

NAME

The book is named after the author Zechariah. The word “Zechariah” literally means “God remembers.”

Mitchell:

The name is probably a testimony to the faith of his parents. During the long years of captivity they were confident that God would indeed remember His people. This is the great message of Zechariah to the Jewish remnant. God remembers to keep His promises not only in returning them to the land, but also in returning them to Himself.

Theologically the significance of the name “the Lord” (Yahweh) cannot be overlooked in the context of Zechariah’s prophecy.

NASB - Introduction to Zechariah:

Yahweh is the personal, covenant name of God and is a perpetual testimony to His faithfulness to His promises (Exodus 3:14). He “remembers” His covenant promises and takes action to fulfill them. In the book of Zechariah God’s promised deliverance from Babylonian exile, including a restored kingdom community and functioning temple (the earthly throne of the divine King), leads into even grander pictures of the salvation and restoration to come through the Messiah.

AUTHOR

Zechariah was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo (1:1). Because Zechariah was a descendant of Aaron, he was both a priest and a prophet - as were Jeremiah and Ezekiel. He had been born in Babylon and returned with the first remnant of Jews under Zerubbabel (538 B.C.). His grandfather Iddo is named among the returnees with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Nehemiah 12:4). When Joiakim was high priest, Zechariah apparently succeeded Iddo (1:1,7) as head of that priestly family (Nehemiah 12:10-16). Since the grandson succeeded the grandfather it has been suggested that Zechariah’s father Berechiah died at an early age (1:1,7). Josephus records that Zechariah was slain in the temple (cf. Matthew 23:35).

Most likely Zechariah wrote the entire book that bears his name. However, there is some question as to his authorship of chapters 9 to 14 due to differences in style, compositional features, and historical/chronological features that seem to require a different date and author than that of chapters 1 to 8. However, these arguments are inconclusive and the arguments against Zechariah’s authorship can be satisfactorily answered.

DATE

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are referred to as “post-exilic” prophets - the period of history after the Jews returned from their captivity. The history of this period is given in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai (520 B.C.) (Ezra 5:1; 6:14) but continued in ministry long after him (compare 1:1 and 7:1 with Haggai 1:1; also Nehemiah 12:1-16). As such, many feel that he was younger than Haggai. Due to his young age (2:4) as his ministry began he may have ministered into the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.). Zechariah’s ministry lasted about three years. Zechariah began preaching in October/November 520 B.C. (1:1-6). His night visions can be dated at February 15, 519 B.C. (1:7-6:8). Chapters 7 and 8 can be dated at December 7, 518 B.C. Zechariah’s final prophecy (chapters 9-14) is dated sometime after 480 B.C.

THEME

Halley (page 44): *"Rebuilding the Temple"*

Mitchell: *"The book of vision and victory" "Work for there is a glorious future ahead."*

Mitchell:

The purpose of Zechariah's ministry was similar to that of Haggai - namely, to encourage the people to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:1,2). However, their methods were quite different. Haggai was a practical man who exhorted the people to work. Zechariah was a visionary man who furnished the incentive to work through a revelation of Israel's glorious future. Hence, we find that God needs and can use both types of men.

NASB - Introduction to Zechariah:

Various means are used to accomplish the end of encouraging God's people to complete the work on the temple. These means function as subthemes. For example, great stress is laid on the coming of the Messiah and the overthrow of all anti-kingdom forces by Him so that God's rule can be finally and fully established on earth. The then-current local scene thus becomes the basis for contemplating the universal, eschatological picture.

Mitchell:

In the dark day of discouragement, Zechariah saw a glorious future. He shows the glorification of Zion; the complete overthrow of Israel's enemies, and the universal reign of the Messiah. Hence, Zechariah's implication was, *"Work fellows, for God will make it all worth while ultimately."*

Key Word (Nelson's): Prepare for the Messiah - The first eight chapters frequently allude to the Temple and encourage the people to complete their great work on the new sanctuary. As they build the Temple, they are building their future, because that very structure will be used by the Messiah when He comes to bring salvation.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"Thus says the Lord: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain" (Zechariah 8:3).

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 14 - Zechariah builds to a tremendous climax in the fourteenth chapter, where he discloses the last siege of Jerusalem and the ultimate holiness of Jerusalem and her people.

Outline:

- I. The Proclamation - Apocalyptic Visions of Encouragement 1:1-6:15
 - A. The Solemn Warning 1:1-6
Do not repeat the errors of your fathers - return to Me that I may return to you
 - B. The Prophetic Apocalypses 1:7-6:8
Eight visions and a symbolic transaction (horns symbolize power)
 - C. The Symbolic Action 6:9-15
Crowning of Joshua with gold and silver is a picture of Messiah exercising His dual office

- II. The Practical - Questions Concerning Fasts 7:1-8:23
Question: Was it for Me that you fasted? Is your heart right?
God's purpose is unchanged by the ritual
The promise of full future restoration as the people seek Jesus and Jerusalem while God is with them 8:21-23

- III. The Predictions - Prophecies Concerning Messiah 9:1-14:21
 - A. Concerning the Messiah's People 9-11
 - B. Concerning the King and the Kingdom 12-14
 1. The overthrow of enemies 12:1-14:2
 2. The advent of the King 14:3-8
 3. The glory of the Kingdom 14:9-21

RECIPIENTS

The remnant who had returned after the Babylonian captivity who were to rebuild the Temple while struggling against numerous difficulties. And us...

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

Mitchell:

This prophecy is unique in its messianic emphasis. Zechariah unfolds the events connected with the first and second advents of the Messiah. It has been called, "*The most messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological of the writings of the Old Testament.*" The book genuinely is apocalyptic. His visions remind one of Daniel and Revelation.

Concerning the apocalyptic and eschatological emphasis, Zechariah foretold:

1. The siege of Jerusalem (12:1-3; 14:1,2)
2. The initial victory of Judah's enemies (14:2)
3. The Lord's defense of Jerusalem (14:3,4)
4. The Lord's judgment of the nations (12:9; 14:3)
5. The topographical changes of Judah (14:4,5)
6. The celebration of the Feast of Booths in the Messianic kingdom age (14:16-19)
7. The ultimate holiness of Jerusalem and her people (14:20,21)

Halley (page 446):

Summary of Zechariah's Prophecies Concerning Christ:

1. His atoning death for the removal of sin (3:8,9; 13:1)
2. As builder of the house of God (6:12)
3. His universal reign as King and Priest (6:13; 9:10)
4. Triumphal entry (9:9, quoted in Matthew 21:5; John 12:15)
5. Betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (11:12, quoted in Matthew 27:9,10)
6. His deity (12:8)
7. His hands pierced (12:10; 13:6, quoted John 19:37)
8. A stricken Shepherd (13:7, quoted in Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27)

Here in plain statements that not only forecast, in specific language, the great doctrines of the coming Messiah's atoning death for human sin, His deity, and His universal kingdom, but also mention detailed incidents in His life, such as His entry into Jerusalem riding on a colt and His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver.

The book as a whole teaches the sovereignty of God in history, over people and nations - past, present, and future.

Christ is to rule as absolute Lord. Jerusalem will be the capital. Get to work because there is a great day coming and it all will be worth it all someday.

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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