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of Zechariah? And When was it written? Before the sixteenth century, the writership of the book of Zechariah was unanimously believed to have been written by **“the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo,”** beginning **“in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius”** king of Persia, in 520 BCE (**Zechariah 1:1 ESV**).

Theories of Different Writers

So, who wrote the book of Zechariah? And when was it written? Let’s look at some of the viewpoints about this.

Matthew 27:9,10 quotes **Zechariah 11:12-13** , but ascribes it to the prophet Jeremiah. On this basis, during the seventeenth century, it began to be suggested that the latter half of Zechariah was actually written by Jeremiah, and critical scholars began to credit **Zechariah 9-14** to Jeremiah. Since then there have developed many conflicting theories as to the writership of Zechariah. The most common theory goes something like this:

“The Book of Zecahraih, because of it great variation in style, content, and language, is widely believed to be a composite work. Made up of First Zechariah (chaps. 1-8) and Second Zechariah (chaps. 9-14), the book has been attributed to at least two different prophets. the prophecies of First Zechariah can be dated to the late sixth century B. C., and contemporary with those of Haggai; the oracles of Second Zechariah are somewhat later”—Catholic commentary

Some critical scholars even theorize that the entire book was written before Zechariah’s time, and others assert that the book was written long after Zechariah’s time. The most common theory is, as stated above, that chapters 1-8 were written Zechariah himself, which they call “First-Zechariah,” or a “Proto-Zechariah,” and chapters 9-14 were written much later by a different prophet, one they call “Second-Zechariah,” or “Deutero-Zechariah.” Still others break the book of Zechariah into three parts by splitting chapters 9-14 into two parts; that is, chapters 9-11, called “Second-Zechariah,” or “Deutero-Zechariah,” and chapters 12-14, called “Third-Zechariah,” or “Trito-Zechariah.”

The first eight chapters are specially dated from 520 BCE to 518 BCE, when **“the word of Yahweh was addressed to the prophet Zechariah” (Zechariah 1:1 NJB)** in visions. These dated visions deal with matters of current importance to the people in Zechariah’s day, primarily the historical situation during the restoration of the temple, and the centrality of Jerusalem, their leaders Zerubbabel and Joshua, and also God’s universal rule, his purposes for his people in Judah and Jerusalem and his purposes for the nations. The subject matter, the style, and the vocabulary of chapters 9-14 is very different, dealing primarily with the distant future and the coming Messianic kingdom. Unlike the first eight chapters, there are no more references to angels, visions, Governor Zerubbabel, High Priest Joshua, the temple rebuilding work, or to Zechariah himself. Based on this, critics claim that these later chapters were written much later than the first eight, perhaps a hundred or more years later, some even dating it to the Maccabean period (circa 160’s BCE).

“I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece” (Zechariah 9:13)

ESV). Critical scholars use this as one of their “proofs” to claim that the so-called “Deutero-Zechariah” was written much later. One Catholic commentary on this verse claims, *“the reference is to the Greeks and their struggle with the Persians for control of Syria-Palestine and the eastern Mediterranean in the mid-fifth century B.C.”* (the 400’s BCE). Another Catholic commentary on this verse asserts, *“Greece, now conquering the East under Alexander the Great.”* (circa 330 BCE).

Evidence Against Multiple Writers Theories

Can we determine who wrote the book of Zechariah? *“All these objections [to Zechariah’s writewrship of the entire book] can be explained in other satisfactory ways, so there is no compelling reason to question the unity of the entire book”* (NIV Study Bible note at the introduction to Zechariah). Let’s look at som of the plentiful evidence against the multiple writers theories..

The problem with the above assertions based on the reference to “Greece” in **Zechariah 9:13** is that Greece was already as significant power in the sixth century BCE. Greece (“Javan”) had already been mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures prior to Zechariah’s time (**Isaiah 66:19; Ezekiel 27:13**). By 520 BCE, the Greeks were already causing problems for the Persian Empire. Within a few decades the Greeks would assemble a massive military force to deal with them, and the Persian Empire lost this major battle to Greece at Marathon in 492 BCE. Whether **Zechariah 9-14** was written close to the time of the writing of chapters 1-8, or was written a few decades later, Greece was already a major factor in the struggle for control of the ancient world. For the Almighty God, has proven that, **“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come”** (**Isaiah 46:10 NIV**), predictive prophecy is easy.

“Run, tell that young man, ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls’” (**Zechariah 2:4 ESV**). The “young man” in this verse is Zechariah himself. The problem with the multiple Zechariahs theories, for one thing, is that chapters 1-8 could have been written

when Zechariah was a younger man, and chapters 9-14 could have been written when he was older, perhaps decades later. But, more importantly, even if Zechariah was 9-14 was written close to the time when chapters 1-8 were written, the change in style and vocabulary can easily be understood considering the difference in the subject matter of the two main sections of the book. The fact is that *“many similarities exist between chaps. 1-8 and 9-14, and difference of style is never a conclusive argument for different authorship. The reference to Greece as a future power (9:13) is no problem if one accepts the validity of predictive prophecy”* (Ryrie Study Bible note on *Zechariah 9:1*).

The reason that **Matthew 27:9,10** ascribes the quote from **Zechariah 11:12-13** to Jeremiah may be because some collections of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures place Jeremiah at the beginning of the collection. A reference to anything in that collection may have been attributed to Jeremiah. In fact, the Talmud places Jeremiah at the beginning of the prophetic books. The third major section of the Hebrew Scriptures was called the writings, and contained a number of the canonical Hebrew scripture books. In most collections, it began with the book of Psalms. Jesus referred to this entire collection as **“the Psalms”** (**Luke 24:44**). Additionally, **Matthew 27:9,10** may have been quoting Zechariah, but referring the reader to the prophecies found at **Jeremiah 18:2,3**, and **19:1-13** and **32:6-8**, which had been repeated and expanded in Zechariah’s work. With all this background information in mind, we can better understand some of the possible reasons why Matthew attributed his quote of **Zechariah 11:12-13** to Jeremiah.

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways” (**Hebrews 1:1 NIV**). Like other prophets, Zechariah did not receive his prophetic messages from God all at the same time, or in the same way. The prophecies received from God did not all have to fit within a certain framework, or even include the name of the prophet, or the names of some of his contemporaries. **“God spoke . . . through the prophets . . . in various ways”!** The fact is that prophetic messages were delivered by God to his prophets in a variety of ways. All of Yahweh’s **“prophets** [such as Zechariah] **spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”** (**2 Peter**

1:21 NIV), which insured the accuracy of what the prophet wrote.

In view of all of these extant objective facts, *“there are no compelling reasons to conclude that Zechariah was not indeed the sole author of the book”* (*The Reformation Study Bible, Introduction to Zechariah*). The prophet Zechariah is the one who wrote the book of Zechariah!

Evidence of Unity of Writership

So, we have determined who wrote the book of Zechariah! The book of Zechariah gives solid evidence of internal unity for the writership of the post-exilic prophet Zechariah in the latter part of the sixth century BCE, and perhaps also the early part of the fifth century BCE. The two main sections of the book (chapters 1-8, and chapters 9-14) are both concerned with God’s protection of Jerusalem and judgement against Israel’s enemies (**Zechariah 3:8; 9:9**), and also the pouring out of God’s spirit (**Zechariah 4:6; 12:10**). Further highlighting the unity of writership of the entire book of Zechariah is the fact all three of the so-called “Zechariah’s” stress the presence of Yahweh with his people (**Zechariah 1:16; 9:9; 12:10; 13:1,6-7**), and they have predictions of the Messiah’s first coming (**Zechariah 3:8; 9:9; 11:11-12; 12:10; 13:1,6-7**). Also, all three sections of the book highlight the restoration of Jerusalem and Yahweh’s coming to the defense of his people (**Zechariah 1:13-21; 2:4-5; 8:2-23; 9:11-17; 12:2-6; 14:3-21**).