

Walk Through the Bible

Era #1	Creation
Era #2	Patriarchs
Era #3	Exodus
Era #4	Conquest
Era #5	Judges
Era #6	Kingdom
Era #7	Divided Kingdom
Era #8	Captivity
Era #9	Return
Era #10	Silent Era
Era #11	Gospels
Era #12	Church
Era #13	Missions
Era #14	End & New Beginning

Walk Through the Bible

(Part 2 - Week 14)

Era #9 – Return

Haggai

THEME – We must put God first in order to experience His blessings.

KEY VERSES –

"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"⁵ Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways." Haggai 1:4-5 (NIV)

"I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD Almighty.⁸ "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty.⁹ "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty. "And in this place I will grant peace," declares the LORD Almighty. Haggai 2:7-9 (NIV)

OVERVIEW

Haggai was an older man looking back on the glories of his nation. He was a prophet with a passionate desire to see his people rise up from the ashes of exile and reclaim their rightful place as God's light to the nations.

Haggai's prophecy came at a time when the people of Judah were extremely vulnerable. They had been humbled by their exile to Babylon, hopeful in their return to their Promised Land, and then so discouraged by opposition in their rebuilding of the temple that they had quit ([Ezra 4:24](#)). Now, sixteen years later, with Haggai blaming their lack of food, clothing, and shelter on their failure to rebuild the temple, the Jews were receptive to his message of rebuilding the Lord's house.

After thousands of years, the book of Haggai remains largely unique among the books of Old Testament prophets for one key reason: the people of Judah listened! Haggai's message to rebuild the temple was passionate, simple, and straightforward ([Haggai 1:8](#)). No one could mistake whether or not his direction had been followed—the results would be evident for all the people to see. Through the physical act of rebuilding the temple, the people began to indicate a shift in their spiritual lives: from devotion to self toward devotion to God.

The Jews who emigrated from Babylon to their original homeland of Judah faced intense opposition, both external and internal. [Ezra 4:1–5](#) records the external resistance to the project of rebuilding the temple. The enemies of Judah first attempted to infiltrate the ranks of the builders, and when that didn't work, they resorted to scare tactics. Haggai, on the other hand, focused on

the internal opposition they faced, namely from their own sin. The Jews had thoughtlessly placed their own interests before the Lord's interests, looking after their own safety and security without giving consideration to the status of the Lord's house.

Zechariah

THEME – Build the temple; build your future.

KEY VERSES –

So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty." Zechariah 4:6 (NIV)

This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain." Zechariah 8:3 (NIV)

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. Zechariah 9:9-10 (NIV)

OVERVIEW

Grandson of the priest Iddo, Zechariah prophesied to the people of Judah after they returned from their seventy years of exile in Babylon ([Zechariah 1:1](#); [Nehemiah 12:1, 4, 16](#)). Zechariah's grandfather returned from Babylon, his young grandson in tow, with the first group of Israelites allowed back, in 538 BC under the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia. Because of his family lineage, Zechariah was a priest in addition to a prophet. He, therefore, would have had an intimate familiarity with the worship practices of the Jews, even if he had never served in a completed temple. As a "young man" at the time of his first prophecies ([Zechariah 2:4](#)), his life more than likely extended into the reign of Xerxes I (485–465 BC), the king best known in the Bible for making Esther the queen of Persia ([Esther 1:1](#)).

Zechariah, a young man, especially when compared to his contemporary Haggai, came alongside the older prophet to deliver messages from the Lord to the Jewish remnant recently returned from Babylon. While Haggai's overall message had more of a cautionary tone to it (pointing out the Jews' sin and self-focus), Zechariah emphasized a tone of encouragement to the struggling Israelites trying to rebuild their temple.

Zechariah's dated visions and messages in chapters 1–8 all take place in the same general time period as Haggai's, beginning in October–November 520 BC with a call for the people of Judah to repent ([Zechariah 1:1](#)). Though his final messages in chapters 9–14 go undated, the mention of Greece in 9:13 suggests the prophecies came much later in his life, presumably sometime in the 480s BC, before Ezra (458 BC) and Nehemiah (444 BC) arrived to again revitalize the Jewish people.

The book of Zechariah contains the clearest and the largest number of messianic (about the Messiah) passages among the Minor Prophets. In that respect, it's possible to think of the book of Zechariah as a kind of miniature book of Isaiah. Zechariah pictures Christ in both His first coming ([Zechariah 9:9](#)) and His second coming (9:10–10:12). Jesus will come, according to Zechariah, as Savior, Judge, and ultimately, as the righteous King ruling His people from Jerusalem (14:8–9).

Meaning “Yahweh remembers,” Zechariah's name was appropriate to the purpose of his prophecies. His book brims over with the hope that God would remember His promises to His people, even after all the time they spent outside the land. The prophet used a simple structure of eight visions ([Zechariah 1:1–6:15](#)), four messages (7:1–8:23), and two oracles (9:1–14:21) to anticipate the completion of the temple and, ultimately, the future reign of the Messiah from Jerusalem. Like many of the prophets, Zechariah saw isolated snapshots of the future; therefore, certain events that seem to occur one right after the other in Zechariah's prophecy actually often have generations or even millennia between them.

For a people newly returned from exile, Zechariah provided specific prophecy about their immediate and distant future—no doubt a great encouragement. Their nation would still be judged for sin (5:1–11), but they would also be cleansed and restored (3:1–10), and God would rebuild His people (1:7–17). Zechariah concluded his book by looking into the distant future, first at the rejection of the Messiah by Israel (9:1–11:17), and then at His eventual reign when Israel will finally be delivered (12:1–14:21).