

# Zechariah 1:1-6 – A Warning to Christians: Repent or Die

Calvin, Phillips, Clarke, Barnes, Geneva, Trapp, Delitzsch, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Poole, JFB, Henry, Gill, Eclectic, Ps 126, 137  
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Let's consider some background of this important prophecy.

**a. Zechariah was a freed 释放 Babylonian captive 俘虏 who came back to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, the governor.**

**b. Zechariah means “one who the Lord remembers.”**

**c. Zechariah prophesied 预言 during Darius' 2<sup>nd</sup> year as king of the Medo-Persian Empire.** Darius I (The Great) was the son of Hystaspes, the third Persian monarch, and the son-in-law to Cyrus The Great. He ruled from 521-486BC.

**d. A contemporary of Zechariah was Haggai.** Haggai spoke God's message more directly, but Zechariah used more symbolic language to convey God's message. But their message was the same.

**e. What was that message? God wanted to challenge the Jews who had returned from captivity** to re-start the re-building of the temple so that worship could be restored. The Jews had started, but stopped rebuilding the temple. **Zechariah's message was also for the Jews to consider years later.** Zechariah prophesied how Judah would refuse to properly worship God and he would have to bring in the Medo-Persians, Greeks, and Romans to punish them.

Now while it is exciting to get into the prophecies, in this first section you will hear of the Lord's anger with Judah and his strong to Judah not to fall into the trap they had repeatedly fallen into before – which was why he had to send them into captivity.

Our headings are:

**The Strong Anger of the Lord**

**The Serious Warning to Repent**

**The Somber Reminder from the Past**

Our goals today are: **That, as Gentile Christians, you would not become busy with self-indulgent lives or distracted with troubles and forget to properly worship the Savior of your souls.**

## **The Strong Anger of the Lord**

1 In the eighth month of the **second year of Darius**, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, 2 **"The LORD has been very angry** with your fathers.

**1. The Lord sent Zechariah to speak to the Jews who had returned from the Babylonian captivity.**

**2. Why? The Lord was very angry with his people.** His anger was boiling over. You get the sense of the intensity of his anger because he began by speaking of his anger. Who knows the power of God's anger? Psalm 90:11.

**3. Why was God so angry? Judah had ignored his worship. Worship is the most important thing to God.** Remember the meaning of Zechariah? God remembered his covenant promises though the Jews forgot their promises. He was going to be their God and they were going to be his people. The number 1 way you show you belong to God is to worship him!

**4. Why had Judah ignored worship?** God's people abandoned worship because of minor troubles. After their return from Babylonian captivity the Jews **were** eager to rebuild, and they laid the foundation for rebuilding the temple. But they faced **harassment from neighbors**, particularly the Samaritans and Edomites. Samaria was the capital of the 10½ tribes in the north called Israel. You will remember that the Samaritans had become a mongrel 杂种 nation after the Assyrians forcibly relocated Israelites and replace them with foreigners who then intermarried with the Israelites. Instead of ignoring the trouble makers and start rebuilding the temple and resuming worship, the Jews **chose to become busy with their own lives**, pursuing creature comforts. To characterize their actions in the modern context, we would say: "Life happens."

**5. Consider God's warning to them through Haggai – the more direct prophet of that time.**

Haggai 1:4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled 嵌板 houses, and **this temple to lie in ruins?**" 5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8 "Go up to the mountains and **bring wood and build the temple**, that **I may take pleasure in it and be glorified**," says the LORD.

**6. Lessons:**

**a. Do you use any kind of excuse to avoid worship of God...it's my sister's birthday...I didn't sleep well...Worship clashes 冲突 with my child's nap time...I need to have the day for some "me" time...the services are too long... If so, the Lord is angry with you...very angry. He is jealous for his worship. He doesn't need it, but he requires it...and you should want to worship.**

**b. Repentance is much more than saying sorry.** It is a change in action and attitude. It is to hate and forsake your sins, and then turn and live obediently. It is turning from sin and turning to God. Psalms 119:59-60: "I thought about my ways, And turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay To keep Your commandments."

## **The Serious Warning to Repent**

3 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the **LORD of hosts**: "Return to Me," says the **LORD of hosts**, "and **I will return to you**," says the **LORD of hosts**."

**1. When God gave this serious warning, he did not use his covenant name. He used his judgment name. That was to show the seriousness of the warning.** "**Lord of Hosts**" is use **3X** – triple evidence! This meant this was a serious warning.

**2. And the command was clear: Return to me.** Repent of your sins. Restore my worship. Return to loving and caring for your brothers. Stop the selfishness. Stop intermarrying with pagans. Stop obsessing about your vineyards. Stop obsessing about your paneled houses. This is characteristic of God's constant call.

**James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

**Ezekiel 18:30 ...**"Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.

**3. Along with the warning to repent was God's promise to return to the people.** This is what he said before.

**Jeremiah 3:12** "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: '**Return, backsliding 倒退 Israel,**' says the LORD; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. **For I am merciful,**' says the LORD; '**I will not remain angry forever.**'

He wasn't just going to be near them, but he would return to show them favor.

**4. If Judah didn't repent, God would bring to nothing all they accomplished for themselves after their return from the Babylonian captivity.** Sadly, he had to do so, using Antiochus Epiphanes and others to do it.

**Haggai 1:6** "You have sown much, and **bring in little**; You eat, but **do not have enough**; You drink, but you **are not filled with drink**; You clothe yourselves, but **no one is warm**; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to **put into a bag with holes.**"

**Haggai 2:17** 'I struck you with **blight and mildew 枯萎病和霉菌** and **hail 冰雹 in all the labors** of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says the LORD.

Fools, by adversity, become wise. So God had to bring adversity on Judah.

### **4. Lessons:**

**a. It was good that these Jews were willing to return from Babylon (some weren't willing), but they could not come back and live however they wanted.** And neither must you as a Christian live however you want. Baptism doesn't save!

**b. It doesn't matter how far you have strayed from the Lord (or the church), the Lord will accept you if you repent and return.** He will always forgive.

**c. It is only because of the blood of Jesus** that anyone is forgiven. God does not wish away sins. His justice has to be met.

## **The Somber Warning from the Past**

4 "**Do not be like your fathers**, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.'" **But they did not hear nor heed Me,**" says the LORD.

**1. In order to motivate the Jews to repent, the Lord drew them back to the past when the prophets called on their fathers to repent of their sins.** But their fathers rejected him. This applied to both Israel, taken captive in **722BC by the Assyrians**, and Judah, taken captive in **586BC by the Babylonians**.

**2 Chronicles 36:15** And the LORD God of their fathers **sent warnings** to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, **because He had compassion** on His people and on His dwelling place. 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the **wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.**

Look at some more of these warnings to Israel.

**Isaiah 31:6 Return to Him** against whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted 起兵.

**Isaiah 1:16** "**Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil** of your doings from before My eyes. **Cease to do evil,**

**Hosea 14:1** O Israel, **return to the LORD your God**, For you have stumbled 迷迷糊糊 because of your iniquity 罪孽;

Look at some more of these warnings against Judah.

Jeremiah 3:12 "Go and proclaim...and say: '**Return**, backsliding Israel,' says the LORD; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the LORD; 'I will not remain angry forever.

Ezekiel 18:30... "**Repent, and turn from all your transgressions**, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.

## **2. Because of the failure of Judah's fathers, God sent his covenant people into slavery. He hoped they would get their act together when he brought them out.**

Jeremiah 29:10 For thus says the LORD: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon**, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and **cause you to return to this place**. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to **give you a future and a hope**. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, **and I will listen to you**. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

5 "Your **fathers, where are they?** And **the prophets, do they live forever?** 6 Yet surely **My words** and My statutes 法规, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, **Did they not overtake your fathers?**

"So they returned and said: '**Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us**, According to our ways and according to our deeds, **So He has dealt with us.**'""

## **3. And no one was able to stop God's words from coming true.** This was what Zechariah's contemporaries needed to know. They had to learn from other people's mistakes – which is evidence of the wise. Otherwise, the same disease, famine, and the sword that overtook their fathers would overtake them.

Lamentations 2:17 **The LORD has done what He purposed**; He has fulfilled His word Which He commanded in days of old. He has thrown down and has not pitied, And He has caused an enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the horn of your adversaries.

The word of God could never be stopped.

1Peter 1:24 ... The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever."

## **4. Finally, after their fathers were in captivity in Babylon for 70 years, they acknowledged that Jehovah was right.** That was the mature thing.

### **5. Lessons:**

**a. Does the Lord have to say to your children, "Do not be like your father?"** Or would your children call you blessed?

**b. Whenever you are punished by the Lord, learn to use your punishment from God wisely!** And be sure that you will be punished some time in your life!

**c. Don't forget what God did to those who abandoned his worship**... ignoring the Sabbath – the 7<sup>th</sup> day...and the land was made to rest for 70 years! God's vengeance is severe!

### **Conclusion:**

The Lord was angry because Judah did not show true repentance when they returned to Jerusalem after 70 years in captivity. They acted like being in Jerusalem was enough...and that God would bless them simply because of their historical relationship with the Abraham. So God became angry – very angry – and warned them to repent. In order to impress the need to repent, he reminded them of the judgment that came on their fathers.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. **You are a child of Christ, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.** But Hebrews 10:31 says: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. **You are privileged, but you also have responsibility.**

2. What is that responsibility that you have now? **Do kingdom work.** Like Judah, you have to build up the temple of God – the house of God – the church of God. So evangelize. Invite someone to church. Raise godly seed. **And worship.** Psalms 101:1 I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.

**3. Guard your life so that you do not become distracted with simple things in this life**...that only bring temporary pleasures. **Don't be complacent 自满, thinking you can live however you want**...talk however you want...dress however you want...worship however you want. Listen to the words of life.

Finally, Christians are paternally forgiven every day because they were judicially forgiven in Jesus Christ. They are forgiven because they ask God to count Christ's work as theirs. But if you are not a Christian, you have no such aid. But you don't have to be excluded. God welcomes all those who come and ask him to count Christ's work as theirs.