recall other parts of the Bible that echo the same sentiments from **verse 10**.

What is the blood of my covenant in **verse 11**?

What things are being pictured in **verse 12**?

What things are being pictured in **verse 13**?

What events are pictured in **verses 14-17**?

How would these verses comfort the people of God after the exile?

The last section of the chapter speaks of God's people conquering. How is that happening today?

# Z E C H A R I A H

**Zechariah 10:1-12**



What are **verses 1-2** about? How did they apply to the people in Zechariah's day? How do they apply to us today?

How does the LORD respond to the failure of the shepherds? How are **verses 2-3** an allusion to the Messiah? Read **Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 23; & Matthew 9:36-38**.

What is the symbolism of **verse 4**? How does it allude to the Messiah?

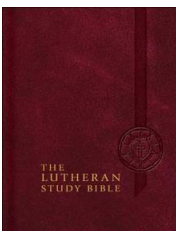
Read **Acts 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:6-8; Isaiah 22:15-25; Psalm 7:10-13; Lamentations 2:1-8; Genesis 49:10; Jeremiah 30:21; & Micah 5:2.**

What promises does the LORD give in **verses 6-12**? Which have taken place? Which are yet to take place?

Shepherds whistled for their sheep as a way of gathering them. When did the Lord “whistle” for Israel? When and how does he whistle for us?

The redeemed pass through “the sea of trouble” as they are gathered in. How do believers experience this truth in their lives?

### **THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE: Kingdom of Israel vs. Kingdom of the Messiah**



There is a vast difference between the OT kingdom of Israel and the kingdom restored by the Messiah. Luther described the former as weak because it was based on Israel’s obedience. Of the latter he said: “This kingdom is founded on God’s mercy without our own goodness or merit, and therefore it will stand fast to all eternity” (AE 20:304). Like Israel, we all fall short of God’s glory. Because of His compassion, He called Israel back to Him and likewise keeps calling us.

# ZECHARIAH

## Zechariah 11:1-17



What is happening in these first three verses?

Should these first three verses go more with the previous chapter or more with the verses that come after? Give reasons for your choice.



What is being symbolized with **verses 4-6**?

The LORD shepherds his oppressed flock marked for slaughter with two staffs: one called Favor and the other Union. With them, he got rid of three shepherds. Who might the three shepherds be?

"The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them." (**verse 8b**) How did this play out in the Messiah's life? Read **John 10:11-39**.

What happened with the staff named Favor? What did that action mean?



How do the 30 pieces of silver allude to the Messiah? Read **Exodus 21:30-32; Jeremiah 19:1-13; 32:6-9; & Matthew 26:14-15; 27:3-10**.

## EHV STUDY BIBLE: The Handsome Price



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There is a complex relationship between this prophecy and the earlier prophetic actions of Jeremiah as reported in **Jeremiah 18 and 19**. As the people of Judah rejected and betrayed Jeremiah and Zechariah, in the same way they would betray Jesus and hand him over to death.

The Valley of Ben Hinnom on the south side of Jerusalem was the location of the potters' quarter in Jeremiah's day and also in the day of Jesus. The Valley of Hinnom was also the place at which infants were sacrificed to heathen gods and at which the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be slaughtered by the Babylonians. According to tradition, it is the site at which Judas took his own life and the location of the potter's field which was purchased as a burial place with the money Judas had received for betraying Jesus.

**Matthew 27** speaks of this burial place that was bought with Judas's pay for betraying Christ: Judas threw the pieces of silver into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself. The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put these into the treasury, since it is blood money." They reached a decision to buy the potter's field with the money, as a burial place for foreigners. So that field has been called The Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price the sons of Israel had set for him, and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord commanded me.

The alleged problem raised by some critics is that the thirty pieces of silver are not mentioned by Jeremiah but by Zechariah, here in **11:8–13**. Zechariah does make the cryptic statement that these thirty pieces of silver will be thrown to the potter in the House of the LORD. Zechariah, who mentions the thirty pieces of silver, says nothing about the purchase of the field. It is Jeremiah who discusses the purchase of a field. Matthew combines the two prophecies into one composite that tells the whole story. The history of Jeremiah's potter's field in the Valley of Himmon, which was already a "field of blood" in Jeremiah's day, reaches its culmination in the tragic story of Judas and of Israel. Judas sold Jesus for silver. Israel traded him for Barabbas.



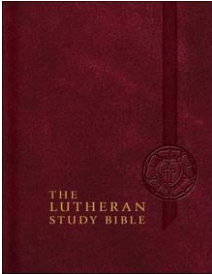
**Self-Reflection:** How much is your pastor (shepherd) worth? How much is Christ worth?

What did the LORD do with the staff called Union? What did that symbolize?

What happens when we reject the Good Shepherd?

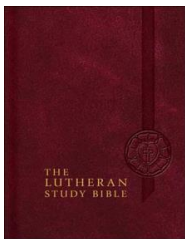
Defend the Good Shepherd from the charge that he is callous to the fate of the flock (**verse 9**). Consider other sections that we have covered in the Bible study. Read also **Matthew 23:37-38**.

### **THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE: The Chronology of the Shepherd**



[This parable of the shepherd] describes how the Lord abandoned His people, the flock doomed to slaughter. These actions were not necessarily in chronological order and likely referred to events that occurred previously in Israel's history. As with Jesus' parables, it is the overall point that is important. Symbolically (not literally), the prophet is commanded to shepherd the flock. He describes their suffering at the hands of external and internal enemies. Finally, the Lord and His prophet, whom the flock came to detest, no longer have pity on them (**vv 6, 9**).

### **THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE: Chapter of Lament**



The chapter begins with a lament over the Lord's coming judgment, followed by a description of how He abandoned His flock and no longer had pity on them. This chastisement is God's "strange" work. His "proper" work is to comfort. "[Isaiah] calls it the 'strange' work of the Lord when He terrifies, because to make alive and comfort is God's own proper work. But He terrifies ... for this reason—that there may be a place for comfort and making alive" (Ap XIIA 51). We are accused by God's Law and threatened with punishment for our sins. God intends this to lead us to repentance so that, trusting in Christ's merits, we might enjoy eternal comfort and peace.

# ZECHARIAH

**Zechariah 12:1-9**



## **EHV STUDY BIBLE: The Battle**



This is the same battle that is described in **Revelation 19 and 20**. At the end of the short season of great tribulation, Christ will appear for the second time, to inflict the final defeat on the enemies of his people. **Ezekiel 38 and 39** is another account of this battle.

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Make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling (c.f. **Isaiah 51:17**) =

I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations =

Strike every horse and rider with blindness =

Clans like a firepot in a woodpile =

The LORD will save the dwellings (tents) of Judah first =

Jerusalem never again attained the earthly glory it had when David was king. In A.D. 70 the Romans destroyed the city (once again). How, then, could Zechariah prophesy of a Judah and Jerusalem that dominate the other nations?

What is it about Christianity that so arouses the fury of the nations?

# ZECHARIAH

Zechariah 12:10-13:1



They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn (c.f. **Revelation 1:5-8**)  
=

Weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo (c.f. **2 Chronicles 35:20-27**) =

The land will mourn, each clan by itself (c.f. **Jeremiah 9:17; Luke 23:27-29**) =

Nathan (c.f. **2 Samuel 5:14; Luke 3:31**) =

Shimei (c.f. **Exodus 6:16-17; Numbers 3:17-18,21**) =

Fountain =

When would the things described here take place?

# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 13:2-6



I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land =

Wounds =



# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 13:7-9



Strike the shepherd (c.f. **Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27**) =

Refine them like silver and test them like gold =

Read **1 Peter 1:6-7**. Who are the one-third who remain?

# Z E C H A R I A H

## Zechariah 14:1-21



All the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it (c.f. **Matthew 24:4-24**; **Revelation 20:7-9**) =

The LORD will go out and fight against those nations (**Acts 1:11-12**) =

Flee by my mountain valley (c.f. **1 Chronicles 8:37**; **Matthew 25:31**) =

Unique day (c.f. **Revelation 21:23-25**) =

Living water will flow out from Jerusalem (c.f. **Psalm 46; Ezekiel 47; Revelation 22**) =

The LORD will be king over the whole earth (c.f. **Philippians 2:9-11**) =

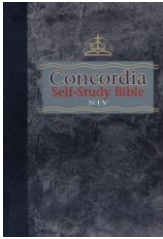
Jerusalem will be secure (c.f. **Revelation 21-22**) =

The plague (c.f. **Isaiah 66; Ezekiel 38-39; Revelation 9**) =

Punishment to those who do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty (c.f. **Leviticus 23:33-43**) =

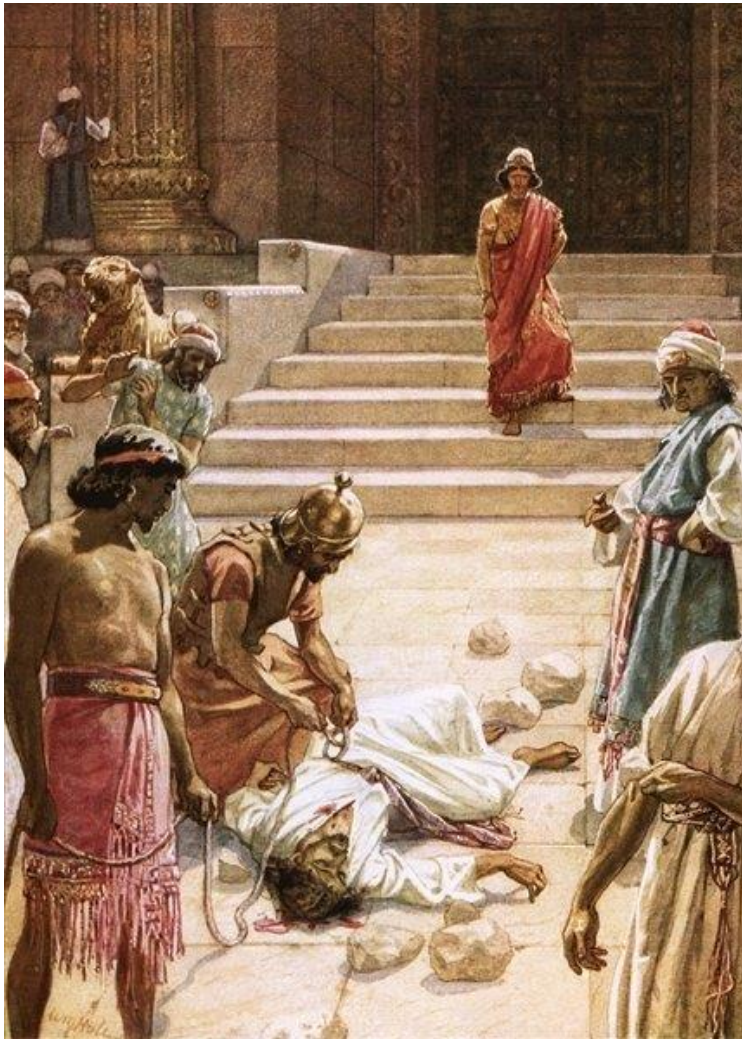
Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty (c.f. **Exodus 28:36-38; Joel 3:17; Isaiah 35:8; John 2:14-17; Revelation 21:22-27**) =

Summarize the message of this chapter for you.



## CONCORDIA SELF-STUDY BIBLE: The End?

Though the response of the people to Zechariah was initially favorable, in the end, according to the report in **Matthew 23:35**, he was put to death in the Temple. The messages in chapters 10 and 11 re-enforce this surprising turn of events with the negative picture they give about the spiritual conditions during the later years of Zechariah's ministry.





**1:1-6 INTRODUCTION**

TURN BACK TO GOD! DON'T BE LIKE YOUR ANCESTORS!

WE REPENT!! ...OR SO IT SEEMS

**1:7-6 ZECHARIAH'S DREAM-VISIONS**

**WARNING: THESE ARE BIZARRE** (LIKE YOUR DREAMS!)

THE IDEA OF GOD SPEAKING IN DREAMS IS ROOTED IN GENESIS (JACOB, ch20; JOSEPH, ch37; PHAROA, ch11)

THEY EXPLAIN CURRENT EVENTS @R! POINT TO THE FUTURE.

**7-8**

**1 FOUR HORSEMEN ON PATROL**  
1:8-17

THE WORLD IS AT PEACE! (1:11)

GOD RAISED UP PERSIA TO CONQUER BABYLON & BRING PEACE

70 YEAR EXILE IS ALMOST OVER. IS NOW THE TIME FOR THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM?

**2 FOUR HORNS, FOUR BLACKSMITHS**  
1:18-21

SYMBOL OF ASSYRIA & BABYLON (ISRAEL)

SYMBOL OF PERSIA

REFLECTIONS ON ISRAEL'S PAST SIN & EXILE

**3 JERUSALEM IS MEASURED**  
2:1-13

LET US HELP!

WELCOME!

THE NEW JERUSALEM: A BEACON TO THE NATIONS, PURIFIED BY THE SCRIPTURE

**4 JOSHUA, THE HIGH PRIEST**  
3:1-10

IF YOU ARE FAITHFUL TO GOD, YOU WILL LET HIS PEOPLE... AN BECOME A SYMBOL OF THE FUTURE MESSIANIC KINGDOM (3:7)

ISRAEL'S SIN REMOVED

MESSIANIC KINGDOM WILL ONLY COME IF THE PEOPLE ARE FAITHFUL

**8 FOUR HORSEMEN ON PATROL**  
6:1-8

UNANSWERED

THE NORTH LAND IS AT REST! (6:8)

**7 WOMAN IN A BASKET**  
5:5-11

SHIMAR (BABYLON)

SYMBOL OF ISRAEL'S REBELLION EXILED TO BABYLON

**6 THE FLYING SCROLL**  
5:1-4

DON'T STEAL!

DON'T LIE.

**5 ZERUBBABEL, ROYAL HEIR OF DAVID**  
4:1-14

JOSHUA, ZERUBBABEL

SUCCESS WILL ONLY COME IF THEY OBEY GOD'S SPIRIT

# RIAH



### CONCLUSION

SHOULD WE STOP GRIEVING? IS GOD'S KINGDOM COMING SOON?

ONLY **IF** YOU ARE FAITHFUL TO THE COVENANT. (8:1-17)

**QUESTION REVERSED:** WILL YOU BECOME PEOPLE WHO ARE READY TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD'S KINGDOM?

BONUS VISION!  
6:9-15

SYMBOL OF FUTURE MESSIANIC PRIEST-KING, BUT ONLY **IF** THIS GENERATION OBEYS GOD.

COME DEPEND ETC.  
VID

### 9-11 IMAGES OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM, PT. 1

**7-10 THE COMING KING...**

NEW JERUSALEM

"REJOICE, JERUSALEM--YOUR KING COMES! HE'S RIGHTEOUS, HUMBLE, AND RIDES A DONKEY" (9:9)

**...BECOMES THE REJECTED SHEPHERD 11**

LEADERS OF ISRAEL

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

WILL THIS REJECTION LAST FOREVER...? **NO!**

### 12-14 IMAGES OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM, PT. 2

GOD'S JUSTICE CONFRONTS EVIL AMONG THE NATIONS (SEE JOEL 3 & EZEKIEL 38-39)

GOD POURS OUT A SPIRIT OF REPENTANCE ON HIS PEOPLE 12:10

WE'RE SORRY WE REJECTED YOU!

NEW JERUSALEM

RIVER OF LIFE

ALL NATIONS

created by the Bible Project



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