

Zechariah 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu;

Analysis

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu. This precise dating formula grounds divine revelation in historical reality. The fourth year of Darius I corresponds to 518 BC, exactly two years after Zechariah's initial night visions (1:7). The ninth month, Kislev (כִּסְלֵוּ), falls in November-December. This chronological precision demonstrates that biblical prophecy isn't timeless myth but God's word intersecting human history at specific moments.

The phrase "**the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah**" (hayah debar-Yahweh el-Zekaryah, זְהָהָה דְּבָר־יְהָוָה אֶל־זְקָרְיָה) emphasizes divine initiative—prophets receive revelation, they don't generate it. This formula appears throughout prophetic literature, establishing that authentic prophecy originates with God, not human imagination. Zechariah's name means "Yahweh remembers," a fitting designation for a prophet calling post-exilic Israel to remember God's covenant faithfulness.

This dating introduces chapters 7-8, which address a delegation's question about continuing traditional fasts (7:3). The timing—two years into temple rebuilding—was crucial: the community needed to understand that God desires heart transformation, not mere ritual observance. The precise date emphasizes God's

active involvement in addressing His people's questions at historically specific moments.

Historical Context

Darius I (Hystaspes) ruled Persia from 522-486 BC. His fourth year (518 BC) marked significant progress in temple reconstruction, which had resumed in 520 BC under Haggai and Zechariah's prophetic ministry. The temple would be completed in 516 BC (Ezra 6:15), so this oracle came midway through the rebuilding project. The ninth month (Kislev) was approximately two months before the dedication month, during a season when questions about religious observance became pressing. The delegation mentioned in verse 2 came from Bethel, a city twelve miles north of Jerusalem with complicated history—once a center of idolatrous worship under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28-29), now apparently seeking proper worship. Their question about whether to continue mourning fasts showed both genuine spiritual concern and potential legalism.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the specific historical dating of biblical prophecy strengthen your confidence in Scripture's reliability and historical accuracy?
2. What does the formula "the word of the LORD came" teach about the nature of prophetic revelation versus human religious insight?
3. Why is it significant that God addresses practical questions (like whether to fast) through prophetic revelation rather than leaving such matters to human tradition?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׁנָה תִּזְהָרֵךְ	בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	בְּיָמֵי דָּרַיּוֹן	בְּיָמֵי דָּרַיּוֹן
H1961	year	And it came to pass in the fourth	Darius	of king
H8141		H702	H1867	H4428
דְּבָרְךָ יְהֹוָה הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	דְּבָרְךָ יְהֹוָה הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	זְכָרֵךְ הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	זְכָרֵךְ הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	זְכָרֵךְ הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה
that the word	of the LORD	H413	came unto Zechariah	
H1697		H3068	H2148	
בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה בְּאֶרְבָּעָה הָיָה	לְחֵדֶשׁ תְּשׁוּבָה	לְחֵדֶשׁ תְּשׁוּבָה	לְחֵדֶשׁ תְּשׁוּבָה	לְחֵדֶשׁ תְּשׁוּבָה
And it came to pass in the fourth	month	day of the ninth	even in Chisleu	
H702	H2320	H8671	H3691	

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 1:1 (Word): The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

Zechariah 1:1 (Word): In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,