

# **Zechariah**

## **Chapter 1**

God's emotions: Zechariah 1 highlights four divine emotions:

- Zeal
- Anger
- Mercy
- Patience

Within Zechariah we find the phrase "Prisoners of Hope" it is a great symbol for the modern Christian and also for the congregation Zechariah was speaking to in his time. These exiles became free from Babylon, but were to be prisoners of hope for the coming Messiah. We are to be the same today, never able to leave our Hope of the coming King Jesus.

"He (Zechariah) is a prisoner of the hope for the Messiah. Therefore, he predicts many things about our Lord Jesus Christ - more than any other Old Testament prophet, except perhaps Isaiah. It is he who tells us that one day the Messiah will ride into Jerusalem meekly, on the colt of an ass.

It is this prophet who predicts thirty pieces of silver as the price for which he who is the truth would be sold. It is this prophet who predicts that the body of the Messiah would be pierced. It is this prophet who predicts that one day the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ will stand on the Mount of Olives again. So this prophecy is a very precious little one.

The book has only fourteen chapters, eight or ten pages in your Bible, yet Zechariah is what Martin Luther called the quintessence of all the prophets, the one who seems to distil everything said by the earlier prophets...It is both timely and timeless."- A Commentary on Zechariah, David Pawson, p.10

**Read Zech 1:1-6**

**1** In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

- **Eighth month:** Darius I, or Darius the Great, king of Persia, reigned from 522 to 486 BC. This repentance message was given in November 520 BC, three months after Haggai's ministry began on August 29. He (Haggai) gave four messages from August to December 520 BC to stir Israel to action.
  - 1. Haggai's first message was given on August 29. He called Israel to start rebuilding the temple (Hag. 1:2-11). They started work 24 days later on September 22 (Hag. 1:12-15).
  - 2. Haggai's second message was on October 17. He called them to be strong (or to be resolved to not quit), to work diligently, and to resist fear (Hag. 2:1-4).
  - 3. Zechariah's first message was given in November. He called them to repentance (1:1-6) because they had so quickly stumbled in compromise (1:3). They repented quickly (1:6).
  - 4. Haggai's third message was given on December 18 (Hag. 2:10-23). He rebuked the priests for continuing in compromise and the people for delaying the work on the temple. He told them that their obedience would result in economic blessing (Hag. 2:10-17).
  - 5. Zechariah's second message was on February 15, 519 BC (1:7-6:8), three months after his first message and five months after work on the temple resumed (Hag. 1:15).
- Furthermore, whereas Haggai only saw a few months ahead to the completion of the temple, Zechariah, through his prophetic telescope, looked ahead through the centuries, as far as the second coming of Christ, and gave them a big view. Once you get the big view of the future you get on with the immediate task in the present with a greater will. You realize what you are doing right now is of far greater significance than you had previously thought. It is part of God's eternal plan of the ages. – Pawson, p. 17
- **Son of Iddo:** The genealogies in Ezra do not mention Zechariah's father, Berechiah, but only his more prominent grandfather, Iddo (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). The word *bēn* can also be translated as "grandson of." Iddo was a priest who returned from the Babylonian captivity (Neh. 12:4, 16).

**2** "The LORD has been very angry with your fathers. **3** Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.

- Zechariah called Israel to repent and return to the Lord, and then promised that He would return to them. The book of Zechariah was written to encourage Israel in a time of despair. So it is surprising that its first message was a call to repentance with warnings of judgment (1:1-6). It is one of the strongest repentance messages in the Bible, and acts as a foundation to the book's message of hope. An authentic

message of love and hope must include a call to repentance.

- ... Zechariah's favorite title for God is an interesting one. Over forty times, this young man said: "Lord of hosts"...In the situation Zechariah faced, the name that was needed most was "I am Lord of hosts". You could translate that as "I am the God of armies, of battalions, of all the forces that there are". So I think I would say, "The Lord of forces". That would really bring it home. Of all the forces of the universe that God is God of, he is the Lord of hosts. He controls them all - military forces, natural forces, physical forces, supernatural forces - he is the God of hosts. To a little remnant of returned exiles trying to rebuild a nation, that was just the name they needed. – *Pawson*, p. 18-19
- **Lord of Hosts:** Three times in verse 3, Zechariah refers to God as "the Lord of Hosts," or "YHWH of hosts." This title emphasizes the Lord's function as the divine warrior, who goes to war to deliver Israel from oppressive nations and judges Israel for her rebellion.

<sup>4</sup> "Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds." ' But they did not hear nor heed Me," says the LORD.

- Here is the message: When are you going to return to me? Now that must have been the biggest surprise to those people. They had trekked mile after mile through the desert. They had come all the way back from Babylon. They had come back to the city of God, and then here is this young man who gets up and says, "Return." Can you imagine it? Who on earth does he think he is? – *Pawson*, p.19

(David Pawson Explains the importance of Zechariah's first prophetic message to the people of Israel as short but powerful in addressing the area of their heart.)

"Return to me and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts. That means that God is a person. It is a personal relationship. Some people think of God as a thing, like a television in the corner that when they want to hear from it they can go and switch on the knob, and when they don't want to hear from it they can switch it off. They think of God as in a corner of heaven, and when you want to pray, you switch on the knob and he will listen, and when you don't want to bother with him, you switch off. They think he is just there, passive, like a divine machine who is just there to be used when we want him and when we are in a jam and feel like praying. Don't you believe it. God is a person and therefore he has personal feelings and personal reactions. If Zechariah says, "Return to God and he will return to you," that means two things, not one. It means that they have got away from God but it also means that God has gone away from them. Do you see that? There are two sides to every personal relationship. A man and his wife have an argument at breakfast and he goes off to work while she stays at home. They are estranged. They are away from each other. It has been a two-sided relationship. All the morning, the man is troubled and he thinks, "Now I'll go back to my wife and apologise and everything will be all right." So he goes back and apologises but he finds his wife isn't ready to receive it. She is very cold towards him, there is no response, and however much he wants to restore the relationship he can't until she moves. That is a personal relationship, for a wife is not a machine, not an object, not a thing." –*Pawson*, p 23

<sup>5</sup> "Your fathers, where *are* they?  
And the prophets, do they live forever?

<sup>6</sup> Yet surely My words and My statutes,  
Which I commanded My servants the prophets,  
Did they not overtake your fathers?

- God's words overtook Israel: God's words of judgment "overtook" Israel when He sent them into Babylonian captivity because of their evil ways. God's Word always overtakes rebellion because it cannot return to Him void without fulfilling its purpose (Isa. 55:11).

**15It shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD...that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...45Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments... (Deut. 28:15, 45**

- Some say that people today will not respond to the old-fashioned message of repentance. God's Word will surely overtake any "popular" trend that is rooted in compromise.

"So they returned and said:  
'Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us,  
According to our ways and according to our deeds,  
So He has dealt with us.' " ' "

### **Vision of the Horses**

- Zechariah's second message included eight visions that he saw all on the same night (1:7-6:8). These eight visions focus on the future of Israel, particularly Jerusalem and the temple. They were not fulfilled in Zechariah's day. Their purpose was to encourage the people to persevere in the work of building the temple. They are helpful to any who are building a house of prayer.
- This first vision emphasized that God was zealous for His people and would restore Jerusalem and the temple with His glory and that He would not cast Israel off while under Gentile control.

<sup>7</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: <sup>8</sup> I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him *were* horses: red, sorrel, and white.

- The colors of the horses were red, sorrel (speckled), and white (1:8). The colors probably spoke of their mission. Angelic riders on horses patrolling the earth suggest a military context (1:10)
- The myrtle is a very sweet little tree: fragrant, humble, clings to the bottom of the valleys; you won't find it standing up proud; it is a very modest tree. But because it has a perfume, it is a tree that is associated with joy and happiness. It was used by brides in their bouquets in the Bible days. It was a favorite name for girls, "Hadassah" meaning 'Myrtle', one who is modest, happy. So there is something

joyful coming. There is a good smell about it; there is something that is going to happen. – Pawson, p. 31

- These horses and their riders have been patrolling the earth - God's scouts. – Pawson, p. 31
- The four sets of horses in Zechariah 1:8-11 and 6:1-8 seem connected to the four horses in Revelation 6:1-8. In Zechariah, the meaning of the colors of the horses is not made clear. However, in Revelation 6, the meaning of each color is clearly given.
  - Red horses: The red horse speaks of bloodshed in war. John saw the rider on a red horse being given a sword to strike the earth with war (Rev. 6:4). The man riding a red horse symbolizes the impending judgment on the nations who mistreated Israel (1:21). Isaiah describes the Messiah coming to Israel in red garments, because it is the day of vengeance (Isa. 63:1-6).
  - Sorrel horses: The Hebrew word *seruqim* translated “sorrel” can also be “speckled” or “mixed color.” The term cannot be known with certainty. It is probably a mixed color, or combination of color, signifying a mission combining judgment and mercy.
  - White horses: White is a symbol for victory, connected to going forth to conquer (Rev. 6:2).
  - Black horses: The black horse speaks of mourning created by a worldwide famine (Rev. 6:5).
  - Pale horses: The pale green horse is associated with physical death (Rev. 6:8). The Greek word *chloros* is translated as “pale” (ashen, or leprous yellow), and it represents the pallor of death and decay in a corpse.

<sup>9</sup> Then I said, “My lord, what *are* these?” So the angel who talked with me said to me, “I will show you what they *are*.”

<sup>10</sup> And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, “These *are the ones* whom the LORD has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth.”

- **Myrtle trees:** The myrtle tree is symbolic of Israel. A myrtle is an evergreen tree that grows to eight feet. The lowly myrtle, rather than the proud, tall cedar, symbolizes Israel. Myrtle boughs were used to make booths for the Feast of Tabernacles, which prophetically speaks of Israel’s salvation (Neh. 8:15). They were also worn by the bridegroom in ancient Israel.
- **Stood among the myrtle trees:** The man standing among the myrtle trees symbolized the Lord standing among the people of Israel, i.e., being deeply involved with them. He watches all that happens to them and even intercedes for God’s mercy to be released on them (1:12).

<sup>11</sup> So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, “We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly.”

- In the Old Testament, angels often appeared as men (see Gen. 18:22; 19:1; 32:24-30). The man on the red horse here was an angel God sent to give a report on the condition of the earth. This angel talked to God about His promise to show mercy to Jerusalem and its surrounding area and to bring restoration after seventy years had passed. The Lord responded with a positive word, indicating the prophecy was being fulfilled. – *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible*, footnote, p. 1460
- There were four persons or groups interacting in this vision: (1:8-11)
  1. The man (1:8, 10) on the red horse, who is the **Angel of the Lord** (1:11-12)
  2. The prophet Zechariah
  3. The interpreting angel, called “the **angel who talked with me**” (1:9, 13-14)
  4. The patrolling angels on a team of horses following the man (1:8, 10-11)
- **Angel of the Lord:** The Angel of the Lord is the preincarnate Christ, who also appears in Zechariah 3:1-2. The Angel of the Lord addresses the Lord as a separate person (1:12). In some passages, the Angel of the Lord is distinct from God, but is then described as if He is the Lord (Gen. 16:7-13; 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-6, 14; 23:20-22; Num. 22:22-35; Judg. 6:11-18).
- **The angel who talked with me:** An interpreting angel talked to Zechariah throughout the night visions to help him understand them (1:9, 13, 14, 19; 2:3; 4:1, 4; 5:5, 10; 6:4). He is the same one who is called “my lord” (1:9). The interpreting angel was going to explain the meaning of the horses (1:9), but the man spoke up to explain their role with the patrolling angels (1:10)

### **The LORD Will Comfort Zion**

<sup>12</sup> Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, “O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?”

- **Seventy years:** There are two main views on the seventy years of the Babylonian exile. The first view is that it began in 606 BC when the first captives were taken to Babylon and continued until 536 BC when the first Jewish captives returned to Jerusalem. The second view is that it began in 586 BC with the destruction of the temple and continued until the temple was rebuilt in 516 BC. The Lord probably intended a double reference, so both approaches can be accurately applied. The seventy years were fulfilled with amazing precision according to both of these calculations.

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, *with good and comforting words*.

- **Comforting words:** God’s answer to the intercession was given to the interpreting angel (1:14)...The word comfort (1:13) is the same word Isaiah used when he prophesied about Israel in the end times (Isa. 40:1-2).

**1“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” says your God. 2“Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned.” (Isa. 40:1-2)**

**14** So the angel who spoke with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts:

- Prophets must speak and "cry aloud" (Isa. 58:1) to proclaim the Word of the Lord, and their obedience in speaking releases the hand of God to fulfill what has been proclaimed (see 1 Kings 17:1). The angel told Zechariah to cry out and proclaim that God is jealous for Jerusalem, He will have mercy upon the city, and He will build the cities of Judah again because the Lord has chosen Jerusalem. Compare this with Revelation 6, where four horsemen bring war, famine, and death; here, the rider on the horse brings a message of peace and restoration. – *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible*, footnote, p. 1461

“I am zealous for Jerusalem  
And for Zion with great zeal.

- Jerusalem and Zion are synonymous here. The use of dual names for the city suggests all that is related to Jerusalem in the past and to Zion in the future.

**15** I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease;  
For I was a little angry,  
And they helped—*but with evil intent.*”

- Here is the second feeling attributed to God here: he is angry. Why? He is angry with the nations because he allowed them to punish Israel and yet their malice went far beyond anything he had commanded or allowed. They punished her far worse than he ever intended. – *Pawson*, p. 34
- **A little angry:** God being a little angry can refer to a short period of His anger, as in being angry for a “little while,” instead of it describing the intensity of anger (1:2, 15). The Lord has never been angry long enough to end His relationship with Israel.

**16** ‘Therefore thus says the LORD:  
“I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy;  
My house shall be built in it,” says the LORD of hosts,  
“And a *surveyor’s* line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.” ’

**17** “Again proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts:

“My cities shall again spread out through prosperity;  
The LORD will again comfort Zion,  
And will again choose Jerusalem.” ’ ”

- **Zeal of God:** The revelation of God’s zeal was the core message given to Zechariah in verses 14-17. God has zeal, or burning desire, for His people and purpose. We must

grow in our understanding and experience of God's emotions. His desire is manifest in Jesus as an affectionate Bridegroom, powerful King, and righteous Judge who removes all that hinders His love.

- Zealous for Jerusalem: The Lord will visit Jerusalem with His glory and will fight to defend her against the political oppression of the Gentiles and the spiritual compromise of the Jewish people. He desires Jerusalem's covenant loyalty and her promised destiny.
- Zealous to live in Jerusalem: The Lord is zealous to live in Jerusalem forever (1:16; 2:5, 10). Jerusalem is the city of the great king (Ps. 48:1-5; Mt. 5:35) and will be the political, spiritual, educational, and financial capital of the millennial earth (Isa. 2:2-4; Jer. 3:17).
- Zealous to build the temple: Jesus will build His house (temple, 6:12) as the place of His throne (Ezek. 43:6-7) and the epicenter of His activity throughout the millennial earth.

*12 The Man [Jesus] whose name is the BRANCH...shall build the temple of the LORD (Zech. 6:12)*

*6 I heard Him speaking to me from the temple...7He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne...where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." (Ezek. 43:6-7)*

- The Lord helped Zerubbabel to build the temple in Zechariah's generation (4:6-10). He completed it in five years, dedicating it in March 516 BC (Ezra 6:15). Jesus called Zerubbabel's temple the house of prayer, and expressed zeal for it (Mt. 21:13; Jn. 2:17)

## **Vision of the Horns**

**18** Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* four horns. **19** And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these?"

So he answered me, "These *are* the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

- **The four horns:** These probably represent Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—the four Gentile world empires seen by Daniel (Dan. 2:31-45; 7:2-13). The times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon oppressing Jerusalem, and will end with the Antichrist's oppression of Jerusalem. Daniel saw these same four Gentile world powers in the four metals of the great statue (Dan. 2) and in the vision of the four beast empires (Dan. 7). Most Jewish commentators identify the four kingdoms as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.
  - o 1. Some see these as the empires of Assyria, Babylon, Media, and Persia since they had already "scattered" Israel (past tense) as Zechariah specified in this vision (1:19). However, some prophetic passages speak of events yet in the future using the past tense.



- 2. Some say the number four stands for the four points of the compass. Thus, the four horns signify enemies of Israel in every direction: Syria, Assyria, and Babylon to the north; Edom and Egypt to the south; Ammon and Moab to the east; and Philistia to the west.
- 3. Others say the number four represents nations from the four corners of the world; thus, the four horns signify the totality of the Gentiles' opposition of Israel throughout history.

Regardless of how one interprets this, God will surely destroy any nation that oppresses Israel.

- **Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem:** The three names “Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” (1:19) provide an all-inclusive reference to the whole nation, regardless of which stage of history is considered.

**20** Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. **21** And I said, “What are these coming to do?”

So he said, “These *are* the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up *their* horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

- The vision of the horns is interwoven with the vision of the carpenters. A carpenter rebuilds; these four carpenters are empires that will help Jerusalem, Israel, and Judah rebuild from the scattering caused by the four Gentile horns. In prophetic order, these four could possibly be: 1) Egypt (see 2 Kings 23:33-37); 2) the Medes and Persians under Darius and Cyrus (see Ezra 1:1-4; Neh. 2:1-20); 3) Greece under Alexander the Great (see Dan. 8:21); 4) the fourth horn is unknown. However, the western powers of the British Empire and America have assisted Israel from its rebirth until now. – *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible*, footnote, p. 1461
- **Four craftsman:** The craftsmen were builders with hammers that could easily shatter a brittle ram's horn. These craftsmen were God's tool of judgment to destroy the evil horn-empires. Craftsman is from the Hebrew word *harash*, which means “a worker in wood or metal.
- What a message of comfort: for every horn God has a smith. Can you remember that? For everything that could attack you and throw you, God has a smith to dehorn it...Very simply: if the devil is horned then Christ is our smith. For every horn, God has a smith, therefore we need not fear the horns because God can dehorn the wildest creature. It is a simple picture of God: even when the nations are at rest, God will dehorn them. -Pawson, p. 37