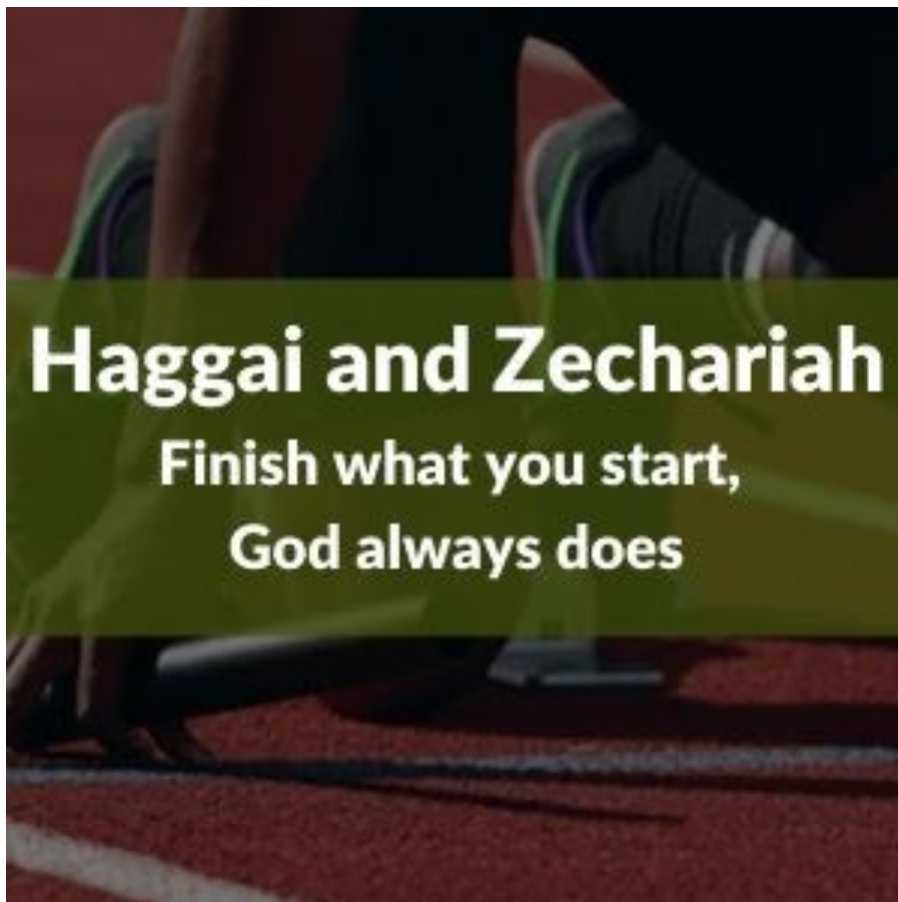


# Handouts

Notes, Questions, &  
Infographics



### **How difficult is it to finish what you start?**

- *For most of us, that can be a challenge.*
- *Our God, however, always finishes what He starts and fulfills what He promises He will.*
- *In today's lesson, we'll look at not only what God did, but the difference in how He fulfills His promises to us today from what people could expect in Old Testament times in our lesson....*

## **Haggai and Zechariah**

### **Finish what you start, God always does**

#### **Where we are in our journey through the Bible**

- We're nearing the end of our study of the Old Testament.
- Three prophets to go: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who spoke during the historical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
- Then in closing you will read the books of 1,2 Chronicles, which is a review of Biblical history from Adam to the return from the exile and stops just before these final books of history and prophecy.
- This is another example of why it is so important to read your Bible in chronological, historical order (not the order they are in your Bible) because 1,2 Chronicles isn't simply a repeat of Samuel and Kings, the books prior to them in our Bibles.
- These books were the last written in the Old Testament times and Hebrew tradition tells us they were written by Ezra, the high priest who returned to Israel after their exile in Egypt.
- He wrote them to review the history of God's people and they are a good review of that history for us also.

#### **Redone Timeline from last week, writing of Chronicles added**

#### **What makes Chronicles a little different from the other books of history**

- 1,2 Chronicles (originally one book) emphasizes different things than the other Biblical books of history.
- Lots of emphasis in them on lists of people—a reminder that individuals matter to God—not just the big important events and people of history, but the individuals.
- Primarily an emphasis on Judah, the Southern kingdom after Israel split in two—as this is the Kingdom that carries on God's plan.
- An emphasis on the Temple, on worshipping God, on the preparations for it, which is seen clearly in how David's sin with Bathsheba is not mentioned, but detailed writing about all he did for God AFTER his sin.
- ***Application: You can never sin beyond God's ability to forgive and use you in great ways if you return to Him and allow Him to do that. AND THAT is what is remembered. That is what can make a lasting heritage.***

Yet they are more simply history.....

- Chronicles reminds the people that as **a group and as individuals**, God never lost track of anyone.
- His care and His plans continued through all their various trials.
- He brought them safely through them all and is returning them at last to their home.
- ***The application to all of us is the reminder that God never loses track of any of us, and that through all we experience, good and bad, challenging and hopeful, He will bring us safely home to Himself forever.***

### **Back to the last 3 prophets**

- These three, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are what are known as the “Post-exilic” prophets, meaning they were God’s teachers to Judah after they returned from the Babylonian exile.
- In reviewing, how the 16 prophets of the Old Testament are divided overall, refer back to the chart of when they lived and their messages.
- 11 prophesied before the captivity, ones like Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others.
- Ezekiel and Daniel during the captivity.
- These 3 afterward, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- Haggai & Zechariah spoke at the same time, Malachi a little later
- ***God always has his messengers with lessons appropriate to their times—the big picture and proper dating are important to see.***

### **The setting of Haggai & Zechariah**

- Written about 14-16 years after the Jews went back to the land after their captivity, which was a glorious work of God.
- There were challenges when the surrounding people tried to stop them, but God intervened there also.
- Yes, there were problems, from enemies but the Israelites had seen God conquer and give victory in much greater problems and He took care of this situation also and they got permission from the king to continue building.
- But they didn’t.....
- ***He sent TWO prophets to them: Haggai and Zechariah, who preached at the same time, but in very different ways.***
- Haggai is very practical about what to do NOW.
- Zechariah, like many prophets, jumps into the mind of God and challenges the people from His viewpoint with dreams and visions from the view of eternity. We’ll look at each one of the prophets in more detail in this lesson.

### ***First Haggai—challenges the people as to why did the work stop?***

- The people didn’t tell themselves that they were quitting work on the Temple, or that they were afraid to do the work, here is what they said:
- “These people say, ‘***The time has not yet come*** to rebuild the Lord’s house.’” Haggai 1:2
- But they had time for other things and Haggai challenged them about that....

- ***“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”*** Haggai 1:4

#### **Their excuse.....**

- ***“Not yet time to do the Lord’s work”***
- It is a common and dangerous excuse, throughout Biblical times, and for us, doesn’t seem like an outright rebellion, we deceive ourselves into thinking we will obey....sometime....
- Other examples: In the New Testament, Felix when confronted by Paul—  
***‘I’ll send for you when a more convenient season.’*** Acts 24:25
- St. Augustine: ***“Lord, make me chaste; just not yet.”***
- We often don’t want to flagrantly disobey God or tell him we have no intention of not doing something we know He wants us to do in an action, a habit, a ministry.
- So, we lie to ourselves and to God that “the timing just isn’t right.”
- I’ll do it, or obey, or change or whatever, ***just not now.***

#### **Haggai wouldn’t have any of it**

- ***Look at what’s happening to you! <sup>6</sup> You have planted much but harvested little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes! Haggai 1:5-6***
- His words were not simply an idle observation; they were a reminder of what God said would happen if they did not follow through on obeying His covenant.
- God previously told them. and Haggai was repeating it when he reminded them that in Deut. 28 it prophesied what would happen if they did not obey, where it says *“You will sow much but reap little, for the locusts will eat your crops. You will plant vineyards and care for them, but you won’t eat the grapes or drink the wine, for worms will destroy the vines. Olive trees will be growing everywhere, but there won’t be enough olive oil to anoint yourselves! For the trees will drop their fruit before it is matured. Deut 28:38,40 LB **\*\*God keeps His word in good and bad consequences.***

#### **The problem is clarified, the challenge given, what now?**

- We need motivation to actually get doing and sometimes that involves more than simply a factual listing of what we’ve done wrong.
- Here is where Zechariah comes in—Haggai’s partner in ministry.
- We haven’t really seen this before—two prophets.
- One is very practical; the other speaks in images.
- Let’s talk about this method first before we get into his content.

#### **About the use of images**

- Sometimes it takes more than simply words to communicate.
- “A picture is worth a thousand words” is often quoted to which I reply, but “Which thousand?”

- We need words to clarify the meaning of images, and often images to inspire our words— this combination is what makes the pairing of Haggai and Zechariah so powerful.
- Haggai’s concrete words are based on the prior covenant with God.
- What are Zechariah’s images all about?

**First, they come from the eternal view of God, who sees past, present, and future**

They needed and we need to put ourselves in our eternal destiny to sometimes have the strength or courage to do what needs to be done.

And to communicate that information, sometimes images are the best way to do it.

***\*\*The Bible does this a lot—reminding us that this present time is not all there is.\*\****

***The point of this shift in perspective***

***Life is not concerned with time alone. There is an overruling power that works in time to prepare for eternity.***

William Orr

**Why images are needed to communicate it and why they work so well**

- ***An image can contain volumes of backstory and meaning in a few words***—the challenge is you need to understand the meaning of the image.
- If you want to describe the perfect superhero, a sterling example of strength, integrity, leadership, and self-giving, you could list these characteristics in minute dictionary detail or you could simply say, “Captain America.”
- The books of the Old Testament and Zachariah is one of the main ones that does this, and uses imagery in much the same way.
- ***The challenge to modern readers have is that we don’t know the backstory of the imagery.*** For us visions of myrtle trees, golden lampstands, and a flying scroll make about as much sense to us as Captain America, Thor, and Spiderman would make to the Old Testament Jews.
- **We can get that back story by becoming more familiar with the Bible and through commentaries.**

**An overview quote on Zechariah by John MacArthur**

- ***This book is the most messianic, apocalyptic, and eschatological in the OT. Primarily, it is a prophecy about Jesus Christ, focusing on His coming glory as a means to comfort Israel (cf. 1:13,17). While the book is filled with visions, prophecies, signs, celestial visitors, and the voice of God, it is also practical, dealing with issues like repentance, divine care, salvation, and holy living.***
- ***Prophecy was soon to be silent for more than 400 years until John the Baptist, so God used Zechariah to bring a rich, abundant outburst of promise for the future to sustain the faithful remnant through those silent years.***
- ***From John MacArthur’s intro to the book of Zechariah***

## Images, and visions in the Book of Zechariah

- These put the practical words of Haggai into the larger plan of God.
- **1) Eight visions while they are building the Temple**
- These are primarily a series of eight, night visions and the coronation of Joshua the high priest in order to encourage the nation that He is not finished with them—that God still has plans for them and will fight for them, bless them, take away their sins, enable them to build the temple, bring true worship, and unite them, if they will repent and obey Him 1:7--6:15
- **2) Prophecies after the building of the Temple, possibly many years later**
- These concern the Messiah, both his first and second comings.
- See the handout from “Got Questions” for a brief summary or their meanings.

### Here is the important point—on all apocalyptic and end-times visions

- They give us “a future and a hope.”
- An eternal context of comfort and strength for what might be difficult now.
- But the future is not yet and not to be our sole focus.
- There is work to be done NOW—our work has a purpose, but as we work towards it we must do very tangible things.
- And to do those things in light of their eternal calling, here is what they were supposed to do...

### From the national to the personal the primary thing was to get to work....

- **To the people as a whole:**
- ***Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty. ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’*** Haggai 2:4-5
- **To one person:**
- *“This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty. . . . Then the word of the Lord came to me: “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. “Who dares despise the day of small things?”*

### We might feel too weak or too old or too tired or too overwhelmed

- But if God calls us to do something, no matter all these things—HE can help us finish it.
- To repeat...***“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. “Who dares despise the day of small things?”***
- What an incredible promise—and it came true. Don’t give up on dreams of what you can do for God.

- Don't have a selfish "bucket list" have a God bucket list.
- What dreams do you have of what YOU can do for God?
- And then back to all the people...

### Then to applications for all the people

- A question about religious observance—after the first set of visions.
- In Chapter 7 people came to him with a question about fasting.
- "Should we mourn and fast in the fifth month, as we have done for so many years?"
- **7: -4** Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me: **5** "Ask all the people of the land and the priests, '**When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?** **6** And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves?"

- **IMPORTANT APPLICATION: Evaluate your motive for any religious action**

- God was not pleased with theirs—religious actions without doing what they were supposed to do.

### He goes on to tell them what to do

- Zechariah 8:16-17, MSG
- *"And now here's what I want you to do: Tell the truth, the whole truth, when you speak. Do the right thing by one another, both personally and in your courts. Don't cook up plans to take unfair advantage of others. Don't do or say what isn't so. I hate all that stuff. Keep your lives simple and honest." Decree of God.*
- "Tell the truth" don't lie—God hates that. New Testament reminder: Eph 4:25 *Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves. . . .* <sup>29</sup> *Don't use bad language. Say only what is good and helpful to those you are talking to, and what will give them a blessing.*
- What we say is a big reflection of who we belong to—and we need to be consistent in it.

### They got to work

- Some did it complaining that it wasn't as great as the old one—but Haggai told them its glory would be greater.
- Because it was the Temple that Jesus would come to.
- **Application: Our standards of "greatness" are often not the same as the Lord's.**
- It isn't the outward appearance that is most important, but who is there—Jesus or not?

### \*\*\*Important overall application for the books and a Bible interpretation overall

- If things aren't going well for us—if we do a little work around the church will that mean that everything will get better?
- If we work hard for God, shouldn't we be protected from difficulties and loss?

- That's what these books seem to teach.
- Does God punish us here and now if we don't do what He wants?
- And bless us with goodies if we do?
- Many teach that is the case—health and wealth preachers invariably quote Old Testament passages out of context to prove it that this is how things work.
- We know it isn't like that, but what is the reality of what we can expect in this and other apparent examples in the Old Testament?

#### **Guidelines in determining what is true and applicable for all time**

- First, need to look at the "whole counsel of God" before we get into specific applications.
- This means we need to be clear about what the WHOLE Bible teaches in various areas. **It takes work & time to develop that.**
- *In so doing we need to look for principles, not specific proof texts.*
- ***The overall principle of these books, the overwhelming lesson of the entire Bible is that God and doing HIS WILL is what is supposed to be the priority of our lives—regardless of the results (very different for Daniel, Jeremiah, or Zerubbabel).***
- Many commentators have said that these books are the Old Testament illustration of Matthew 6:33, NLT, ***Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.***
- And they are as that is a consistent message through the Bible.

#### **Other passages on making God our priority**

- *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. **In all your ways acknowledge him** and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6*
- *"And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with **all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:37-40*
- *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, **do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,** giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17*

***Added note: with God as our priority, it was affirmed somewhat differently in OT & NT—first some***

#### **Old Testament observations**

- It was very clearly stated in Deut 27-29, that if the people will do certain things that He will bless them and if they don't, that they will suffer the consequences.
- There was a direct, tangible correlation between when the people of God obeyed Him and His direct response—when obeyed, they were blessed—***in this life for the nation overall.***
- When they disobeyed, He disciplined them—which primarily meant a loss of material blessings.



- We have seen that throughout these months of study.
- ***IT isn't like that anymore***—we don't have specific promises like that today that apply so directly IN THIS LIFE.
- ***They were under the Old Covenant/Testament, we are under the NEW Covenant/Testament.***

**AND how we are shown that we are pleasing to God in the New Testament is VERY DIFFERENT**

- ***No guarantee of earthly blessings if you follow God.***
- *In this world you will have tribulation, Jn. 16:33*
- *Blessed are you if men revile, persecute, say evil against you, Matt. 5:11*
- One of the most godly, productive of New Testament characters, Paul: *I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. <sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. <sup>28</sup> Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 2 Cor. 11:24-28*
- Jesus was a homeless preacher, and He died a criminal's death.

**AND though the promises aren't always for now, the challenges are even harder**

- ***Inner as well as outer holiness expected***—in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says numerous times, you have heard it said....***but I say to you*** about holiness concerning lust, anger, AND He goes on to set a higher standard, summarized in this statement—
- ***“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”*** John 13:35
- Love defined by Jesus (not current emotional standards) but shown by serving as Jesus did, a life of service and at the end, washing the disciple's feet—***servant leadership (serving those we love overall) is not a nice suggestion, but a key evidence of belonging to Jesus.***
- We'll see the details of that as we study the New Testament in the upcoming lessons as we continue going through the Bible.
- One of the clearest examples of what matters to Jesus literally at the end of all things is in Matt. 25, the parable of the sheep and the goats. Let me summarize it.....

**What really matters isn't always obvious, but one day it will be**

- After Jesus commends people for the little things they did, he says, ***“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’***

- <sup>40</sup> ***“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’***
- Care for those in prison, the hungry, the aliens, strangers, and those in need—in addition to telling the truth, suffering without complaining, and the many things the Bible challenges us to do and that we will be studying more in the coming lessons of the New Testament--doing these things are essential characteristics of those who belong to Jesus.
- We may or may not be rewarded NOW for those acts of kindness done in faith, but we will be—and it will be glorious!

## ***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS***

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### **Haggai and Zechariah, Finish what you start, God always does**

1. Summarize the setting of these books historically, what has and is going on for the people of Israel?
2. What had the people stopped doing that God wanted them to do?
3. Have you ever used the excuse “it isn’t time yet,” to do something God wants you to do? Why is that wrong and how can we overcome the habit of doing that?
4. How does Zechariah complete the practical teaching of Haggai? How does his use of images inspire both his past audience and us today?
5. How is the Old Covenant and its promises of prosperity different than what we are promised in the New Covenant—in our world today?
6. APPLICATION— What are some things you would like to do for God that you haven’t done as yet? How are some practical ways you can get started doing them?

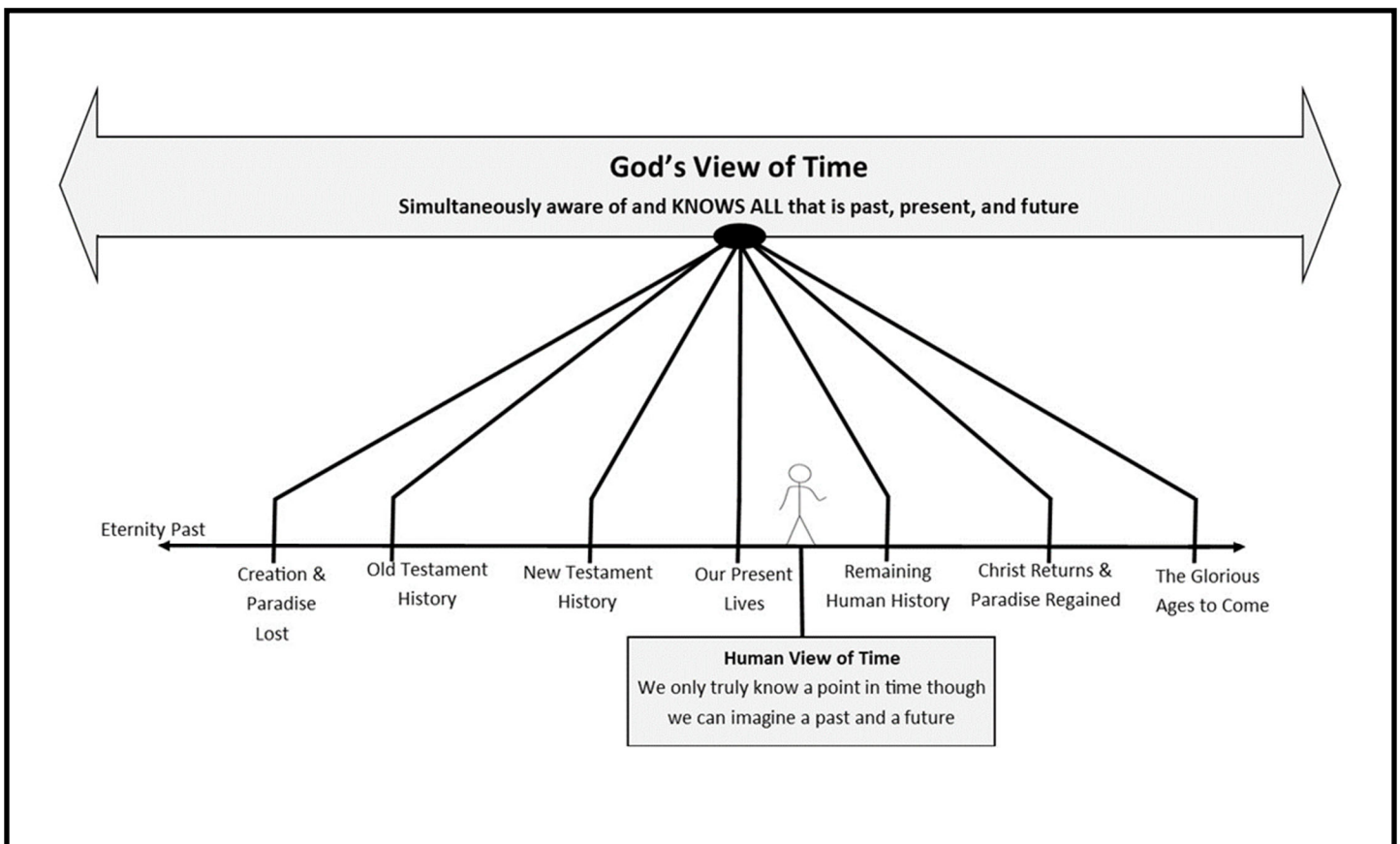
# Illustration of God's View of Time

This illustration shows how God is simultaneously aware of and knows all of time, past, present, and future and in contrast how we humans only experience one particular point of time.

This illustrates also how God can tell us in the Bible what will happen because He knows all of it in advance of us encountering it on our timeline.

Prophecy is not some mysterious thing, but simply how a caring God communicates what His people need to know.

Links to a podcast and video on this topic are also on [www.Bible805.com](http://www.Bible805.com)



TIMELINE  
**History**  
 from the Return to the close  
 of the Old Testament

**538 BC**  
 1ST RETURN UNDER  
 ZERUBABEL

Return of the first group of exiles under Zerubabel and Jeshua, they begin to build the Temple but soon quit from a combination of fear and distraction.

**520-518 BC**  
 PROPHETS HAGGAI AND  
 ZECHARIAH PREACH

Haggai and Zechariah preach and remind the people that building God's house is the most important thing they are supposed to do and that He will protect them. Temple finished.

**483-473 BC**  
 ESTHER

The book of Esther takes place back in Persia. She is Queen and is used by God to rescue her people from threatened destruction; challenged by her uncle Mordecai. Purim commemorates this.

**458-456 BC**  
 2ND RETURN UNDER EZRA

Ezra the priest, (a descendant of Aaron, the high priest) leads a much smaller group back. His goal is to teach and spiritually restore the people, who were returning to sinful ways, particularly in marrying heathen women.

**450-425 BC**  
 EZRA RECORDS

Ezra writes 1, 2 Chronicles, to remind people of their history, God's care, and the importance of obedience.

**444-432 BC**  
 NEHEMIAH'S 1ST TRIP

Nehemiah goes to rebuild the wall, which he does in 52 days. Stays as governor for 12 years; various reforms in partnership with Ezra, including spiritual revival, and economic justice. He also stands up to Israel's enemies.

**432-430 BC**  
 NEHEMIAH BRIEFLY  
 LEAVES AND RETURNS

Upon Nehemiah's return, he finds people had resumed neglect of the Temple, marriage to pagan women, and economic sins. Harsh words and discipline follow.

**435 BC**  
 PROPHET MALACHI  
 PREACHES

Prophet Malachi preaches against the same sins Ezra and Nehemiah pointed out. The people not following God in marriage or Temple observances, rob God by not giving as they should. The book ends with challenges.

**430 BC**  
 OLD TESTAMENT  
 ENDS, BEGINNING OF  
 400 SILENT YEARS

Promise for those who followed God through it all, *"Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored His name. They will be mine," says the Lord Almighty. (Mal. 3:16-17)*

## TIMELINE of the Return from Exile to the Close of the Old Testament

The timeline of events when the Jews return from exile in Babylon can be confusing in that the books that describe them in our Bibles are not in historical order and the prophets who preached during this time are at the end of the Old Testament.

In the historical timeline, the book of Esther takes place near the beginning of the book of Ezra. An initial return to the land took place before her story and another return to the land takes place after it.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah preach approximately 18 years after the first return to encourage the people to finish building the Temple. They had become discouraged and distracted and the prophet's preaching encouraged them to finish the Temple.

Though the Temple was rebuilt, the people needed spiritual rebuilding and God calls Ezra to take a much smaller group back to do that.

His preaching challenges the people, but the walls are not rebuilt, and the city is filled with rubble. God calls Nehemiah to rebuild and clean up the city of Jerusalem which he does.

During this time, Ezra is writing the books of Chronicles to remind the people of God's care throughout their history and to remind them of the importance of serving and worshiping God.

The prophet Malachi is preaching either somewhat earlier or at the same time Nehemiah is working and challenging the people.

The Old Testament ends with the people never again serving pagan Gods, though as a nation they are not totally committed to worshiping the God who has cared for them through thousands of years.

# Old Testament Prophets' Timeline

AUDIENCE COLOR KEY: green=Israel; blue=Judah; pink=Exiles in Babylon; tan=misc. nations

*note: exact dates approximate as many reputable sources vary, though general history and timeline valid.*

## Historical setting: After division of the kingdom into Israel and Judah, recorded in 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17

Prophet	Audience	Kings who ruled at the same time	Approximate Dates, all BC	Historical happenings at the time of the prophet, plus comments on the content of their books
Elijah	Israel	Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram	870-845	Kingdom split about 930, all sinful kings in Israel through Israel's history, kings a mixture of good and bad in Judah.
Elisha	Israel	Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz	845-800	Disciple of Elijah. Preaches to a sinful people who worshipped idols, not Jehovah God. Some individual (e.g. Naaman) success, no national repentance.
Jonah	Nineveh	Jeroboam II	760-753	Jonah first a prophet of victory to Israel; then called to preach to Nineveh capital of Assyria, a violent and cruel enemy. Finally obeys and Nineveh repents, though it doesn't last.
Amos	Israel	Jeroboam II	765-754	Israel powerful and complacent, pagan worship, neglect of the poor, calls for justice. Resotoration after judgement promised which is a pattern in many prophets.
Hosea	Israel	Jeroboam II	758-725	Though his message is of love and forgiveness, Israel does not repent, continues in spiritual decline. Though materially prosperous and religiously active, Israel goes into captivity in 722, conquered by Assyria.

## Historical setting: Israel conquered by Assyria, prophecies now warning Judah, recorded 2 Kings 18-2 Kings 25

### Additional history of Judah primarily in 1-2 Chronicles; fall of Jerusalem and edict to return in 2 Chron. 36

Isaiah	Judah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	760-673	Begins preaching to Judah before Israel falls. Assyria threatens but does not conquer Judah. Book reflects God's eternal view.
Micah	Judah	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	738-698	Preaches same time as Isaiah, warns of judgement if no repentance. Defines what God requires in Micah 6:8.
Nahum	Nineveh	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah	658-615	Assyrian repentance under Jonah doesn't last. Final destruction of Assyria/Nineveh by Babylonians.
Zephaniah	Judah	Josiah	640-609	Last revival in Judah under Josiah, but not enough.
Habakkuk	Judah	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin	608-598	Babylon conquered Assyria; Judah in process of its downfall. Questions why God uses pagan nations for His purposes.
Jeremiah	Judah	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah	650-582	Messages not in order. Records the last days of Judah, the prior series of deportations before final destruction in 587 BC. Wrote at the same time as Ezekiel and Daniel who were deported early on. Writes Lamentations after fall of Judah.
Obediah	Edom	uncertain	?	Judgement of Edom. Date not certain, message timeless. Do not rejoice over or take advantage of the fall of others.

## Historical setting: Babylon conquers Judah, a series of deportations, final destruction 607 BC, recorded in 2 Kings 24, 25

Ezekiel	Exiles in Babylon	Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, in Judah; Babylonian rulers there	620-570	Under captivity, God continues speaking to his people; obedience still required, he was a priest and spoke to the people in Babylon. Also numerous future, end-time prophecies.
Daniel	Exiles in Babylon	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah in Judah; Babylonian rulers there	620-540	One of the earliest deported to Babylon, lived there during the destruction, deportation, and return of the people. His prophecies span human history.

## Historical setting: Israel allowed to return & rebuild, recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, captives who stayed in Esther

Joel	Judah	Governor Zerubbabel?	?	Date not certain, message timeless. Restoration promised.
Haggai	Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	520	Returned to the land, Temple rebuilding stalled, preached priority of finishing God's work. Preached with Zechariah.
Zechariah	Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	522-509	Messages, challenges to complete the tasks of God.
Malachi	Judah	not certain, perhaps some overlap with Nehemiah	435	People back in the land, Temple rebuilt. The people persisted in sin. Challenges to repent. Blessings for obedience.

## After these books 400 "Silent years" No written word from God, but God at work in history preparing for the Messiah.

from Yvon Prehn for [www.bible805.com](http://www.bible805.com)

## What are the meanings of the various visions in Zechariah?

In [Zechariah 1:7–6:8](#), the prophet Zechariah receives eight visions in one busy night:

1. The horseman among the myrtle trees (1:7-17)
2. The four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21)
3. The surveyor (2:1-13)
4. The vision of Joshua the high priest (3:1-10)
5. The golden lampstand and two olive trees (4:1-14)
6. The flying scroll (5:1-4)
7. The woman in the basket (5:5-11)
8. The four chariots (6:1-8)

Zechariah begins his book with a strong call for Israel to repent (1:1-6). This theme of repentance is developed more fully through the subsequent eight visions. In general, these visions speak of God's plans for Israel and especially for Jerusalem and the temple. Another major theme is the coming of the future Messiah. The prophet also had a mission of encouraging the post-exilic Jews to continue their work to rebuild the temple.

Here is a brief look at each of these divine visions:

1. **The horseman among the myrtle trees (1:7-17):** Zechariah sees a man and horses among the trees. The man explains that they had gone throughout the whole earth and found peace. An angel then tells the prophet that God still loved Israel and would restore Jerusalem. Verse 17 summarizes: "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"
2. **The four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-21):** Zechariah is shown four horns and four craftsmen. The angel tells him that the horns are four kingdoms that opposed Israel (Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Medo-Persia) and the craftsmen are coming to "throw down these horns"; i.e., God would defeat Israel's enemies.
3. **The surveyor (2:1-13):** Zechariah sees a man holding a measuring line. When the prophet asks the man where he is going, the man says he is going to measure the city of Jerusalem. This vision represents God's promise that Jerusalem will be expanded and its people will one day live in safety as the Lord judges Israel's enemies.
4. **The vision of Joshua the high priest (3:1-10):** Zechariah

sees [Joshua the high priest](#) standing in filthy clothes; he is before the [Angel of the Lord](#), and Satan stands to the side. Satan is rebuked, and Joshua is given rich, clean clothes. God Himself explains the vision: Joshua will be blessed in his service to the Lord. The vision is also symbolic of Israel's restoration as God's "priestly" nation (cf. [Exodus 19:6](#)). This vision of Joshua ends with a prediction of the ultimate high priest—the coming Messiah, symbolized by a Branch and an all-seeing Stone.

5. **The golden lampstand and two olive trees (4:1-14):** An angel shows Zechariah a golden lampstand being fed oil from two olive trees. The two olive trees are symbolic of Zerubbabel the governor of Judah and Joshua the high priest. The golden lampstand represents the temple and temple-worshiping community. God was making the point that He would once again work through His people to lay the foundation of the temple and finish the work.

6. **The flying scroll (5:1-4):** Zechariah sees a large scroll, written on both sides, flying over the whole land. This vision speaks of God's judgment upon those who disobeyed His law.

7. **[The woman in the basket \(5:5-11\):](#)** The angel shows the prophet a basket that could hold an ephah (three-fifths of a bushel). On the basket is a lead cover. The angel opens the basket to reveal a woman sitting inside. The angel says, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land," and seals the basket again with the heavy lid. Two other women appear with stork-like wings; they pick up the basket and carry it to Babylon. This strange vision pictures suppressed wickedness to be banished to Babylon where it would eventually be freed (cf. [Revelation 17](#)).

8. **The four chariots (6:1-8):** Zechariah sees four horses of different colors pulling four chariots. They quickly run through the entire earth, with the result that God's Spirit has "rest." This vision represents a judgment upon the enemies of Israel. After the judgment, God's wrath will be appeased, and "rest" ensues. This final vision brings the series of visions full circle: the first vision had pictured these horses at the end of their mission. A similar vision of judgment, also using the imagery of horses, is found in [Revelation 6:1-8](#).

The two middle visions, numbers 4 and 5, emphasize God's blessing. As Israel returns to Jerusalem and rebuilds the temple, they will find God's favor. The work will be accomplished, "'not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty" (4:6).