Zechariah 1:3-6

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Zechariah 1:3–6*** (ESV)  
**3** Therefore say to them, Thus declares YHWH of hosts: Return to me, says YHWH of hosts, and I will return to you, says YHWH of hosts. **4** Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says YHWH of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares YHWH. **5** Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? **6** But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and said, ‘As YHWH of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.’ ”

1. **The LORD of Hosts = YHWH of Hosts**. This is one of the names of YHWH that is used very often in Zechariah and also elsewhere in Scripture. In Hebrew it is Yahuah Tseva’ot (or Yahweh Tseva’ot). What does the Hebrew **tseva’ot** “hosts” mean? What does this name Yahuah Tseva’ot really mean?

Singular: צַָבָא tsava’ army, warrior, division, large group, array, stars

1. This Hebrew word **tseva’ot** “hosts” is used 484 times in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). You can get a feel for the wider scope of meaning from looking at a few examples of where this same word **tseva’ot** is used: Gen 2:1, Gen 21:22, Num 2:3-4 (and the whole chapter!), Exodus 12:41, Joshua 5:15, 2 Kings 23:5, and Isaiah 6:3. How does your English Bible translate these usages of **tseva’ot**? How does that give you a fuller sense of the meaning of the name **“Yehuah of Hosts”?**

***Genesis 2:1*** (ESV)  
**1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

***Genesis 21:22*** (ESV)  
**22** At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do.

***Numbers 2:3–4*** (ESV)  
**3** Those to camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah by their companies, the chief of the people of Judah being Nahshon the son of Amminadab, **4** his company as listed being 74,600.

***Exodus 12:41*** (ESV)  
**41** At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of YHWH went out from the land of Egypt.

***Joshua 5:15*** (ESV)  
**15** And the commander of YHWH’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

***2 Kings 23:5*** (ESV)  
**5** And he deposed the priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to make offerings in the high places at the cities of Judah and around Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and the moon and the constellations and all the host of the heavens.

***Isaiah 6:3*** (ESV)  
**3** And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is YHWH of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

**Tseva’ot** can refer to an army of people, the people of Israel, the army of YHWH, the stars of the heavens, all created beings in heavens and earths

1. In the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX) the name **Yehuah of Hosts** is usually translated into Greek as **kyrios pantokrator**. **Kyrios** is Greek for “Lord or Master”, and was used in place of the actual personal name Yehuah. What does **pantokrator** mean?

panto = “all”; krator=”ruler, master” 🡪 pantokrator = “ruler of all, master of all”

English autocrat 🡨 auto+kator “self+ruler”

1. Compare Rev 4:8, where the Greek name **pantokrator** is used, with Isaiah 6:3, where the Hebrew is **tseva’ot** is used. Revelation 4:8 is actually a quote from Isaiah 6.3. Who is praising Yehuah? How does this help you understand the broad scope of the name **“Yehauah Tseva’ot”**? How would you explain the meaning of this name in your own words to someone else?

***Revelation 4:8*** (ESV)  
**8** And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is YHWH God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

The heavenly **tseva’ot** are praising him, saying “Holy Holy Holy is Yehauah Tseva’ot”!

Lord of Hosts = Yehuah the master of everything, the head of all created beings, the chief of all armies in the heavens and on the earth.

1. **“return to me”**. This perhaps more than any other phrase will summarize the message the Zechariah. Where are they to return from? Why? What does it mean to “return to me”?

They, as well as their ancestors, disobeyed the commands of God. They chose to do evil, to follow their own path, instead of obeying the Torah (instructions for live).

1. What is Zechariah referring to when he talks about their fathers not listening to the prophets? Compare for example, 2 Chron 36:16 and Jer 35:15.

God sent prophets to them time and time again, warning them to return and obey, lest they be punished. But it was to no avail. Neither their actions nor their hearts were changed.

1. The word “return” is Hebrew שׁוּב**shuv**. What does it mean?

return, go back, turn around, change direction

1. What is God’s response (or promise) when we “return to him”? What does this tell us about Him?

He will return to us. He will “change directions” and move toward us as we do the same for Him.

1. The Hebrew שׁוּב**shuv** is often translated as “repent”. How does this study of שׁוּב **shuv** help you understand what “repent” really means?

Repent means to turn around, to change direction, to stop walking in your current path, and begin walking in God’s path. It’s not a just a mental thing, not just being sorry – it is changing the way you live, turning from your past and walking toward God. And He, likewise, promises to walk toward us.

1. What is Zechariah’s point in verse 1:5 and 1:6a? Rephrase this in your own words.

Your ancestors, as well as the prophets, as all dead now. And my words, as spoken through the prophets all came true. they were punished as I said they would be.

1. Verse 1.6b is a bit hard to understand. The ESV translates it, “So they repented and said…” Who repented, and what do you think that meant in this case? Remember that Hebrew for “repented” is שׁוּב**shuv** “turn”.

They understood their punishment. They “turned” to God, but it was too late to avert their punishment. All that the prophets said would happen did happen.

Once they were in exile it was impossible to delude themselves any longer into thinking that they were right. Overcome by events, they had to confess that the words of the prophets had been justified, and admit their own failure. The prophet is proving that the word of YHWH has triumphed in the past, and implying that it will do so in the future. Let those who are now hearing it beware, and be sure to listen and heed it. Joyce Baldwin, “Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi”, TNTC.

1. What was the punishment that was given? It is not explicitly stated, but it would have been very clear to all the people hearing the words of Zechariah.

Their land was plundered. The temple was destroyed. Their city was destroyed. Their people were made slaves in a foreign land (Babylon).

1. How would you summarize Zechariah’s introductory message of Zech 1:1-6?

Zechariah is making a plea for a wholehearted response to Yehuah’s invitation to return to Him.

1. How do see ourselves in this passage? What does Yehuah want you to learn about HIM? What does He want you to learn about YOURSELF?