

God Is Not Finished

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Zechariah 1:1-6

One verse, that carries this study is **Philippians 1:6**, *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ*. Paul is crystal clear, God will bring to completion the work He started in you. It's not about your effort, it's all about the mercy and grace of God.

When our eyes drift to circumstance, our hearts melt and our faith falters. This is where we find Judah, the southern Kingdom, now for 18 years back in Jerusalem with their eyes on their circumstances rather than God. Through this study, we will watch God say to a discouraged, half-finished people, in a hundred ways, I am not finished with you. In **Zechariah 1:1-6**, is where He says it plainly. We want to plant the flag in this text!

The Situation of Israel after 16 years since their return from Babylon:

- The returning exiles were from Babylon were few after 70 years (**Ezra 2:64-65**).
- Jerusalem was a wasteland and in ruins (**Nehemiah 1:3; Haggai 1:4**)
- Solomon's Temple was destroyed (**Ezra 3:8-13**).
- The exiles faced enemy opposition as they began to rebuild the Temple (**Ezra 4:1-24**).

There is a certain expectation, either spoken or unspoken, that when a decision is made to "*return to God*," God will make it easy, and He does. However, there are always obstacles in our path. So much so that we question how to gain God's favor (**Zech 7:3, 5**) and wonder if our efforts are worthwhile, especially when compared to the acts of previous generations (**Hag 2:3-4; Zech 8:9**).

Amid all this, Israel lost its way, and God raised up Zechariah and Haggai to confront the nation and charge them to reengage in building the Temple. Haggai rebuked Israel for faulty priorities (**Hag 1:1-15**). Zechariah directed the people to recognize what the Lord was planning to do for Israel both in their time and in the future.

Zechariah means "Yahweh remembers." That is not a footnote or coincidence. To the returning exiles: God has not forgotten His covenant. To us: we wait, sure, for the fulfillment of everything He has promised. **The God who remembers is the God who is not finished!**

I. God's Authoritative Word (Zech 1:1)

- A. Stalled Work
 - 1. Outward opposition and cultural headwinds (**Ezra 4:4-5, 24**).
 - 2. Inward discouragement and misaligned priorities (**Haggai 1:2-4**)
- B. Providential Futility
 - 1. The reality was that the people had come back to the land, but not to the LORD.
 - 2. The unfinished Temple was a mirror of their hearts toward God (**Haggai 1:6**)
- C. Divine Purposes
 - 1. God is teaching in the delay. "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.*" (**Zech 4:6**)
 - 2. Sixteen years of human willpower couldn't raise that house. The "delay" proved the whole point the book is making – God's house is built by God's Spirit stirring in God's People, not human muscle.

II. God's Rendered Verdict (Zech 1:2)

- A. Past verdicts serve as future reminders (**Jer 16:10-13**).
- B. God's discipline and judgment is not victory for the enemy, it is God keeping His word (**Jer 25:8-13**)

III. God's Gracious Call (Zech 1:3)

- A. God calls His people to repentance, "*Return to me...and I will return to you.*"
- B. What does repentance look like?
 - 1. It is turning from sin – change in direction, orientation, and path a person is walking. It is turning from sinful acts, words, deeds, actually committed.
 - 2. It is turning to God – as one turns to God, repentance reaches down to the will and produces obedience. Obedience is evidence of a heart that has turned towards God not the grounds of acceptance by God. Acceptance by God is not secured by your performance in life...but by Christ.

IV. God's Warning Issued (Zech 1:4-6a)

- A. The command: *"Do not be like your fathers."* (Zech 1:4)
- B. The indictment: *"They did not hear or pay attention to me."* (Zech 1:4)
 - 1. This is what Stephen will say of that same generation in Acts 7 — "stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit." The warning in verse 4 is not *"do not miss the message."* It is *"do not harden against the message you have heard."*
- C. The question: Zech 1:5, *"Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?"* But the word remains (Zech 1:6a)

V. The Confession of Repentance (Zechariah 1:6)

- A. Zech 1:6a, *But my words and my statutes...did they not overtake your fathers?"* (Overtake – pursuit, capture, creditor chases and overtakes a debtor, or an army pursuing an enemy)
- B. Zech 1:6b, *So they repented and said, 'As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.* See their 3 agreements:
 - 1. Agreed on God's purpose. *"As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us..."*
 - 2. Agreed on God's indictment. *"...for our ways and deeds..."*
 - 3. Agreed with God's judgment. *"...so has he dealt with us."* They acknowledged that what God had done to them was right. Not excessive. Not arbitrary. Not unjust.
- C. Repentance acknowledges the justice of the verdict before it receives the mercy of the call.

VI. The Picture We Can Apply

- A. The Old Testament Altar – Before a single foundation stone was moved, the returning exiles rebuilt the altar (Ezra 3:2-6). This was a place of blood, atonement, of acceptance before a holy God. Then the dwelling place was to be built over a period of time.
- B. The New Testament Picture – at the moment of faith exercised in Christ, we are justified before God and our legal standing is changed in the blink of an eye. However, in that moment we also begin construction on "our temple." The Temple under construction is a picture of us as New Testament believers. It is an image of sanctification.
 - 1. **Ephesians 2:21–22**, *In whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*
 - 2. **1 Peter 2:5**, *You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
 - 3. See also 1 Corinthians 3:9-17. **1 Corinthians 3:17b** *"...For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*
- C. Your sanctification, being fashioned and formed in the image of Christ, is not a self-managed construction project. It rests on an already secured standing and an ever-present God who is the wise master builder. No matter where you are as a believer, God is not finished with your life.