

Zechariah

Time of Writing: At the same time as Haggai (compare 1:1 to Haggai 2:1 and 2:10). So, this would be about 520 BC, about 10 years after the return from exile.

Messianic prophecies published by some ancient rabbis:

- 1:20 With various application, several rabbis believed one of the four craftsmen to be the Messiah.
- 2:10 - 11 The “many nations” idea led some to believe that the Messiah would be the one to “dwell in your midst.”
- 3:8 “Branch” was believed to be one of the Messiah’s names, as in Isaiah 4:2, 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15, and Zechariah 6:12.
- 3:10 Sitting under the vine and fig tree (also in Micah 4:4) was symbolic of the peace of the time of the Messiah.
- 4:7 The capstone was thought to be the Messiah
- 4:10 Zerubbabel’s measuring was paving the way for the Messiah.
- 7:13 This described events just before the Messiah.
- 8:12 This described the prosperity of the time of the Messiah.
- 8:23 “Every language” prompted the rabbis to see the Messiah here.
- 9:1 Some rabbis decided that Hadrach (or Chadrach) was really two words, Chad (sharp) and Rakh (gentle), the Messiah being one to the Gentiles and the other to the Jews.
- 9:9 This is why Jesus chose to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.
- 9:10 The Messiah would have a universal and peaceful kingdom.
- 10:4 The Messiah was to be the cornerstone, the tent peg, and the battle bow.
- 11:12 The chief priests knew that this passage was considered Messianic, yet still chose to pay Judas this amount.
- 12:10 This described mourning over the death of the Messiah.
- 14:2 Rabbis predicted that this would happen in the time of the Messiah, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD being accepted as the fulfillment. The Christians and Jews had different explanations concerning who was the remnant.
- 14:7 – 9 These figures of speech would be familiar to the crowds to whom Jesus spoke.

Passages referenced in the New Testament:

- 3:2 (Jude 9) Most commentators assume that Jude quoted an apocryphal book called The Assumption of Moses, although Jude may have been written first. Instead, perhaps Jude merely used Moses to represent Israel as Zechariah used Joshua for the same purpose.
- 8:25 (Ephesians 4:25)
- 9:9 (Matthew 21:5, John 12:15) This Messianic prediction was well known, but somehow the disciples forgot about it.
- 11:12 – 13 (Matthew 27:3 – 10) Concerning the apparent error by Matthew, Doddridge suggests that we should follow the ancient Syriac translation, which omits the name altogether. Nevertheless, this passage was deemed Messianic in Jesus’ time, so it is remarkable that the authorities used that sum of money.

12:10 (John 19:37) The ancient rabbis understood this to be Messianic because the House of David was not restored upon return from Babylon. The phrasing of the chapter promises a great kingdom, but not conquest.

13:7 (Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27) All of chapters 12 through 14 were considered Messianic. This was another description of the details of that time.

The Plot

- 1 Repent. Do not repeat the mistakes of the past. God will again choose Jerusalem. The nations that had harmed Israel will be destroyed.
- 2 The Exiles are encouraged to return because their enemies will be punished by God, and God will dwell in Israel again.
- 3 Joshua, the High Priest, represents the nation. The people of God are forgiven and will live in peace.
- 4 The Kingdom shall be built by the Spirit, not by earthly power. Grace will be its watchword. They shall shine forth on the whole world.
- 5 Evil will be removed from the Kingdom.
- 6 Exiles will help pay for the Temple. Joshua represents the Messiah: priest and king.
- 7 Should we continue to mourn the fall of the Temple? Listen to the messages of the prophets that your fathers ignored.
- 8 The Lord will return to Zion and all people will know the power of God.
- 9 The surrounding nations will be ruined. The King will come in peace.
- 10 Israel will be restored and be victorious.
- 11 Worthless foreign leaders have ruled badly and will be removed.
- 12 Jerusalem will be protected until after the Messiah, over whom they will mourn.
- 13 After the Messiah, demons and prophets will cease, and only a remnant will survive.
- 14 Jerusalem will be destroyed, but a living water will flow from it. The eternal and universal Kingdom will be established

Obscure References

- 2:8 The apple of the eye is the center part. To touch it causes great pain (not to the pupil, but to the eyelid as it closes over the damaged pupil).
- 7:5 The fast in the fifth month was to mourn the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8, Jeremiah 52:12). The fast in the seventh month probably was not Yom Kippur but in memory of the murder of Gedeliah (Jeremiah 41:1 – 2).
- 8:19 Other fasts were held in the fourth month when Nebuchadnezzar first broke through the walls of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52:6 – 7), and the tenth month, when the siege began (2 Kings 25:1, Jeremiah 52:4).
- 12:11 The reference is to King Josiah's death at that place (2 Kings 23:29).