

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

ZECHARIAH

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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,

Zechariah was a contemporary of the prophet Haggai.

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....

Zechariah followed in the footsteps of his grandfather as a prophet. Note: Grandparents can be very influential in the lives of they grandchildren.

Emphasis is on the fact that Zechariah's message is "the word of the LORD," YHWH, the self-existent, eternal God of Israel.

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

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.

When I looked at the Hebrew for "sore displeased," it indicated "bursting with rage." True to the principle established in Ezekiel...

Ezek. 18:20...The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

...the Lord is not going to respond to those hearing Zechariah's message according to the works of their forefathers. He is calling for them to turn FROM their sin TO God. If they do so, He promises to turn to them, to restore their relationship. Again, this affirms the truth as declared by the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezek. 18:30-32 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

I think it is important to note that God is giving them a choice; He is not forcing them into relationship.

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.

The prophet urges them not to be like their fathers who paid no attention to the prophets of God. Their forefathers had chosen to ignore God's message as delivered by His prophets. They chose to continue in their "evil ways" and "evil doings." In today's understanding that would be like calling Americans to quit living according to the wicked morals of our society and stop doing wicked things.

Zech. 1:5 Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

As God often does, He poses questions to make them think. The point to these questions—you are going to die.

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.

The point God is making—My words live; My words and My laws are true. The judgment that fell upon your forefathers came to pass as foretold by My prophets. These judgments resulted in repentance by many who lived through that judgment. Point is made that judgment was in accordance with their actions; it was just.

Zech. 1:7 Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, 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,

Zech. 1:8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that *were* in the bottom; and behind him *were there* red horses, speckled, and white.

Just as with my other journals, I am going to trust the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to me and try not to get bogged down by what I can't understand.

About three months after receiving his first message from the Lord, Zechariah receives another message from a night vision. He sees a man on a red horse standing among some myrtle trees. The Hebrew for *bottom* indicates shade or as it was getting dark, and I tend to think it is referencing getting dark, i.e., approaching a time of judgment, a time of God's wrath. Zephaniah used that comparison.

Zeph. 1:15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness....

Behind this horse and rider were some other horses of different colors (verse 11 implies that they have riders since they reply to the angel).

Zech. 1:9 Then said I, O my lord, what *are* these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these *be*.

Zech. 1:10 And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These *are they* whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

Zech. 1:11 And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

The wording is confusing, but it seems as though the angel and the man on the red horse are one and the same and is identified in verse 11 as "the angel of the LORD." This is often the description given in the Old Testament of the pre-incarnate Jesus. Zechariah asks the angel who these other riders are, and he is told that they are those sent by YHWH to basically patrol the earth. Zechariah then hears the riders give a report on what they saw—the earth is still and at rest or quiet.

You can't help but wonder at this report. When has this been descriptive of the situation on planet earth? As you keep on reading, this seems to be in contrast to the situation in Jerusalem/Judah.

Zech. 1:12 Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

Zech. 1:13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with good words and comfortable words*.

The "angel of the LORD" then speaks to YHWH. He asks when He is going to show mercy to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah since they have suffered His anger for 70 years in captivity in Babylon. God answers him with "good words and comfortable words" that seem to include the message of the following verses.

Zech. 1:14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

Zech. 1:15 And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are at ease*: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

Zech. 1:16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

The angel then tells Zechariah to proclaim the message that YHWH is still zealous for Jerusalem and its people. He is "bursting with rage" toward the heathen nations who mistreated the Jewish people far beyond the judgment that God intended for them. These are those same nations that were described as still and at rest in verse 11. This would also seem to indicate a connection to the rest of God's people that were scattered throughout the earth and how they were being treated by those nations in which they lived.

Verse 15 and verse 2 are confusing when compared—In verse 2 the Lord was "bursting with rage" toward the forefathers and in verse 15 He states that He "was but a little displeased."

Verse 16 affirms that the Lord is again going to show mercy to Jerusalem (and its people) as His house is rebuilt. When His house is rebuilt, He will again be their defense and protection. (I believe *stretching forth the line* is an idiom that declares ownership.)

Zech. 1:17 Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

Emphasis is again made that this message is from YHWH. He identifies the cities of Judah (v12) as "My cities." He is declaring that Judah will again prosper and Jerusalem will be established as God's dwelling place on earth. In immediate context, this prophecy would be fulfilled in Zechariah's lifetime, but I believe there is a future, more magnificent fulfillment of this prophecy for Israel.

Zech. 1:18 Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

Zech. 1:19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

The next thing Zechariah sees is four horns, and he asks the angel what they were. The angel tells him that they are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

In my study of prophecy I have learned that horns represent power, and often kings/kingdoms. Daniel 7 describes the coming Antichrist as a horn (v8), and Daniel 8 describes Alexander the Great as a “notable horn” (v5) and the kings of Media and Persia as horns (v20). (See journal on Daniel for further explanation.) Frankly, I think these four horns must refer to the same kings/kingdoms referenced in Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and again by his own dreams—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. I think, as is often the case, that Zechariah was given a vision that spanned from his own time to the end times.

Zech. 1:20 And the LORD shewed me four carpenters.

Zech. 1:21 Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

Zechariah is then shown four carpenters or skilled craftsmen. Point is made that YHWH shows him the carpenters. Zechariah questions what they were going to do. He was told that since no man showed any concern for how Israel was treated at the hands of these kings/kingdoms, these carpenters were sent to provoke fear into the Gentile nations and rescue the land of Judah from their domination. They had scattered God’s people throughout the nations, and it seems that God is sending these carpenters to facilitate their return.