



zechariah

promise of restoration

Zechariah The Prophet

All good stories have plot twists and moments of heightened importance. God's story of salvation is no different. God has promised a kingdom, a blessing, a dwelling place and his presence to be with his people. But Exile to Babylon has come. The Jerusalem temple lay in ruins; the people scattered and the city shattered. God's promises seem a thing of the distant past. Where to now???

Cue entry — Zechariah the prophet!

Zechariah's prophecy as part of the OT book of the 12 forms a critically important part of God's story of salvation. What will become of the Kingdom of God now Jerusalem is destroyed and the temple no more? What will become of the promises to David now that no King is enthroned? How will sins be atoned for without the priests and sacrifices? What will become of God's reputation in the world now that the nation of Israel looks so small, weak and powerless?

Cue entry — Zechariah the prophet!

Zechariah comes to God's people as they have been allowed to return from captivity in Babylon. The Persians are the new super-power in town, and their mighty ruler Darius has proclaimed that Israel may return to Jerusalem to rebuild their homes and society. But will this mean God's promises will be kept in total? Will this mean the era of God's total dominion has come? Will this see evil being finally and totally crushed? Will the Messiah now come and throw off oppression and foreign rule and establish the Kingdom of God on earth?

Cue entry — Zechariah the prophet!

But now we're back and the temple rebuilding has been completed, sure it's not as good as the former one. It seems as though our time in exile is over. What now? What next?

Cue entry — Zechariah the prophet!

Zechariah forms a most significant part of God's story of salvation. It is not surprising that Zechariah features highly in the gospel writers portrayal of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem some 500 years later. Or that Revelation draws upon Zechariah in such a deep and rich manner. Many of the Bible's themes are developed and built upon within the prophetic book of Zechariah.

Given all this, it is startling that we are not more familiar with Zechariah's prophecy. Through this series of studies to be used in conjunction with the teaching series at Jannali Anglican Church, we shall seek to uncover the gems of Zechariah that shed so much light on God's story of salvation and the coming of his kingdom with the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we all be enriched and encouraged as we engage with God in his Word through Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Iddo - the prophet.

— Zechariah Study 1: Overview and Orientation —

//Introductory matters...

The Bible is one united story of God's plans and promises. Zechariah is often cited or alluded to by Jesus the one who is at the centre of both God's plans and promises. For that reason the OT prophecy of Zechariah ought to mean even more for us than it did for its original hearers.

Looking Back

[Zech 7:8-14]

- What's the focus of God's command?
- What's at the heart of Israel's sin?
- What's God's response?

The Present

[Zech 1:1-6, 6:15]

- What's God's present call to his people?
- If people respond to God rightly, why can they be confident?
- What responsibilities do God's people have?

Looking Forward

[Zech 8:7-8, 8:20-22, 9:9-10]

- What does God promise he'll do?

Passage	What it will be like on that day?
12:3-4	
12:8-9	
13:1-4	
14:8-11	

Key Themes To Keep an Eye Out For:

- The Temple - Sin & judgement - King & Priest - God's Kingdom & Messiah - Exile - New Heavens and New Earth - Passion Narratives
- Repentance and Faith

— Zechariah Study 2: 1:1-2:13 —

//Introductory Discussion...

If you lost everything in life and had to start over what do you think you would need? What things do you think might be important for life of God's people living in Jerusalem?

Investigate:

[Read Zech 1:1-6]

- What has God done to his people?
- What will God do when his people return to him?
- Given the historical situation what do you think this might look like for Zechariah's generation?

The night vision [1:7-6:8] portrays a very vivid picture of what this will look like. So let's turn to the 1st 3 of these in 1:7-2:13.

Investigate

[Read Zech 1:7-2:13 - *you may choose to read each separately]
Try to summarise the main point you get from each scene.

1:7-17 - Horseman on Patrol

1:18-21 - Four Horns

2:1-13 - A Measuring Line

- Each part of Zechariah's night vision builds upon each other. They are a bit like lego blocks, you can appreciate them one-by-one but when you put them together they build a bigger picture. In summary what do you think the 1st 3 convey together? Try to write a summary sentence together as a group or on your own and then share.

Thinking It Through

- What do we learn about God from these visions?
- How did that speak to the original generation in their situation?
- What does it say to us? What might it say to us? [c.f. Mark 1:1-15]

— Zechariah Study 3: 3:1-4:14 —

//Introductory Discussion...

Discuss what you know about the roles of prophet, priest and king in OT Israel.

Investigate:

[Read Zech 3]

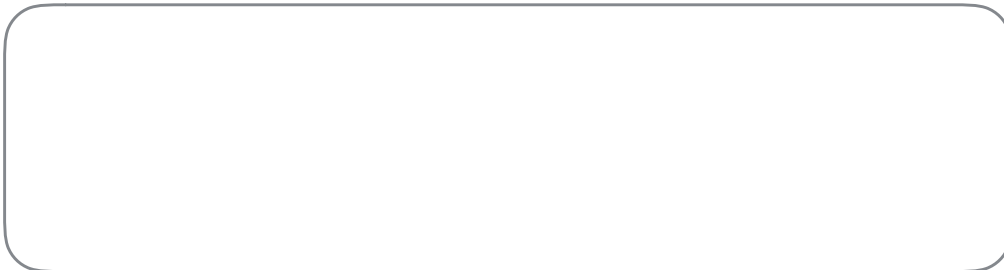
1. Why do you think Joshua's uncleanness as the high priest is so serious? What does Joshua do about it? What does God do about it? (3:1-4)

2. What is required of Joshua if he is to govern God's house? (3:6-7)

3. What will happen on the day that God brings his servant, the Branch? (Zech 3:8-10; see also Jeremiah 23:5-6)

4. What do you think it means that Joshua and his associates are a sign of the coming Branch?

Try to draw/summarise the scene in Zechariah 3.



Investigate

[Read Zech 4]

5. What items of temple furniture are here and why do you think they're significant? (*discuss and if needed see end notes on lampstand*)

6. What do the olive trees signify? (4:3 + 4:11-14 *see end notes*)

7. What sort of scene do you imagine in your mind? Try to describe it.

8. What do you think the plumb-line in Zerubbabel's hand conveys? (*see end notes*). Why do you think this is an important sign to God's people in their day of small things (4:10)?

Thinking It Through

- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about God's grace/generosity?
- What do you think that said to Zechariah's generation?
- What do you think this says to us today? (see Hebrews 8:1-13 or Matthew 27:27-51)

— Zechariah Study 4: 5:1-6:8 + 6:9-15—

//Introductory Discussion...

Why do you think that sin is such a big deal for God? What do you think a world without sin would be like? Again in this section we see a series of 3 visions that all say something about sin and its removal from God's people before a symbolic crowning of Joshua the high priest.

Investigate:

[Read Zech 5:1-4] - Flying Scroll

- What is usually on a scroll?
- What sense do you get by the size? (*cf. 1 Kings 6:1-3 shows us it's the same size as the portico in Solomon's temple, probably the place from which the law was read to the people*).
- What is the function of this huge flying scroll? (5:4)

Investigate

[Read Zech 5:5-11] - Woman in a Basket

- What does Zechariah see? What does it represent? (Zech 5:6)
- What happens to the basket?
- Why do you think its significant that the basket is taken to Babylon?

Investigate

[Read Zech 5:6:1-8] - Four Chariots

- What do you think is meant by the land of the north? [*see end note*]

- When you compare these 4 chariots with the 4 horses in vision 1 what things do you notice are different? (*see end note vision structure*)

- Why do you think God's Spirit is pacified at the end? (Zech 6:8)

[Read Zech 6:9-15]

As the night visions finish we note Zechariah is now 'to do' something [as opposed 'to see' something]. He is to have a crown made and to symbolically crown Joshua the high priest [he has not become a king as the crown is removed in 14 to reside in the temple as a memorial sign]. This symbolic crowning of Joshua the high priest, brings the first half of Zechariah to a close.

Integrate

Try to summarise the overall impression you get from all this.

Thinking It Through

- What is a key role of God's law? [see Romans 3:19-20]
- How does God deal with sin? [see Hebrews 9:1-28]
- What do we learn about God from all this?
- What do you think that said to Zechariah's generation?
- What do you think this says to us today?

— Zechariah Study 5: 7:1-8:23 —

//Introductory Discussion...

Think of a time when you've had a great feast - why was this a time to feast? What about fasting - when might be a time to fast? Why?

Investigate:

[Read Zech 7:1-14]

- What year are we in at the start of 7:1? *[see end note - Important dates for Zechariah]*
- What question is asked? What do you think it means? *[see end notes for study 5]* and What's God response?
- What does God desire more than fasting? [7:8-10]
- How did the past generation act and how did God respond? [7:11-14]

Investigate

[Read Zech 8:1-23]

- What is the general mood of ch 8 and how is it different to ch7?

Fill in this table:

Verse	What is promised
8:3	
8:4-5	

8:7-8	
8:12-13	
8:14-15	
8:19	
8:20-22	

- Try to summarise this promised future in a sentence or 2.
- What must the people do now? [8:16-17]

Thinking It Through

- What do we learn about God?
- What do you think this said to Zechariah's generation?
- What do you think this says to us today?

— Zechariah Study 6: 9:1-17 —

//Introductory Discussion...

When in life do you feel least in control?

Investigate:

[Read Zech 9:1-17]

- What does the future hold for Israel's old enemies?
- Who will the remnant be? [9:7] Is that surprising?
- Why will God's people never be safe from oppressors coming against them? [9:8]
- How is God's king described? [9:9]
- What will God's king achieve? [9:9-10]
- Who do you think God is addressing 9:11-12?
- What is the basis of God's relationship with his people in 9:11?
- What place will God's people have in God's final victory? [9:14-15]

Investigate:

[Read Matthew 21:1-13] Try to identify any parallels or connections.

Verse	Parallels + Connections (or Something Missing?)

Thinking It Through

God is the ultimate ruler and king. How do you think that speaks to those times when we feel least in control?

- What do you think ch 9 said to Zechariah's generation?
- What do we learn about God from all this?
- What do you think this says to us today?
- How do you think that changes the way we live?

— Zechariah Study 7: 10:1-11:17 —

//Introductory Discussion...

Discuss the things you think are the most important things for leaders of God's people to have, to exemplify, to do?

Investigate:

[Read Zech 10:1-11:17]

- What can't idols do effectively? What's the result of following idols? [10:2]
- Who is God angry with? Why? [10:3]
- How does v5-10 portray God?
- How does God respond to false shepherds and sheep that follow them?
- List the things God will do for his sheep as their shepherd.

Thinking it Through:

- What do you think Zechariah 10-11 said to the leaders of Zechariah's day?
- What do you think it said to the followers of Zechariah's day?
- "People get the leaders they deserve" - discuss.

Investigate

[Read John 9:35-10:15]

- What connections can you see between Zechariah and John?

Zechariah	John

Investigate

[In smaller groups/pairs or all together — read Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34 + 1 Peter 5:1-5] Make a list of the good attributes a shepherd should have and the ones bad shepherds might have.

Thinking it Through:

- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about Jesus?
- What does this mean for us in leadership [as parents, grandparents or formal ministry leadership?
- Discuss what you think this means for us as followers?

— Zechariah Study 8: 12:1-14:21 —

[if doing 8 week series]

//Introductory Discussion...

What makes an item of news 'good news'?

Investigate:

[Read Zech 12:1-13:9]

- How is God portrayed in 12:1?
- What things does God promise to do in 12:1-9?
- What does God promise to do in 12:10 and what else will happen?
- 'That Day' - is an important term - what do you think it refers to?
- What is the result of that day coming? [13:7-9]

Investigate

[Read Zech 14]

The Day of the Lord is a big concern in the closing passage of Zechariah.

- List the things that will take place on that day.

- Who knows about that day to come? [14:7]
- How would you summarise this final scene in Zechariah?

Investigate

[Read Revelation 21:22-22:5] Can you see any parallels or connections. Discuss these together.

Zechariah 12-14	Revelation 21-22

Thinking It Through

- What do we learn about God?
- How do you think that spoke to the original generation in their situation? What might it say to us now?
- Together as a group and in your own words - try to summarise the message of Zechariah as a whole and give thanks to God.

— Zechariah Study 8a: 12-13 —

[if doing 9 week series]

//Introductory Discussion...

What makes an item of news 'good news'?

Investigate:

[Read Zech 12:1-13:9]

- How is God portrayed in 12:1?
- On 'that day' what things does God promise to do for the inhabitants of Jerusalem? [Zech 12:2-9]
- On 'that day' what does God promise to do for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem? [Zech 12:10-14]
- 'That Day' - is an important term - what do you think it refers to?
- Who in the passage is the pierced one and who has pierced him? [Zech 12:10]
- On 'that day' what does God promise will happen for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem? [Zech 13:1-6]
- Not only will God purify those who have pierced him from their sin, God will also purify the land. How will God purify the land? [Zech 13:2-3]
- How is Zech 13:7 fulfilled in Matthew 26:30-32?
- On 'that day' what does God promise will come out of the judgement in Zech 13:7-9? [cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7]
- What is the end result of that day coming?

Thinking It Through

- How is the news about Jesus referred to in the NT?
In the NT we see that Zechariah's message about the Kingdom of God finds its fulfilment (ultimate meaning) in Jesus Christ. When Zechariah refers to 'that day' he is speaking about the last days that we presently live in, the time between Jesus' first coming as saviour and his second coming as judge.
- In Zech 12:1-13:9 what events do you think have already happened and what events are yet to come?
- What do we learn about God?
- How do you think that spoke to the original generation in their situation? What might it say to us now?

— Zechariah Study 8b: 14:1-21 —

[if doing 9 week series]

//Introductory Discussion...

What do you hope for in your future personally? What about for others? What about for the people of God? What about for the entire world?

Investigate:

[Read Zechariah 14:1-21]

- Chapter 14 pictures the end of the end, the final day of reckoning between God and all humanity. Who initiates the battle and who wins the battle? [Zech 14:2-3]
- Who are the survivors in verses 2-5?
- What is the end result of this battle? [Zech 14:9]
- How would you describe the future for Jerusalem and the enemies of God's in verses 10-15?
 - Jerusalem:
 - The enemies:
- Who are the survivors in verse 16? Why is this surprising? [compare to verse 2]
- The feast of booths/tabernacles was a celebration of God's goodness to his people. What will happen to those who refuse to worship and celebrate the feast of booths/tabernacles?

- The idolatrous religion of the Canaanites was always a problem for the people of God. How does the last verse help us understand the holiness of Jerusalem and Judah?

Investigate

[Read Revelation 21:1-8 +21:22-22:21]

Can you see any parallels or connections. Discuss these together.

Zechariah 14	Revelation 21-22

Thinking It Through

- What does Zechariah teach us about God?
- How do you think that spoke to the original generation in their situation? What might it say to us now?
- Together as a group and in your own words - try to summarise the message of Zechariah as a whole and give thanks to God.

— End Notes —

Study 3:

Lampstand - Moses was commanded to make a lampstand to stand in the tabernacle in Exodus 25:31-40 (if you thought of this lampstand that's a good connection to have made). This new era, in Zechariah's time, will see the temple rebuilt and Zerubbabel will be the one who achieves it. The lampstand in this context seems to speak also of the community of God's people and the certainty of their restoration and ongoing dwelling in total unmitigated safety, and all this will be achieved by the Spirit of God (4:6).

Olive Trees - whatever the nature of the olive trees, its branches and the gold pipes etc, their function is to provide an inexhaustible source of olive oil to ensure that the lamp will not go out. Again a reminder that God's people will dwell in the safety of his care. Also the olive tree is an image used in the NT in Romans to describe the people of God (see Romans 11:13-24).

Plumb-Line - 'A builders' device consisting of a string with a weight, or plummet, on one end. The weight forces the cord to hang vertically so that builders and renovators are able to check the alignment of walls they are constructing and make sure that they are perpendicular to the center of gravity of the earth. The plumb line is also used to recognize walls that are tilted and need to be torn down. Used metaphorically in the Bible, the plumb line is a tool to enable the people of Israel to delineate righteousness and truth from apostasy (Amos 7:7-9). It also occurs as a testing tool: justice is the line and righteousness the plummet that test rebuilt Jerusalem (Isa. 28:17). The measuring line and plummet used to condemn Ahab's Samaria also condemn Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 21:13), while chaos and confusion are brought to Edom by God's line and plummet (Isa. 34:11). Zerubbabel's holding a plummet in his hands at the time of the temple's reconstruction (Zech. 4:10) may be a literal reference to its normal usage, but this passage may also be interpreted metaphorically.' Copied from Eerdmans Dictionary

The Structure of Zechariah*

Part 1. Chapters 1-6

Introduction 1:1-6

Eight Visions 1:7-6:8, plus 6:9-15

Part 2. Chapters 7-14

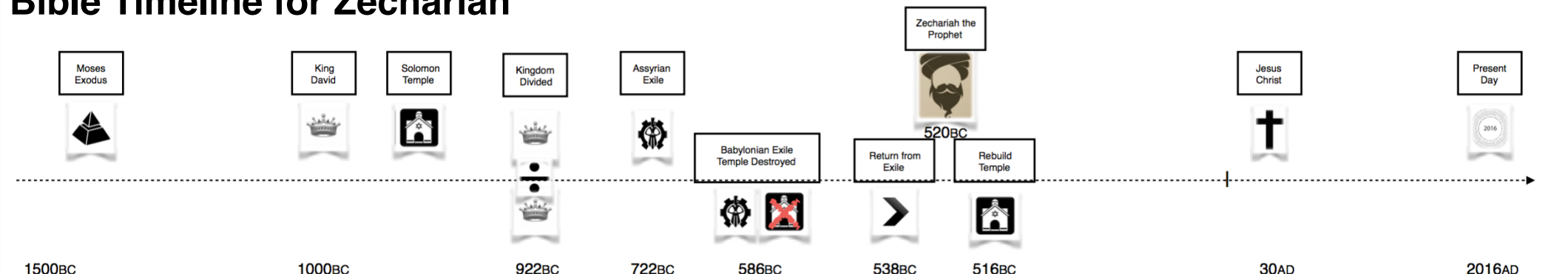
Introduction 7:1-8:23

Two Oracles 9-11, 12-14

- The oracles build on the visions

*Taken from Barry Webb, *The Message of Zechariah*, Bible Speaks Today Commentary, 31.

Bible Timeline for Zechariah



Study 4

The Land of the North - 'There is good reason for this which had to do with geography and history of Palestine, where Israel had lived since the time of the conquest under Joshua. This strategic land bridge was bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the west and desert on the east, so the only ways an invading army could approach it were from the north or south. But by the time Israel was established there, Egypt, to the south, was well past its prime and no longer in a position to engage in major military campaigns beyond its borders. So the enemies that threatened Israel always approached from the north, especially the Assyrians and Babylonians, but also troublesome neighbours such as the Syrians.' Barry Webb, *The Message of Zechariah*, 104-5.



Study 3-4: The Night Visions Structure [adapted from Michael Stead from MTC in Barry Webb, *The Message of Zechariah*, 106.]

4 Horsemen.
Judgement of
nations
anticipated

1

2

3

God Returns

4

5

Joshua and Zerubbabel
God's Chosen Leaders

God Returns
A house is
built for him
in Jerusalem.

Sin Departs

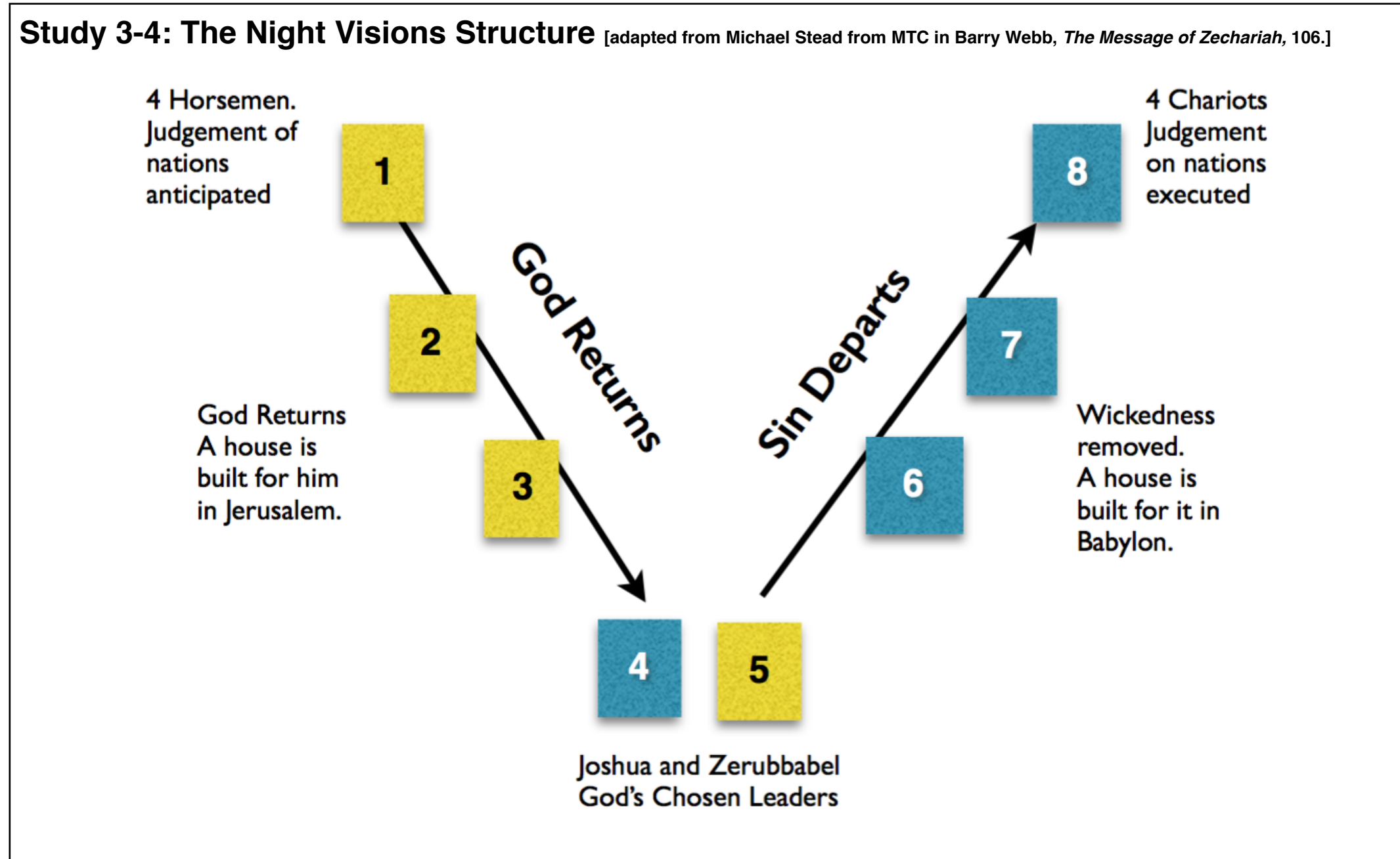
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7

8

4 Chariots
Judgement
on nations
executed

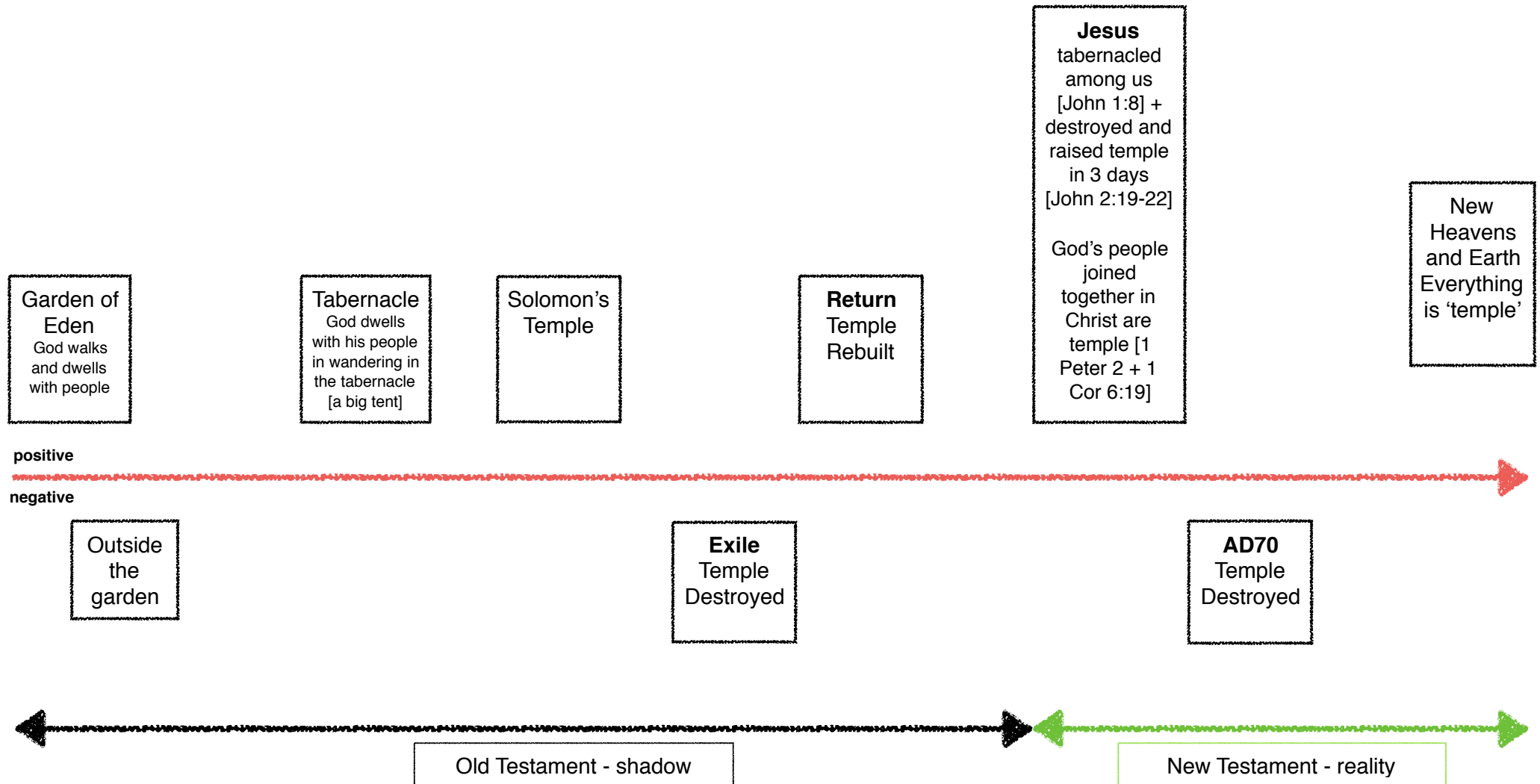
Wickedness
removed.
A house is
built for it in
Babylon.



— A Biblical Theology of Temple —

How the theme of temple is developed within the ongoing story of God's progressive revelation in Scripture.

God Dwells in Heaven - his heavenly dwelling cf. for example Zechariah 2:13



Study 5:

Events of Fasting in Exile cf. Zechariah 7:3-5 + 8:19

4th month - the city wall breached (Jer 39:2)

5th month - temple destroyed (2 Kings 25:8)

7th month - Gedaliah the governor of Judah was killed
(2 Kings 25:25; Jer 41:1-3)

10th month - siege of Jerusalem began (2 Kings 25:1-2; Jer 39:1)

General Info [but also study 5]:

Important Dates for Zechariah

922BC - Divided Kingdom

722BC - Northern Kingdom Exile by Assyrians

586BC - Southern Kingdom Exile by Babylonians

539BC - Fall of Babylon - to Cyrus of Persia

538BC - Cyrus edict for Jews to return to Jerusalem.

537BC - Work begins on altar

537BC - Work halted on temple

520BC [29 Aug] - Haggai's 1st message (Haggai 1:1)

520BC [21 Sep] - Work resumed on temple

520BC [17 Oct] - Haggai's 2nd message

520BC [27 Oct] - Zechariah's 1st message (Zech 1:1)

520BC [18 Dec] - Haggai's 3rd and 4th message

519BC [15 Feb] - Zechariah's 2nd message (Zech 1:7)

518BC [7 Dec] - Zechariah's 3rd message (Zech 7:1)

516BC - Temple Rebuilding Completed