

## Zechariah

1. Introduction – Zechariah is the longest of the minor prophets and is often considered the most difficult. Zechariah was a contemporary of Ezra and Haggai, calling the people to spiritual renewal and readying them for worship in relation to the rebuilt temple and beyond.
2. Author, date, historical setting – Zechariah is likely the same individual named in Ezra 5:1; 6:14 and Neh. 12:16. If so, then he was from a family of priests that returned from the exile. He ministered to a people who had returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple and were faced with many temptations, questions, and trials. Scholars have noted a significant contrast in style and focus between chs. 1-8 and chs. 9-14. As a result, some scholars have theorized that the book was written by two (or more!) different authors, possibly separated by a large period of time. However, the differences between these two sections can be explained plausibly by noting that the same author can adopt very different styles when the subject changes. The first part is largely concerned with local issues; the second part looks further into the future. Zechariah may have lived long after the events alluded to in 1-8 and later wrote 9-14 as a more distant prophetic vision. Furthermore, there are many common themes between the two sections that confirm the unity of the book.
3. Language and style – Zechariah has an impressive literary structure. The parts of the books reflect a chiasmic structure (a nested structure whose parts follow a pattern like A-B-C-C'-B'-A'). As the author works his way into the structure of 1-8, he works from a focus on the nations (1 and 8), to concerns of the restored community (2-3 and 6-7), and then zeroing in on the temple area (4, 5). 1-8 is primarily prose, whereas 9-14 is primarily poetry. 9-14 consists of two oracles, both concerning a more distant but fuller restoration and rescue of God's people.
4. Structure (Dillard and Longman):
  - a. Zechariah's claim to authority (1:1-6)
  - b. The night visions (1:7-6:8)
    - i. the commander and his scouts (1:7-17)
    - ii. four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21)
    - iii. man with a measuring line (2:1-13)
    - iv. the high priest in filthy clothes (3:1-10)
    - v. the menorah and olive trees (4:1-14)
    - vi. the flying scroll (5:1-4)
    - vii. the basket of wickedness (5:5-11)
    - viii. four chariots (6:1-8)
  - c. Crown for the high priest (6:9-15)
  - d. A question about fasting (7:1-8:23)
  - e. Two oracles (9-11; 12-14) about Israel's enemies and the coming of Zion's king and shepherd
5. Themes:
  - a. The high priest is stripped of his filthy garments and dressed in clothing provided by God. This is a beautiful and powerful picture of the reality of justification by faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ.
  - b. Zech. 9-14 is the most quoted part of the Old Testament in the gospel narratives of the death of Christ.
  - c. The crowning of the high priest seems to point forward to the Messiah who is both priest and king in the same person.
  - d. Zechariah points the people away from focusing on ritual holiness and toward obedience to the law from the heart.

### Reference:

*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, R. B. Dillard and T. Longman III, Zondervan, 1994.  
*A Survey of the Old Testament*, Hill and Walton, Zondervan, 2000.