

*Minor Prophets...*

# THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Book of ZECHARIAH

*...Major Message*

## **Minor Prophets...**

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, saying,

2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

5 Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

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## ***Minor Prophets...***

### **TITLE AND WRITER**

The name "Zechariah" (lit. *Jehovah remembers*) was a common one among the Israelites, which identified at least 27 different individuals in the Old Testament, perhaps 30.

Zechariah, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, was both a prophet and a priest. The Lord Jesus referred to a Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom the Jews murdered between the temple and the altar (Matt. 23:35).

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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, saying,

Mt. 23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto **the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.**

## **DATE**

Zechariah's inspired preaching began in the eighth month of 520 B.C. (1:1).

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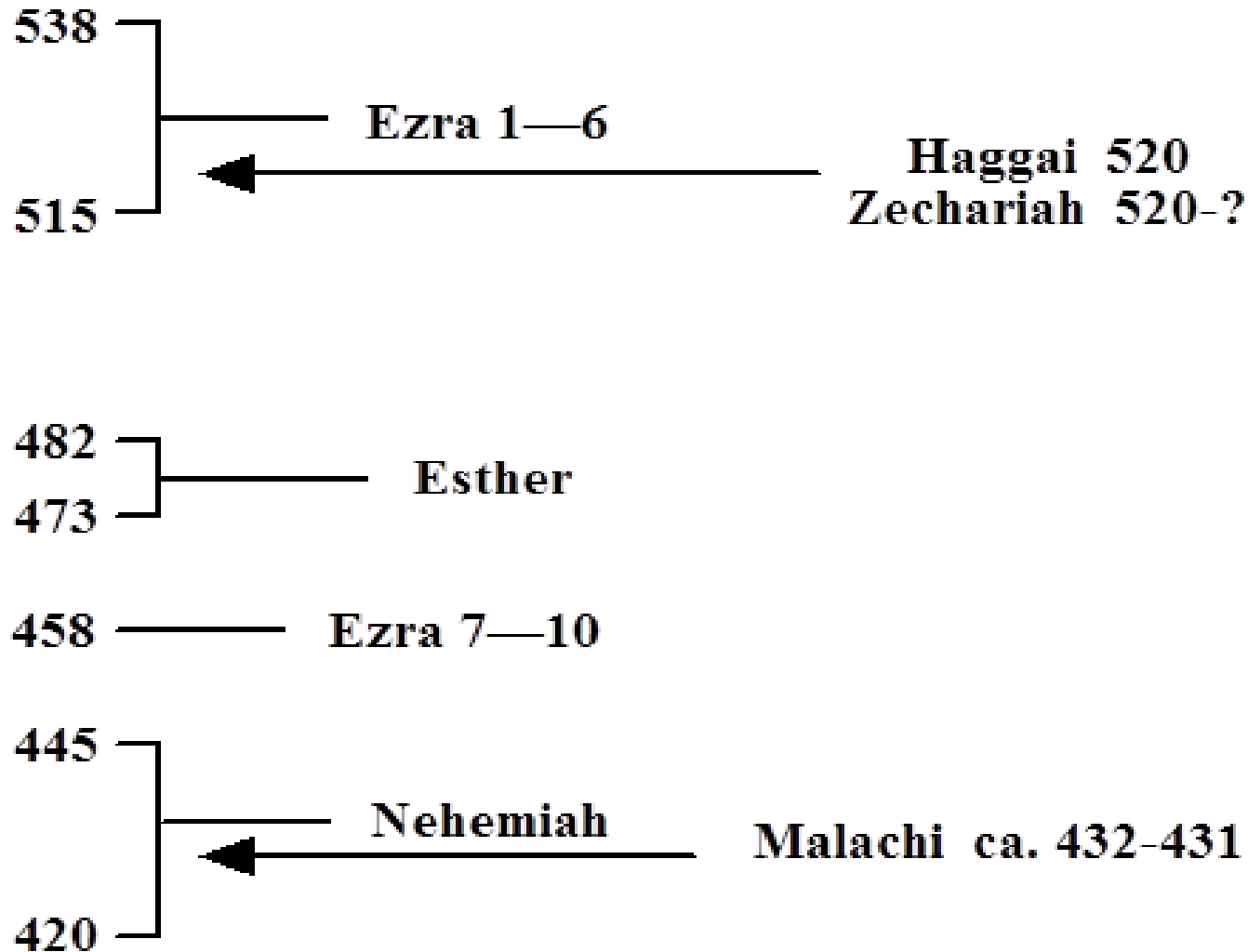
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### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Zechariah began ministering among the Jews who had returned from captivity in Babylon (i.e., the restoration community) two months after Haggai began preaching (1:1; 7:1; cf. Neh. 12:10-16; Hag. 1:1).

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## Chronology of the Restoration Period



<http://www.soniclight.org/constable/notes/htm/OT/Zechariah/Zechariah.htm>

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Haggai and Zechariah's ministries followed those of Ezekiel and Daniel, who ministered during the Captivity in Babylon.

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**TABLE OF SOME POST-EXILIC EVENTS**

Cyrus issued his edict allowing the Jews to return home.	538 B.C.	Ezra 1
About 50,000 Jews returned under Zerubbabel and Joshua's leadership.	536 B.C.	Ezra 2; Neh. 7
The altar was rebuilt and sacrifices resumed.	536 B.C.	
Work on the temple began but then halted.	536 B.C.	<a href="#">Ezra 3:1-4</a>
The Jews became occupied with rebuilding their own homes.	536-522 B.C.	Hag. 1—2
Cyrus died, and his son, Cambyses II, succeeded him and ruled Persia.	530 B.C.; 530-522 B.C.	
Smerdis ruled Persia.	522-521 B.C.	
Darius I, the Great (Hystaspes), rescued Persia from civil war and ruled Persia.	521-486 B.C.	
Darius confirmed Cyrus' decree and encouraged the Jews to continue rebuilding the temple.	520 B.C.	<a href="#">Ezra 6:1-14</a>
Haggai preached his first three sermons.	520 B.C., 6th and 7th months	<a href="#">Hag. 1:1,</a> <a href="#">15;</a> <a href="#">2:1</a>
<b>Zechariah preached his first sermon.</b>	520 B.C., 8th month	<a href="#">Zech. 1:1</a>
Haggai preached his fourth and fifth sermons.	520 B.C., 9th month	<a href="#">Hag. 2:10,</a> <a href="#">20</a>

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<b>Zechariah received his eight night visions.</b>	520 B.C., 11th month	<a href="#">Zech. 1:7</a>
<b>Joshua, the high priest, was crowned.</b>	520 B.C., 11th month	<a href="#">Zech. 6:9-15</a>
<b>The delegation from Bethel arrived, and Zechariah preached again.</b>	518 B.C., 9th month	<a href="#">Zech. 7:1</a>
The Jews completed the temple and dedicated it.	515 B.C., 12th month	<a href="#">Ezra 6:15</a>
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) reigned over Persia.	486-464 B.C.	<a href="#">Esth. 2:16</a>
Artaxerxes I reigned over Persia.	464-424 B.C.	
About 5,000 Jews returned to Palestine under Ezra's leadership.	458 B.C.	<a href="#">Ezra 7:7</a>
Artaxerxes I authorized Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.	445 B.C.	<a href="#">Neh. 2:1</a>
Nehemiah led the third return to Palestine.	444 B.C.	<a href="#">Neh. 2:9</a>
Malachi ministered.	ca. 432-431 B.C.	

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### **PURPOSE AND THEMES**

Zechariah ministered to the restoration community to motivate those Jews to finish rebuilding the temple and to rededicate themselves to Jehovah with the prospect of His blessing. The central theme of the book is encouragement and hope. The key to this hope is the coming of Messiah and his overthrow of ungodly forces and establishment of His kingdom on earth.

This book also contains many messianic prophecies (cf. 3:8-9; 6:12-13; 9:9-10, 14; 11:12-13; 13:7; 14:4, 9, 16).

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### **CANONICITY AND UNITY**

This book is the second to the last of the Minor Prophets in the second (Prophets) division of the Hebrew Bible. Neither Jews nor Christians seriously challenged its canonicity. One reason for this is the fact that the New Testament quotes and alludes to Zechariah so often, about 41 times.

### **GENRE**

Zechariah consists of a combination of poetry (chs. 9—10), exhortations (sermon material; 1:1-6), prophetic-apocalyptic visions (1:7—6:8), symbolic actions (6:9-15), and oracles (chs. 7—14), some of which concern eschatological salvation (chs. 9—14). Some of the oracles introduce or follow visions, and others do not. Along with Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation, Zechariah is one of the most apocalyptic books in the Bible.

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### **STRUCTURE**

In the case of Zechariah, there are three large chiastic sections (1:7—6:15; 7:1—8:19; and chs. 9—14). These contain Zechariah's eight night visions and their accompanying oracles, his messages prompted by a question about fasting, and the two burdens (oracles) announcing the triumphant interventions of the Lord into history in the future. A brief section introduces the whole book (1:1-6).

Zechariah is the longest of the Minor Prophets. It contains 14 chapters with 211 verses, whereas Hosea, the second longest, has 14 chapters with 197 verses. Daniel, the shortest Major Prophet, contains 12 chapters with 357 verses.

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### **MESSAGE**

This is the second post-exilic prophetic book. The historical background and audience are the same as those for Haggai. As Zechariah's contemporaries looked back, they saw former glory and recent shame. As they looked forward, they saw difficulty and felt discouragement. Zechariah ministered to inspire hope in the heart of this discouraged remnant of Israelites. That was his purpose.

Zechariah had a three-fold conviction:

1. God reveals His will,
2. He calls people back to Himself and provides the way for their coming,
3. He promises that if they will return to Him, He will return to them.

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In the first vision, God revealed the presence of His angel that was watching over His people in their depressed place. They knew about the depressed place, but the presence of the angel was news to them.

The second vision revealed that forces would destroy the powers that opposed them. The people knew about these enemy powers, but they needed a reminder that God planned to destroy them.

In the third vision, God revealed Jerusalem in its future large, secure condition. The people knew about Jerusalem; they were rebuilding it. But they were not sure about its future large and secure condition.

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The fourth vision revealed an adversary and an advocate. The people were aware of their adversary, but they were unaware of their divine advocate.

In the fifth vision, God revealed the people's responsibility to be lights in the world and their resource for doing so. The people knew their responsibility, but they did not fully appreciate that they had a supernatural resource that would enable them to fulfill their responsibility.

The sixth vision revealed the purging of sin with divine revelation. The people were aware of the present sin, but they now learned that observing God's law would deal with it.

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The seventh vision illustrated ongoing evil and its final purging away. The people were aware of widespread evil, but they needed reminding that God would eventually remove it forever.

The eighth vision revealed the need for divine control over present chaos and the provision of divine control.

The two oracles in Zechariah 9—14 teach the same basic lesson: the pervasive power of "the LORD of Hosts." To summarize this briefly, the anointed King would be rejected initially, but He would return with the pervasive power of Jehovah.

Whereas Haggai called these people to be strong and to work, Zechariah revealed the secret of their strength. The Apostle Paul put it this way:

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2 Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal

The proof of vision is strength.

The secret of strength is vision.

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### I. REVELATIONS CONCERNING ISRAEL'S FUTURE, 1:1-6:15

#### A. The Voice of the Prophet, 1:1-6

##### 1. The Man, 1:1

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,** saying,

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Ezra 5:1 Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that *were* in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them. (6:14)

Neh. 12:16 Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam;

Hag. 1:1 **In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet** unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

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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

***Comparison of timing***

Hag. 2:1 **In the seventh month**, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

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

Hag. 2:10 In the four and twentieth *day* **of the ninth month**, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, ***...Major Message***



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### 2. The Message, 1:2-6

Zech. 1:2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

5 Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

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### a. The Lord's Wrath, 1:2

Zech. 1:2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

### b. The Lord's Will, 1:3-5

Zech. 1:3 **Therefore** say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.**

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Isa. 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

**7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.**

Hos. 7:10 And **the pride of Israel testifieth** to his face: and **they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.**

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Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

13 And **rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God**: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Prov. 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but **whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.**

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Zech. 1:4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

5 Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

2 Chron. 36:16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy.

1 Cor. 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

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c. The Lord's Word, 1:6

Zech. 1:6 But **my words** and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

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Zechariah enumerates in his introductory address five great principles:

1. The condition of all God's blessings, verse 3.
2. The evil and peril of disobedience, verse 4.
3. The unchangeable character of God's Word, verse 6a.
4. God's governmental dealings with His people in accordance with their deeds, verse 6b (“according to our ways, and according to our doings,.”)
5. God's immutable purposes, verse 6b (“...as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us...so hath he dealt with us.”)

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## **Conclusion**

Isa. 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, **but have removed their heart far from me**, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Mk. 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but **their heart is far from me.**

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### Resources

(Biblos) <http://biblehub.com> (for Hebrew/Greek translation)

Blue Letter Bible. <https://www.blueletterbible.org> (to copy and paste verses and occasional check of Hebrew/Greek translation)

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Thompson-Chain Bible. 1982. (King James Version, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) B.B. Kirkbride Bible Company: Indianapolis, IN.

**...Major Message**