**Zechariah**

**Return to Me**

**What you need to KNOW:**

Zechariah was a contemporary with the prophet Haggai. Both men spoke to God’s people after they had been allowed to return from their exile in Babylon and were reconstructing Jerusalem. They had a generational difference as Zechariah was a young man, while Haggai was advanced in years, however their passions were the same. They shared a common calling to call the people of Judah to not only rebuild the city, but to focus their efforts on the reconstruction of God’s Temple. The people had begun the work of reestablishing the Temple with gusto, however, the work had ground to a halt.

The prophets called the people to get back to the project. Haggai’s prophesies were spoken over the course of four months and they were primarily focused on getting the project going again. Zechariah’s messages were spoken over the course of two years. His messages gave the people ‘a kick in the pants’ to finish the Temple, but were also interwoven with pastoral calls for spiritual renewal and the encouragement found in the hope of a glorious future. The heart of Zechariah’s ministry is expressed with the opening instruction, *“Return to me, and I will return to you, say the Lord Almighty” (1:3).* Zechariah continually assured God’s people that The Lord is sovereign over history. That He is the Lord of the past, the Orchestrator of our present circumstances and the One who will Superintend the final outcome of human history. Our hope is well-placed in His capable hands.

Much of Zechariah’s messaging was ‘forth-telling,’ instructions that spoke into the circumstances the people of Judah were experiencing. However, interwoven into his appeals were ‘foretelling’ predictions of future events. In fact, many of the hopeful prophesies of Zechariah were fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus. For instance, Zechariah foretold that the coming Messiah would ride a donkey into Jerusalem *(9:9).* This prophesy was pointedly fulfilled 500 years later when Jesus rode into Jerusalem a few short days before He was hung on a cross to bear human sin *(Matthew 21:1-11).* Another example of the reliability of Zechariah’s words happened when a Roman soldier stuck a spear into Jesus’ side to confirm His death on the cross *(John 19:34).* That soldier couldn’t have known that he was part of a greater narrative foretold by Zechariah that at the Savior’s death *“they will look on me whom they have pierced” (12:10)*.

Woven into the book of Zechariah are predictions of the Savior’s first coming as well as his second coming. And, the historical fact that the predictions surrounding the Savior’s initial work of redemption came true, is a source confidence that Zechariah’s predictions about the Redeemer’s final actions to restore the creation to its original, pristine state will indeed happen at the end of time.

There is much hope and encouragement in Zechariah to persevere in our faith. This book guarantees that there will come a time when the human struggle against sin and death will find a conclusion. It is certain that a day is coming when *“the Lord will be king over all the earth! Watch, for the day of the Lord is coming!” (14:9,1).* Bank on it!

**GET GOING!**

**Begin your walk through the prophesies of Zechariah. A two chapter a day pace will get you through its fourteen chapters in a week.**