

Zechariah Introduction

Note: for historical background information on Zechariah listen to Chaggai NachDaily Audio Introduction.

Demographic information

Zecharia is the eleventh of the Trey Asar prophets and is fourteen perakim long. Zechariah was the son of Berechyah, the son of Edo, from the tribe of Yessachar, and Chavakuk was his uncle. **Rashi** and **Radak** in Zechariah, perek 2 bring that Zechariah started to receive prophecy in Bavel, where he lived, when he was still a young boy. Zechariah's teacher was the either Yechezkel or Baruch ben Neriah, the scribe of Yirmiyahu. Zechariah was a contemporary of Chaggai and Malachi, and is counted with Chaggai and Malachi as one of the three last prophets to receive nevuah. Their deaths mark the end of the period of prophecy.

Megilah 15A brings that Zecharia lived at the beginning of the second Beis Hamikdash. **Sanhedrin 93B** brings that Zechariah was present with Chaggai and Malachi when Doniel saw his vision. The **Yerushalmi** in Brachos, perek beis brings that Zechariah was part of the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah – Men of the Great Assembly - that contained 120 elders, more than eighty of them prophets. **Sanhedrin 96B** explains that Zechariah was actually assassinated by his brethren inside the second Beis Hamikdash.

Zechariah - the name

On the simplest level, the name Zechariah is a compound word: Zechar-Ya'h. *Zechar*, meaning *remember* and *Y'ah* meaning *Hashem*. In other words, Zechariah prophesied about the final redemption, when Hashem will ultimately remember His nation, bring them back to Eretz Yisrael, and rebuild the Beis Hamikdash.

Alternatively, Hashem is going to *Zocher* - *remember and recall* all the cumulative good that every single Jew has done throughout the long, dark exile, and in a sense "jog His memory" and arouse His compassion for His nation. Because every Jew is filled with mitzvos like a pomegranate, Hashem focuses on the good inside each and every one of us and judges His nation favorably.

The Ramad Walli explains al pi kabbalah that the reason Zechariah is placed next to Chaggai is that Chaggai's soul came from the *Sitra D'Nukva* - the feminine side, and he therefore cleared and prepared the way to allow the Divine influence to reenter this world.

The name Zechariah, on the other hand, comes from the word *zachar*, meaning masculine. Zechariah's soul came from the *Sitra D'Duchra* – the masculine side, because the primary purpose of Zechariah's prophecies was to make a tikkun D'Duchra, which was the drawing down of Hashem's light into the world. In relation to Chaggai, Chaggai's role was to pave the way and rid the world of negative forces

that impeded God's exalted light. Once the path was cleared, it was Zechariah who was to actually draw God's light back into the world.

The Ramad Walli continues to explain: We know that blessing/ bracha only emanates from God's Divine light in this world. That is why his name was Zechariah, the son of Berechyah, the son of Edo, meaning Zechariah, the son of blessing, and Edo means to testify, because it was Zechariah who testified that the whole world would be filled with God's Divine blessing, which hints to the very point of Zechariah's prophesy and his tikkun neshama.

Zechariah Overview

Zechariah is one of the more obscure prophets. The meanings of many of his prophesies are cryptic and remained concealed until today. Even Rashi, in sefer Zechariah says that we do not understand the meaning of this prophecy. There are many interpretations and levels of understanding of the pesukim in Zechariah.

Zechariah begins by warning the generation not to fall into the sins of their ancestors - idol worship and promiscuity. Zechariah rebukes the generation for their sins. We also get glimpse of what the Jewish community was like in Bavel at that time.

Interspersed throughout Zechariah are many cryptic prophesies: the downfall of Greece and Greek culture, prophesies about the war of Gog u'Magog, destruction of idols, and how "on that day" God will unleash His vengeance, and how the expanded boundaries of Eretz Yisrael will take place with the revelation of Mashiach ben Dovid.

Zechariah chapter 6 describes Zechariah's vision of the chariot. Zechariah was one of three prophets, (including Yeshaya and Yechezkel,) who saw a deep vision of God's chariot, known as the Ma'aseh Merkavah.

Zechariah ends with a vision of what the world will look like when God reveals Himself, when the world will see the truth of God, Am Yisrael and His Torah. As Zechariah himself says in chapter 14:9 *"And God will be King of all earth. On that day, God will be one and His Name will be one."*

As we learn Zechariah let us merit the ultimate day when God will truly remember His nation, when His compassion will override His anger, when the whole world, as one, will pronounce God's name. Although it is taking so long, we still wait patiently for Mashiach to come and reveal himself to the entire world. The potential for Mashiach to reveal himself to the world exists every moment.

End of introduction. We will be starting perek aleph in the next shiur.

Thank you...

