

Zechariah 1

Verse 1

In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying,

This was about two months after Haggai issued his 1st prophecy.

See chart 105

Zechariah Time Line			
Chp / Verse	Events		Year BC
	Cyrus releases Jews	1st Return	539
	Second temple begun		538 - 536
	Work stopped	15 years	536 - 520
	Haggai sent to Jerusalem	1st message	6 -1-520
1:1	Zechariah	1st message	8 - 520
1:7	Zechariah	2nd message	11-24-520

Ten Old Testament prophets, beginning with Elijah and ending with Zechariah, used the following statement, “the word of the Lord came to (insert name) the prophet. This was an affirmation of their right and responsibility to speak the word of the Lord to the people of Israel.

The sudden resurgence of activity by the Jews in the rebuilding of their temple came about when Haggai and Zechariah spoke to the people in the name of the Lord.

See Ezra 5:1 - 2

When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, ² then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

While there were some enemies that tried to stop the work, they were told in no uncertain terms by Darius the Great that that would not be allowed.

See Ezra 6:11-12

¹¹ And I issued a decree that any person who violates this decree, a timber shall be pulled out of his house and he shall be impaled on it; and his house shall be turned into a refuse heap on account of this. ¹² May the God who has caused His name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who attempts to change *it*, so as to destroy that house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued *this* decree; *it* is to be carried out with all diligence!”

Verses 2 - 3

² “The Lord was very angry with your fathers. ³ Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the Lord of armies says: “Return to Me,” declares the Lord of armies, “that I may return to you,” says the Lord of armies.

We should not be surprised that the Lord can become angry. It is true that He is in heaven and it is a wonderful place but God is dealing with mankind on a fallen planet where it is possible for people to repent but not in a whole hearted way.

Haggai first called the people to action on the first day of the sixth month. Spurred by his message, the leaders and the people officially restarted construction on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius. So why did Zechariah call for repentance from the people when they had already begun the work about two months previously. Apparently, their devotion to the work was not what was required in order for things to progress as it should.

Verse 4

⁴ “Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, ‘This is what the Lord of armies says: “Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.”’ But they did not listen or pay attention to Me,” declares the Lord.

Those who had restated the work are the same people who had neglected the work of the Lord for 15 years. Again, they had repented of their sin but God reminds them that it is easy to fall back into their old ways if they are not careful. To do so would put them in the same category with their fathers who did not listen to the Lord.

Verses 5 - 6

⁵ “Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶ But did My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, not overtake your fathers? Then they repented and said, ‘Just as the Lord of armies planned to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’””

God reminds the people that their ancestors and the prophets who spoke God’s word to them eventually died, but in contrast the decrees of the Lord outlived them, and their judgment was based on those laws. Because of this their ancestors ultimately realized that the Lord had dealt with them in a fair and just way.

See Daniel 9:4

⁴ I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed, and said, “Oh, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, ⁵ we have sinned, we have done wrong, and acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. ⁶ Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our leaders, our fathers, and all the people of the land.

See Ezra 9:6

⁷ Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and because of our wrongful deeds we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to open shame, as it is this day. ⁸ But now for a brief moment grace has been *shown* from the Lord our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, so that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹ For we are slaves; yet in our bondage our God has not abandoned us, but has extended favor to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to erect the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

The 70-year captivity in Babylon made the Jews keenly aware that they and their ancestors had rejected the Lord and were paying the price for their sin. However, we should not assume that all of those who returned to Jerusalem were part of the righteous remnant. The righteous remnant was always a small subset of the nation as a whole whether that was before, during, or after the deportation to Babylon. Even those who had returned to Jerusalem had to be rebuked for putting more interest in the beautification of their own homes above the completion of the Lord’s House.

Verse 7

⁷ On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, that is, the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:

This was 3 months after the first message from the Lord (Verse 1).

See chart 110

Zechariah Time Line			
Chp / Verse	Events		Year BC
	Cyrus releases Jews	1st Return	539
	Second temple begun		538 - 536
	Work stopped	15 years	536 - 520
	Haggai sent to Jerusalem	1st message	6 - 1-520
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Verses 8 - 11

⁸ I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel, and white horses behind him. ⁹ Then I said, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “I will show you what these are.” ¹⁰ And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, “These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.” ¹¹ So they responded to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, “We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is still and quiet.”

A man on a red horse was standing among the myrtle trees in a valley. This man was the angel of the Lord (the preincarnate Christ). There were other horses that were standing behind Him which were red, brown, and white in color. These riders were sent by the Lord to patrol and walk through the earth. The patrol horses told the angel of the Lord (Christ) that the whole earth was sitting still and living at peace. This was bad news for Israel because the pagan nation who had destroyed Jerusalem was enjoying peace and prosperity, while God's temple lay in ruins.

The Myrtle trees are evergreen shrubs known for their fragrance and white flowers. They grow in valleys which represents Israel's low position as a captured nation that is subservient to the King of Babylon. However, even though Israel felt forgotten and lowly under foreign rule, the Lord was present among them.

See Pic 115



Verses 12 - 14

¹² Then the angel of the Lord said, “Lord of armies, how long will You take no pity on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant for these seventy years?” ¹³ And the Lord responded to the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. ¹⁴ So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘This is what the Lord of armies says: “I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.”

The Angel of the Lord (Christ) asked the Lord of Armies (The Father) how long the Jews would suffer the humiliation of their captivity. The Father's response was one of great comfort to those who had now been in captivity for 70 years. The 70 years

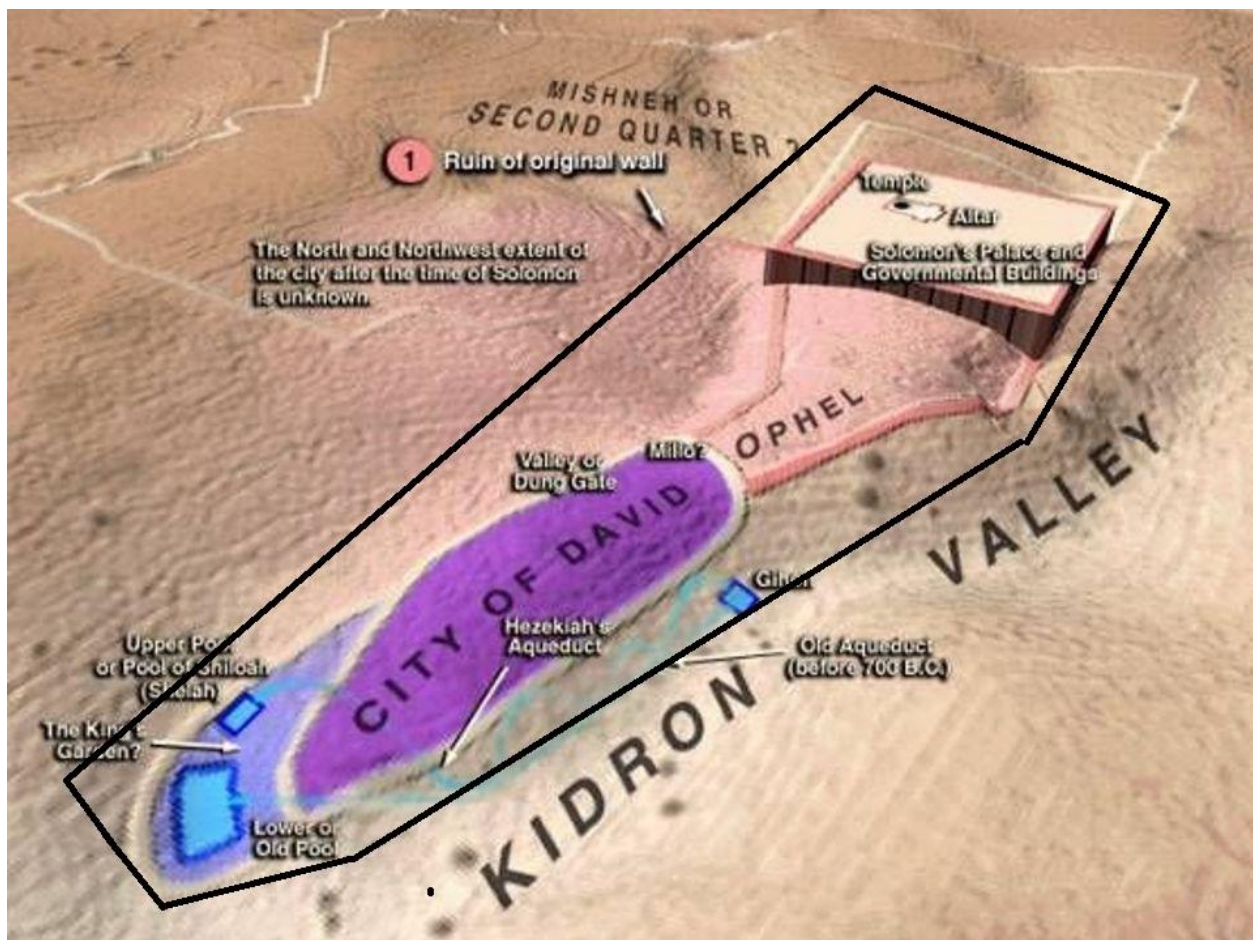
The term Zion was first mentioned in the Book of Samuel.

See 2 Samuel 5:6 - 7

⁶ Now the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land; and they said to David, "You shall not come in here, but even those who are blind and those who limp will turn you away," thinking, "David cannot enter here." ⁷ Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.

Originally, Zion referred directly to the City of David, however, after Solomon built the temple on the elevated plain above the city of David, the name grew to include both areas. Later, Zion became a poetic name for the people of Israel as a whole.

See pic 120



Verses 15 - 17

¹⁵ But I am very angry with the nations who are carefree; for while I was *only* a little angry, they furthered the disaster.” ¹⁶ Therefore the Lord says this: “I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,” declares the Lord of armies, “and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem.”” ¹⁷ Again, proclaim, saying, ‘This is what the Lord of armies says: “My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’””

Without a doubt God uses one nation to punish another nation for their sins but if that nation becomes vindictive and kills innocent citizens and thus commits war crimes then that nation will be judged by God. God had used Assyria, Babylon and other nearby nations to punish Israel at different times, but some of those nations had gone too far in their retribution toward Israel and they were not going to get away with it.

Israel had paid a high price for their sin, the destruction of the temple and their deportation to Babylon, but now the Lord had freed them of their captivity, allowed them to return to Jerusalem and wanted to fully bless them but the people needed to complete the work that they had begun 15 years ago on the temple. The measuring line that was stretched over Jerusalem meant the work had not been completed yet.

Some commentators believe these verses point to the time of the Maccabees and/or the time of Christ. However, it seems that this part of the message was written to the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem and had not yet experienced the kind of blessings they had hoped for. Those blessing would come if they remained faithful to God and completed the work on the temple.

Verses 18 - 19

¹⁸ Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, *there were four horns*. ¹⁹ So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these?” And he said to me, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”

Horns, when used figuratively, usually refer to world powers such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and even the medieval church (500 to 1500 AD). However, here it says that four horns scattered Israel, so which of these seven empires meet the qualification of having “scattered” Israel. We know from bible history that Assyria and Babylon scattered the Northern and southern kingdoms of Israel.

See Jeremiah 50:17

17 “Israel is a scattered flock; the lions have driven them away. The first one *who* devoured him was the king of Assyria, and this last one *who* has gnawed his bones is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Ok, but which of the other 5 empires meet this requirement.

1. The people of Israel were taken out of Egypt but they were not scattered.
2. During the Medo-Persian empire Mordecai the Jew refused to bow down to Haman, making him so angry that Haman wanted to punish not just Mordecai, but every Jewish person living across all 127 provinces of the Persian Empire. However, the government was not against the Jewish people, but rather this one man tricked the king using deception and bribery. The Jews were threatened with annihilation but they had been scattered throughout the kingdom prior to this event.
3. Under the Greek empire there was the Maccabean revolt but the Jews won that conflict and took control of their land.
4. Under Roman control, all of the Jews were expelled from Jerusalem and Judah in 70 AD. So, this would qualify as a scattering of the Jews.
5. The policies supported by Catholic Church leaders over the centuries contributed heavily to the persecution, forced expulsions, and scattering of Jewish communities across Europe.

The following are just two examples of this taking place.

1. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella forced all Jews to leave Spain in 1492.
2. Pope Pius V ordered Jews to leave church lands, except for Rome and Ancona in 1569.

This would seem to imply that the 4 horns were Assyria, Babylon, Rome and the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. Some commentators want the 4 horns to be successive but that is not specified in these verses.

Verses 20 - 21

20 Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. 21 And I said, “What are these coming to do?” And he said, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah so that no one lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to frighten them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.”

The four craftsmen were the nations that defeated the four world powers that had scattered Israel.

1. Babylon destroyed Assyria in 612 BC.
2. The Medo Persians defeated Babylon in 539 BC.
3. Western Rome fell in 476 AD after decades of economic decay, internal strife, and invasions by various Germanic tribes. Eastern Rome (the Byzantine Empire) fell on May 29, 1453, when the Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople.
4. The Catholic Church survived the fall of Eastern and Western Rome but its power was diminished by two major schisms within the church. The first split came during the East–West Schism of 1054 AD and the second split was the result of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

It should be noted that verse 21 calls these 4 horns “nations”. Therefore, a strict interpretation would not include the Catholic Church, however, it was a major force within the Medieval European world. It was the most powerful institution of that time, controlling vast amounts of wealth and owning huge areas of land. It also made laws, and guided daily life from the local village to the royal palace.