

THE KINGDOMS  
OF  
JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Scale of English Miles

# TRUTH, PROPHECY, and MESSIAH

A Study of the Minor Prophets

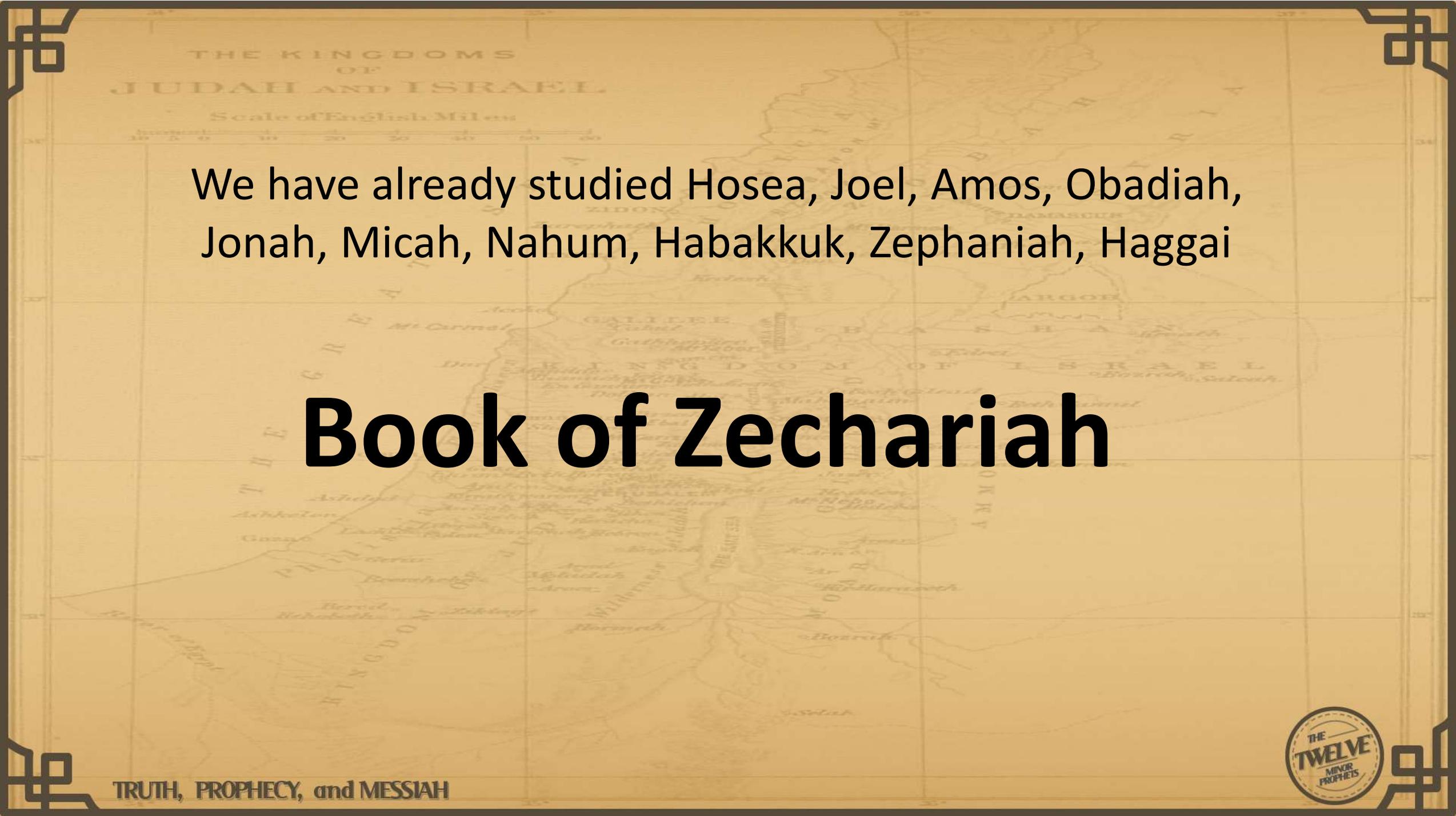


# What are we studying?

- The Minor Prophets is a collection of twelve Old Testament books, known simply as “the Twelve” or “the Book of the Twelve” in the Hebrew Bible.
- **The title “minor” refers to length, not significance or value.**
- Roughly in chronological order, each of these short books gives a glimpse into the spiritual landscape and history of Israel, challenging the status quo through prophets called to speak on God’s behalf.
- In the Hebrew Bible, these works are counted as one book.

<https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/minor-prophets>





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We have already studied Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,  
Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai

# Book of Zechariah

**Author:** Zechariah, a post-exilic prophet and priest. Name “Zechariah” means “the Lord remembers.” About 32 people are called Zechariah in the Old Testament. This author was a Levite born in Babylon.

**Special Feature:**

This book is the most apocalyptic and messianic of all the minor prophets. It was quoted or alluded to at least 41 times by New Testament authors.



# Historical background

- In 538 BC King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and published a decree allowing exiles from Judah to return home. The Jews had permission to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1–4) and came back full of joy and hope, under the leadership of Zerubbabel. They laid the foundations of the temple, but were hindered in their work by the neighboring peoples throughout the reign of Cyrus (538–522 BC; Ezra 4:4–5).
- Zechariah and Haggai urged the people to take heart and take up the rebuilding again; Tattenai, governor of the province of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates objected to this work and demanded to know their authority to carry it out (Ezra 5:3). The authorities searched the royal archives in Babylon and discovered Cyrus’s decree (Ezra 6:1–5), which not only allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem but specified that financial help should be given from the royal treasury (Ezra 6:4) and that the temple gold and silver should be returned (Ezra 6:5). So it was that Darius himself encouraged the Jews, complying with the earlier decree, paying for the rebuilding, providing animals for sacrifice (Ezra 6:8–10), and discouraging others from hindering their work (Ezra 6:11).
- Zechariah stressed the completion of the temple under Zerubbabel’s direction (4:9–10; 6:12). It will be a sign that God has returned to dwell in the midst of His people (2:10; 8:8; cf. 1:17; 2:12). There was great rejoicing when, in 516 BC, the temple was completed (Ezra 6:14–16). The people renewed their dedication to God and looked forward to a time of blessing. Unfortunately, their expectations were not satisfied. They assumed that life would be wonderful, but it turned out to be very hard. Many began to ask whether God was really with them after all.
- When Judah was part of the Medo-Persian Empire they remained an outwardly insignificant and powerless people, facing opposition from their neighbors (Ezra 4:6–24). This continued when the Greek Empire was established through Philip of Macedon and his son, Alexander the Great.

# The theology of Zechariah

Throughout the book of Zechariah there is an emphasis on God's power over the whole world. He has allowed the nations to visit judgment on His people, Judah, but there are strict limits to what they may do. Judah has been and remains God's elect and His judgment is for the purpose of restoring them to a pure relationship with Himself. Those nations that have overstepped the mark will now be judged. Within this plan there is an important role for certain individuals. The historical characters Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest) are mentioned as restoring the temple and its worship. But they have a more far-reaching significance than this. They represent the 'anointed ones' who stand before 'the Lord of all the earth' (4:14), and Zerubbabel is identified in some sense with 'the Branch' (3:8; 6:12), which is a word used to describe the Messiah in Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15 (cf. Isaiah 4:2).

-New Bible Commentary

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*(Parallel to Haggai chapter 2)*

In the eighth month of the second year of Darius [October 520 BC], **the word of the Lord** came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying, **“The Lord (Yahweh) was very angry with your fathers.** Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the **Lord of hosts** (Yahweh Sabbaot יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת), **“Return to Me,”** declares the **Lord of hosts**, “that I may return to you,” says the **Lord of hosts**. Zechariah 1:1-3

Threefold repetition of the divine name stresses the divine imperative conveyed in this call to repentance. The condition for their receiving divine blessing was not simply to resume building the temple, but to return to Him—not just to the Lord’s Law or to His ways but to the Lord Himself. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

“Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former [pre-exilic] prophets proclaimed, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “**Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.**” ’ But they did not listen or give heed to Me,” declares the Lord. “Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not My words [threatened punishment] and My statutes [judicial decisions], which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake [a hunting term] your fathers? Then they repented and said, ‘As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’ ” ’ ” Zechariah 1:4-6

\*Where were their fathers? - dead from sword, famine, pestilence, and natural causes, as predicted by the earlier prophets

## Zechariah's Eight Night Visions

Vision	Reference	Meaning
The Red-horse Rider among the Myrtles	1:7–17	God's anger against the nations and blessing on restored Israel
The Four Horns and the Four Craftsmen	1:18–21	God's judgment on the nations that afflict Israel
The Surveyor with a Measuring Line	Chapter 2	God's future blessing on restored Israel
The Cleansing and Crowning of Joshua the High Priest	Chapter 3	Israel's future cleansing from sin and reinstatement as a priestly nation
The Golden Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees	Chapter 4	Israel as the light to the nations under Messiah, the King-Priest
The Flying Scroll	5:1–4	The severity and totality of divine judgment on individual Israelites
The Woman In the Ephah	5:5–11	The removal of national Israel's sin of rebellion against God
The Four Chariots	6:1–8	Divine judgment on Gentile nations

Source:  
Bible Knowledge Commentary



(First vision)

On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat [February 15, 519 BC, 5 months after temple building resumed, 2 months after Haggai's last prophecy], in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows: I saw at night, and behold, a **man** was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel [brown] and white horses behind him. Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are." And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are those whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth." So they answered the **angel** [מַלְאָךְ *mal'ak*, messenger] **of the Lord** who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet." Zechariah 1:7-11

Then the angel of the Lord said, “O Lord of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years [of exile]?” The Lord answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, **“I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.** But I am very angry with the nations [Gentiles] who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.’ ‘Therefore thus says the Lord, “I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,” declares the Lord of hosts, “and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem.” ’ “Again, proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and **the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.**” ’ ” Zechariah 1:12-17

The intercession of the Angel of the Lord is unusual, for this divine Messenger is usually seen representing God to people rather than functioning in an intercessory role representing people to God.

– Bible Knowledge Commentary

## Because of God's love for Israel and anger toward the Gentiles, He promised six blessings for Israel:

- (a) the presence of God in Jerusalem (I will return ... with mercy; cf. Ezek. 43:5; 48:35) in contrast with the departure of the divine glory from the preexilic temple (Ezek. 10:18–19; 11:22–23)
- (b) the rebuilding of the temple (My house will be rebuilt; cf. Ezek. 40–48)
- (c) the rebuilding of the city (the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem; cf. Jer. 31:38–40)
- (d) Israel will be enriched (towns will again overflow with the wealth of divine blessings which the city walls will be unable to contain; cf. Isa. 60:4–9)
- (e) the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zion) will be comforted by the fulfillment of God's gracious promises (cf. Deut. 13:17; 30:3; Isa. 14:1; 49:15)
- (f) they will be chosen (cf. Zech. 2:12; 3:2), referring to God's focusing His sovereign love on them

*(2<sup>nd</sup> vision, from a valley outside Jerusalem)*

Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns [a symbol of strength, signifying aggression and/or pride]. So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these?” And he answered me, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.” Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. I said, “What are these coming to do?” And he said, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.” Zechariah 1:18-21

Four nations that had scattered Israel before Zechariah saw the vision (perhaps Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia, and Medo-Persia)  
– Bible Knowledge Commentary

*(3<sup>rd</sup> vision, at an observation post within Jerusalem)*

Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand [probably angel of the Lord]. So I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is.” And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, and said to him, “Run, speak to that young man, saying, ‘**Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls** because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. **‘For I,’** declares the Lord, **‘will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’**” Zechariah 2:1-5

‘Thus says the Lord God, “It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan, and you will say, **‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages.** I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls and having no bars or gates, Ezekiel 38:10-11

“Ho there! Flee from the land of the north,” declares the Lord, “for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens,” declares the Lord. “Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon [Jews remaining in exile].” For thus says the Lord of hosts, “After glory He has sent Me against the nations which plunder you, **for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.** For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me.” Zechariah 2:6-9

**“Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” declares the Lord. “Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day [second coming of Messiah Jesus] and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst [as the promised Messiah], and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. The Lord will possess Judah as His portion in the **holy land**, and will again choose **Jerusalem**. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for He is aroused from His holy habitation.” Zechariah 2:10-13**

Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” Isaiah 2:2-3

*(4<sup>th</sup> vision, within the courts of the Temple)*

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the **angel of the Lord** [preincarnate Messiah], and Satan [adversary] standing at his right hand to accuse him. **The Lord** said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel [Joshua was functioning here in his high priestly capacity as representative of the nation Israel]. He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, “Remove the filthy garments [representative of his sin and guilt and that of the nation] from him.” Again he said to him, “See, **I have taken your iniquity away from you** [forgiveness of sins] and will clothe you with festal robes [the purity associated with his forgiveness].” Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. Zechariah 3:1-5

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And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘**If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service** [faithful performance of priestly duties], **then you will also govern My house** [continued service in the temple] **and also have charge of My courts** [guard the temple from idolatry and other religious defilement], **and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.**

Zechariah 3:6-7

“Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol [they prefigured the future cleansing of the nation Israel], for behold, I am going to bring in **My servant** the **Branch**. ‘For behold, the **Stone** that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes [Messiah’s full intelligence with which He will judge]. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day [Second Coming of Messiah Jesus]. ‘In that day,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree [conditions of peace and prosperity (1 Kings 4:25; Isa. 36:16; Micah 4:4); seems to refer to the whole period of millennial blessing which will follow the return of Christ].’ ”

Zechariah 3:8-10

- As the **Servant** of the Lord, Messiah Jesus is the One who comes to do the will of the Father (Isa. 42:1; 49:3–4; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11).
- As the **Branch** of David, Messiah Jesus is the Davidic Descendant who will rise to power and glory out of the humiliation into which the line of David had fallen (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12–13).
- As the **Stone** (cf. Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42; 1 Peter 2:6) Messiah Jesus will bring judgment on the Gentiles (Dan. 2:44–45) and be a stone of stumbling for unbelieving Israel (Rom. 9:31–33).



*(5<sup>th</sup> vision, within the courts of the Temple)*

Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep. He said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see, and behold, a **lampstand** all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.” Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, “What are these, my lord?”

Zechariah 4:1-4

So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, ‘**Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,**’ says the Lord of hosts. What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” ’ ” Zechariah 4:5-7

Might = military strength

Power = human manpower

We can only truly serve and honor God in His power

Also the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. **Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.** For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line [final stone?] in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of the Lord which range to and fro throughout the earth.” Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?” And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?” So he answered me, saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, **“These are the two anointed ones [olive trees] who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.”** Zechariah 4:8-14



Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, **Moses** and **Elijah** appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, **“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”** When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. Matthew 17:1-8

Moses = Law    Elijah = Prophets    Both illustrate exodus/departing and looking to Messiah  
Moses died    Elijah never died (raptured)    Both groups enter God’s kingdom

# Summaries

- **Chapter 5**

- God will cleanse His people from wickedness
- God will judge those who refuse to repent and continue to live in disobedience

- **Chapter 6**

- God promises that the Temple will be completed despite opposition
- “Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the Lord.”  
Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. And it will take place if you completely obey the Lord your God.”  
Zechariah 6:15

In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev [December 7, 518 BC, nearly two years after the night visions, 2 years before the completion of the Temple]. Now the town of Bethel [the Israelite city 12 miles north of Jerusalem that had been the center of apostate worship for the Northern 10 tribes of Israel (cf. 1 Kings 12:28–29; 13:1; Amos 7:13)] had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech [Jews with Babylonian names] and their men to seek the favor of the Lord, speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, “Shall I weep in the fifth month [Ab, July-August, commemorating the burning to the ground of the city and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8–10)] and abstain, as I have done these many years?” Zechariah 7:1-3

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Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, “Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months [two fasts observed by the exiles during the Babylonian Captivity, NOT including Yom Kippur] **was it actually for Me that you fasted?** ‘When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves [empty formalism devoid of spiritual reality]? ‘Are not these the words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited?’ ” Zechariah 7:4-7

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Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah saying, “Thus has the Lord of hosts said, ‘**Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.**’ But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. **They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets**; therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts. And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,” says the Lord of hosts; “but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.” Zechariah 7:8-14

Then the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘**I am exceedingly jealous for Zion**, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.’ “Thus says the Lord, ‘**I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem** [second coming of Messiah Jesus]. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.’ Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. And the **streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls** playing in its streets.’” Zechariah 8:1-5



Jerusalem was the one place where sacrifices could be offered, the one temple authorized to be built as God’s house, a sign that the Lord was in the midst of His people. The restoration of the temple in Jerusalem means the confirmation of God’s covenant promises.  
-New Bible Commentary

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?’ declares the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’” Zechariah 8:6-8



“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Let your hands be strong [to complete the rebuilding of the temple], you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets, those who spoke in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built. ‘For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for animal; and for him who went out or came in there was no peace because of his enemies, and I set all men one against another. ‘But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ declares the Lord of hosts. ‘For there will be peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. ‘It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.’ Zechariah 8:9-13

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I have not relented, so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear! These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. **Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another**, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,’ declares the Lord.”

Zechariah 8:14-17

Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘The **fast of the fourth**, the **fast of the fifth**, the **fast of the seventh** and the **fast of the tenth months** will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.’ “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will also go.” So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord.’ “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘**In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” ’ ’**” Zechariah 8:18-23

**The Fast of the Fourth**, the 17th of Tammuz, commemorated the occasion when Moses discovered them worshiping the golden calf and broke the two tables of the law. **The Fast of the Fifth** is Tisha B’Av, when the Temple was destroyed. **The Fast of the Seventh**, the 3rd of Tishri, is the Fast of Gedaliah, commemorating the assassination of the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to govern the Jews who remained in their homeland after the Temple had been destroyed in 586 BC. **The Fast of the Tenth**, the 10th of Tevet, was for the day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege on Jerusalem. – Chuck Missler

# Lessons for today

- All of the Law and Prophets point ahead to the promised Messiah, who is Jesus of Nazareth
- In the last days, the nations (Gentiles) will turn to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- Don't ignore the pain of the past, let God turn it into the joy of the future
- Messiah is coming and He will be the object of our worship

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# A Time To Respond

