

## The Half Hour That Changes the World

### Zechariah

### Book 38

#### Basic Question behind the book:

*Like the little boy in the Gospels who brought loaves and fishes, can God make use of the little bit I have to bring?*

#### Summary of book:

It is generally agreed that Zechariah was a contemporary of Malachi and Haggai, speaking to the people, like they had done, who had returned from exile in Babylon, and who were intent on rebuilding the city and the temple. What isn't generally agreed is how the two sections of the book relate to each other. Chapters 1 - 8 contain a series of visions and encouragements geared toward rebuilding the temple. Chapters 9 - 14 focus on the future. They may reflect different times or periods of writing in the author's ministry. The Book of Zechariah is the most apocalyptic of the Minor Prophets in terms of the vivid imagery that it uses.

#### Vital Statistics:

Purpose: To give hope to God's people by revealing God's future deliverance through the promised Messiah.

Author and Dating: The prophet Zechariah is the prophet behind this work. As always with the prophets, we have to consider whether the book we look at in our Bibles was actually written down by the author involved, or preserved orally and then written down much later by those who felt the message needed to be shared with succeeding generations. Chapters 1 - 8 may have arisen from Zechariah's ministry around 520 BC. Chapters 9 - 14 may come from a period about 20 years later, around 480 BC.

Setting: The exiles had returned home from Babylon to rebuild their lives, their homes, their city and their temple. The work on the temple had been thwarted and ultimately stalled. Haggai and Zechariah both challenge the people to commit to the rebuilding of the temple.

#### Other Reflections:

There can be little doubt that life was far from easy for those who returned from the Babylonian exile, and rebuilding what had been before was far from straightforward for them. Sometimes we need an encourager to come along and make us believe that we can do it, to inspire in us hope, and to give us a picture of what might be if we keep moving forward.

#### Key Verses:

*"Who despises the day of small things?" (4:10)*

*"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (4:6)*

*"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey ... He will proclaim peace to the nations" (9:9f).*