



World Christian Fellowship

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Conditions to Blessing!

Zechariah 1:1-6

Zechariah 1:1-6, *In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, ²“The Lord has been very angry with your fathers. ³Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the Lord of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts. ⁴“Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.”’ But they did not hear nor heed Me,” says the Lord. ⁵“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶Yet surely My words and My statutes, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, Did they not overtake your fathers? “So they returned and said: ‘Just as the Lord of hosts determined to do to us, According to our ways and according to our deeds, So He has dealt with us.’” ’*

Though this is book written many centuries ago, it is still written by an unchanging God.

The word of this prophecy is as good as if it were penned this morning.

It is incredible from many angles.

Overview:

Many people feel that it is the most difficult book in the Old Testament to interpret. May be true, and therein lies something of its challenge.

Let us approach this study with prayer and humility, knowing that many who have before us have found it to be very difficult.

This book about Christ.

Almost every page, Jesus Christ appears in this book. Jesus is the main character throughout this book.

Zechariah 1:9, *Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they are."*

Zechariah 1:14, *So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I am zealous for Jerusalem And for Zion with great zeal."*

The same angel again.

Zechariah 1:19, *And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" So he answered me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."*

Zechariah 2:3, *And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him,*

Zechariah 4:1, *Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.*

Zechariah 4:5, *Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."*

Zechariah 5:5, *Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth."*

Zechariah 5:10, *So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"*

Zechariah 6:4, *Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"*

We can see an angel who is talking to Zechariah.

Who is the angel?

Angel is a mouthpiece for God Himself and another very special angel.

Let's look at some Scripture and see this other special angel.

Zechariah 1:11-12, *So they answered the Angel of the Lord, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly." ¹²Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, "O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?"*

Zechariah 3:1, *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.*

Zechariah 3:6, *Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying,*

Who is the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament?

Jesus Christ.

Along with God and through the angel that talked with Zechariah was Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the main character of the book, that becomes very evident.

It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zechariah 9:9, *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Who is coming on a Donkey?

Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ at what point in His life He came on Donkey?

Entering into the city of Jerusalem on His Triumphal entry.
What we commonly known as Palm Sunday.

Zechariah 11:12, *Then I said to them, “If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.” So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.*

A prophecy of the betrayal by Judas.

So, here the King arrives at 9:9, and the King is rejected in 11:12.

Zechariah 12:10, *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

We have the King arriving, rejected, and crucified, and also received.

There is this predicted revival, the salvation that comes to Israel.

Zechariah 13:8-9, *And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: ⁹I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'*

We have the salvation of Israel at the time of the tribulation.

The King is judging, or refining brings out a people tested and proven.

Zechariah 14:9, *And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— "The Lord is one," And His name one.*

Only one religion existing in the whole world, in the kingdom, the worship of the true Christ.

Zechariah 14:16, *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go*

up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

We can see that from the beginning of the book, where there is a historical dialogue with the Angel of the Lord, to the latter part of the book, where there is prophetic information about the coming of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the key to the book of Zechariah.

No Old Testament prophet has more prophesy concerning Christ, Israel, and the nations in so short a book.

Zechariah predicts,

- ✓ The second coming,
- ✓ The reign of Christ,
- ✓ His priesthood,
- ✓ His kingship,
- ✓ His humanity,
- ✓ His deity,
- ✓ His building of the temple of the Lord,
- ✓ His coming in lowliness,
- ✓ His bringing of permanent peace,
- ✓ His rejection and betrayal,
- ✓ His return to Israel as the crucified one, and
- ✓ His being smitten by the sword of the Lord.

All of that is in the book of Zechariah.

The whole significance of the life of Christ and His reign in the future is here.

The book is mostly Messianic, dealing with Christ. Christ is seen in the book by many titles.

- ✓ He is called Jehovah's Servant.
- ✓ He is called the Branch.
- ✓ He is called the Man.
- ✓ He is called the King,
- ✓ He is called the Priest, and
- ✓ He is the True Shepherd.

The book was written to be a comfort to Israel.
To let them know God was on their side, and they were to be blessed by God.

The name Zechariah means "God remembers."
God is remembering His people in this book.
God is comforting His people.

Jesus is the great Comforter.
We think that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter.

John 14:16, *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—*

Jesus Himself is the Comforter.

Christ here is the Comforter of His people.

It is a book of comfort through Christ.

Zechariah 1:13, *And the Lord answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words.*

This is a book about comfort.

Zechariah 1:17, *“Again proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; The Lord will again comfort Zion, And will again choose Jerusalem.”””*

Comfort comes, in this book through very deep mysteries.

This is the reason it is very hard for us to understand.

Some great things in this book also relative to the restoration of Israel.

If anyone having any doubts about whether God is still working with the nation of Israel, this book ought to settle those.

Zechariah 8:8, *I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.’*

There is coming a restoration for Israel.

Zechariah 10:9-10, *“I will sow them among the peoples, And they shall remember Me in far countries; They shall live, together with their children, And they shall return. ¹⁰I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, And gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, Until no more room is found for them.*

There is coming a day when scattered Israel will be brought back and overcrowd their own country.

- There are fantastic prophesies about the birth of children in the millennium.
- There are prophesies about evangelism in the millennium.
- There is a complete description of the antichrist.
- There is a second coming judgment passage.
- There is a description of the battle of Armageddon.
- There is a description of the judgment of the nations.
- The martyrdom of the believers in the great tribulation.
- The salvation of Israel and the ultimate salvation of the nations.

All those things in this little book.

A tremendous book full of visions, prophesies, signs, celestial visitors, and the voice of God, and it traces redemptive history right on out to its climax.

It is also a very practical book.

It talks about repentance.

It talks about God's divine care for the believer.

It talks about salvation.

It even talks about practical Christian living.

Why does this book flourish with so many fantastic things?

The prophetic ministry of the Old Testament prophets is about to end when Zechariah writes.

Israel is going to know prophetic silence for 400 years.

This silence will be broken by John the Baptist.

It pleased God to just have a mighty outburst of prophesy to indicate that prophesy was not dying a slow death.

Historical setting.

Who's Zechariah?

When we come to the book of Zechariah, we encounter the people of Israel at a critical moment in their history.

18 years have passed since Cyrus the great conquered the Babylonian Empire.

Daniel prophesied that there would be four great world empires.

1. Babylon,
2. Medo-Persia,
3. Greece, and
4. Rome.

Babylon has come and gone. Nebuchadnezzar has come and gone.

The Medo-Persian Empire rule. Cyrus the Great conquered the Babylonian Empire.

Israel had been taken into Babylonian captivity. They conquered Israel, and hauled them off to captivity in **586 B.C.**

When Cyrus the Great conquered the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persians had on their hands all these Jewish captives. They had been there 70 years when Cyrus made a decree. Cyrus decreed they could all go back to their land.

The history of all this happened behind Zechariah is recorded in the book of Ezra.

Cyrus rose to power, and in **538 B.C.**, he made an edict granting the Jews the right to return to their land. The repatriation of Israel.

After 70 years of being out of their land as captive for the punishment for national sins. At last, they are granted royal permission to return and rebuild Judah and Jerusalem according to Ezra 1:1.

Being in Babylon for 70 years people get their roots down, even in a foreign land. Many of the Jews were well settled. They got properties, married and well settled.

When the decree came only a small remnant went back to Israel. They returned under the leadership of **Zerubbabel**.

They were an enthusiastic remnant. When they got back to Israel, from the Babylonian captivity, in seven months they had rebuilt the sacred altar. They were again performing the sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament. They were back with their worship commanded by God.

43260 of them returned.

In seven months, they had reinstated the sacrificial system. In the second year of seven months, the altar they had actually begun to rebuild the temple itself, which became known as Zerubbabel's temple. The foundations were laid. The base of the wall was laid.

Then the Samaritans came down and tried to stop them. They stopped.

They just had the foundation.

Nehemiah came later to get the rest of the thing going and build the walls around the city. They were discouraged, and the work stopped.

But the ruler who had caused the stoppage, the Samaritan ruler, was assassinated. When he was assassinated, you would have thought they would have taken advantage of the opportunity, but they didn't. So, it was still just left the way it was.

But God wanted that temple built.
God wanted that worship reinstated.

So, God brought along Haggai. He was a prophet at the same time as Zechariah.

Haggai ministry was to exhort the people to build that temple. He only gave four messages that are recorded in the book of Haggai.

Four short messages challenging them to build that temple. They brought a revival in Israel and things started again.

In the midst of the revival, God raised up another priest and prophet Zechariah.

Zechariah came two months after

Haggai 1:1, “In the sixth month,”

Zechariah 1:1, “In the eighth month,”.

Two months apart came these two prophets.

What was the difference?

Haggai got them started, and Zechariah kept them going.

Zechariah kept it up for a long time. His message to the people of Israel was, “Keep going and keep doing it. God hasn’t forgotten you. I know it’s tough, and the opposition’s tough, and you are trying to rebuild your country, but keep going. Let God be your comfort.”

The future is fantastic if you obey God in the present.

Zechariah comforts them in the process. He wants to bring the revival to a full, complete end.

That is the message of the book.

It is God comforting His people through the prophet in a time of hardship while they were rebuilding their country and their temple.

All through the book, Zechariah keeps saying, “God wants to bless you. You are going to receive His blessings. God is going to comfort you.” All these marvelous blessings are promised to them.

A great, big, giant prerequisite for any of it, and that's the first six verses.

Precondition to your spiritual blessing.

Zechariah said that you are building the temple and let me encourage you to keep on being obedient, to keep on serving the Lord, to keep on doing what is right. God has so much for you. God has so many fantastic blessings.

But there is one gigantic condition, which is spelled in the first six verses.

V 3, *Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Return to Me," says the Lord of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts.*

We have the key to this whole book which is the concept of repentance.

V 4, *"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds." ' But they did not hear nor heed Me," says the Lord.*

The place of blessing is always the same.

When a person turns away from sin then there is a blessing.

Repent and turn away from sin and stand in the place of blessing.

Why does this book begin with that?

Because Zechariah wants to eliminate any false security on the part of ungodly people that God is going to give all these blessings.

You can just stand there and get it all.

There is a prerequisite to all of it and any of it, and that is turning away from sin. God does not bless regardless of people's spiritual condition.

God only blesses where there is a turning from sin to obedience in Him.

So, the prophet has a message of comfort and a message of blessing, both now and in the future, but it will only belong to those who meet the condition.

Repentance:

Turning from sin, is a constant cry of Old Testament prophets.

Isaiah 55:6-7, *Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.*

There is mercy and there is pardon for the one who turns to God away from sin.

Jeremiah 3:12-13, *Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: 'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the Lord; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the Lord; 'I will not remain angry forever. ¹³Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the Lord.*

There is blessing, but it is for the people who turn from sin.

Ezekiel 18:30-32, *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!"*

Hosea 14:1, *O Israel, return to the Lord your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;*

Joel 2:12, *"Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."*

Amos 5:4, *For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live;*

Zephaniah 2:2, *Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you!*

Haggai, and Zechariah said the same thing.

Malachi 3:7, *Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the Lord of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'*

After Malachi **400 years** of silence.

A new prophet comes by the name of John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:1, *and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*

The message never changes.

The place of blessing, the place of the kingdom, the place of mercy and grace was always the place of repentance.

Christ, before He ascended into heaven, stood on that mountain and told the disciples that they were to preach repentance.

“Preach repentance from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of this earth.”

The apostles went out, and preached.

Acts 2:38, *Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 17:30, *Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,*

The message hasn’t changed.

God has a place of blessing.

God has a place of comfort.

God has a place of grace, mercy, hope, and peace, but it’s only for people who turn from sin.

The idea means 180 degrees from sin to God, always the place of blessing.

Luke 15:7, *I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

V 1, *In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, ²“The Lord has been very angry with your fathers.*

In the eighth month, in Hebrew calendar that is October/November time, the rainy season.

Haggai started two months earlier.

The Persian emperor that had released the Jews was Cyrus.

When Cyrus died, he was succeeded by Cambyses who is well known for having conquered Egypt.

But Cambyses didn't have a child, and he committed suicide. There was a vacancy to fill his place. Darius was a powerful man, drove to the top and became the ruler.

Darius began to reign in 522 B.C., which means if this is the second year of Darius, then it was written in 520 B.C.

Darius is the king under whom Zechariah writes.

Even though they were back repatriating their country, they had no king. The king or the ruler of the whole world at that time was Darius. So, he is really the king over Zechariah.

The Old Testament prophets very often date their prophesy by kings. Frequently we will notice that the prophets will say, “In the year of such-and-such a king, the word of the Lord came unto so-and-so.”

This is how they date their prophecy and give us historical background.

Haggai and Zechariah, they name a pagan Gentile king, because there is no king in Israel because it is already the times of the Gentiles.

Israel is already in Gentile hands.

Do you know when the times of the Gentiles ends?

It ends at the return of Jesus Christ.

Since 586 B.C., Jerusalem has been under the hands and the power and the control of the Gentiles.

When Zechariah goes to date his book, he has to date it according to the king.

Since Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian, Israel had lost her dynasty and never got it again.

“The word of the Lord came to Zechariah.”

The word of the Lord appears 3,808 times in the Bible.

This is God’s Word, through the prophet’s mouth and the prophet’s pen.

“The word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet.”

The term “the prophet” modifies Zechariah, not Iddo.

What was the prophet?

Simply means a spokesman or a speaker.

This is God’s mouth.

This is God’s voice.

This is God’s speaker.

Zechariah is simply available to God to utter through his mouth the word that God wants.

- His name is Zechariah.
- His father is Berechiah.
- His grandfather is Iddo.

Zechariah is a very common name.

There are 27 other people in the Bible named Zechariah.

A very common name.

It means “God remembers.”

Iddo was a priest, not a prophet.

The prophet there modifies Zechariah. We know he was a priest because Ezra and Nehemiah both tell us that.

Zechariah came from a priestly background. His father is Berechiah. He is mentioned only here.

Perhaps he died very young. Maybe Zechariah succeeded Iddo as priest because his father died soon.

Iddo could have been a priest.

Berechiah could have died during the lifetime of his father, Iddo, so that Zechariah followed his grandfather as priest.

Zechariah is believed by Jewish tradition to be a very important man. Some have said that he was a member of the great synagogue.

Zechariah was martyred.

Matthew 23:35, *that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*

So, Zechariah was a prophet who gave up his life in martyrdom.

- Zechariah means “Jehovah remembers.”
- Berechiah means “Jehovah blesses,”
- Iddo means “in His time.”

V 2, *“The Lord has been very angry with your fathers.*

Angry was Jehovah at your fathers with great anger.

He was angry, angry.

Almost to the extent of abhorrence or hatred or despising.

That’s how angry God was.

Zechariah didn’t need to give them a lot of illustrations.

All they had to do was look around them, and there were plenty of them.

The rubble that once was their country was illustration enough of how angry God was. God was so angry with their fathers that he took them right out of the land.

That thousands of them were slaughtered.

They were dragged into captivity.

Their land was just desolated.

Confirmation of Lord’s anger was all over the place. The holy places were defiled. The people were enslaved. The priesthood stopped functioning.

God is a God of wrath.

God is not a Santa Claus figure.
God is not some kind of passive grandfather.

God is angry about sin.
Whether God is dealing with Israel, or God is dealing with society today or society in general, whether God is dealing with a believer in the Church whoever and whenever God deals with sin, He is angry.

1 John 4:16, *And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

Hebrews 12:29, *For our God is a consuming fire.*

God is both love and consuming fire.

When we read our bible, we will find out that God is a God of wrath. God's holy, righteous character is indignant about sin. It offends God and brings about a holy reaction.

Ezra 8:22, God is angry with people who forsake Him.

Hebrews 10:26-27, God is angry with apostates.

Deuteronomy 29, God is angry with idolatry.

Psalms 89, God is angry with sinning saints.

1 Thessalonians 2:16, God is angry with false teachers.

The anger of God can be seen in the drowning of the old world.

- It can be seen in the scattering of people at Babel.
- It can be seen in the drowning of the Egyptian army,
- The chastening of the Israelites,
- The death of Nadab, of Korah, Dathan, and Abihu.
- The punishment of Saul,
- The punishment of David,
- The punishment of Solomon.
- The death of Ananias Sapphira.
- The reality of hell.

God is a God of wrath.

The person who believes that sin goes unpunished is a fool.

Every act of sin demands a holy reaction. God was very angry, and God reacted in anger to that, but it was righteous anger. His holiness had been affronted.

Zechariah introduces the fact that even though this is God remembers and God blesses and God comforts, there is always a circle in which that happens, outside of which is wrath.

Romans 1:18, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

Secondly, after discussing the problem of wrath, Zechariah quickly presents the grace.

V 3, *Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Return to Me," says the Lord of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts.*

Why does He call Himself the Lord of Host three times in one verse?

The Lord of Host reinforces His authority and power. God is saying, "Turn to me," and the implication is, "or My army will take care of you."

There is grace offered.

The other alternative is still wrath.

"Return to Me,"

God had already taken the initiative.

God had already begun to turn to them.

God had raised up Cyrus.

God called Cyrus, "My servant," even though He was a pagan king. Cyrus sent the people back.

God raised up Haggai to start the revival.

God raised Zechariah to preach.

God's heart had already turned back to His people.

70 years were over and they were back in their land.

God had turned and begun already.

Haggai 1:13, *Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the Lord."*

God loves us, and His love for us is to incite our love for Him.

1 John 4:19, *We love Him because He first loved us.*

What has that have to do with a Christian?

I have already returned."

We may have returned to the Lord, but I don't know that we are always as close as we ought to be.

James 4:8, *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Lot of times, in our lives we get to just drifting.

Return to Me, and I will return to you.

Israel is back. Positionally.

But they needed a deeper commitment, a personal return to God and His person and His character.

We maybe be positionally all right. But we drift!

God's wrath is always averted by repentance, and confession, and coming back to Him.

When you come back to Him, you can't drag your garbage in with Him. You got to dump it before you go in,.

The problem of wrath is solved by the presentation of grace. Here God is a God of judgment and a God of wrath again, but He stands with love, and He says, "Return to Me, and I'm waiting for you."

- This is what Jesus said.
- This is what the apostles preached.
- This is what the prophets preached.
- This is what the early Church fathers preached.
- This is what all the Christian preachers through the ages preached.

This is what we are preaching, and everybody will keep preaching until someday heaven closes its doors, and Jesus comes.

V 4, *"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Turn now from*

your evil ways and your evil deeds.” ’ But they did not hear nor heed Me,” says the Lord.

“Do not be like your fathers

Evil is hereditary.

People tend to pass on the same evil patterns to their children.

The conduct of fathers is perpetuated in their children.

There were prophets then, and they cried out, but they didn’t listen, and they didn’t hear, and they are gone now.

They knew the results of their fathers’ sins. Nobody needed to tell them that. They knew what happened. They knew their fathers had been slaughtered by Nebuchadnezzar’s hordes.

Those who didn’t die were hauled off into captivity. They knew that. It wasn’t any long lecture needed.

Just remember your fathers, and don’t be like they were. Be different.

Ezra 9:7, *Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day.*

Zechariah says that God's got so much of blessings which I have written down it in 14 chapters.

Are you going to be in a place to receive the blessing?

If you don't act differently than your fathers did then you are not going to have it.

Their fathers had acted evil.

They had not repented.

Hezekiah's going to straighten that nation out back in their history. This is long before Zechariah.

2 Chronicles 29:3-9, *In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. ⁴Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, ⁵and said to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place. ⁶For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the Lord our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord, and turned their backs on Him. ⁷They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel. ⁸Therefore the wrath of the Lord fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes. ⁹For*

indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity.

Remember your fathers and what they did and how they paid. The graves of the world are filled with people who fall into this classification. Those who have walked out of the presence of God and have not been willing to turn from their sin and have forfeited blessing for time and eternity.

The grave danger is that these would do the same.

The prophets cried vehemently.
For the most part they didn't listen.

When Jesus came and preached the same message, they took Him and killed Him.

Jesus told a parable about a man who owned a vineyard.

Matthew 21:33-40.

Matthew 21:37-39, *Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'* ³⁸*But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'* ³⁹*So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.*

Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem.

Matthew 23:37, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”*

It never did change much, and it hasn't changed much today.

People still reject just like their fathers and their fathers before them.

“Turn,” he says.
It means repent.

Turn from your evil ways.
Turn from your evil doings.
But these people really, for the most part, didn't.

This is God's message.
A simple message.

It's a message to you as it was to the people in Zechariah's time.

Christians are prone to wander outside the circle.
Keep yourselves in the love of God.
Keep yourselves in the place of blessing.

Unbelievers, they have never been there.

Christians, we have been there.

Sometimes we want to wander out into the darkness of the world.

Zechariah says the problem of wrath can be solved by grace. He makes a plea for repentance.

Zechariah closes with the pattern of history,

V 5-6, *“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶Yet surely My words and My statutes, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, Did they not overtake your fathers? “So they returned and said: ‘Just as the Lord of hosts determined to do to us, According to our ways and according to our deeds, So He has dealt with us.’ ” ”*

That was long ago.

That doesn't apply to me.

God wouldn't do that to me.

Better check the history.

Because history will clarify that question.

He said he would do it!

He did it.

Jeremiah kept saying, “You are going to be sorry. There is a price to pay.” They just rejected him, but there was a day, and they paid.

The pattern of history:

a) The problem of sin.

The issue of sin in verse 4. People are characterized by evil ways and evil doings.

Evil ways and evil doings lead to a second issue.

b) Rejection.

V 4, *‘But they did not hear nor heed Me,’ says the Lord.*

Evil ways. Sinful ways. Resulting in Rejection.

They refused to hear the prophets.

They refused to hear Christ.

They refused to hear the Scripture.

c) The issue of death.

V 5, *“Your fathers, where are they?”*

What was the answer?

They are dead.

They died in judgment.

Even the ones who went into captivity died in an unclean land.

“The wages of sin is death.”

Where are they?

They are dead.

The issue of sin led to the issue of rejections.

The issue of rejection, led to the issue of death.

d) The issue of opportunity.

V 5, *“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?”*

Prophets die, too!

When prophets die there is nobody talking anymore.

They just were about to experience 400 years without a prophet to speak for God.

Where are the prophets?

No more opportunity.

The issue of sin led to the issue of rejections.

The issue of rejection, led to the issue of death.

Leads to the loss of all opportunity.

No more prophets.
Nobody to preach.
No message to hear.

There is a pattern there and it's just the same today.

e) The issue of inevitability.

V 6, *Yet surely My words and My statutes, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, Did they not overtake your fathers?*

You judge. Did they happen?

What I said would happen, did it happen?

It did happen. The exile was proof positive that it happened.
The death of the nation stands as evidence that it happened.

V 6, *“So they returned and said: ‘Just as the Lord of hosts determined to do to us, According to our ways and according to our deeds, So He has dealt with us.’ ”*

It's obvious to anybody who was left alive that God did exactly what He said He was going to do.

God will do what He says He will do.

If God says, “In grace I will bless, in wrath I will condemn.”

God will do it.

Conclusion:

V 3, *“Return to Me,” says the Lord of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts.*

God doesn't say, “Turn to My law.”

God doesn't say,

- ✓ Return to My way of life.
- ✓ Return to My principles.
- ✓ Return to My religious system.

God says, “Return to Me.”

This is something personal.

Christians are connected to God.

There is only one way to return to God.

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.”*

Are you like the prodigal son who returned to his father?

His father slew the fatted calf and made him a feast, and put a ring on his finger, and a robe, and said, “Rejoice, my son has returned.”

God has so many things that He wants to give you.

Maybe you have never even come to Christ.

God is saying, “Turn to Me from your sin, and I will meet you there, and we will start a relationship forever. And I will pour out blessing.”

Zechariah’s prophecy and every other promise in the Word of God can belong to the person who turns to God, away from sin. That is the message that begins the book.