



The Book of Zechariah

Suffered Rejection While

Fortelling Future

Events

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Zechariah

OVERVIEW: THE FUTURE

Some people fear the days to come, wondering what evils lurk in the shadows; others consult seers and future-telling charlatans, trying desperately to discover its secrets. But tomorrow's story is known only to God and to those special messengers, called prophets, to whom God has revealed a chapter or two.

A prophet's primary task was to proclaim the word of the Lord, pointing out sin, explaining its consequences, and calling men and women to repentance and obedience. Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Amos stand with scores of others who faithfully delivered God's message despite rejection, ridicule, and persecution. And at times they were given prophetic visions foretelling coming events.

Nestled near the end of the Old Testament, among what are known as "minor prophets," is the book of Zechariah. As one of three postexilic prophets, along with Haggai and Malachi, Zechariah ministered to the small remnant of Jews who had returned to Judah to rebuild the temple and their nation. Like Haggai, he encouraged the people to finish rebuilding the temple, but his message went far beyond those physical walls and contemporary issues.

With spectacular apocalyptic imagery and graphic detail, Zechariah told of the Messiah, the One whom God would send to rescue his people and to reign over all the earth. Zechariah is one of our most important prophetic books, giving detailed Messianic references that were clearly fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ.

The rebuilding of the temple, he says, was just the first act in the drama of the end and the ushering in of the Messianic age. Zechariah proclaimed a stirring message of hope to these ex-captives and exiles—their King was coming!

Jesus is Messiah, the promised "great deliverer" of Israel. Unlike Zechariah's listeners, we can look back at Christ's ministry and mission.

As you study Zechariah's prophecy, you will see details of Christ's life that were written 500 years before their fulfillment. Read and stand in awe of our God who keeps his promises. But there is also a future message that has not yet been fulfilled—the return of Christ at the end of the age.

As you read Zechariah, therefore, think through the implications of this promised event. *Your King is coming*, and he will reign forever and ever.

God knows and controls the future. We may never see more than a moment ahead, but we can be secure if we trust in him. Read Zechariah and strengthen your faith in God—he alone is your hope and security.

THE BLUEPRINT

A. MESSAGES WHILE REBUILDING THE TEMPLE (Zech. 1:1-8:23)

Zechariah encouraged the people to put away the sin in their lives and to continue rebuilding the temple. His visions described the judgment of Israel's enemies, the blessings to Jerusalem, and the need for God's people to remain pure—avoiding hypocrisy, superficiality, and sin. Zechariah's visions provided hope for the people.

We also need to carefully follow the instruction to remain pure until Christ returns again.

1. Zechariah's night visions Zech. 1:1-8:23

In midautumn of the second year of King Darius's reign, the Lord gave this message to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah and grandson of Iddo.

[2] "I, the Lord, was very angry with your ancestors. [3] Therefore, say to the people, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty.' [4] Do not be like your ancestors who would not listen when the earlier prophets said to them, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: Turn from your evil ways and stop all your evil practices.'

[5] "Your ancestors and their prophets are now long dead. [6] But all the things I said through my servants the prophets happened to your ancestors, just as I said they would. As a result, they repented and said, 'We have received what we deserved from the Lord Almighty. He has done what he said he would do.' "

[7] Then on February 15 of the second year of King Darius's reign, the Lord sent another message to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah and grandson of Iddo. Zechariah said:

[8] In a vision during the night, I saw a man sitting on a red horse that was standing among some myrtle trees in a small valley. Behind him were red, brown, and white horses, each with its own rider. [9] I asked the angel who was talking with me, "My lord, what are all those horses for?"

"I will show you," the angel replied.

[10] So the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones the Lord has sent out to patrol the earth."

[11] Then the other riders reported to the angel of the Lord, who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have patrolled the earth, and the whole earth is at peace."

[12] Upon hearing this, the angel of the Lord prayed this prayer: "O Lord Almighty, for seventy years now you have been angry with Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. How long will it be until you again show mercy to them?" [13] And the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

[14] Then the angel said to me, "Shout this message for all to hear: 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: My love for Jerusalem and Mount Zion is passionate and strong. [15] But I am very angry with the other nations that enjoy peace and security. I was only a little angry with my people, but the nations punished them far beyond my intentions.

[16] " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I have returned to show mercy to Jerusalem. My Temple will be rebuilt, says the Lord Almighty, and plans will be made for the reconstruction of Jerusalem.' [17] Say this also: 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: The towns of Israel will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem as his own.' "

[18] Then I looked up and saw four animal horns. [19] "What are these?" I asked the angel who was talking with me.

He replied, "These horns represent the world powers that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

[20] Then the Lord showed me four blacksmiths. [21] "What are these men coming to do?" I asked.

The angel replied, "The blacksmiths have come to terrify the four horns that scattered and humbled Judah. They will throw them down and destroy them."

[2:1] When I looked around me again, I saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. [2] "Where are you going?" I asked.

He replied, "I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is."

[3] Then the angel who was with me went to meet a second angel who was coming toward him. [4] The other angel said, "Hurry, and say to that young man, 'Jerusalem will someday be so full of people that it won't have room enough for everyone! Many will live outside the city walls, with all their livestock—and yet they will be safe. [5] For I, myself, will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem, says the Lord. And I will be the glory inside the city!' "

[6] The Lord says, "Come away! Flee from the north, for I have scattered you to the four winds. [7] Come away! Escape to Jerusalem, you who are exiled in Babylon!"

[8] "After a period of glory, the Lord Almighty sent me against the nations who oppressed you. For he said, 'Anyone who harms you harms my most precious possession. [9] I will raise my fist to crush them, and their own slaves will plunder them.' Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me."

[10] The Lord says, "Shout and rejoice, O Jerusalem, for I am coming to live among you. [11] Many nations will join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they, too, will be my people. I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord Almighty sent me to you. [12] The land of Judah will be the Lord's inheritance in the holy land, and he will once again choose Jerusalem to be his own city. [13] Be silent before the Lord, all humanity, for he is springing into action from his holy dwelling."

[3:1] Then the angel showed me Jeshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord. Satan was there at the angel's right hand, accusing Jeshua of many things. [2] And the Lord said to Satan, "I, the Lord, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from a fire."

[3] Jeshua's clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. [4] So the angel said to the others standing there, "Take off his filthy clothes." And turning to Jeshua he said, "See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes."

[5] Then I said, "Please, could he also have a clean turban on his head?" So they put a clean priestly turban on his head and dressed him in new clothes while the angel of the Lord stood by.

[6] Then the angel of the Lord spoke very solemnly to Jeshua and said, [7] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: If you follow my ways and obey my requirements, then you will be given authority over my Temple and its courtyards. I will let you walk in and out of my presence along with these others standing here. [8] Listen to me, O Jeshua the high priest, and all you other priests. You are symbols of the good things to come. Soon I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. [9] Now look at the jewel I have set before Jeshua, a single stone with seven facets. I will engrave an inscription on it, says the Lord Almighty, and I will remove the sins of this land in a single day. [10] And on that day, says the Lord Almighty, each of you will invite your neighbor into your home to share your peace and prosperity."

[4:1] Then the angel who had been talking with me returned and woke me, as though I had been asleep. [2] "What do you see now?" he asked.

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl of oil on top of it. Around the bowl are seven lamps, each one having seven spouts with wicks. [3] And I see two olive trees, one on each side of the bowl."

[4] Then I asked the angel, "What are these, my lord? What do they mean?"

[5] "Don't you know?" the angel asked.

"No, my lord," I replied.

[6] Then he said to me, "This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. [7] Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel's way; it will flatten out before him! Then Zerubbabel will set the final stone of the Temple in place, and the people will shout: 'May God bless it! May God bless it!' "

[8] Then another message came to me from the Lord: [9] "Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. [10] Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand. For these seven lamps represent the eyes of the Lord that search all around the world."

[11] Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on each side of the lampstand, [12] and what are the two olive branches that pour out golden oil through two gold tubes?"

[13] "Don't you know?" he asked.

"No, my lord," I replied.

[14] Then he said to me, "They represent the two anointed ones who assist the Lord of all the earth."

[5:1] I looked up again and saw a scroll flying through the air.

[2] "What do you see?" the angel asked.

"I see a flying scroll," I replied. "It appears to be about thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide."

[3] Then he said to me, "This scroll contains the curse that is going out over the entire land. One side says that those who steal will be banished from the land; the other side says that those who swear falsely will be banished from the land. [4] And this is what the Lord Almighty says: I am sending this curse into the house of every thief and into the house of everyone who swears falsely by my name. And my curse will remain in that house until it is completely destroyed—even its timbers and stones."

[5] Then the angel who was talking with me came forward and said, "Look up! Something is appearing in the sky."

[6] "What is it?" I asked.

He replied, "It is a basket for measuring grain, and it is filled with the sins of everyone throughout the land."

[7] When the heavy lead cover was lifted off the basket, there was a woman sitting inside it. [8] The angel said, "The woman's name is Wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and closed the heavy lid again.

[9] Then I looked up and saw two women flying toward us, with wings gliding on the wind. Their wings were like those of a stork, and they picked up the basket and flew with it into the sky.

[10] "Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel.

[11] He replied, "To the land of Babylonia, where they will build a temple for the basket. And when the temple is ready, they will set the basket there on its pedestal."

[6:1] Then I looked up again and saw four chariots coming from between two bronze mountains. [2] The first chariot was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses, [3] the third by white horses, and the fourth by dappled-gray horses. [4] "And what are these, my lord?" I asked the angel who was talking with me.

[5] He replied, "These are the four spirits of heaven who stand before the Lord of all the earth. They are going out to do his work. [6] The chariot with black horses is going north, the chariot with white horses is going west, and the chariot with dappled-gray horses is going south."

[7] The powerful horses were eager to be off, to patrol back and forth across the earth. And the Lord said, "Go and patrol the earth!" So they left at once on their patrol.

[8] Then the Lord summoned me and said, "Those who went north have vented the anger of my Spirit there."

[9] Then I received another message from the Lord: [10] "Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah will bring gifts of silver and gold from the Jews exiled in Babylon. As soon as they arrive, meet them at the home of Josiah son of Zephaniah. [11] Accept their gifts and make a crown from the silver and gold. Then put the crown on the head of Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. [12] Tell him that the Lord Almighty says: Here is the man called the Branch. He will branch out where he is and build the Temple of the Lord.

[13] He will build the Lord's Temple, and he will receive royal honor and will rule as king from his throne. He will also serve as priest from his throne, and there will be perfect harmony between the two.

[14] "The crown will be a memorial in the Temple of the Lord to honor those who gave it—Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah son of Zephaniah."

[15] Many will come from distant lands to rebuild the Temple of the Lord. And when this happens, you will know my messages have been from the Lord Almighty. All this will happen if you carefully obey the commands of the Lord your God.

[7:1] On December 7 of the fourth year of King Darius's reign, another message came to Zechariah from the Lord. [2] The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech, along with their men, to seek the Lord's favor. [3] They were to ask this question of the prophets and of the priests at the Temple of the Lord Almighty: "Should we continue to mourn and fast each summer on the anniversary of the Temple's destruction, as we have done for so many years?"

[4] The Lord Almighty sent me this message: [5] "Say to all your people and your priests, 'During those seventy years of exile, when you fasted and mourned in the summer and at the festival in early autumn, was it really for me that you were fasting? [6] And even now in your holy festivals, you don't think about me but only of pleasing yourselves. [7] Isn't this the same message the Lord proclaimed through the prophets years ago when Jerusalem and the towns of Judah were bustling with people, and the Negev and the foothills of Judah were populated areas?' "

[8] Then this message came to Zechariah from the Lord: [9] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: Judge fairly and honestly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. [10] Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and poor people. And do not make evil plans to harm each other.

[11] "Your ancestors would not listen to this message. They turned stubbornly away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. [12] They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could not hear the law or the messages that the Lord Almighty had sent them by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. That is why the Lord Almighty was so angry with them.

[13] "Since they refused to listen when I called to them, I would not listen when they called to me, says the Lord Almighty. [14] I scattered them as with a whirlwind among the distant nations, where they lived as strangers. Their land became so desolate that no one even traveled through it. The land that had been so pleasant became a desert."

[8:1] Then another message came to me from the Lord Almighty: [2] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: My love for Mount Zion is passionate and strong; I am consumed with passion for Jerusalem! [3] And now the Lord says: I am returning to Mount Zion, and I will live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City; the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain. [4] This is what the Lord Almighty says: Once again old men and women will walk Jerusalem's streets with a cane and sit together in the city squares. [5] And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls at play.

[6] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: All this may seem impossible to you now, a small and discouraged remnant of God's people. But do you think this is impossible for me, the Lord Almighty? [7] This is what the Lord Almighty says: You can be sure that I will rescue my people from the east and from the west. [8] I will bring them home again to live safely in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be faithful and just toward them as their God.

[9] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: Take heart and finish the task! You have heard what the prophets have been saying about building the Temple of the Lord Almighty ever since the foundation was laid. [10] Before the work on the Temple began, there were no jobs and no wages for either people or animals. No traveler was safe from the enemy, for there were enemies on all sides. I had turned everyone against each other. [11] But now I will not treat the remnant of my people as I treated them before, says the Lord Almighty.

[12] For I am planting seeds of peace and prosperity among you. The grapevines will be heavy with fruit. The earth will produce its crops, and the sky will release the dew. Once more I will make the remnant in Judah and Israel the heirs of these blessings. [13] Among the nations, Judah and Israel had become symbols of what it means to be cursed. But no longer! Now I will rescue you and make you both a symbol and a source of blessing! So don't be afraid or discouraged, but instead get on with rebuilding the Temple!

[14] "For this is what the Lord Almighty says: I did not change my mind when your ancestors angered me and I promised to punish them, says the Lord Almighty. [15] Neither will I change my decision to bless Jerusalem and the people of Judah. So don't be afraid. [16] But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and that lead to peace. [17] Do not make evil plots to harm each other. And stop this habit of swearing to things that are false. I hate all these things, says the Lord."

[18] Here is another message that came to me from the Lord Almighty. [19] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: The traditional fasts and times of mourning you have kept in early summer, midsummer, autumn, and winter are now ended. They will become festivals of joy and celebration for the people of Judah. So love truth and peace.

[20] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: People from nations and cities around the world will travel to Jerusalem. [21] The people of one city will say to the people in another, 'Let us go to Jerusalem to ask the Lord to bless us and to seek the Lord Almighty. We are planning to go ourselves.' [22] People from many nations, even powerful nations, will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to ask the Lord to bless them.

[23] "This is what the Lord Almighty says: In those days ten people from nations and languages around the world will clutch at the hem of one Jew's robe. And they will say, 'Please let us walk with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' "

2. Zechariah's words of encouragement

B. MESSAGES AFTER COMPLETING THE TEMPLE (Zech. 9:1-14:21)

Besides encouragement and hope, Zechariah's messages were also a warning that God's Messianic kingdom would not begin as soon as the temple was complete. Israel's enemies would be judged and the King would come, but God's people would themselves face many difficult circumstances before experiencing the blessing of the Messianic kingdom. We too may face much sorrow, disappointment, and distress before coming into Christ's eternal kingdom.

This is the message from the Lord against the land of Aram and the city of Damascus, for the eyes of all humanity, including the people of Israel, are on the Lord. [2] Doom is certain for Hamath, near Damascus, and for the cities of Tyre and Sidon, too, though they are so clever. [3] Tyre has built a strong fortress and has piled up so much silver and gold that it is as common as dust in the streets! [4] But now the Lord will strip away Tyre's possessions and hurl its fortifications into the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre will be set on fire and burned to the ground.

[5] The city of Ashkelon will see Tyre fall and will be filled with fear. Gaza will shake with terror, and so will Ekron, for their hopes will be dashed. Gaza will be conquered and its king killed, and Ashkelon will be completely deserted. [6] Foreigners will occupy the city of Ashdod. Thus, I will destroy the pride of the Philistines. [7] They will no longer eat meat with blood in it or feed on other forbidden foods. All the surviving Philistines will worship our God and be adopted as a new clan in Judah. And the Philistines of Ekron will join my people, just as the Jebusites once did. [8] I will guard my Temple and protect it from invading armies. I am closely watching their movements. No foreign oppressor will ever again overrun my people's land.

[9] Rejoice greatly, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—even on a donkey's colt. [10] I will remove the battle chariots from Israel and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and I will destroy all the weapons used in battle. Your king will bring peace to the nations. His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

[11] Because of the covenant I made with you, sealed with blood, I will free your prisoners from death in a waterless dungeon. [12] Come back to the place of safety, all you prisoners, for there is yet hope! I promise this very day that I will repay you two mercies for each of your woes! [13] Judah is my bow, and Israel is my arrow! Jerusalem is my sword, and like a warrior, I will brandish it against the Greeks.

[14] The Lord will appear above his people; his arrows will fly like lightning! The Sovereign Lord will sound the trumpet; he will go out against his enemies like a whirlwind from the southern desert. [15] The Lord Almighty will protect his people, and they will subdue their enemies with sling stones. They will shout in battle as though drunk with wine, shedding the blood of their enemies. They will be filled with blood like a bowl, drenched with blood like the corners of the altar.

[16] When that day arrives, the Lord their God will rescue his people, just as a shepherd rescues his sheep. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. [17] How wonderful and beautiful they will be! The young men and women will thrive on the abundance of grain and new wine.

[10:1] Ask the Lord for rain in the spring, and he will give it. It is the Lord who makes storm clouds that drop showers of rain so that every field becomes a lush pasture.

[2] Household gods give false advice, fortune-tellers predict only lies, and interpreters of dreams pronounce comfortless falsehoods. So my people are wandering like lost sheep, without a shepherd to protect and guide them.

[3] "My anger burns against your shepherds, and I will punish these leaders. For the Lord Almighty has arrived to look after his flock of Judah; he will make them strong and glorious, like a proud warhorse in battle. [4] From Judah will come the cornerstone, the tent peg, the battle bow, and all the rulers. [5] They will be like mighty warriors in battle, trampling their enemies in the mud under their feet. Since the Lord is with them as they fight, they will overthrow even the horsemen of the enemy.

[6] "I will strengthen Judah and save Israel; I will reestablish them because I love them. It will be as though I had never rejected them, for I am the Lord their God, who will hear their cries. [7] The people of Israel will become like mighty warriors, and their hearts will be happy as if by wine. Their children, too, will see it all and be glad; their hearts will rejoice in the Lord. [8] When I whistle to them, they will come running, for I have redeemed them. From the few that are left, their population will grow again to its former size.

[9] Though I have scattered them like seeds among the nations, still they will remember me in distant lands. With their children, they will survive and come home again to Israel. [10] I will bring them back from Egypt and Assyria and resettle them in Gilead and Lebanon. There won't be enough room for them all! [11] They will pass safely through the sea of distress, for the waves of the sea will be held back. And the waters of the Nile will become dry. The pride of Assyria will be crushed, and the rule of Egypt will end. [12] I will make my people strong in my power, and they will go wherever they wish by my authority. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

[11:1] Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire may sweep through your cedar forests. [2] Weep, you cypress trees, for all the ruined cedars; the tallest and most beautiful of them are fallen. Weep, you oaks of Bashan, as you watch the thickest forests being felled. [3] Listen to the wailing of the shepherds, for their wealth is gone. Hear the young lions roaring, for their thickets in the Jordan Valley have been destroyed.

[4] This is what the Lord my God says: "Go and care for a flock that is intended for slaughter. [5] The buyers will slaughter their sheep without remorse. The sellers will say, 'Praise the Lord, I am now rich!' Even the shepherds have no compassion for them. [6] And likewise, I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land," says the Lord. "I will let them fall into each other's clutches, as well as into the clutches of their king. They will turn the land into a wilderness, and I will not protect them."

[7] So I cared for the flock intended for slaughter—the flock that was oppressed. Then I took two shepherd's staffs and named one Favor and the other Union. [8] I got rid of their three evil shepherds in a single month. But I became impatient with these sheep—this nation—and they hated me, too. [9] So I told them, "I won't be your shepherd any longer. If you die, you die. If you are killed, you are killed. And those who remain will devour each other!"

[10] Then I took my staff called Favor and snapped it in two, showing that I had revoked the covenant I had made with all the nations. [11] That was the end of my covenant with them. Those who bought and sold sheep were watching me, and they knew that the Lord was speaking to them through my actions. [12] And I said to them, "If you like, give me my wages, whatever I am worth; but only if you want to." So they counted out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.

[13] And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potters"—this magnificent sum at which they valued me! So I took the thirty coins and threw them to the potters in the Temple of the Lord. [14] Then I broke my other staff, Union, to show that the bond of unity between Judah and Israel was broken.

[15] Then the Lord said to me, "Go again and play the part of a worthless shepherd. [16] This will illustrate how I will give this nation a shepherd who will not care for the sheep that are threatened by death, nor look after the young, nor heal the injured, nor feed the healthy. Instead, this shepherd will eat the meat of the fattest sheep and tear off their hooves. [17] Doom is certain for this worthless shepherd who abandons the flock! The sword will cut his arm and pierce his right eye! His arm will become useless, and his right eye completely blind!"

[12:1] This message concerning the fate of Israel came from the Lord: "This message is from the Lord, who stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the spirit within humans. [2] I will make Jerusalem and Judah like an intoxicating drink to all the nearby nations that send their armies to besiege Jerusalem. [3] On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone, a burden for the world. None of the nations who try to lift it will escape unscathed.

[4] "On that day, says the Lord, I will cause every horse to panic and every rider to lose his nerve. I will watch over the people of Judah, but I will blind the horses of her enemies. [5] And the clans of Judah will say to themselves, 'The people of Jerusalem have found strength in the Lord Almighty, their God.'

[6] "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a brazier that sets a woodpile ablaze or like a burning torch among sheaves of grain. They will burn up all the neighboring nations right and left, while the people living in Jerusalem remain secure. [7] The Lord will give victory to the rest of Judah first, before Jerusalem, so that the people of Jerusalem and the royal line of David will not have greater honor than the rest of Judah. [8] On that day the Lord will defend the

people of Jerusalem; the weakest among them will be as mighty as King David! And the royal descendants will be like God, like the angel of the Lord who goes before them! [9] For my plan is to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

[10] "Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on all the people of Jerusalem. They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died. [11] The sorrow and mourning in Jerusalem on that day will be like the grievous mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo.

[12] "All Israel will weep in profound sorrow, each family by itself, with the husbands and wives in separate groups. The family of David will mourn, along with the family of Nathan, [13] the family of Levi, and the family of Shimei. [14] Each of the surviving families from Judah will mourn separately, husbands and wives apart.

[13:1] "On that day a fountain will be opened for the dynasty of David and for the people of Jerusalem, a fountain to cleanse them from all their sins and defilement.

[2] "And on that day, says the Lord Almighty, I will get rid of every trace of idol worship throughout the land, so that even the names of the idols will be forgotten. I will remove from the land all false prophets and the unclean spirits that inspire them. [3] If anyone begins prophesying again, his own father and mother will tell him, 'You must die, for you have prophesied lies in the name of the Lord.' Then his own father and mother will stab him.

[4] "No one will be boasting then of a prophetic gift! No one will wear prophet's clothes to try to fool the people. [5] 'No,' he will say. 'I'm not a prophet; I'm a farmer. The soil has been my means of livelihood from my earliest youth.' [6] And if someone asks, 'Then what are those scars on your chest?' he will say, 'I was wounded at the home of friends!'

[7] "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man who is my partner, says the Lord Almighty. Strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn against the lambs. [8] Two-thirds of the people in the land will be cut off and die, says the Lord. But a third will be left in the land. [9] I will bring that group through the fire and make them pure, just as gold and silver are refined and purified by fire. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'These are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.' "

[14:1] Watch, for the day of the Lord is coming when your possessions will be plundered right in front of you! [2] On that day I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses plundered, and the women raped. Half the population will be taken away into captivity, and half will be left among the ruins of the city.

[3] Then the Lord will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past. [4] On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west, for half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south. [5] You will flee through this valley, for it will reach across to Azal. Yes, you will flee as you did from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all his holy ones with him.

[6] On that day the sources of light will no longer shine, [7] yet there will be continuous day! Only the Lord knows how this could happen! There will be no normal day and night, for at evening time it will still be light. [8] On that day life-giving waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean, flowing continuously both in summer and in winter.

[9] And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one Lord—his name alone will be worshiped. [10] All the land from Geba, north of Judah, to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become one vast plain. But Jerusalem will be raised up in its original place and will be inhabited all the way from the Benjamin Gate over to the site of the old gate, then to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. [11] And Jerusalem will be filled, safe at last, never again to be cursed and destroyed.

[12] And the Lord will send a plague on all the nations that fought against Jerusalem. Their people will become like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will shrivel in their sockets, and their tongues will decay in their mouths. [13] On that day they will be terrified, stricken by the Lord with great panic. They will fight against each other in hand-to-hand combat; [14] Judah, too, will be fighting at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the neighboring nations will be captured—great quantities of gold and silver and fine clothing. [15] This same plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the other animals in the enemy camps.

[16] In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. [17] And any nation anywhere in the world that refuses to come to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, will have no rain.

[18] And if the people of Egypt refuse to attend the festival, the Lord will punish them with the same plague that he sends on the other nations who refuse to go. [19] Egypt and the other nations will all be punished if they don't go to celebrate the festival.

[20] On that day even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed with these words: Set apart as Holy to the Lord. And the cooking pots in the Temple of the Lord will be as sacred as the basins used beside the altar.

[21] In fact, every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart as holy to the Lord Almighty. All who come to worship will be free to use any of these pots to boil their sacrifices. And on that day there will no longer be traders in the Temple of the Lord Almighty.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: God's jealousy

EXPLANATION:

God was angry at his people for ignoring his prophets through the years, and he was concerned that they not follow the careless and false leaders who exploited them. Disobedience was the root of their problems and the cause of their misery.

IMPORTANCE:

God was jealous for their devotion to him. God is jealous for our devotion. To avoid Israel's ruin, don't walk in their steps. Don't reject God, follow false teachers, or lead others astray. Turn to God, faithfully obey his commands, and make sure you are leading others correctly.

THEME: Rebuild the temple

EXPLANATION:

The Jews were discouraged. They were free from exile, yet the temple was not completed. Zechariah encouraged them to rebuild it. God would both protect his workmen and empower them by his Holy Spirit to carry out his work.

IMPORTANCE:

More than the rebuilding of the temple was at stake—the people were staging the first act in God's wonderful drama of the end times. Those of us who believe in God must complete his work. To do so we must have the Holy Spirit's help. God will empower us with his Spirit.

THEME: The King is coming

EXPLANATION:

The Messiah will come both to rescue people from sin and to reign as king. He will establish his kingdom, conquer all his enemies, and rule over all the earth. Everything will one day be under his loving and powerful control.

IMPORTANCE:

The Messiah came as a servant to die for us. He will return as a victorious king. At that time, he will usher in peace throughout the world. Submit to his leadership now to be ready for the King's triumphant return.

THEME: God's protection

EXPLANATION:

There was opposition to God's plan in Zechariah's day, and he prophesied future times of trouble. But God's Word endures. God remembers the agreements he makes with his people. He cares for his people and will deliver them from all the world powers that oppress them.

IMPORTANCE:

Although evil is still present, God's infinite love and personal care have been demonstrated through the centuries. God keeps his promises. Although our bodies may be destroyed, we need never fear our ultimate destiny if we love and obey him.

TIMELINE

Daniel taken to Babylon 605 B.C.

Ezekiel taken to Babylon 597

Jerusalem falls 586

Babylon overthrown by Cyrus 539

Cyrus's decree allowing the exiles to return 538

Temple construction begins 536

Temple work halted 530

Haggai, Zechariah become prophets; temple work resumed 520

Temple completed 516

Ezra comes to Jerusalem 458

Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem 445

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

