

The Old Testament books of Haggai and Zechariah

Both of these books start by referring to King Darius, who was the king of Persia and renewed the edict of Cyrus, through his appointed governor Zerubbabel, to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem after the return of the Jews from their Babylonian exile. Both Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to rebuild the temple and were prominent from 520 to 518 BC.

Haggai This short book of only 2 chapters re-iterates the command to rebuild the temple in chapter 1, followed in chapter 2 with messages of comfort and hope on the final rebuilding of the temple.

Zechariah This penultimate book of the Old Testament is the longer, with 14 chapters. The first part is about the beginning of a new age foretold by 8 visions of the horsemen followed by the horns and smiths, the measurer, the investiture, the lamp-stand and olive trees, the flying scroll, the woman in the bushel and finally the chariots. There are similarities with visions detailed in the New testament book of Revelation. The 2nd part of the book concerns Israel and the nations, and final blessings in that the king is coming: *'Rejoice heart and soul daughter of Zion. Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem, see now your king comes to you: he is victorious, he is triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.....He will proclaim peace to all nations'. (9:10)*

Here we have a prophecy of the king, the messiah, in particular the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Matthew's gospel chapter 21 verse 5)

With Zechariah and the final book of the Old Testament, Malachi, (about which I will write next month), together with parts of Isaiah, we have leads into the New Testament events of the Messiah, namely Jesus Christ, the anointed one!

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