



Session

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ZECHARIAH, PROPHET TO RETURNED EXILES

Zechariah

Zechariah was not just a prophet, he was also a priest. Zechariah was the grandson of Iddo, a priest who had returned from the exile in Babylon with Zerubbabel. In Hebrew the name *Zechariah* means “Yahweh remembers.” Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and while Haggai encouraged the people to continue their building of the temple, as a priest Zechariah helped the people understand the religious implications of their need to rebuild.

The Book of Zechariah is referred to many times in the New Testament, and Matthew relied heavily on the Book of Zechariah when writing his Gospel. Zechariah 9:9 is quoted twice in the gospels, by both John and Matthew. Zechariah 9:9 identified the coming Messiah as humble and riding on a donkey. This prophecy was fulfilled on the day Jesus rode a donkey into the city of Jerusalem beginning the final week of His life on earth.

Zechariah is the longest of the twelve books of the Minor Prophets, and Zechariah shared, through a series of visions, how God wanted the people to respond when they returned to Him. Zechariah began his prophecy by reminding the people what had gotten them into the situation they had been in, namely sin. The problem of sin had been Israel’s undoing before and without keeping it in check, it could very well be again. Zechariah recalled for the people the commandments set down by God and how those commandments, when obeyed, would lead them to restoration.

While the construction of the temple was a physical reminder to the people of God’s rescue of them, they also needed to focus their hearts on rebuilding their spiritual relationship and faith in God. Spiritual restoration was the most important thing. While the people would continue to struggle to obey, God promised a king was coming to bring salvation to the people.