



PART 4 THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS

It is advisable first to read the Preface in Part 1, also the Introduction to the Minor Prophets which precedes the Study on Hosea and to read each book prior to studying it. The section on each prophet is a complete Bible Study.

Only a brief summary of the words of the *Voice of the Lord* (*red italics*) can be conveyed.

ZECHARIAH

INTRODUCTION

Zechariah's name means '*the Lord remembers.*'

The God of Israel ever remembers His promise, being always faithful to His word.

The prophet's ministry began after the Babylonian exile and like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he was both priest and prophet. He was a contemporary of Haggai but ministered years after him, being called as a young man to pronounce the *Voice of the Lord* in the second year of King Darius.

After the decree of Cyrus ending the captivity and allowing the Temple to be rebuilt, Zechariah, born in Babylon, returned with 50,000 Jews to the land of Judah in 538 B.C. under the leadership of Joshua and Zerubbabel.

Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai and Malachi were other prophets who also returned.

Although the foundations of the Temple were completed in two years, the work was interrupted by enemy opposition. The people instead started to build their own houses.

The rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem had started again by the time Zechariah gave his first message in 520 B.C. This was the same year as Haggai received his messages from the Lord. The theme of Zechariah's book is encouragement.

His first message was followed a few months later in 519 B.C. by 8 visions (not dreams) all in one night. Their words gave comfort and encouragement to the builders, the progress of the work having been hindered for 16 years.

Read Zechariah 1: 1 - 6

Zechariah's first message to the returned exiles was a *rebuke* and warning from the Lord; very angry for the 70 years of the captivity.

God's message to the Jews was not to follow the ways of their forefathers but instead repent and return to the Lord –

Therefore say to them (the Jews of this day),

Return to Me and I will return to you; it is the utterance of the Lord of hosts.

Zechariah 1: 3

VISION 1 - THE MAN AND THE HORSES MIDST THE MYRTLE TREES

Read Zechariah 1: 7 - 17

* In his first Night Vision Zechariah saw a Man (the Angel of the Lord – the Christ) riding a red horse amongst the myrtle trees with riders on red, brown and white horses. The Man explained the Lord God had sent them and they had reported back that the earth was at peace.



Answering the Angel of the Lord's question about the length of Jerusalem's captivity, the vision ended with words of the Lord's anger against the nations. They had been used to punish His people but their wicked aim had been the destruction of the Jews.

The Angel of the Lord gave the interpreting angel who talked to Zechariah comforting words to proclaim to Zion's people.

Zechariah 1: 16, 17

VISION 2 - FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CRAFTSMEN

Read Zechariah 1: 18 - 21

* The 2nd Night Vision depicted horns and craftsmen; the latter an encouragement to the people of Judah.



Horns are symbols of national power, the four probably representing the empires of Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia and Medo-Persia.

These are the horns or powers that scattered Judah so that no man lifted up his head.

Zechariah 1: 21a

For their cruel devastation of Israel, each power was destroyed by other nations – Egypt, Babylonia, Persia and Greece.

But these craftsmen (smiths or workmen) have come to cast out the horns of the nations who lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

Zechariah 1: 21b

VISION 3 - A MAN WITH A MEASURING LINE



Read Zechariah 2: 1 - 13

* In the 3rd Night Vision Zechariah, God's messenger, saw a man with a Measuring Line about to measure the enlarged city of Jerusalem on the return of the exiles.

The interpreting angel and another angel explained that Jerusalem will be safe, having God's protection, and be a city without walls because of its growth in size. The Lord, Whose presence had rested above the Ark of the Covenant both in the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, would return to glorify Jerusalem.

Zechariah 2: 5

The Jews still in Babylon were told to flee, to return to their own land, God's message stating that Zion's enemies will be plundered.

For he who touches you (Israel) touches the apple (pupil) of His eye.

Zechariah 2: 8b



The people were to sing with joy for the Lord declared He would come to live there. Many nations would be joined to the Lord in that day of Zion's restoration and be His people.

Zechariah 2: 10

Zechariah 2: 12

Zechariah 2: 13

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46: 10a

VISION 4 - THE HIGH PRIEST CLOTHED IN CLEAN GARMENTS

Read Zechariah 3: 1 - 7

* In Zechariah's 4th Night Vision, he saw Joshua, the High Priest, dressed in filthy clothes standing before the Angel of the Lord with Satan, the Accuser, on his right.

Zechariah 3: 2

The Angel of the Lord gave orders for the filthy garments to be removed by the angels standing before Him. The filthy clothes represented not only his sin but that of the nation. Joshua's sin was thus taken away before he could be reinstated as High Priest.

Zechariah requested that Joshua be given a clean turban or mitre. As the Lord had commanded Moses, the High Priest's turban, was engraved with a gold inscription –

HOLY TO THE LORD

A turban was set on Joshua's head and he was clothed in the costly garments of his office as the divinely reappointed High Priest.

The Angel of the Lord then gave Joshua a charge with these solemn words –

Zechariah 3: 7

Read Zechariah 3: 8 - 10

The *Voice of the Lord* announced to the assembly of priests standing before Joshua –

Behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch.

Zechariah 3: 8b

Before Joshua was *the Stone* set with seven eyes.
The *Branch* and *Stone* were Messianic titles.

Behold, I will carve upon it its inscription, says the Lord of hosts; and I will remove the iniquity and guilt of this land in a single day.

Zechariah 3: 9b

Israel would then be cleansed and restored as a priestly nation.

Zechariah 3: 10

These promises of the Lord could refer to –

- * The Crucifixion on Good Friday with the removal of Sin through Christ in one day.
- * The time of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the latter days.

VISION 5 - THE GOLD LAMPSTAND WITH SEVEN LAMPS AND TWO OLIVE TREES

Read Zechariah 4: 1 - 14

* Zechariah received the 5th Night Vision when the Angel awakened him. The golden Lampstand in the vision is different from the design in both the Tabernacle and Temple.



The Angel answered Zechariah's question by explaining that the continuous flow of oil from the two olive trees was the *Voice of the Lord* to Zerubbabel saying:

Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit (of Whom the oil is a symbol), says the Lord of hosts.
Zechariah 4: 6b

Zerubbabel, of King David's line, on the return of the exiles from Babylon, had been appointed Governor in Jerusalem - but not King. Together with Joshua the High Priest, they were to lead and encourage the dispirited people to rebuild the Temple for the worship of the Lord of all the earth. Worship is God's priority and should be the believers'. Not by human might or power but only by the power of God's Spirit would Zerubbabel, who had laid the Temple's foundations, finish its building.

Who despises the day of small things?

Zechariah 4: 10a

The great mountain (obstacles / hindrances) would become like a plain or a molehill before Zerubbabel, for he would finish rebuilding God's Temple. The mole hill is the source of the proverb - *making mountains out of molehills* - but reversed!

The two olive trees represented Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. Their service to the Lord pointed to the future work of God's Messiah as both King and Priest.

VISION 6 - THE FLYING SCROLL



Read Zechariah 5: 1 - 4

* Zechariah in his 6th Night Vision saw a scroll, unrolled like a banner and therefore easy to read.

The angel explained it was the Curse over the land. On one side, the scroll was inscribed with the doom of banishment for every thief and on the other for everyone who swears falsely by taking God's name in vain – as recorded in the Ten Commandments.

The *Voice of the Lord* declared that the banner's curse would enter and destroy the houses of the thief and the false swearer.

VISION 7 - THE WOMAN IN A BASKET

Zechariah 5: 5 - 11

The Angel in the 7th Night Vision explained that the Woman in the large measuring basket covered by a lead lid, symbolised wickedness as already seen in the sin of the thieves and false swearers.

Zechariah then saw two women, with wings like storks, lift up that evil basket and swiftly carry it away. The Angel explained that they were flying away with it to idolatrous Babylonia.

ZECHARIAH'S LAST VISION

Read Zechariah 6: 1 - 8

Zechariah, in his 8th and last Night Vision, saw 4 chariots harnessed to powerful horses – red, black, white and dappled. The Angel explained that this vision (more difficult to understand) symbolised the four spirits of heaven going out through all the earth from the presence of the Lord. The spirit conveyed by the black and white horses went north to overcome two powers in that region; the bay horses went forth to the south country. The Babylonian divine judgement gave rest to God's Spirit of righteous anger in that land. The first chariot drawn by red horses, not included, probably meant that their mission (against Assyria?) had already been completed.

A CROWN FOR THE HIGH PRIEST

Zechariah 6: 9 - 15



Then the *Voice of the Lord* commanded Zechariah to take an offering of silver and gold from respected and named representatives of the exiles to make a memorial crown for Joshua. The crown was not for Zerubbabel as governor but for Joshua, the High Priest, as a type of Christ, the One Who would come again as Priest and King. The crowning of Joshua in 519 B.C. was a confirmation of the 8 visions. The temple was dedicated in 516 B.C.

Zechariah was to say to Joshua,

Zechariah 6: 12

Zechariah's words to Joshua prophesied that the crown was not only a confirmation of the visions but a symbol of the coming Messiah and the people's spiritual renewal. At His coronation He would be enthroned in glorious honour bringing peace as both Priest and King and Temple builder.

Many from far away would help build that true temple of the Lord.

As the Lord's messenger, Zechariah continued with these words to Joshua -

Your part in this shall come to pass if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord.

Zechariah 6: 15b

FASTS AND FEASTS

Read Zechariah 7: 1 - 7

Nearly 2 years later, the *Voice of the Lord* came to Zechariah in the 4th year of King Darius about the Fasts during the exile.

Men from Bethel had come to inquire of the priests and prophets if the fast in the 5th month to commemorate the destruction of the Temple should now continue.

(Jeremiah 52: 12, 13)

God's answer came to Zechariah in a question that rebuked the insincerity of the people.

Zechariah 7: 5

The fasts of the 4th, 5th, 7th and 10th months in Babylon commemorated the opening of Jerusalem's gates to Nebuchadnezzar, destruction of the Temple, the assassination of Gedaliah and the siege of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 39: 1 - 3, 52: 4 - 7, 2 Kings 25: 22 - 25)

Read Zechariah 7: 8 - 14

Then the *Voice of the Lord* came again to Zechariah.

Zechariah 7: 9

In pre-exilic times, the people had failed to listen to the *Voice of the Lord*. They showed no mercy and compassion to widows, the fatherless, strangers and the poor.

Therefore there came great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 7:12b

So they shall cry and I will not answer, says the Lord of hosts. But I will scatter them with a whirlwind among the nations whom they know not and who know not them.

Zechariah 7: 13b, 14a

Thus the *Beautiful Land* of Israel was desolate for many years.

GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL

Read Zechariah Chapter 8

God reaffirmed His promises to do good and to restore Israel but great wrath to the surrounding enemy nations.

Zechariah 8: 2

The *Voice of the Lord* came to Zechariah with words of encouragement both for the present time of rebuilding and to the Remnant returning in the distant future.

The Lord having withdrawn His presence from Jerusalem now promised to return according to His original promise. (Zechariah 1: 16)

The rebuilding of the Temple having begun, the Lord God promised peace and prosperity and abundant blessings. The Lord promised joyous Feasts instead of Fasts.

BLESSINGS FOR ZION

Thus says the Lord of hosts; _____

Zechariah 8: 3

*Old men and old women shall again dwell in Jerusalem and sit out in the streets.
The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.*

Zechariah 8: 4a, 5

Zechariah 8: 7

Zechariah 8: 8

God promised to bless the people as when the foundations of the Temple were first laid.
Their hands were to be strong.



Zechariah 8: 12

*As you have been a curse and a byword among the nations, O house of Judah
and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing.*

Zechariah 8: 13a

Zechariah 8: 15

THESE ARE THE THINGS YOU SHALL DO

** Speak everyman the truth with his neighbour.*

(These words were repeated by St. Paul in Ephesians 4: 15, 25)

** Render truth and pronounce the judgement that makes for peace in your gates.*

Zechariah 8: 16

** Let none think or devise evil in your hearts against his neighbour.*

** Love no false oath, for all these things I hate, says the Lord.*

Zechariah 8: 17

Love truth and peace - and then will the four fasts each year be feasts of joy and blessing.

(Zechariah 8: 19)

In the latter days many peoples (Gentiles) shall come to pray in Jerusalem and they will say -

"Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Zechariah 8: 23b

AN ORACLE AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

Read Zechariah 9: 1 - 8

As foretold by Zechariah (2: 8, 9) and other prophets, the traditional pagan enemies of Israel would be destroyed –

Aram (Damascus), Tyre and Sidon (Phoenician cities) and the Philistines cities of

Ashkelon, Gaza, Ashdod and Ekron.

Fulfilling the prophecy, Alexander the Great captured and destroyed the offshore island of Tyre in 333 B.C. and it has never been rebuilt.

A remnant would be left no longer worshipping idols.

Ekron, like the Jebusites in Jerusalem, would be assimilated into Judah.

During these times the Lord would keep watch over His Land.

ZION'S COMING KING

Read Zechariah 9: 9 - 17

Zechariah foretold rejoicing when Zion's King would appear, the promised Messiah, bringing deliverance to Israel and peace to the nations.

Zechariah 9: 9

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a colt, the foal of a donkey – a humble animal, and unlike the war horse, a sign of peace.

On entering Jerusalem Jesus was greeted with the words –

*Hosanna! (Save now!)
Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!* (Matthew 21: 9)

He shall speak the word and peace shall come to the nations, and His dominion shall be from the Sea (Mediterranean) and from the River (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth!

Zechariah 9: 10b

God's covenant relationship with His people, sealed in blood, assured the promise –

I will restore double your former prosperity to you. Zechariah 9: 12b

The Lord their God will save them on that day as the flock of His people, for they shall be as the (precious) jewels of a crown, lifted high over and shining glitteringly upon His land.

(Zechariah 9: 16)

GOD'S CARE FOR ISRAEL

Read Zechariah Chapter 10

Unlike dumb idols, the Lord God Almighty is the One Who controls everything. It is the Lord Who gives Israel the latter rains in the Spring to water the fields and pastures. God's righteous anger was ever against the false shepherds (rulers and priests) who led His people astray.

My anger is kindled against the shepherds (who are not true shepherds). Zechariah 10: 3a

In His care for the people of Israel, the Lord gave the promise of the coming Cornerstone – a Messianic word used in both the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament.

Out of him (Judah) shall come forth the Cornerstone. Zechariah 10: 4a

Zechariah 10: 6

The Lord would lead and be with His people against their enemies. Like Zechariah's name, the Lord would be remembered by His scattered people who would survive.

Zechariah 10: 9

This prophecy was fulfilled in 1948 when the Jews returned and the nation of Israel was born in a single day!

TWO STICKS AND TWO SHEPHERDS

Read Zechariah 11: 1 - 3

Poetic words briefly describe the coming destruction of the cedars of Lebanon, the region's pine forests, and the oaks of Bashan. In complete contrast to the previous chapter of divine blessings, the ruined pasture lands and the jungles of the Jordan valley will be lamented in the coming years of desolation in the land.

Read Zechariah 11: 4 - 17

The Lord instructed Zechariah to shepherd, to feed the flock (Israel) marked for slaughter. The sinful rulers and priests had no care for the people and did not feed their flock.

For I will no more pity or spare the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord. Zechariah 11: 6a



This prophecy of God's judgement was fulfilled when the Romans conquered Judah in 70 A.D. The Lord no longer had pity on His people for their rejection of the Messiah.

In pasturing the flock, Zechariah took two (shepherd) staffs, naming them Beauty or Grace and Bands or Union. Within a month three false shepherds (rulers, priests and prophets) were judged and destroyed. They had hated Zechariah – representing the future Good Shepherd.

So I (Zechariah) said, I will not be your shepherd.

Zechariah 11: 9a

THE BROKEN STICKS

* Zechariah then broke the staff called Grace (favour to His people) thus revoking God's covenant with Israel for their rejection of the Good Shepherd - the Messiah.

So the covenant was annulled on that day and thus the most wretched of the flock (the Godly) who were watching me (Zechariah) knew that it was truly the word of the Lord. Zechariah 11: 11

For wages, Zechariah received only thirty pieces of silver – the price of a slave!

Zechariah 11: 13, (Matthew 27: 10)

* Then Zechariah broke the second staff (Bands) indicating the annulment of the union between Israel and Judah.

At the *Voice of the Lord*, Zechariah then took up the rod and staff of a false and uncaring shepherd; and so foretold the years of hardship and affliction for the Jewish people.

Woe to the worthless and foolish shepherd who deserts the flock! Zechariah 11: 17a

Ultimately, the antichrist (the false shepherd) will become powerless and be destroyed.

(11: 17b)

GOD'S DEFENCE OF JERUSALEM

Zechariah 12: 1 - 9 (An ORACLE - a burden being a revelation or vision)

Almighty God's powerful word is expressed in the second oracle regarding Israel and especially about Jerusalem.

Thus says the Lord, Who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him. Zechariah 12: 1b

Zechariah 12: 2

The nations surrounding Jerusalem would stagger as if drunk on wine from drinking the cup of God's wrath.

Zechariah 12: 3

Despite the people's rejection of the Messiah, they will be defended by the Angel of the Lord going before them. Then will the inhabitants of Jerusalem be strong in the Lord. In that future day the Lord will destroy all the nations that surround Jerusalem.

MOURNING AS FOR AN ONLY SON

Zechariah 12: 10 - 14

In that day there will be a great mourning in Jerusalem. It will be like that for King Josiah who was killed in battle, even though in disguise, fighting the Egyptians at Megiddo.

Sadly, he had failed to listen to the *Voice of the Lord* conveyed through Pharaoh Neco!

(2 Kings 23: 29 - 30, 2 Chronicles 35: 20 - 25)

Josiah was Judah's last good king, for whom the prophet Jeremiah wrote laments. The three sons who succeeded Josiah, ruled as puppet kings and each did evil in the sight of the Lord. Josiah's son, Zedekiah, was the last king of David's line to rule in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12: 10

Zechariah prophesied that all the families in Israel will repent and mourn, their wives apart, in deepest sorrow and overwhelming grief when their rejected Messiah appears.

Their mourning for the only begotten Son of God they had pierced will be far greater than their deep sorrow on the death of good King Josiah.

THE DAY OF CLEANSING FROM SIN

Zechariah 13: 1 - 6

Zechariah 13: 1

The Lord of host will remove the idols, false prophets and the impure spirit from the land.

THE SMITTEN SHEPHERD

Zechariah 13: 7 - 9

Awake, O sword, against My shepherd and against the man who is My associate, says the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.

Zechariah 13: 7a

Zechariah's prophetic word declared that the Good Shepherd would be smitten whereas in his earlier prophecy (11: 15 - 17), it was the wicked shepherd that was struck down.

His prophecy was fulfilled in the New Testament on the night of Jesus' betrayal and arrest when the apostles fled from the Garden of Gethsemane. After the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the Jews were scattered and dispersed amidst the nations for 2000 years.

In His judgement God remembers mercy, for a one third remnant will remain to be refined, tested like gold and re-gathered, the Lord being acknowledged by His people.

They will call upon My name, and I will hear and answer them. I will say, it is My people; and they will say, The Lord is my God.

Zechariah 13: 9b

THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

Zechariah 14: 1 - 8

In the End Times the Lord will gather all nations against Jerusalem.

The city will be taken and plundered, the landscape subjected to a mighty upheaval.

Zechariah 14: 3

Zechariah 14: 4

Zechariah 14: 5

Zechariah 14: 8

Read Psalm 46: 4 - 6

There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. (Psalm 46: 4)

Behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the temple. (Ezekiel 47: 1a)

THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY REIGNS

Zechariah 14: 9 - 15

Zechariah 14: 9

Again, worship is God's priority and the outcome of witness to the world's peoples.



In Zechariah's last apocalyptic revelation, Jerusalem would stand higher than the surrounding land and be safe from destruction. Fearful calamity will come upon the enemies which fought against Jerusalem and Judah; even physical wasting away through plague of man and beast. Panic in the enemy ranks will cause fighting and annihilation of each other, leaving much plunder – this time of the enemy and not Jerusalem!

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (HARVEST)

Zechariah 14: 16 - 21

Zechariah 14: 16

For those people who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, there will be no rain, the punishment of Egypt and other nations of drought and plague.



Throughout Israel's history the Harvest celebration in Jerusalem was the last and greatest feast of the year – a time of rejoicing, thanksgiving, praise and worship.



Zechariah declared that the pots in the Temple shall be holy like the bowls before the altar; and even the bells on the horses shall be inscribed with the words –

HOLY TO THE LORD

The household pots in all Jerusalem and Judah shall be dedicated and holy to the Lord; and traders shall never again be seen in the Temple courts.

Finally the book of Zechariah ends with these words -

And in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite (any godless or unclean person, whether Jew or Gentile) in the house of the Lord of hosts.

Zechariah 14: 21b



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