

Zechariah 1:1-6
May 18, 2022

The name Zechariah is Hebrew for *Yahweh remembers*.

The book of Zechariah is one of twelve books in the Old Testament that are collectively called the “Minor Prophets” or “the Twelve.” They aren’t “minor” in that they are less important than Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; rather, that they are less lengthy.

All sixteen prophetic books were written during a three-century span, roughly between 785-430 BC, during the time of the divided kingdom, through the exile, and into the post-exilic time period.

While we usually think of a “prophetic” book as one that foretells the future, it’s better to think of them as speaking to God’s people on His behalf. We could call this forthtelling. Nevertheless, there is some foretelling throughout the prophetic books, and Zechariah is no exception. Feinberg notes:

“The prophetic horizon of Zechariah is far broader than that of the other minor prophets... He dwells on the Person and work of Christ more fully than all the other minor prophets together” (Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*, 273).

Thus, we have references to the Messiah as the Branch (3:8; 6:12), the dual roles of King and Priest that Jesus occupies (6:13), the Triumphal Entry (9:9), His crucifixion (12:10), even Jesus’ Second Coming (14:4) and the Messianic Kingdom (14:8-9). Quite the spread!

We also want to note that the most common name for God in this book is the *LORD*, with *LORD of Hosts* occurring fifty-three times. He

is the LORD Almighty, the God of Armies. This is quite the high and exalted name for God! (In contrast, *God* only occurs four times!)

I. Introduction (1:1-6)

Zechariah tells us out of the gate that he writes *in the eighth month of the second year of Darius* (v. 1), or the year 520 BC, making him a contemporary of Haggai (cf. Hag 1:1). Darius was the Medo-Persian king who permitted the Israelites to begin to return from exile to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the Temple under the ministry of Ezra (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh 12:16).

Even though they had just returned from exile, the Israelites had already begun their slide towards spiritual sluggishness. Like Haggai, Zechariah calls the Israelites to repentance for their disobedience and spiritual failures. Their *fathers*, and the *prophets* who had ministered to their ancestors, were gone (v. 5). The question now is: Will they obey the LORD? After all, the word from the former prophets came to pass!

The Hebrew word for *turning* (what we might think of as *repentance*) is mentioned three times in vv. 2-6. Twice the LORD calls them to repentance, and we are told in v. 6 that they indeed do just that! Like Haggai, Zechariah strikes an overall hopeful tone.