

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 1: Class Introduction

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are the last three prophets of the Old Testament. Each wrote in the period following the Babylonian captivity in a time when Jehovah is working to restore a relationship with His people. All three books contain common elements of disappointment and restoration, but Haggai and Zechariah are particularly similar as they both address the people in their task to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The people needed direction and encouragement, and both are provided in these books. Malachi on the other hand, written around 100 years later, addresses the Israelites common problem of indifference. Their warm response to the message of Haggai and Zechariah had grown cold, so Jehovah rebukes them one last time before sending his messenger in preparation of the Messiah.

Without context, all three of these books can be difficult to understand (especially Zechariah). Read the book of Ezra in order to see the historical background of these prophet's writings and answer the following questions concerning each chapter:

Chapter 1: What proclamation is given by Cyrus, King of Persia?

Chapter 2: What do many of the exiles do in response to the proclamation of Cyrus?

Chapter 3: What did the Israelites accomplish?

Chapter 4: What decree is made by King Artaxerxes?

Chapter 5: Who prophesies to the people to begin building again?

Chapter 6: What decree is given by Darius the king? Is the decree carried out?

Chapter 7: Who is sent to "teach [God's] statutes and rules in Israel"?

Chapter 8: Which tribe of Jacob does this man send for and teach?

Chapter 9: What does Ezra specifically pray about?

Chapter 10: What do the people do in response to Ezra's prayer?

# Haggai

**Author:** Haggai, literally “festival” or “joyous one”

**Date:** ~520 B.C.

**Theme:** *Build the temple.* God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people from their spiritual indifference and to encourage them to complete the work which had stopped almost sixteen years earlier (Ezra 5:1-2). Under their preaching the work prospered and the temple was finished “on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king” (Ezra 6:15). This would be 516 B.C.

# Zechariah

**Author:** Zechariah, means “God remembers”

**Date:** ~520 – 516 B.C.

**Theme:** *Turn back to the Lord.* The children of Israel must repent and turn to God to escape punishment and enjoy being his people once again (6:15). There are two major lines of thought running through the book: the sovereignty of God and human responsibility. His sovereignty tells them *why* they should turn back to him... it is evident from the beginning of the book that God will see the temple through its completion and ultimately establish his kingdom (1:2-6). They had to make that choice for themselves, though. The middle section (chapters 7-8) of the book calls for the generations and the consequences of their actions (7:11-14). God encourages the people to repent and build the temple to enjoy the peace that will prevail throughout the land (8:9-23).

# Malachi

**Author:** Malachi, means “my messenger”

**Date:** ~460 – 432 B.C.

**Theme:** *You have robbed God.* Indifference to both the moral and ceremonial aspects of the law had left Israel’s worship in a state of decay. They were robbing God by not giving Him all that He was due. Therefore the priests are rebuked for their poor leadership, specifically in the way of divorce and mixed marriages. As the last book of the Old Testament, the people are reminded at the end of the coming messenger who will prepare the way for their ultimate King, the Messiah.

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 2: Introduction to Haggai

### Author

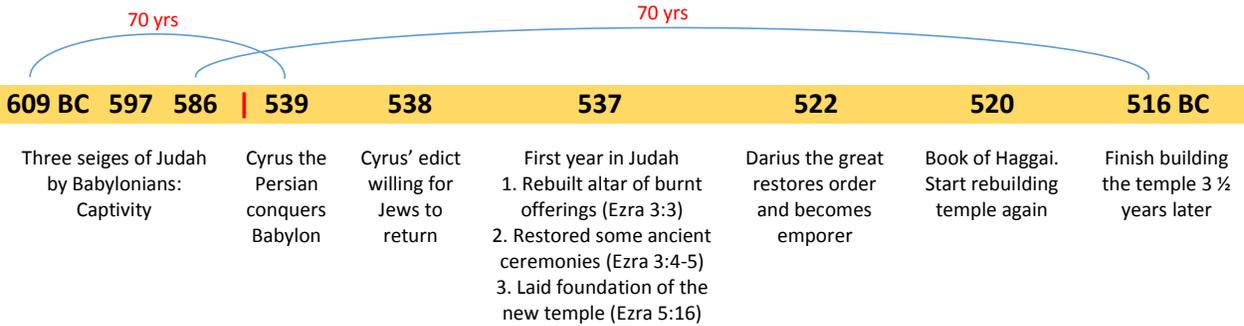
The short book of Haggai provides all that we know of this man. He is only mentioned two other times in the entirety of the Bible, and only then as historical verification (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

The name Haggai literally means “festival” or “joyous one.”

The most important thing we can know about Haggai is that he was inspired by God. The phrase “Thus says the Lord” appears twenty-six times in this book of only thirty-eight verses. He speaks not of himself, but from the mind and mouth of God. He refers to himself simply as “the prophet” (1:1) and “the messenger of the Lord” (1:13).

### Date

The first verse tells us that the word of the Lord came to Haggai “In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month.” Darius I, son of Hystaspes, reigned over Persia from 522 to 486 B.C. Therefore, Haggai’s message would have been delivered around 520 B.C.



### Background

- I. Because of His covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), God delivered the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage and made them His special people (Ex 2:23-25).
- II. Israel became a great nation and were given a land in which to live and prosper (Josh 21:43-45).
- III. However, God made other promises about the land that the Israelites did not keep, so they were taken from their land into Babylonian captivity (Deut 28:15→Josh 23:14-16→Jer 2:11-13→Dan 1:1-2→2 Kings 24:10-16→2 Kings 25:1-21).
- IV. True to His covenant, God promised that after seventy years in Babylon he would cause them to return to the land (Jer 25:11; 29:10).
- V. In the first year of the reign of Cyrus the Lord stirred his spirit to make a proclamation to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (2 Chron 36:21-23; Ezra 1).

## Persian Kings Who Reigned During This Period

**Cyrus (559-529 B.C.)** By 549 B.C. Cyrus had defeated the Median king and united the Medes and Persians under his own rule. He reversed the practice of the Assyrians and Babylonian conquerors who led captives away from their homeland. Instead, he allowed these conquered people to return to their lands, and he helped them rebuild temples to their deities. Some historians suggest that he did this because he thought the more gods to whom he could ingratiate himself, the better off he would be.

**Cambyses (529-522 B.C.)** Some say Cambyses is the “Artaxerxes” from Ezra 4. If that is true then he is the king the Samaritans wrote to, imploring that he stop the Jews from rebuilding the temple and the city. Whether that is true or not, we know that Cambyses was the son of Cyrus and ruled for a relatively short amount of time. He expanded the empire by conquering Egypt in 525 B.C. but was unable to conquer Kush to expand the kingdom further south-west. He met an untimely death (which is disputed in history) in 522 B.C.

**Darius I (522-486 B.C.)** Upon the death of Cambyses the empire was thrown into a state of upheaval. Darius I, with the aid of his father, Hystaspes, an able general, put down all opposition and ruled as one of the strongest of Persian monarchs. He is also known as Darius “the Great.” Pfeiffer wrote, “Darius searched the archives and found the decree of Cyrus which authorized the construction of the temple. Thereupon Darius issued a new edict forbidding hindrance to the project and ordering a generous contribution from the royal treasury” (Baker’s Bible Atlas 166).

## Theme

### Build the temple

God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people from their spiritual indifference and to encourage them to complete the work which had stopped almost sixteen years earlier (Ezra 5:1-2). Under their preaching the work prospered and the temple was finished “on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king” (Ezra 6:15). This would be 516 B.C.

## Outline of the Book

- I. Haggai’s First Message: “Build the Lord’s House” (1:1-15)
  - a. Consider your ways (1:1-11)
  - b. Work on the temple is begun (1:12-15)
- II. Haggai’s Second Message: “The Latter House Will Be More Glorious” (2:1-9)
  - a. The Lord will be with the builders of the temple (2:1-5)
  - b. The temple’s future glory (2:6-9)
- III. Haggai’s Third Message: “From This Day On, God Will Bless You” (2:10-19)
  - a. Two questions demonstrate Israel’s need to be cleansed (2:10-14)
  - b. Wrong priorities brought calamity; Zeal for the Lord would restore prosperity (2:15-19)
- IV. Haggai’s Fourth Message: “Zerubbabel Is Chosen As God’s Signet” (2:20-23)
  - a. The overthrowing of the nations is promised (2:20-22)
  - b. The Messianic hope is preserved in Zerubbabel (2:23)

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 3: The Book of Haggai

### Haggai's First Message "Build the Lord's House" (1:1-15)

520 B.C.								
	Elul		Tishri			Chisleu		
August	/	September	/	October	/	November	/	December

- Darius was the king of Persia at the time of this writing (520 B.C.).
- According to the Hebrew calendar the sixth month would be Elul, which is equivalent to parts of our August / September.
- The first day of the month was the regular festival of the new moon when the people gathered to offer sacrifices (Num 10:10)
- Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, had led the first remnant of exiles back to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. He was of the royal lineage of David.
- Joshua the son of Jehozadak was a direct descendant of Aaron the Levite, the first high priest.

#### Summary

With the people all gathered for the festival of the new moon, Haggai begins to exhort them to rebuild the temple. Their harvest was past and it had not been a good year (v 9-11). Therefore at a time when they were feeling downcast and depressed due to the barren year, it was fitting that Haggai exhorts them to consider their ways (v 7). The poor harvest was not merely by chance of nature, but a judgment from God. Upon hearing the message, everyone's spirit was stirred (v 14) and work was resumed on the Lord's house that very month (v 15).

### Haggai's Second Message "The Latter House Will Be More Glorious" (2:1-9)

520 B.C.								
	Elul		Tishri			Chisleu		
August	/	September	/	October	/	November	/	December

- The seventh month of the Hebrew calendar was Tishri and would correspond to our September / October.
- The twenty-first day of Tishri would be the last and great day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:34-43).
- What covenant is God referring to in verse 5?
  - God had delivered them out of Egypt and made them his special people because of his covenant with Abraham (Exo 2:23-25; 19:5-6)
  - He made a covenant with Israel dedicated with blood (Exo 24:8)
  - He declared that he would dwell among them and be their God (Exo 29:45)
  - This nation was favored because of God's promise to Abraham that through his seed all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3)

#### Summary

This second message by the prophet Haggai was spoken when the builders had been at work on the temple about a month. They were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles but rather than it being a week of great rejoicing, their hearts were downtrodden. First, their harvest had not been bountiful, and furthermore, the material they had to rebuild the temple reflected their poverty. This message from Jehovah was to encourage them by his promise to bless and to strengthen them in their zeal for His work. This was a promise of the spiritual blessings that were to come through Jesus Christ, a promise realized by all who are the children of God by faith and who now are the heirs of this promise (Gal 3:26-29). Though the nation had suffered another captivity in Babylon, it was because of their failure to keep God's commandments (Deut 28:15-68). But God remembered his covenant which he had

spoken and confirmed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This covenant was the reason for the restoration of their national identity and the real purpose of the preaching of Haggai to rebuild the temple. The reconstruction of the temple stood as a testimony of God’s presence and a re-affirmation of his covenant with them when they came out of Egypt.

## Haggai’s Third Message “From this Day On, God Will Bless You” (2:10-19)

520 B.C.							
August	Elul	September	Tishri	October	November	Chisleu	December
	/		/		/		

- It had been three months since the remnant had favorably received Haggai’s first message and resumed building the temple (1:15).
- When the second message had been delivered they had shown signs of discouragement, therefore the Lord assured them of his pleasure in their work on the temple.
- The ninth month on the Hebrew calendar is Chisleu, and corresponds with our November / December.

### Summary

By this time the winter crops had been sown and watered by the autumn rains. Haggai’s message draws an analogy from the law to explain how the people had brought upon themselves the failure of their crops; but now, because they had faithfully given themselves to the work of the Lord, blessings which had been withdrawn will be restored.

## Haggai’s Fourth Message “Zerubbabel is Chosen as God’s Signet” (2:20-23)

- This message is delivered on the same day as Haggai’s third message, when the Lord promised to restore his blessings on the returned remnant.
- A signet is a small seal, esp. one set in a ring, used instead of or with a signature to give authentication to an official document.

### Summary

Speaking solely to Zerubbabel now, the overthrowing of the nations is promised (v 20-22) and the messianic hope is preserved in Zerubbabel (v 23). Jehovah will destroy the strength of the kingdoms by using one another’s swords as one hostile kingdom will destroy another. And though the conquering nation may think victory is by its own power, the real truth is that it will be “the rod” of God’s anger (Isa 10:5-19). In the end, the message is given to Zerubbabel that the Lord will take him and make him like a signet ring, “For I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts” (v 23). This prophecy of Haggai is messianic. God is promising Zerubbabel that he will be a direct link in the genealogy of Christ.

### Thought Questions

1. Why does Haggai specify the exact times his messages were given?
2. What would have been some challenges the people probably faced in order to obey God’s command like they did?
3. How do we sometimes act like the people Haggai preaches to in this book?

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 4: Introduction to Zechariah

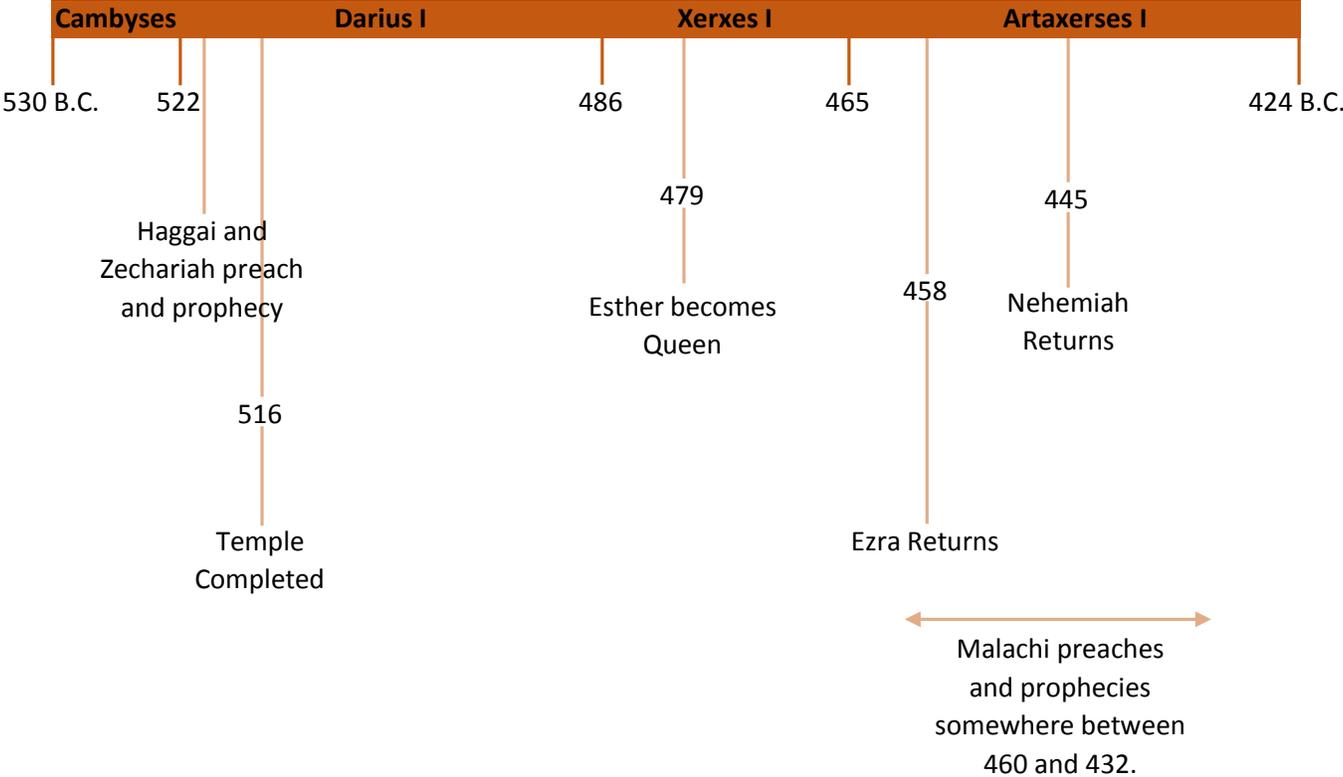
### Author

Zechariah means “God remembers,” which is a good reflection of the theme or purpose of the book: God will remember his people and preserve them from destruction. Zechariah began his prophecy about two months later than Haggai “In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius,” which was 520 B.C. The works of Haggai and Zechariah complement each other: Haggai offered a stern rebuke, an admonition, as well as encouragement, but Zechariah dealt primarily in encouraging words and visions which would motivate God’s people in finishing the building of the temple. The combined efforts of Haggai and Zechariah succeeded; the Jewish people were motivated in completing the work.

Verse 1 says that he was the “son of Berechiah, son of Iddo.” This Iddo may be the same Iddo mentioned in Nehemiah 12:1, 4, and 16, who was a Levitical priest. If this is true, then Zechariah was a Levite and possibly a priest.

### Date

Darius I (The Great) ruled the Persian Empire from 522 B.C. to 486 B.C. It is during this time that the book of Zechariah was written. This period of history is considered to be one of the best documented periods of ancient history, both biblically and historically. The Persians were experts in keeping records of their kings and their history.



## Background

- I. On the decree of Cyrus, Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in 538 B.C. and began rebuilding the temple.
- II. Discouraged by the surrounding nations, and commanded by Cambyses (Artaxerxes, Ezra 3:7-24), work on the temple stopped.
- III. In 520 B.C., the second year of Darius, work on the temple resumed under the preaching of Haggai and the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the Levite.
- IV. The people soon became discouraged again because of poor economic conditions, and Haggai's preaching turned to encouragement.
- V. Zechariah began preaching and prophesying two months after Haggai's first message. He told the people to repent and renew their covenant with God.

## Messianic Prophecies

<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Zechariah Reference</b>	<b>N.T. Fulfillment</b>
<b>The Lamb on the throne</b>	2:10-13	Revelation 5:13; 6:9; 21:24; 22:1-5
<b>A Holy Priesthood</b>	3:8	John 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:20-21
<b>A Heavenly High Priest</b>	6:12-13	Hebrews 4:4; 8:1-2
<b>Triumphal Entry</b>	9:9-10	Matthew 21:4-5; Mark 11:9, 10
<b>Sold for 30 pieces of silver</b>	11:12-13	Matthew 26:14-15
<b>Money buys potter's field</b>	11:12-13	Matthew 27:9
<b>Piercing of his body</b>	12:10	John 19:34, 37
<b>Shepherd smitten-sheep Scattered</b>	13:1, 6, 7	Matthew 26:31; John 16:32

## Theme

### **Turn Back to the Lord**

The children of Israel must repent and turn to God to escape punishment and enjoy being his people once again (6:15). There are two major lines of thought running through the book: the sovereignty of God and human responsibility. His sovereignty tells them *why* they should turn back to him... it is evident from the beginning of the book that God will see the temple through its completion and ultimately establish his kingdom (1:2-6). They had to make that choice for themselves, though. The middle section (chapters 7-8) of the book calls for the generations and the consequences of their actions (7:11-14). God encourages the people to repent and build the temple to enjoy the peace that will prevail throughout the land (8:9-23).

## Outline of the Book

- I. Call to repentance (1:1-6)
- II. The Visions (1:7 - 6:15)
  - a. The First Vision (1:7-17)
    - i. The rider under the myrtle trees (1:7-10)
    - ii. The angel's response (1:11-12)
    - iii. The Lord's response (1:13-17)
  - b. The Second Vision (1:18-21)
    - i. The four horns (1:18-19)
    - ii. The four craftsmen (workers) (1:20-21)
  - c. The Third Vision (2:1-13)
    - i. The measuring of Jerusalem (2:1-7)
    - ii. The angel's response (2:8-9)
    - iii. The call to sing for joy (2:10-13)
  - d. The Fourth Vision (3:1-10)
    - i. The filthy garments of the high priest (3:1-7)
    - ii. The changing of the garments (3:8-10)
  - e. The Fifth Vision (4:1-14)
    - i. The introduction to the lampstand and the two olive trees (4:1-4)
    - ii. The word of the Lord (4:5-14)
  - f. The Sixth Vision (5:1-11)
    - i. The flying scroll (5:1-3)
    - ii. The message of the flying scroll (5:4)
  - g. The Seventh Vision (5:5-11)
    - i. The ephah (5:5-8)
    - ii. The two women (5:9-15)
  - h. The Eighth Vision (6:1-8)
    - i. The four chariots (6:1-8)
    - ii. The crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)
- III. The Question Concerning Fasting (7:1 - 8:23)
  - a. Bethel seeks favor with God (7:1-3)
  - b. The question about fasting (7:4-7)
  - c. The call to sincere religion (7:8-14)
  - d. The renewal and completion of God's covenant (8:1-17)
  - e. The joyous state of God's people (8:18-23)
- IV. The Two Burdens (9-14)
  - a. The First Oracle (9-11)
    - i. The announcements to the nations (9:3-17)
    - ii. God will act on behalf of his people (10:1-12)
    - iii. The good shepherd (11:1-14)
    - iv. The foolish shepherd (11:15-17)
  - b. The Second Oracle (12:1 – 14:21)
    - i. Judah's victory (12:1 – 13:6)
    - ii. The Lord's victory (13:7 – 14:21)

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Lesson 5: Zechariah 1-3, The First Three Visions

## A Call to Return to the Lord

Perhaps the same Iddo mentioned in Nehemiah 12:1, 4, and 16

**Iddo**

Not mentioned in Ezra 6:14

**Berechiah**

**Zechariah**

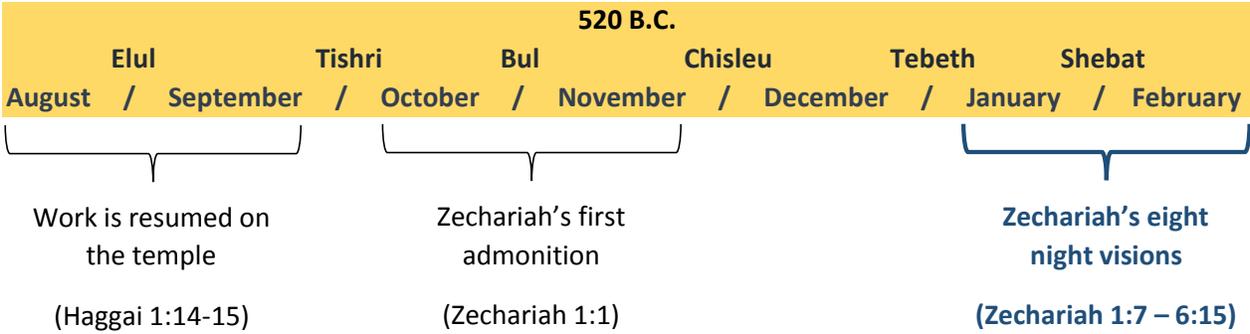
**“Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts”**

“DO NOT BE LIKE YOUR FATHERS”

“RETURN FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS”

“[RETURN] FROM YOUR EVIL DEEDS”

## The Eight Night Visions



There is no doubt that the visions are linked together, for they were all seen by Zechariah on the same night, the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (Shebat), in the second year of Darius. What is unclear though, is exactly *how* they are linked together. There is a general structure to the visions, but to what extent we are uncertain.

Differing Views on the Structure of the Eight Visions		
Vision	Hinckley G. Mitchell	Joyce Baldwin
First	The return from captivity	God patrolling the earth
Second		The threat of the nations against Judah
Third		The two anointed leaders of post-exilic Judah
Fourth	The anointed of Yahweh	The cleaning of the land
Fifth		God patrolling the earth
Sixth	The seat of wickedness	
Seventh		
Eighth		

Though we may not know how each of the visions fit together, it does seem that there is a general pattern to the telling of each vision:

1. An introduction which reports in one form or another that Zechariah saw some person or a happening
2. A description of what he saw
3. The prophet's questions about the meaning of what he saw
4. An interpreting angel's interpretation

	Vision 1: A Horseman	Vision 2: Horns and Craftsmen	Vision 3: A Man with a Measuring Line
<b>Intro</b>	<p><sup>7</sup>On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying..."</p>	<p><sup>18a</sup>And I lifted my eyes and saw...</p>	<p><sup>1a</sup>And I lifted my eyes and saw...</p>
<b>Description</b>	<p><sup>8</sup>"I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses."</p>	<p><sup>18b</sup>and behold, four horns! <sup>20</sup>Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen.</p>	<p><sup>1b</sup>...a man with a measuring line in his hand! <sup>2b</sup>To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length."</p>
<b>Question</b>	<p><sup>9</sup>Then I said, "What are these, my lord?"</p>	<p><sup>19a</sup>And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" <sup>21a</sup>And I said, "What are these coming to do?"</p>	<p><sup>2</sup>Where are you going?"</p>
<b>Interpretation</b>	<p><sup>10</sup>"These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth."</p>	<p><sup>19b</sup>And he said to me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." <sup>21b</sup>He said, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head. And these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.</p>	<p><sup>4b</sup>...Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. <sup>5</sup>And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst."</p>

## Questions

### Vision 1: A Horseman

1. What did 'those whom the Lord sent to patrol the earth' find?
2. What question does the angel of the Lord ask?
3. What six blessings are mentioned in the Lord's response?

### Vision 2: Horns and Craftsmen

4. Do you think the four horns represent specific entities? If so, who? And if not, what do you think they represent?
5. Do you think the four craftsmen represent specific entities? If so, who? And if not, what do you think they represent?
6. Does this vision fit into Zechariah's message of encouragement?

### Vision 3: A Man with a Measuring Line

7. Why is it okay that Jerusalem will be "without walls"?
8. Do you think verse 7 is referring to physical Zion (Jerusalem) or spiritual Zion (God's people)? Or both?
9. Does this vision fit into Zechariah's message of encouragement?

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 6: Zechariah 3-4, Visions Four and Five

In the first three visions of Zechariah, God gave Zechariah an overview of the history of the city of Jerusalem and informed him of a day when the temple and the city would be restored. He promised that the enemies of Israel would ultimately be destroyed, and their city would be rebuilt and be filled with his glory. God also proclaimed that he would be their protector and he would dwell within the city.

In chapter 3 the scene shifts from an overview of the city of Jerusalem to a spiritual vision focusing on the worship in the temple and on Joshua, the high priest. To this point, nothing had been said or done about Israel's sins. There is no evidence that Israel had repented or received God's pardon for her sins. The national repentance and forgiveness by God had not yet occurred. The question addressed in this passage is simple:

*How can a holy and righteous God restore such a sinful people to fellowship with himself and still be consistent with his own holy character?*

The answer is found in the fourth vision given to Zechariah. It reveals precisely how Israel will be cleansed from her sins.

### Vision 4: Joshua the High Priest Zechariah 3



#### Joshua

- Served as high priest of Israel
- Helped rebuild the altar of God (Ezra 3:2)
- Involved with laying the foundation of the Temple (Ezra 3:8-10)
- Represents the nation of Israel

#### Satan

- Hebrew – *haśśāṭān*  
Proper name for the Evil One
- Hebrew etymology suggests 'enemy' or 'adversary'. Greek suggests 'accuser'.
- Represents opposition to Israel

#### The Lord

- Supporter of Israel

#### Angel of the Lord

- Represents the actions of the Lord for his people Israel

## Questions

### Vision 4: Joshua the High Priest

1. With a subject, an accuser, and a defender, what does this vision remind you of?
2. What part of Joshua is transformed in this vision? Who do you think Joshua represents?
3. Does this vision fit into Zechariah's message of encouragement?

## Vision 5: A Golden Lampstand Zechariah 4

### The Lampstand

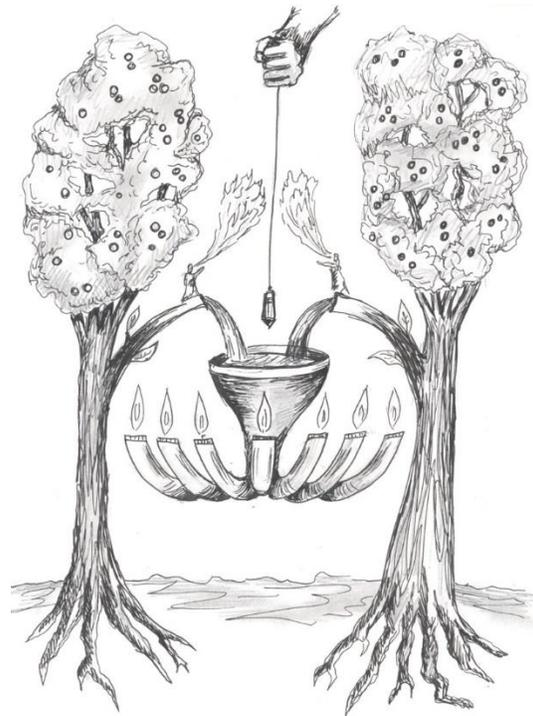
- Many conflicting opinions on its specific representation
- Perhaps corresponds with the angel's interpretation in 4:6

### The Oil

- In the Temple the oil was supplied by the priest (humans)

### The Olive Trees

- In the vision God supplied the oil by the two olive trees



## Questions

### Vision 5: A Golden Lampstand

1. By whose power will the Temple be rebuilt?
2. What were the people proclaiming when they shouted "Grace, grace to it!" in vs 7?
3. Does this fit into Zechariah's message of encouragement?

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 7: Zechariah 5-6, Visions Six through Eight

The first five visions are prophecies of hope, comfort, and encouragement. They have revealed a promise to restore the temple, the spiritual leadership (Joshua as high priest), and the civil leadership (God's approval of Zerubbabel as governor). God also promised protection from the surrounding nations that might try to hinder the work of rebuilding the temple.

Although the truths presented in the first five visions were encouraging, some important questions remained unanswered:

---

***What about the sinful returnees from Babylon?***

---

---

***How will Babylon deal with the sinful people of God?***

---

Before the Lord could ultimately bless Israel, it would be necessary to deal with sins and sinners. Inasmuch as a Holy God cannot bear to look upon evil (Hab 1:13), he cannot give total victory until the sin problem is resolved.

Zechariah's three concluding visions, recorded in chapters 5 and 6, provide the answers:

- I. **Judgment will fall upon Israel for sin, first individually (5:1-4)**
- II. **Then nationally (5:5-11)**
- III. **Then it will strike the nations as well (6:1-8)**

## Vision 6: A Flying Scroll Zechariah 5:1-4



### **Scroll Dimensions:**

20 cubits X 10 cubits (approx. 30x15 ft.)

\*One cubit equals eighteen inches

### **Commandments Referenced:**

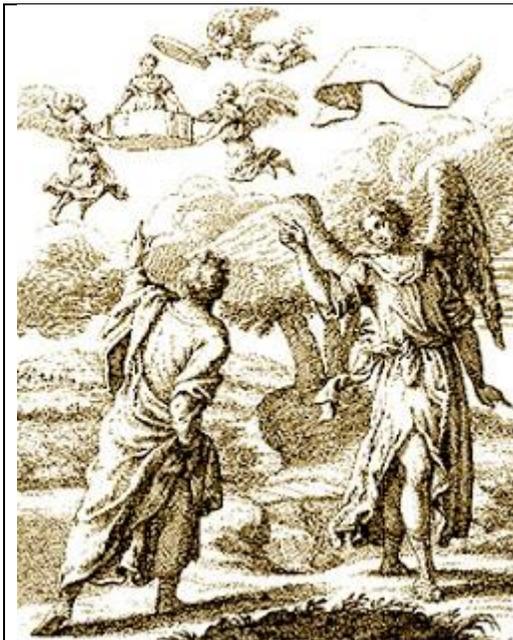
- III. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain
- VIII. You shall not steal

## Questions

### Vision 6: A Flying Scroll

1. Read 1 Kings 6:3. Do you think there is any significance to this area having the same dimensions as the flying scroll?
2. What law was written on the scroll?
3. This vision judges the sins of the *individual / Jewish nation / outside nations* ? (circle one)

### Vision 7: A Woman in a Basket Zechariah 5:5-11



<sup>5</sup>Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, "Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out." <sup>6</sup>And I said, "What is it?" He said, "This is the **basket** that is going out." And he said, "This is their **iniquity** in all the land." <sup>7</sup>And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the basket! <sup>8</sup>And he said, "This is Wickedness." And he thrust her back into the basket and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening.

Hebrew *ephah*: A large measurement among the Jews, equivalent to our bushel; here used as a container.

Hebrew eye: LXX is only translation that says 'iniquity'. Either way the interpretation is the same; it anticipates the representation of wickedness that the basket contains.

## Questions

### Vision 7: A Woman in a Basket

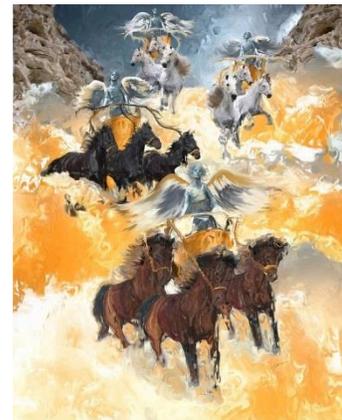
1. Whose wickedness is represented by the woman in the basket?
2. Where is Shinar?
3. This vision judges the sins of the *individual / Jewish nation / outside nations* ? (circle one)

## Vision 8: The Four Chariots Zechariah 6:1-8



### Possible symbolism within vision:

- The number four: **Totality**
- Chariots: **God's judgment**
- The number two: **Strength**
- Brass mountains: **God's enduring presence**
- Red: **War and bloodshed**
- Black: **Desolation, sorrow, and mourning**
- White: **Victory and gladness**
- North country: **Babylon**
- South country: **Egypt**



## Questions

### Vision 8: The Four Chariots

1. What other vision contains four horses (or in this case, four groups) out among the earth?
2. Who prophesied that this judgment would happen?
4. This vision judges the sins of the *individual / Jewish nation / outside nations* ? (circle one)

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Lessons 8-9: Zechariah 7-14, The Question Concerning Fasting and The Two Burdens

Here in chapter 7 begins another division of the prophecy. In the first portion of the book, Zechariah pleaded for the nation of Israel to repent and turn to the Lord for his blessings. Then he received eight night visions to help encourage God's people to rebuild the temple. It is now 518 B.C. in the month of Chislev that Zechariah receives a revelation from God:

<b>Eight Night Visions</b>		<b>The Completion of the Temple</b>
<b>520 B.C.</b>	<b>518 B.C.</b>	<b>516 B.C.</b>

## The Question Concerning Fasting

Zechariah 7-8

*The citizens of Bethel inquired concerning whether they should continue to observe the time of fasting and mourning in the fifth month (July/August) as they had for seventy years. Apparently when the captivity had come nearly seventy years before, the Jews had established a number of days of fasting to commemorate some of their national calamities. These days of fasting included:*

- 1. On the ninth day of the fourth month to commemorate the final breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (Jer 39:2; 52:6-7)**
- 2. On the tenth day of the fifth month to remember the destruction of the Temple (Jer 52:12-13)**
- 3. On the third day in the seventh month to remember the murder of Gedaliah, the governor of Jerusalem, placed in power by Nebuchadnezzar after the final deportation of the Jews (2 Kings 25:25, 26; Jer 41:1)**
- 4. On the tenth day of the tenth month to memorialize the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1; Jer 39:1)**

## Questions

Zechariah 7-8

1. Who instituted each of the fasts listed above?
2. What were all of the fasts focused on?
3. How is Bethel's question answered in chapter 7?
4. How is Bethel's question answered in chapter 8?
5. Does chapter 8 fit Zechariah's message of encouragement?

## The Two Burdens

Zechariah 9-14

These chapters are considered to be some of the most difficult in the Old Testament; they are highly prophetic, stretching over a period between the fall of the Persian Empire and the appearance of Jesus. In chapter 9 and again in chapter 12, Zechariah delivered a burden, or oracle, against specific nations. Several of the New Testament writers relied upon these chapters for information which they used in their own writings:

Reference in Zechariah	Occurrences in New Testament
Chapter 8:16	Ephesians 4:25
Chapter 9:9	Matthew 21:5; John 12:15
Chapter 11:12-13	Matthew 27:9-10
Chapter 12:10	John 19:37
Chapter 13:7	Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27

The use of chapters 9-14 by the New Testament writers suggests that Zechariah was looking beyond the immediate historical situation to events associated with the life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ. This *doesn't* mean that Zechariah ceased to address specific historical situations and circumstances in his own day. Rather, the implication is that the prophetic messages referred to more than just the events and conditions existing in the day of the prophet.

## The First Burden

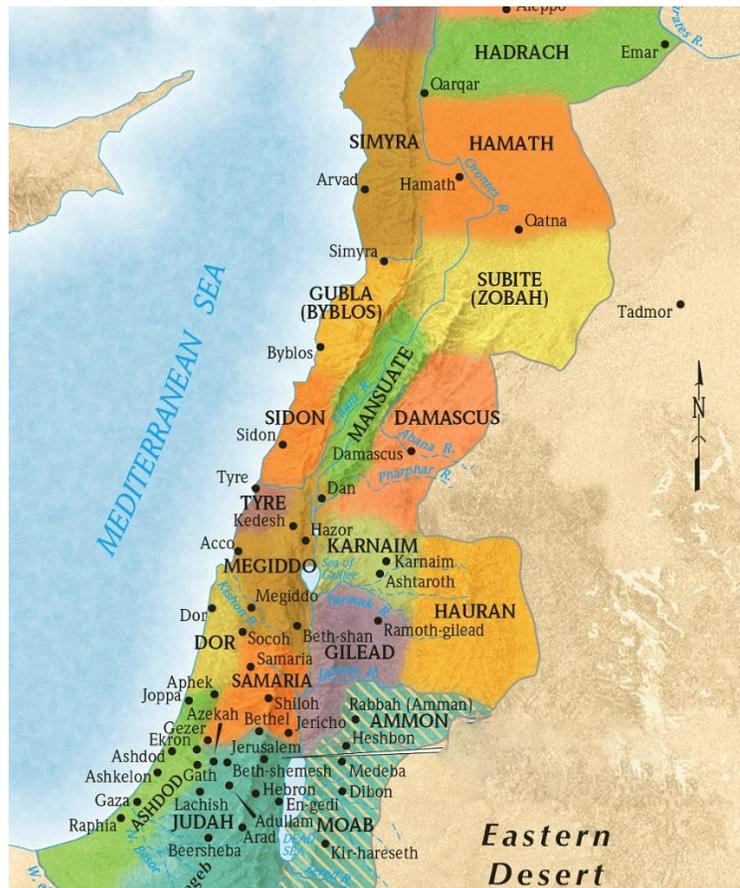
Zechariah 9-11

### The Arrogant Nations Defeated Chapter 9:1-8

In chapter 8, God declared his wrath against the oppressors of his people. These oppressors are now mentioned specifically, and his judgment upon them is now proclaimed.

<sup>1</sup>...the word of the Lord is against the land of **Hadrach** and **Damascus** is its resting place...<sup>2</sup>and on **Hamath**...**Tyre** and **Sidon**...<sup>5</sup>**Ashkelon** shall see it, and be afraid; **Gaza** too...**Ekron** also...the king shall perish from **Gaza**...<sup>6</sup>a mixed people shall dwell in **Ashdod**...the pride of Philistia.

Zechariah 9:1-6 (ESV)



Map Courtesy: 2007 Holman Bible Publishers

## The King and Kingdom of Peace

### Chapter 9:9-10

Tyre, Sidon, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod all fell to the Greek General Alexander the Great. His methods were violent and ruthless, a stark contrast to the king coming in verse 9:

*“<sup>9</sup>Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

*Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)*

- **The King will come with salvation**
- **The King will be lowly**
- **The King will be riding a donkey**
- **The King is Jesus!**

## The Uprising Against Greece

### Chapter 9:11-17

*“<sup>13</sup>I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and wield you like a warrior’s sword.”*

*Zechariah 9:13 (ESV)*

Verses 13-17 refer to the conflicts and victories of the Maccabean age (198 B.C. – 165 B.C.) when God’s people were successful against Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C. God promises to protect them and give them victory over the sons of Greece.

- **His arrow will go forth like lightning**
- **The Lord God will sound the trumpet**
- **[Like] whirlwinds of the south**

## The Restoration for Judah and Israel

### Chapter 10

*“<sup>6</sup>I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and they shall be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the Lord their God and I will answer them.”*

*Zechariah 10:6 (ESV)*

## Rejection of the Messiah

### Chapter 11

Chapter 11 is among the most difficult chapters in Zechariah. The Hebrew language is very vague in helping us understand the nature of the oracle so nailing down an interpretation is very hard to do. It seems though that the chapter can be divided into three parts:

#### The Coming Judgment

*Vs 1-3*

In chapter 10 we saw that God was very displeased with the civil leaders who were appointed over his people; they fed his people lies and left them with false hope. Here in 11:1-3 they are personified and their pride is brought down.

#### The Good Shepherd Rejected

*Vs 4-14*

Either symbolically or literally, Zechariah is commissioned to shepherd the flock of God. He was:

- Shepherd over all (7)
- Active (8)
- Rejected (8)
- Righteous (8-11)
- Treated unfairly (12)

#### The Evil Shepherd

*Vs 15-17*

As the prophet had represented the good shepherd in the former vision (4), he is summoned to personate the evil shepherd in this vision. God had determined to let Israel fall under the power of a shepherd who should not merely neglect the flock, but destroy it.

## Questions

### Zechariah 9-11

1. What does the donkey in 9:10 symbolize?
2. The descriptions in 9:11-17 produce striking images to the reader. Which image made the biggest impression on you?
3. Does chapter 10 fit Zechariah's message of encouragement?
4. Who does the good shepherd in 11:4-14 represent?
5. Who do you think the evil shepherd in 11:15-17 may be? Why? (There are many possibilities)

## The Second Burden

### Zechariah 12-14

These chapters should be considered as a single unit. They're linked by several key phrases and words that are used repeatedly:

"On that day" (ESV)	17 times
"Jerusalem"	23 times
The name of the Lord or other nouns and personal pronouns referring to the Lord	60 times

These chapters present a clear picture identifying a future day when the Lord will do something special for Jerusalem. He has not forgotten his people. Remember the very name of the book we're studying, Zechariah, means "God remembers."

In the previous chapter we were left with a bleak picture of Israel that left us with many questions concerning her future. Israel had rejected the Messiah, so the breaking of the staff paved the way for hostile powers to invade the land (v. 10) and for the nation to fall into the hands of the evil shepherd (v. 16). Now God declares his salvation and we see a change of heart in the Jewish people. While before they had rejected the Messiah, they now mourn for the one whom they pierced.

### The Lord Will Give Salvation

#### Chapter 12:1-9

#### On that day...

**Jerusalem will be a cup of staggering**  
**Jerusalem will be a heavy stone**  
**Enemies will be driven mad on blind horses**  
**God will destroy all nations who are against Israel**

**Judah will devour**  
**Jerusalem will be inhabited**  
**The Lord will give salvation**  
**The Lord will protect Jerusalem**

## The People Will Mourn Him Whom They Have Pierced

### Chapter 12:10-14

*“<sup>10</sup>And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”*

*Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)*

#### Everyone will mourn...

- Each family
- The house of David
- The house of Nathan
- The house of Levi
- The house of the Shimeites
- And everyone else!

**...like they mourned for Hadad-rimmon**

## The Shepherd Returns

### Chapter 13

When Israel responds to the Messiah, understanding the suffering he went through, the restoration of Jerusalem will begin. Their sins will be forgiven (13:1), idolatry will cease (13:2), and prophecy will no longer be necessary (13:3-4).

## The Coming Day of the Lord

### Chapter 14

#### Possible Interpretations

- The time of the Maccabees
- Titus' conquest on Jerusalem in A.D. 70
- The end of the OT era and the beginning of the NT times
- The Millennial Kingdom established
- **Spiritual Jerusalem, the church.**

#### Lead in

Ch. 11 – The Good Shepherd takes charge of the flock who has rejected God



Ch. 12 – The divine Shepherd is pierced, God's purposes are hindered by the folly of men.



Ch. 13 – God is in control and his purposes will be fulfilled.

#### Summary

“In some ways, chapter 14 reflects the history of the church, the people of the new covenant who endure hostility (v. 1-2) yet enjoy God's protection (v. 3). They have a refuge in him (v. 4-5) and possess spiritual life (v. 8). As spiritual Jerusalem, they drink living waters (v. 8) and dwell securely (v. 10).”

McComiskey – *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*

Zechariah wrote his prophecy to encourage the building of the temple, the house of God. This house of God represented the place of worship for the true living God. However, in the day of the Messiah there will be no need for such a place for God will be worshiped by all nations and in every place. Jesus stated:

*“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father...God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

*John 4:21, 24 (ESV)*

## Questions

### Zechariah 12-14

1. Does chapter 12:1-9 fit Zechariah's message of encouragement?
2. For you, what was the most striking image from chapter 12?
3. Who were the people of Hadad-rimmon mourning in the plain of Megiddo (2 Chron 35:22-25)?
4. Where is 13:7b referenced in the New Testament?

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

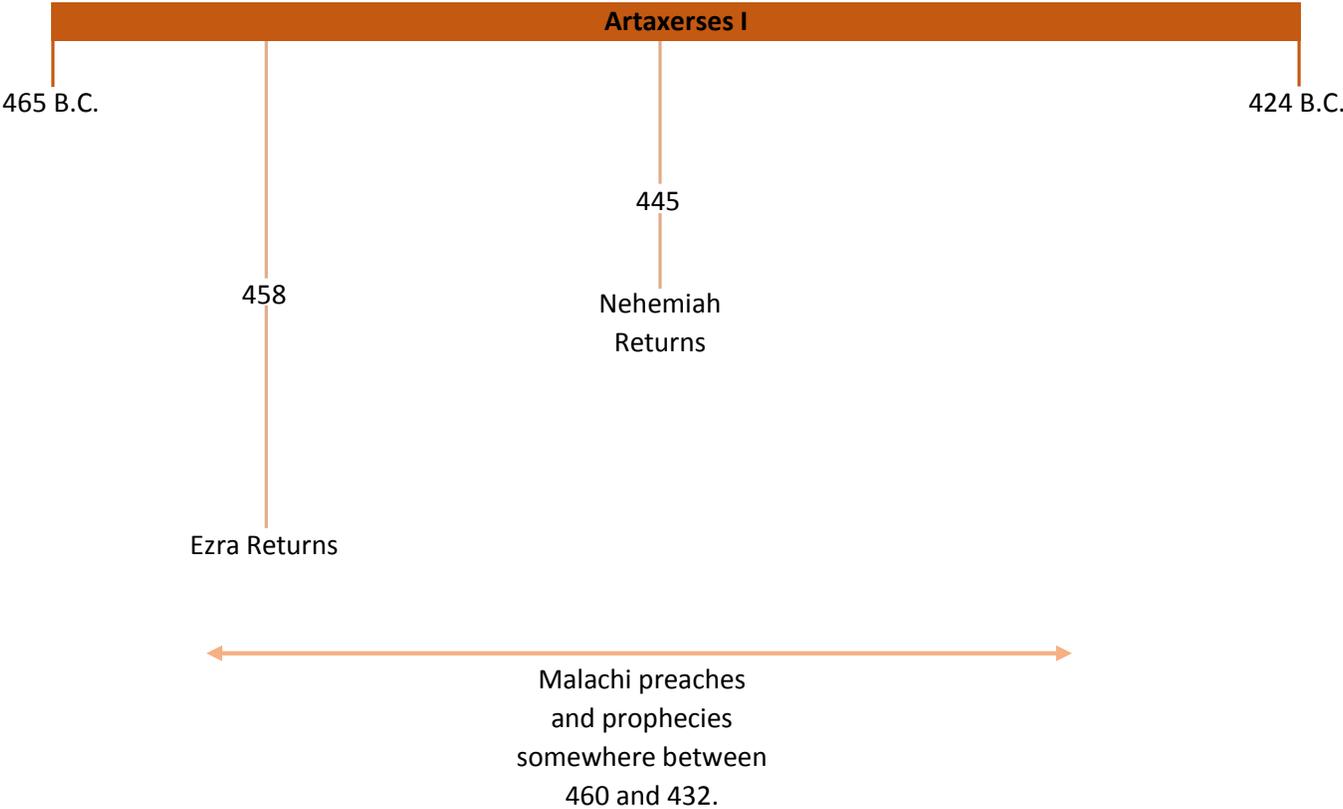
## Lesson 10 – Introduction to Malachi

### Author

Malachi means “my messenger”, therefore presenting two possibilities for the book’s authorship. The first is that Malachi is a proper name and the book was written by a man named such. The second is that the word is used for its meaning and the book was written anonymously by someone calling himself God’s messenger. George L. Robinson suggests that it “may reasonably be regarded as an abbreviation of *Malakhiyah*, meaning ‘messenger of Jehovah’” (*The Twelve Minor Prophets*, p. 157). Whichever is the case, we can see from verse 1 that the true author is Jehovah and that He is addressing Israel.

### Date

The date is difficult to pinpoint since there are no specific, dated events to reference. Some writers have defended a date as early as 470 B.C. while others as late as just before the Maccabees around 200 B.C. Probably the best indicator, though, is the similarities between the conditions described in Nehemiah and those found in Malachi. Since we know specific dates for Nehemiah, a ‘best-guess’ range for Malachi can be produced:



## Background

- **The first contingent of exiles return under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest.** 536 B.C.
- **Encouraged by the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuild the temple.** 520 – 516 B.C.
- **Ezra returns with a second group of exiles and restores knowledge and respect for the law** 458 B.C.
- **Nehemiah returns and rebuilds the walls of the city.** 445 B.C.

## Style

The Didactic-Dialectic Method		
		
An <b>assertion</b> or charge is made	A supposed <b>objection</b> is raised	A <b>refutation</b> to the objection is presented

Earlier prophets had usually followed the rhetorical development of ideas. Malachi found this method of presentation better for his purposes and the style ended up becoming universal in the Jewish schools and in the synagogue.

Another characteristic of Malachi is his appeal to Jehovah as the source of his message:

"Saith Jehovah" (says the LORD)	3 times
"Saith Jehovah of hosts" (says the LORD of hosts)	21 times
"Saith Jehovah, the God of Israel (says the Lord, the God of Israel)	1 time
	25 times

This appeal to Jehovah as the spokesman, and the prophet's own presentation of truth, give to his message a spirit of authority and conviction that reached the hearts of some of his listeners, producing results, though they probably were not phenomenal.

## Message or Lessons

<b>Indifference to both the moral and ceremonial aspects of the law</b>	<b>Worship was in a state of decay</b>	<b>The Jews were divorcing their wives and marrying heathen women</b>	<b>There is eternal discipline in the law</b>
---	--	---	---

## Outline

- I. Condemnation of the priests' faithlessness (1:2 – 2:9)
  - a. Jehovah's love for Israel (1:2-5)
    - i. The divine love asserted (v. 2)
    - ii. The divine love demonstrated (v. 3-5)
  - b. Rebuke of the faithless priests and people (1:6-14)
    - i. Worthlessness of the people's sacrifices (vv. 6-8)
    - ii. Better to close the temple (vv. 9-10)
    - iii. A superior service rendered among the Gentiles (vv. 11-13)
    - iv. The curse of Jehovah (v. 14)
  - c. Curse pronounced upon the faithless priests (2:1-9)
    - i. Immediate reformation the only way of escape (vv. 1-4)
    - ii. Covenant with Levi an the ideal priest (vv. 5-7)
    - iii. The apostate priests and their disgrace (vv. 8-9)
- II. Condemnation of divorce and mixed marriages (2:10-16)
- III. Day of the Lord – Condemnation of religious indifference and skepticism (2:17 – 4:6)
  - a. Jehovah's approach in judgment (2:17 – 3:6)
    - i. Their question, "Where is the God of justice?" (2:17)
    - ii. Jehovah's appearance as a refining fire (3:1-2)
    - iii. Purification of priests and people (3:3-5)
    - iv. Jehovah's unchangeableness (3:6)
  - b. Wrongful withholding of itnes and offerings (3:7-12)
    - i. The people's fickleness and Jehovah's curse (vv. 7-9)
    - ii. Jehovah's bountiful reward for their respect and faithful discharge of duty (vv. 10-12)
  - c. New defense of Jehovah's justice (3:13 – 4:3)
    - i. Complaint: the wicked prosper, the righteous suffer (3:13-15)
    - ii. Separation of the pious from the wicked (3:16-18)
    - iii. Utter destruction of the wicked (4:1)
    - iv. Exaltation and glorification of the righteous (4:2-3)
  - d. Closing admonitions (4:4-6)
    - i. Exhortation to faithful observance of the law (v. 4)
    - ii. Elijah the messenger and his work of preparation (vv. 5-6)

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 11: Malachi 1-2, Condemnation

Although the urging of Haggai and Zechariah had brought the completion of the temple, this had not produced the messianic age many expected. The warm response to Zechariah’s call to repentance had grown cold, because God apparently had not restored the covenant blessings. Malachi, writing a short time later, called the people to repentance with respect to: the priesthood, which had become corrupt; worship, which had become routine; divorce, which was widespread; social justice, which was being ignored; and tithing, which was neglected.

### The Lord’s Love for Israel

Malachi 1:2-5

Assertion	Objection	Refutation
“ <sup>2</sup> I have loved you...”	“...How have you loved us?...”	“...Is not Esau Jacob’s brother? ...Yet I have loved Jacob”
↓	↓	↓
Jehovah declares His love for the people, and by this love He shows the hearers their own ingratitude and lack of devotion toward Him.	Their inward doubt is revealed. They believed that the Lord did not love them; otherwise things would be different.	God shows the people what “not loving” looks like in his hatred for Esau and the people of Edom.

### Question:

Read Genesis 25:21-23, then Romans 9:6-29. Was God’s choice of Jacob over Esau fair? Why or why not?

### The Priests’ Polluted Offerings

Malachi 1:6-14

Assertion	Objection	Refutation
“ <sup>6</sup> ...where is my honor?...where is my fear?..., O priests, who despise my name.”	“...How have we despised your name?”	“ <sup>7</sup> By offering polluted food upon my altar.”
		↙
	“...How have we polluted you?”	“...By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised.”
↓	↓	↓
God recalls the long established principles that a son should honor his father and a servant his master. In certain cases, not doing so resulted in death (Ex. 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18-21)	The priests supposed objections reflect their lack of understanding. To profane the altar is to profane God Himself. Their offering was their actions, not their words.	“ <sup>7</sup> By offering polluted food...” ESV “ <sup>7</sup> Ye offer polluted bread...” KJV They were offering the blind, the lame, and the sick from the flocks. To offer such a worthless gift to a governor was insulting...how much more of an insult to God!

**Question:**

Consider Malachi 1:13 where the people say “What a weariness this is...” Do we sometimes consider our service to God to be wearisome? Write down an example of when you’ve felt burdened by your service to God.

**The Lord Rebukes the Priests**

Malachi 2:1-9

The priests had insulted the name of Jehovah and had brought it into disrepute; now they must give glory to it or suffer the consequence of Jehovah’s curse, demonstrated in the outpouring of His wrath.

The Good Example of Levi	The Poor Example of the Priests
<sup>5a</sup> My covenant with him was one of life and peace... <sup>5b</sup> It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. <sup>5c</sup> He stood in awe of my name. <sup>6a</sup> True instruction was in his mouth... <sup>6b</sup> ...no wrong was found on his lips. <sup>6c</sup> He walked with me in peace and uprightness... <sup>6d</sup> ...he turned many from iniquity.	<sup>8a</sup> You have turned aside from the way. <sup>8b</sup> You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. <sup>8c</sup> You have corrupted the covenant of Levi



<sup>7</sup> For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.



<sup>9</sup> and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.

**Question:**

Malachi 2:1-3 show us the seriousness of the Priests’ responsibility for God’s Word. Pick one of the good examples of Levi listed above and tell why it’s important in our stewardship of God’s Word today, as Christians.

**Divorce and Intermarriage Strongly Denounced**

Malachi 2:10-16

You have:	
<sup>11</sup> Profane[ed] the covenant of our fathers	<b>Exod 19:5-6</b>
<sup>11</sup> Been faithless	<b>Deut 18:9-14</b>
<sup>11</sup> Committed abominations	<b>Exod 34:16, 1 Kings 11:1-2</b>
<sup>11</sup> Profaned the sanctuary	<b>Gen 2:24</b>
<sup>11</sup> Married the daughter[s] of a foreign god	
<sup>14</sup> Been faithless to your wives	
Therefore:	
“ <sup>15</sup> ...guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup> For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”	

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Lesson 12: Malachi 3-4, Robbing God

*“Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’<sup>8</sup> Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me.”*

*Malachi 3:7b-8a (ESV)*

God’s promise of blessings had always been conditional. Man must cooperate by doing his part; this they had not done. Jehovah’s returning to them is conditioned on their returning to Him. The nation of Israel has robbed God, and He wants back what is rightfully His before a relationship will continue.

## The Messenger of the Lord

Malachi 2:17 – 3:5

Assertion	Objection	Refutation
“ <sup>17</sup> You have wearied the LORD with your words.”	“But you say, ‘How have we wearied him?’”	“By saying, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them.’ Or by asking, ‘Where is the God of justice?’”

↓	↓	↓
The faithless multitude of the people had worn Jehovah’s patience thin by their skeptical attitude toward Him.	To ask this question is to be in denial of any wrongdoing. Are we ever guilty of denying our own sin?	Those who stood condemned were asking for God’s righteous judgment, not realizing that they were practicing the evil that would be judged.

### Thought Questions:

- Do you have any habits that are wearisome to God?
- Do you ever think yourself more righteous than you should?
- Do you spend more time thinking of the evil of others than your own sins?

Jehovah’s response to their question, “Where is the God of justice?”, is that He Himself will come, and suddenly. But before He comes He will send His messenger to prepare the way before Him.

**Fill in the blanks:**

The Messenger of the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_. This promise of a messenger rests on the prophecy found in Isaiah chapter \_\_\_\_\_. He is known as \_\_\_\_\_ per Malachi 4:5. All four gospels affirm the identity of the messenger by quoting the prophecy in Isaiah (Matt \_\_\_\_\_, Mark \_\_\_\_\_, Luke \_\_\_\_\_, John \_\_\_\_\_).

Jehovah will not come as they suppose, though. He would not simply come to judge the heathen, but also His own people. Malachi 3:5 gets to the heart of the Lord’s reply to their ignorant question in 2:17; not only will He come in judgment against the priests, but He will come also against all the wicked among the people. Consider the sins listed in 3:5 and their penalty:

Sin	Law	Result / Penalty
Sorcery	Lev. 20:27	
Adultery	Lev. 20:10	
False swearing	Exo. 20:7; Lev. 19:12	
Oppress workers due wages	Lev. 19:13	
Oppress widows Oppress fatherless Oppress sojourners	Exo. 22:21-24	

## Robbing God

Malachi 3:6-15

Here is declared an immutable principle on which man can depend in all ages and generations: “I the LORD do not change.” His infinite love, which is basic to His immutable character, will provide mercy that they not be completely consumed.

The history of Israel is not a record of ever-increasing obedience. Instead, it is a long, sad story of recurring departure from God. Therefore:

---

*“Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”*

*Malachi 3:7b (ESV)*

---

### Class discussion:

When the people ask how they have robbed God in verse 8, He answers with the example of their tithing. They were giving, but they weren’t giving everything they were supposed to. They weren’t giving their *best*. Try to find another example in the scriptures of God being displeased with something partial (heart, gift, sacrifice, etc), as opposed to the instruction we’re given in verse 10.

## The Book of Remembrance

Malachi 3:16-18

Several writers in the scriptures refer to the Book of Remembrance:

<b>Exod</b>	32:32-33	(Moses)	God teaches us to remember and value the good that people do (Phil 4:8), and He does the same as He commands.
<b>Ps</b>	56:8; 69:28; 139:9	(David)	
<b>Ezek</b>	13:9	(Ezekiel)	
<b>Dan</b>	7:10; 12:1	(Daniel)	
<b>Phil</b>	4:3	(Paul)	
<b>Rev</b>	20:12	(John)	<b>Think of some specific times when this thought can be a great comfort to us.</b>

## The Great Day of the LORD

Malachi 4:1-6

The prophet closes with a description of the ultimate, complete destruction of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous. Verses 4-6 give us an admonition, a final promise, and a threat:

Admonition	Final Promise	Threat
“ <sup>4</sup> Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.”	“ <sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.”	“ <sup>6</sup> ...lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
↓	↓	↓
To meet the judgment of God in confidence the true Israelite must respect and keep the law. Horeb is another name for Sinai, where among scenes of awe, terror, and wonder, Jehovah made known His law.	As the David whom Jehovah will raise up to be king and shepherd over His people is not David in person, but fulfilled in Christ, so the Elijah here is not to be thought of as Elijah in person, but his spirit in another.	A return to Jehovah was the only way to avert destruction. Some listened, most did not. Consequently, Jehovah destroyed their city and their land in A.D. 70.

The book of Malachi serves as a fitting close to God’s ancient revelation to His people. A final appeal is made to the people to purge out the wickedness found among them and to render to Jehovah an acceptable service. A final warning is given of inevitable judgment upon the wicked. And a final promise is made of Jehovah’s righteousness to be provided in Him who would be the personal bond of unity between Jehovah and His people. There was no more that Jehovah could say or do; therefore no word was heard from Him until the silence was broken by the messenger who would introduce the Messiah. This messenger’s call to repent was followed by the words of grace spoken by Him in whom God as doing His work and revealing Himself and His will.

# Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## Lesson 13: Application

The writings of the prophets are much more than a glimpse at past events. Through the successes and failures of God's people and His continual instruction to them, we get a very personal look at God's character as well as invaluable instruction on what God wants and how we are supposed to act as His children.

Consider the following lessons drawn from the prophets covered in this class and be prepared to discuss specific examples of where these lessons can help us in our lives today.

### Haggai

**Are we more interested in our own pleasure than doing the work of God? (1:4)**

**The proper reaction to trial and tribulation. (1:9-12)**

**Confessing our failures is a good first step. (2:12-14)**

**Act courageously for God since we have assurance that He will always be with us. (2:18-19)**

**God is in control. (2:20-23)**

### Zechariah

**God knows the true heart of our worship. (7:4-7)**

**We are expected to live morally. (7:8-10)**

**God's reaction to stubbornness. (7:11-14)**

**God's message is for *all*. (8:20-23)**

**The Day of the Lord is coming. (Ch. 14)**

### Malachi

**Our relationship with God is based on love. (1:2)**

**God only wants our best. (1:6-8)**

**Responsibilities are taken seriously. (2:1-9)**

**Faithfulness [to God, to marriage, etc.] is *very* important. (2:10-12)**

**We have hope of a coming great day of the Lord. (4:1-6)**

## Works Cited

Hailey, Homer. *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972.

Print.

Harkrider, Robert F., Rick Billingsley, and Tom Roberts. *Minor Prophets II, Nahum-Malachi*.

Ed. Mike Willis. Bowling Green, KY: Guardian of Truth Foundation, 2007. Print.

Radmacher, Earl D., Ronald Barclay. Allen, and H. Wayne. House. *Compact Bible Commentary*.

Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004. Print.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The ESV<sup>®</sup> Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version<sup>®</sup>) copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.