

Keys to a fuller understanding of Zechariah include the study of 1:1-6, a call to repentance. This anticipates the work the Lord will do in Israel and Jerusalem, the work prophesied throughout the book of restoring, even surpassing their former glory. The reason for this future restoration seems to be found in 1:14 and 8:1-2 --the Lord was jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. That jealousy would lead him to renew the prosperity of the land and its (his) people when he had brought them back from the captivity into which he had sent them.

Study tips: Read through Zechariah at one sitting. Then read Ezra 1-6 and Haggai before reading Zechariah a second time. Look up names (Darius, the Persian Empire) and events (return from exile) in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia. How does knowing some of the historical background help in understanding some of Zechariah's message? Zechariah borrows phrases and ideas from many of the canonical prophets who had predated him. Locate these and see how he uses their material in his own book. Compare the pattern of Zechariah 9:1-8 with that of Amos 1:2-2:16. How are they similar? Different? Many of Zechariah's images are used in Revelation. Which ones are they? How has John adapted them for his own purposes? What are the messianic prophecies of Zechariah? Where are they in the New Testament? Are there any messianic prophecies in Zechariah not specifically noted in the New Testament (e.g., not introduced by the formula "This happened to fulfill...")? Which of the themes in Zechariah 1-8 can you find in 9-14? How do these influence the argument for the unity of the prophecy?

Some classic notes: The libretti of several movements from Handel's Messiah come from Zechariah. Michelangelo painted Zechariah high on the wall of the Sistine chapel.

Further reading: Joyce Baldwin: HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI (IVP) and Charles L. Feinberg: GOD REMEMBERS (Multnomah) are two interesting works on this prophecy.

b. An extended outline looks like this:

I. The Visions of Zechariah 1-6

- I am convinced that each of these visions has a special message for the remnant returned from captivity.
- A. The prologue 1:1-6
 - B. The man in the Myrtle trees 1:7-17
 - C. The carpenters 1:18-21
 - D. The man with the measuring line 2:1-5
 - E. The Priest and Jehovah 3:1-10
 - F. The Candlestand 4:1-14
 - G. The Flying Roll 5:1-4
 - H. The Ephah 5:5-11
 - I. The chariots 6:1-8
 - J. The epilogue: 6:9-15

II. Historical segment 7-8

- A. The problem 7:1-7
- B. The answer 7:8--8:15
- C. The predicted outcome 8;16-23