

Zechariah

Lesson 1 - Overview

The late Bible teacher John MacArthur once said, “You can’t understand prophecy without understanding Zechariah.” Zechariah contains more prophecies about the first and second comings of Jesus Christ than any other Old Testament book except Isaiah. That makes it a crucial book for us to know, especially in these last days.

Studying Zechariah will be a great spiritual blessing. As you learn its prophecies, you will be strengthened, equipped, and prepared for the days ahead. Understanding what God has revealed helps us live with confidence and assurance instead of fear. These prophecies will also help you explain to others what is coming for Israel and how God’s plan will affect every nation on earth.

However, studying a prophetic book like Zechariah will not be easy. Satan will oppose you and try to distract or discourage you, because he does not want you to stand firmly in the truth or share it with others. He would rather keep you in fear and ignorance. So be ready for spiritual attacks. Stay diligent and persevere, so that you can be useful in God’s kingdom and one day hear Him say “Well done.”

I encourage you to devote the coming weeks to studying this amazing book, so that you will better understand the things that are going to take place.

DAY ONE

- 1. This week will be spent overviewing the book of Zechariah to set the stage for a more detailed study in the weeks ahead. Think of this as an aerial view: you will see the big picture, but we will not focus on the details yet — that will come in the following weeks. You will find a chart on page 37 of your Observation Worksheets titled “Zechariah at a Glance.” This chart will be your companion for this week’s study.**
- 2. This week we will cover all fourteen chapters in Zechariah, divided across five days of study. As you work through the book, you will fill in the “Zechariah at a Glance” chart, and then use part of the final day to review and reflect on what you have recorded.**

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3. Always take time to go before the Lord in prayer before beginning this or any study. Since it is His Word and the Holy Spirit is your teacher, true understanding will come through His guidance and instruction. Ask Him for wisdom, understanding, and practical application of the truths He will reveal to you as you study.

4. I will explain how to approach this week's study. Please read all the way through the rest of the instructions for Day 1 and familiarize yourself with what you will be doing. Learning to study God's Word in this way will bring great blessing to your life. Don't miss what God wants to do in you, or the peace He can bring to your soul in the midst of the turmoil around you.

5. Today you will be reading Zechariah chapters 1-3. We are not digging deeply into these chapters — remember, this is just an aerial view. As you read, you will be asked to mark some key words or phrases in a specific way so they will stand out to you in your later studies. I will explain how to mark key words and then give you a list of words or phrases to watch for. You may want to write on an index card so that you have them handy every day, to remind you what you are looking for and how to mark them consistently.
 - a. You will be marking key words as you read. This will slow you down a bit and help you to focus your attention on what you are reading.
 - b. In historical and prophetic books, timing is always a key component. You will want to mark any references that show timing of events. I use a simple little green clock with an hour and minute hand, but you could also use a green squiggly line under the word. There is no right or wrong way to do this; what matters is that you do it, because it will help you in your study.
 - c. As you begin, Zechariah 1:1 sets the time frame for this book. Mark the month and the year using whatever marking you have chosen. Then look at page 39 of your Observation Worksheets (OWS), which has a timeline of the rulers and prophets of Zechariah's time. Find when Zechariah's prophecy was written and record this on your "Zechariah at a Glance" chart next to the row for Zechariah chapter 1.
 - d. There is another time reference that you don't want to miss: the phrase is "in that day." Use a special marking for this phrase, because it points to a specific event. Use a different marking or a different color, but make sure it stands out.
 - e. Make sure that you watch for and mark these key words and phrases consistently throughout all fourteen chapters.

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6. Mark these key words or phrases as you read . . .
 - a. Each time Zechariah describes seeing something (for example, “I saw at night,” “I lifted my eyes and looked,” or “He showed me”), mark it using one distinct color making a small set of eyes so it stands out on the page. These markings identify each vision. On your Observation Worksheets (OWS), write down the main theme of each vision you’ve marked.
 - b. The phrase “the word of the Lord came to . . .” (Zechariah or “to me”). Underline or highlight this phrase.
7. If you notice other repeated events, subjects, or ideas, you can list them on the last page of this lesson (page 6). Be sure to include chapter and verse references so you can find them easily later.
8. Summarize each chapter of Zechariah in a few concise words that capture what the chapter is about. Write these summaries on your “Zechariah at a Glance” chart (OWS page 37). Use pencil so you can revise them later as you continue studying and gain more insight.

DAY TWO

1. Today you will do the same things you did yesterday, this time covering chapters 4-6. Read, mark the time references and key words and phrases, and record the main theme of each chapter on your “Zechariah at a Glance” chart.
2. In Zechariah 6:9 there is a phrase that says “the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.” While this may not be a vision, it is an important part of the chapter, so be sure to take special note of what it is about. You could make a note of this in the margin of your OWS next to this verse.
3. You may also have found some additional items to add to your list of repeated events, subjects, and thoughts on page 6.

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DAY THREE

1. Read Zechariah 7-8 following all the steps you used over the past two days.
2. Look at the time phrase in Zechariah 7:1. Compare it with the time statements in Zechariah 1:1 and 1:7, then list all three time references below.
 - a. Zechariah 1:1
 - b. Zechariah 1:7
 - c. Zechariah 7:1
3. Don't miss the time reference "in those days." This is a synonym for "in that day" so mark it the same way.

DAY FOUR

Today's assignment is to work on Zechariah 9-11. Make sure to follow all the steps as before —read carefully, mark the time references and key words or phrases, and record the main theme of each chapter. Over time, this will become your natural way of approaching Scripture.

DAY FIVE

1. Today's assignment is to work on Zechariah 12-14. As you read, continue using the same approach—mark the time references and key words or phrases, and record the main theme of each chapter on your "Zechariah at a Glance" chart.
2. Note how Zechariah 12 begins. Why do you think the chapter begins this way? Write a brief explanation in your own words in the space below.

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3. Let's take a look at your "Zechariah at a Glance" chart. Do you see any common subjects that span several chapters? If you do, these are called segments. They may be grouped by common subjects, people, time, or other features. In this particular book, they may also be grouped around visions. In the column under "Segment Divisions," write in the segments you see. If you notice more than one way the book could be divided, use multiple columns. Again, do this in pencil, since you may change your mind as you continue to study.

That wraps up your first week of study. I pray that the time that you have spent in God's Word has blessed and encouraged you. We are headed into a rich and meaningful study together.

Repeated Events and Subjects in Zechariah