

Zechariah

"The Messiah is Coming"

Background Information

Zechariah was a very common name, as some 29 men in the Old Testament share it. The name means "The Lord remembers."

Like a few other prophets, Zechariah was also a priest, and non-Biblical tradition also states that he might have been a member of the group that later became known as the Sanhedrin.

Matthew 23:35 indicates he was murdered (though this could possibly be another man by the same name).

Time Covered and Outline

Though called a "minor" prophet, this book contains 14 chapters and the work of Zechariah continued for some time. The earliest chapters occur during the second year of the Darius in 520 BC, while the final chapters seem to have come during the reign of Xerxes, possibly as late as 460 BC.

Zechariah not only outlines easily by chapters, but also by the type of message he was delivering at the time.

- I. A Call to Repentance (1:1-6)
- II. The Night Visions (1:7-6:15)
 - A. Man among the myrtle trees (1:7-17)
 - B. Four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21)
 - C. The measuring line (2)
 - D. The high priest cleansed (3)
 - E. Gold lampstand with two olive trees (4)
 - F. The flying scroll (5:1-4)
 - G. A woman in a basket (5:5-11)
 - H. Four chariots (6:1-8)
 - I. Historical appendix: Joshua made high priest (6:9-15)
- III. Four Messages (7-8)
- IV. Two Burdens Zechariah Bore (9-14)

Major Themes

Repentance
Divine care
The coming Messiah (rejected, then accepted)
Holiness

God's Character in Zechariah

Good (9:17)

Jesus in Zechariah

Of the minor prophets, none are filled with more references to the coming Messiah than Zechariah.

- (1) "My servant the branch" (3:8)
- (2) "a priest on His throne" (6:13)
- (3) the one "whom they pierced" (12:10)
- (4) "lowly and riding on a donkey" (9:9)

Key Words in Zechariah

Angel (Hebrew *mal'ak*); "messenger." 1:9; 1:13; 2:3; 3:1; 3:5; 4:1; 5:5; 6:5; 12:8

Branch (Hebrew *tsemach*); "shoot" or "twig." 3:8; 6:12

Elsewhere in the World...

Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, is born in 479 BC.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

Ezra specifically mentions Zechariah as one of the prophets (Haggai is the other) who motivate the people to finish the temple. That part of his work comes in Ezra 5 and 6. Likely, the final chapters of Zechariah's prophecy are done near the same time as the book of Esther.