

**THE LORD REMEMBERS AND WILL AGAIN  
CHOOSE JERUSALEM --  
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH**

by Paul G. Apple, Oct. 2007; Rev. Jan. 2026

**BY A SERIES OF PROPHETIC VISIONS AND MESSAGES OF ULTIMATE  
RESTORATION AND TRIUMPH, ZECHARIAH ENCOURAGES THE  
NATION OF ISRAEL IN THEIR MISSION OF REBUILDING THE TEMPLE  
BY REMINDING THEM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO FULFILL HIS  
MESSIANIC AND KINGDOM PROMISES**

*"the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem"*

- Zechariah 1:17

For each section in the Book of Zechariah:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

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## BACKGROUND OF BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

**Malick:** Even though Yahweh warns the postexilic community and recounts their faithfulness, He encourages them through prophetic visions and messages of ultimate victory in order that they might presently trust and obey Him who is faithful.

**Roper:** The book of Zechariah, along with those of Haggai and Malachi, forms a triad that we call the "postexilic" prophets, obviously because they were written after the Exile. The Exile, as I indicated in the first study of this series, was a time of terrible humiliation for the Jews. They had spent seventy long years in Babylon and Persia, and they returned to their land greatly reduced in number. Only about forty-two thousand came back to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. They were greeted upon their return by a picture of absolute desolation. The little cities in the heartland of Judah lay in ruins. The city of Jerusalem had been destroyed; there was a great deal of rubble in the streets and the walls had been broken down and had not been repaired. And in the middle of Jerusalem stood the burned-out hulk of the temple, which had been left behind by Nebuchadnezzar and his troops when he invaded Judah in the Sixth Century. It was a very difficult time.

There is nothing quite so discouraging as a rebuilding project. It was one thing, I am sure, to have built the temple when the materials were new and fresh, when they had Hiram of Tyre to assist them, and they could not quite envision how it would finally appear. It was exciting, and there was a great deal of momentum to the project. But it is a different matter entirely to have to take soot blackened stones and clean them, to have to salvage lumber which had been used before, and rebuild with these. That is difficult. So God raised up these prophets at this time to encourage them in this very discouraging task.

I am sure that many of us are involved in the process of reconstruction. Our lives, for one reason or another, have been ruined, and are just as blighted and blasted as the nation of Judah was. And now we are going back and picking up the pieces. That is so discouraging, because the materials have been distorted and ruined in some way, and it is difficult to put it all back together again. There is nothing quite so difficult as reconstruction.

The message revolves around the meaning of his name, for Zechariah means "God remembers". That would be important for the returned exiles to know. They felt at times that they were a forgotten people, that God had turned his back on them, and they needed to recall that God remembered. Actually, a number of priests during the exilic period were given this name, so it is evident that this was a thought which pervaded much of the nation of Judah at this time.

Zechariah's prophecy is divided into four major units. The first six verses of chapter 1 are an introductory section which was delivered between verses 9 and 10 of Haggai 2. Zechariah 1, verse 1, reads, "In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet..." Verse 9 of Haggai 2 ends a prophecy delivered "on the twenty-first of the seventh month," and verse 10 begins, "On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord

came to Haggai the prophet.” Zechariah began his ministry just about a month before Haggai delivered his third message. So these two men worked together hand-in-glove to minister to the nation of Judah.

Zechariah's introductory message was given in the eighth month, which would be our month of November. Then a message followed a couple of months later, in the eleventh month, which would be our month of February. This second message is built around a series of eight visions Zechariah saw in the night. As you know, the Hebrew prophets are frequently referred to as "seers," because they saw things no one else saw. This was the case in Zechariah's ministry. The Lord revealed certain truths to him through visions which came to him in the middle of the night. These prophecies are given to us in chapter 1, verse 7, through chapter 6.

The third division is found in chapters 7 and 8. This message was given about two years after the visions of the second message. It is basically a response to the questions of a delegation of men that came to him from Bethel. The final message of Zechariah begins with chapter 9 and continues on to the end of the book in chapter 14. This section is a series of apocalyptic visions, i.e., it takes us way down to the end time, shows us the future of Israel and of the nations surrounding Israel. It is very much like the book of Revelation.

**Baxter:** After the short, forthright message of Haggai, this Book of Zechariah may seem discouragingly complicated; yet it is not so in reality, as we shall see. To an observant reader it quickly sorts itself out; and it is full of good things. . . . If we pick our way carefully through this Book of Zechariah two or three times, we soon find its arrangement becoming clear to us. We are sure to see, first of all, that there is a major break between chapters viii. and ix., which divides the book into two main parts. There can scarcely be any mistaking this, for the characteristics of the two parts are markedly different from each other. The first eight chapters are mainly *vision*-prophecies; the remaining six chapters are wholly *direct* prophecies. The first eight chapters were written during the rebuilding of the temple; the remaining six chapters were written considerably after the temple was rebuilt. The first eight chapters have a particular and immediate reference to the Jewish “Remnant” now back in the land; the remaining six chapters have a general and far-reaching reference to Israel as a whole, to the ultimate future, and to the Gentile nations. The contents of the first eight chapters are carefully dated; the contents of the remaining six chapters are nowhere dated.

**Feinberg:** Although Zechariah begins with the theme of the restoration of the sanctuary, he touches upon many phases of the spiritual life of the nation, and he treats with remarkable fullness the prophetic events leading up to Messiah’s return and reign.

<http://www.geocities.com/genebrooks/zechariah.pdf>

## **Outline:**

*Zechariah 1-8 During the Building of the Temple (520-518 BC)*

*Zechariah 9-14 After Building the Temple (480-470 BC)*

### **1. CALL TO REPENTANCE (Zechariah 1:1-6)**

## **2. EIGHT VISIONS IN ONE NIGHT (MESSIANIC & MILLENIAL) (Zechariah 1:7-6:8)**

- a. Riders Under the Myrtle Trees (1:7-17) *The LORD will again be merciful to Jerusalem (1:14, 16-17) Rev 6:4*
- b. Four Horns & Four Smiths (1:18-21) *Those who scattered Judah are cast out (1:21)*
- c. Man with a Measuring Line (Chapter 2) *God will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem (2:3-5) Rev 19:8; 21:23*
- d. Joshua and Satan (3:1-10) *The Servant the Branch comes to save (3:8-9) First prophet to mention Satan*
- e. Lampstand and Two Olive Trees (Chapter 4) *The LORD empowers Israel by His Spirit (4:6) Rev. 1:12; 4:5; 5:6; 11:4*
- f. Flying Scroll (5:1-4) *Wicked governments are cursed (5:3)*
- g. Woman in the Basket (5:5-11) *Wickedness will be removed (5:9)*
- h. Four Chariots (Chapter 6) *Administrative forces of righteousness (G. Campbell Morgan) (6:5, 7) Rev. 6:2, 5*

## **3. CROWNING OF JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST (Zechariah 6:9-15)**

### **4. RITUAL FASTING AND THE FUTURE (Zechariah 7-8)**

- a. When the Heart is Right, the Ritual is Right (7:4-7)
- b. When the Heart is Wrong, the Ritual is Wrong (7:8-14)
- c. God's Purpose Concerning Jerusalem Unchanged by any Ritual (Chapter 8)

**5. REJECTION OF THE COMING MESSIAH (Zechariah 9-11)** Jesus returns the favor in prophesying judgment for Zechariah's martyrdom (Matthew 23:35)

### **6. MILLENIAL REIGN OF THE COMING MESSIAH (Zechariah 12-14)**

- a. Siege of Jerusalem by Anti-Christ and his Armies (Chapter 12)
- b. Repentance of Israel and Reception of their true Messiah (Chapter 13) Romans 11:26
- c. Coming of the Great King to split Mount of Olives in two (Chapter 14)

## **MESSIANIC ZECHARIAH**

*Only Isaiah talks about the Messiah more*

Christ's Deity 3:4; 13:7

Christ's Humanity 6:12; 13:7

Christ's humility 6:12

Christ's priesthood 6:13

Christ's kingship 6:13; 9:9; 14:9, 16

Christ's glorious reign 9:10, 14

Christ's world peace 9:9-10; cf. 3:10

Christ the Branch 3:8

Christ my Servant 3:8

Christ the Good Shepherd 9:16; 11:11

Christ the smitten Shepherd 13:7; Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27

Christ's entrance to Jerusalem on a colt 9:9; cf. Matthew 21:5; John 12:13

Christ betrayed for thirty pieces of silver 11:12-13; Matthew 14:27

Christ's hands pierced 12:10

Christ's people saved 12:10; 13:1

Christ wounded in the house of His friends 13:6

Christ's coming on the Mount of Olives 14:3-8; Acts 1:11

Christ's coming in glory 14:4

Christ's coronation Zechariah 14:9

Christ's building of the Lord's Temple 6:12-13

## **BLESSINGS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM:**

\* Extent of His Kingdom worldwide 14:9

\* Abundant rain 10:1

- \* Outpouring of Spirit on Israel 12:10
- \* Revelation of the pierced Messiah 12:10
- \* Changes in Eretz Y Israel 14:4-5, 10-11
- \* Kingdom set up on earth 14:9-15
- \* Jerusalem the center of worship 14:16-17

**George L. Robinson:** The book of Zechariah is the most messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological of all of the writings of the Old Testament.

**Piper:** The main point is: *Fear not, for I purpose to do you good, says the Lord.* The whole book is made up of visions and prophecies of how God is going to save Israel and make her a blessing to others. And these promises are intended to fill the Jews with hope in God and make them fearless and strong.

One of the problems for gentile Christians like us is how a book full of promises to Jerusalem and Judah can be a help to us today. Let me try to sketch very briefly the principles that guide my interpretation of prophecies like this. First, I think these prophecies are aimed primarily at the ethnic people of Israel. They were the audience; and when they heard Zechariah refer to "the house of Judah and the house of Israel" they would naturally understand the Jewish people not the church of Christian gentiles. These prophecies are aimed at the ethnic people Israel. Second, I think there is a glorious future for Israel even yet when she repents. It is too simple to say that since the time of Christ the church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people, even though that is true, in a sense. The reason it is too simple is that in Romans 11 Paul teaches that God is not finished with ethnic Israel. In verse 1 he says, "Has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin." Paul insists that God has not finished with the Jews, first of all because he is a Jew (of the tribe of Benjamin!). Paul does admit that the Jews are temporarily rejected through their unbelief, but this is for the benefit of us gentiles; and when the full number of gentiles is complete the remaining Jews, too, will repent and be saved. Romans 11:12,15, "Now if their (Jews) trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! ... If their (Jews) rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" Here Israel is distinct from converted gentiles and is promised a glorious future. So a few verses later in verses 25,26, Paul says, "A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the gentiles comes in, and so all Israel will be saved." In the context of Romans 11:12,15 it is unwarranted to interpret "all Israel" here to mean anything other than corporate ethnic Israel. So one of my guiding principles in reading Old Testament prophecy about Israel is that there is a glorious future ahead when Israel will repent, turn to Christ and be saved.

Third, by faith in Christ gentile believers become full partners in the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament. The two key texts to support this principle are Galatians 3:29, "And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise," and Ephesians 2:19 and 3:6, "So then you (gentiles) are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God ... (you are) fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise

in Christ Jesus through the gospel." So by faith in Christ we gentile believers are no longer "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel" but are full partners in the "covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12).

Fourth, (these first three principles imply that) the prophecies of the Old Testament made to Israel are not less than literal (as though ethnic Israel were not intended) but more than literal, because they embrace not only the ethnic Israel but also the gentile children of Abraham by faith (Rom. 4:11), who will not be second-class citizens in the final kingdom.

Fifth, and finally, many of the benefits promised to the people of Israel are fulfilled in stages. This is especially true since the expected coming of the Messiah has occurred in stages. Christ came the first time (as Hebrews 9:26 says) "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And he will "appear a second time not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." For the most part, Old Testament prophecy does not distinguish these two comings. Therefore, very often some aspects of Old Testament promises are fulfilled already in Christ, but the final consummation awaits the last day. So these are my guiding principles as I seek to apply Zechariah to our lives today: 1) it is aimed primarily at ethnic Israel; 2) there is yet a glorious future for ethnic Israel when she repents; 3) by faith in Christ we gentile believers become full fellow-heirs of the promises made to Israel; 4) therefore, the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel are not less than literal but more than literal: they embrace not only ethnic Israel but also us gentile believers; 5) many of the benefits promised to the people of Israel are fulfilled in stages, especially since the promised Messiah himself comes in two stages (Christmas and the Second Coming).

The practical implication of all this is that whenever you read a "Fear not!" in the Old Testament you can take it for yourself as a fellow heir if you are a Christian. The reasons given in the Old Testament why you need not fear will almost always relate to Israel first but then indirectly also to you as a spiritual Jew (Rom. 2:29) and a child of Abraham (Gal. 3:29).

We began by suggesting that the main point of Zechariah's prophecy is, "Fear not, for God purposes to do you good." A very profitable way to read this book is to mark every verse where God says he is going to do something good for Jerusalem. I marked well over 50 verses. But since we can't look at all these, let's focus in on the most important of all: 13:1. I call it most important because all the other benefits promised to Israel (and to us) depend on this one.

"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness." Zechariah promises the people that at some future time a fountain would be opened which would take away their sin and guilt. I say this is the foundation for all the other blessings promised because the only way sinners can hope to inherit the riches of God is if their sins are forgiven. The fountain of cleansing is the first checkpoint on the road to heaven.

<http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper82/120582m.htm>

**Dolphin:** On February 15, 519 B.C., some three and one-half months after his initial message in 1:1-6, and two months after Haggai's final message (Haggai 2:20-23), Zechariah was given eight night visions. It appears that all eight visions were given in one night, but we cannot be sure. The eight visions can best be understood in the chiasmic pattern of a, b, b, c, c, b, b, a, with the theological climax coming in the fourth and fifth visions. The first and the eighth vision bear a strong resemblance to one another, while the second and third, fourth and fifth, and sixth and seventh are in pairs. The resulting pattern would appear something like this:

- a Waiting in the Calm Before the International Storm 1:7-17
- b Watching the Nations Punish One Another 1:18-21
- b Expecting the Glory of God on Earth 2: 1-13
- c Symbolizing the Removal of Sin All in One Day 3:1-10
- c Receiving God's Spirit for Doing His Work 4:1-14
- b Purging Evil From Israel 5:1-4
- b Removing Wickedness From Israel 5:5-11
- a Executing Judgment on the Gentile Nations 6:1-15

**G Campbell Morgan:**

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE PROPHETS					
Northern Kingdom			Southern Kingdom		
Prophet	King		Prophet	King	
	Jeroboam	933-912			
	Nadab	912-911			
	Baasha	911-888			
	Elah	888-887			
	Zimri	887			
	Tibni	887-863			
	Omri	887-877			
ELIJAH	Ahab	876-854		Jehoshaphat	873-848
	Ahaziah	854-853		Jehoram	848-841
ELISHA	Jehoram	853-842	JOEL	Ahaziah	841
	Jehu	842-815		Athaliah	841-835
	Jehoahaz	814-798		Jehoash	835-796
	Jehoash	798-793		Amaziah	796-767
JONAH	Jeroboam II	793-743	ISAIAH	Uzziah	767-740
AMOS	Zachariah	743	MICAH		
HOSEA	Shallum	743			
	Menahem	743-737			
	Pekahiah	737-736		Jotham	740-732
	Pekah	736-730	OBADIAH	Ahaz	732-716
	Hoshea	730-722	NAHUM	Hezekiah	716-687
<b>Fall of the Northern Kingdom</b>					
			JEREMIAH	Manasseh	687-643
				Amon	643-641
			HABAKKUK	Josiah	641-609
			ZEPHANIAH		
<b>The Exile</b>					
			DANIEL	Jehoahaz	609
				Jehoiakim	609-598
			EZEKIEL	Jehoiachin	598-597
				Zedekiah	597-586
<b>The Restoration</b>					
			HAGGAI		520
			ZECHARIAH		520
			MALACHI		520

<http://www.campuslight.org/Resources/Minor%20Prophets%20Lessons.pdf>

## II. Outline

- A. The Series of Eight Visions (1:1-6:15)
  - 1. The Man in the Myrtle Trees and the Horses (1:7-17) - Angels sent to survey the earth and comfort God's people with their words.
  - 2. The Four Horns and Four Carpenters (1:18-21) - The horns are four enemies of Israel. Carpenters are the spiritual forces which defeat the enemies.
  - 3. Man with the Measuring Line (2:1-13) - Angel measuring Jerusalem for a spiritual wall of protection.
  - 4. The Cleansing of the High Priest (3:1-10) - Represents the cleansing of Israel for the work of the LORD. Introduces the BRANCH.
  - 5. The Golden Candlestick and Two Olive Trees (4:1-14) - The light of the Word and the abundant power of the Spirit.
  - 6. The Flying Roll (5:1-4) - God's judgment on Israel's iniquity.
  - 7. The Woman in the Ephah - (5:5-11) - Wickedness being carried out from God's people.
  - 8. The Four Chariots and Crowning of the High Priest (6:1-8) - Judgments from the LORD and the crowning of Christ the High Priest as King of Kings.
- B. Sin, Judgment and Restoration (7:1-8:23)
  - 1. Obedience Rather than Religious Activity (7:1-7)
  - 2. Reason for the Captivity (7:8-14)
  - 3. Jerusalem's Future (8:1-23)
- C. Triumph of God in the Messiah's Coming (9:1-14:21)
  - 1. Rejoicing in the King - Ch. 9 (9:9)
  - 2. Restoration of God's People - Ch. 10 (10:6, 7, 12)
  - 3. Suffering of the Messiah - Ch. 11 (11:12)
  - 4. Crucified Christ - Ch. 12 (12:9-10)
  - 5. Death of Messiah - Ch. 13 (13:3, 6)
  - 6. Tribulation and Millennium - Ch. 14 (14:16)

## III. Some Lessons

- A. Spiritual cleansing must come from God and God alone. (3:3)
- B. Our "success" does not depend on us, but on the LORD. (4:6)
- C. God loves man so much that He sent His Son to die for our sins. (9:9; 11:12; 12:10)
- D. Jesus will return, so we must be ready. (14:4, 9, 16)

**Laney:** The restoration period was an exciting and challenging era in Judah's history. The Temple and the city walls of Jerusalem needed rebuilding; the worship institutions needed refurbishing; and the people, still weary from long years of exile, needed encouraging. In the face of those challenges there were threats from the Arabs and synchronistic Samaritans who wanted to prevent the reestablishment of Judah. The leaders of the people faced such internal difficulties as neglect of worship, neglect of spiritual priorities, and breakdown in marriage relationships. . .

The visions and prophecies contain "*comforting words*" (1:13) revealing the future glories of Zion, the ultimate overthrow of Israel's enemies, and the universal reign of Messiah. The prophecy of Zechariah presents a detailed portrayal of God's future dealings with His chosen people, Israel.

**Steven J. Cole:** The book falls into two main parts. The first part (chapters 1- 8) is specifically dated. The second part (chapters 9-14) is not. After the introductory theme (1:1-6), chapters 1-6 consist of eight night visions that came to Zechariah in 520 B.C. The overarching theme of these visions is that God is again working on behalf of His people and that He will bring judgment on the heathen nations that had afflicted His people. These visions encouraged the Lord's people to continue working to rebuild the temple.

In chapters 7 and 8, dated two years later, Zechariah gives a reply to a delegation of priests from Bethel concerning certain religious fasts. The thrust of his message is to show that God is concerned about hearts that are right before Him, not just about outward religious observance. It serves as a warning to the people that as the temple was completed, the danger would be to fall into outward religion without inward reality.

Chapters 9-14 are not dated and probably were written many years (perhaps 40) later. This section consists of a number of Messianic prophecies that reveal the importance of the rebuilt temple, since Messiah will come to this temple. Even though powerful nations will arise and threaten God's people, His prophetic plan of the ages will be carried out. Because of these prophecies, Zechariah has been called the Revelation of the Old Testament. Like Revelation, it is a difficult book to interpret. But the overall message is plain: It is an encouragement to God's discouraged and frightened people to walk in reality with Him, because He will keep His covenant promises.

You can remember the theme of the book if you will jot down the Hebrew meanings of the three names in verse 1. Zechariah means, "whom the Lord remembers." Berechiah means, "the Lord blesses." Iddo means, "at the appointed time" (Charles Feinberg, *God Remembers* [American Board of Missions to the Jews], p. 17). God raised up Zechariah to proclaim that God remembers His chosen people and that He will bless them in His appointed time.

#### **Dr. John C. Whitcomb: Precious Promises for Perilous Times**

It is important to realize the overall background and context of this message of Zechariah. For many Christians, the OT has been very neglected and misunderstood. This is the foundation of the NT and the NT presupposes that we understand the OT. Animal sacrifices will once again be offered in the millennial temple in Jerusalem in an ethnic Israelite theocratic program under the direction of the priest after the order of Melchizedek. Zechariah looks forward to that day. God's promises are irrevocable and absolutely dependable. He never breaks His covenant commitments to people – not dependent on our faithfulness. Ezekiel tells what the temple will be like in the millennial age. 586 B.C. destruction of temple under Nebuchadnezzar. Temple rebuilt in 516 B.C. Decree of Cyrus to urge the Jews to return and rebuild the altar and offer up sacrifices. They returned in 536 B.C. and were deeply depressed by what they saw. They started the project; were met with ecumenical opposition; resisted that and then suffered discouraging reprisals. For 16 years the project was on hold. Then in four short years the temple was finished. But they must have wept when they saw how pitiful the temple looked in comparison to its former glory.

The Davidic line never recovered from the curse of Jehoiachin. *"Never will any of your sons prosper sitting on the throne of David in Jerusalem."* Jesus received the throne rights through Joseph from Solomon. Jesus had to be adopted -- not begotten by Joseph who inherited the curse of Jehoiachin. Through Mary he inherited the Davidic line through Nathan. Thus God worked out His promises in a way that nobody could have anticipated. The intricacies of the details of God's prophecies are amazing. The judges and then the kings had failed and now the priests were ruling the nation. They were not

all godly priests; but they were the legitimate rulers of the nations in the absence of kings and judges.

41 times the NT quotes or alludes to the book of Zechariah. Nothing any servant of God can do or plan or say -- no matter how devoted he may be -- can guarantee the spiritual state of the next generation. God doesn't have any spiritual grandchildren. Every generation is a disaster apart from the mercy and grace of a sovereign God. The theme is that God is Sovereign and that is how He can remember and do something about the situation. Only God can handle the situation.

## OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF ZECHARIAH – FROM RUINS TO REIGN – GOD’S UNSTOPPABLE PLAN FOR ISRAEL’S RESTORATION

### Introduction:

Today we come to the book of **Zechariah** – the second to last book in the OT. So it is easy to find – just go to Matthew and back up two books. It is the longest of the 12 Minor Prophets. Zechariah whose name means “*Yahweh Remembers*” was a younger contemporary of Haggai – so he shares the same background and historical setting information that we covered last Sunday. Both prophets were trying to stir up the returning exiles to complete the work on rebuilding the temple that had started back in 536 BC and then been halted for 16 years due to external opposition and internal divisions and spiritual complacency.

Haggai was more of a confrontational exhorter (“*Consider your ways*”) while Zechariah was more of a comforting voice of hope and encouragement – focusing the people on God’s faithfulness to His covenant promises. Someone has said that the message of Haggai was “*Take Part*” in the rebuilding program; while Zechariah came alongside and said “*Take heart*” – don’t be discouraged or fearful despite the difficulty of the task.

The prophet had been born back in Babylonia and then brought back to Jerusalem by his priestly grandfather with the returning exiles under the political leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. Jewish tradition attests that he was a member of the great synagogue that collected and preserved the canon of revealed Scripture. Jesus testifies in **Matt. 23:35** that Zechariah was murdered between the temple and the altar – so he paid a price for his faithful ministry.

### David Roper:

The message revolves around the meaning of his name, for Zechariah means “*God remembers*”. That would be important for the returned exiles to know. They felt at times that they were a forgotten people, that God had turned his back on them, and they needed to recall that God remembered. Actually, a number of priests during the exilic period were given this name, so it is evident that this was a thought which pervaded much of the nation of Judah at this time.

Try to put yourself in Zechariah’s sandals. Imagine walking through a city devastated by war. Buildings collapsed. Streets empty. Hope scarce. Yet in the midst of the rubble stands an architect holding blueprints—not of what was, but of what will be. Those blueprints guarantee that destruction will not have the final word.

That is the setting of Zechariah. Jerusalem lies in ruins. About 50,000 people have returned from the Babylonian exile, but they are discouraged, threatened, and spiritually apathetic. Into that despair, God sends Zechariah—not merely to motivate rebuilding, but to **reveal God’s sovereign blueprint for Israel’s future glory**.

Above all Zechariah was a **visionary** – with tremendous insight from God into His future program for Israel and the role of the promised Messiah – mixing prophecies related to both the First Coming and the Second Advent of Christ. You have probably known some visionaries in one context or another – whether in the realm of work, or politics or even church leaders. Their fatal flaws are usually:

- Inaccuracy – not seeing the future from a realistic or big picture perspective,
- or Implementation failures – unable to motivate people or to execute their vision.

But when it comes to God, a visionary inspired by Him has a perfect track record. God sees the future clearly and always accomplishes His promised kingdom agenda.

What are some **qualities of a visionary** and how do we see those reflected in Zechariah?

- **Future-oriented Perspective** – imagining what could be; not constrained by what is
- **Clear sense of Purpose** – driven by a compelling “Why” – What is so important about the temple of God – he was anchored in his convictions and prophetic calling
- **Big-Picture Thinking** – focused on outcomes that will make the difference for the long term
- **Ability to Inspire and Motivate Others** – especially motivating thru hope and courage rather than fear; helping others to catch the vision and understand the role they need to play
- **Resilience and Perseverance** – translating vision into action that will persist until the project is successfully finished

Zechariah complements the message of **Daniel** – giving us the Jewish perspective of God’s program for Israel during *the times of the Gentiles*.

**Luke 21:24** “*Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*”

These Gentile times began back in 586 BC when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem. Daniel lays out the 4 great world empires: Babylonians, Medo-Persia Empire, Greek and Roman – both the historic empire and the end times revived Roman empire. These *times of the Gentiles* will extend until the end times. The Jews currently have temporary control of Jerusalem but full regathering and control will not occur until the end times when the nation will be regathered, saved and usher in the Millennial Kingdom.

### **Hermeneutics:**

Sadly many conservative evangelical commentators and preachers fail to align themselves with the futuristic vision that Zechariah lays out for God’s elected nation. They subscribe to the **amillennial** framework of end times events rather than the **premillennial** framework. In other words Christ has already established His kingdom at His first coming. There will be no ultimate regathering and salvation of the nation of Israel in the end times. There will be no 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom where Christ reigns in peace and righteousness from His throne in Jerusalem. They treat prophetic books like Zechariah from a subjective hermeneutic that sees the NT church replacing the nation of Israel when it comes to God’s promises to Abraham and David – so instead of a literal interpretation, they would spiritualize or allegorize the details in the text. They deny any future for the ethnic nation of Israel. They struggle with the prophetic details when it comes to a book like Zechariah. They miss the whole point of the book. *Yahweh Remembers* – If the promises in the book related to the First Coming of Christ were fulfilled literally, it should be expected that there will be literal fulfillment of the promises that still remain related to His Second Advent.

## **Big Idea** –

BY PROPHETIC VISIONS, MESSAGES AND BURDENS OF ULTIMATE RESTORATION AND TRIUMPH, ZECHARIAH ENCOURAGES THE NATION OF ISRAEL IN THEIR MISSION OF REBUILDING THE TEMPLE BY REMINDING THEM OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO FULFILL HIS MESSIANIC AND KINGDOM PROMISES

**Zechariah 1:17** “*the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem*”

Though Israel is temporarily sidelined, her future restoration is certain – because God keeps His covenant promises.

**Overview** -- The Book of Zechariah is recognized as “the most Messianic, the most truly apocalyptic, and the most eschatological of all the writings of the OT” (ISBE, 1956 – referenced by **Dr. John C. Whitcomb**). It stands as God’s remarkable witness to the folly of despising small beginnings. When God is sovereignly at work to accomplish His kingdom purposes, the ultimate end can far transcend the pitiful circumstances viewed from just a natural perspective. The small remnant of Jews that had returned from the Babylonian Captivity to rebuild the temple were faced with a discouraging task. Everywhere they looked there was the rubble to remind them of the faithlessness of their ancestors. Even the construction of the temple itself was but a sad contrast to the majestic state of Solomon’s former edifice. But **God will again remember His people and accomplish His great promises.**

Under the encouraging ministry of Zechariah, the people were given a vision for the future glories that God still had in store for His covenant people. Their enemies were under God’s future wrath as God would once again choose Jerusalem and accomplish all that He had promised. The Messiah would return in triumph to vanquish all opposition and establish His rule from His throne in the city of David. Despair was replaced with hope and a zeal to accomplish the task God had set before them.

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## **Structure of the Book:**

### **I. (1-6) 8 PROPHETIC VISIONS – KINGDOM CONTROL**

REGARDING THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL AND JUDGMENT ON HER ENEMIES

written during the second year of the reign of Darius = **520 BC**, and the specific night of the visions was likely **February 15, 519 BC**.

**1:1** “*In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying,*”

**God reveals His divine plan – He is actively controlling history to bring about Israel’s restoration, the judgment of the nations and Messiah’s reign.**

### **II. (7-8) 4 MESSAGES FROM THE LORD — KINGDOM CALLING**

EXHORTATION TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY IN ANTICIPATION OF PROMISED PROSPERITY THAT WILL SPILL OVER TO THE GENTILES

**Introduced by: “Then the word of the Lord . . .” (7:4, 8; 8:1, 18)**

Takes place 2 years later

Responding to a question about the continuation of the fasts – God gives the prophet 4 messages:

- 1) Word of Rebuke
- 2) Word of Righteousness
- 3) Word of Restoration
- 4) Word of Rejoicing

### **III. (9-14) 2 BURDENS -- KINGDOM CONSUMMATION**

#### **ULTIMATE RESTORATION AND TRIUMPH**

**Introduced by:** “*The burden of the Word of the Lord . . .*” (9:1; 12:1)

First advent -- rejection of Israel’s coming king

Second advent -- acceptance of Israel’s king

**Jerry Harmon:** The prophecy in chapters 9-14 was delivered about 40 or 50 years later. By this time, the temple has long been completed. Zechariah is now an old man. Israel is weak and they're still vulnerable under foreign domination. Nehemiah has not yet returned to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem during this time, and so they're vulnerable still to the surrounding nations. Powerful and aggressive neighbors still surrounded them. And the people worried, what if these neighbors attack us? What if they tear down the temple we worked so hard to rebuild? What if they invade us again and carry us all into captivity just as before? They feared really the future, what the future might hold. They weren't really certain about it.

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### **I. (1-6) 8 PROPHETIC VISIONS – KINGDOM CONTROL**

#### **REGARDING THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL AND JUDGMENT ON HER ENEMIES**

The series of 8 visions bracketed by an Introduction focusing on the urgent need for Repentance and then a closing Climax

Provides prophetic reassurance that God has not abandoned His people.

**1:14** “*I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem*”

### **(1:1-6) REPENT NOW -- HISTORY PROVES THAT THE LORD’S URGENT CALL TO REPENTANCE MUST BE RESPONDED TO RIGHT NOW**

#### **I. (:2-3) THE CALL TO IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE OFFERS THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM GOD’S IMPENDING WRATH**

A. (:2) Sin Incurs God’s Wrath

“*The Lord was very angry with your fathers*”

B. (:3) Only Repentance Can Restore the Fractured Relationship

“*Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Return to Me,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘that I may return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts.’*”

Nature and Necessity of Repentance

Implied Timing of Repentance = Right Now – while you have opportunity

Blessings associated with restored fellowship

## **II. (:4) THE CONTRAST OF REJECTING THE COMMAND TO REPENT PROVES THE FUTILITY OF STUBBORN REBELLION**

### A. Negative Contrast Hits Close to Home – History Lesson

*“Do not be like your fathers,”*

Sad case when you are commanded to reject the behavior example of your Parents

### B. Same Call for Immediate Repentance

*“to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’”*

Privilege of access to God’s revelation through His messengers, the prophets

Faithful proclamation of the message of God

Same connection between sin and the fracturing of the relationship

Same necessity of immediate repentance – *“Return now”*

### C. Tragic Closing of the Ears to the Pleas of God

*“But they did not listen or give heed to Me, declares the Lord.”*

## **III. (:5-6a) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN MORTALITY AND ETERNITY VINDICATES GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO CARRY OUT HIS WORD**

### A. (:5) Limited Perspective of Mortal Men

*“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?”*

### B. (:6a) Historical Vindication of the Eternal Word of God

*“But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers”*

God will faithfully bring about all that He has prophesied –

Both the blessings and the curses

## **IV. (:6b) THE CONFESSION OF REPENTANCE BRINGS FORTH THE FRUIT OF SUBMISSION TO GOD’S SOVEREIGN DISPOSITION – BUT WILL IT BE TOO LATE??**

*“Then they repented and said, ‘As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’”*

Their forefathers ended up changing their mind about their own sinfulness and the Lord’s charges against them. But it was not in time to benefit them. The message to the contemporaries of Zechariah is to **Repent NOW** while there is still time to participate in the blessings.

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**(1:7-17) VISION #1 – GOD’S SURVEILLANCE -- MAN ON RED HORSE AMONG MYRTLE TREES – HOW LONG? WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER?**

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE DAY IS COMING WHEN THE LORD WILL HAVE COMPASSION AND RESTORE THE FORTUNES OF HIS PEOPLE**

This first of 8 visions serves to summarize all the others by presenting the major theme -- God sees the nations at ease while Israel suffers – and He **promises judgment and restoration.**

Introduced to the man riding the red horse (judgment) – identified in **vs. 11** as the **Angel of the Lord** – preincarnate Christ (distinguished from the interpreting angel speaking in **vs. 9**)

Myrtle trees associated with booth-making at the Feast of Booths and with messianic blessing

(:16-17) Word of Promised Restoration and Prosperity to Israel

1. (:16) Faithful Compassion Leads to Restoration and Growth

*“Therefore thus says the Lord, ‘I will return to Jerusalem with **compassion**; My house will be built in it,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem.’”*

2. (:17) Sovereign Choice Leads to Prosperity and Blessing

*“Again, proclaim saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again **comfort Zion** and again **choose Jerusalem.**”*

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**(1:18-21) VISION #2 – GOD’S SUPREMACY -- THE HAMMERING OF THE HORNS -- JUDGMENT AGAINST THE OPPRESSIVE GENTILE NATIONS**

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE DAY IS COMING WHEN THE LORD WILL OVERTHROW THE GENTILE NATIONS WHICH HAVE SCATTERED AND OPPRESSED THE JEWISH PEOPLE**

The “*time of the Gentiles*” will not last forever. In their pride and false sense of security, they judge themselves to be impenetrable. They have spread terror among God’s people in scattering and oppressing them and obliterating all hope of deliverance. But God will terrorize them and ultimately overthrow their sovereignty to establish His own righteous reign.

Horns were symbols of power and pride. In the context of judgment each symbolizes either a nation or the head of that nation. Here the horns represent Gentile nations that attacked God’s people.

(:21) The Sovereign Conquest of the Gentile Nations

*“These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head but these craftsmen [blacksmiths] have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.”*

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**(2:1-13) VISION #3 – GOD’S SURVEYOR – GOD IS THE DEFENSE AND GLORY OF HIS ELECT PEOPLE -- EXPANDED JUDAH RESTORED AND PROTECTED BY**

*THE LORD*

**BIG IDEA:**

**A DAY IS COMING WHEN THE LORD WILL RETURN TO PROSPER AND PROTECT JUDAH BY DWELLING IN HER EXPANDED MIDST (ESTABLISHING HIS GLORIOUS THRONE AT THE CENTER OF HER UNIVERSE)**

The measuring line to lay out the future dimensions of the millennial city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls – because the Lord Himself will be her defense.

**(:5) Presence of the Lord**

1. To Sovereignly Protect

*“For I, declares the Lord, ‘will be a wall of fire around her’”*

2. To Sovereignly Rule

*“and I will be the glory in her midst.”*

Cf. the Shekinah Glory that had departed from the temple

**(:10-12) The Presence of the Lord Will Vindicate His Sovereign Election of the Nation of Judah**

A. (:10a) Exhortation to Exalt

*“Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion”*

B. (:10b) Promise of Abiding Presence

*“for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord.”*

C. (:11a) Expansion of Blessing to the Gentiles

*“Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people.”*

D. (:11b) Confirmation of the Identity of the Messiah

*“Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.”*

E. (:12) Vindication of the Lord’s Sovereign Election of Judah

*“The Lord will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”*

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**(3:1-10) VISION #4 – GOD’S SALVATION – JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST -- THE BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE AND CLEANSED BY THE MESSIAH -- THE BRANCH**

**BIG IDEA:**

**GOD’S ELECT ARE UNTOUCHABLE AND FIT FOR SPIRITUAL SERVICE BECAUSE OF THE CLEANSING FROM SIN PROVIDED BY CHRIST -- THE COMBINATION OF ROLES OF KING AND PRIEST IN ONE PERSON IS PREFIGURED IN JOSHUA (THE BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE) AND FULFILLED IN THE COMING MESSIAH (MY SERVANT THE BRANCH)**

A powerful picture of justification by grace – anticipated Israel’s future national spiritual cleansing as Satan is silenced.

Amazingly, the church saints have been blessed with the lofty calling of being both a priesthood (**1 Pet 2:5, 9**) and a people who will ultimately reign with the Messiah (**2 Tim 2:12**) when he returns to establish His kingdom. We have experienced the forgiveness of sins and have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ so that we are no longer under any condemnation – in fact we have the Lord Jesus as our **Advocate** before the throne of God to rebuke all of the attacks and accusations of Satan (the accuser of the brethren).

This passage gives tremendous insight into the **role of the Messiah**. He is seen here in his preincarnate existence as the **Angel of the Lord**. He is shown in various images as coming to save the nation in that future eschatological day when He will restore Judah to prosperity. This vision speaks to the restoration of the nation of Israel to her priestly role in ministering spiritual prosperity to the world. As cleansed vessels, no longer under any condemnation, and defended against the accusations of Satan, we are fit for spiritual service.

(:1-2) The Elect of God Have Been Rescued from Condemnation and Rendered Untouchable

*“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’”*

(:8-9) The Messiah the Servant of the Lord is Coming as the Divine Branch and the One Stone to Save Judah and Restore Prosperity to the Land

*“Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you - indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. <sup>9</sup> For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,’ declares the LORD of hosts, ‘and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.’”*

**Eugene Merrill:** Remarkable about the stone of the present oracle is that it has seven eyes (**Zech. 3:9**). Seven in biblical numerology signifies fullness or completeness, so the seven eyes suggest omniscience or undimmed vision. In vision five (**Zech. 4:1-14**) the seven eyes are identified as the eyes of YHWH that “*run to and fro over the whole earth*” (**4:10**). This universal attention by YHWH is an affirmation of His **sovereign control**, His unlimited dominion.

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**(4:1-14) VISION #5 – GOD’S SUPPLY -- THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND AND 2 OLIVE TREES**  
**BIG IDEA:**

**GOD’S WORK SUCCEEDS ONLY BY THE ABOUNDING ENABLING SUPPLIED BY GOD’S ANOINTING HOLY SPIRIT**

(:6-7) How Can Anyone be Adequate for Ministry? Two Key Principles:

1. (:6) Success Comes Only by God's Spirit

*"Then he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.'"*

We cannot overemphasize the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit – despite what we see as excesses in some other movements – we do not want to overreact by minimizing His role

God's work is accomplished by divine power, not human strength.

2. (:7) Grace Can Remove the Greatest Obstacles

*"What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"*

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(5:1-4) VISION #6 – GOD'S STANDARDS -- THE FLYING SCROLL – PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S CURSE AGAINST LAW BREAKERS

**BIG IDEA:**

**BECAUSE GOD TAKES SIN SERIOUSLY THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPING HIS CERTAIN JUDGMENT**

Some people can get so involved in the work of the Lord that they imagine the requirements of holiness don't apply to them. They think that their religious activities should somehow give them a pass when it comes to certain aspects of obedience. The people of Zechariah's day who were committed to rebuilding the temple may have had such thoughts. Here God makes plain His view of transgression of His holy law. He will not hold anyone guiltless who breaks His covenant. His judgment will be certain and his judgment will be severe.

(:3-4) The Proclamation of God's Curse against Law Breakers – The Certainty and Severity of God's Judgment

*Then he said to me, 'This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side. <sup>4</sup> "I will make it go forth," declares the LORD of hosts, "and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones."*

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(5:5-11) VISION #7 – GOD'S SEPARATION -- THE WOMAN IN THE MEASURING BASKET

**BIG IDEA:**

**WICKEDNESS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO EXIST IN THE HOLY ASSEMBLY --**

**WICKEDNESS WILL ULTIMATELY BE CONFINED (SEPARATED), REMOVED FROM THE MIDST OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND TEMPORARILY ENSHRINED IN BABYLON**

A Jack-in-the-Box scene – a genie-in-the-bottle scene – here we have a woman who personifies wickedness being confined in an ephah and carried off to be worshiped in her own temple in Babylon. In the end times in preparation for the millennial kingdom, after God restores His people to their land, He will purge the land of wickedness and idolatry.

(:10-11) Wickedness will temporarily be enshrined in Babylon

*And I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?"<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."*

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**(6:1-8) VISION #8 – GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY -- THE FOUR CHARIOTS – PATROLLING THE EARTH TO BRING JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES**

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE EXECUTION OF JUDGMENT (AGAINST ISRAEL'S WICKED ENEMIES) APPEASES THE WRATH OF GOD WHO WILL ULTIMATELY BE VICTORIOUS**

God governs the nations to accomplish His redemptive plan. The wrath of God is going to be satisfied one way or another. Christ's propitiation upon the mercy seat via His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross can satisfy God's wrath for those who repent and place their faith in the Savior. But for those wicked enemies who refuse to submit to God's rule, God's wrath will ultimately be appeased via the execution of judgment. Israel's enemies found this to be the case. After having been used by God in a disciplinary fashion, they demonstrated their heart of unrighteousness and cruelty in excessively tyrannizing God's people. This final night vision in the book of Zechariah shows God's judgment going forth against these nations.

[(:7-8) The Basic Execution of their Mission – God's Wrath Will Be Satisfied

A. (:7) Mission Defined = Patrolling the Earth for Judgment

*"When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth. And He said, 'Go, patrol the earth.' So they patrolled the earth."*

B. (:8) Mission Executed = Appeasing the Wrath of God

*"Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, 'See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north.'"]*

**Biblehub.com:** This patrolling signifies a divine presence and intervention in the world, ensuring that God's plans are carried out. It serves as a reassurance to the faithful that God is in control and actively working to bring about His purposes. The act of patrolling can also be seen as a precursor to the final judgment, where God's justice will be fully realized, as depicted in the eschatological visions of Revelation.

**Lambert Dolphin:** The mission of the horses and chariots supplies the **central theme** to all eight visions, for they acted as a pair of book-ends at the front and back of the visions. Together, the

eight visions say more than that the temple must be rebuilt and the leadership revived; they argue that God's kingdom in the whole world would be renewed and governments that had opposed His kingdom would be totally vanquished.

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**(6:9-15) CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS – THE ULTIMATE KING-PRIEST**

**BIG IDEA: CLOSING EPILOGUE**

**THE COMING MESSIAH WILL REIGN AND MINISTER PEACE AS BOTH KING AND PRIEST FROM THE TEMPLE WHICH HE WILL BUILD**

I. (:9-11) THE CROWNING -- THE SYMBOLIC CORONATION OF JOSHUA

II. (:12-13) THE COMING BRANCH -- THE MESSIANIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRANCH = THE ULTIMATE PRIEST-KING

*"Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD."<sup>13</sup>*

*"Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."*

III. (:14-15) THE CULMINATION OF PROPHECY -- THE MEMORIAL CROWN AND VALIDATION OF DIVINE PROPHECY

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**II. (7-8) 4 MESSAGES FROM THE LORD — KINGDOM CALLING -- EXHORTATION TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY IN ANTICIPATION OF PROMISED PROSPERITY THAT WILL SPILL OVER TO THE GENTILES**

**Introduced by: “*Then the word of the Lord . . .*” (7:4, 8; 8:1, 18)**

Takes place 2 years later

Illustration: Imagine a husband who never misses an anniversary—but only gives the same generic card every year. No special handwritten note. No display of affection. Technically faithful, but relationally distant.

That is the spiritual condition of Israel in **Zechariah 7**.

They are asking about religious observance, but God is concerned about relational obedience.

These chapters show us that external religion without internal repentance never satisfies God, yet future restoration is guaranteed because of His covenant faithfulness.

Responding to a question about the continuation of the fasts – God gives the prophet 4 messages:

**INTRODUCTION: “Ritual or Relationship” — Zechariah 7:1–3**

After decades in exile, a delegation from Bethel arrives with a sincere-sounding question: *Should we keep fasting as before?*

- The fast commemorated the destruction of the temple
- The temple is now being rebuilt
- The real question is: *Do we still need to mourn?*

The question wasn't about whether God delighted in their fast, but whether their ritual still needed to be observed. They ask about tradition, not transformation.

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## **I. A WORD OF REBUKE — “DEEDS WITHOUT DEVOTION” (Zechariah 7:4–7)**

*“Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me...” (7:4)*

God exposes Hypocritical Religion – ritual that is disconnected from devotion

### **Outline**

- **A. Their Ritual Was Self-Centered (v. 5):** *“Was it really for Me that you fasted?”*
- **B. Their Religion Was Superficial (v. 6):** They ate and drank for themselves, not for the LORD.
- **C. Their Reminder Was Scriptural (v. 7):** God had already spoken through earlier prophets.

### **Application:**

Spiritual ceremony becomes *idolatry* when separated from obedience.

(cf. Isaiah 1:11–17; Amos 5:21–24)

### **Dispensational Note:**

In context, this was a rebuke to post-exilic Israel, but prophetically, it warns that in any age—**ritual without heart devotion is worthless.**

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## **II. A WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS — “RITUAL WITHOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FUTILE” (Zechariah 7:8–14) – Reminder of Covenant Responsibilities**

*“And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah...” (7:8)*

### **Outline**

- **A. The Command of God (v. 9):** *“Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy.”*
  - Execute true justice
  - Show kindness and mercy
  - Do not oppress the vulnerable
  - Do not devise evil in your hearts
- **B. The Compassion of God (v. 10):** *“Do not oppress... and do not devise evil.”*
- **C. The Consequence of Disobedience (vv. 11–14):** Rejecting God's Word led to their scattering.

### **Cross References:**

- **Micah 6:8** — *“What does the LORD require of you...?”*
- **James 2:17** — *“Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

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## **III. A WORD OF RESTORATION — “FROM BROKENNESS TO BLESSING”**

**(Zechariah 8:1–17)**

*“Again the word of the LORD of hosts came...” (8:1)*

### **Outline**

- **A. Revived Relationship (v. 3):** *“I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem.”*
- **B. Renewed Reality (vv. 4–5):** Peaceful streets, safety for young and old.
- **C. Redeemed Remnant (vv. 7–8):** *“They shall be My people.”*
- **D. Righteous Responsibility (vv. 16–17):** *“Speak the truth... do not devise evil.”*

**Dispensational Note:**

This points to Israel's **future millennial restoration**, when Messiah reigns from Jerusalem (cf. **Zechariah 14:9–11; Isaiah 2:3–4**).

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**IV. A WORD OF REJOICING — “FASTING TURNED TO FEASTING” (Zechariah 8:18–23)**

*“And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying...” (8:18)*

**Outline**

- **A. Their Fasts Changed to Festivals (vv. 19):** Mourning becomes joy.
- **B. The Nations Come to Worship (vv. 20–22):** Gentiles seek the LORD in Jerusalem.
- **C. The Favor of Fellowship (v. 23):** *“We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”*

**Dispensational Note:**

This climaxes in the **millennial reign** of Christ when Israel becomes the *spiritual center* of the nations (**Isaiah 60:1–3; Zechariah 14:16**).

In this age, believers experience spiritual fulfillment of that joy, but the literal consummation awaits the Kingdom Age.

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**CONCLUSION — “From Ritual to Relationship, From Fasting to Feasting”****Closing Illustration: Candlelight Funeral Home / Candlelight Inn**

(kept the same clientele – they have just aged to the point of death)

A funeral and a feast may take place in the same building—but everything changes:

- Mourning to Feasting
- Tears to Laughter
- Sense of Loss to Sense of Fullness

That is what **Zechariah 7–8** promises.

God will take Israel's mourning and turn it into joy—not because they earned it, but because **He is faithful**.

**Final Challenge:**

God still asks us, as He asked them to examine their worship: *“Was it really for Me?”*

Let our worship move beyond ritual to righteousness, beyond fasting to feasting in His presence

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**III. (9-14) 2 BURDENS -- KINGDOM CONSUMMATION****ULTIMATE RESTORATION AND TRIUMPH**

**Introduced by: “The burden of the Word of the Lord . . .” (9:1; 12:1)**

**(9-11) First Advent -- Rejection of Israel's coming king****(9:9-10) The Prophecy of the Coming Righteous Messiah to Reign in Peace over the World from Jerusalem**

1. (:9a) Announcement of the Coming Messiah
  - a. Anticipatory Tone of Triumphant Rejoicing

*“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!”*

- b. Long-Awaited Physical Union of Covenant Ruler and Covenant People  
*“Behold, your king is coming to you”*

**John MacArthur:** The two advents of Christ are here compressed as though they were one as in **Is 61:1-3** (cf. **Lk 4:16, 21**). Actually, **v. 9** refers to His first coming and **v. 10** is His second. OT prophets didn't see the great time period between the two comings. The church age was a “mystery” hidden from them (cf. **Eph 3:1-9; Col 1:27**).

2. (:9b) Snapshot of the First Coming of the Messiah

- a. His Unblemished Character = Righteous

*“He is just”*

There are no character flaws that anyone could criticize;

Cf. the requirements for an elder – here you have one who is truly

Blameless

- b. His Noble Mission = Accomplishing Salvation

*“and endowed with salvation”*

- c. His Humble Demeanor (cf. Philippians 2)

*“Humble, and mounted on a donkey,*

*Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

3. (:10) Snapshot of the Second Coming of the Messiah

- a. Establishment of Peace

*“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem;  
And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the  
nations”*

- b. Exercise of Worldwide Dominion

*“And His dominion will be from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.”*

(10:6-12) Redemption, Regathering and Re-establishing Can Only Come from God –  
God Strengthens His People to be Firmly Established in the Promised Land

Repetition: *“I will strengthen them”*

A. (:6) Promise of Restored Remnant

- 1. Reunion -- Reunited as One Kingdom

- a. Southern kingdom

*“I will strengthen the house of Judah”*

- b. Northern kingdom

*“And I will save the house of Joseph”*

- 2. Restoration -- Restored to the Land

*“And I will bring them back”*

3. Reason = Compassion  
*“Because I have had compassion on them”*
4. Reversal of Rejection  
*“And they will be as though I had not rejected them.”*
5. Responsiveness of Personal God  
*“For I am the Lord their God and I will answer them.”*

B. (:7-8) Prosperity of Restored Remnant – Strength / Joy / Numbers

1. Strength  
*“Ephraim will be like a mighty man”*
2. Joy  
*“And their heart will be glad as if from wine;  
 Indeed, their children will see it and be glad,  
 Their heart will rejoice in the Lord.”*
3. Numbers  
*“I will whistle for them to gather them together,  
 For I have redeemed them,  
 And they will be as numerous as they were before.”*

C. (:9-10) Providence of the Restored Remnant

1. (:9) Renewed Allegiance  
*“When I scatter them among the peoples,  
 They will remember Me in far countries,  
 And they with their children will live and come back.”*
2. (:10) Sovereign Disposition  
*“I will bring them back from the land of Egypt  
 And gather them from Assyria;  
 And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon  
 Until no room can be found for them.”*

D. (:11) Pathway for the Restored Remnant – Defeating all Obstacles

*“And they will pass through the sea of distress,  
 And He will strike the waves in the sea,  
 So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up;  
 And the pride of Assyria will be brought down  
 And the scepter of Egypt will depart.”*

E. (:12) Plan for the Restored Remnant – Strengthened to walk in righteousness

*“And I will strengthen them in the Lord;  
 And in His name they will walk,’ declares the Lord.”]*

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**(12-14) Second Advent -- Acceptance of Israel’s king**

**(12:6-9) The Destruction of Israel’s Attacking Enemies**

A. (:6) Destruction of Enemies Leads to Security for God’s People in Jerusalem

1. Two Images of Destruction

a. A Firepot

*“In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood”*

b. Flaming Torch

*“and a flaming torch among sheaves”*

2. Contrast between the Devastation of Israel’s Enemies and the Security of God’s People

a. Devastation of Israel’s Enemies

*“so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples,”*

b. Security of God’s People

*“while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem.”*

B. (:7) Jerusalem Not Magnified Above Judah

*“The Lord also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah.”*

Lesson: Salvation is from the Lord – not from the fortified capital city of Jerusalem

C. (:8) Jerusalem – the City of David -- Magnified

*“In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord before them.”*

Lesson: The Lord can make both the weak and the strong to be victorious warriors (like King David) under the leadership of the Sovereign Messiah

D. (:9) Enemies of Jerusalem Destroyed

*“And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”*

Lesson: The Lord will fulfill His promise of destruction.

(12:10) National Conversion of Israel = Accomplished by the Spirit of God

1. Divinely Targeted towards Israel

*“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem,*

2. Divinely Initiated

*“the Spirit of grace and of supplication”*

3. Divinely Focused – Looking Upon their Rejected Messiah and Bitterly Mourning

*“so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”*

Firstborn or an only son = of highest value; most precious

**(14:4) A Day of Supernatural Upheaval Centered Around the Mount of Olives**

*“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”*

**(14:6-11) That Day of the Lord Will Be Unique in Many Respects**

**A. (:6-7) Unique Illumination -- Special Lighting and Darkening Effects**

*“In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.”*

**B. (:8) Unique Provision -- Continual Flow of Living Waters**

*“And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.”*

**C. (:9) Unique God -- Enthronement of the Lord Alone Over all the Earth = Key Verse**

*“And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”*

**D. (:10) Unique Topography -- Topographical Changes Further Elevating Jerusalem**

*“All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin’s Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s wine presses.”*

**E. (:11) Unique Security -- Security for those Living in Jerusalem**

*“People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.”*

**CONCLUSION:**

Don’t give up on God’s future plans for His elect nation Israel. Nothing will thwart God’s kingdom agenda.

Zechariah lifts our eyes from the rubble of present discouragement to the certainty of future glory.

- From ruins to reign.
- From rejection to redemption.
- From discipline to delight.

*“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”*

KINGDOM CONTROL		CALLING	CONSUMMATION
8 Night Visions		4 Messages	2 Burdens
1) God's Surveillance	Man among Myrtle Trees	REBUKE	First Advent -- Rejection of Messiah
2) God's Supremacy	Hammering of 4 Horns	RIGHTEOUSNESS	
3) God's Surveyor	Man with Measuring Line		RESTORATION
4) God's Salvation	Cleansing of High Priest		
5) God's Supply	Lampstand and Olive Trees		
6) God's Standards	Flying Scroll	REJOICING	
7) God's Separation	Woman in Basket		
8) God's Sovereignty	Four Chariots		
APOCALYPTIC		ETHICAL	PREDICTIVE
Chaps. 1-6		Chaps 7-8	Chaps 9-14

# OUTLINE OF ZECHARIAH

## **THE LORD REMEMBERS AND WILL AGAIN CHOOSE JERUSALEM**

**BY PROPHETIC VISIONS, MESSAGES AND BURDENS OF  
ULTIMATE RESTORATION AND TRIUMPH,  
ZECHARIAH ENCOURAGES THE NATION OF ISRAEL  
IN THEIR MISSION OF REBUILDING THE TEMPLE BY  
REMINING THEM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO  
FULFILL HIS MESSIANIC AND KINGDOM PROMISES**

*"the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem"*  
- Zechariah 1:17

### **I. (1:1 – 6:15) EIGHT PROPHETIC VISIONS – KINGDOM CONTROL -- REGARDING THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL AND JUDGMENT ON HER ENEMIES**

*TIMESTAMP: During the Building of the Temple (520 BC)*

**(1:1-6) INTRODUCTORY CALL TO REPENTANCE --  
HISTORY PROVES THAT THE LORD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENTANCE  
MUST BE RESPONDED TO RIGHT NOW**

**A. (1:7-17) VISION #1 – GOD'S SURVEILLANCE -- MAN ON RED HORSE  
AMONG MYRTLE TREES –  
HOW LONG? WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER?**

The day is coming when the Lord will have compassion and restore the fortunes of His people

**B. (1:18-21) VISION #2 – GOD'S SUPREMACY -- THE HAMMERING OF THE  
HORNS -- JUDGMENT AGAINST THE OPPRESSIVE GENTILE NATIONS**

The day is coming when the Lord will overthrow the Gentile nations which have scattered and oppressed the Jewish people

**C. (2:1-13) VISION #3 – GOD'S SURVEYOR – GOD IS THE DEFENSE AND  
GLORY OF HIS ELECT PEOPLE -- EXPANDED JUDAH RESTORED AND  
PROTECTED BY THE LORD**

A day is coming when the Lord will return to prosper and protect Judah by dwelling in her expanded midst (establishing His glorious throne at the center of her universe)

**D. (3:1-10) VISION #4 – GOD'S SALVATION – JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST --  
THE BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE AND CLEANSED BY THE  
MESSIAH -- THE BRANCH**

God's elect are untouchable and fit for spiritual service because of the cleansing from sin provided by Christ --

The combination of roles of King and Priest in one person is prefigured in Joshua (the brand plucked from the fire) and fulfilled in the coming Messiah (My Servant the Branch)

**E. (4:1-14) VISION #5 – GOD'S SUPPLY -- THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND AND 2 OLIVE TREES**

God's work succeeds only by the abounding enabling supplied by God's anointing Holy Spirit

**F. (5:1-4) VISION #6 – GOD'S STANDARDS -- THE FLYING SCROLL – PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S CURSE AGAINST LAW BREAKERS**

Because God takes sin seriously there will be no escaping His certain judgment

**G. (5:5-11) VISION #7 – GOD'S SEPARATION -- THE WOMAN IN THE MEASURING BASKET (EPHAH)**

Wickedness cannot be allowed to exist in the holy assembly – Wickedness will ultimately be confined (separated), removed from the midst of God's people and temporarily enshrined in Babylon

**H. (6:1-8) VISION #8 – GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY -- THE FOUR CHARIOTS – PATROLLING THE EARTH TO BRING JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES**

The execution of judgment (against Israel's wicked enemies) appeases the wrath of God who will ultimately be victorious

**(6:9-15) EPILOGUE: CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS – THE ULTIMATE KING-PRIEST**

The coming Messiah will reign and minister peace as both King and Priest from the temple which He will build

**II. (7:1 – 8:23) FOUR MESSAGES FROM THE LORD – KINGDOM CALLING -- EXHORTATION TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY IN ANTICIPATION OF PROMISED PROSPERITY THAT WILL SPILL OVER TO THE GENTILES**

*TIMESTAMP: During the Building of the Temple (518 BC)*

Introduced by: "Then the word of the Lord . . ." (7:4, 8; 8:1, 18)

**(7:1-3) INTRODUCTION: RITUAL OR RELATIONSHIP**

**A. (7:4-7) MESSAGE #1 – A WORD OF REBUKE – DEEDS WITHOUT DEVOTION**

**B. (7:8-14) MESSAGE #2 – A WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – RITUAL WITHOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FUTILE**

C. (8:1-17) **MESSAGE #3** – A WORD OF RESTORATION – FROM BROKENNESS TO BLESSING

D. (8:18-23) **MESSAGE #4** – A WORD OF REJOICING – FASTING TURNED TO FEASTING

### **III. (9:1 – 14:21) TWO BURDENS – KINGDOM CONSUMMATION -- ULTIMATE RESTORATION AND TRIUMPH**

**TIMESTAMP: After the Building of the Temple (480-470 BC)**

Introduced by: “*The burden of the Word of the Lord . . .*” (9:1; 12:1)

A. (9:1 – 11:17) **FIRST BURDEN** – THE MESSIAH COMES THE FIRST TIME AND IS REJECTED

1. (9:1-17) REJOICE IN THE COMING KING

God’s people should rejoice in anticipation of their coming king who will vanquish all enemies and establish peace and prosperity

2. (10:1-12) STRENGTHENED IN THE LORD FOR VICTORY

The compassionate God will ultimately strengthen His regathered remnant led by the Messiah to tread down their enemies and be firmly established in the promised land

3. (11:1-17) THE REJECTION OF THE WORTHY SHEPHERD

God’s judgment always accompanies the rejection of His worthy shepherd and allegiance towards ungodly false substitutes

B. (12:1 – 14:21) **SECOND BURDEN** – THE MESSIAH COMES THE SECOND TIME AS THE TRIUMPHANT WARRIOR-KING

1. (12:1-14) ISRAEL PROTECTED AND TRANSFORMED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

The Day of the Lord will bring supernatural destruction to Israel’s attackers and divinely initiated repentance to all the Jews who now recognize their Messiah

2. (13:1-9) NATIONAL CLEANSING FOR THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

The rejection of the Good Shepherd leads to a refining process where the remnant of Israel is eventually cleansed and restored to its loyal covenant relationship

3. (14:1-21) KING OF THE HILL – TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF THE WARRIOR-KING

The promised Messiah will return as the triumphant Warrior-King to defeat Israel’s enemies and usher in the millennial kingdom

TEXT: Zechariah 1:1-6

TITLE: REPENT NOW

**BIG IDEA:**

**HISTORY PROVES THAT THE LORD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENTANCE MUST BE RESPONDED TO RIGHT NOW**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and proclaimed a message of encouragement to God's people who had returned from Exile and faced the daunting challenge of rebuilding. But before proclaiming the word of hope contained in the apocalyptic visions (along the line of the Book of Revelation), Zechariah introduces his prophecy with a ringing call to repentance. *'Return to Me,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'that I may return to you,' says the Lord of hosts.'* God will remember His people at the proper time; but everything hinges on the spiritual condition of their heart – it must be properly oriented towards God in repentance and faith. They must not stubbornly persist in rebellion or allow their hearts to grow cold like their forefathers had done in precipitating God's judgment of them in the Exile to Babylon.

**(:1) CONTEXT – THE COMMUNICATION OF GOD'S REVELATION**

A. Identification of the Time of the Prophecy

*"In the eighth month of the second year of Darius"*

B. Identification of the Source of the Prophecy

*"the Word of the Lord"*

C. Identification of the Prophet Himself – significance of the 3 names mentioned here (Ray Stedman)

1. Zechariah = "Jehovah remembers" – takes care of; watches over  
*"came to Zechariah the prophet,"*

**John Whitcomb:** powerful verb in Hebrew; cf. used of God remembering Noah and his family; Jesus remembering the thief on the cross; I heard your cry; felt your need; and answered you

2. Berechiah = "God blesses"  
*"the son of Berechiah,"*

3. Iddo = "at the appointed time"  
*"the son of Iddo saying"*

**Biblehub.com:** This genealogical detail establishes Zechariah's priestly lineage, as Iddo is mentioned among the priests who returned with Zerubbabel (**Nehemiah 12:4, 16**).

## I. (:2-3) THE CALL TO IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE OFFERS THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM GOD'S IMPENDING WRATH

### A. (:2) Sin Incurs God's Wrath

*"The Lord was very angry with your fathers"*

How much trouble were they in if the God of the universe was *very angry* with them?

What is the connection between the sins of the fathers and are own well-being?

In what ways had they sinned against God? Described below as "leaving God"

**John MacArthur:** This actually means "to break out in long-controlled indignation," reminding the people of the severity of God's wrath and the necessity of His judgment on their past sins in pre-Exilic times.

**Biblehub.com:** The Hebrew word used here for "*very angry*" conveys intense displeasure and wrath. This anger is not arbitrary but is a response to the covenant unfaithfulness of the people. God's anger is a recurring theme in the Old Testament, often resulting from idolatry and disobedience. It is important to note that God's anger is always just and righteous, reflecting His holiness and justice.

**with your fathers** -- This phrase refers to the ancestors of the Israelites, particularly those who lived during the time leading up to the Babylonian exile. The "*fathers*" had repeatedly turned away from God, despite His warnings through the prophets. This historical context is crucial, as it highlights the pattern of rebellion and the consequences that followed, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile. The mention of "*your fathers*" serves as a reminder of the past mistakes and a call to repentance for the current generation.

### B. (:3) Only Repentance Can Restore the Fractured Relationship

*"Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Return to Me,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'that I may return to you,' says the Lord of hosts."*

Significance of the name "*the Lord of hosts*"

Nature and Necessity of Repentance

Implied Timing of Repentance = Right Now – while you have opportunity

Blessings associated with restored fellowship

**John Mackay:** Their physical return to the land of the Lord's inheritance had to be matched by a spiritual return in obedience to him. . . This is the essence of the prophetic word of warning and of the promise attached to

renewed obedience. The spiritual process involved had often been spelled out at key points in the nation's history, from their earliest days (Deut. 4:27-31; 30:2-10), at the inauguration of the Temple (1 Kgs. 8:47-48), and by the prophets (Jer. 3:11, 22; 4:1; Ezk. 33:11). It will be taken up later by the prophet Malachi (Mal. 3:7). It is a promise based on the mercy of the forgiving God who receives graciously and loves freely (Hos. 14:2, 4).

**Biblehub.com:** The repetition of "*says the LORD of Hosts*" reinforces the authority and certainty of the message. It serves as a divine seal, assuring the people that these are not merely the words of the prophet but the very words of God. This repetition also emphasizes the seriousness of the call to repentance and the promise of God's return, urging the people to respond with sincerity and urgency. The use of this title at the end of the message serves as a reminder of God's **ultimate power** and the assurance that He can fulfill His promises.

## **II. (:4) THE CONTRAST OF REJECTING THE COMMAND TO REPENT PROVES THE FUTILITY OF STUBBORN REBELLION**

### A. Negative Contrast Hits Close to Home

*"Do not be like your fathers,"*

Sad case when you are commanded to reject the behavior example of your Parents

Children could not argue that they were in some way excused from God's wrath because of the sin of their parent – God is the standard and we are held accountable – still it is sad when our parents fail us

### B. Same Call for Immediate Repentance

*"to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.'"*

Privilege of access to God's revelation through His messengers, the prophets

Faithful proclamation of the message of God

Same connection between sin and the fracturing of the relationship

Same necessity of immediate repentance – *"Return now"*

### C. Tragic Closing of the Ears to the Pleas of God

*"But they did not listen or give heed to Me, declares the Lord."*

## **III. (:5-6a) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN MORTALITY AND ETERNITY VINDICATES GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO CARRY OUT HIS WORD**

A. (:5) Limited Perspective of Mortal Men

*“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?”*

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase underscores the temporary nature of the prophets themselves, despite their divine calling and messages. While the prophets were God's mouthpieces, they were still mortal and subject to death. This serves to highlight the enduring nature of God's word over the human vessels who deliver it. The prophets' messages, though delivered by mortal men, carry eternal significance and authority. This idea is echoed in the New Testament, where Jesus speaks of the enduring nature of His words (**Matthew 24:35**). The question also serves as a reminder that while the prophets may pass away, the truth of their messages and the fulfillment of God's promises remain. This can be seen as a type of Christ, who, as the ultimate prophet, priest, and king, offers a message of eternal life and salvation that transcends His earthly ministry.

B. (:6a) Historical Vindication of the Eternal Word of God

*“But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers”*

God will faithfully bring about all that He has prophesied –  
Both the blessings and the curses

**John Mackay:** Both questions are addressed to the people, and point to the transitory nature of human life. Both the past generations – no matter what their sin – and the prophets – no matter how faithfully they had delivered the Lord's message – had passed away. None could deny that. The point is not the similar fate endured by bad and good alike. Rather the thrust of the questions is to bring home the fact that there is no immunity from the march of time. The people are being urged to recognize their need to respond now, while the opportunity is afforded to them.

**John Mackay:** ‘Overtake’ pictures a pursuer capturing someone who is fleeing, a hunter catching his game, or a wild animal grasping its prey (Gen. 31:25; Ex. 14:9; 15:9). So their forefathers were pursued and caught by the inescapable curse of God. This metaphor is also found in Deuteronomy 28:15, 45, which provides a probable background for this passage.

**IV. (:6b) THE CONFESSION OF REPENTANCE BRINGS FORTH THE FRUIT OF SUBMISSION TO GOD'S SOVEREIGN DISPOSITION – BUT WILL IT BE TOO LATE??**

*“Then they repented and said, ‘As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’”*

Their forefathers ended up changing their mind about their own sinfulness and the Lord's charges against them. But it was not in time to benefit them. The message to the contemporaries of Zechariah is to Repent NOW while there is still time to

participate in the blessings. Ultimately all of mankind will bow the knee before the Lord's sovereign authority and acknowledge the fairness of His justice and the holiness of His standards.

\* \* \* \* \*

### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where in the Scriptures do we see examples of the Lord being "*very angry*"? How should that impact our living in an awareness of "the fear of the Lord"? How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of all wisdom for us?
- 2) What do we learn about the Lord's grace and mercy and patience in His plea to His people to return and be forgiven and blessed?
- 3) How should our sense of our own mortality as contrasted with the eternity of God and His faithfulness to His Word impact our daily living?
- 4) Why is it so imperative to Repent NOW?

\* \* \* \* \*

### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Ray Stedman:** The book of Zechariah has been called the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. Like the book of Revelation, Zechariah is a book of prophecy. Its theme is to set forth the program of God, which is also the theme of the book of Revelation. The difference is that in Zechariah Israel is in the foreground and the Gentile nations in the background, while in the book of Revelation the Gentile nations are in the foreground and the continuous thread that ties them together is the nation of Israel.

The first verse of Zechariah reveals in a very interesting way this focus on the nation Israel:

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, the prophet, {Zech 1:1a RSV}

We usually read through these opening verses without thinking of them as having much significance, but remember that Hebrew names mean something. The most outstanding example perhaps of the significance of Hebrew names is Methuselah, the name of the oldest man who ever lived. His name means "when he dies it will come" -- and when he died, the flood came, just as that name prophesied.

Here, we have three names that are very significant. Zechariah means "God remembers" and Berechiah, his father's name, means "God blesses" and his grandfather's name Iddo, means "At the appointed time." That is the theme of the book of Zechariah. It is a book

of encouragement to the people of Israel.

Zechariah was a contemporary with Haggai, one of the prophets who ministered to the remnant who had returned from captivity in Babylon. Although they were back in Jerusalem rebuilding the temple and the city, they were still vassals of Babylon, still subject to the Gentile nations around them, without much hope for the future. It was a discouraging, depressing time, and a spirit of dark pessimism gripped these people. And Zechariah comes to them in the midst of their depression, with this announcement that is even wrapped up in his name and ancestry: Jehovah blesses, Jehovah remembers at the appointed time. What an encouragement those names must have been.

At the beginning of the first chapter there is a brief outline of the book. This is often true of the Bible, and if you look for these little outlines, you can often find a brief summary of the message of the book in the opening sections. Here it is broken up in a dramatic way by the name of God, the Jehovah of hosts. It is one of the unusual names of God. Jehovah of hosts, that is, the God of the masses -- the God of all the armies, whether they be angel armies, human armies, demonic armies, makes no difference. The stars are also called the hosts. This is the God who is sovereign over all the masses, whoever they may be. And this name is repeated three times (verses 2-3):

"The LORD [Jehovah] was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord [Jehovah] of hosts: Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts." {Zech 1:2-3 RSV}

Three times that name is repeated. What is said before each of those repetitions marks the divisions of this book. It falls into three brief sections. The first one is included in,

"The Lord was very angry with your fathers." {Zech 1:2 RSV}

That marks the first division, comprising just the first six verses which describe God's displeasure with his people. Then we have,

"Return to me." {Zech 1:3b RSV}

And that marks the second division, covering from chapter 1, verse 7, clear over to chapter 6, verse 15, speaking of God's deliverance of his people. Then, chapters 7 through 14 make up the third division which is an exposition of these words:

"and I will return to you, says the Lord." {Zech 1:3d RSV}

That is always God's way. If you find yourself straying away from his presence and as a result, your life grows cold, your faith grows dim, you grow discouraged, you are defeated, you find yourself exposed to all types of temptations and prey to every evil thought, what must you do? "Return to me," says the Lord, "and I will return to you." If you want God back in your life, with all the glory of his presence, then come back to him. That is always the formula.

**David Roper:** A brief word of introduction to the book of Zechariah, and then we will look at it in some detail. We do not know much about Zechariah the prophet. Twenty-five or thirty men in the Old Testament bore that name, so it is difficult at times to sort out the various individuals involved. But evidently he was a priest, and came from a long line of distinctive priests. His father Berechiah and grandfather Iddo were well known in Israel. Iddo served at the head of one of the priestly courses, So Zechariah was also revered in Israel, and he had an extensive teaching ministry as a priest, as well as his prophetic ministry as a prophet. There is some indication that his father died when he was quite young, because his father himself never became the head of a priestly course as he was destined to become. We do not know much about Zechariah's life, except that at this time God raised up this man and gave him a message.

**David Roper:** Zechariah begins by taking these exiles back into the pre-exilic period and reminding them of the fate of their fathers, the men who went off into exile in Babylon. He reminds them that, from the very beginning, prophets had called upon them to return. If you go back to the Eighth Century prophets, to Hosea and Amos and Micah and Isaiah, you see that their word to Israel was repeatedly:

"Return! Return! Return!" This figure suggests a nation going off in the wrong direction, each step taking them further and further away from the Lord, There is only one direction where they will find release, and that is in returning to the place from which they departed. They are to return. That term occurs over and over again in the prophets, right down to the time of the Exile. But they did not listen.

Zechariah asks rhetorically, "Where are the fathers today?" Well, the answer is: "They are dead in Babylon." The whole generation that was deported perished in Babylon. "Where are the prophets?" Even the prophets did not endure. They also died in Babylon, or in Egypt, or in the other places to which they were deported. But God's word overtook them. God's word did not fail. God did what he had purposed to do. They had to go through this period of discipline.

It was a terrible time, but it was a redemptive time. It was medicinal. It was designed to purify and cleanse and correct the nation. God is so faithful to do that. His word will always catch up to us. Now, Zechariah is not talking about the sort of sins which grow out of our weakness, which we repent of and desire to put away. He is talking about sins we commit, to use the Old Testament idiom, "with a high hand"--belligerent sins, determined sins. If we determine to go our own way and pursue our own path, the Lord will let us go, and he will cry out to us to return. But if we do not return, his word will overtake us, sooner or later. We simply do not get away. He pursues us because he loves us. That is what happened to the nation. God pursued them into exile, and his word overtook them there. That is why Zechariah said for them to recall what God did for his people, and not to be like their fathers, but to return.

**John MacArthur:** Though primarily a book of consolation, the prophet begins with a

call to repentance, to preclude any false security on the part of Israel, i.e. thinking that God would bless His chosen people regardless of their spiritual condition. This expresses the ongoing desire of God (cf. Ge 17:7; Lv 26: 12; Eze 37:27; 2Co 6:16; Jas 4:8; Rev 21:3), and the constant condition for blessing.

**John Mackay:** [Re vs. 6] The problem is that of determining who ‘they’ are: is it a reference to the forefathers, or to the current generation? It seems more likely to refer to previous generations, as the NIV punctuation indicates. . . . When the punishment of the Lord had come upon them, they were brought to recognize its justice, and the folly of the way they had been behaving. ‘The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command’ (Lam. 1:18).

But it is not a picture of impending doom that is presented. It is rather a challenge to faithfulness. Zechariah points to the fact that it had taken the trauma of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile to bring the previous generation to their spiritual senses (Lam. 2:17; Dan. 9:4-14). They have been forced to recognize that the Lord’s warnings were not idle, and that their own expectations and conduct had been blameworthy. But that recognition had come too late as far as they were concerned, because the calamity had already engulfed them. However, it was not too late for the generation that had been restored to Jerusalem, if only they were prepared to learn the lessons of the past. They must ensure that they were living close to God or all their enterprises would also be liable to be swept away. They are being challenged to live obediently, without God having to chasten them to bring them to their senses.

**Theo Laetsch:** The Lord recalls to the mind of the Jews the seventy years of His sore displeasure during the Babylonian Captivity, in which the fathers of the present generation had suffered the well-deserved punishment of their own and their fathers’ sins. The Lord finally had fulfilled His threat (Ex. 20:5; Lev. 26:14ff; Deut. 28:15-68). This manifestation of God’s displeasure was still very vivid in the memory of the Jews who had returned only fifteen years before. The lesson of the Exile and God’s avenging justice ought never to be forgotten. Yet the Searcher of hearts (Jer. 17:9) sees the beginning of the rebellious spirit of the fathers in the refusal of the present generation to build the Temple and to give it their wholehearted support.

**J. Sidlow Baxter:** After the short, forthright message of Haggai, this Book of Zechariah may seem discouragingly complicated; yet it is not so in reality, as we shall see. To an observant reader it quickly sorts itself out; and it is full of good things. . . . If we pick our way carefully through this Book of Zechariah two or three times, we soon find its arrangement becoming clear to us. We are sure to see, first of all, that there is a major break between chapters viii. and ix., which divides the book into two main parts. There can scarcely be any mistaking this, for the characteristics of the two parts are markedly different from each other. The first eight chapters are mainly *vision*-prophecies; the remaining six chapters are wholly *direct* prophecies. The first eight chapters were written during the rebuilding of the temple; the remaining six chapters were written considerably after the temple was rebuilt. The first eight chapters have a particular and immediate reference to the Jewish “Remnant” now back in the land; the remaining six chapters have a general and far-reaching reference to Israel as a whole, to the ultimate

future, and to the Gentile nations. The contents of the first eight chapters are carefully dated; the contents of the remaining six chapters are nowhere dated.

**Steven J. Cole: Returning to the Lord**

1. Returning to the Lord is necessary because of His wrath against all sinners (1:2).
2. Returning to the Lord is the human response that opens the supply of God's personal grace (1:3).
3. Returning to the Lord is what we should learn from the history of God's people (1:4-6).

**John Whitcomb:** God is just as capable today as then to bring repentance and obedience and response to His Word. There was tremendous apostasy just 40 years after the temple was rebuilt. Look at how rapidly the theocracy deteriorates in every generation. Look at the situation that Ezra and Nehemiah found. Haggai's and Zechariah's revival did not last very long.

At the opening of Zechariah, the people had been under deep depression. The ministry of Haggai is about to end. "*Lord of hosts*" = "I am not just a tiny little local provincial deity. I am the God of all the hosts of angels. I am a very great God." Zechariah is saying, "Be very careful; you are not here long; do not delay your repentance; don't count on repeated warnings forever; respond to the one thing you may have heard from a servant of God." This is serious business. These ancestors got what they deserved exactly as God had prophesied. Why didn't Israel ever believe the Word of God through His prophets?

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: Turn to Me!**

**Introduction:** Zechariah is writing to people that were a lot like you. They were people that knew the Lord. For the most part, they believed that they were loyal to God. They had an allegiance to God. Zechariah ministered during the same time as Haggai the prophet. And this was a time during when 50,000 Jews made the commitment to return back to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. And they were going back to reestablish the city of Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. And at 536, they began the reconstruction of that devastated temple. They laid the foundation and they were off to a good start. But then suddenly they just stopped. And for 16 years, the work had been set aside. And meanwhile, everyone got caught up in the busyness of life. That sounds like American Christians today. **They're so busy, they have no time for the things of God**, unless a crisis comes, and then the house is filled with people that want to pray. But right now, they're just too caught up in their own thing. . .

He's been called the **prophet of hope** because his message is filled with **encouragement**. It is filled with hope. and especially regarding what God's future is for his people and the coming Messiah. Zechariah has more messianic prophecies in it than all of the other minor prophets combined. It's only second to Isaiah with regard to the number of **references to Christ**. And the New Testament alludes to Zechariah at least 41 times. And the message is that God has not forgotten his people. God has a future for his people and God will accomplish his purposes. . . Christ is in the book of Zechariah.

He's all over it in many aspects. The king, the stone, the slave sold for 30 pieces of silver. He's the smitten shepherd, the branch, the glorious ruler, and so on. . .

You can remember the **theme of the book** if you'll jot down just the Hebrew meanings of the names mentioned in verse one. We see the name Zachariah, that means whom the Lord remembers. Then we see the name Berechiah, that means the Lord blesses. And then we see the name Edo, that means at the appointed time. So you put those together, you get really the theme of the book. **God remembers and blesses his people at his appointed time. . .**

**He's going to give us three reasons here why we need to turn to the Lord and live a life of continual repentance before the Lord.**

- I. Because of God's wrath against all sinners.
- II. Because of God's grace to all those who respond.
- III. Because of God's warning about past history.

Now, Zechariah, the prophet, looks back to the history of the people of Israel, and he brings three warnings based on what he sees in their past. And the whole idea that he gives here is, look, we need to learn from the mistakes of the past. What's the old saying? Those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. God, in essence, is saying, It doesn't have to be with you as it was with your fathers. If you look back, you'll remember how your fathers acted when I called them to turn to me. The prophets cried out and they refused to hear.

And so there's three warnings that he gives here.

- **The warning about disobedience**, look at verse four.
- **A warning about delay**. Look at verse five. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? And the point Zechariah makes here is that spiritual opportunities do not last forever.
- **There's a warning about this discipline**. Look at verse six.

**Conclusion:** You know who God blesses? People that have a continual contrite repentance towards God, that are truly turning to Him with all their heart.

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/broadcasters/jharmon/sermons?searchKeyword=Zechariah>

TEXT: Zechariah 1:7-17

TITLE: VISION #1 – MAN ON RED HORSE AMONG MYRTLE TREES –  
HOW LONG? WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER?

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE DAY IS COMING WHEN THE LORD WILL HAVE COMPASSION AND RESTORE THE FORTUNES OF HIS PEOPLE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

This is a message of comfort regarding the Lord's compassion towards His people. Although some of the Jews have returned from exile and begun the rebuilding program, things have not gone well. There has been much opposition and discouragement. Zechariah's contemporary Haggai had challenged the indifference of God's people and stirred up their hearts to repentance. They understood the priority of giving themselves wholeheartedly to the work of the Lord. The temple needed to be rebuilt; the Messiah would some day come to reign over the nations from Jerusalem. But the situation still looked bleak. The oppressing nations were the ones enjoying peace and prosperity. How long would it be before the Lord remembers His promises? Zechariah encourages the people to focus on the future reign of the Messiah which will surely come. In fact the prophet's name means "*the Lord remembers.*"

**Psalm 13**

*How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?  
How long will You hide Your face from me?  
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,  
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?  
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?*

*Consider and answer me, O Lord my God.  
Strengthen my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death.  
And my enemy will say, "I have overcome him."  
And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.*

*But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness;  
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.  
I will sing to the lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.*

**John Mackay:** The visions are not intended to be merely personal experiences for the prophet. They convey to him truth that he is to pass on to the people of Jerusalem. Their purpose is to encourage them to abandon the survive-for-the-moment mentality that persisted among them and to persevere in the work they are undertaking, by setting before them the glorious promises of God concerning their future as the people of God. This was a ministry of consolation to the struggling remnant in the land. They could locate themselves in terms of the Lord's future prospects which extended to include the Messiah and the advance of his cause in New Testament times.

## **(:7-8a) SETTING OF THE VISION**

### A. Date of the Vision

*“On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat”*

**F. Duane Lindsey:** This date was five months after the building of the temple was resumed (**Hag. 1:14-15; 2:15**), three months after Zechariah’s first prophecy (**Zech. 1:1**), and two months after Haggai’s last prophecy (**Hag. 2:20** – a prophecy regarding the destruction of world powers before the millennial rule of the Messiah; cf. **Hag. 2:21-23**).

### B. Political Context of the Vision

*“in the second year of Darius”*

**John MacArthur:** The Persian emperor Cyrus had died and was succeeded by Cambyses (ca. 530-521 B.C.) who conquered Egypt. He had no son, killed himself, and Darius rose to the throne by quelling a revolution.

### C. Source of the Vision

*“the Word of the Lord came to”*

Interesting combination of Word and Vision: cf. the Incarnate Christ as the Word – enabling us to see God for who He really is; God takes the initiative to reveal Himself to man

### D. Medium of the Vision

*“Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo”*

### E. Introduction to the Vision

*“as follows”*

### F. Testimony to the Vision – there are going to be a series of 8 night visions

*“I saw at night and behold”*

## **I. (:8b) THE SUBJECTS OF THE VISION – FOCUS ON THE ANGEL OF THE LORD**

A. The Central Figure – twofold description of the Angel of the Lord = the pre-incarnate Christ (speculation as to the significance of some of these details since no clear interpretation is offered in the text)

#### 1. War-like figure – Commander in Chief

*“a man was riding on a red horse”*

#### 2. Prince of Peace

*“and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine”*

**Zondervan Pictorial Encycl:** Found six times, sometimes as myrtle branches (**Neh 8:15**), often as myrtle trees (**Zech 1:8, 10, 11**). . . The tree is an evergreen, thirty ft. tall; the leaves are small, shiny, slightly-scented and leathery. The white or pinkish flowers are scented, and are followed by blue-black berries, which can produce a perfume. . . The queens of England carry sprigs of myrtle in their wedding bouquets as a symbol of peace.

**Biblehub.com:** Myrtle trees are evergreen and symbolize **peace** and **recovery**, often associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. The hollow, or low place, may represent humility or the valley of vision, where God reveals His plans. This setting suggests a message of hope and restoration for Israel, as myrtle trees were used in the rebuilding of Jerusalem (**Nehemiah 8:15**).

**F. Duane Lindsey:** standing astride his horse  
(not a contradiction to earlier statement that he was riding on the red horse)

**John Mackay:** If any definite location is sought, nothing more specific may be intended than a reference to the lower part of the valley of Kidron outside Jerusalem, where there was a deep gorge with many myrtle trees. We would then have a picture of the Angel of the Lord outside the city indicating that they did not yet fully enjoy the blessings of the Lord's presence with them, but at the same time he was not far from the city, and was watching over it protectively. Indeed, the Angel was receiving the reports of the horsemen because he was going to order the affairs of the world to suit his plans for his people. . .

(Re myrtle trees) – They are referred to as replacing the brier in the wilderness when the Lord restores the fortunes of his people (**Isa. 41: 19; 55:13**), and may be an apt symbol of the **restored community**.

B. The Supporting Cast = angels on a variety of colored horses

*“with red, sorrel and white horses behind him”*

1. Red – symbolizing war and judgment?
2. White – symbolizing peace and righteousness and prosperity?
3. Sorrel – symbolizing some mixture?

**John MacArthur:** red speaking of bloodshed and judgment (cf. **Is. 63:1, 2**), white speaking of victory (cf. **Rev 19:11**), and sorrel or a brownish color is possibly a combination of the others. A similar picture is found in **Rev 6:1-8**. These horses are about to gain a victorious judgment. Since they are messengers of vengeance, they likely represent angels, so frequently employed as God's instruments of judgment.

## **II. (:9-11) THE INITIAL DIALOGUE – QUESTION AND ANSWER FORMAT – THE QUIET BEFORE THE STORM**

A. (:9) Answer Given by the Interpreting Angel – Voice of Explanation

*“Then I said, ‘My lord, what are these?’ And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, ‘I will show you what these are.’”*

This angel must always be distinguished from the Angel of the Lord

B. (:10) Answer Given by the Angel of the Lord – Voice of Authority

*“And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, ‘These are those whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.’”*

**Biblehub.com:** The patrol signifies God's omniscience and His watchful care over the nations. This imagery of patrolling suggests a military or **protective role**, ensuring peace and order. It connects to other biblical passages where God is depicted as a watchful guardian, such as in **Job 1:7** and **2 Chronicles 16:9**. The concept of divine surveillance assures the faithful of God's control over global events, especially relevant during the post-exilic period when Israel was under foreign rule.

C. (:11) Answer Given by the Surrounding Angels – Voice of Reporters

*“So they answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet.’”*

Speaks to the sense of false security among the nations who seem prosperous but have no idea that the wrath of God is about to be executed upon them.

**Biblehub.com:** This peace foreshadows the ultimate peace brought by the Messiah, as prophesied in **Isaiah 9:6-7**, where Christ is the Prince of Peace who establishes true and lasting tranquility.

### **III. (:12) THE BIG QUESTION – HOW LONG??**

*“Then the angel of the Lord said, ‘O Lord of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?’”*

A. The Assumption: Expectation of Prosperity on the Part of God’s Chosen People

B. The Agony of Pain and Suffering – experiencing the Discipline of God

C. The Argument Based on the Lord’s Character

- His Compassion
- His Faithfulness to His Promises
- His Sovereign Power over the nations
- His Patience and Longsuffering – He gets angry and disciplines His people, but ultimately shows mercy and forgiveness

#### **IV. (:13-17) THE ANSWER: THE TABLES WILL SOON BE TURNED**

##### **A. (:13) Word of Comfort to God's People**

*“The Lord answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words.”*

**Biblehub.com:** The nature of God's message is one of kindness and comfort, reflecting His compassion and mercy. This is significant given the historical context of the Israelites returning from exile and rebuilding Jerusalem. The words are meant to reassure the people of God's continued presence and support. This echoes other instances in Scripture where God provides comfort, such as **Isaiah 40:1-2**, where God speaks tenderly to Jerusalem, promising restoration and forgiveness.

##### **B. (:14-15) Word of Warning to the Nations**

###### **1. (:14) Favored Status of Jerusalem Still in Effect**

*“So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, ‘Proclaim, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.’”*

Everyone wants to deny this today and say that God is finished dealing with Israel and fulfilling His promises to the nation.

**John MacArthur:** God first described Himself as jealous when making His covenant with Israel (**Ex 20:5; 34:14**).

**Biblehub.com:** God's jealousy is not like human jealousy; it is a zealous protection and deep commitment to His people and His chosen city. Jerusalem and Zion are central to God's covenantal promises. Jerusalem is the physical city, while Zion often represents the spiritual and eschatological hope of God's people. This phrase reflects God's enduring love and commitment to restore and protect His people and their land. The jealousy of God is also seen in other scriptures, such as **Exodus 34:14**, where God desires exclusive devotion from His people.

###### **2. (:15) Fear the Impending Wrath of God**

*“But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.”*

God used these nations to discipline his people; but in their wickedness they went too far and angered God greatly; their fate will be far worse

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase reflects God's intense displeasure with the nations surrounding Israel. Historically, these nations, such as Babylon and Assyria, had been instruments of God's judgment against Israel due to their disobedience. However, they went beyond what God intended, acting with excessive cruelty and pride. The term "at ease" suggests complacency and self-satisfaction, indicating that these nations were unconcerned with their own moral state or the suffering they inflicted. This echoes the sentiment found in **Isaiah 47:6**, where God expresses anger at Babylon for showing no

mercy. Theologically, this highlights God's justice and His concern for righteousness, as He holds all nations accountable for their actions. . .

The nations, particularly Babylon, exacerbated Israel's suffering beyond what God had intended. This phrase indicates that these nations acted with excessive harshness and brutality, adding to the calamity that God had decreed. This is reminiscent of the prophecy in **Jeremiah 50:11**, where Babylon is condemned for its arrogance and excessive cruelty. Theologically, this underscores the principle that while God may use nations as instruments of His will, they are still responsible for their actions and will be judged accordingly.

C. (:16-17) Word of Promised Restoration and Prosperity to Israel

1. (:16) Faithful Compassion Leads to Restoration and Growth

*“Therefore thus says the Lord, ‘I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem.’”*

**Biblehub.com:** The imagery of a **measuring line** suggests planning and restoration, indicating that Jerusalem will be rebuilt and reestablished according to God's design. This concept is echoed in other prophetic visions, such as Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple (**Ezekiel 40**) and Revelation's depiction of the New Jerusalem (**Revelation 21:15-17**). It signifies order, purpose, and the fulfillment of God's promises.

2. (:17) Sovereign Choice Leads to Prosperity and Blessing

*“Again, proclaim saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’”*

**Biblehub.com:** **the LORD will again comfort Zion** -- Zion, often synonymous with Jerusalem, represents the spiritual and national heart of Israel. The promise of comfort suggests a return to favor and divine presence. This is reminiscent of **Isaiah 40:1**, where God speaks comfort to His people, indicating forgiveness and restoration. The comfort is not just physical but also spiritual, pointing to a renewed relationship with God.

**and choose Jerusalem.** -- The act of choosing Jerusalem reaffirms God's covenantal love and purpose for the city. Despite past judgments, God's election of Jerusalem remains steadfast. This choice is foundational to the identity of Israel as God's people and is a theme throughout the Old Testament, as seen in passages like **1 Kings 11:13**. It also foreshadows the eschatological significance of Jerusalem in the New Testament, particularly in **Revelation 21**, where the New Jerusalem is depicted as the eternal dwelling place of God with His people.

**CONCLUSION:**

*“The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,*

*For His compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
Great is Your faithfulness.”*

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

\* \* \* \* \*

**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Why should the Jews have had any expectation of God's compassion and mercy after their repeated failures to remain faithful to His covenant?
- 2) How are we quick to wrongly evaluate the perceived prosperity of the wicked?
- 3) How should the Lord's jealousy for the fidelity and prosperity of His people motivate us to live? How do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?
- 4) What do we learn from this passage about the Lord's sovereign election?

\* \* \* \* \*

**QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**Dr. John C. Whitcomb:** God will comfort Jerusalem (1:17), be jealous for His people (1:14), and will return to His people (1:16).

**Matthew Henry:** The earth sat still, and was at rest. It is not uncommon for the enemies of God to be at rest in sin, while his people are enduring correction, harassed by temptation, disquieted by fears of wrath, or groaning under oppression and persecution. Here are predictions which had reference to the revival of the Jews after the captivity, but those events were shadows of what shall take place in the church, after the oppression of the New Testament Babylon is ended.

**Lambert Dolphin:** Christ is said to be "among the myrtle trees" (v. 8). The "myrtle," or hadassah shrub (the Jewish form of the name Esther), was an indigenous shrub that grew all over Israel and was a popular name for Israel. Thus, in this vision the myrtle tree symbolizes Israel.

The rider on the red horse is also located "in the hallow" (v. 8), a glen, ravine, or valley. This may well indicate that the nation of Israel was at the time in a period of deep humiliation. This low time in the nation's history is directly related to the fact that we have now passed into the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). That period would last from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's first captivity in 605 B.C. until just before the second coming of Christ.

The variegated coloring of the horses may well indicate that the mission of God would be mixed. "Red" usually points to the judgment of war, and "white" usually points to

mercy and peace. "Sorrel" (also translated "speckled," "dappled," "tawny," or a reddish-brown color) suggests a combination and mixture of God's works. . .

This text sets forth three declarations and four comforting words. The first of the three declarations is: "[God is] zealous for Jerusalem" (v. 14). The covenant God made with the people of Israel will never be revoked; it will be fulfilled, for the Lord made it unconditionally. One day Israel will be brought back to her land, not because she deserves it, but because God will be faithful to His Word.

The second declaration is: "[God is] exceedingly angry with the nations" (v. 15). These Gentile nations are altogether too complacent and self-reliant. Whereas God was but "a little angry" with His people, when God used nations such as Assyria or Babylon to discipline Israel (Isa. 10; Hab. 1-2) these nations "helped--but with evil intent" (v. 15); they used the occasions to try to destroy Israel and remove her from the family of nations. They disciplined Israel beyond what God had intended.

The third declaration, necessarily implicit in a text about God's zeal or jealousy, is that God will judge these nations. God will judge them before His earthly kingdom comes (Joel 3:1ff; Zech. 6:1-8).

These declarations are followed by four "good and comforting words" (v. 13). The first is that Messiah will come again to Jerusalem (v. 16a). The book of Ezekiel describes how the "glory of the LORD" departed from Jerusalem, left the Holy of Holies to go to the porch of the temple, moved out to the eastern gate of the city, and finally, went up the Mount of Olives, where the glory of the Lord went up to heaven and where it will return when our Lord returns the second time (Ezk. 10:18--19; 11:23). By the term "glory," of course, the writer means the presence of God. In the meantime, Zechariah declared that His return would signal His restoration of the people to "mercy" (v. 16a).

The second wonderful word of hope and comfort for God's people is "My house shall be built in [Jerusalem]" (v. 16b). The project of rebuilding the so-called "second temple" in the days of Haggai and Zechariah was only a partial fulfillment of the command to build a temple when our Lord returns to rule and reign in the Millennium. God's glorious promise of a temple--the details and dimensions of which had never before been seen (Ezk. 40-48)--was to be realized far in the future. Zechariah will have more to say about this structure in Zechariah 2 (see also Isa. 2:2-3).

The third comforting word promises that Jerusalem's boundaries would expand (v. 16c). This city, ravaged as it was by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., the Romans in A.D. 70, and many other conflicts since--and still ravaged in our present day--would experience unusual urban renewal and expansion. The surveyor's line would "be stretched out" to measure an enlarged Jerusalem. [Rev. 11:1]

The fourth comforting word is that Jerusalem would once again be the city God had chosen (v. 17). Somewhat like our "Governor's Award" for a model city in a state, the Lord will select Jerusalem once again as His chosen place. The reason God will do this is because "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). Having set His affection once on this city, our Lord will not forget what He has promised, even

though He must judge the people of Jerusalem in the interim. The cities of the Promised Land will "spread out," or "overflow" just as the springs of water overflowed into the streets in Proverbs 5:16.

<http://www.ldolphin.org/daniel/zech02.html>

**Steve Zeisler:** The first thing God says is that he recognizes that evil is going unpunished at that moment, but his anger is great and it remains undiminished on those who are cruel, violent and wicked, those who have "furthered disaster." So God is fully aware that justice is being perverted. Secondly, God says, "I will deal compassionately with my people. I have not forgotten my covenant. My servants with whom I have a love relationship will not be abandoned. I have plans to restore and honor my people."

**F. Duane Lindsey:** Because of God's love for Israel and His anger toward the Gentiles, He now promised six blessings for Israel:

- (a) the presence of God in Jerusalem (*I will return . . . with mercy*; cf. Ezek. 43:5; 48:35) in contrast with the departure of the divine glory from the pre-exilic temple (Ezek. 10:18-19; 11:22-23)
- (b) the rebuilding of the temple (*My house will be rebuilt*; cf. Ezek. 40-48)
- (c) the rebuilding of the city (*the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem*; cf. Jer. 31:38-40)
- (d) Israel will be enriched (*towns will again overflow with the wealth of divine blessings which the city walls will be unable to contain*; cf. Isa. 60:4-9)
- (e) the inhabitants of Jerusalem (*Zion*) will be comforted by the fulfillment of God's gracious promises (cf. Deut. 13:17; 30:3; Isa. 14:1; 49:15)
- (f) they will be chosen (cf. Zech. 2:12; 3:2), referring to God's focusing His sovereign love on them and perhaps also referring to God's inaugurating the new Covenant with Israel (Jer. 31: 31-40; cf. Rom. 11:26-27).

The complete fulfillment of these blessings from a New Testament perspective relates to the Second Advent of Christ, the millennial temple, and the blessings of the millennial kingdom, as suggested in the parallel Scripture passages mentioned above.

### **Steven J. Cole: When God Seems to Have Forgotten You**

**Big Idea:** When it seems as if the wicked are at ease and the godly are forgotten, Christ encourages us with His powerful presence, His prayer for us, and His promises for our welfare.

The vision is described (1:7-8), explained (1:9-11), and applied (1:12-17).

1. There are often times when it seems that the wicked are at ease and the godly are forgotten (1:8, 11).
2. Christ encourages us with His powerful presence, His prayer for us, and His promises for our welfare.
  - A. Christ encourages us with His powerful presence (1:7-10).
  - B. Christ encourages us with His prayer for us (1:12).
  - C. Christ encourages us with His promises for our welfare (1:13-17).
    - (1) The Lord of hosts emphatically affirms His jealous love for His

- people (1:14).
- (2) The Lord asserts His fierce anger towards the nations that oppressed His people (1:15).
  - (3) The Lord reaffirms His compassion for His people and His promises for their future blessing (1:16-17).

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: God Has Not Forgotten You! -- Vision #1 The Man Riding The Red Horse**

**Introduction:** On the 24th day of the 11th month, just like we read in verse number seven, On this very day, when the people had begun to rebuild, the Lord revealed to Zechariah eight visions on this one day. And these visions were to encourage this discouraged people And this day on our calendar would be on February 15, 519 BC. All eight visions that we're gonna be looking at in the book of Zechariah all occurred at one time to the prophet Zechariah. And all eight visions basically develops the one major theme of the book. . .

The big idea I want you to see really today in this whole text is this.

**When it seems as if the wicked are at ease and the godly are forgotten, Just God doesn't forget you, and he encourages us with his presence, his prayers, and his promises.**

**I. (:8-11) First Assurance = His Constant Presence**

Much of God's work is done in secret. God is secretly working behind the scenes in your life. And I call this the **providence of God**, and you heard me talk about this before. Providence, what is it? It's really from two Latin words, pro, before, video, to see, to see beforehand. The idea of the providence of God is that God's work today in your life is based on what God sees way down the road, or what he sees beforehand. God's actions today are based on what God knows tomorrow. Or another way to look at the providence of God is to simply say this, providence is God executing his plan in your life and in the entire universe. He has a plan and he has the power to execute that plan. And he arranges all the details and then he makes sure that all these things come to pass. That means there's nothing in your life that has left a chance. There's nothing in your life that is unimportant to God. . .

The image here is Messiah on a red horse presenting himself as a warrior ready to fight in battle against all of the enemies of God's people Jesus is always ready to fight on your behalf. Red is the color of blood, it's the color of judgment, of vengeance. When God judged Edom, the Bible says his garments were red. And then also the angel of the Lord is standing among myrtle trees that are in the bottom. Again, look in verse eight, the second part. And he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom. What bottom is this referring to? Well, this is referring to a ravine. And this was most likely the lowest point of Kidron or the Kidron Valley that was just outside of Jerusalem. Myrtle trees grow in that area because the water would drain down into that ravine, and it was a very fertile place. In fact, you can go to Jerusalem today and look down into that Kidron Valley and see lush trees that are growing there in that spot. And commentators agree that the myrtle trees in the ravine symbolize God's lowly people,

the Jews. They're not stately cedars on mountaintops, but humble myrtles in a ravine under Gentile domination. That is what it really pictures there. The people of God are humble. They're lowly. The myrtle is an evergreen that can grow to about 30 feet. And one writer says, it exudes a fragrant aroma from its berries and leaves and from its flowers. Its branches were used in the Feast of Booths. And by the way, it only would exude that fragrance when it was crushed. So Zacharias sees in this vision this angel of the Lord riding a red horse and he's down in this ravine in the valley among the myrtle trees, which is a picture of Jesus being among his people that are in the valley, his oppressed people. But then also he sees the army of the Lord. . .

This vision is meant to give hope to all those who are waiting for God to work on their behalf. You may be like that myrtle tree down there in the valley, and the darkness of that valley, but God knows where you are. In fact, he's right there with you in your midst, right there in that ravine, he sees all, he knows what your experience, he is mounted and ready to charge forth in your defense. And his presence is there with you. And that should comfort us all. That no matter how dark the valley that we're in, Christ is right there with us. And his presence will strengthen us, his presence will help us in this time that we're in that valley. . .

## **II. (:12) Second Assurance = His Compassionate Prayers**

The New Testament teaches us about the prayer ministry of Jesus. We know, according to the New Testament, that Jesus is in heaven, and what is he doing for us right now in heaven? He's up there and he's making intercession for us. He's praying for you, he's praying for me. **Hebrews 7:25** -- Jesus is always in heaven praying for you, praying for me. He is our great intercessor. The Bible says in **Romans 8:34**, *it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*. But let me tell you something, the intercession of Jesus, his advocacy, his intercessory ministry began long before that. We see it all the way back here in ancient times, in the time of Zachariah, and he is praying for his people. He's pleading for the well-being of his people. Now, this had to be a great source of comfort for Zachariah, that this son of God, this second member of the Trinity himself cries for his people with compassion and concern. . .

## **III. (:13) Third Assurance – His Comforting Promises**

### **A. God will Judge Israel's Enemies**

God's zeal for Zion. Notice **verse number 14**, *so the angel that communed with me said unto me, cry thou saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy*. The word jealous here, *quinnah*, the Hebrew word, it's a word that's connected to the Arabic word, meaning to become very red, as in red in the face, a person who is burning with passion. It's been translated zeal or jealous love, And really the word jealous is put first in the sentence for emphasis. The Hebrew uses also the cognate accusative. We can read it like this. *Jealous I am with jealousy*. . .

### **B. (:16) God will have mercy on Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.**

God says, my house will be built. A measuring line would be stretched over Jerusalem, not for judgment, but a **measuring line for rebuilding**. And this project of rebuilding

the temple, or what some people call the second temple, in Haggai and Zechariah's day, this is fulfilled, but it's only partially fulfilled at this time. The ultimate fulfillment still awaits at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's going to return and fulfill the rest of this promise. . .

Zechariah says Jerusalem will once again become the city of God. Now, beloved, that has not yet happened, but it will one day. Now, those who say that Jerusalem has no special place in the future perhaps have not read Zechariah's vision. The Jews still have not experienced the fulfillment of all these promises some over 2,500 years later. Now I know there are some who want to spiritualize this and say, well, this isn't literal, but this is literal. This is a promise. How did the people back then understand this? They understood this as God literally fulfilling this promise to make Jerusalem his city again and to rebuild it and to expand it. These promises are true and God always keeps his promises. That's why, again, Israel is important. God hasn't canceled them. God hasn't canceled any of these promises that Zechariah made to Jerusalem and Israel. The Bible says *the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance*. Our Lord will not forget what he has promised, even though he must judge people in Jerusalem now in the interim. Right now, Israel is not experiencing the blessings and the promises of God. They're experiencing the curses and the judgments that God said will come to pass. But just as surely as God will bring about the curses and the judgments, he will also bring about his promises and his blessings. And this is what God says will take place. This is yet future. We may die without seeing the fulfillment of this promise, but it will still happen.

**Conclusion:** How does this apply to us? When our situation appears hopeless, we must remind ourselves that God identifies with our sufferings and he's in charge of the future. Our responsibility is simply to repent, confess our sins, and to believe His comforting words. His responsibility is to respond to our faith and to work out in our life what is perfect for us. But God has not forgotten you. That's the message. He hasn't forgotten you. He's working behind the scenes. He's right there in the valley with you. Don't judge things by your own feeble sense. Things are not as they seem.

TEXT: Zechariah 1:18-21

TITLE: VISION #2 – THE HAMMERING OF THE HORNS -- JUDGMENT AGAINST THE OPPRESSIVE GENTILE NATIONS

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE DAY IS COMING WHEN THE LORD WILL OVERTHROW THE GENTILE NATIONS WHICH HAVE SCATTERED AND OPPRESSED THE JEWISH PEOPLE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The “*time of the Gentiles*” will not last forever. In their pride and false sense of security, they judge themselves to be impenetrable. They have spread terror among God’s people in scattering and oppressing them and obliterating all hope of deliverance. But God will terrorize them and ultimately overthrow their sovereignty to establish His own righteous reign.

**I. (:18-19) THE FOUR HORNS**

A. The Vision

*“Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns”*

**John Mackay:** There seems to be no break from the first vision as Zechariah proceeds.

B. The Question

*“So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, ‘What are these?’”*

**F. Duane Lindsey:** A horn when used symbolically indicates invincible strength (cf. **Micah 4:13**) or often a Gentile king who represents his kingdom (**Dan. 7:24; Rev. 17:12**). Here the four horns symbolize proud Gentile powers. . .

**John Mackay:** How this arose can easily be seen, in that the horn is used by the animal to defend itself and also to attack. It is the horn that is displayed as a trophy when the hunter has captured a wild beast.

C. The Answer Given by the Interpreting Angel

*“And he answered me, ‘These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.’”*

**John Mackay:** The unusual order in which Judah, Israel and Jerusalem are mentioned has given rise to much speculation. One might have expected Israel to be mentioned before Judah in that the Northern Kingdom with its capital at Samaria was overthrown earlier in 722 B.C.

**Theo Laetsch:** Judah is the tribal name, Israel, the honorable name of the nation chosen by the Lord (**Gen. 32:24-30**); and Jerusalem, the seat of God’s dwelling; a climax

indicating the wickedness of the enemy who opposed and sought to destroy not merely a sister nation, but God's people, Jehovah's own city, a blasphemous crime.

## II. (:20-21) THE FOUR CRAFTSMEN

### A. The Vision

*"Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen"*

### B. The Question

*"I said 'What are these coming to do?'"*

### C. The Answer Given by the Interpreting Angel

#### 1. The Culpability of the Gentile Nations -- Review of the Vision of the Horns

*"These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head"*

**John Mackay:** The picture of being unable to raise the head is one of utter conquest and subjugation (**Judg. 8:28**).

#### 2. The Sovereign Conquest of the Gentile Nations

*"but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."*

**Biblehub.com:** The craftsmen, or artisans, symbolize agents of divine retribution and restoration. They are tasked with dismantling the power of the oppressive horns. This imagery suggests a reversal of fortunes, where those who were once oppressed will see their oppressors brought low. The term "craftsmen" may also imply skill and precision in God's plan to restore His people, akin to the rebuilding efforts seen in Nehemiah's time.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Note other passages in the Bible where the figure of a "horn" signifies political authority and power.
- 2) How can these Gentile nations be held accountable by God if they were used as His instrument to judge rebellious Israel?
- 3) Why do we believe that the present scattering of the Jewish people is not a permanent situation?
- 4) What does the figure of craftsmen signify in this passage?

\* \* \* \* \*

## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**John MacArthur:** *four horns* -- Horns were symbols of power and pride (cf. **Pss 75:10; 89:17; 92:10; Da 7:24; 8:20, 21; Mic 4:13**). In the context of judgment each symbolizes either a nation or the head of that nation (cf. **Da 7:21, 24; 8:3; Rev 17:12**). Here the horns represent nations that attacked God's people (**vv. 19, 21**), referring either to Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Medo-Persia or perhaps, more likely, to the 4 world empires of **Da 2:7**: Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, all of which oppressed Israel.

**John MacArthur:** *four craftsmen* – The word is literally the term for stoneworkers, metal workers, and wood workers – those who shape material with hammers and chisels. These “hammers” represent the nations which overthrow the 4 horns (**v 18**). As with the 4 beasts of **Da 7**, each empire is overthrown by the subsequent one, the last being replaced by Messiah's kingdom (cf. **Da 2:44; 7:9-14, 21, 22**). Babylon was hammered in a night attack by the Medo-Persians (539 B.C.). With the victory of Alexander over Darius in 333 B.C. at Issus, the Greeks hammered the Medo-Persian “horn.” In the second century B.C., the Roman hammer fell and one by one the nations fell (Israel in 63 B.C.) The Roman Empire, revived in the last days, according to Daniel, will be hammered by the returning Messiah (cf. **Da 2: 34, 35, 45**).

**F. Duane Lindsey:** It seems better either to regard the number four as a number of completeness, the totality of Israel's opposition, or to refer the four horns to four nations that had scattered Israel before Zechariah saw the vision (perhaps Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia, and Medo-Persia). [because of the past tense in **1:19**]

**Eugene Merrill:** The connections between this vision and the first are also striking. It is clear that the fact that there were four horses in vision one and four horns and four craftsmen in this one is significant. The implied hostility of the nations in vision one (**vv. 12, 15**) is explicit in vision two (**vv. 19, 21**). Finally, just as the horses of the first vision were YHWH's instruments of dominion over all the earth (**vv. 10, 11**), so the four craftsmen reduce the nations to defeat (**v. 21**).

**Hampton Keathley:** The first horn is Babylon. Babylon takes over Judah, but what does Nebuchadnezzar do? He is told that he is the head of gold on the statue, but he likes the idea of being the whole statue, so he builds a golden statue. Then what does God do with the head of gold? He makes it go eat grass. Belshazzar comes along and likes all the treasure from the temple in Jerusalem and decides to throw a party. God writes on the wall and says, “you have been measured, found wanting and deserving of destruction.” Along comes the first craftsman. The first craftsman is Persia. Then Greece and finally Rome. The whole point is that the horns are the Gentile nations that come along to discipline Israel, and the craftsmen come along to discipline the Gentile nations who became arrogant in their domination. You would almost think God was in control.

**Charles Spurgeon:** And then he finds the right men; not four gentlemen with pens to write; not four architects to draw plans, but four mechanics to do rough work. He who wants to open an oyster, must not use a razor: there needs less of daintiness, and more of force, for some works: providence does not find gentlemen to cut off the horns, but carpenters. The work needs a man who, when he has his work to do, puts his whole strength into it, and beats away with his hammer, or cuts through the wood that lays before him with might and main. Rest assured, you who tremble for the ark of God, that when the horns grow troublesome, the carpenters will be found.

**John Whitcomb:** Message to Israel: Don't despair. The workmen symbolize that every country which attacks Israel will be destroyed. For every enemy of Israel, God has an enemy to destroy that enemy.

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: Pride and Punishment: The Vision of Four Horns and Four Craftsmen**

**Introduction:** God hates pride. But what is pride? What is it? Let's first talk about what it's not. First of all, it's not self-esteem. There's nothing wrong with having a good self-esteem. And when I say good self-esteem, I mean to value yourself because you are in Christ. I call that Christ-esteem. I'm only somebody because Jesus loves me. And it's hard to not feel good about who you are because you're accepted in the Beloved. You have been forgiven for your sins and you are called the Beloved by God. So, I feel valuable because of my relationship to Christ. At the same time, I'm humbled that God would save a sinner like me. The grace of God exalts a person without inflating them and it also humbles a person without humiliating them. And pride is not rejoicing in the honor given. The Bible says we're to give honor to whom honor is due. It's okay to say to someone, I'm proud of you. We don't mean that in a vain way, but to encourage someone by saying I'm proud of you. You know, Barnabas was an encourager in the Bible, right? That's why they called him Barnabas. . .What is pride? Pride is an attitude of independence of God. Pride is the agnostic William Ernest Henley who wrote in that poem, famous poem, Invictus, I'm the master of my own fate. I'm the captain of my own soul. That's the attitude and spirit of pride. It's the attitude of humanism that relegates God to a place of unimportance in our life. Someone said pride is a telescope turned the wrong way. It magnifies self and it makes the heavens small.

Now, what does pride do? Well, pride, as we had said before, God hates it, it provokes deity. Again, it's at the top of God's hate list. The Bible says in Proverbs 16, five, that everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. And it also proves depravity, because notice it says, proud in heart, that's where it starts. Pride starts in the heart of man, in the heart of every person. It's something that we all deal with. Since the first sin in the garden, man became filled with selfishness and pride. And then pride promotes dissension, Proverbs 13, 10. Only by pride comes contention, but with the well-advised is wisdom. Pride is a reason for strife in relationships and in situations. It's the start of every argument, starts every war. And then pride produces dishonor, Proverbs 11, 2. When pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom. And then another thing about pride. is it precedes destruction. It precedes destruction.

Proverbs 16, 18, pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. And so we have to learn this, that in the Christian life, we have to stay humble, right? The way up is the way down. Pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone else around them sick, except the one who has it, said one person. . .

Now in this second vision, it's divided up into two parts. First, we're going to see **four horns** in verses 18 and verse 19, and then we're going to see **four craftsmen** in verse 20 and verse 21. Now, when Zechariah sees in the vision, it really, again, illustrates one message to Israel and to us that God is faithful to punish the pride of men.

### **I. (:18-19) The Four Horns – The Part of Pride**

People of the East were always pastoral people with flocks and herds, and they knew that the strongest and most dominant animal in the herd were furnished with horns. Horns were a natural symbol of power and pride. . .

The horns represented kings and their kingdoms, which have come against the people of God. people of Judah, Israel, and God's city, Jerusalem. Now, specifically, the identifications of these kings and nations are really debated by commentators as you study this. Some commentators say that the four horns are...since these represent nations that oppress God's people, this has to be Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, the Medo-Persians. all past and current oppressors of the people of Israel. So certainly the four horns represent those four nations. Others say that the same kings and nations that are given in the book of Daniel, certainly that's what Zechariah is referring to here. You remember that in Daniel's vision, he had the statue, there were four nations represented. and also later the visions of the animals, but that was the Babylonian Empire, Medo-Persian, Greece, and Rome. So there are a group of commentators that hold that view, that the four horns actually represent these four empires and the kings who brought their kingdoms against Israel. . .

Now, other commentators say that the four horns represent the four points on a compass, north, south, east, and west. And so the idea is that Israel is surrounded by hostile enemies. There's no specific nation or enemy that's in view here. These are just Israel's enemies in general, and they're all around them. They're all poised against Israel. That seems to be another common interpretation here as to who these four horns really represent. Now, either view is possible on this, because the general idea is really the same. These are the enemies of God's people who lift up their horn in pride and power against them to oppress them and to crush them. . .

Throughout history, there have been people that have risen up against the people of God, enemies against God's people, whether they be Israel or whether it be the church. Charles Spurgeon, in a sermon preached on this passage, applied it to both. He applied it to Israel and their future, but then he also applied it as well to the church. horns are enemies that rise up against the church, against the people of God. And again, we have certainly seen that as well throughout church history. . .

## **II. (:20-21) The Four Craftsmen – the Punishment**

There are four Workers with hammers or blacksmiths who can skillfully hammer down each of those horns. That's the idea here. It is hammering them down. . .

The purpose of these craftsmen with hammers is to terrify the horns, to crush them, or we could say to hammer them down. For every horn that comes into existence, God has his craftsman who is capable of hammering them down. That's the idea there. God is faithful to punish those who rise up in pride.

**Application:** We shouldn't be surprised that horns are rising up against the people of God, because we live in this evil world. But here's another way we apply this. God will be the strong defender of his people, and he will hammer the pride of the enemy in his time. God is able to humble the proud. He's able to hammer these powerful enemies.

TEXT: Zechariah 2:1-13

TITLE: VISION #3 – THE SURVEYOR – GOD IS THE DEFENSE AND GLORY OF HIS ELECT PEOPLE -- EXPANDED JUDAH RESTORED AND PROTECTED BY THE LORD

**BIG IDEA:**

**A DAY IS COMING WHEN THE LORD WILL RETURN TO PROSPER AND PROTECT JUDAH BY DWELLING IN HER EXPANDED MIDST (ESTABLISHING HIS GLORIOUS THRONE AT THE CENTER OF HER UNIVERSE)**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Do we have the throne of the Lord established at the center of our universe? Or are we still sitting on the throne and trying to govern our own lives? Here the Lord shows us the glory of that future day when the presence of the Lord on His throne in Jerusalem will provide protection and prosperity for His people. The Lord will reign in glory and be a fire of protection around those who submit to His gracious rule. If we choose instead to seek our own glory we will remain vulnerable and exposed to the enemies without.

**I. (:1-5) THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD WILL DOMINATE THE FUTURE RESTORATION OF EXPANDED JUDAH**

**A. (:1-2) Presentation of the Vision**

1. **(:1)** The Image -- Man with a Tape Measure  
*“Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand.”*
2. **(:2a)** The Question – A Man on a Mission  
*“So I said, ‘Where are you going?’”*
3. **(:2b)** The Answer – the large dimensions will be surprising  
*“And he said to me, ‘to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is.’”*

We limit God in many ways when we think that we can measure with physical tools what He is able to accomplish in a specific situation. Think of all of the times throughout the Bible where God surprised people by doing the impossible. Here God shows that it will take a different type of supernatural measuring to figure the dimensions of that Jerusalem of the future.

**Biblehub.com:** The act of measuring signifies preparation and intention. In ancient times, measuring a city was often associated with construction or restoration, indicating a divine plan for rebuilding. This echoes the vision in **Ezekiel 40-42**, where a man

measures the temple, symbolizing restoration and hope. Measuring also implies ownership and protection, suggesting God's commitment to Jerusalem's future. Theologically, it points to God's precise and intentional plans for His people.

B. (:3-4) Prosperity of the Restored Expanded City

*“And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, and said to him, ‘Run, speak to that young man, saying, Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it.’”*

A city without walls might seem vulnerable; but not in this case;

The multitude of men and cattle speaks to the surprising prosperity of the restored city – beyond one’s imagination as they look at present circumstances.

**Eugene Merrill:** The second messenger, with a sense of great urgency, commands the first to run to Zechariah with the meaning of the vision. This urgency is communicated by the double imperative in Hebrew (*rus dabber*, “run, speak”). This can only mean that what is about to happen is imminent. Neither the messenger nor Zechariah can be slow to hear it and act upon it.

B. (:5) Presence of the Lord

1. To Sovereignly Protect

*“For I, declares the Lord, ‘will be a wall of fire around her’”*

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase signifies divine protection and presence. In the context of Zechariah's vision, Jerusalem is depicted as a city without walls, vulnerable to attack. The "*wall of fire*" symbolizes God's supernatural defense, reminiscent of the pillar of fire that protected and guided the Israelites during the Exodus (**Exodus 13:21-22**). This imagery emphasizes God's role as a protector, ensuring the safety and security of His people. The concept of God as a protective barrier is also seen in **Psalms 125:2**, where the Lord surrounds His people. Historically, ancient cities relied on physical walls for defense, but here, God promises a spiritual safeguard, highlighting His omnipotence and the futility of relying solely on human means for security.

2. To Sovereignly Rule

*“and I will be the glory in her midst.”*

Cf. the Shekinah Glory that had departed from the temple

**David Roper:** That is a supernatural line of defense—a wall of fire. God would protect his people. And his presence would be felt among them; the glory would return. Ezekiel had seen the Shekinah glory depart from the temple. And though the Shekinah would never be there again in visible form until the Millennium, God would be there, his presence would rule. Every resource that he had in himself would be available to them. They would not need to fear, they would not need to defend themselves, they would not need to act on their own behalf; God would deliver them. This is a picture of

deliverance, which is the first stage of reconstruction. Zechariah wants us to know that God, who formerly was our enemy, once we have been reconciled to him, is our friend, and has constituted himself the enemy of every force arrayed against us.

**Biblehub.com:** Here, the focus shifts to God's presence within Jerusalem. The "*glory*" refers to the Shekinah, the visible manifestation of God's presence, which once dwelt in the Holy of Holies in the Temple (**1 Kings 8:10-11**). This promise of divine indwelling points to a future restoration and spiritual renewal of Jerusalem, where God's presence will be central. It also foreshadows the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ as the embodiment of God's glory (**John 1:14**) and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers (**1 Corinthians 3:16**). Theologically, this phrase highlights the theme of God's immanence and His desire to dwell among His people, a recurring motif in both the Old and New Testaments.

## **II. (:6-9) THE VENGEANCE OF THE LORD WILL BE EXECUTED AGAINST ALL THOSE NATIONS WHICH HAVE HARMED JUDAH**

### A. (:6-7) TwoFold Warning to Take Refuge in God's City

#### 1. Warning #1

*"Ho there! Flee from the land of the north," declares the Lord, 'for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens,' declares the Lord."*

**Biblehub.com:** The "*land of the north*" refers to Babylon, where many Israelites were exiled. Historically, Babylon was a dominant power, and its location to the north of Israel made it a significant threat. The call to flee signifies a divine directive for the exiles to return to their homeland, aligning with the prophetic theme of restoration found in **Jeremiah 50:8** and **Isaiah 48:20**. This also prefigures the ultimate deliverance and return to God's promises.

#### 2. Warning #2

*"Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon."*

Maybe some of you today are *living with the daughter of Babylon* rather than submitting to the yoke of the Lord's gracious commands.

**John MacArthur:** The prophet turned from the distant future (vv. 4, 5) to the present, summoning those Israelites still in Babylon (referred to as the land of the north, cf. v. 7, because of the direction from which it invaded Israel) to flee before God poured out His judgment on it. This also implied a future call to leave a future Babylon (cf. Rev 17:3-5; 18:1-8).

**John Mackay:** The next three words, rendered in the NIV *after he has honoured me and has sent me*, are highly problematic. Literally they are, 'after (or afterwards) glory (or honour or weight) he sent me.' And that seems to be as much as there is general agreement about. Some of the more plausible interpretations include the following. (1) 'Weight' or 'weightiness' may be an idiomatic expression for persistent urging or

insistence. Whoever was sent had no option but to go. It was required by God.

(2) The phrase ‘after glory’ may indicate the purpose for which the person was sent. He was to obtain glory by carrying out the task of 2:9. [my choice]

(3) The phrase ‘after glory’ may indicate time. The particular time indicated would then depend on identifying the speaker.

Although many take the reference to be to the prophet himself, this seems to be ruled out by the nature of the mission described in 2:9 as ‘I will surely raise my hand against them’ and so punish the oppressing nations. That is a divine task. So the best explanation of the first person references is that the speaker is the Angel of the Lord who can both speak as the Lord and yet be distinguished from him.

#### B. (:8-9) TwoFold Description of Mission of Vengeance

##### 1. (:8) Description #1 – Protecting a Precious Possession

*“For thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘After glory He has sent Me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.’”*

**Eugene Merrill:** The famous “*apple of his eye*” derives from a hapax legomenon (, baba), cognate to Aramaic (baba) or Akkadian babu, both meaning “gate.” It is thus the opening of the eye that is intended here or, perhaps with most modern scholars, the pupil. In either case it represents one of the most important and vulnerable parts of the body. To strike a blow at Zion is to strike one at YHWH, wounding him in a most sensitive area, to carry out the full import of this bold anthropomorphism.

**John Mackay:** Being very sensitive and easily injured it is looked after with particular care (Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8; Prov. 7:2).

##### 2. (:9) Description #2 – Plundering a Ruthless Oppressor

*“For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me.”*

**Dr. Barry Horner:** With “*a wave of His hand*,” as a gesture militant opposition, God will reverse the fortunes of the Gentile oppressors so that master becomes slave and slave becomes master. The enemies of Israel will become the spoil of Israel because of Messiah’s intervention (Isa. 19:16-17). This astonishing about-face will cause the children of God to acknowledge His sovereignty in their lives. He remembers His own children (Isa. 49:15-16). “Then . . . you [Israel] will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me” (cf. 12:2-10).

### III. (:10-12) THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD WILL VINDICATE HIS SOVEREIGN ELECTION OF THE NATION OF JUDAH

#### A. (:10a) Exhortation to Exalt

*“Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion”*

- B. (:10b) Promise of Abiding Presence  
*“for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,’ declares the Lord.”*
- C. (:11a) Expansion of Blessing to the Gentiles  
*“Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people.”*
- D. (:11b) Confirmation of the Identity of the Messiah  
*“Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.”*
- E. (:12) Vindication of the Lord’s Sovereign Election of Judah  
*“The Lord will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”*

**(:13) CONCLUSION – WHEN THE LORD SPRINGS INTO ACTION, WATCH OUT!**

*“Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for He is aroused from His holy habitation.”*

Talk about waking a sleeping giant!  
 The Lord dwells in the context of holiness.

**F. Duane Lindsey:** The entire human race is to bow in silence and awe before the Almighty God.

**Psalm 15**

*O Lord, who may abide in Your tent?  
 Who may dwell on Your holy hill?  
 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness,  
 And speaks truth in his heart.  
 He does not slander with his tongue,  
 Nor does evil to his neighbor,  
 Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;  
 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,  
 But who honors those who fear the Lord;  
 He swears to his own hurt and does not change;  
 He does not put out his money at interest,  
 Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.  
 He who does these things will never be shaken.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) In what ways has the Lord been a *wall of fire* around you to protect you in specific instances?
- 2) Do you have a sense of the Lord's presence within you, manifesting His glory to others?
- 3) How precious does it make you feel to know that the Lord considers you to be as the *apple of His eye*?
- 4) What lessons about divine election can you learn from this passage?

\* \* \* \* \*

## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Steve Zeisler:** A useful way to look at the message which Zechariah preached is to look at the three commands around which the message centers. The first command is twice given, in different words. **Zech.2:6-7:** "*Flee from the land of the north*"; **verse 7:** "*Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon.*" Disentangle yourselves from the commitments you have to the world system. If you are still living in Babylon, if you have not yet returned to the land, if you are tied to it, if you are embracing the daughter of Babylon, cut yourself off; get away as fast as you can. That is the first command. The second command is in **Zech.2:10:** "*Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst*"; while the third is: "*Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord*" (**Zech.2:13**). . .

The second is, "*Sing for joy.*" Christian joy is a most unaccountable, hard to argue with experience. People who derive their joy from something other than their circumstances are very difficult to explain; people who are filled with hope and delight, exuberance, verve and bounce, even when they are suffering, because of what God has said and what he has done inside them. "Sing for joy" is what Paul and Silas did in the jail at Philippi, even in the midst of an earthquake. The joy of faith, the joy of Christianity is what has arrested unbelievers in every age. . .

The third command is given in **Zech.2:13:** "*Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for he is aroused from his holy habitation.*" The commands, "Sing for joy," and "Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord," are not antithetical. We derive our joy from the presence of God in our midst. We are overcome by silence, by respect and awe for God when we clearly see him for who he is and when we ponder the actions he has taken and will take. Our God is aroused from his habitation. He is standing up, he is on the point of action. That ought to strike us with a sense of respect and awe that does not allow for words. Be silent. God will act. His may be an act as terrible and unthinkable as crucifying his own Son. Imagine our God, aroused to act, visiting his judgment on sin, breaking his own heart to do it? What can you say? Be silent. God is aroused to act. He may end it all.

This may be the point when human history will be done away with once and for all. We see God poised to act to end human history; what can we do but close our mouths and worship and respect him?

Zechariah was not a bad preacher once he was on his feet. Here were his main points: Flee from the entanglements of Babylon; sing for joy for the dwelling place of God is with men; be silent before the Lord for he is aroused for action. Zechariah ministered to his people because he had seen visions that communicated to him the answer to the anxious question, "Why doesn't God do more?" The answer enabled him to see the larger picture of the success of God in meting out justice, and to recognize that the future of God's people was one of prosperity and protection and glory. Having seen all those things Zechariah had something to say.

**Eugene Merrill:** What Zechariah sees is a re-measurement of Jerusalem in order to reestablish the ancient boundary lines preparatory to the city's full reoccupation. Jeremiah had anticipated such a day when he, prior to the fall of Jerusalem, had redeemed the property of his uncle against the day when the Babylonian exile would be over and land could be reclaimed (**Jer 32:6-15**). With full confidence in the promises of YHWH, Jeremiah had avowed that "*houses, fields, and vineyards will once more be bought in this land*" (**v. 15**). . .

Does the vision have only eschatological significance, or can it relate to Zechariah's own circumstances? In our judgment it does both. . .

In conclusion, it is impossible to know a great deal about the construction and configuration of walls about Jerusalem in the post-exilic period, including the time of Nehemiah. What is clear is that for the greater period of time there were no walls or none sufficient, at least, to provide protection. Whether this was due only to harassment from unfriendly neighbors or also because of a population that had outstripped the capacity of the earlier walls cannot be known. It very likely was a combination of the two.

The eschatological import of the vision is much less debatable. The time will come, Zechariah learns, when there will be no need of walls to protect the great population of the city, for YHWH Himself will be a wall of fire and a source of glory (**v. 5**). Such a vision of Jerusalem first appears in Ezekiel in an eschatological passage (**38:10-13**) that speaks of the nation's security despite the absence of material fortification. When the enemies of Israel advance upon them, YHWH will send fire against them (**39:6**) with the result that His holy name will be known in the midst of Israel (**39:7**). The juxtaposition of the themes of unwalled villages, fire, and YHWH's glorious presence is certainly striking and instructive.

Though the imagery is different, one can nevertheless hardly fail to connect the fire and glory of this vision with the language of the exodus and wandering narratives. YHWH had led His people out of Egypt by a guiding and protecting pillar of fire (**Ex. 13:21**; cf. **14:19-20, 24, 25**; **Pss. 78:14; 105:39**), one associated with His glory (**Ex. 33:9**). **Isa.**

4:5 is especially relevant, for it too looks forward to the day when YHWH will create over Zion and her people “*a flaming fire at night, for over all the glory will be a canopy.*” That glory will, of course, be His own presence (vv. 10, 11; cf. Hag. 2:9).

### Hampton Keathley: 2:10-13

- Yahweh will come to dwell in the midst of Israel. This is a comforting and encouraging message to the people.
- Notice also that other nations will become the people of God. We have seen that over and over again in the prophets.
- Judah and Jerusalem (12) will be God’s dwelling place. Again we have emphasis on land promises being fulfilled which points to a future for national Israel. We don’t know just from reading Zechariah that the literal fulfillment will be in the Millennium. We learn that in the NT and esp. Revelation.

John Mackay – **The Divine Promise (2:4-5)** – To challenge the incipient defeatism of the people and to counteract their restricted ideas of what the future held (as represented by the man with the measuring line), the Lord presents a threefold promise. This promise undoubtedly spoke to the immediate situation of Zechariah’s day, but it cannot be contained within that period. It opens out from the prospects of the Old Testament church to include the wider vista of the new Testament church, of whom it is said, “*You have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God*” (Heb. 12:22). Although in one sense the church has now arrived, and has come to Jerusalem, it is still waiting for “*the Holy City, the new Jerusalem*” (Rev. 21:2), where these promises will be finally and completely realized.

- (1) Expansion
- (2) Protection
- (3) Divine Indwelling

John Brine: (1732-1764) He will destroy those who seek the Ruin of his Church, none can afflict the Saints without the .greatest Injury to themselves; since God is as tender of them, as a Man is of the Apple of his Eye: The Church is a burdensome Stone, and all that burden themselves with her shall be cut in Pieces, though all the People in the Earth be gathered together against her (**Zechariah 12:3**). God may for wise Reasons permit the Enemies of his People to harass and distress them, yea, he may use them as his Rod for the Correction of his Children; yet this will not excuse them from his most severe Resentment and Anger, which, I apprehend, to be the Import of these Words, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the Affliction. To the Saints the Lord is a Wall for their Security, and round about them, so that they are not any way open to Invasion: As he is a Wall of Fire, it is most certain that he will consume and burn up those who attempt the Destruction of his Church, the City about which he is a Wall of Protection and Defense. However. formidable her Enemies may be, and though they may imagine that it is an easy Thing to devour her, because she is weak and defenseless in her self, as was before observed; yet they will ever find it absolutely impossible, and will eternally sink under the intolerable Weight of divine Vengeance.

[http://www.mountzionpbc.org/John\\_Brine/jb\\_defence.htm](http://www.mountzionpbc.org/John_Brine/jb_defence.htm)

**Charles Spurgeon (quoted by Dr. Barry Horner):** comments concerning **Zechariah 2:1-5**.

I am not given to prophesying, and I fear that the fixing of dates and periods has been exceedingly injurious to the whole system of premillennial teaching; but I think I clearly see in Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ will come—so far I go, and take my stand—that he will come personally to reign upon this earth. At his coming it appears clear to me that he will gather together the Jewish people, that Jerusalem shall become the metropolis of the new empire which shall then extend from pole to pole, from the river even to the ends of the earth. If this be a correct interpretation of prophecy, you may read the whole of this chapter through and understand it; you have the key to every sentence: without such a belief; I see not how to interpret the prophet's meaning.

[http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/zechariah\\_commentary.pdf](http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/zechariah_commentary.pdf)

**Steven J. Cole: God Our Strong Defender and Benefactor**

Big Idea: God will defend and bless His chosen people in His time.

1. God defends His chosen people in His time by punishing the wicked who oppress them (**1:18-21**).
2. God will bless His chosen people in His time as their defender and benefactor by sending His Messiah (**2:1-13**).

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: Is God Through With Jerusalem? -- Vision # 3 The Man With The Measuring Line**

**Introduction:** Down through history, Jerusalem has been conquered by enemies. It has been exchanged hands through so many different people. In the Bible the first time we hear the city of Jerusalem is in Genesis chapter 14. There is a king of Salem which is Jerusalem by the name of Melchizedek. We've heard that name. And Melchizedek was the king of Salem, also called the king of peace, because really, Jerusalem comes from the Hebrew word shalom, which means peace. And then the next time we see Jerusalem in the Bible, it is a Canaanite stronghold with an allegiance to Egypt and Joshua, and Joshua chapter 10 has its sights set on it, because he wants to conquer that area. And chapter 15, he does conquer that area, and that's a territory that he gives to the tribe of Judah. So 1500 years before Christ, the city was said to belong to Judah. And then you fast forward years later, David conquers the city of Jebus or Jebus or the fortress of the Jebusites. And that is Jerusalem at that time. This was in 1003 BC. David conquers it. And this becomes the city of David. This becomes the capital city of Israel. And then really it was a small city at that time and it really didn't expand much under David.

It wasn't until David's brilliant son Solomon became king that Jerusalem really began to reach its zenith. He built a huge temple there, it was a wonder of the world, palaces there, and he extended the borders of Israel and so on. And so it was really a bright time for Israel. But then you go to 586 B.C. after the nation's disobedience and Nebuchadnezzar destroys the city. And then later on, Nehemiah goes back to rebuild the city. We know that in the Old Testament.

But finally, the city of Jerusalem is destroyed again in 70 A.D. And so it kind of rises meekly out of the dust of that destruction of the Romans in 70 A.D. But again, it's crushed in 132 A.D. by the Roman emperor Hadrian. And then, you know, and since that time, it has gone through so much conflict and war, and different groups have taken over the city. In 1099, the first Crusaders captured Jerusalem. And then later on, Saladin, the great Muslim leader, captures Jerusalem in 1187 AD. And then the Crusaders kind of capture it again, and two times it goes back and forth, it keeps changing hands.

And so finally, you fast forward all the way to 19, and it's captured by the British during World War I. And then you come to 1948 when Israel becomes a nation. But even during that time, Jerusalem was kind of divided between the Jordanians and the Jewish people. But during the Six-Day War in 1967, what basically took place was there was fierce fighting. The Israel forces, paratroopers fought against the Jordanian soldiers. They were able to advance into the old city, capture the city of Jerusalem and the Wailing Wall and the Temple Mount. And for the first time in many, many thousands of years, Jerusalem was under the control of Israel and has been under the control. But have you noticed that there's still a battle for it? There's still a fight for control over Jerusalem. Now you might be wondering and asking, what does all this have to do with this vision of Zechariah. Well, this third vision of Zechariah tells us that it'll be the Lord that'll have the final say on what happens to Jerusalem.

And really this vision also answers two questions.

- Number one, **will God once again return to the city and dwell there?** That's one big question. Remember, the glory of God at one time was there in Jerusalem on the Temple of Solomon, but it left because of the people's sin. Will God ever dwell there again?
- **And does the city of Jerusalem have a future in God's plan for the last days?**

And now the reason that's an important question is because, again, there are many theologians out there today that say, that God's done with Israel. He's done with Jerusalem. That's all in the past. Everything God has with regard to blessing is all spiritual blessings. None of that applies to Israel. None of that applies to Jerusalem. Jerusalem has no special significance or purpose. But theologians who take that position have to deal with this third vision of Zechariah. And they have to decide how they're gonna interpret this. And I can't see how you can interpret it any other way than by literally by what it says. . .

**Three things that this third vision reveals about God's future plan for the city of Jerusalem.**

- I. (:1) The Preparation to Measure Jerusalem**
  - A. Who is this man?

Commentators are divided as to who it is. Some say, well, this is just an ordinary man. He's a surveyor. He's surveying Jerusalem. Other commentators say, no, this man is the same man that we saw in the first vision who was the man on the red horse. And if you remember our study, that was none other than who? The Lord Jesus, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. This was the angel of the Lord or the angel of Yahweh, the messenger of Yahweh. And so there's disagreement as to whether this is just an ordinary man or is this the Lord? Now, I think that this is the Lord Jesus. And let me tell you why. Because there's a vision in **Ezekiel 40**, it's very similar to the vision Zachariah has. Listen to what it says. *And the visions of God brought me he into the land of Israel, set me upon a very high mountain by which was the frame of the city on the south. And he brought me thither and behold there was a man, again he sees a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed and he stood in the gate.* Now in Ezekiel's vision, there's no question that this is the angel of the Lord or the messenger of the Lord or a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. And what is he doing in Ezekiel's vision? Well, he's measuring. And he's measuring specifically the temple there and the city there. And so I think that this is similar. And so therefore, I think the man here in Zachariah's vision is the Lord Jesus. . .

Measurement implies ownership

B. What was he measuring?

I think, in this vision. But this surveyor, we could call the angel of the Lord, is not measuring the now Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that was right there at that very moment. He was measuring, I think, the future new Jerusalem, the plans for the new Jerusalem of the kingdom. And I think just as in all the other visions that Zechariah had, there's a prophetic element here in this vision. It's very prophetic. And so, and by the way, this alone indicates to Zechariah that God was not finished with the city. If there's someone measuring it, and there's nothing there, and that means what? Something's gonna be built there. And God's not done with the city.

**II. (:3) The Plan to Multiply Jerusalem**

A. (:4) A city without walls

*Jerusalem shall be inhabited as town without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein.*

That's the reason for the enormous dimensions and the measuring that this man is doing.

God's going to expand it. Jerusalem is gonna enjoy such an expansion and a glory. The population will spill out. You know, this had to be a comfort because remember the people are there, they're exiles, they're there in a city that is just destroyed, there's rubble all around, they're starting to try to put it all back together, build a temple, and the question had to come to their mind, is this all worth it? I mean, are we wasting our time here? This is a lot of work, this is a lot of sacrifice. We left Babylon to come back here to build this thing, and is it really, does it really have a future? And this was the encouragement of God to them saying, look, don't stop building because I want you to know, this city does have a future. In fact, here's an angel measuring out, and this is

gonna be a city one day that's gonna be so expansive, it's gonna be so big, so broad, it doesn't have walls. It'll be, you know, a town, like a town without walls. By the way, that translates the Hebrew word *perizot*, which has the idea of an open country or plains.

#### B. (:5) A City with walls of fire

You put God first. You put worship first. You make sure that you have your priorities right, that you have the spiritual perspective right, because God says, I will be a wall of fire around the city. God will be the protection there. And so, what does that mean? Well, God will not only be the protection, but look again at verse number five, and will be the glory in the midst of her. And so that answers one question that the people back then were wondering, will God ever occupy this city ever again? And the answer is absolutely yes. God will occupy the city of Jerusalem again. Not only will He be there, He'll be the wall of fire around it. When you think about a wall of fire, what do you think about? I think about the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire. Remember that protected Israel in the wilderness? and also was in the midst of them when they would camp. The tabernacle was right in the middle of camp, and the kind of glory would come down on that tabernacle. And so it was the glory of God that was in the midst of them, but it was also protecting them. And this is the same idea here. This is the idea that the glory of God that left Jerusalem will come back. . .

God's presence will dwell in the midst of that city. And again, some people ask, when is this gonna happen? Well, this hasn't happened yet. And so if it hasn't happened yet, what does that mean? It's yet to happen in the future. God's gonna do this one day in the future. And so this will come to pass. This is the new Jerusalem in the millennium. This is the millennial Jerusalem where Jesus will set up his throne there in Jerusalem and he will be king. He will be the glory of God that's in the midst of that city. That's yet to come. And so Jerusalem will be expansive. It'll multiply.

### III. **The Promise to Magnify Jerusalem**

There are two different groups being addressed.

- In verses six to nine, he addresses the exiles who decided to remain in Babylon. And he calls them, what does he call them? Look at verse number seven, what he calls them. He says, thou that dwellest with the daughter of, who? Babylon. These are **those that dwell with the daughter of Babylon**. These are the ones that didn't want to come back to Jerusalem when the exile ended. Remember after there was exile, God allowed them to come back, repatriate the land. But there were a lot of them that said, we don't want to leave. We're not leaving Babylon. We're not going back to Jerusalem. Why? Well, because they had the good life in Babylon. They had already settled. And look at verse number six where God says, I have spread you abroad as the four wings of the heavens, saith the Lord. And so you have these exiles that are still living in Mesopotamia. They've been spread abroad throughout that land. Most did not want to come back to Jerusalem. They become rich and prosperous. In fact, in the time of Nehemiah, did you know this? they would cast lots in order for people to go back to the city of Jerusalem. And if you lost, you had to go back. The lot fell on you, it's like,

you gotta go back to Jerusalem. And why was that? Because they were having trouble getting people to go back and repopulate the city. Why? Again, because they had it so good where they were, and they're now going back to a city that had been destroyed and needed to be totally rebuilt. Where's the pioneer spirit? I mean, it was gone. They were wanting to settle where they were. And so, Nehemiah says they had to compel people to go back and live there. And so, Zechariah has a word to say to those exiles who are dwelling with the daughters of Babylon.

- But then in verses 10 to 13, Zechariah addresses the people that did go back to Jerusalem. These are the people that returned to the rubble. And he calls them, **O daughter of Zion**.

Now, Zechariah has a strong command that he's gonna give to each of these groups. He has a word for each of them.

- Here's the word for those living with the daughter of Babylon. What's the word? It's **flee, flee**.

- And by way of contrast, What does Zacharias say to those that are living, the exiles that return to Jerusalem, living among the heaps, living among the rubble, trying to rebuild? What does he say to them? Look at verse number 10. **Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion**, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. Rejoice, rejoice.

There's this **big contrast** that we see in scripture between Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon represents all that is opposed to God, rebellion against God, man's way, materialism, wealth, prosperity, looking at everything from a totally humanistic point of view without God. And Jerusalem represents all that is completely, totally opposite of that. And so Babylon, we could say, represents the world system as opposed to God. But you know what? It's easy for people to go live in Babylon because it's so alluring, it is so enticing, it has money, it has pleasure, it has status, the good life. You can experience it all right now there. But those that focus on Jerusalem have their mind not on the things of this world, but they have their mind on the kingdom of God and everything God stands for and what he will do with his people in the future.

The four beautiful promises that God gives to those inhabitants of Jerusalem.

1. The Lord will personally come to Jerusalem and dwell in her midst. **Vs. 10**
2. Many nations will worship the Lord there. **Vs. 11**
3. Jerusalem will be the Lord's chosen city again. **Vs. 12**
4. There will be worldwide judgment when the Lord comes. **Vs. 13**

**Application:** If you profess to know God, but you're living with the daughter of Babylon, God's word to you is get out of there. Get out. Make sure you're focusing on not the world, but the kingdom. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. You're living in Babylon. If your heart's in Babylon, friend, you need to check your salvation. You need to be focused on the kingdom of God. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Now, if you're living in Jerusalem, and you're

focusing on the kingdom of God, and you're experiencing trials and difficulties, and things look very hard, and as you look out into the future, God says to you, rejoice and sing for joy, because I am with you. And I will be in your midst. And if you're not one of God's people, His word is to you, submit your life to Jesus Christ. Submit your life to Jesus Christ.

TEXT: Zechariah 3:1-10

TITLE: VISION #4 – JOSHUA -- THE BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE AND  
CLEANSED BY THE MESSIAH -- THE BRANCH

**BIG IDEA:**

**GOD'S ELECT ARE UNTOUCHABLE AND FIT FOR SPIRITUAL SERVICE  
BECAUSE OF THE CLEANSING FROM SIN PROVIDED BY CHRIST**

**THE COMBINATION OF ROLES OF KING AND PRIEST IN ONE PERSON IS  
PREFIGURED IN JOSHUA (*THE BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE*) AND  
FULFILLED IN THE COMING MESSIAH (*MY SERVANT THE BRANCH*)**

**INTRODUCTION:**

You recall the OT anointed roles of Prophet, Priest and King. God had wisely established a division of power and responsibility so that God's dealings with the nation would not all be mediated through one central person – despite the presence of many strong individual leaders down through Israel's history. Right from the beginning of God's choice of Abraham, we saw the mysterious figure of Melchizedek as a precursor to the coming Messiah – one who was greater than Abraham (since he received tithes from him) and one who functioned as both Priest and King (cf. Hebrews 7). However, the coming Messiah will be the one to ultimately combine these leadership roles in His sinless reign.

**Psalm 110:**

Picture of Kingship:

*The Lord says to my Lord:*

*“Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for your feet.”*

Picture of Priestly Service

*The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind,*

*You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Amazingly, the church saints have been blessed with the lofty calling of being both a priesthood (**1 Pet 2:5, 9**) and a people who will ultimately reign with the Messiah (**2 Tim 2:12**) when he returns to establish His kingdom. We have experienced the forgiveness of sins and have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ so that we are no longer under any condemnation – in fact we have the Lord Jesus as our Advocate before the throne of God to rebuke all of the attacks and accusations of Satan (the accuser of the brethren).

This passage gives tremendous insight into the role of the Messiah. He is seen here in his preincarnate existence as the Angel of the Lord. He is shown in various images as coming to save the nation in that future eschatological day when He will restore Judah to prosperity. This vision speaks to the restoration of the nation of Israel to her priestly

role in ministering spiritual prosperity to the world. As cleansed vessels, no longer under any condemnation, and defended against the accusations of Satan, we are fit for spiritual service.

**I. (:1-5) THE VISION OF JOSHUA AS IT RELATES TO OUR PAST --  
A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE --  
AS GUILTY SINNERS WE STAND IN GOD'S PRESENCE ONLY BECAUSE  
OF THE ADVOCACY OF THE LORD AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST TO  
REBUKE THE ACCUSATIONS OF SATAN, CLEANSE US FROM SIN, AND  
CLOTHE US WITH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**

A. (:1) The Opening Scene – High Level Participants in the Presence of the Lord in Heaven – this is heavy stuff

*“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”*

**John Mackay:** This is a different style of introduction from those of the other visions. This and other changes in the way the vision is related are just elegant variations to avoid monotony. They certainly do not constitute valid grounds for questioning the authenticity of the vision.

1. Joshua the high priest

Normally a very impressive figure – but not when you see the rest of the Cast; Jesus = Greek form of Joshua

**Eugene Merrill:** Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah describes Joshua as “*high priest.*” This is left to Haggai and Zechariah, though clearly the prominence of Joshua among the priests in even the accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah leaves no question that they also knew him as such (cf. especially **Neh. 12:1, 7**). He was a direct descendant of Aaron through Zadok, founder of the line of priests established by David and Solomon (**1 Chron. 6:3, 8-15**). His father Jehozadak had gone into Babylonian exile in 586, so it is likely that Joshua was already advanced in years when he returned to Jerusalem in 538, nearly fifty years later. Certainly by the year of Zechariah’s night visions (519) Joshua was an old man.

2. Angel of the Lord

3. Satan = the accuser of the brethren

Satan is a powerful adversary – just ask Job – but he cannot do more than what the Lord allows him to do. He certainly is not bound now ... as some would preach. He walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom to devour.

Some of his typical accusations:

- your puny attempts at rebuilding the temple will never amount to anything; your service to the Lord is in vain; it’s not worth it

- you will always be a defeated, worthless sinner
- you are a nobody; God does not even see what you are doing or care about you
- all of the future promises of God that you are counting on are suspect – maybe you are interpreting them wrong; maybe God has changed His mind ...

B. (:2) The Stern Lines -- The Elect of God Have Been Rescued from Condemnation and Rendered Untouchable – even against the Accusations of Satan Himself – despite their Sin

*“The Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’”*

**Eugene Merrill:** The rationale for the rebuke is that Satan has overlooked the fact that YHWH, who has chosen Jerusalem, has declared Joshua to be a brand snatched from the fire (v. 2). The reference to YHWH as “*He who has chosen*” (*habboher*) Jerusalem establishes the connection between this vision and the preceding oracle (and the first as well) where YHWH, speaking with reference to the eschaton, promises to choose Jerusalem again (2:12; cf. 1:17; 2 Chron. 6:6; Isa. 14:1 [Israel]). “*He who has chosen Jerusalem*” thus orients the vision to the end times, but it also draws attention to Jerusalem as the place of YHWH’s habitation, particularly in the Temple.

**Thomas Constable:** The Lord then referred to Joshua as a burning stick plucked from the fire, evidently for His future use (cf. Amos 4:11). If Joshua represents Israel, then the fire must refer to the Babylonian captivity from which Israel had come almost destroyed, and the stick refers to the surviving remnant. Israel had experienced another brush with extinction at the Exodus (Deut. 4:20; 7:7-8; Jer. 11:4), and she will do so again in the Tribulation (13:8-9; Jer. 30:7; Rev. 12:13-17).

C. (:3-5) The Symbolic Action -- Picture of Imputed Righteousness

1. The Stripping off of the Filth of Sin

*“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, ‘Remove the filthy garments from him.’ Again he said to him, ‘See, I have taken your iniquity away from you”*

**Eugene Merrill:** The scene that meets the human eye is that of a high priest dressed in garments stained with excrement, a sign of the vilest defilement. The same way of describing human sinfulness is found in Isa. 4:4 where, interestingly enough, the daughters of Zion will be cleansed from their filthiness in a purging associated with the coming of the “Branch,” a messianic figure introduced in Zech. 3:8 in connection with our present vision. As distasteful and shocking as this may be in general terms, the appearance of the high priest so defiled was beyond comprehension. His dress was to be of the finest, purest linen, especially on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4), so to see him this way was to see him in a state of absolute cultic and spiritual disqualification.

2. The Gracious Clothing in the Righteousness Provided by God

*“and will clothe you with festal robes.’ Then I said, ‘Let them put a*

*clean turban on his head,' So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by."*

It's comforting to have the angel of the Lord *standing by* for whenever we need him

**Eugene Merrill:** He passes from a condition of utmost defilement to one of unsurpassed glory. It is significant, however, the word used here to speak of the new garments, is not the normal one for the robes of the high priest ("*holy garments*"; cf. **Ex. 28:2**). Rather, it describes the apparel of royalty or wealth. The point is that Joshua forms with Zerubbabel a dyarchic rule in which the high priest increasingly enjoyed political as well as cultic authority. The turban of **v. 5** also supports this understanding.

**Steven Cole:** We stand before God not in our own good deeds, but in the righteous deeds of Jesus Christ, imputed to our account. It is not a lifelong process of God infusing enough righteousness into us that eventually we qualify for heaven, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. Rather, it is a judicial decision on God's part that takes place in an instant, as the clothing of Joshua here pictures. God justifies the guilty sinner by grace alone through Christ alone, received by faith alone. Our good deeds have nothing at all to do with it.

**Biblehub.com:** The splendid robes represent righteousness, honor, and restoration. In biblical symbolism, clothing often signifies one's spiritual state; thus, being clothed in splendid robes indicates a transformation from sin to righteousness. This imagery is consistent with the New Testament teaching of being clothed with Christ's righteousness, as in **Galatians 3:27**. The change of garments signifies a new identity and status before God, aligning with the prophetic vision of a renewed priesthood and a restored Israel.

In this vision, Zechariah speaks, indicating his active role in the prophetic vision. The **clean turban** symbolizes purity and the restoration of the priesthood. In the context of the Old Testament, the high priest wore a turban as part of his sacred garments (**Exodus 28:36-39**). The turban, inscribed with "Holy to the LORD," signifies holiness and dedication to God. This act represents the removal of iniquity and the reinstatement of Joshua the high priest, symbolizing the cleansing and renewal of Israel. The turban also points to the future Messianic priesthood of Jesus Christ, who is both King and Priest (**Hebrews 7:26-28**).

## **II. (:6-7) THE VISION OF JOSHUA AS IT RELATES TO OUR PRESENT -- FAITHFUL SERVICE TODAY GRANTS THE PRIVILEGE OF RULING AND SERVING IN THE FUTURE**

### **A. Charge to Serve the Lord Faithfully – Conditions for Blessing**

#### **1. Tone of Divine Exhortation**

*"And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts'"*

2. Twofold Responsibility
  - a. Responsibility of Personal Obedience – Covenant Loyalty  
*“If you will walk in My ways”*
  - b. Responsibility of Faithful Service in His Role as Priest  
*“and if you will perform My service”*

B. Promise of Threefold Blessing

1. Governing Authority – emphasis on the temple and associated people  
*“then you will also govern My house”*
2. Administration Privileges – emphasis still on the temple courts  
*“and also have charge of My courts”*
3. Priestly Service  
*“and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.”*

**John Mackay:** If he maintains his integrity then he will be given permission to enter into the heavenly court, into the very presence of God, and there to fulfill his priestly role by interceding on behalf of the people.

**III. (:8-10) THE VISION OF JOSHUA AS IT RELATES TO OUR FUTURE -- THE MESSIAH THE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS COMING AS THE DIVINE BRANCH AND THE ONE STONE TO SAVE JUDAH AND RESTORE PROSPERITY TO THE LAND**

- A. (:8a) Call to Joshua and his Fellow Priests to Listen  
*“Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you – indeed they are men who are a symbol”*
- B. (:8b-9a) Threefold Image of the Function of the Messiah in the End Times
  1. Image of Messiah as God’s Servant  
*“for behold, I am going to bring in My servant”*
  2. Image of Messiah as the Branch – direct extension of deity  
*“the Branch”*

**John MacArthur:** denotes His rise from humble beginnings (**Is 11:1; Jer 23:5, 6**) and His fruitfulness (**6:12; Is 11:1**).

**Biblehub.com:** “*My servant*” is a messianic title used in the Old Testament to refer to the coming deliverer. The “Branch” is a specific messianic term found in other prophetic books, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, symbolizing new growth and life emerging from the line of David. This imagery conveys the promise of a future king who will bring justice, peace, and restoration. The Branch is a type of Christ, who

fulfills these prophecies through His life, death, and resurrection, establishing an eternal kingdom.

3. Image of Messiah as the Stone with Seven Eyes

*“For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes.”*

**Eugene Merrill:** Stone as a messianic symbol is also well known throughout the Bible, for the foundation upon which God’s future Temple of redemption and dominion must rest is none other than the messianic figure of whom this scene provides a foreshadowing. As **Kenneth Barker** points out, the Messiah was, in His first advent, a stumbling stone and rock of offense (**Ps. 118:22-23; Isa. 8:13-15; Matt. 21:42; 1 Peter 2:7-8**) but now is the chief cornerstone of the church (**Eph. 2:19-22**). In the eschaton He will be “the dependable rock of the trusting heart.” Thus, behind this vision hovers the unmistakable aura of messianic promise and fulfillment.

Remarkable about the stone of the present oracle is that it has seven eyes (**Zech. 3:9**). Seven in biblical numerology signifies fullness or completeness, so the seven eyes suggest omniscience or undimmed vision. In vision five (**Zech. 4:1-14**) the seven eyes are identified as the eyes of YHWH that “*run to and fro over the whole earth*” (**4:10**). This universal attention by YHWH is an affirmation of His **sovereign control**, His unlimited dominion (cf. **1:10**). Hanani the prophet had long before taught King Asa of Judah that “*the eyes of YHWH run to and fro over the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is upright toward him*” (**2 Chron. 16:9**).

D. (:9b) End Times Activity of the Lord Described – Declaration of His Purpose

1. Purpose Statement #1

*“Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it, declares the Lord of hosts”*

**Hampton Keathley:** The engraving - the only place where we have engraved stones is on the garments of the priests. The stone on the priest’s headband was engraved with the phrase, “*Holy to the Lord.*”

**John MacArthur:** The engraving may be a reference to the cornerstone of the temple building, on which will be engraved an inscription attesting to the Divine Builder and the purpose for which the building was erected. As such, it is closely tied to the removal of “*the iniquity of that land in one day,*” symbolized by the removal of filthy garments in v. 4. The phrase looks to the future day when there will be cleansing and forgiveness for the nation as a whole (**12:10 – 13:1; Ro 11:25-27**), made possible through Christ’s redemptive provision at Calvary.

2. Purpose Statement #2

*“and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”*

E. (:10) Picture of Kingdom Prosperity

*“In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.”*

**Biblehub.com: you will each invite your neighbor** -- The act of inviting a neighbor suggests a time of peace, security, and community. In ancient Israel, hospitality was a significant cultural value, and inviting someone to share in one's resources was a sign of friendship and goodwill. This phrase implies a reversal of the hostility and division that often characterized Israel's history, pointing to a future where relationships are restored. It echoes the prophetic vision of peace and unity found in **Micah 4:4** and **Isaiah 2:4**.

**to sit under your own vine and fig tree** -- The imagery of sitting under one's vine and fig tree is a symbol of peace, prosperity, and security. In the agrarian society of ancient Israel, vines and fig trees were valuable resources, providing food and economic stability. This phrase is used in **1 Kings 4:25** to describe the prosperity during Solomon's reign, a time of peace and abundance. It also appears in **Micah 4:4**, symbolizing the peace and security of the Messianic age. The vine and fig tree can be seen as types of Christ, who provides spiritual nourishment and peace to His people.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What types of accusations does Satan like to level against you? How do you respond?
- 2) Do you view yourself as a brand plucked from the fire? What does this image mean to you?
- 3) What are your favorite images that speak to the role and function of the Messiah?
- 4) What is the significance of the Israelites enjoying the fellowship and hospitality described in verse 10?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Charles Ryrie:** Joshua the high priest is cleansed in this vision. This had personal significance in that it answered the charge some had made that Joshua was unfit to serve in that office. It had priestly significance for the nation, picturing their restoration to a priestly position before God. It also had prophetic significance, illustrating the future cleansing of the nation at the return of Christ.

**Eugene Merrill:** Joshua, the high priest with whom Zechariah was personally acquainted, appears in the prophet's vision in a state of ritual impurity, so much so that he is being condemned for it by Satan in the very presence of YHWH. YHWH, however, views Joshua as a chosen vessel and demands that he be considered as such and provided appropriate attire. This is done, and then Joshua is told that if he continues

to be faithful to YHWH, he will have a place of ongoing prominence in the purposes of YHWH. The lesson to be learned, so the oracular section (vv. 8-10) points out, is that Joshua and his colleagues are a sign of what YHWH is about to do by means of his servant the Branch, who will be a foundation stone of redemption and restoration. . .

In addition to the eyes, however, there is about to be engraved on the stone an inscription reading, "*I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.*" This admittedly novel interpretation of v. 9b rests on several factors. First, it seems evident that the stone in question is the cornerstone of a building, in this case most likely the Temple of YHWH. Second, in the ancient Near Eastern world cornerstones invariably bore inscriptions attesting to the builder and the purpose for which the building was erected. The eyes on the stone would be the divine signature identifying YHWH as the real architect and builder of the structure. The necessary statement of purpose is the rather oblique reference to the function of the Temple as a place of expiation of sin. When the Davidic branch comes and the Temple of YHWH is complete, the iniquity of all the land will be removed, all in one day.

This removal of iniquity calls to mind the taking away of the iniquity of Joshua in the vision (v. 4). It is most evident that the two ideas, and hence the two passages, are to be taken together. Joshua, "*snatched from the fire*" by divine grace, is a prototype of the whole nation, the "*kingdom of priests*" (Ex. 19:6), that will also finally achieve cleansing and forgiveness. When that comes to pass, YHWH pledges, everyone will invite his friends to sit in peace with him under the vine and the fig-tree (Zech. 3:10). This is a common image in the eschatological literature to describe the day of YHWH's universal dominion (Mic. 4:4; cf. 1 Kings 4:25).

In summary, vision four describes a day of redemption in which Joshua the high priest, typical or representative of Israel as a priestly people, will be cleansed of his impurities and reinstalled in his capacity as high priest. This presupposes a Temple in which this can take place, so Joshua will build such a structure. Again, this Temple is only the model of one to come, one whose cornerstone is YHWH Himself. That cornerstone contains the glorious promise of the regeneration of the nation, a mighty salvific event that will be consummated in one day (Isa. 66:7-9).

#### Lambert Dolphin:

But it is the use of the title "*BRANCH*" that is significant. This title appears in the Old Testament in four wonderful promises about the coming Messiah. These prophetic promises give four presentations of the Branch that correspond to the four presentations of Christ in the four gospels. They are:

- (1) The Branch as Royal King. "*I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness*" (Gen. 23:5); "*Behold your King*" (corresponds to the presentation of the Messiah in Matthew).
- (2) The Branch as Servant. "*My Servant the BRANCH*" (Zech. 3:8); "*Behold My Servant*" (corresponds to the presentation of the Messiah in Mark).
- (3) The Branch as Fully Man. "*The Man whose name is the BRANCH*" (Zech. 6:12); "*Behold the Man*" (corresponds to the presentation of the Messiah in

Luke).

(4) The Branch as Fully God. "*The Branch of the LORD*" (**Isa. 4:2**); "*Behold the Son of God*" (corresponds to the presentation of the Messiah in John).

**Thomas Constable:** In that day, the Lord promised, the Israelites would all invite their (Gentile) neighbors to join them in enjoying their peace and prosperity. Israel would enjoy peace and security as never before, even under the reign of Solomon (**1 Kings 4:25**; cf. **2 Kings 18:31**; **Mic. 4:4**). Then God will lift the curse that He imposed on the creation at the Fall, and there will be agricultural prosperity as well as spiritual prosperity (**Isa. 11:1-9**; **35**; **65:17**; **Dan. 7:13-14, 27**; **Mic. 4:1-4**). Paradise lost will become paradise regained.

### **Steven Cole: How Can Sinners Serve a Holy God?**

God cleanses sinners through Christ on the basis of His grace and then uses them to serve Him as they walk in His ways. . .

Note also that the cleansing from sin mentioned in Zechariah 3 is not potential, waiting on Israel's response, but actual, according to God's purpose. The Lord doesn't turn to Joshua and say, "I'd really like to cleanse you, I'm out here knocking on the door of your heart, but it's your decision, Joshua. I'm waiting for you!" No, the Lord powerfully rebukes Satan and then commands those standing near Joshua to remove his filthy garments and put clean garments on him. Then He explains what He is doing to Joshua. As **Charles Feinberg** states,

"It is clearly God's work without any help from man" (The Minor Prophets [Moody Press], p. 285).

Dr Feinberg also says, "Let those who rail at the choice of God note this passage, and let them rejoice that this is their certainty and assurance for eternity also" (ibid.). If you deny God's sovereign gracious election as the basis for your salvation, you not only deny the clear teaching of His Word, but also rob yourself of a major ground of assurance! To make your cleansing from sin rest on your feeble choice of God is to ground your salvation on a faulty surface. God grounds your cleansing from sin on the sure foundation of His sovereign choice, and not even Satan can bring a charge against God's elect (**Rom. 8:33**)!

Thus we've seen that Joshua had no merit of his own. Rather, God cleansed him according to God's sovereign election. . .

When John Wesley was six years old, he awoke one night to the horror of being in a burning house. Everyone else had gotten to safety, but somehow he had been forgotten. At the very last moment, just before the roof collapsed, a neighbor climbed through the window and pulled the terrified child to safety. He always saw himself as a brand plucked from the burning. After his conversion, which came after years of trying to earn salvation by his good works, he realized even more how much God had rescued him from the eternal flames of hell.

If God has not rescued you from your sins, you must let go of your good works and allow God to cleanse you by His sovereign grace through Christ alone. If He has rescued you, it is so that you can now serve Him as you walk in His ways.

**Lambert Dolphin:**

- A. Christ Intervenes For Us As Our High Priest **3:1-2**
- B. Christ Cleanses Us As Our High Priest **3:3-4**
- C. Christ Challenges Us As Our High Priest **3:5-7**
- D. Christ Delivers Us As Our High Priest **3:8-10**

**Charles Spurgeon** (quoted by **David Guzik**):

“So it is with the child of God. What is he at the best? Till he is taken up to heaven, he is nothing but a brand plucked out of the fire. It is his daily moan that he is a sinner; but Christ accepts him as he is: and he shuts the devil’s mouth by telling him, ‘Thou sayest this man is black - of course he is: what did I think he was but that? He is a brand plucked out of the fire. I plucked him out of it. He was burning when he was in it: he is black now he is out of it. He was what I knew he would be; he is not what I mean to make him, but he is what I knew he would be. I have chosen him as a brand plucked out of the fire. What hast thou to say to that?’ Do observe that this plea did not require a single word to be added to it from Joshua.”

**John MacArthur:** God’s favor rested on Israel above any nation on earth (cf. **Dt 7:6-11**). He snatched them from potential disappearance in their captivity, like pulling a stick out of the fire just before it is torched (cf. **Am 4:11**). Thus, God confirmed His purposes for Israel, sweeping from Zechariah’s time to the consummation of human history (cf. **Rev 12:3-17**).

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: Sinners In God’s Courtroom: Vision # 4 – The Vision of the High Priest**

**Introduction:** Now the problem that this vision wrestles with, or really deals with, is how can a morally defiled and sinful people be made fit to appear before the presence of God, much less to serve the Lord, to minister before the Lord?

He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, right beside Joshua the high priest is the angel of the Lord. Now we have identified him already in previous visions as the pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the second member of the Trinity. This is Jesus standing next to Joshua. This is a beautiful picture here of the ministry of Christ as our advocate. You might say that this whole picture, this whole vision that Zechariah has is kind of an Old Testament illustration of the New Testament truth in **1 John 2.1**. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with a father, who? Jesus Christ the righteous. . .*

What I want you to see here in this fourth vision are three important works of Christ, our advocate.

## I. Intervention

Look at the people in this courtroom scene:

A. First of all let's look at Joshua the defendant notice he again he's standing before God and also mark this that Joshua is a representative of the whole nation of Israel. He's standing and that assumes the position of being the accused party. But again, he represents as the high priest, not just himself, although he does represent himself, but he represents the whole nation. He's representative of them.. . So he's standing before the Lord and he's got on his robes, but they're all covered in manure. They're covered in excrement.

B. But then there's Satan, the accuser. Look again at verse one. and Satan standing at his right hand to what? To resist him. So standing right beside Joshua the high priest with his filthy garments is the prosecuting attorney in this courtroom. And the word Satan here actually means adversary. And it refers to his work of resisting the people of God. He is constantly accusing God's people or accusing the brethren. That's what the Bible says in **Revelation 12:10**.

C. Jesus, the advocate.

His attitude is one of love. He wants to come along our side and he wants to plead our case. And he wants to remind us that we are his child. He comes and he picks us up and he comforts us. That's what an advocate does. And so in this courtroom scene of heaven, the father is the judge. You could say that I'm the guilty sinner. Satan is the accusing attorney. I'm guilty and deserving of his punishment. Satan presses the case demanding action and Jesus comes alongside and says, I'm your defense. I'm your defense. I'm your attorney.

## II. Imputation

Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said unto him, and unto him he said, behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. . . He takes away our filthiness, He takes away our filthy garments, and He gives to us the robe of righteousness. We get the righteousness of Christ given to us.

Did you know that in the Bible there are three imputations where something is placed on someone else? For example, did you know that, here's the first imputation,

- Adam's sin is imputed to us.
- Our sin was imputed to Christ.
- Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.

## III. Installation

After Jesus cleanses us, he recruits us to serve as his priests. Look at verse number six. It says this, *and the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua saying*. Now the word *protested* here, probably a better translation of that word would be *charged*. The word is *ad* in the Hebrew. It means giving a solemn commission or the giving of a responsibility. Another way to express this would say like this, the angel of the Lord solemnly commissioned or charged or gave a responsibility to Joshua. In other words,

this is the point in the vision where Joshua is now recommissioned to be the high priest of the people of God, Israel.

We are say we're cleansed that we might serve the Lord. But in order to do that, we have to walk in holiness. And what I want you to see is what I call the **standards of ministry**.

- First, he says, Joshua, it's your responsibility to **walk in my ways**.
- Second, he says, to **keep my charge**, that is faithfully execute the office of duties of high priest.

And notice three images that are given for the Messiah.

- **My servant**, in verse eight, where he says, Behold, I will bring forth my servant. That's a wonderful title in the Old Testament used for the Messiah in the book of Isaiah.

- And then he's called also **the branch**. Look again in verse eight. For behold, I will bring forth my servant, the branch. Again, the branch is an image of the Messiah frequently found in the Old Testament among the prophets. Why? Because he is a branch. or a sprout of David, of the house of David, but also of the Lord God himself. And there's a beautiful picture of that, of the humanity of Christ and the deity, excuse me, of Christ.

- But then also he's called **the stone** in verse number nine. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua, upon one stone shall be seven eyes. So we see here the stone.

Now, by the way, the four titles of the branch that, There are four titles in the Old Testament about the branch that really parallel the gospels. Branch of Righteousness for David, that really parallels **Matthew**, where the gospel is all about Jesus Christ, the son of David. And then My Servant, the Branch, that's all in the Gospel of **Mark**. It presents Jesus as the servant. And then the man whose name is the branch, that's the gospel of **Luke**, where he's called the son of man. And the branch of the Lord, that's the gospel of **John**, where Jesus is the son of God.

TEXT: Zechariah 4:1-14

TITLE: VISION #5 – THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND AND 2 OLIVE TREES

**BIG IDEA:**

**GOD’S WORK SUCCEEDS ONLY BY THE ABOUNDING ENABLING SUPPLIED BY GOD’S ANOINTING HOLY SPIRIT**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The prerequisite to serving God must be the type of sanctification and cleansing emphasized in the last vision. Here we see the encouragement to ministry success. Vision #4 dealt with Joshua, the religious leader; Vision #5 encourages Zerubbabel, the political leader who must motivate the people to accomplish the difficult task at hand. The key would be reliance upon the unending supply of God’s resources through His Spirit. There are no mountains of difficulty that he cannot tunnel through.

Remember the simple Sunday School song:

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?  
Got any mountains you can’t tunnel through?  
God specializes in things thought impossible.  
He does the things others cannot do.

**THREE ENCOURAGEMENTS TO MINISTRY SUCCESS:**

**I. (:1-7) THE AVAILABLE UNCTION**

**A. (:1) Transition to the Next Vision**

*“Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep.”*

**Biblehub.com:** In the book of Zechariah, angels often serve as messengers and interpreters of visions. This particular angel is a divine guide, providing insight and understanding to the prophet.

Vision #4 focused on Joshua and the priestly role – the spiritual cleansing from sin and sanctification that is a prerequisite to do God’s work.

Vision #5 focuses on Zerubbabel as the political leader – the resources of God that will enable the work of rebuilding the temple to be completed successfully.

**B. (:2-3) The Vision Itself – Two Main Elements**

**1. The Golden Lampstand**

*“He said to me, ‘What do you see?’ And I said, ‘I see, and behold, a lampstand, all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it;’”*

**John MacArthur:** The lampstand is the 7-branched kind used in the tabernacle, with the addition of a bowl on the top in order to maintain an abundant supply of oil and spouts to carry the oil to keep the 7 lamps burning. The picture is of an abundant supply.

**Eugene Merrill:** The purpose of the menorah obviously was to illuminate the interior of the Holy Place (Ex. 25:37), but it also spoke of the illumination of the presence of YHWH Himself.

2. The Two Olive Trees

*“also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.”*

**David Roper:** Then, draped over the top of the lampstand are two olive trees, creating a picture of perpetual supply. The olive trees grow to maturity, the olives ripen, the olive oil then drops into the bowl on top and flows through channels to each of the individual lamps--necessitating a good deal of plumbing--all this intended to convey the idea of unlimited resource: the oil keeps flowing, the lamp keeps burning.

C. (:4-5) Request for Insight and Understanding

*“Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, ‘What are these, my lord?’ So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ And I said, ‘No, my lord.’”*

No understanding apart from the Spirit of God making things plain to us

D. (:6-7) The Powerful Explanation – focusing on the resources of God’s Spirit and God’s Grace – How Can Anyone be Adequate for Ministry?

Two Key Principles:

1. (:6) Success Comes Only by God’s Spirit

*“Then he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.’”*

We cannot overemphasize the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit – despite what we see as excesses in some other movements – we do not want to overreact by minimizing His role

**Eugene Merrill:** The focus cannot be on the menorah itself but on its source of illumination, the oil that provides its fuel. The reservoir—the lamps, the pipes—all have to do with this fundamental idea that the menorah is useless without the power that energizes it. Likewise the task of temple building and, indeed, of the establishment of the sovereignty of YHWH and His kingdom cannot be accomplished apart from divine enablement; hence the word of YHWH: *“Not by strength and not by authority, but by my Spirit” (v. 6).*

## 2. (:7) Grace Can Remove the Greatest Obstacles

*“What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”*

Sola Gracie – one of the tenets of the Reformation

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase symbolizes a significant obstacle or challenge. In the context of Zechariah, the "*great mountain*" represents the daunting task of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. Mountains in biblical literature often symbolize insurmountable challenges or powerful kingdoms (**Isaiah 40:4, Matthew 17:20**). The rhetorical question emphasizes the power of God to overcome any obstacle.

**David Roper:** He is referring to the huge pile of rubble that was strewn over the temple area. When it had burned, the temple had caved in and become a great mound of rubble. It seemed to be insurmountable. How could they clean all this rubble and rebuild the temple? Well, Zechariah is told to say to Zerubbabel, "*Before you this great mountain will become a plain.*" How is this to be accomplished? "*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,*" says the Lord. God's strength, his resources, would be adequate.

**John Mackay:** Generally the most important stone in an ancient building was the foundation stone, but here it is the completion of the building that is specially marked, perhaps when Zerubbabel superintends the placing of a stone at the top of an arch or gateway, marking the completion of the Temple. It would have been previously prepared and then brought out from the workshop or quarry to fit into its allotted place. With jubilation the people will cry out, "*Grace! Grace to it!*" extolling God's freely given blessing on the work now completed, and imploring that he continue to look with favour on the Temple and all that was represented by it.

## II. (:8-10) THE ASSURANCE OF SUCCESS

### A. (:8) Additional Words of Divine Encouragement

*“Also the word of the Lord came to me, saying”*

### B. (:9a) Promise of Ultimate Ministry Success

*“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it.”*

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase emphasizes the assurance of divine support in completing the temple. Despite opposition and delays, Zerubbabel is assured that the work he started will be finished. This completion is a testament to God's faithfulness and the perseverance of His people. It also prefigures the ultimate completion of God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ, who is referred to as the cornerstone in **Ephesians 2:20**, signifying the foundation and completion of the spiritual temple, the Church.

C. (:9b) Confirmation of Divine Prophecy

*“Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.”*

D. (:10) Assurance that God Knows What He is Doing

1. Don't Get Discouraged by Man's Limited Perspective

*“For who has despised the day of small things?”*

The rebuilding of the temple looked pitiful compared to its former glory in the days of Solomon; but God was at work to accomplish His purposes; we should never despise or underestimate the importance of something that God considers important.

**John MacArthur:** Though the rebuilding of a temple smaller than Solomon's may have been discouraging to some (cf. **Ezr 3:12; Hag 2:3**), the Lord announced that His pleasure was upon this work, and that His omniscient care was watching over and taking pleasure in its completion. He said in effect, 'Don't despise what God is pleased with.' This was only a picture of the glorious restoration when Messiah comes to reign. That temple will make all others pale by comparison (cf. **Eze 40 -48**).

2. Rejoice in God's Omniscient Perspective

*“But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel – these are the eyes of the Lord which range to and fro throughout the earth.”*

**John Mackay:** this is the practical impact of the Lord's close supervision of all that occurs on earth. The project that he approves of will not lack his care and protection until it is completed.

### **III. (:11-14) THE ANOINTING FOR LEADERSHIP**

A. (:11-13) Request for Insight and Understanding

1. (:11-12) Twofold Request for Explanation of the Two Olive Trees

a. (:11) Request #1 – Vision described in very general terms

*“Then I said to him, ‘What are these two olive trees to the right of the lampstand and on its left?’”*

b. (:12) Request #2 – Vision described in much more specific terms

*“And I answered the second time and said to him, ‘What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves’”*

2. (:13) Need for Insight and Understanding

*“So he answered me, saying, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ And I said, ‘No, my lord.’”*

B. (:14) Explanation of the Significance of the Olive Trees

*“Then he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.’”*

“sons of oil”

\* \* \* \* \*

**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Does God still speak to His people today in similar types of visions? Why or Why not?
- 2) Trace the passages in Scripture where oil is used as a type of the Holy Spirit. What do we learn from this analogy?
- 3) How abundant do we consider God’s resources to us for the task at hand?
- 4) How has God leveled out our mountains and overcome our obstacles?

\* \* \* \* \*

**QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**David Roper:** As we saw in our last study, Zechariah's message is presented to him in the form of eight visions, one after another, given on the same evening. It was God's normal procedure, at least during Old Testament times, to reveal truth to the prophets in this way. They saw things that other people did not see. That is why at times they are called "seers". They received truth in visual form. They saw things that it would have been impossible for them to know apart from the activity of God in their lives. If you or I had visions of this nature, we would probably consider giving up catsup on our pizza before bedtime! But these visions were something very real; these were not nightmares, although they have a strange, almost bizarre quality about them. But these were visions that came from God to the prophets. Now, it appears that God is not revealing himself in this way any longer. In the book of Hebrews the writer says in the first verse, "*In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets [that is, he spoke to them through visions, through dreams, through auditory experiences]; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...*" So the final, complete revelation of God is in the person of Christ, and he is not speaking to us, it appears, in the same ways that he did formerly. But this was the normal experience of the prophets in Zechariah's day. . .

So we can see now something of the picture. The oil is produced by the tree, flowing through the branches down into the lamps, and the light is given off. Consistently throughout Scripture, oil is used to refer to the ministry of the Holy Spirit working powerfully through us. Thus this is a picture of the power of the Holy Spirit, flowing

through Zerubbabel and Joshua out to the people, so that the people then can become what they are intended to be. What a beautiful picture of the Spirit-filled life! As a matter of fact, these two men are called "sons of fresh oil"-that is the translation of the word "anointed" in the margin of the New American Standard Version. That is, they are those who are full of oil, who are filled with the Spirit and thus are able to have this sort of ministry to those in need around them, so that light is produced where it was beginning to flicker and die. What a beautiful picture of the ministry of the Spirit of God in our life! There is no end to what he can do; there is no limit to the resources available. The tree never fails to produce fruit, so there is always an adequate supply of oil.

**John MacArthur:** The purpose of the vision was to encourage Zerubbabel to complete the temple rebuilding, to assure him of divine enablement for that venture and the endless supply for the future glory of Messiah's kingdom and temple. The lampstand pictured Israel fully supplied by God to be His light then and in the future. . .

The two olive trees (**vvs. 3, 11**) represent the kingly and priestly offices in Israel through which the blessing of God was to flow. The two olive branches (**v. 12**) are the two men who occupied the supreme positions in those offices at that time: Zerubbabel, as a descendant of David, and Joshua, the High-Priest, a descendant of Eleazar. Together, they foreshadow the Messiah, in whom these two offices are combined (cf. **6:13; Ps 110**) and who is the true source of blessing to make Israel the light to the nations (cf. **Is 60:1-3**). They had positions of responsibility in service to "*the Lord of the whole earth*," a millennial term that points to the final kingdom (cf. **Mic 5:4**).

**John Mackay:** (Re vs 6) "*Might*" and "*power*" are very close synonyms. "*Might*" refers to material wealth and military capability, while "*power*" refers to the exercise of it. Together they represent the full extent of human resources which could be deployed to deal with a difficult situation. As Zerubbabel looked at what was available to him in organizing the building of the Temple, he might well have compared what he had to the lavish provision David had set aside for Solomon – "*a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone*" (**1 Chr. 22:14; 29:2**). He might also have thought of the mighty men available to David and Solomon to protect their realms against external threat. The restored community had no comparable economic or military resources. . .

The next verse dramatically declares that the problems besetting Zerubbabel as God's agent will be swept aside. *What are you, O mighty mountain?* (4:7) issues a challenge to whatever opposes God's purposes. From a human perspective there may seem to be insuperable impediments – a great mountain of them – but it is the divine perspective that ultimately counts. Isaiah showed how every obstacle would be cleared from the path of the coming Lord, every mountain and hill being made low (**Isa. 40:4**). In Jeremiah the figure of a mountain is used specifically of Babylon, "*the destroying mountain*" (**Jer. 51:25**), which had done so much wrong in Zion. Perhaps then this challenge is not issued just to obstacles in general, but particularly to those parties that had already tried to make life difficult for the Jews.

**Lambert Dolphin:** Three principles are taught in this vision:

- A. God's Work Will Be Accomplished by God's Spirit **4:1-6**
- B. God's Work Must Not Be Despised for Its Small Beginnings **4:7-10**
- C. God's Work Values People More than Institutions **4:11-14 . . .**

**CONCLUSION:** God will accomplish His purposes through His chosen instruments, mortals who are willing to fuel the fires that give light and life to the house and mission of our Lord. Our Lord will accomplish His purposes in spite of mountainous obstacles that tasks such as the rebuilding of the temple pose. Moreover, while God values men and women more than He values institutions, men and women must not think that their work for God in building the institutions is accomplished by their own might and power. Rather, it is done only by His Holy Spirit.

That is why men and women must not negatively judge any work of God based on how it appears to them at present, for any demeaning or belittling of small beginnings is premature and ill-founded. All so-called "small things" are directly linked to God's ongoing triumph and, especially, to His climactic victory in the final day.

**Steven J. Cole: Preventing Spiritual Burnout**

Big Idea: To prevent spiritual burnout, see the importance of God's work and depend on the continual supply of His Spirit.

1. To prevent spiritual burnout, see the importance of God's work.
  - A. We must be aware of some seeming negatives in God's work.
    - (1) God's work seems beset with problems.
    - (2) God's work seems incredibly slow in its progress.
    - (3) God's work often seems insignificant.
  - B. We must keep in mind the sure positives of God's work.
    - (1) God's work is the focus of His delight.
    - (2) God's work is a worldwide work that will prevail.
    - (3) God's work is the work of revealing God in and through us.
2. To prevent spiritual burnout, depend on the continual supply of God's Spirit.

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: Avoiding Spiritual Burnout: The Vision of the Golden Lampstand**

**Introduction:** The Greeks had a race in their Olympic games that was very unique. The winner was not the runner who finished first, it was the runner who finished with his torch still lit. I don't know about you, but by the time we finish this race of life, I want the torch, my torch that God's given me, to be still lit for the Lord Jesus. Many believers seem to burn out spiritually, and they basically have let down in their Christian life. This is a very real problem. Spiritual burnout is a term that we hear a lot. What does it mean?

In this vision here, in this fifth vision, Zacharias sees a lampstand that has a glorious light, and it also has an endless supply of oil that will never burn out. And really, that is

a picture of what we are to be for God. We are to be lights in the world. Our light should always be burning bright and never burn out. And how can we avoid burnout?

Big Idea: To avoid spiritual burnout,

- we must continually remember the importance of God's work,
- we must continually rely upon the supply of God's spirit,
- and we must look to the work of our Savior Jesus.

Now you might remember that Zechariah's fourth vision in chapter three encouraged the high priest with the message God will cleanse his people. and his Messiah will use them in service for him. God will cleanse them and God will use them in service. In this fifth vision, Zerubbabel is the one who's being encouraged. In the fourth vision, it was Joshua, the high priest, that was receiving encouragement. Here it's Zerubbabel who is the civic leader of this group of people. He's the one who's being encouraged here.

So we see two olive trees, each with a branch, that stood beside the lampstand, the golden pipes extend from each branch to the bowl, so that the golden olive oil is poured from the tree into the bowl. And out of that reservoir or bowl came pipes to the seven lamps on the lampstand, And this is really similar to a menorah that would be in the temple.

The lampstand signifies the important task that God gives his people to be a light to the nations, to reveal God and his truth to those who walk in darkness. The oil that flows in continual abundant supply lights the lamp, and that lamp can go on burning, and that oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit of God just keeps giving the supply. The two olive trees that Zachariah sees in this vision, they represent the priestly and kingly offices of Joshua, Joshua who was the high priest of Rebbel, who was a king, we could say a king. He didn't officially reign as a king, but he was the leader of the people and thus by default, you know, the king, the one who was leading. And so they represented these two anointed offices of priest and king, which would be fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would come one day. He would unite both of those offices together. And so that is, those two men and their offices are a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so the Lord encourages Zerubbabel by assuring him that in spite of all the mountain of problems that he is facing as he's trying to rebuild the temple and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, that God was gonna be with him and he would finish the task, but it wasn't gonna be by his own power or his own might. It was going to be by the Spirit of the Lord. That's the whole point of this vision here. This would confirm to all of God's people that he had sent his Messiah servant in the person of the angel Lord to his people. And so this was just an encouraging vision to Zachariah.

**Three principles that will help us to avoid spiritual burnout.**

**I. We must continually reflect on the importance of God's work.**

Our task, our job, corporately as a church, individually as a person, is to be the light in a dark world. And that is our call.

A. Light reflects.

You know, the light that we have is not our own light. It's not our own source, right? It is from Jesus Christ. We reflect Christ. All we do is a reflection of the light of Christ. And so that's what saints are for. During a sermon, a pastor asked a question to the congregation, what is a saint? And one little boy looked at the stained glass windows of the apostles and blurted out, a saint is people who let the light shine through. And that's a good answer. And that's what we are to do.

B. Light rejoices.

Something about light, it brings joy to the heart. Proverbs 15, 30, the light of the eyes rejoices the heart. In Ecclesiastes 11, 7, light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun. . . if you get enough light, it rejoices the heart. The human heart is dark without Christ. What a difference the spiritual light that Jesus Christ makes.

C. Light rescues.

When we present the light of Christ in this lost world, people are rescued from the darkness and depth of sin.

**II. We must continually rely upon the supply of God's spirit.**

Now, as God's people, we have access to a continual supply of God's spirit. And we have to continually depend upon the spirit of God. And this is the vital truth that God is communicating to Zerubbabel in the symbolism of the olive trees, and then the declaration of the word of the Lord. Remember, the olive trees are supplying the continual flow of oil into the bowl, which supplies it to the lamps, and the oil never runs dry. Because it's being supplied by these olive trees. And so it's a continual supply. And this is meant to communicate very clearly to Zerubbabel. Just like these olive trees are supplying the continual flow of oil so that the lamp can burn bright, even so, When you do a work for God, it's not gonna be by your own strength, by your own power, it's gonna be by the Spirit of God, because we know that the oil here symbolically represents who? The Holy Spirit of God, right? Oil represents the Holy Spirit of God, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Not by might, that refers to military power. Israel didn't have a military anyway. Power refers to the strength of an individual. If you're going to get the job done for me, it's not going to be by your own might, military strength. It's not going to be by your own power, your individual ability and wisdom to lead and to do anything.

We have to make a conscious choice, but we also have to make a continual choice to depend upon God's Spirit. . . We need to every day depend upon the Holy Spirit of God and be filled, be constantly be filled with the Spirit day after day. . . Now, why? Well, because we face so many obstacles.

**III. We must look to the work of our Savior Jesus.**

The anointed ones in Zechariah's vision represent these two men (Joshua the high priest

and Zerubbabel the king), and more importantly, these two offices of high priest and king. And they both are vital in fulfilling what we could say the theology of the lampstand by mediating the presence of God to his people.

By God's design, no single person in Israel could be both king and priest. No one could do that. You know why? First of all, the priests came from what tribe? Levi, right? And the kings, where did they come from? Well, they came from the tribe of Judah. So God never designed that one person could be both priest and king. In fact, in the Old Testament, you'll find many times when a king tried to exercise the office of a high priest and actually tried to burn incense on an altar, what did God do to him? He judged him severely for it, right? Because that was a violation of God's order. Several times we see kings trying to do that and God punishing them severely. Because no one man could hold both roles of representing God to man and man to God. And also, we see that Israel's history was marked by a litany of kings and priests that failed in their God-given responsibilities. That's part of the problem with Israel. Their kings all failed.

Now, let me give you the application for this to us. We are to look to Christ. If you wanna be successful, we have to constantly keep our eyes on Christ. Sounds like we've heard that before, right? Isn't that all through the Bible? You know, the secret of the Christian life is not really a secret. It's keep your eyes on Christ and look to Christ and depend upon Christ. And so, we notice that these two anointed ones are, they stand by the Lord of the whole earth, standing by the Lord. In the last vision, Joshua stood before the angel Lord, depending on him for his intercession and righteousness. In this fifth vision, the interpreting angel explained that he or these are standing by the Lord. That is the idea of utter reliance on him, trusting him, that he would accomplish and do what they could not do. And again, that's Jesus Christ. You know what? You know why we should not burn out? Because we have Jesus Christ, who is both our high priest, our great high priest, and he's our king. And you know what we have? We have the sympathy of a high priest. He comes to our aid.

We have the sympathy of a high priest who prays for us, but also we have the sovereignty of a king. Jesus is our sovereign king. And that means that nothing that comes into your life is by accident. He has a purpose for it. That's why we can say Romans 8, 28, and we know that *all things work together for good. To those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.*

TEXT: Zechariah 5:1-4

TITLE: VISION #6 – THE FLYING SCROLL – PROCLAMATION OF GOD’S CURSE AGAINST LAW BREAKERS

**BIG IDEA:**

**BECAUSE GOD TAKES SIN SERIOUSLY THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPING HIS CERTAIN JUDGMENT**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Some people can get so involved in the work of the Lord that they imagine the requirements of holiness don’t apply to them. They think that their religious activities should somehow give them a pass when it comes to certain aspects of obedience. The people of Zechariah’s day who were committed to rebuilding the temple may have had such thoughts. Here God makes plain His view of transgression of His holy law. He will not hold anyone guiltless who breaks His covenant. His judgment will be certain and his judgment will be severe.

**I. (:1-2) THE PRESENTATION OF THE FLYING SCROLL – THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE LAW – ITS CURSES APPLY TO EVERYONE**

**A. (:1) Overall Image**

1. Standard Introduction

*“Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked,”*

2. Special Effects – public message to read by all

*“and behold, there was a flying scroll.”*

**Biblehub.com:** Scrolls in ancient times were used for writing important documents, including legal decrees and religious texts. The fact that the scroll is flying suggests a supernatural element, indicating that the message it contains is from God and is meant to reach its intended audience swiftly. The scroll's flight may symbolize the pervasive and inescapable nature of God's word and judgment. This imagery can be connected to other scriptural references where God's word is described as active and powerful, such as in **Isaiah 55:11** and Hebrews 4:12. The scroll's content, revealed in subsequent verses, relates to judgment against sin, aligning with the themes of justice and righteousness found throughout the prophetic literature.

**B. (:2) Outstanding Features**

1. Introduced by the Interrogating Angel (interpreting angel as well)

*“And he said to me, ‘What do you see?’”*

2. Identified by the Prophet Zechariah

a. Special Effects

*“And I answered, ‘I see a flying scroll;’”*

**Lambert Dolphin:** The fact that the scroll was "flying" likens its messages to some of the advertisements one can see at a seashore, fair or football stadium, where a small aircraft flies overhead trailing a long sign. In the case of the scroll, however, the message was being guided by God. It is almost as if the scroll were on automatic pilot.

**John MacArthur:** The scroll represents, then, a divine standard, by which man is to be measured.

b. Specific Size

*“its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.”*

**Eugene Merrill:** Among biblical objects or places with these measurements are the Holy Place in the Tabernacle (**Ex. 26**), the “porch” of Solomon’s Temple (**1 Kings 6:3**), and the great bronze altar of the Temple (20 cubits long and 10 high; **2 Chron. 4:2**). All three of these have to do with the sanctuary, the place where YHWH meets with His people. As the interpretation shows in **vv. 3-4**, the connection of the scroll with the dwelling-place of YHWH leads to the conclusion that the scroll contains the covenant document that binds YHWH and the nation together.

**Biblehub.com:** The dimensions of the scroll are significant, measuring approximately 30 feet by 15 feet. These measurements are identical to the dimensions of the Holy Place in Solomon's Temple (**1 Kings 6:3**), suggesting a connection to the law and the covenant. The size of the scroll implies the magnitude and comprehensiveness of the judgment it contains. The use of cubits, an ancient unit of measurement, reflects the historical context of the text, grounding the vision in the cultural and religious practices of the time. The large size of the scroll also indicates that the message is meant to be seen and understood by all, underscoring the public and unavoidable nature of divine judgment.

**Lambert Dolphin:** Since a "cubit" is about eighteen inches, this scroll was about 30 feet x 15 feet. Scrolls, which antedated our modern books, were usually long strips of papyrus or parchment, but this scroll was unusually wide.

## **II. (:3-4) THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD’S CURSE AGAINST LAW BREAKERS – THE CERTAINTY AND SEVERITY OF GOD’S JUDGMENT**

### **A. (:3) Four Aspects of the Targeted, Terrible Curse**

1. Scope of the Curse – Targeted against the Land of Judah – No Mistake

*“Then he said to me, ‘This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land’”*

2. Subjects of the Curse = Targeted against those breaking God’s Ten Commandments – No Exceptions

a. Thieves

*“surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to*

*the writing on one side”*

- b. Swearers = taking the name of the Lord in vain  
*“and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side”*

**Charles Ryrie:** The scroll was not rolled up since both sides could be read.

**Eugene Merrill:** The flying scroll of Zechariah mentions only two of the covenant stipulations, violation of which will invite the sanction of curse. These two, however, represent the whole law, for the one has to do with interpersonal, human relations and the other with man’s responsibility before God

- 3. Severity of the Curse = Terrible in its Effects  
*“will be purged away”*
- 4. Signature of the Curse = Terrible in its Sovereign Disposition  
*“according to the writing”*  
Just as it is determined whose names are written in the book of life

B. (:4) 3 Sobering Descriptions regarding the Execution of the Curse

- 1. Sovereignly Dispatched – it cannot be stopped  
*“I will make it go forth,’ declares the Lord of hosts”*
- 2. Selectively Invasive – it will find the appropriate targets  
*“and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name”*
- 3. Severely Destructive – it will do the intended damage  
*“and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones.”*

**Lambert Dolphin:** Surely this indicates the severity of the judgment that God would bring against those who violated His covenant. Moreover, the curse would *"consume [the houses], with its timber and stones"* (v. 4d). Such a consuming judgment from God reminds us of the fire that fell from heaven when the prophet Elijah prayed for God to answer his prayer by fire (1 Kings 18:38). The fire ate up the sacrificed animal, the twelve stones of which the altar was made, and the water-filled trench surrounding the altar. The wicked may not expect to escape the judgment of God.

**F. Duane Lindsey:** The severity and the totality of the judgments suggest a fulfillment in the Millennium because only then will divine judgment on sin be so rapid and so complete.

**Charles L. Feinberg:** The curse will not go astray; it will find the guilty and extirpate him, root and branch.

**Biblehub.com: It will remain inside his house** -- The permanence of the judgment is emphasized here. Unlike temporary punishments, this indicates a lasting consequence for sin. The presence of judgment within the house suggests an ongoing state of ruin and desolation, reflecting the seriousness of the offenses and the thoroughness of divine justice.

**and destroy it, down to its timbers and stones.** -- The destruction "down to its timbers and stones" signifies complete annihilation, leaving nothing intact. This imagery is reminiscent of the total destruction seen in divine judgments throughout the Bible, such as the fall of Jericho (**Joshua 6:24**) and the destruction of the temple (**Matthew 24:2**). It underscores the idea that God's judgment is thorough and leaves no room for the continuation of sin. This also serves as a warning and a call to repentance, highlighting the need for holiness and integrity among God's people.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Trace the concept of "*the curse of the law*" throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Does this topic seem to present God in an overly harsh fashion?
- 2) How seriously do you view sin in your own life?
- 3) Why did God focus just on these two particular commandments?
- 4) What remains after God's awesome judgment?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Eugene Merrill:** In line with the structural pattern of the night visions, visions six and three are a matching pair. In support of this the Meyers point first to such matters in common as the national focus of both, that is, the centrality of Judah in the restoration program. Second, a solitary individual in both visions is the immediate recipient of them, contrary to the other visions where multiple recipients appear, at least secondarily. Third, there is the measuring line in vision three with which the unidentified surveyor is about to measure the breadth and length of Jerusalem. Vision six features a scroll that also is measured, but this time in terms of length and breadth. Finally, the scroll is flying, just as the man of vision three is on the move to accomplish his task. . .

That mission is transparently clear—the scroll will demolish the house to the last timber and stone. Although this should be taken literally to some extent as referring to material structures, the use of “house” as a metaphor for one’s family and life is more likely. The

scroll as the covenant Word of God contains the message that judges and brings to ruin all human efforts at salvation and success. The covenant breaker will find that his sins against God and against men will lead inexorably to utter devastation.

In concluding comment on this vision, another instructive but contrastive parallel should be drawn to vision three. There the surveyor was about the business of building, the result of which was a city with no wall of protection but YHWH Himself, the “*wall of fire*” (2:5). Here the scroll does not build but, to the contrary, destroys, leaving neither wall nor roof nor foundation. In the first case, the remnant people who trust confidently in YHWH will find adequate shelter in His presence among them. In the present case, the thief and blasphemer will know nothing of this protective grace but only the wrath of a holy God whose covenant mercies have been spurned (cf. **Hab. 2:9-11**).

**Thomas Constable:** In spite of the glorious promises of the future just revealed in the previous visions, the Israelites needed to realize that sin would still bring inevitable divine punishment on them. They needed to remain pure so they could avoid the Lord's curses and enjoy His promised blessings (cf. **2 Cor. 7:1**). They were still under the Mosaic Law, specifically the Decalogue.

#### **Steven Cole: What God Thinks About Sin**

President Calvin Coolidge was not known for his talkativeness. A story, perhaps apocryphal, says that one Sunday he attended a worship service without his wife. When he returned home, she asked him what the minister had talked about. “Sin,” replied silent Cal. “What did the preacher say about sin?” his wife persisted. Coolidge replied, “He was against it.” Coolidge’s answer is a succinct summary of **Zechariah 5**, which tells us what God thinks about sin. In a nutshell, He is against it. Zechariah’s sixth and seventh night visions tell us, God will be relentless in judging all sin.

A major mistake that God’s people can make is to think that if we are doing God’s work, it buys us some indulgences against our sins. Israel was rebuilding the temple, and Zechariah wanted to encourage them in that work. But God also wanted to warn them that His people must be holy, even as He is holy. Rebuilding the temple was a great work, but it didn’t earn them any credit in the sin department. Just because they were God’s chosen nation didn’t mean that God would tolerantly overlook their sin. God would deal with all sinners in Israel and He would ultimately purge the nation of all wickedness. . .

Again, we must remember that this verse ultimately looks forward to the millennium, when the Lord will purge out sinners and establish His righteous reign. But there is still an obvious application for us, namely, that God is committed to the holiness of His people, beginning on the thought level (Matt. 5:27-30). Sometimes He takes drastic measures to impress on His people that He is a consuming fire (**Heb. 12:29**). Paul mentions that in Corinth some were sick and others were dying because they did not judge their own sins before coming to the Lord’s Table (**1 Cor. 11:29-31**).

**John Mackay:** The description emphasizes the thoroughness of divine judgment, extending even to the destruction of the stones of their homes. . . There are no half measures when God acts. *“The Lord’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous” (Prov. 3:33)*. The holiness of God should be reflected in his people.

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: The Rise & Fall of Babylon: Vision of the Flying Scroll & Woman in a Basket**

[Treats both vision number 6 and 7 together]

**Introduction:** Now, there's a lot of different **signposts** in the Bible that point to the fact that **we are living in the last days**. Some men who are much smarter than I, prophecy experts, have talked about these signposts. **Mark Hitchcock** talked about seven signs or indicators that we are living in the last days. And one of the indicators that he mentioned, he said this, he said, Iraq will remain in the news as a major player in world politics. And so that's very interesting. He said, you know, looking at the Bible and what the Bible has to say about Bible prophecy, here's one thing to look for, that Iraq will be a key figure in the last days. Now, modern Iraq is ancient Babylon, that empire of Babylon, right?

In fact, **Charles Dyer**, another prophecy expert, wrote a book on this, and he said that there are three major signposts mentioned in the Bible that indicate that we're kind of living in the last days. And he mentioned these three signposts. Number one, **the rebirth of Israel as a nation**. And we saw that, we know about that, right? Israel became a nation again, the nation born in a day, fulfilling Bible prophecy.

Then the **revived Roman Empire**, that is the European countries will come together and unite together. And of course, we've seen that. The euro now is the official single currency in most of the countries there in Europe. And you have countries joining and countries dropping out and it's still not yet revealed what that's gonna look like. But one of the things we know is the Bible talks about this revival of the ancient Roman Empire or the uniting together of these European countries.

And the third signpost that he mentioned was the **rebuilding of Babylon**. And again, Babylon is modern Iraq. Now if you look in Revelation chapter 17 and chapter 18, what you see described there is the fall of Babylon. And the Bible makes two chapters speaking about this. This is a monumental event when Babylon falls. And if you follow the chronology of the book of Revelation and your literal and the chronology of it, you would have to say that this is gonna take place when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, Babylon will be destroyed. Which means, that if it's going to be destroyed then it would have to mean it was something, a force to be reckoned with. Now This is if you take the Bible literally with regard to Babylon.

Now many scholars and Bible teachers have identified Babylon as something other than a literal city. The dominant view is that Babylon in the book of Revelation chapter 17 and 18 represents Rome and the Vatican. They believe that's what Babylon is talking

about. However, if you take the Bible and you interpret it literally, and by the way, if you've been in my 9:45 Sunday School class, you've heard me talk about this a lot, and I know I sound like I'm beating a dead horse here, but just bear with me as I beat this horse a little bit more tonight. I think, you know, if you take the Bible and you interpret it literally and not use an allegorizing or spiritualizing approach to Scripture, like some people do, some take Old Testament prophecies, they interpret some of those Old Testament prophecies literally, and then the other prophecies they interpret allegorically or spiritualize them. But if you're consistent in your hermeneutics and you interpret literally these Old Testament prophecies, then you would have to say that this is not... symbolizing something other, there's no deeper meaning to it, that Babylon in the book of Revelation 17 and 18 is talking about that city and that country of Iraq.

What does the Bible say about Babylon? Well, one prophecy says it'll be **overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah**. It'll be overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaiah 13, verse 19, in Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans, excellency shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Now I challenge you to look at the history of that city and tell me when that happened. Because that has never happened. How is Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? With what? It was destroyed with fire. And if you look in the history of Babylon, that city was not destroyed that way. We read of nothing happening like this in the history of the city.

Jeremiah, the prophet says the same thing in Jeremiah 50. He says, your mother shall be sore, confounded. She that bear you shall be ashamed. Behold, the hinder most of the nation shall be a wilderness and a dry land and a desert because of the wrath of the Lord. It shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate. Everyone that goes by Babylon shall be astonished and hiss at all her plagues. And then in verse 26 it says this, And verse 39, it says, therefore, wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the island shall dwell there, and the owl shall dwell therein, and it shall be no more inhabited forever, neither shall it dwell in from generation to generation. And then in verse 40 of chapter 50, it says this, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighboring cities are else, saith the Lord, so shall no man abide therein, neither shall any son of man dwell therein. Now, again, I would propose that has not yet happened. It has not been overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Also, the Bible says Babylon, when it's destroyed, **Israel will dwell in peace and safety**. And I don't want to go through all the passage, but you can write down Isaiah 14, verses one to four. It talks about the destruction of that city. In verse four of chapter 14, it says, and thou shalt take up a proverb against the king of Babylon, saying, how hath the oppressor ceased? This golden city ceased. And then the Bible says in verse seven of Isaiah chapter 14, the whole earth is at rest and is quiet. They break forth into singing. In other words, when? Babylon is destroyed, all of the earth will be at rest and quiet, and that includes Israel. Israel will be at rest and quiet. Well, has that happened? Can I ask you, does Israel dwell in safety right now? No, of course not.

And then also, Babylon will be overthrown in a time called the **Day of the Lord**. When will this happen? In a time called the Day of the Lord. Isaiah 13 verse six, how ye for

the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. And then it kind of goes on to talk about the day of the Lord and Babylon being destroyed during that time.

So if you put all of this together, you kind of get the picture. It's going to happen in a time the Bible calls the day of the Lord. It's going to be overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah, meaning with fire. It's going to happen suddenly. And when it happens, no one will dwell in that place after that ever more.

And then another thing the Bible says, no stones would ever be taken from it. Jeremiah 51, 26, they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shall be desolate forever, saith the Lord. Again, when archeologist Robert Caldwell came to Babylon at the end of 19th century, he found entire sections of the city the bricks were taken out of that city and used to build other buildings and villages nearby. He found that to be a fact. So what's the point? The point is, is that Babylon has not been destroyed the way the Bible describes it. And if it hasn't been destroyed yet the way the Bible describes it, That means that it has to rise. It's going to be destroyed yet in the future.

And then here's one final thing. After Babylon is destroyed, **God will restore Israel.** This is Jeremiah 50 verses four and five. In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping, they shall go and seek the Lord their God, and they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces the other word saying come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. When Babylon is finally destroyed what will happen is that Israel will be restored and here they are going to Zion to join themselves to the Lord it says there. What does that describe? That's describing the millennial reign of Christ. During that time, again, if you put all these together, when Christ returns, sets up his literal throne in Jerusalem, this will be right after Babylon's destruction. that God will destroy it, Jesus will destroy it when he comes back the second time and then sets up his reign and Jerusalem will be at rest there. And so, you know, since these things have not yet come to pass, as scripture says, again, I can say this can only mean one thing, that Babylon has to rise. It has to come to power.

The first five visions gave hope to Israel. Now these next visions six, seven, and eight will deal with the theme of God's judgment on sin. The sin of individuals and the sin of a pagan nation.

#### **I. Vision 6 (5:1-4) – The Flying Scroll**

The whole idea here is that the standard by which God one day will judge the sin of all will be his word, his law, right? It doesn't matter what man thinks. It only matters what God thinks. We're not gonna be judged according to man's standards, we're gonna be judged according to God's standards. . . God's judgment is relentless. God's judgment is thorough. God says it'll enter into the house of all those who have violated it, and it will be thorough in its judgment. This is meant to cause fear. that God will judge sin, and specifically here with Zechariah and the people he's writing to, it applies to them.

God will judge the sins of Israel. God will not tolerate sin in the life of his own people. So this is God's hatred and judgment of sin, but not only on individuals, but also on nations.

## **II. Vision 7 (5:5-11) – The Woman in a Basket**

Zechariah wrote this vision in 519 BC. Remember, Babylon had already fallen to the Persians, right? This vision shows that a house will be built in Shinar. Where's Shinar? Shinar is in the land of Babylon. And that it'll rise up again. All right, that's why this is so important. Written in 519 B.C., after Babylon came into ruins, and yet here's a prophecy of Babylon rising again to power. It shows this will happen.

### **He sees five distinct things in this vision.**

- 1) Big measuring basket – represents the evil
- 2) Woman fit inside of it – represents sin
- 3) Lid of lead – she is under divine control
- 4) Transportation of the basket by two women to Babylon (land of Shinar)
- 5) It will be placed on a pedestal in its temple in Babylon

The woman will be let out of that basket when the time is right, and a house will be built in Babylon when the time is right, when God says, From that, it'll be a center of wickedness and sin and evil. And this is yet to come. Do you remember back in Genesis after the flood, the first city built in defiance to God was what? Babylon. Remember, they had a leader. Nimrod, the Bible called him a mighty hunter. And remember what God said to the people after they got off, after Noah and his family got off the ark, the command was to spread out, subdue the earth. And in opposition to that, they all instead came together and said, we're gonna build a tower under the heavens. We're gonna do our own thing. This was rebellion against God. It was a city that began in rebellion. We could say it's the world's first capital city. And we could also say it might be the world's final capital city, because where that evil began... God will destroy it in the end. And the Bible says when Babylon is destroyed, all of heaven will rejoice.

TEXT: Zechariah 5:5-11

TITLE: VISION #7 – THE WOMAN IN THE MEASURING BASKET (EPHAH)

**BIG IDEA:**

**WICKEDNESS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO EXIST IN THE HOLY ASSEMBLY --**

**WICKEDNESS WILL ULTIMATELY BE CONFINED (SEPARATED), REMOVED FROM THE MIDST OF GOD’S PEOPLE AND TEMPORARILY ENSHRINED IN BABYLON**

**INTRODUCTION:**

A Jack-in-the-Box scene – a genie-in-the-bottle scene – here we have a woman who personifies wickedness being confined in an ephah and carried off to be worshiped in her own temple in Babylon. This passage is a nice corollary to the teaching in 1 Cor. 5 on the necessity for church discipline – sexual immorality (in that context) cannot be tolerated in the church. Here the wickedness in question is more probably the idolatry that had so characterized the children of Israel and led to their former captivity. In the end times in preparation for the millennial kingdom, after God restores His people to their land, He will purge the land of wickedness and idolatry. This is a very difficult section, but we will try to explain the significance of each portion of the imagery without going overboard and engaging in a lot of speculation.

**I. (:5-8) WICKEDNESS WILL ULTIMATELY BE CONFINED (SEPARATED) (ISOLATED) – stuffed into the ephah basket**

**A. (:5-6a) Dominant Imagery of the Vision – The Ephah Going Forth**

*“Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, ‘Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth.’ I said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘This is the ephah going forth.’”*

1. Significance of an *ephah* – The Measuring of Wickedness – the fullness of sin

- used for holding dry goods as a measurement
- significance of measuring throughout these visions
- unusual size of this ephah – large enough to hold a woman
- maybe no more significant than it was a common basket used as a container for holding things

2. Traveling ephah – “*going forth*” – The Banishment of Wickedness  
Very public spectacle; seen by all – just like the flying scroll

**B. (:6b) Significance of the Imagery of an Eye – The Dominion of Evil**

*“Again he said, ‘This is their appearance in all the land’”*

Word literally means “eye” like a physical eye; some versions translate it “iniquity” here; I like the explanation of **Merrill**:

**Eugene Merrill**: First, it is necessary to deal with the very much debated “*their eye*” in **v. 6b**. Many versions translate “*their appearance*. . . That may, indeed, be the preferred translation, but that does not solve the difficulties. The LXX and Syriac read “*their iniquity*,” . . . This would solve the problem of meaning nicely, especially in light of “*wickedness*” in **v. 8**, but the text-critical principle of *lectio difficilior* would tend to rule that out.

The answer lies, we submit, in letting Zechariah supply his own fund of language and imagery. He has used the phrase (*bekol haares*), “*in (or through) all the earth*,” three times previously in the book (**1:10, 11; 4:10**) and does so once again later (**6:7**). Without exception it occurs in contexts having to do with **dominion**, especially YHWH’s universal rule. In one of those instances “*eyes*” is part of the formula, namely, in **4:10**. There YHWH identifies the “*seven*” of **v. 10a** as “*the eyes of YHWH which run to and from through the whole earth*.” As argued at that passage, this refers to YHWH’s **omniscience** by which He knows the end from the beginning.

This is likely the import of “*their eye*” in **5:6**. Without repeating the whole cliché, “*their eye which runs to and fro through the whole earth*,” the interpreting messenger compresses it to simply “*their eye ... through the whole earth*.” What he has in mind, if this view be correct, is that the forces of evil, like YHWH himself, assert dominion over all the earth, though in their case it is woefully nonomniscient and pitifully inadequate. Yet, like Satan in the prologue of Job (**Job 1:7; 2:2**), they make the effort oblivious to the sovereignty of YHWH, who will someday call their hand and hold them to account. The ephah and its contents, then, represent the antitheocratic powers of this world with their pseudo-dominion of all the earth. This interpretation has in its favor an inner-hermeneutical method without resort to textual emendation.

C. (**:7a**) Significance of the Lead Cover = Stopper or Lid on the basket  
“*(and behold, a lead cover was lifted up)*”  
Prevents the woman from escaping

**Biblehub.com**: **And behold, the cover of lead was raised** -- This phrase introduces a dramatic moment in Zechariah's vision, emphasizing the unveiling of something significant. The use of "*behold*" signals the importance of what is about to be revealed. The lead cover suggests heaviness and containment, symbolizing the suppression of sin or iniquity. Lead, being a dense and heavy metal, indicates the seriousness of what is being contained. In biblical times, lead was used for various purposes, including weights and seals, which could imply the sealing of judgment or the weight of sin. The act of raising the cover signifies the revelation of hidden sin, aligning with themes of exposure and judgment found throughout prophetic literature.

**and there was a woman sitting inside the basket** -- The woman inside the basket represents wickedness, as clarified in the subsequent verses. In the ancient Near Eastern context, women were sometimes used symbolically to represent cities or personified concepts, such as wisdom or folly. Here, the woman embodies wickedness, possibly alluding to the personification of sin or idolatry. The basket, or ephah, was a common measure for grain, suggesting commerce or trade, which could symbolize the corrupt practices prevalent in society. This imagery connects to other biblical passages where sin is personified or where women symbolize larger entities, such as Babylon in **Revelation 17**. The vision reflects the theme of divine judgment against sin and the eventual removal of wickedness, resonating with the broader prophetic message of restoration and purification.

D. (:7b-8) Significance of the Imprisoned Woman

1. Why a Woman – personifying Wickedness – the identification expressly Made; cf. **Rev. 17:3-5**

*“and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah.  
Then he said, ‘This is Wickedness!’”*

**Lambert Dolphin:** To make the image of the personified wickedness even more vivid, wickedness is depicted as "a woman sitting inside [a] basket" (v. 7). The picture is reminiscent of a kind of genie in a jar. This woman's influence would be capped by the "lead disc" (v. 7). Surely that would be God's concluding act of placing wickedness under wraps.

2. Imprisoned Against Her Will

*“And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening.”*

**Biblehub.com:** The act of shoving the woman into the basket signifies the containment and control of wickedness. This imagery suggests that God is taking action to restrain and limit the influence of sin among His people.

**Eugene Merrill:** That a woman could be contained in a five-gallon vessel is, in actual life, impossible. But in a vision such things are not only possible but frequently insisted upon in order to draw attention to the surreality of the experience and its divine origination.

## **II. (:9) WICKEDNESS WILL ULTIMATELY BE REMOVED FROM THE MIDST OF GOD’S PEOPLE**

A. Significance of the Winged Women – Divine Agents to Facilitate Sanctification

*“Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork,”*

**David Guzik:** Some regard these women as agents of evil because storks were unclean animals, but here they seem to do the work of God in sending the wicked woman back to Babylon.

Probably symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification; on the other hand if these women were actually involved in building the temple in Shinar, it could be argued that they were evil agents. Since they were transporting wickedness against her will, it seems like they should be viewed as divine agents.

B. Significance of the Elevation of the Ephah – Power Over Wickedness

*“and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.”*

Wickedness did not want to get lifted up and removed against her will

### **III. (:10-11) WICKEDNESS WILL TEMPORARILY BE ENSHRINED IN BABYLON**

A. (:10) The Question of Destiny

*“I said to the angel who was speaking with me, ‘Where are they taking the ephah?’”*

Where is Wickedness ultimately headed? How about those who practice evil?

B. (:11a) The Ultimate Futility = Building a Temple in Babylon

*“Then he said to me, ‘To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar’”*

The Pride of man from the beginning of history has sought to establish his own temple and exalt his own accomplishments – cf. the Tower of Babel

This is a shameful temple in a shameful land.

**John MacArthur:** The destination of the women bearing the basket was Shinar, an older word designating Babylon (cf. Ge 10:10). The older word is used possibly to recall the Tower of Babel as a symbol of opposition against God (cf. **Ge 11:2**). There it will be placed in a “*temple*” and set on a base or pedestal as an idol. Again the vision is unmistakably looking forward to the final Babylon of **Rev 17, 18** at the second coming of Christ (cf. **Mal 4:1-3**).

C. (:11b) The Ultimate Idolatry = The Worship of Wickedness

*“and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal.”*

**Eugene Merrill:** Reference to Shinar is tantamount to reference to Babylon, for that city becomes the very epitome of humanistic independence of and resistance to God and His sovereignty. It was at Babylon, in the land of Shinar, that the rebel human race erected a great ziggurat, the purpose of which was to frustrate God’s mandate to “*be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth*” (**Gen. 1:28; 9:1**). The men of Babylon had said, “*Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the surface of the whole earth*” (**Gen. 11:4**). From that time Babylon became synonymous with arrogant human

independence, the very fountainhead of antitheocratic social, political, and religious ideology.

**Biblehub.com:** The "*basket*" containing wickedness being set on a "*pedestal*" signifies the elevation and recognition of sin in a prominent position. A pedestal is typically used to display something of importance or to give it prominence. This imagery suggests that wickedness will be openly displayed and perhaps even celebrated in the land of Shinar. This can be connected to the broader biblical theme of the rise of evil before its ultimate downfall, as seen in **Revelation 17-18**, where Babylon is depicted as a symbol of end-times rebellion against God. The setting of the basket on a pedestal also implies a temporary triumph of wickedness, which will ultimately be judged and destroyed by God.

\* \* \* \* \*

### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What benefit would the people of Zechariah's day have derived from this difficult to understand passage?
- 2) How has God promised to defeat wickedness in the last days as recorded in the Book of Revelation?
- 3) How does this view of separation compare to God's command to the church to exercise discipline in removing wickedness from the assembly?
- 4) How does the world worship wickedness today? What idols have we had to cast out of our lives?

\* \* \* \* \*

### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Dr. Richard Bacon:** (Notes from his audio message on [SermonAudio.com](http://SermonAudio.com)) – Most commentators get this passage wrong. They find too many things in the passage that just are not there. This is the most difficult passage I have preached in my 15 years as pastor here. Rabbinic view: historical approach: all the wickedness was carried away in the captivity and purged there. **Matthew Henry** says this is talking about fraudulent commerce. An ephah is a measurement of dry goods (somewhere between 5 and 9 gallons). Lead stopper weighs 90 pounds. The exact size is not that important. It is a standard measure. The Jews had 3: an omar (a little less than a peck – a couple of pounds); ten of those make up an ephah; ten of those make up a homar. Warning against diverse measures = having a large and small ephah depending on whether you are buying or selling. Others: it is talking about materialism in general. They thought too much about this world's goods and not enough about God. That would preach ...

but it is not what Zechariah is talking about. The fundamental teaching in this passage: when God prospers the church spiritually he also purges the church of sin

God is there purging wickedness from the land. Review of **verses 1-4**: a reassertion of the curse of the law. Here we have a vindication of the righteousness of God in banishing wickedness from His church. 3 Signs of a true church:

- 1) It must preach the true gospel;
- 2) The ordinances of God must be rightly administered;
- 3) Church discipline – look to join a church that is willing to kick you out; will put your feet on a righteous track and will let you know when your feet get off that righteous track.

The idea of **measuring** occurs over and over in the book of Zechariah. The ephah refers to the full measure of sin; sin is replete; the cup is full. The bucket is going to be full of wickedness – he takes the heavy lead lid and pushes the woman into a space where normally she would not fit. (cf. **Matt. 23:32** – talks about the measure of the Pharisees’ wickedness had become full; then God destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Also **1 Thess. 2:16**) Once it is measured it is removed. We have the Word of God, particularly the law, to measure what is sin. It is measured and then taken out of the land by the 2 women -- **Eccles. 5** – two are better than one = the certainty of it happening?? (**Amos 3:3**). Not called angels here. There were two angels at Christ’s resurrection (**John 20:12**).

He casts the lead on her mouth – whose mouth (“*the mouth thereof*”)? It looks like a stopper; regardless, the wickedness is being contained.

- 1) Wickedness Measured;
- 2) Wickedness Removed;
- 3) That removal made permanent

But outside of the church, wickedness is enthroned and virtually worshipped (even though they don’t call it wickedness) -- Set up in an idol house and actually worshipped.

Application: We need to protect our children from the influences of wickedness. Get out of Babylon and get back to Jerusalem where we are building the temple of God. (**2 Cor. 6:14ff** – pretty strong antithesis). There is a cumulative effect of sin; it builds up in our system. The barrel does not get full on the first day. We become more tolerant as sin builds up. Those in a position of sin have a responsibility to limit or restrict sin and to punish evil doers (not reform them). When the bucket of sin gets full, God will remove it. Repent before I come and take the candlestick away. The final outcome of sin is banishment.

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=41706805>

**Theo Laetsch**: A woman is chosen as the symbol of wickedness because of the alluring, captivating, deceptive power of sin. (cp. **Judg. 14:15 ff.; 16:5-20; Prov. 2:16-19; 7:7 ff.; 9:13 ff.**) Wickedness by its very nature is not willing to be caged, confined to narrow limits. It longs for liberty to roam about at will. Yet in spite of her violent

effort to gain her liberty, the woman is hurled back into her prison, and the “*weight*,” literally, the stone, such as were used to cover large openings (cp. **Gen. 29:2 f.; John 11:38, 41**) “**of lead**” was replaced over the opening end of the ephah. . .

[Application to the necessity of Church Discipline]

The Holy Land is for holy people. While even the justified and sanctified believers have need of daily forgiveness, wickedness, manifest rebellion against God, cannot be tolerated in God’s holy Church, the communion of saints. It must be removed by removing the wicked man or men (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:9-13).

**F. Duane Lindsey:** Israel’s corporate sin, associated with idolatry, will be removed from her land. . . Returning the wickedness of idolatry to its place of origin in Babylon apparently will set the stage for final judgment on Babylon (**Rev. 17-18**). Its removal from Israel will prepare the way for Christ’s second coming and millennial kingdom (**Rev. 19-20**).

**Charles Feinberg:** In Babylon culminates all that defies God and his righteousness on earth. Godlessness of every sort, including that of Israel, will find its place there.

**Lambert Dolphin:** Given the part that Babylon plays in the eschatological drama of the closing days of this present age, the removal of wickedness to Babylon might have been in preparation for the final conflict between good and evil. **Isaiah 13-14**, and, especially, **Jeremiah 50-51**, place a revived Babylonian empire at the center of the final contest between God and “*all the nations of the earth*” that have been gathered into the Near East for history’s finale. But God will triumph, for He has full control over evil. That can be seen in His ability to pack up evil and literally ship it to the center of wickedness where He is able to deal with it conclusively at the end of the age.

**Thomas Constable:** The angel explained that the woman represented wickedness. He picked her up, threw her down into the middle of the basket, and shut the lead cover over her (cf. **2 Thess. 2:6-8**). Obviously some conflict was involved; “*Wickedness*” did not want to be restricted. Perhaps Zechariah saw a woman, instead of a man, because the word “*wickedness*” in Hebrew is feminine. Here the woman represents the sum total of Israel’s sins, wickedness being the opposite of righteousness (cf. **Prov. 13:6; Ezek. 33:12**).

**Matthew Henry:** He sees the woman thrust down into the ephah, and a talent, or large weight, of lead, cast upon the mouth of it, by which she is secured, and made a close prisoner in the ephah, and utterly disabled to get out of it. This is designed to show that the wrath of God against impenitent sinners is,

1. Unavoidable, and what they cannot escape; they are bound over to it, concluded under sin, and shut up under the curse, as this woman in the ephah; he would fain flee out of his hand (Job 27:22), but he cannot.
2. It is insupportable, and what they cannot bear up under. Guilt is upon the sinner as a talent of lead, to sink him to the lowest hell. When Christ said of the

things of Jerusalem's peace, Now they are hidden from thy eyes, that threw a talent of lead upon them.

**David Roper:** Do you see what all this is? Zechariah is given, in this series of visions, a number of truths related to what the New Testament calls our "sanctification"--how we are set apart for God. And I see here a series of levels of truth, almost like a layer cake, or a sandwich--**four principles** which carry all the way through the Scriptures, from beginning to end. The first is the principle of law. God says, "*You shall be holy, for I am holy,*" and he has never rescinded that command. It is true that we are not under the specific statements given to Israel; we need to be clear about that. We do not have to keep the sabbath literally, although we do keep it in its spiritual sense now--the sabbath rest. We do not need to abstain from eating an ossifrage any longer. You can eat one if you can find out what it is! We are not under that specific law; but we are under law to God, in the sense that his character is still there. He has not removed that. We are to be holy because he is holy, and this principle runs right through the Scriptures.

Right under that is the next layer, the repeated statements of the resources of God, the power that is available in Christ. How do you respond to the law? You lay hold of Christ. This is shown in the symbol of the lamp stand. Grace is extended to us at any time. Whatever the requirement, there is always an adequacy in Christ.

Then, underneath that, there is this picture of the principle of sin itself having been dealt with. This too is found all through the Scriptures. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." You have been set free from the dominion of the flesh--the habits and the old way of doing things which have dominated your life for so long.

And underneath that, going back to the picture of Joshua the high priest, is the astounding forgiveness of God. Even when you have failed in everything--when you look at the law and turn your back on it, or look at the law and try to keep it in your own flesh and you fail--beneath everything else is this wonderful forgiveness of God. He picks you up, brushes you off, says, "Let's have another go at it, but let's do it the right way this time." All these truths are evident repeatedly throughout Scripture.

Where does all this originate? This is made clear in the final scene, toward the end of chapter 6. Let's begin reading with **verse 9** . . .

This is saying that for the first time in history, there will be a King and a Priest on the throne at the same time. For the first time in history it has been sanctioned by God that a Priest/King will rule. And the crown, which is taken from the exiles, is to be placed on his head. He is to be the King among God's people, and he is called the Branch. If you go back to the other prophets in the Old Testament--Isaiah, Jeremiah--you find that the Branch is Messiah, the Lord Jesus himself. He is the One who makes it possible. He does it all, when we are willing to crown him as King, and to keep that crown in the temple. You notice that the crown is to remain in the temple as a memorial to the exiles. And it is to remain in our lives as a memorial of the time when we crowned Jesus Christ as Lord in our lives. If we have never done that, then these truths are not available to us.

But if we have, if we have genuinely made him King and Lord of our life, then all of the resources portrayed for us in this visual way are ours.

TEXT: Zechariah 6:1-8

TITLE: VISION #8 – THE FOUR CHARIOTS – PATROLLING THE EARTH TO BRING JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL’S ENEMIES

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE EXECUTION OF JUDGMENT (AGAINST ISRAEL’S WICKED ENEMIES) APPEASES THE WRATH OF GOD WHO WILL ULTIMATELY BE VICTORIOUS**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The wrath of God is going to be satisfied one way or another. Christ’s propitiation upon the mercy seat via His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross can satisfy God’s wrath for those who repent and place their faith in the Savior. But for those wicked enemies who refuse to submit to God’s rule, God’s wrath will ultimately be appeased via the execution of judgment. Israel’s enemies found this to be the case. After having been used by God in a disciplinary fashion, they demonstrated their heart of unrighteousness and cruelty in excessively tyrannizing God’s people. This final night vision in the book of Zechariah shows God’s judgment going forth against these nations.

**I. (:1-3) THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE FINAL NIGHT VISION – GOD GOES FORTH IN POWER AND JUDGMENT**

A. (:1a) Introduction

*“Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold”*

B. (:1b) The Four Chariots

*“four chariots were coming forth”*

**John Mackay:** In the first vision the prophet had seen horses which had patrolled the earth. Now the time for reconnoitering was past. Action was called for, and it is chariots that are presented to his view. Although used for the conveyance of kings and other notable persons, these were principally military vehicles. They symbolize the Lord’s power (**Isa. 66:15; Hab. 3:8**). That there are *four* of them seems to refer to the worldwide scope of their mission (**2:6; 6:7**).

**Richard Holdeman:** Not a racing vehicle here; Two-wheeled offensive weapon of war pulled by a couple of horses; pre-cursor of the tank

C. (:1c) The Two Bronze Mountains

*“from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains”*

**Charles Feinberg:** The original employs the definite article, *the two mountains*; that is, Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. The chariots ran through the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

**Biblehub.com:** **Bronze** is a metal associated with strength and judgment in the Bible. The use of bronze here may symbolize the enduring and unyielding nature of God's purposes. In the construction of the Tabernacle and Temple, bronze was used for the altar and other items related to sacrifice and judgment, suggesting a connection to divine justice and purification.

D. (:2-3) The Four Groups of Powerful Colored Horses (each group associated with a chariot) – “*all of them powerful*” (alternate reading – rather than just a reference to the dappled horses) – then vs. 7 would also refer to all 4 groups of horses

1. Red Horses

*“With the first chariot were red horses”*

War and bloodshed

2. Black Horses

*“with the second chariot black horses”*

Famine and death

**Theo Laetsch:** Black symbolizes famine with all its horrors. (Cp. **Rev. 6:5.**)

3. White Horses

*“with the third chariot white horses”*

**F. Duane Lindsey:** triumph and victory

4. Dappled Horses

*“and with the fourth chariot dappled horses”*

Not used elsewhere so it is hard to know what this signifies

## **II. (:4-6) THE BASIC EXPLANATION OF THE ELEMENTS – GOD ULTIMATELY WILL AVENGE EVERY WRONG AND ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH**

A. (:4-5a) Introduction – Asking for an Explanation

1. The Question Introduced

*“Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, ‘What are these, my lord?’”*

2. The Response Introduced

*“The angel replied to me”*

B. (:5b) The Explanation of the Four Chariots

*“These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth.”*

**John Mackay:** “*the four winds of heaven*” are used to represent powerful forces, especially of God’s judgment (**Jer. 49:36; Dan. 7:2; Rev. 7:1**). One symbol – the chariots and their horses – is being explained by another, more obvious symbol. These are the forces which shape events in the world. What is more they are forces that carry out the Lord’s purpose throughout the earth.

**Biblehub.com:** The “*four spirits*” can be understood as divine agents or forces sent by God to execute His will on earth. The number four often symbolizes universality or completeness in the Bible, as seen in the four corners of the earth (**Isaiah 11:12**). These spirits may also be connected to the four horsemen in **Revelation 6**, representing God’s sovereign control over world events.

**F. Duane Lindsey:** The divine title, *the Lord of the whole world*, is a millennial designation describing the universal rule of Messiah over the earth during the future Kingdom Age (cf. **Micah 4:13**).

C. (:6) The Explanation of the Four Groups of Colored Horses

1. Red Horses – skipped – must be self-explanatory – no need to mention
2. Black Horses  
    *“with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country”*
3. White Horses  
    *“and the white ones go forth after them”*
4. Strong, Dappled Horses  
    *“while the dappled ones go forth to the south country”*

**III. (:7-8) THE BASIC EXECUTION OF THEIR MISSION – GOD’S WRATH WILL BE SATISFIED**

A. (:7) Mission Defined = Patrolling the Earth for Judgment

*“When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth. And He said, ‘Go, patrol the earth.’ So they patrolled the earth.”*

B. (:8) Mission Executed = Appeasing the Wrath of God

*“Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, ‘See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north.’”*

**John MacArthur:** As a result of God’s judgment of His enemies, His wrath can rest. God has been avenged by this action, particularly in regard to the power from the N being judged finally. This likely refers to the final Babylon (cf. **Rev 17, 18**). Until this judgment is done and God’s wrath rests, the kingdom can’t be established (**Rev 19, 20**) with the Messiah on His throne.

\* \* \* \* \*

### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Does our view of God allow for such a militaristic approach to judgment?
- 2) Does this passage increase the depth of our appreciation for the propitiation provided by our Lord Jesus Christ?
- 3) Why should God's enemies beware of what is in store for them?
- 4) How secure are we in the knowledge of God's absolute control over history as He works out His sovereign program for subduing the rebellious nations and establishing His kingdom on earth? How does this give us confidence to carry out the mission with which He has charged us?

\* \* \* \* \*

### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**John Mackay:** The final vision brings the series to an end by returning to the same theme as was found in the first: the Lord's supremacy over the whole earth, and the outworking of his providential control for the good of his people. The similarity of theme is reflected in the similarity (but not identity!) of the imagery. The intervening visions had been concerned with Israel's own relationship with the Lord, and now that that has been dealt with, it is time to resume what had seemed to be the delayed intervention promised in the first vision. The Lord's people could not expect to see their foes vanquished and the kingdom of God ushered in until their own relationship with the Lord had been put on a right footing. God's timetable is not determined by the need to punish the peoples who reject his rule, but by the need for his own people to be purified and ready to enjoy all he has prepared for them. When that is accomplished, he will ensure that no outside power will disrupt their peace and their enjoyment of fellowship with him

**Thomas Constable:** Because of the geography of Palestine all of Israel's enemies came against her from the north or from the south; the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Arabian Desert on the east prohibited major foreign invasions from those directions. Since the chariots went in compass directions we should probably understand their judgment to be universal (cf. **2:6; Jer. 49:36; Ezek. 37:9; Rev. 7:1**). They went north and south out of Palestine, but they executed judgment in every direction. The total picture is of God executing His judgments against all nations that oppose Israel.

**Carl Jones:** (audio sermons)

Brass serpent referred to in **John 3** – judgment that God hung on the pole; judgment will come out of Jerusalem in the last days – Mt. Olive and Mt. Kidron  
Same group of angels referred to in **chap. 1**

**Rev 6** – the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse –

Babylon – main persecutions have come from the north; they will catch the worst of it; political, economic and religious system

**Ezek 36-39** – great battle of Armageddon – invade Israel from North

**Richard Holdeman:** God Goes on Offense (audio sermons) (amil perspective)

When evil prevails, we are tempted to think, “I can’t believe God let that happen!” We question whether God is paying attention. God does see what is going on and He is involved and He is actively ruling over all the affairs of men and nations for the sake of His people. We can continue to serve God in confidence, knowing that this is the case. God’s people were seeking to rebuild in difficult circumstances while their enemies round about them seemed to be resting comfortably. That is not the end of the story. God does have His eye on His people. This is part of His plan. Sermon Points:

- God is aware of all things
- He is actively involved in bringing these things about
- God’s Providence includes His active governance of all men and nations; His activity is comprehensive
- The Purpose of God’s Involvement in the World is to Bring Peace to His People and Glory to Himself

**Lambert Dolphin:** God will execute His judgment over the nations of the world in two ways:

- A. By Appeasing God's Wrath Against the Gentile Nations (**6:1-8**)
- B. By Installing God's Priest-King as Ruler Over All Nations (**6:9-15**).

The mission of the horses and chariots supplies the central theme to all eight visions, for they acted as a pair of book-ends at the front and back of the visions. Together, the eight visions say more than that the temple must be rebuilt and the leadership revived; they argue that God's kingdom in the whole world would be renewed and governments that had opposed His kingdom would be totally vanquished. . .

The colors of the horses figure prominently in the eighth vision, as they did in the first. *"With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses--strong steeds"* (**vv. 2-3**). These horses bear a strong resemblance to the four horsemen of **Revelation 6:1-8**. Generally it is said that red indicates martyrdom, white stands for victory, black stands for famine, and dappled (or "pale"), a mixture of some white on a darker background, points overall to death. In spite of what some allege, more seems to be implied by the vividness of such detail than the four comers of the globe. . .

*"The one with the black horses is going to the north country"* (**v. 6a**). If the vision has both a now (fulfilled) and a not-yet (fulfilled) aspect about it, as many prophecies do, then this text points both to ancient Babylon (a country north and east of Jerusalem, approached from a road leading north out of Jerusalem) and to an eschatological country (or countries) where God would prepare for His concluding acts by sending first a time of deep famine--either in modern Iraq (ancient Babylon) or, perhaps, Syria--

then a victory over one or more of these countries--with "the white [horses which] are going after [the black ones]" (v. **6b**)--in the latter days, i.e., the time connected with the second coming of our Lord.

**T. Michael Crews:** The idea is these nations angered God by their treatment of His people Israel and now God is satisfied because He has sovereignly defeated His enemies. The exiles Zechariah saw this happen when Babylon, the nation who once thought they were running the show, were defeated by the Persians. The Babylonians hadn't been defeated by military might: God defeated them. Zechariah reminds them God is running the show because He defeats all of His enemies. Does God defeat all of His enemies? Oh yes. There is no enemy that can stand against our Sovereign God. In this present world, God is defeating all of His enemies. Satan would like you to believe He is running this show, but over and over God defeats the devil's plans by bringing good even out of the worst circumstances. The Cross of Christ is the best example of God's sovereign victory over the devil. Death seems to run the show in this world, snuffing out the lives of the young, the innocent, the helpless. But God defeated death at the resurrection of Christ, opening the door for all who believe to be resurrected too. Every time throughout history when it seems goodness will die and evil will triumph, God comes through and sovereignly brings victory. The Bible reminds us that there will come a day when God's victory will be final and complete, and all of His enemies will be destroyed forever. It may look dark and grim, we may sometimes be alarmed or confused, but always remember: God is running this show: He is undefeated and will always remain undefeated.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **Various Interpretations of the Significance of the Two Mountains:**

**Thomas Constable:** The next thing Zechariah saw in his night visions was four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains. Chariots were instruments of judgment, and bronze is a color that often carries this connotation in Scripture (cf. **Exod. 27:2; Num. 21:9**). Bronze was used to defend against attackers (**Isa. 45:2; Jer. 1:18**), so perhaps impregnability is also in view. Perhaps the mountains represent the gateway to heaven from which these agents of judgment come. Another view is that they were Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives with the valley between being the Kidron Valley. A third possibility is that they are the two parts of the Mount of Olives that will split apart when Messiah returns to the earth (cf. **14:1-8**). Nevertheless they are "*bronze*."

**Johon MacArthur:** *two mountains . . . bronze*. Representing the reality of God's judgment on the nations who attack Israel, the two mountains are probably Mt. Zion and the Mt. of Olives, where the Lord will return and judge (cf. **Joel 3:2, 12, 14; Zec. 14:4**). This valley, called Jehoshaphat ("*Jehovah judges*") could refer to the Kidron Valley between these two mountains. Jews, Christians, and even Muslims have long taught that the last judgment will be there. The bronze has a symbolic relationship to judgment as in the case of the bronze serpent (**Nu 21:9**) and/or the bronze altar (**Ex 27:2**), where sin was dealt with by God.

**F. Duane Lindsey:** Bronze seems to symbolize righteous divine judgment against sin (cf. **Rev. 1:15; 2:18**). . . It is doubtful that actual mountains are intended since these were made of bronze. In the first vision God was angry with the nations that felt secure (**Zech 1:15**); in this vision He was satisfied with their just judgment (cf. **Rev. 19:2, 15-19**).

**G.N.M. Collins:** The mountains of brass are symbols of immutability and strength. “The Prophet no doubt understood by these mountains the providence of God, or His hidden counsel, by which all things have been decreed before the creation of the world; and hence he says, that they were mountains of brass, as they could not be broken” (**John Calvin**).

TEXT: Zechariah 6:9-15

TITLE: CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS – THE ULTIMATE KING-PRIEST

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE COMING MESSIAH WILL REIGN AND MINISTER PEACE AS BOTH KING AND PRIEST FROM THE TEMPLE WHICH HE WILL BUILD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The difficult work of the remnant in the days of Zechariah had tremendous significance. For the rebuilding of the temple prefigured that future eschatological day when the Messiah would return to build His glorious temple and reign as both king and priest – an amazing confluence of these two very exalted anointed offices. (cf. how our system of government maintains its checks and balances between the executive, legislative and judicial branches) The Messiah would come as the prophesied Branch to powerfully extend his reign over all the earth. He would establish peace and righteousness and confirm the prophetic Word of the Lord.

**I. (:9-11) THE CROWNING -- THE SYMBOLIC CORONATION OF JOSHUA**

A. (:9) Divine Authority of the Symbolic Coronation

*“The word of the Lord also came to me, saying”*

Important section – dealing with the culmination of all of history

B. (:10a) Important Role of the Returning Remnant

*“Take an offering from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah”*

**John MacArthur:** Jewish exiles who remained in Babylon, but who had come bearing gifts for the building of the temple are identified.

**Biblehub.com:** **take an offering from the exiles** -- This phrase refers to the Jewish exiles who returned from Babylonian captivity. The offering signifies a contribution for the rebuilding of the temple, symbolizing the restoration of worship and community. The exiles' return fulfills prophecies of restoration, such as those in **Jeremiah 29:10-14**, and highlights God's faithfulness to His covenant people.

**from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah** -- These individuals are likely leaders or representatives among the returning exiles. Their names are significant: Heldai means "worldly," Tobijah means "Yahweh is good," and Jedaiah means "Yahweh knows." These names reflect the diverse experiences and divine purposes in the lives of the exiles. Their involvement underscores the communal effort in the restoration process.

C. (:10b) Urgency of the Acting Out of the Drama

*“and you go the same day”*

D. (:10c) Privileged Setting of the House of Josiah

*“and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon”*

E. (:11a) Value of the Symbolic Crown

*“Take silver and gold, make an ornate crown”*

Required great sacrifice in terms of the cost of the offering;

Not fashioned like any ordinary crown

**John MacArthur:** Zechariah was to make not a High-Priest’s crown or turban, but an ornate crown, one constructed of many circlets, a majestic crown (like the one on the returning Messiah in **Rev 19:12**).

**John Mackay:** The word “crown” in the original is a plural noun, but it is improbable that more than one crown is meant. Sometimes plurals are used in Hebrew to indicate a superlative, so that the idea would be of the ultimate or supreme crown. The mention of the two metals, moreover, makes it likely that what is described is a crown consisting of multiple rings of metal.

It is possible that 2 crowns were made: one of gold and one of silver; one for Joshua and one for Zerubbabel; and that the text goes on to just give the details about the prophetic crowning of Joshua ...

**Eugene Merrill:** But the text before us makes perfectly good sense with the double personality and double crown perspective it presents. What the narrative is saying is that crowns are made, only one of which is to be worn by Joshua. One could even translate the relevant passage, *“Take silver and gold and make crowns, placing one on the head of Joshua the high priest”* (v. 11). This admittedly presupposes an elliptical expression of something like *“make crowns (and of these one is Joshua’s) and place it,”* etc. Such ellipsis is a common feature of biblical Hebrew.

F. (:11b) Surprising Coronation of a Priest

*“and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.”*

**II. (:12-13) THE COMING BRANCH -- THE MESSIANIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRANCH = THE ULTIMATE PRIEST-KING**

A. (:12a) Divine Interpretation of the Symbolic Coronation

*“Then say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts’”*

B. (:12b) Significance of the Designated Prophetic Name of Branch

*“Behold, a man whose name is Branch,  
for He will branch out from where He is”*

**Charles Feinberg:** The thought is rather the growth of the Messiah, the King-Priest, from lowliness and obscurity to note and eminence from His own nation and country.

**John Mackay:** It seems to point to the Messiah as a legitimate descendant to David. He will not be a foreigner.

C. (:12c-13a) Repeated Emphasis on His Divine Mission = Building the Temple  
*“and He will build the temple of the Lord.  
Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord”*

D. (:13b) The Combined Role of King and Priest

1. Reigning as King

*“And He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne”*

**Charles Feinberg:** The first verb speaks of the dignity of the office, and the second speaks of the exercise of its authority. He sits! Priests never sat in their ministry. There was no seat in the tabernacle nor in the temple for the priests. Theirs was an unfinished work; His is a gloriously complete one.

2. Ministering as Priest

*“Thus, He will be a priest on His throne”*

3. Administration of Peace Via His Combined Role

*“and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.”*

**John Mackay:** *“counsel of peace”* here is that deliberate policy which procures peace”

**Chris Appleby:** Never again will the King lead the people astray against the warnings of the priests. Never again will the king need to keep the priests in order. Both roles will be exercised by the one person.

**John Whitcomb:** He is one person, with two distinct functions, yet in total harmony.

### **III. (:14-15) THE CULMINATION OF PROPHECY -- THE MEMORIAL CROWN AND VALIDATION OF DIVINE PROPHECY**

A. (:14) The Crown of Remembrance

*“Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the Lord to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen the son of Zephaniah.”*

B. (:15a) The Certainty of the Fulfillment of the Mission = the Building of the Temple  
*“Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the Lord.”*

Even though the temple will be built by the Messiah; He will use human Instruments; Some commentators take this as a reference to the wealth of the Gentiles being used in the building of the temple; but in context it seems to be a reference to the regathering of the Jewish people

C. (:15b) The Confirmation of the Lord’s Word

*“Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.”*

D. (:15c) The Condition of Obedience for Participation in the Project

*“And it will take place if you completely obey the Lord your God.”*

\* \* \* \* \*

**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) How can believers argue so strongly against the future rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem in light of the forceful language used in this prophecy?
- 2) What are the characteristics of a Branch and why is that name applied to the Messiah?
- 3) Are we presently submitting to the rule of the Lord and availing ourselves of His high priestly ministry on our behalf?
- 4) How can obedience be set forth as a condition in vs. 15 if the Lord is assuring His people that He will accomplish this important mission?

\* \* \* \* \*

**QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**J. Carl Laney: The Crowning of Joshua**

1. The symbolic action (6:9-11)
2. The Messianic significance (6:12-15)

The crown was probably ornate, made up of several circlets, and had commemorative significance.

*“Branch”* = a messianic term used by the prophets in referring to both royal and priestly functions (cf. **Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23:3-5; 33:14-26; Zech. 3:8**).

He will be what his name implies – one who shoots up and branches out as a strong, vigorous plant.

Although the fulfillment of the prophecy is certain, it is only through obedience that those promises will be realized personally.

**Fred Hartman:** The crown to be made would honor Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen (or Josiah), who had given the materials to make it. They would not be given the honor of wearing it, however, for the crown was to be placed in the Temple and left there. According to Jewish tradition, this crown was hung in a window at the very top of the

Temple as a reminder of God's promises regarding the coming of an eternal King-Priest who would rule over the earth. All the visions of Zechariah, as well as the Word of the Lord given to him in **chapter 6**, point prophetically toward the ultimate coronation of the Messiah King-Priest. This event will be the consummation of all Jewish hopes and aspirations. With the crowning of the Messiah, sin and unrepentant sinners will have been destroyed, and the curse upon the earth will have been removed. The Messiah will rule over the entire world, and creation will rejoice and cry out, Victory at last!

**David Baron:** This is one of the most remarkable and precious Messianic prophecies, and there is no plainer prophetic utterance in the whole Old Testament as to the Person of the promised Redeemer, the offices He was to fill, and the mission He was to accomplish.

**Charles Feinberg:** Those who do not differentiate between the Church and Israel tell us that we are to take this temple as a spiritual one, namely, the Church of Christ spoken of in the New Testament. This is undoubtedly the millennial temple referred to in **Isaiah 2:2-4; 56:6, 7; Micah 4:1-7; Ezekiel 40-48.**

**Meyer:** Through a branch the fullness of the Root is carried to the fruit, which swells in ruddy beauty on its extremity, and presently falls into the hand of the wayfarer; so Jesus is the blessed channel of communication between the fullness of God, and the thirsty wastes of human need. We sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to our taste.

**F.B. Meyer:** Man's nature demands a Priest. Conscious of sin and defilement, he rears an altar wherever he pitches his tent; and, selecting one of his fellows, he separates him from the ordinary duties of life, and bids him stand as mediator and priest between God and himself. . .

Man also requires a King. God had designed to meet this need by Himself by being Israel's King, that they should not be "*like other nations*," but a peculiar people unto Him. They were following natural promptings, when the Israelites came to Samuel and said: "*We will have a king over us, that we also may be like the other nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.*" Man needs a leader – one whom he may admire and obey; from whom he may receive indisputable commands; and in whom his faculty of veneration may find satisfaction. The days when there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes, were far from being either contented or prosperous. . .

As Priest, Jesus pleads the merit of his blood; as King, He exerts power on our behalf. As Priest, He pacifies the guilty conscience; as King, He sends thrills of his own victorious life into our spirits. As Priest, He brings us nigh to God; as King, He treads our enemies under his feet. It is of great importance to us all to think of our Saviour in this dual aspect. On the one hand, we get all the benefit of his Cross and Passion; on the other, all the benefit of his resurrection and session at the right hand of God.

**David Roper:** Zechariah is given, in this series of visions, a number of truths related to what the New Testament calls our "sanctification"--how we are set apart for God. And I see here a series of levels of truth, almost like a layer cake, or a sandwich--four principles which carry all the way through the Scriptures, from beginning to end. The first is the principle of law. God says, "*You shall be holy, for I am holy,*" and he has never rescinded that command. It is true that we are not under the specific statements given to Israel; we need to be clear about that. We do not have to keep the sabbath literally, although we do keep it in its spiritual sense now--the sabbath rest. We do not need to abstain from eating an ossifrage any longer. You can eat one if you can find out what it is! We are not under that specific law; but we are under law to God, in the sense that his character is still there. He has not removed that. We are to be holy because he is holy, and this principle runs right through the Scriptures.

Right under that is the next layer, the repeated statements of the resources of God, the power that is available In Christ. How do you respond to the law? You lay hold of Christ. This is shown in the symbol of the lamp stand. Grace is extended to us at any time. Whatever the requirement, there is always an adequacy in Christ.

Then, underneath that, there is this picture of the principle of sin itself having been dealt with. This too is found all through the Scriptures. "*Sin shall not have dominion over you.*" You have been set free from the dominion of the flesh--the habits and the old way of doing things which have dominated your life for so long.

And underneath that, going back to the picture of Joshua the high priest, is the astounding forgiveness of God. Even when you have failed in everything--when you look at the law and turn your back on it, or look at the law and try to keep it in your own flesh and you fail--beneath everything else is this wonderful forgiveness of God. He picks you up, brushes you off, says, "Let's have another go at it, but let's do it the right way this time." All these truths are evident repeatedly throughout Scripture.

This is saying that for the first time in history, there will be a King and a Priest on the throne at the same time. For the first time in history it has been sanctioned by God that a Priest/King will rule. And the crown, which is taken from the exiles, is to be placed on his head. He is to be the King among God's people, and he is called the Branch. If you go back to the other prophets in the Old Testament--Isaiah, Jeremiah--you find that the Branch is Messiah, the Lord Jesus himself. He is the One who makes it possible. He does it all, when we are willing to crown him as King, and to keep that crown in the temple. You notice that the crown is to remain in the temple as a memorial to the exiles. And it is to remain in our lives as a memorial of the time when we crowned Jesus Christ as Lord in our lives. If we have never done that, then these truths are not available to us. But if we have, if we have genuinely made him King and Lord of our life, then all of the resources portrayed for us in this visual way are ours.

**Eugene Merrill:** chiasmic structure:

A Joshua the priest is crowned (11b)

B The Branch sprouts up (12a)

- C The Temple is built (12b)
- C The Temple is built (13a)
- B The Branch is enthroned (13b)
- A The priest is enthroned (13c)

**Steven J. Cole: The Coming King-Priest**

Big Idea: Since God will judge all nations and send His King-Priest to reign, we must completely obey Him.

1. God will judge all nations: The vision of the chariots and horses (6:1-8).
  - A. The fact that God will triumph over and judge all His enemies should bring us, His people, great comfort.
  - B. The fact of God's judgment should terrify all that do not know Him.
  - C. The certainty and thoroughness of God's judgment should warn everyone that no one will escape.
  
2. God will send His King-Priest to reign: The coronation of Joshua (6:9-15).
  - A. Christ will be both king and priest.
  - B. Christ will build His temple.
  - C. Christ will be worshiped by all peoples.

**Dr. John C. Whitcomb**: High priests were from Levi and wore no crowns; kings with crowns were from Judah. No mix between the two lines was allowed by God. Uzziah king of Judah wanted to be king-priest and marched into the temple. He was withstood by the high priest Azariah, and was immediately struck with leprosy by God (2 Chron. 26).

TEXT: Zechariah 7:1-14

TITLE: HEARTS LIKE FLINT

**BIG IDEA:**

**HARD HEARTS CLOSE THEIR EARS TO GOD'S COMMANDS AND SUBSTITUTE RELIGIOUS RITUAL FOR LOVING OBEDIENCE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

In the parable of the soils in the New Testament (**Mark 4:20**), Christ taught that there is only one type of heart that is truly good and fertile – that is the heart that submits to God's revelation and carries out His commands. But too often people become stubborn and hard-hearted. They shut their ears to God's revelation – not allowing the truth to penetrate into their conscience. They selfishly choose to indulge their own flesh and seek after pleasure rather than sacrificially loving others and pursuing righteousness and justice. To excuse themselves, they engage in external religious rituals while all of the time hardening their hearts against the pleadings of the Spirit of God. Exposure to God's Word means nothing apart from obedience. Dedication to God's Word means nothing apart from obedience. Just look at the Woes Christ proclaimed against the Pharisees – the teachers of God's Law in His day. One thing God demands: and that is a soft and broken heart that is sensitive to His Word and committed to doing justice, to loving mercy and walking humbly before God (**Micah 6:8**). This passage exposes the desolation and ruin that will result from hardened hearts that close their ears to God's commands and substitute religious ritual for righteous obedience.

**I. (:1-3) THE SELF RIGHTEOUS QUESTION – ISN'T IT TIME NOW FOR ME TO ENJOY SOME WELL-DESERVED RELIEF FROM GOD'S BURDENSOME COMMANDS?**

3 Incriminating Characteristics of this Self Righteous Jewish Delegation:

A. (:1) Comfortable in Their Progress -- Historical Context – Rebuilding Work Progressing

*“In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislew”*

B. (:2-3a) Commending Themselves – feeling of entitlement

*“Now the town of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech and their men to seek the favor of the Lord, speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying”*

**Biblehub.com:** had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech -- Sharezer and Regem-melech are likely officials or representatives of Bethel. Their names suggest a Babylonian influence, as "Sharezer" is of Assyrian origin, meaning "protect the king," and "Regem-melech" means "friend of the king." This reflects the historical context of the Jewish

return from Babylonian exile, where many Jews had adopted Babylonian names and customs.

**along with their men** -- The inclusion of "*their men*" indicates that this was a formal delegation, suggesting the importance of their mission. It underscores the communal aspect of their inquiry, representing the concerns of the people of Bethel as a whole. This collective approach highlights the seriousness with which they approached the matter at hand.

B. (:3b) Clueless -- Haven't Got a Clue

*"Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?"*

Commemorating the burning of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC

**(Jer. 52:12-13)**

Viewed the service of God as burdensome.

1. Misrepresenting the Intent of God's Command
2. Misrepresenting the Extent of Their Obedience

**Parallel texts** referring to the service of God as burdensome:

**1 John 5:3** *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."*

**Matt. 23:4** *"They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger."*

The Pharisees are the best example of self-righteous Jews

**Mal. 3:13-15** *"You have said, 'It is vain to serve God'"*

## **II. (:4-10) THE SCATHING RESPONSE FROM AN ANGRY GOD – YOU HAVE TRIED TO SUBSTITUTE RELIGIOUS RITUAL FOR LOVING OBEDIENCE**

"scathing" = bitterly severe

How do we know God is angry with them here? Vs. 12 *"great wrath"*

A. (:4-7) Response #1 – Your Motivation and Perspective Are All Wrong

1. (:4-6) Your Motivation Is Selfish

*"Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, 'Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves?'"*

cf. **1 Cor. 6** – *the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body*

**John MacArthur:** Zechariah pointed out that they were not fasting out of genuine sorrow and repentance, but out of self-pity (cf. **Is 1:10-15; 58:3-9**).

**Biblehub.com:** This rhetorical question challenges the sincerity and motivation behind the people's religious observances. It calls into question whether their fasting was genuinely directed towards God or merely a ritualistic practice devoid of true devotion. This echoes the prophetic theme found in **Isaiah 58:3-7**, where God critiques superficial religious acts that lack justice and compassion. The inquiry serves as a reminder that true worship involves heartfelt obedience and a genuine relationship with God, rather than mere external observance.

**John Mackay:** The question is not focusing on the origins of their fasts, but the religious motivation behind them. . . This note of contrition and self-humiliation seems to have been absent in the practice of the exiles. They were sorrowing for what they had lost, but in an exercise of self-pity, rather than with due recognition of the righteousness of God's judgment against them and their nation. They should rather have acknowledged that they were rightly afflicted by God. Fasting was an exercise designed to induce a right perception of their spiritual condition as before God.

2. (:7) Your Perspective (Your Understanding of History) Is Flawed

*“Are not these the words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited?”*

**John MacArthur:** The important matter is not ritual, but obedience. It is obedience to God's Word that brought in the past great joy, peace, and prosperity to Israel, and that covered the land during the time of David and Solomon. If the present generation in Zechariah's time substitutes ritual for obedience, they too will lose the joy, peace, and prosperity they were enjoying.

**Biblehub.com:** The Negev is a desert region in the southern part of Israel, while the foothills refer to the Shephelah, a region of low hills between the coastal plain and the central highlands. These areas being "inhabited" suggests a time of security and stability, as these regions were often vulnerable to external threats. The mention of these areas indicates the extent of the land's prosperity and the comprehensive nature of the population's well-being. It also serves as a geographical reminder of the full scope of God's blessings when the people were obedient, contrasting with the desolation that followed their disobedience.

B. (:8-10) Response #2 – You Have Missed the Heart of God's Commands --  
It's not about external religious ritual . . . but about loving others in a practical way (cf. the Sermon on the Mount)

Introduction:

*“Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah saying, ‘Thus has the Lord of hosts said’”*

1. Positively – What God Requires (chiastic structure: A B B A)
  - a. Summary: Justice  
*“Dispense true justice”*
  - b. Specifics: Kindness and Compassion  
*“and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother”*
2. Negatively – What God Forbids
  - a. Specifics: Don’t Take Advantage of the Helpless  
*“and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor”*
  - b. Summary: Don’t Seek to Harm Others  
*“and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.”*

### **III. (:11-14) THE STUBBORN REJECTION OF GOD’S WORD – DON’T EXPECT GOD TO BAIL YOU OUT (COME TO YOUR AID) WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EARS AND HEART AGAINST HIS COMMANDS**

#### **A. (:11-12a) Process of Stubborn Rejection of God’s Word**

1. (:11) Turned a Deaf Ear  
*“But they refused to pay attention”*  
*“and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing.”*
2. (:12a) Hardened Their Hearts  
*“they made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets.”*

Look at all that we learn about God’s gracious provision of His revelation in this verse and His employment of human spokesmen

#### **B. (:12b-14) Provoking of God to Severe Judgment**

1. (:12b-13) Description of God’s Response
  - a. (:12b) God’s Response Described as Great Wrath  
*“therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts”*
  - b. (:13) God’s Response Described as Reciprocal  
*“‘And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,’ says the Lord of hosts”*
3. (:14) Demonstration of God’s Response
  - a. Dispersion among the Gentile nations  
*“but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known.”*

**Charles Feinberg:** Up to that hour they had been scattered primarily to Assyria and Babylonia. If the text is to be permitted to have its full significance and plain sense, it must look on to the world-wide dispersion of the Jews, consequent upon their rejection of their Messiah, the greatest exhibition of their obdurate disobedience to the words of the Lord and his messengers.

- b. Desolation where there had been great blessing  
*“Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.”*

**Biblehub.com:** **o that no one could come or go** -- This phrase highlights the complete isolation and abandonment of the land. The absence of movement indicates a breakdown of society and commerce, reflecting the totality of the judgment. It also underscores the fulfillment of prophetic warnings, such as those in **Jeremiah 25:11**, where the land would become a ruin and a waste, devoid of its people.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) In what area do we struggle with stubbornness and pride in refusing to soften our heart and listen to God’s words of instruction and reproof and correction?
- 2) Are we more focused on external ritual or on the internal obedience of the heart and God’s command to love Him and to love our neighbor?
- 3) How does God work to soften our hearts? How can we evaluate whether our hearts are hardened or soft?
- 4) Do we serve God from the right motivation and from the right perspective?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**John MacArthur:** The temple was more than half done; all obstacles to the construction were removed by the decree of Darius confirming the decree of Cyrus (cf. **Ezr 6:1-14**); and all was going very well. This gave rise to a question by the delegation from Bethel. The questions involved the continuation of a national fast to mourn the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. Though Jerusalem had no walls yet and there were many ruins (cf. **Hag 1:4**), now that the temple was being finished, they were sent to inquire of the Lord and the priests whether they needed to continue the fast. The question is answered negatively in **chap. 7** with two messages and positively in **chap. 8** with two messages. Each of the 4 messages was given to impress upon the people **the**

**need to live righteously.** As with **chaps. 1-6**, the prophet began historically and then moved prophetically to the time of the Second Advent of Christ.

**John Mackay:** Here we have a narrative concerning an incident that took place two years after Zechariah's night visions. The Temple was by then half-completed, and people were wondering about how this should affect their pattern of living and worship. By asking if it was permissible to stop certain fasts which had been instituted in the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem, they exposed themselves to a searching divine critique of their heart motivation.

**Eugene Merrill:** What may have appeared to be an innocent question about the propriety of fasting was instead a question fraught with hypocrisy, as YHWH's response puts beyond any doubt. It therefore appears that the query to Zechariah by the Bethelites may not have been so much a matter of piety as it was of posturing. May it not be that the delegation was trying more to impress the prophet than to gain instruction from him? . . .

The Negev was in the south of Judah and consisted largely of desert. For the Negev to be populated, one must envision times of unusually suitable climatic conditions and freedom from hostility. This is even more true of the Shephelah, the "lowlands" between Judah and the western plains. Its towns were historically in constant danger from the Philistines and other marauders who could easily penetrate their relatively weak and vulnerable defenses. Only when Israel and Judah were unusually strong could the conditions Zechariah describes prevail. His point is very apparent: If mighty and prosperous Jerusalem and Judah were overthrown for failing to heed the words of warning of earlier prophets, how much more important was it for his own audience to pay strict attention to those words in a day when their community was struggling for its very survival. This is no time for hypocritical self-indulgence.

**Charles Ryrie:** The fast in the seventh month commemorated the assassination of Gedaliah, the Jewish governor of Judah (**2 Kings 25:23-25**). Though done from good motives, these fasts were nevertheless man-made, were not commanded by God, and were observed self-righteously (**v. 6**). Had the people heeded God's word through the prophets; they would not have experienced captivity and would have had no need for the fasts (**v. 7**).

**Theo Laetsch:** The Searcher of hearts saw the germ of self-satisfied, hypocritical work-righteousness sprouting in the hearts of the people. The root of self-righteousness, like that of idolatry, is self-service, placing one's own efforts, one's own pleasure or pride, above the service of God and complete submission to His will, His Law and His Gospel. This self-righteousness, unless nipped in the bud, would prove even more ruinous to the nation than the coarse idolatry of which the fathers had been guilty.

**T. Michael Crews:** Making God Glad

You make God glad when:

I. WHEN YOU DO WHAT YOU DO FOR HIM. (**v. 1-7**)

- II. WHEN YOU DO UNTO OTHERS WHAT'S RIGHT. (v. 8-10)
- III. WHEN YOU DO WHAT HE TELLS YOU TO DO. (v. 11-14)

**Paul T. Murphy:** The Contradiction of True Religion [www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com)

**Context:** Why are **chaps. 7-8** here? **God's People must be Faithful to God's Covenant --**

Questions about fasting? Zechariah's name means "*God Remembers*" – God has not forgotten His people. God has remembered His covenant and the people must remember what is required of them in that covenant. The exile happened because they had failed to obey fully (as at end of **chap. 6**). So these promises of blessing in **chap. 8** hinge on their obedience.

Fasts in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> month for 70 years (**2 Kings 25**);

Note the tone of the question; Now that we are back in the land do I still have to do this? Apparently they were tired of it all. They had had enough. They were indifferent to all of these things.

**(:4-7) Error of Empty Formalism** – doing it for all the wrong reasons; your life must be consistent with God's Word; He demands obedience, not ceremonial ritual; Your prayers are useless

**Steven J. Cole: Avoiding Spiritual Sclerosis**

Big Idea: Outward religion without inward reality results in spiritual sclerosis.

To avoid this disease, we need to know three things:

1. Outward religion is a danger for all of God's people.

Our text reveals three warning signs that tell us we're drifting into outward religion:

A. Manmade: We focus on rules and rituals not ordained by God.

B. Motions: We go through meaningless activity in the name of spirituality.

C. Motive: We need to ask why we do what we do spiritually.

2. Outward religion leads to spiritual sclerosis.

A. Signs of developing spiritual sclerosis:

(1) Refusal to pay attention to God (**7:11**).

(2) Refusal to submit to spiritual authority (**7:11**).

(3) Refusal to hear God's Word (**7:11**).

B. The results of spiritual sclerosis:

(1) Your heart grows hard toward God's Word (**7:12**).

(2) You incur God's fierce discipline (**7:12**).

(3) God is silent when you cry for help (7:13).

(4) God turns our prosperity into desolation (**7:14**).

(5) God visits our sins on our descendants.

Outward religion without inward reality leads to spiritual sclerosis.

What's the solution?

3. Inward reality with God is the prescription for spiritual health.

A. Inward reality means living unto the Lord, not for self.

B. Inward reality with God results in outward obedience in our relationships with people.

### **Dr. Jerry Harmon: The Problem of Empty Worship**

**Introduction:** They're simply just going through the motions of worship, but there's no enthusiasm, there's no real passion in their worship for God, no excitement. And so their worship is not really meaningful. It's empty worship. Now, God desires worship, beloved, but he despises worship that is empty, where there's no heart, there's no real meaning in what is going on, where people are just going through the motions of worship.

According to verse number one, the day is December 7, 518 BC, according to our Julian calendar. That is the fourth year of the reign of King Darius in Babylon. And the reason I cite that date is because it's two years, and the temple is going up. Great progress is taking place. The walls are up. And the city of Jerusalem was prospering. After these exiles had returned, remember, it was in ruins. Well, two years later, things are really moving along. The city is beginning to be rebuilt. God was keeping his promises to the people of Jerusalem, the ones he made through the prophet Zechariah. Things were looking up in many ways. However, there was a spiritual problem. And the problem was about this idea of worship, and this needed to be addressed. What good would it be to have a brand new, beautiful temple if the people that came to that temple had empty worship or meaningless worship? What good would that temple be? Again, God values true worship, worship that comes from the heart.

### **Three indicators, three signs of empty worship**

#### **I. When Ritual Replaces Reality**

These are four fasting days that they came up with on their own. Now they were all related to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. You remember, this was kind of the 9-11 of Israel, the terrible tragedy that they all will never forget, when Nebuchadnezzar came into Jerusalem and he destroyed it and destroyed the temple in 586. Well, all these fasts were to commemorate that sad event. A fast in the fourth month is to remember when Nebuchadnezzar breached the wall of Jerusalem. The fast in the fifth month is to remember when the temple was destroyed. The fast in the seventh month is to remember the assassination of the Jewish governor, Gedalia. And then the fast in the tenth month was to remember the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem. Now, these Jewish people had been observing these fasts for over 70 years, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem. They've been doing these four fast days that they all prescribed in and of themselves.

These fasts had long lost their meaning to these people when they were going through the motion. And God did not command them to do these fasts. This was something they did on their own. The only fast that God commanded his people to do was on the Day of Atonement. This is according to Leviticus 16, 29. And it had to do with the yom kippur, when the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat.

According to Zechariah, outward religion without inward reality leads to spiritual hardening of the heart. And we see this in verse number 12, where it says, yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone. They became hardened in their heart.

## **II. When Worship is Man-Centered Rather than God-Centered (:4ff)**

Outward religion is done for the person who is doing it, not to glorify God. And so, again, notice the question that God asks in verse five, when you fast and mourn in the fifth and seventh month, even those 70 years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me? God says, were you doing this for me?

We need to examine our motives and whatever we do, we need to make sure, are we doing it for the right reason? We need to ask ourselves these questions. Am I doing it from pride or self-righteousness? Am I doing this to seek status? Am I doing this to seek the applause of others? Or am I doing this absolutely, totally unto God? This is my service unto the Lord. This is my act of worship unto God because He's so worthy for everything that He's done for me. I'm not doing it for man, I'm doing it for God. Am I doing this because I wanna work off or cover up guilt for some sin?

## **III. When Worship is a Substitute for Obedience (:7ff)**

God says, I'm looking for a righteousness, not just on the outside, but starts on the inside with your thoughts and your motives where you will not think evil against your brother. You will not harbor sinful thoughts. But on the other hand, you'll show justice and mercy and compassion. **1 Sam. 15:22**

Essentially he's saying remember your fathers and remember this, the reason why the temple was destroyed And the reason why people went off into exile is because of their disobedience, not because they didn't bring sacrifices, but because their worship was meaningless and they were disobedient. That's the reason the temple was destroyed. Look in verse 11.

When God's people harden their hearts against him, he can get pretty tough in their discipline to get their attention. And you know, the harder you harden your heart against God, the harder the hammer that God has to use. And they were ignored by God as well. Look at verse 13. Therefore it has come to pass that as they cried, and they would not hear. So they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts. So here's another consequence of disobedience. You harden your heart against God, you ignore God's word. When you cry out to him, he's gonna ignore you. He's gonna return the favor. When a crisis comes, you're not hearing God's word, you're not listening. God says, well, I'm not listening to you either.

TEXT: Zechariah 8:1-23

TITLE: GOD'S FAVOR EXTENDED TO BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES (IN CONNECTION WITH HIS PRESENCE)

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE BLESSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FUTURE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS WILL ATTRACT THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE GENTILES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Only the presence of the Lord can guarantee our ultimate blessing. Here we have a tremendously encouraging passage as God points to the reality of His curses upon disobedient Israel as the guarantee that future restoration and blessing will be just as certain. Everything centers around the sovereign decree of God who alone can motivate the obedience of His people that is essential for blessing. This blessing for restored Judah will then spill over and attract the attention of the Gentiles who will flock to Jerusalem in pursuit of that same blessing.

**2 MESSAGES**

**I. (:1-17) MESSAGE #1 – GOD GUARANTEES FUTURE RESTORATION TO ZION AS THE CENTER OF TRUTH AND PEACE IN HIS KINGDOM – GOD'S SEVEN CONFIDENT ASSERTIONS --**

Introductory Formula:

*“Then the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying,”*

These are things that God is going to do without fail; you can count on God.

A. (:2) Jealous for Zion – God is exceedingly jealous for Zion

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. Jealous to reconcile Zion to her privileged position of intimacy

*“I am exceedingly jealous for Zion,”*

2. Jealous to punish all of Zion's enemies with great wrath

*“yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.”*

**John Mackay:** There had been times when this jealousy worked for judgment against the people because of their waywardness which God could not allow to undermine his relationship with them (**Ps. 78:58**). But now this jealousy is operative for their good. It will not allow anyone or anything to disrupt his desire to see them blessed (**Ezk. 36:5-6; Joel 2:18; Nah. 1:2**). Zechariah is assuring the disheartened people of the fundamental fact of God's disposition towards them for good, and his determination to see all that he has promised to them come true. Nothing will be allowed to interfere with his purpose.

**Biblehub.com:** The repetition of God's jealousy underscores the depth of His commitment and the urgency of His actions. "*Great fervor*" suggests a burning intensity, highlighting God's active involvement in the affairs of Zion. This fervor is not only about protection but also about the restoration and future glory of Jerusalem. Historically, this reflects the period after the Babylonian exile when the Jewish people were returning to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Theologically, it points to God's unwavering faithfulness to His promises, as seen in other scriptures like **Isaiah 62:1-2**, where God expresses His determination to make Zion a praise in the earth. This fervor can also be seen as a type of Christ, who zealously cleansed the temple (John 2:17), reflecting His commitment to purity and true worship.

B. (:3) Dwelling in Zion – God will return to dwell in the midst of Zion  
Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. Relocation of the Presence of God

*“I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.”*

2. Renaming based on the Character of God

a. City of Jerusalem -- Truth

*“Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth”*

b. Mountain of Zion -- Holiness

*“and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.”*

C. (:4-5) Safety in Zion – God will make all people safe and secure in Zion  
Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. Safe for the Old Folks

*“Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age.”*

**Biblehub.com:** In ancient times, the presence of elderly people in public spaces was a sign of societal stability and blessing, as they were often the first to suffer in times of war or hardship. This promise of restoration is a reversal of the curses found in **Deuteronomy 28**, where disobedience led to destruction and exile. The prophecy also reflects the hope of a restored community where life can flourish.

**Each with a staff in hand because of great age:** The staff symbolizes both the wisdom and the frailty that come with old age. In biblical times, a staff was a common tool for support and guidance, often associated with shepherds and leaders. The mention of "great age" highlights the blessing of a long life, which is seen as a reward for righteousness in scriptures such as **Proverbs 16:31**. This vision of elderly people living

to a ripe old age in Jerusalem is a testament to God's faithfulness and the fulfillment of His covenant promises, as seen in passages like **Isaiah 65:20-22**, which also speak of longevity and prosperity in the restored Jerusalem.

2. Safe for the Young Children

*“And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.”*

**Biblehub.com**: Play is an expression of joy and freedom. In a historical context, play was a natural part of childhood, but it also required a peaceful environment. The ability for children to play in the streets without fear indicates a time of peace and divine protection. This scene contrasts with the earlier periods of war and exile, showing a complete transformation. Theologically, it points to the Messianic age, where peace and righteousness will reign, as prophesied in **Isaiah 11:6-9**, where harmony is restored to all creation.

D. (:6) Omnipotence (God is Able) in Zion – Don't doubt God's ability to pull this off. God is able! There is nothing too difficult for God.

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. Human Inability

*“If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days,”*

2. Divine Ability

*“‘will it also be too difficult in My sight?’ declares the Lord of hosts.”*

E. (:7-8) Restoration in Zion – God will regather His people and live in their midst in Zion.

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. Deliverance

*“Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west”*

2. Regathering

*“and I will bring them back”*

3. Establishing

*“and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem;”*

4. Fellowship – Enjoyment of the relationship

a. Beloved People

*“and they shall be My people”*

b. Loyal God  
*“and I will be their God.”*

c. Based on the Character of God  
*“in truth and righteousness.”*

F. (:9-13) Blessing (Prosperity) in Zion – God will turn the tables on the fortunes of His people.

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. Beginning Exhortation – Keep working Hard / Fulfill your Ministry / Persevere

*“Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets, those who spoke in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built.”*

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase is an encouragement to be diligent and courageous in the work of rebuilding. In the context of Zechariah, it is a call to the returned exiles to continue their efforts in reconstructing the temple despite opposition and discouragement. Biblically, "*strong hands*" symbolize readiness and determination to accomplish a task, as seen in other scriptures like **Joshua 1:6-7**, where strength and courage are commanded for the fulfillment of God's promises. . .

The temple is referred to as the "*house of the LORD of Hosts*," highlighting its significance as the dwelling place of God's presence among His people. The temple was central to Jewish worship and identity, serving as a symbol of God's covenant and faithfulness. The rebuilding of the temple was not just a physical task but a spiritual renewal, pointing forward to the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who referred to His body as the temple (**John 2:19-21**), signifying the new covenant and the indwelling of God's presence through the Holy Spirit.

2. The Blessed Future will be different than the Cursed Past

a. The Cursed Past

1) No Reward for Labor

*“For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for animal”*

2) No Peace or Security

*“and for him who went out or came in there was no peace because of his enemies”*

3) No Friendship or Partnership

*“and I set all men one against another.”*

b. The Change in Treatment

*“But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ declares the Lord of hosts.”*

c. The Blessed Future

1) (:12) Peace and Prosperity

*“For there will be peace for the seed;  
the vine will yield its fruit,  
the land will yield its produce  
and the heavens will give their dew;  
and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all  
these things.”*

2) (:13a) Blessing to the Nations

*“It will come about that just as you were a curse among  
the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I  
will save you that you may become a blessing.”*

3. (:13b) Concluding Exhortation -- Do Not Fear /  
Persevere – Keep Working Hard

a. Take Courage

*“Do not fear;”*

b. Work Hard

*“let your hands be strong.”*

G. (:14-17) Responsibility in Zion – God will motivate the obedience that surely leads  
to blessing

Introductory Formula:

*“For thus says the Lord of hosts”*

1. (:14-15a) Sovereign Decree of the Lord – You Can Count on God’s Blessing

a. Sovereign Decree to Curse

*“Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers  
provoked Me to wrath,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I have not  
relented,”*

b. Sovereign Decree to Bless

*“so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem  
and to the house of Judah.”*

2. (:15b) Simple Command of Encouragement

*“Do not fear!”*

3. (:16-17) Streamlined List of God's Requirements (chiastic structure ABBA)
  - a. (:16) What One Must Do – Love what God loves (and Do that)

*“These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates.”*
  - b. (:17) What One Must Avoid – Hate what God hates (and Don't do that)

*“Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,” declares the Lord.”*

**John MacArthur:** As always, the promised blessings are connected with obedience to God's righteous standards. Such obedience can only be brought about by the power of the Spirit in the life of one who has been transformed by God's grace through faith. These standards are reminiscent of **Pss. 15:1-5; 24:4; Pr 6:20-22.**

## **II. (:18-23) MESSAGE #2 -- THE BLESSING ON THE JEWS WILL SPILL OVER TO THE GENTILES WHO SEEK GOD'S FAVOR**

Introductory Formula:

*“Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying,”*

A. (:18-19) Fasting Turned Into Feasting for Judah – Pursuit of Truth and Peace

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

*“The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah so love truth and peace”*

**Biblehub.com:** **Therefore you are to love both truth and peace:** This exhortation connects ethical living with divine blessing. Truth and peace are central to God's covenantal relationship with His people. Loving truth involves integrity and faithfulness to God's word, while loving peace involves harmony and reconciliation with others. These virtues are essential for the community's well-being and reflect the character of God, who is both truthful and the Prince of Peace (**Isaiah 9:6**). The call to love truth and peace is echoed in the New Testament, where believers are urged to live in truth and pursue peace (**Ephesians 4:15, Romans 12:18**).

B. (:20-22) Favor of God Sought by the Gentiles – Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

*“It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord; and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will also go. So many peoples*

*and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord.”*

C. (:23) Fellowship of Gentiles with Jews – Pathway to the blessings associated with the Presence of God

Introductory Formula:

*“Thus says the Lord of hosts”*

*“In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”*

**Biblehub.com:** **will tightly grasp the robe of a Jew:** Grasping the robe signifies a desire for guidance, blessing, or association with someone of spiritual significance. In the cultural context, touching a garment could imply seeking favor or protection. The Jew here represents the people of God, through whom divine truth and salvation are revealed. This act symbolizes the Gentiles' recognition of the Jews' unique relationship with God.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How does God demonstrate His jealousy for the total allegiance of His people?
- 2) What characteristics of restored Jerusalem are mentioned in this passage?
- 3) How can we be sure that God will fulfill what He has promised here?
- 4) What does the assurance of God’s presence with us mean to us today?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**John MacArthur:** Israel restored in millennial glory will be the means of blessing to all the world (cf. **Is 2:2-4; Mic 4:1-5**). Gentiles from around the world will make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to entreat the Lord. This signifies salvation of people from all over the world during the kingdom, fulfilling **Ps 122**. In the days in which the messianic kingdom on earth is inaugurated the Jews will truly be God’s messengers as originally intended, and will bring multitudes to Christ. The 10 to 1 ratio represents a vast number of Gentiles who will come (cf. **Ge 31:7; Lv 26:26; Nu 14:22; 1Sa 1:8; Ne 4:12**). The Messiah, in the midst of millennial Israel, will be the attraction of the world. People seeing the Jews so blessed in their kingdom, will demand to go and meet the Savior King.

**John Mackay: vs. 6 – No Reason for Incredulity**

*‘The remnant of the people’* are of course the descendants of the community which had experienced God’s judgment (**Ezr. 9:8, 13; Isa. 10:20; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; Hag. 1:12**). They considered God’s promises of prosperity to be quite out of touch with the everyday realities around them (**Hag. 1:5-11; 2:15-19**). What was *‘marvelous’* was what was hard to do, something that seemed incapable of realization. Such skepticism breeds when the situation is assessed only in terms of worldly resources and possibilities, and faith fails to grasp the reality of God’s power (**Gen. 18:14; Num. 11:23; 2 Kgs. 7:2; Mk. 10:23-26**). The attitude to be adopted is always that of Abraham, the father of the faithful. *‘He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised’* (**Rom. 4:20-21**).

**Eugene Merrill:** This continuation of the long oracle on fasting commences with a reversal of the tragic circumstances with which the previous section ended. There YHWH had described the scattering of the pre-exilic covenant people to the four winds and the empty desolation of the land that ensued (**7:14**). This had been done because of the hypocritical infidelity of the nation down through the years (**7:9-12**). Zechariah’s own contemporaries were guilty of the same perfidy, especially with regard to a falsely pious and self-interested practice of commemorating the collapse of Jerusalem and the Temple by a ritual of fasting. They were therefore in danger of suffering the same consequences.

But this is not what YHWH plans or desires for His people. Rather, He is “zealous” for them, so much so that He will display His great wrath on their behalf. Throughout this passage there are the overtones of YHWH’s guardian protection of Judah. A dominant motif reflecting this concern and his capacity to achieve it is the self-ascription “YHWH of hosts.” As noted previously, this epithet, which is a favorite of the postexilic prophets speaks of YHWH’s omnipotent and universal sovereignty. In an age when tiny Judah had nearly been swallowed up by the mighty empires of the day and when even after her restoration from Babylonia she had found life to be tenuous at best, it was important that her prophets assure her that YHWH, her God, was the commander of the empire of heaven. The leader of hosts was sufficient for the times.

Of a total of 36 occurrences of “YHWH of hosts” in Zechariah, 15 are in this one oracle, the highest concentration of the phrase in the OT with the possible exception of Malachi. Even more remarkable, it occurs six times in the present passage alone, a passage that focuses narrowly on eschatological restoration. So humanly impossible will that be, it can come to pass only by the resources of the Almighty One.

**Bruce Ray: Love Truth and Peace** (Juanita Community Church)

**Introduction:**

Answers the question of chapter 7 regarding “Do I need to continue the fast of the fifth month?” They should have known that this was a time for rejoicing. Their hearts were not right. They had been fasting not for the Lord, but for themselves. They were concerned with form over substance; outward ritual over inward character; these rituals

made them feel better about themselves; but God looked upon their hearts; more concerned with how they lived their lives day by day. The question which they asked revealed the hearts of those who asked it. The answer reveals much about the heart of God.

### **I. (:1-8) Rejoice in the Knowledge of how much God Loves You**

God is very jealous for His people = sense of intense love; His fierce commitment to His people even when they turn from Him. The essence of God's covenant = **vs. 8**. (**Eph. 3:17ff** – love of Christ for us; **John 16:25ff** – “*the Father Himself loves you*”; **Rom. 5:5** – love of Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit) How will you respond to the love of God? Don't overly analyze it. Believe it; accept it; appreciate it; love God back – **1 John 3:1**. Do not fear. Amazing love, how can it be! We don't deserve it; we can't understand it.

### **II. (:9-19) Rejoice in the Knowledge of what God has Planned for You**

Plans ultimately to prosper us; not to harm us; gives us hope; focus on the future; God is determined now to bless you materially and spiritually; people living to ripe old ages as well as youth enjoying their chance to play; Don't be afraid of the future; don't dwell in the past; don't allow our past to cripple us; enjoy the freedom we have as God's children; What you believe about the future (Eschatology) shapes how you live in the present; God is determined to bless you; God is going to bless you; love the truth

### **III. (:20-23) Rejoice in the Knowledge of how God will Use You**

The salvation of the Lord is going to extend from Israel to many peoples and nations; We see this fulfilled in the first fruits of harvest at Pentecost; people from every language heard the gospel message and responded; But we see it especially in the evangelistic and missionary efforts of the church throughout the ages as it obeys the Great Commission; the command is not just to proclaim, but to invite; God has changed my life; He has worked in my heart; let us go seek the Lord together; Come with me; Will the nations really come? Sounded ridiculous to the Jews of Zechariah's day. They certainly were not influential people in the world's eyes. What difference can we make by our personal testimony? (**Rev. 11:15**)

#### **Steven J. Cole: Blessed to Bless**

Big Idea: Because God has promised to bless us abundantly, we should be a blessing to others.

1. God has promised to bless His people abundantly.
2. God's blessed people should be a blessing to others.

#### **Dr. Jerry Harmon: Blessed to be a Blessing**

##### **Introduction:**

I'm just a beggar trying to tell other beggars where to find bread, right? That's what salvation is all about. God has called us to himself. He's given us abundant blessings. But if we keep it to ourselves, we're not doing right. To bottle up the blessings of God for ourselves is to fall into rampant selfishness, which is the sin of this American culture, to be so very selfish.

The whole theme of the chapter can be summed up in verse 13, the last part of verse 13. If you look down there where it says in verse 13, "*so will I save you. and ye shall be a blessing.*" God pours out His grace on us so that we will basically pour it out on others.

Now, the text falls into two parts. And they're both kind of prefaced with the phrase, *the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me saying,*

- I. (:1-17) God's promised blessing on Israel
  - A. (:1-8) God's promise to restore his blessing on the nation of Israel after years of captivity.
  - B. (:9-17) Application of this promise to the remnant of Zechariah's day
- II. (:18-23) God's blessed people are to become a blessing to all the nations

### I. THE PROMISE OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

#### **Two truths concerning God's promised blessings.**

##### **A. God's Blessings Depend on Him, Not Us**

Eleven times in this chapter, we read this phrase, *thus saith the Lord of hosts*. These promises are based upon God. And then we also see the name Lord, or Yahweh, the covenant-keeping name of God. That occurs 22 times in this chapter. Over and over, God says, *I will*, or *I am*. He's declaring the things that he's gonna do for his people. This is what I will do. And so all of these promises are based on **God's faithful character**.

Israel's salvation depends on God's purpose and might, not on Israel. And we could say the same. When God promises to do something, when God sets his heart to save someone, it's gonna be according to God, not according to them. God will do it. And so again, here's the whole point. When God determines to do something, there's nothing that can stop it. God will accomplish that. Phil. 1:6

The population had been wiped out by the Babylonian invasion and captivity. The land was desolate and devastated. The idea seemed preposterous to Israel that God was gonna totally restore all these things and the land and the people and save them. It all seemed impossible. But God promised to these people that in the future, Jerusalem will be filled with elderly people. It'll be filled with little children. We see this in verses four and five. There shall be old men and old women dwelling in the streets of Jerusalem.

##### **B. God's Blessings Demand a Response from Us**

First of all, be strong and build the house of the Lord. Look in verse number nine. Look in verse nine. He tells them, just keep doing what you're doing. Build the house of the Lord, *thus saith the Lord of hosts*. Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. And then drop down to verse number 13. Notice what else he tells them. And it shall come to pass that

as ye were a curse among the heathen of house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you and ye shall be a blessing. Notice the next phrase, fear not. And again, he says, but let your hands be strong. So twice he tells them not to fear. He tells them, excuse me, tells them twice to let your hands be strong. He tells them not to fear. And notice verse 15 as well, which says, So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Fear ye not. So again, he says twice to them to fear not. They were trying to rebuild the temple in the face of all of this fierce opposition. Jerusalem was still littered with rubble. They were still in a bad way, even though they were making progress. And God says, Look, I'm going to bless you, but that doesn't mean you sit back and just wait. No, you keep doing what you're doing. **You build the house of the Lord and let your hands be strong. Don't be afraid.**

## II. THE PERPETUATION OF GOD'S BLESSINGS (:13)

Blessing others includes showing them how to find God. . . So if you look at these verses here, this refers to the Jewish people in a time of the millennial reign of Christ. Again, this is all future. during the millennial reign of Christ, God will use them as a light to the nations, to point people to Jesus Christ during the time of the millennium. But these verses, again, also apply to us now.

When our lives reflect the beauty of God's holiness and the beauty of God's truth and joy, people will say, I want what you have. I want what you've got.

TEXT: Zechariah 9:1-17

TITLE: REJOICE IN THE COMING KING

**BIG IDEA:**

**GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD REJOICE IN ANTICIPATION OF THEIR COMING KING WHO WILL VANQUISH ALL ENEMIES AND ESTABLISH PEACE AND PROSPERITY**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Chapter 9** begins the final section of the prophecy of Zechariah which consists of two oracles introduced by the phrase “*The burden of the word of the Lord*” (9.1, 12:1). Many of the earlier themes are revisited and expanded upon. But the focus shifts to the coming Messiah – the preparation for that coming in the judgment of the Gentile nations, the character of the Messiah, and all that He will accomplish in restoring and blessing His people. He is a just King who will reign in peace from Jerusalem over the entire world. Even Gentiles will flock to align themselves in submission under His rule. But first there must be judgment against those wicked nations that had oppressed His chosen people. God’s elect should rejoice in anticipation of their coming King.

**I. (:1-8) THE PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH – THE MILITARY EXPLOITS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT FORESHADOW GOD’S END-TIME JUDGMENTS AGAINST GENTILE NATIONS AND PRESERVATION OF HIS REMNANT PEOPLE**

(Prophetic passage which has both near and far fulfillment)

A. (:1-7a) Neighboring Nations Laid Waste – Military Campaigns of Alexander the Great – Note the glory of God as He lays waste to the false glory of human kingdoms --

1. (:1-2a) Advance Through Aram (Syria)

*“The burden of the word of the Lord is against the land of Hadrach, with Damascus as its resting place (for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel, are toward the Lord), And Hamath also, which borders on it”*

- Ultimate accountability to the sovereign Lord

**John MacArthur:** Re “*Damascus*” – This city was to be the main target of the judgment of God through Alexander upon the capital of Syria, one of Israel’s worst enemies from ca. 900-722 B.C.

2. (:2b-4) Advance Through Phoenicia

*“Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise:  
For Tyre built herself a fortress  
And piled up silver like dust, and gold like the mire of the streets.  
Behold, the Lord will dispossess her and cast her wealth into the sea;  
And she will be consumed with fire.”*

- Futility of human Wisdom
- Futility of human Power
- Futility of human Wealth and Materialism

**John MacArthur:** Re “Tyre” – This city was occupying an island one half mile off-shore, and thought itself to be invincible (cf. **Is 23:1-4**). With walls 150 ft. high in some places, it was such an impregnable city that the Assyrian Shalmaneser besieged it for 5 years and failed to conquer it. Nebuchadnezzar tried for 13 years unsuccessfully. But Alexander, God's judgment instrument, using the rubble of the mainland city destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, built a causeway out to the island and destroyed it in 7 months (ca. 334-332 B.C.)

3. (:5-7a) Advance Through Philistia

*“Ashkelon will see it and be afraid.  
Gaza too will writhe in great pain;  
Also Ekron, for her expectation has been confounded.  
Moreover, the king will perish from Gaza,  
And Ashkelon will not be inhabited.  
And a mongrel race will dwell in Ashdod,  
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.  
And I will remove their blood from their mouth  
And their detestable things from between their teeth.”*

- Futility of human Security
- Futility of human Leadership
- Futility of human Dynasties and Offspring
- Futility of human Pride
- Futility of human Idolatry

**John MacArthur:** This judgment put an end to idolatry for many Philistines who turned to the God of Israel. In the imagery of this verse, the nation is seen as a man with blood in his mouth (from eating sacrifices to idols) and abominations (the other defiled food of idol worship) which are removed. The picture is of conversion to worship the true God.

B. (:7b-8) Remnant in Jerusalem is Spared

1. (:7b) Establishment of a Remnant

*“Then they also will be a remnant for our God,  
And be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite.”*

2. (:8a) Protection of the Remnant

*“But I will camp around My house because of an army,  
Because of him who passes by and returns;  
And no oppressor will pass over them anymore.”*

3. (:8b) Prophetic Confirmation  
“For now I have seen with My eyes.”

## **II. (:9-10) THE PROPHECY OF THE COMING RIGHTEOUS MESSIAH TO REIGN IN PEACE OVER THE WORLD FROM JERUSALEM**

- A. (:9a) Announcement of the Coming Messiah
  1. Anticipatory Tone of Triumphant Rejoicing  
“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!”
  2. Long-Awaited Physical Union of Covenant Ruler and Covenant People  
“Behold, your king is coming to you”

**John MacArthur:** The **two advents of Christ are here compressed** as though they were one as in **Is 61:1-3** (cf. **Lk 4:16, 21**). Actually, **v. 9** refers to His first coming and **v. 10** is His second. OT prophets didn’t see the great time period between the two comings. The church age was a “mystery” hidden from them (cf. **Eph 3:1-9; Col 1:27**).

- B. (:9b) Snapshot of the First Coming of the Messiah
  1. His Unblemished Character = Righteous  
“He is just”

There are no character flaws that anyone could criticize;  
Cf. the requirements for an elder – here you have one who is truly blameless

**John Mackay:** Kings were often arbitrary and unfair in their actions – not least Alexander whose vanity often caused him to act inequitably. But the rule of the Messiah will be fair and just, because he himself desires to do God’s will and has his law within his heart (**Ps. 40:8**). The character of his official actions is determined by his inner attitude towards God (**Jn. 5:30**). Such righteousness had long been associated with the Messiah (**2 Sam 23:3; Ps. 45:6-7; Isa. 11:3-5; 32:1; 45:23; 53:11; Jer. 23:5; 33:15**). In his reign the injustices and perplexities of this world would be eliminated, and equity would prevail. In particular, the Messianic king would meet and fulfil all the requirements of the covenant.

2. His Noble Mission = Accomplishing Salvation  
“and endowed with salvation”
3. His Humble Demeanor (cf. Philippians 2)  
“Humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

**Biblehub.com:** **humble and riding on a donkey** -- The humility of the King is highlighted by His choice to ride on a donkey, an animal associated with peace rather

than war. In ancient Near Eastern culture, kings would ride horses during times of war and donkeys during times of peace. This imagery contrasts with the expectations of a conquering hero and points to the nature of the Messiah's kingdom as one of peace and humility. This prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament when Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey (**Matthew 21:1-5**), symbolizing His peaceful mission.

**John Mackay:** It describes one who knows suffering and misery, and who lives in outwardly insignificant circumstances. When such earthly misfortunes are rightly improved on, they foster an attitude of humble dependence on the Lord (**Isa. 66:2**), and of taking him as a refuge (**Ps. 14:6**). The spirit of the humble sets them apart from those whose eyes are haughty (**Ps. 18:27**) and from proud mockers (**Prov. 3:34**). What they have experienced makes them sensitive to the situation of others. Even if they could, they would not employ force to get their way. Hardly a characteristic of earthly kings!

**John Piper:** So what Jesus meant when he chose that donkey to ride on was this: I am meek and lowly in heart; I am approachable; you can find rest for your souls here; I am not against you, I am for you; I did not come to condemn but to save; I come on behalf of God, my Father in heaven, to reconcile you to him -- to make peace between you and your Maker.

### C. (:10) Snapshot of the Second Coming of the Messiah

#### 1. Establishment of Peace

*“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations”*

**Biblehub.com:** **And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim** -- This phrase signifies the removal of military power and reliance on human strength. Ephraim, representing the northern kingdom of Israel, often relied on military might and alliances for security. The cutting off of the chariot symbolizes a shift from dependence on military prowess to reliance on divine intervention. This echoes **Hosea 1:7**, where God promises to save His people not by bow, sword, or battle, but by His own power.

**and the horse from Jerusalem** -- Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah, is similarly stripped of its military resources. Horses were a symbol of war and strength, often used in battle. The removal of horses indicates a future where trust in God supersedes reliance on military capabilities. This aligns with **Psalms 20:7**, which contrasts trust in chariots and horses with trust in the name of the Lord.

**and the bow of war will be broken** -- The breaking of the bow signifies the end of warfare and conflict. This imagery is consistent with prophetic visions of peace, such as in **Isaiah 2:4**, where swords are beaten into plowshares. It points to a future Messianic age where peace prevails, and instruments of war are rendered obsolete.

**Then He will proclaim peace to the nations** -- This phrase highlights the universal scope of the Messiah's mission. The proclamation of peace extends beyond Israel to all

nations, fulfilling the Abrahamic promise that through his seed all nations would be blessed (**Genesis 22:18**).

2. Exercise of Worldwide Dominion

*“And His dominion will be from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.”*

**III. (:11-17) THE PICTURE OF DELIVERANCE AND PROSPERITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

A. (:11-12) Deliverance of God’s People -- Redemption from Bondage

1. (:11a) Rescuing by the Blood of the Covenant

*“As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you”*

Study Hebrews for the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ, the Passover Lamb slain for us

**John MacArthur:** Why is Israel to be so blessed? It is not because of her faithfulness through the centuries, but because of God’s unfailing devotion to His covenant of blood made with Abraham (**Ge 15:1-10**), which is in force as long as God lives.

2. (:11b) Resulting in Deliverance from the Despair of Prison

*“I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit”*

Study the bondage of sin and of the kingdom of darkness

**John MacArthur:** Prisoners in ancient times were often kept in dry wells or pits, like Joseph was (**Ge 37:24, 28**). The exiles of Israel, pictured as being in a dry well of captivity, suffering, and despair, will be freed because of His unbreakable covenant with them.

3. (:12a) Re-establishing Hope in the Stronghold of the Lord

*“Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope”*

4. (:12b) Restoring their Abundant Fortunes

*“This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you.”*

B. (:13-14) Deployment of God’s People as Weapons of God’s Wrath

Delivered to be used as instruments to serve God’s purposes

1. (:13a) The Bow

*“For I will bend Judah as My bow,  
I will fill the bow with Ephraim.”*

2. (:13b) The Sword

*“And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece;  
And I will make you like a warrior’s sword.”*

3. (:14a) The Arrow  
*“Then the Lord will appear over them,  
And His arrow will go forth like lightning;”*

4. (:14b) The Warpath – The Military Procession  
*“And the Lord God will blow the trumpet,  
And will march in the storm winds of the south.”*

C. (:15a) Defense of God’s People  
*“The Lord of hosts will defend them.”*

D. (:15b) Devouring of God’s Enemies  
*“And they will devour and trample on the sling stones;  
And they will drink and be boisterous as with wine;  
And they will be filled like a sacrificial basin,  
Drenched like the corners of the altar.”*

E. (:16-17) Delight of God’s People

1. (:16a) Pastoral Flock  
*“And the Lord their God will save them in that day  
As the flock of His people”*

2. (:16b) Precious Stones  
*“for they are as the stones of a crown,  
Sparkling in His land.”*

3. (:17a) Pretty Picture  
*“For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs!”*

4. (:17b) Prosperous Feasting  
*“Grain will make the young men flourish”  
and new wine the virgins.”*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What type of false securities and human dependencies have I been delivered from by the Lord?

2) Am I living right now in expectation that the King is coming – rejoicing in anticipation of His arrival?

3) From studying the details of the military campaigns of Alexander the Great, what specific details are reflected in this prophecy here?

4) What type of prosperity will regathered and restored Israel experience in the end times?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**John Mackay:** The task given to Zechariah was to encourage the people to remain true to the Lord by showing them what still lay in the future. This was not achieved by presenting an optimistically unreal picture of their future prospects, but by looking forward realistically and presenting some basic Scriptural truths. Though there seemed from their perspective to be delay, the future glory is no less certain. Themes that had been touched upon in passing in the earlier messages are now dealt with more extensively, and the Messianic focus of the prophetic message is seen even more clearly. These chapters [9-14] are frequently employed in the Gospels and in the book of Revelation, where they are in part fulfilled by Christ's first coming and in part await his return.

**Dr. John C. Whitcomb:** The judgment of God will not be total at the Second Coming. **Isaiah 19** tells of the *remnants* among the Gentiles whom God will save. *Assyrians (19:23ff.)* and *Egyptians (19:18-22)* will join in the worship of God. There will also be *Ethiopian* and *Babylonian* believers (**Ps. 87:4**); *Ammonites (Jer. 49:6)*, and *Moabites (Jer. 48:47)*, *but no Edomites (Jer. 49:7-22; Obad. 1-21; Mal. 1:2-4)*.

**F. Duane Lindsey:** The final division of the book consists of two oracles that look forward to the messianic King and kingdom. . . These two oracles contain numerous passages which are **counterparts to major themes of the eight visions**, thus giving testimony to the unity of the entire Book of Zechariah.

1. The future prosperity of Israel and Jerusalem (first vision, 1:7-17) parallels **10:6-9** (in the first oracle) and **12:6-8** and **14:11** (in the second oracle).
2. The destruction of the nations (second vision, 1:18-21) is reaffirmed in **9:1-8** (first oracle) and in **12:1-6** and **14:1-3** (second oracle).
3. The divine protection and exaltation of Jerusalem (third vision, chap. 2) are further developed in **9:9-17** (first oracle) and in **12:7-9** and **14:4-11** (second oracle).
4. The spiritual cleansing of Israel (fourth vision, chap. 3) is clarified in **10:2-3** (first oracle) and in **12:10-14** and **14:8** (second oracle).
5. The divine enablement of Israel (fifth vision, chap. 4) is explained in **10:1-6** (first oracle) and in **13:1-6** (second oracle).
6. Divine judgment on sinners (sixth vision, 5:1-4) is elaborated in **chapter 11** (first oracle) and in **13:7-9** and **14:12-15** (second oracle).
7. The removal of iniquity from the land of Israel (seventh vision, 5:5-11) results in a condition of holiness in Jerusalem and Judah (**14:20-21**, second oracle).
8. God's judgment on and rule of the whole world (eighth vision, 6:1-8) are reflected in **14:16-19** (second oracle).

## Bruce Ray: The King is Coming

**Introduction:** The key verse is **verse 9**. The remaining chapters of Zechariah (9-14) focus on the character and mission of the coming Messiah. “The last 6 chapters of this prophecy constitute an incomparable treasury of prophetic truth.” **Charles Feinberg**. God’s people should rejoice greatly. Give free expression to that joy. Why? Because the King is coming. Focus our attention on the coming King. (**Matt. 21** – entrance of Christ into Jerusalem to fulfill a portion of this prophecy – royal carpet laid down on Palm Sunday; “*Hosanna*” = “Save now!”)

### 1. Rejoice because your King is Coming to you

“*Behold*” = invitation to look and linger; to drink in the whole scene; **vv. 1-8** prepare the way for **v. 9** – announcing a series of divine judgments against places not very well known to us today. Land of Hadrach located in Syria near Damascus – but not known until recently when some documents were discovered that mentioned an ancient city by that name.

Zechariah describes exactly the path taken by a young military commander named Alexander the Great almost 200 years later. His troops traveled east from Greece; came into Asia Minor; came to the coast of the Mediterranean and swept south towards Egypt. That’s the route they followed. After 2 major defeats, the Persians who were in command of much of the world of that time (under Darius III – following a progression of kingdoms); the Persians disengaged and retreated; instead of pursuing them, Alexander swung south along the coast of the Mediterranean; he added all of these countries to his column. He took Syria (**vv. 1-2**); he took Lebanon and Phoenicia; he took the cities of the Philistines in the south. He took the king of Gaza, tied him behind a horse and dragged him around the city a few times. But after an 11 year deployment, his troops were reluctant to continue on with the military campaigns. After a night of excessive drinking (after he came down with a fever) in the city of Babylon at the age of 32, Alexander the Great died; but recorded incredible accomplishments – his military exploits are only part of his story.

These verses call attention to 2 specific things I want to stress:

- **Battle over Tyre (vv. 2-3)** -- port city of the Phoenicians; commercial center, trade center for routes; very prosperous; built an impregnable fortress that could never be taken; put 2 walls around the entire island; 150 feet high inner and outer walls; they weren’t too afraid of Alexander; had withstood a 5 year siege by the Assyrians and 13 year siege by the Babylonians; when the Greeks came they weren’t too concerned. But Alexander took the new city of Tyre in 7 months; despite a half mile of sea between old Tyre and new Tyre; he had his troops take the rubble and debris of old Tyre and throw it into the sea; built a causeway to the new Tyre; swept the city clean; marched out to the new Tyre and captured it; put 10,000 people to death; shipped out 30,000 in bondage to other places; old Tyre was literally scraped flat like Ezekiel prophesied; the old city would never be rebuilt; but the causeway is still there

- **Taking of Judah (vs. 8)** *“I will defend my temple”* —Will not this temple we just built be in danger against such a commander as Alexander the Great? God assured the people that He will keep it safe. Alexander was arrested by a dream and spared Jerusalem and conferred upon it great privileges. Josephus is very specific here; Alexander the Great bowed down to the Jewish high priest; dream of God going before him; “I have made this mission under divine guidance.”

Alexander’s greatest impact was not military; but cultural; he was a passionate kind of missionary for all things Greek; committed to the creation of a world united by Greek language and culture; a policy followed by his successors; left behind Greek teachers in all the lands they conquered; Why is that important?? Hellenization = his policy. This prepared the way for the future worldwide proclamation of Jesus Christ some 200 years later; Greek culture became the main influence in all of the Mediterranean region; rapid spread of gospel in early NT era; easy to move from one country to another – good roads made for rapid transit between towns; OT itself was translated into Greek = the most common Bible in use at the time of Lord Jesus Christ; What was future to Zechariah is past to us

## **2. Rejoice because your King is Righteous and He has or Dispenses Salvation**

a) He is Just in all that He does; not doing what is best for his own advantage; not selfish; the Lord our Righteousness

b) He has Salvation to give to others -- **John 5:21**

**Col. 1:13-14** – transfers us from domain of sin and darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son; light; characterized by righteousness; How can He do that? By providing that righteousness that God can offer because Christ kept the law perfectly for us; by satisfying divine judgment from the sins we have committed; offering himself as our substitute for our guilt; because of the blood of the covenant he is able to save us from the judgment of God

## **3. Rejoice because your King is Gentle and Peaceable**

a) Few kings are gentle; most want to amass power; this king comes not riding a war horse or driving a chariot, but gentle, riding a colt, the foal of a donkey; approachable; doesn’t strike fear into our hearts to make us want to run away; draws us to Him; not physical force or power that is to impress us but the power of his character; Heb. 7:26; such a high priest meets our need; **4:15** – can sympathize with our weaknesses; yet

without sin. Can identify with us in our weakness; can understand our struggles; has come to deliver us

b) Came to Proclaim Peace; the gospel we proclaim is Good News; Christ came not to condemn, but to save; Zechariah promises us that many will believe and will come to Him

**John Mackay:** It would be wrong to take this portion simply as a prophecy of Alexander and what he did as the Lord’s instrument in the affairs of the land. There is no mention

of Alexander or any human agency at all. The emphasis in this passage is on the fact that it is the Lord that is at work. He determines the outcome of the events of history, and this culminates in the Messiah. We are summoned to look beyond Alexander's day. What happened then is used to teach concerning the Lord's cleansing and restoration of his inheritance, which ultimately issues in the inviolable security of "Never again will an oppressor overrun my people" (9:8). That was not true of Jerusalem after Alexander's day.

**John MacArthur:** Re vv. 13-15 Reminiscent of the Exodus (Ex 19:16-19; Hab 3:13-15), the Lord will protect and empower them (cf. Is 11:11-16; Zec 12:6,8). The initial historical fulfillment of this prophecy came when the Maccabees defeated the Greeks ca. 167 B.C.; the final, complete fulfillment will occur at His Second Advent. The Maccabean triumph is only a pledge and a preview of final triumph over all enemies.

Re "trample on . . . sling stones." This may mean the Jews will easily subdue their enemies as David did Goliath (Jdg 20:16). Or better, it could mean they will contemptuously tread on the harmless missiles cast at them by their enemies. This could depict the futility of Armageddon when the armies of the God-hating world gather in Israel and are destroyed by the Messiah (cf. Rev 16:12-16; 19:11-16). The bloodshed of the godless will be visible in that day, from one end of the land of Palestine to the other, like blood splattered on the corners of the altar of sacrifice from basins which caught it when the animal was slain (cf Rev 14:20).

**Eugene Merrill:** What has traditionally been overlooked is that this is eschatological literature which, though being grounded in the present time of the prophet (hence, well-known place names), views the future in very stylized and conventional patterns. The point here is that YHWH, like many conquerors before Him in human history, will manifest Himself in the last days as a vanquishing hero. Because most conquests of Palestine originated in the north, He will come from the north as well, smashing all hostile powers before Him until He comes to Zion, the city where He is pleased to live among men. One should not, therefore, look to precise historical events of which this is an account, nor should one even anticipate a future scenario in which God will literally march from Hadrach to Jerusalem, establishing his dominion over all opposition. What is at hand is a formulaic way of asserting an unquestionably literal establishment of YHWH's kingship in the end times, a suzerainty to be achieved in the pattern well known to Zechariah and his fellow countrymen on the human level.

**Encyclopedia reference to Alexander the Great:**

Shortly before he died, Alexander ordered the Greek cities to worship him as a god. Although he probably gave the order for political reasons, he was, in his own view and that of his contemporaries, of divine birth. The order was largely nullified by his death shortly after he issued it.

<http://entireworld.blogspot.com/2007/02/alexander-great.html>

## Map of Military Conquests of Alexander the Great



<http://cache.eb.com/eb/image?id=64954&rendTypeId=4>

### Steven J. Cole: Rejoice! Your King is Coming

**Big Idea:** Because Jesus Christ is King and He is coming to reign, we who are subject to Him should rejoice greatly.

1. Jesus Christ is King.
2. Jesus Christ is coming to reign.
3. Our response to Jesus the coming King should be to rejoice and shout in triumph.

May I ask, "How's your joy in Jesus?" I have to fight the flesh to gain this joy, just as you do. Remember, joy is a fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22**). **Octavius Winslow** wrote ("The Sympathy of Christ," at [http://www.gracegems.org/2/religion\\_of\\_joy.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/2/religion_of_joy.htm)):

The religion of Christ is the religion of JOY. Christ came to take away our sins, to roll off our curse, to unbind our chains, to open our prison house, to cancel our debt; in a word, to give us the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Is not this joy? Where can we find a joy so real, so deep, so pure, so lasting? There is every element of joy; deep, ecstatic, satisfying, sanctifying joy in the gospel of Christ. The believer in Jesus is essentially a happy man. The child of God is, from necessity, a joyful man. His sins are forgiven, his soul is justified, his person is adopted, his trials are blessings, his conflicts are victories, his death is immortality, his future is a heaven of inconceivable, unthought of, untold, and endless blessedness. With such a God, such a Savior, and such a hope, is he not, ought he not, to be a joyful man? Are you pursuing that kind of joy? You should be, because your King is coming!

### Dr. Jerry Harmon: The Parable of the Two Sons

**Introduction:** Zechariah will mention two different kings here tonight. It's as if he's

contrasting the impact of two men that lived in this world and the impact of their life. And of course, the greatest impact is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zechariah chapters 9 through 14, this will constitute a major third part of the book of Zechariah, the third major portion of the book. Chapters 1 through 6, you remember, this was written during the second year of the reign of Darius. And in these chapters, we saw the prophetic night visions that Zechariah had. He had eight prophetic visions in the night. In these chapters, chapters one through six. And then in chapter seven and eight, this will take place two years later. And you remember that these chapters really give the prophets answer to a delegation of some people from Bethel that came to Jerusalem to ask the priests and the people there concerning some Jewish fasts. And Zechariah gives the answer to that.

But now in chapters 9 through 14, this will occur about 40 or 50 years later. From that time. Now, by this time, the temple has long been completed. Zechariah is now an old man. Israel is weak and they're still vulnerable under foreign domination. Nehemiah has not yet returned to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem during this time, and so they're vulnerable still to the surrounding nations. Powerful and aggressive neighbors still surrounded them. And the people worried, what if these neighbors attack us? What if they tear down the temple we worked so hard to rebuild? What if they invade us again and carry us all into captivity just as before? They feared really the future, what the future might hold. They weren't really certain about it.

And so to these people, Zechariah delivers the message of chapters nine through 14, which prophesy about Israel's future. And it really consists of two burdens that he's going to talk about. The first burden in chapters 9 through 11 focuses on Israel's coming king, that is, the Messiah. And this will emphasize his first coming and the rejection that he will receive at his first coming. And then the second burden that Zechariah talks about is in chapters 12 to 14, and this focuses on Israel's coming comfort when the nation will go through severe trials and purging, but finally be delivered by the second coming of her Messiah and King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**I. The Conquest of the Macedonian King (:1-8) – Alexander the Great**  
**It was the conquest of Alexander the Great that prepared the way for the great king that was to come, the greatest king, the king of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

We could say that his conquest prepared the world for the coming of the Messiah.

Alexander the

Great built Greek cities. He encouraged his soldiers to marry women from conquered nations, to spread Greek culture and the Greek language all throughout the world. What he did basically was unite the world under the Hellenistic culture. By the time Rome got on the scene, they were really ready to conquer a world, an empire that was already united and already together. Greek language was the language of the literature. Of course, our New Testament is written today in common Greek, Koine Greek, the language of the people of that day. And so really the combination, we could say, of Greek culture and of Roman roads and laws was just what the early church needed to spread the gospel at such a rapid pace as they did during that time. God, again, was

preparing the stage of the world. He was preparing everything for his Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come.

## **II. The Contrast with the Messiah-King (:9ff)**

Rejoice, you know why? Because you have a king that is going to come. He's gonna come to this very city of Jerusalem. So that's why Jerusalem has a future. Israel has a future. **You have a king that's coming to you.** And he's gonna be unlike any other king in history. He's unlike the king that was just prophesied about He will conquer the world indeed, but he won't do it through being a warrior. He'll do it, a warrior with a sword, he'll do it as a warrior, but through love and through his truth, he will conquer.

it's interesting to me that in Zechariah 9, we have this prophecy of this coming king right next to prophecy about another earthly king that was conquering the world. So you have a **contrast between Alexander the Great and Jesus the Greatest**, all right? The even greater king. It's almost as if we're invited to compare the two together. Both of these kings died at 33. Alexander lived for self-glory. Jesus gave up the glory of heaven and was the most selfless person to ever live. Alexander lived and died for himself. Jesus lived and died for you and for me. Alexander died on a throne, Jesus died on a cross, so one day we would have a throne to reign from. We'll reign with him, the Bible says. Alexander built his kingdom on blood, Jesus builds his kingdom on love. Alexander shed much blood, Jesus shed his own blood. Alexander tried to make himself a god, Jesus was God. He was God. Alexander tried to make all men slaves. Jesus seeks to make all men free. Alexander exalted himself. Jesus humbled himself.

Zechariah in this prophecy describes the character of this king where it says that he'll come, he'll be meek and lowly. Alexander's arrival brought fear to the people. But here, Zechariah commands the people to rejoice. The coming of this king should cause rejoicing, not fear, not dread, but rejoicing. Now, the Jews, of course, in Jesus' day were expecting a powerful political messiah that would deliver Israel from Rome. They did not expect a humble, suffering, servant messiah who would die for the sins of the people.

However, the prophet Zechariah predicted that in the first coming, the messiah would come in humility He would come in lowliness. He would be riding a beast of burden, in verse number nine, lowly and riding upon a donkey and the foal of an ass, it says. He is humble, mounted on this beast of burden. After Solomon's time, kings and warriors rode horses, not donkeys. The donkey was a beast of burden used in a time of peace. Powerful kings didn't ride into battle on a donkey. They rode on a powerful horse. So this prophecy, I think, looks forward to this coming Messiah who would come in a humble way, who in his first coming would be our sin bearer. He himself would bear the burdens of sin of the world. And he would be despised by the rulers of his day, but he would bring salvation. Notice there'll be a righteous king in verse nine where it says, he is just. He is just meaning righteous. This king is not corrupt like many world leaders and people today.

- Came as the Sinless one
- Came as our Savior
- Came as our Sin-bearer

Beginning in **verse 10** there is reference to the **second coming of our Lord**. The first time Jesus came, he did not cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the house from Jerusalem. He didn't speak peace to the heathen. His dominion didn't extend at that time from sea to sea. And so really, what we can say is that the entire church age comes between verse nine and verse 10. Again, the first time Jesus comes as Savior, the next time he comes, however, he will be the warrior, he'll be the judge. And he will not be riding upon a donkey, he'll be riding upon a white horse. And he will come to reign, whereas the first time he came to redeem, this time he'll come to reign over his kingdom.

He'll use some images here that are very, very interesting. First of all, he'll use the **image of a storm**. Look at verse 14. . . then also [the image of] **a feast**. Now, a feast might sound delightful to us, but when you see the description of this feast, it's not so appetizing, let's say, because in verse 15, he changes from a storm to a feast, but the prophet pictures the soldier shallow like men who are drunk with wine, but instead of being drunk on wine, they're drunk on the blood of their enemies.

then it also uses the image of **an army of sheep** in verse 16. . . The army's pictured like a flock of sheep. Now, that would not be very intimidating. Be honest with you. Hey, there's a flock of sheep out there. They're coming to attack. Okay, well, I'm not all that afraid of a flock of sheep. But have you met the shepherd? Because there's a shepherd leading these sheep. The sheep aren't gonna do all that much, but the shepherd of Israel, God, he's gonna be the one that will protect them. In fact, it says, the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people. He will be the one doing the fighting. It's not the sheep you got to worry about, it's the shepherd. All right? That's the one you got to worry about.

But then also uses the image of **precious stones** at the end of verse 16. Once more the image changes from sheep to stones. Remember when the high priest Joshua was cleansed and clothed, he received a special holy turban that was his crown. He was crowned with a royal diadem. We remember seeing that in chapter 6, that beautiful crown. But now it's God's people who are like a beautiful, precious jewel, sparkling in the land, revealing the beauty of their God.

So now the section ends in verse 17 with a brief description of the land and the changes God will make for the joy of his people because when the Lord back comes back at the second coming he will make changes to the land verse 17 for how great is his goodness and how great is his beauty corn shall make the young men cheerful and new wine the maids so This is all during the kingdom age. The land of Palestine will be fruitful and beautiful as God provides the rain that is so necessary for everything to grow. And so

what we see here in chapter nine then is that Zechariah prophesies both about the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ.

Let me close by saying there are two commands given in this chapter that we can apply to us today. What's the first one? Rejoice. Again, look back in verse 9. Rejoice, O daughter. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. We should rejoice and give praise to God that he sent his son, Jesus, to be our Savior and our Messiah. Friend, don't let a day go by where you don't give God praise and rejoice in the fact that you are his child.

But the second thing, return. Look at verse number 12. This is the second command that we see here. Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. The word turn here really simply means return. And I put it down as return because it's alliteration with rejoice. So return, return. This is the command. Return where? Return to the stronghold. Now, this was directed to the Jews who still believed in the God of Abraham, yet they were still living in exile. They had not yet come back to Jerusalem. Let's go back to Zechariah's time. A small remnant had come to the rubble of Jerusalem, and they had rebuilt the temple, and they're trying to get things in order and get the city rebuilt. But again, the city is still weak and vulnerable, and a lot of Jews have still not yet returned back to Jerusalem. Why? Why had they not come back?

Well, perhaps they were afraid to move back to Jerusalem, which had no visible wall, no human army to protect it. So they were afraid to come back. And Zechariah is teaching them that God himself is their defense. God is sufficient to be our defense. You get the idea? You have nothing to be afraid of. If God is your defense, O child of God, You don't have anything to be afraid of. He is your defender. And he will be to them, as Isaiah 26 1 declares, as a wall, as a rampart. And so Zechariah is encouraging these ones, return, come back to the stronghold. It's funny to me that he calls Jerusalem a stronghold there, you know, because it was, humanly speaking, it was far from it. From human eyes, it didn't look like a stronghold. But if you look at it through the eyes of faith, it's the greatest stronghold there is. Why? Because God is your defense. God is your protector. God is your stronghold. That's the thing here. You have to look at it through eyes of faith. And so he's saying, return to him.

TEXT: Zechariah 10:1-12

TITLE: *STRENGTHENED IN THE LORD FOR VICTORY*

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE COMPASSIONATE GOD WILL ULTIMATELY STRENGTHEN HIS REGATHERED REMNANT LED BY THE MESSIAH TO TREAD DOWN THEIR ENEMIES AND BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN THE PROMISED LAND**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Often people look for blessing and strength in all of the wrong places. False prophets come along and make all types of seductive promises of health and prosperity. The wicked seem to prosper and go unpunished despite their rebellion. But the end is fast approaching when God will wrap up His kingdom program for this earth, defeat all enemies and establish His remnant in His promised land. The Messiah will ride forth in majesty on His war horse and lead His people to ultimate victory. In a spiritual sense, we need to be strengthened in the Lord right now to fight the battles against our enemies and enjoy the blessing and fruitfulness that God wants for us.

**I. (:1-2) BLESSING AND FRUITFULNESS CAN ONLY COME FROM GOD – CONTRAST BETWEEN THE FULL RAIN CLOUDS OF DIVINE BLESSING AND THE EMPTY RAIN CLOUDS OF FALSE PROPHETS**

**A. (:1) The Full Rain Clouds of Divine Blessing**

**1. Seek Genuine Blessing from God Alone at the Appropriate Time**

*“Ask rain from the Lord at the time of the spring rain”*

It is always the appropriate time to seek blessing from God

He loves to give good gifts to His children – **James 1:16-17**

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase emphasizes the importance of seeking God for provision and blessings. In ancient Israel, rain was crucial for agriculture, especially during the springtime, which was the latter rain season necessary for the maturation of crops. The Israelites were dependent on these rains for their survival and prosperity. This request for rain symbolizes reliance on God for sustenance and reflects a broader biblical theme of dependence on divine provision (**Deuteronomy 11:14**). It also serves as a reminder of God's sovereignty over nature and His ability to provide for His people.

**2. God is the Sufficient Source of All Blessing**

*“The Lord who makes the storm clouds”*

**3. God’s Gracious Blessing Brings Particular Abundant Fruitfulness to Each Individual**

*“And He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to each man”*

B. (:2) The Empty Rain Clouds of False Prophets

1. False Prophets Speak Lies that Promote Sin

a. Teraphim

*“For the teraphim speak iniquity”*

**Tenney:** They were household gods ranging from rather small (**Gen 31:34, 35**), to nearly life-sized (**1 Sam 19:13, 16**). Recent archeological discoveries at Nuzi in Iraq have illuminated the function and significance of these idols. Their possession constituted the headship of the household with all of the rights attendant thereto. . . The function of teraphim of which the prophets most disapproved was divination. As divinatory objects they often are mentioned with ephods, also used for divination.

b. Diviners

*“And the diviners see lying visions and tell false dreams”*

**John MacArthur:** In contrast to God who provides abundance, idols or household gods (cf. **Ge 31:19, 34**) and demonic fortunetellers left Israel as sheep without a shepherd (cf. **Eze 34:6-10**). God will judge them all for that false leadership (v. 3). The implication of these words is that a similar deception will occur in the end times. The NT confirms this (cf. **Mat 24:5, 11, 22-28; 2Th 1:8-12**).

2. False Prophets Offer False Security

*“They comfort in vain.”*

Many passages speak of the futility of following after false prophets. **Jer. 2:13**

3. The Void of Faithful Shepherding Leaves a Vulnerable, Neglected Flock

a. No Direction

*“Therefore the people wander like sheep”*

b. No Deliverance

*“They are afflicted”*

c. No Shepherding

*“because there is no shepherd”*

**II. (:3-5) VICTORY OVER OUR ENEMIES CAN ONLY COME FROM GOD – GOD EQUIPS HIS PEOPLE TO WAGE WAR VICTORIOUSLY – PRIMARILY THROUGH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MESSIAH = THE TRUE SHEPHERD**

A. (:3a) The Anger of God Unleashed in Judgment Against False Prophets

*“My anger is kindled against the shepherds and I will punish the male goats.”*

B. (:3b-5) The Equipping by God to Fight as Victorious Warriors

1. (:3b) Transforming Vulnerable Sheep Into a Majestic War Horse

*“For the Lord of hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah,  
And will make them like His majestic horse in battle.”*

The equipping presence of the Lord with His people is the key  
Cf. Picture of Messiah returning on singular war horse

**Biblehub.com:** This metaphor of transformation from a flock to a **royal steed** signifies empowerment and victory. In ancient Near Eastern culture, a royal steed was a symbol of strength, speed, and majesty, often associated with kings and military leaders. This transformation suggests that God will equip Judah with the strength and capability to overcome their adversaries. It also foreshadows the Messianic hope, where the ultimate victory is achieved through Jesus Christ, who is often depicted as a **conquering king** (**Revelation 19:11-16**).

2. (:4) Transforming Them Into Weapons of Warfare Led by the Messiah
  - a. Cornerstone – Stability of Leadership (**Mackay**) (**Is. 28:16**)  
*“From them will come the cornerstone”*
  - b. Tent Peg – Reliability of Leadership  
*“From them the tent peg”*
  - c. Bow – Military Success of Leadership (**Ps. 45:5**)  
*“From them the bow of battle”*
  - d. Summary  
*“From them every ruler, all of them together”*

**F. Duane Lindsey:** These terms emphasize the strong, stable, victorious, and trustworthy nature of Messiah’s rule. The Lord will not do all the fighting but will empower His people to conquer like mighty men. His presence will enable them to be victorious.

3. (:5) Transforming Them Into Victorious Warriors
  - a. Characterized as Mighty Men  
*“They will be as mighty men”*
  - b. Relentless and Victorious in the Trenches  
*“Treading down the enemy in the mire of the streets in battle”*
  - c. Energized by Divine Assistance  
*“And they will fight, for the Lord will be with them”*
  - d. Overcoming Incredible Odds  
*“And the riders on horses will be put to shame”*  
You have a picture of foot soldiers defeating the cavalry

### III. (:6-12) REDEMPTION, REGATHERING AND RE-ESTABLISHING CAN ONLY COME FROM GOD – GOD STRENGTHENS HIS PEOPLE TO BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN THE PROMISED LAND

**John Mackay:** The theme of this section is indicated by the repetition of “*I will strengthen them*” (10:6, 12). This divine empowering is the means by which the fortunes of his people will be restored.

- A. (:6) Promise of Restored Remnant
  - 1. Reunion -- Reunited as One Kingdom
    - a. Southern kingdom
      - “*I will strengthen the house of Judah*”
    - b. Northern kingdom
      - “*And I will save the house of Joseph*”

**Biblehub.com:** The house of Joseph refers to the northern kingdom of Israel, often represented by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons. This promise of salvation highlights God's intention to reunite and restore all of Israel, not just Judah. The division between the northern and southern kingdoms occurred after Solomon's reign, leading to separate destinies. God's plan to save Joseph's house signifies a future reconciliation and unity among the tribes, pointing towards the messianic hope of a **united Israel**.

- 2. Restoration -- Restored to the Land
  - “*And I will bring them back*”
- 3. Reason = Compassion
  - “*Because I have had compassion on them*”
- 4. Reversal of Rejection
  - “*And they will be as though I had not rejected them.*”
- 5. Responsiveness of Personal God
  - “*For I am the Lord their God and I will answer them.*”

**Biblehub.com:** This declaration reaffirms the **covenant relationship** between God and Israel. The use of “*LORD*” (YHWH) emphasizes God's eternal and unchanging nature. It is a reminder of the promises made to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and the faithfulness of God to His word. This identity as their God is central to Israel's identity and destiny.

- B. (:7-8) Prosperity of Restored Remnant – Strength / Joy / Numbers

1. Strength

*“Ephraim will be like a mighty man”*

2. Joy

*“And their heart will be glad as if from wine;  
Indeed, their children will see it and be glad,  
Their heart will rejoice in the Lord.”*

3. Numbers

*“I will whistle for them to gather them together,  
For I have redeemed them,  
And they will be as numerous as they were before.”*

**Biblehub.com:** In ancient Near Eastern culture, shepherds often used a whistle or a specific call to gather their sheep. This imagery suggests God's role as a shepherd, calling His people back to Him. The whistle signifies a divine summons, emphasizing God's initiative in restoring His people. This echoes the theme of God as a shepherd found in passages like **Psalm 23** and **John 10:11**, where Jesus is described as the Good Shepherd. The gathering indicates a regathering of the Israelites, a recurring theme in prophetic literature, pointing to the restoration of Israel after exile. [and in the end times]

C. (:9-10) Providence of the Restored Remnant

1. (:9) Renewed Allegiance

*“When I scatter them among the peoples,  
They will remember Me in far countries,  
And they with their children will live and come back.”*

2. (:10) Sovereign Disposition

*“I will bring them back from the land of Egypt  
And gather them from Assyria;  
And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon  
Until no room can be found for them.”*

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase indicates an overwhelming blessing and growth, reminiscent of the promises made to the patriarchs about their descendants being as numerous as the stars. It suggests a future time of prosperity and expansion for God's people, where the land cannot contain their numbers. This abundance is a testament to God's faithfulness in fulfilling His covenant promises, pointing to the **eschatological hope** of a restored and flourishing kingdom under the reign of Christ.

D. (:11) Pathway for the Restored Remnant – Defeating all Obstacles

*“And they will pass through the sea of distress,  
And He will strike the waves in the sea,  
So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up;*

*And the pride of Assyria will be brought down  
And the scepter of Egypt will depart.”*

**John MacArthur:** Similar to Israel crossing the Red Sea, God will remove both geographical and political obstacles to Israel’s return for the kingdom of Messiah. Assyria and Egypt, traditional enemies of Israel, symbolize any nation that would try to withstand God from fulfilling His will (cf. **Is 11:11,12**).

E. (:12) Plan for the Restored Remnant – Strengthened to walk in righteousness  
*“And I will strengthen them in the Lord;  
And in His name they will walk,’ declares the Lord.”*

**Charles Feinberg:** Their entire life and conduct will be controlled by the desire to honor the Lord. Such is the goal of prophecy for the nation Israel.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Are we quick to turn to the Lord for blessing and persevere in faith that He will provide what we need?
- 2) What are some examples today of false prophets offering false security?
- 3) Are we confident that the Lord is with us in our battles to equip us for victory?
- 4) How has God showered His compassion on us?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Ed Anderson:** (sermonaudio.com) **Blessings 101 – The Panorama of Blessings**

##### **I. The Pathway of Blessings (:1-2)**

Prayer with faith in God is the foundation for blessing. Sometimes Jews had sought blessing from the wrong sources – from idols, from diviners, etc. Certainly there are all types of prophets today claiming to have a word from God. You must seek blessing from the right source. Don’t seek any additional revelation. **Rev. 22:18; Gal. 1:8**

##### **II. The Person of Blessings = the Lord Himself (v.3-5)**

Millennial significance of the various pictures of the Lord.

A. Cornerstone = Christ – **Eph 2:20** – not simply for decoration; the angles of the walls were dependent upon that cornerstone; we take the direction from our lives from Him -- **1 Cor. 3:11**

B. Tent Peg – the one upon whom we can hang all of our hopes

C. Battle Bow – represents the power of life and death; implements of war and might;

**Rev. 19:11** – He will be the military commander of His people  
D. Gets rid of the Opposition – has nothing to do with the word “ruler”  
Opposing all oppressors of Israel and banishing them completely  
E. The people of Israel will be empowered to tread down their enemies  
They will defeat cavalry armies

**III. The Promises of Blessing (v.6-12)** We may trust His promises without hesitation  
(**Num. 23:19; 2 Pet. 3:9; Ps. 147:5**)

- A. Nation of Israel Restored as a United Nation – not two kings and two kingdoms
- B. Regathered (:8) – whistling sound to summon the bees – I am going to give a signal for Israel to return to their land
- C. Multiplied – reversing their worldwide dispersion; they will occupy both sides of the Jordan River; this prophecy has never yet been fulfilled
- D. God will take away all Hindrances to their Return (:11)
- E. (:12) Nation of Israel Regenerated

**Rom. 9-11** temporarily blinded; God saving the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous of His blessing; **Zech 12:10**

Result: Israel will walk in obedience to the Lord

**Eugene Merrill:** Zechariah turns first of all to the problem of evil leadership in the historical community of Israel, dividing his attention between the spiritual and political aspects. Things have been bleak, indeed, as the whole history of Israel and Judah could attest, but there was hope now in light of the restoration from exile and particularly in light of God’s gracious promises concerning the age to come. All his people need do is ask for rain, that is, the showers of His blessing (v. 1), and it was certain to come. The “*latter-rain*” (*malqos*) refers, in the context of the agricultural cycles of Palestine, to the renewal of sustained rains in the spring of the year, commencing usually about March or April. The “*former rains*” were those of the autumn, following the harvest-time.

“*Latter rain*” is also a term with eschatological significance, referring to the pouring out of divine blessing in the coming age. Hosea, speaking of YHWH’s reviving of His people at the end time, puts it in terms of YHWH’s coming “*as the rain, as the latter rain that waters the earth*” (**Hos. 6:3**). Joel associates it with a time of abundant harvest, the wheat, vineyards, and olive trees having soaked up its nourishment so as to yield their fruit. All this is to make up for the years devastated by the ravages of pest and insect (**Joel 2:21-25**). This is a reference to Israel’s historical experience, one to be succeeded by a time of blessing in the latter day . . .

Continuing in the same imagery but with a strong mixture of messianic language, YHWH foresees Judah as the source of four elements: the cornerstone, the peg, the bow, and the ruler. These should be interpreted in the context of holy war that prevails here and not in that of architecture or construction or something else. “*Cornerstone*” or “*corner tower*” (*pinna*) occurs as a metaphor for a leader such as a king or governor (**Judg. 20:2; 1 Sam. 14:38; Isa. 19:13**). With that in mind it seems quite clear that Zechariah is alluding to a future human figure who will provide the very foundation for a revived kingdom structure. Paul understood this one to be Christ, “*the chief*

*cornerstone*” (**Eph. 2:20**). As for the peg (*yated*), the word can refer to a tent peg or, as is likely here, to a peg in the wall from which items could be suspended. It must be sturdy, for, as Ezekiel notes (**15:3**), one would hardly use wood from a vine in its manufacture.

*Eliakim ben Hilkiyah* is described as such a peg in **Isa. 22:15-25**. With the predicted removal of Shebna from office the weight of the Davidic government would rest upon the major-domo Eliakim, servant of King Hezekiah (**Isa. 36:3**). But he would not be capable of supporting such a load and so would be torn from the wall (**22:25**). This no doubt was to signify the impending doom of the royal house itself.

In his famous prayer of confession Ezra rejoiced that God had shown the postexilic community grace in preserving a remnant and in providing a “peg” in the holy place. The collocation of remnant and peg here (**Ezra 9:8**) suggests that they share much in common, just as they do in Zechariah. In the latter it is the eschatological remnant that will give rise to the peg, the stout hook on which all of Judah’s hopes for the future can be suspended.

“*Battle bow*” as a personal epithet is otherwise unknown in the OT, though Babylonia is called “*battle mace*” by Jeremiah (**Jer. 51:20**). Zechariah himself uses the term with reference to the conquest by the messianic king who will break the battle bow of the enemy (**9:10**). A more helpful reference, however, is that of **9:13** where YHWH says He will “*bend*” Judah as a warrior bends a bow. Since Judah is in view in **10:3-5** as the source of the bow, it cannot be Judah as a whole but someone who comes from Judah. This idea is, of course, consistent with OT messianic theology (cf. **Gen. 49:10**).

Finally, that “*every ruler*” shall come from Judah (**v. 4c**) is not a matter of surprise, for that too is a major OT theme. David and all his descendants were, after all, sons of Judah. Zechariah uses a rather strange word for ruler here, however, the participle form of (*nagas*), “*to oppress*.” Normally one would expect “*king*” (*melek*), “*prince*” (*nas*), or the like, but here occurs a term usually reserved for oppressive, tyrannical rule (**Ex. 3:7; 5:6, 10; Isa. 3:12; 9:3; 14:2, 4; Dan. 11:20**). Zechariah already used the same participle to describe cruel, despotic rulers (**9:8**). The reason for its use here appears to be the harsh tone of the language of conquest throughout the pericope. When YHWH achieves His final hegemony He will, through His appointed Davidic rulers, ruthlessly put down all opposition. To His foes His total, violent domination of them will cast Him as an oppressor, a dictator to whom they must submit against their will.

**John Mackay:** The emphasis is on the provision the Lord alone can make:

- **fertility (10:1-2),**
- **leadership (10:3-5),**
- **restoration (10:6-12).**

**Steven J. Cole: Praying in the Promises**

Big Idea: God’s abundant promises for His people should motivate us to pray for their fulfillment.

1. God has promised abundant blessings for His people (10:2-12).
  - A. God promises to deliver His people from their enemies (10:2-5).
  - B. God promises to restore and strengthen His people (10:6- 12).
  
2. God's promises should motivate us to pray for their fulfillment (10:1).
  - A. We should pray for God's promises because He commands us to pray.
  - B. We should pray for God's promises to acknowledge our dependence on Him.
  - C. We should pray for God's promises to remember the Lord alone as the source of all our blessings.
  - D. We should pray for God's promises to realize the fulfillment of His purposes.

**Dr. John C. Whitcomb:** **Isaiah 11:16** is the foundation for Zechariah 10 – “*like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.*” In the first return all Jews left Egypt. God accomplished the Exodus with great supernatural interventions. Therefore, the return from Babylon under Zerubbabel was not the second return (**Isa. 11:11**), for it was neither **total** nor **supernatural** (most of the Israelites remained in Babylon, only a remnant returned, and no miracles occurred).

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: Asking for Rain: Claiming God's Prayer Promises**

**Introduction:** There's one command in this chapter, and it's found in verse number 1. And God is commanding the people to pray for rain. Again, verse 1, ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain. Now, God meant this to be taken both literally and spiritually. They were to ask God for spring rain for their crops, but they were also to ask God to pour out His spiritual rain, His blessings on His parched people, you could say, spiritually parched people. So, rain in this text can stand for blessings that God promises to give. We are to pray for God to fulfill those promises.

If you can boil it down to one idea, it would be **God's abundant promises for his people should motivate us to pray for their fulfillment.**

**I. The Promise of God's Abundant Blessings**

Promises for Deliverance from Enemies

A. You need to be aware of your enemies

So who are the enemies that he names here? Well, two enemies, first of all, false gods and prophets, these false gods presented by false prophets, and then also selfish, domineering leaders.

B. God promises deliverance from our enemies

So notice the deliverance again in verse three at the end. For the Lord of hosts has visited his flock, the house of Judah, and has made them as his goodly horses in the battle. And the ultimate leader and deliverer for his people is the Messiah. So in these verses, Zechariah points to the coming Messiah. And notice that God promises to visit his flock and to make them like his majestic horse in battle, as goodly horses in battle. In other words, the Messiah will turn sheep into war horses. In verse four, the hymn is referring to Judah, from Judah will come. And then what we see in the rest of verse number four, is these beautiful, I think, pictures of the Messiah. Now some

commentators interpret the terms in verse four as referring to God raising up strong leaders. But the ultimate leader for Israel is the Messiah. And I think that these are messianic terms. And also these terms are used in a Jewish targum, that's an Aramaic paraphrase or commentary on the scripture. In that targum, all of these are messianic, that's referring to the Messiah. And that's the way this was seen here.

### Messianic terms

- Cornerstones
- Tent peg
- Ultimate warrior

Application: We need to see Christ as being sufficient over every foe that we face. In other words, Jesus Christ is our all in all. . . . Because God is working and doing his part, I need to do my part. So victory is our responsibility, but it's our response to his ability. We have to do our part. And so the theme of verses two to five is that God promises deliverance from our enemies, and as we learn to do battle in Christ, depending on the Lord.

### C. God Promises to Restore and Strengthen (:6-12)

God is very definitive about what He's going to do. He's not dependent on the so-called free will of people. It's not that God forces human will, but rather, after He converts us by His grace, He enables us to freely choose to do what is spiritually good on our part. So the balance of Scripture is on the one hand, God sovereignly does His part. He saves, He strengthens, He sustains His people. On the other hand, we have to actively do our part. We have to rely upon God's strength and take action and walk in His name. We have to return to the Lord. We can only do that in His strength, you see. Again, just two practical things here.

First of all, God sometimes scatters His people in weakness **so that they will look to Him alone to save**. We see this in verse 9. Look at verse 9. Notice what it says. And I will sow them among the people. That is, God says, I'm going to scatter these people among the nations, among the people. And they shall remember me in far countries." When they get into these difficult situations in far countries, he's referring here to Egypt and Assyria, and these are all representative of places around the globe where God has dispersed his disobedient people. And then in verse 8, he says, I'm going to whistle and gather them back. refers to a shepherd blowing a pipe-like whistle to call his flock back to the fold. Just prior to the Messiah's return, God is going to bring back the Jewish people to the land from around the globe, and God's already doing that. We can see God doing that. God sows his people, he scatters them abroad. And then, like seed scattered abroad, but like a good farmer, he doesn't forget the seed that he's sown, that he's scattered. He's gonna bring it all back together. He's waiting for the harvest. He's gonna bring it all back together.

The second thing, when weak people experience God's strength, **great joy results**. You say, why does God do that? Why does God put us in such a difficult, despairing situation where we're at the end of ourself and we're at the end of our rope? And then

we finally look to God and we are infused with strength from God because that whole experience brings incredible joy to the believer, an exhilarating joy at the end. Notice verse 7 where it says this, and their heart will be glad as if from wine. Indeed, their children will see it and be glad. Their hearts will rejoice. the Lord. When God has brought us to the end of ourselves where we are to focus, or we're forced, I should say, to rely on Him alone, not only do we experience great joy, but even our children also enter into that joy, is what it says in verse 7.

## II. The Participation in God's Abundant Blessings

There are four good reasons to pray:

- A. Because God commands us to pray
- B. Prayer is a way to acknowledge our dependence on God
- C. Prayer reminds us that God alone is the source of our blessing
- D. Prayer is asking God to fulfill His purposes

**Conclusion:** John Piper has often pointed out that the church is engaged in spiritual warfare, but that most believers have a peacetime mentality. He says that having this mindset, we use prayer as a domestic intercom, rather than as a wartime walkie-talkie. He pictures Jesus, the field commander, issuing each of his troops a walkie-talkie tuned in to the general's headquarters. If they have any need on the battlefield, they can call for help. And then he writes,

*But what have millions of Christians done? They have stopped believing that we are in a war. No urgency, no watching, no vigilance, no strategic planning, just easy peacetime and prosperity. And what do they do with the walkie-talkie? They try to rig it up as an intercom in their cushy houses and cabins and boats and cars, not to call in firepower for conflict with a mortal enemy, but they ask the maid to bring another pillow to the den.*

Ouch, pretty strong. The Lord did instruct us to pray for our personal needs, our daily bread, but only after we pray first to hallow His name, His kingdom to come, His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. So, we ought to pray for rain to end the drought. I'm talking about spiritual drought that is all over in our country. We need to pray for rain. But first and foremost, we ought to be praying for God to work that in our own heart. Is there any drought spiritually in our own life? Pray for the reign of his spirit to bring revival

TEXT: Zechariah 11:1-17

TITLE: THE REJECTION OF THE WORTHY SHEPHERD

**BIG IDEA:**

**GOD'S JUDGMENT ALWAYS ACCOMPANIES THE REJECTION OF HIS WORTHY SHEPHERD AND ALLEGIANCE TOWARDS UNGODLY FALSE SUBSTITUTES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Before opening the window to give us a glimpse of Israel's promising future, Zechariah shows the utter folly of the nation and its leaders in rejecting their Messiah. This scene speaks mainly of Christ's first coming and the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

**FOUR KEY PLAYERS IN THIS DRAMA OF HUMAN SHEPHERDING**

**I. (:1-3) THE WAILING SHEPHERDS –  
As God's Judgment Sweeps Through the Land**

A. Judgment on the Glorious Cedars of Lebanon

*“Open your doors, O Lebanon,  
That a fire may feed on your cedars.  
Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,  
Because the glorious trees have been destroyed”*

**Thomas Constable:** The prophet announced in vigorous poetic language that Lebanon's famous cedars would perish. The Israelites referred to the royal palace in Jerusalem as Lebanon because it contained so much cedar from Lebanon (**Jer. 22:23**; cf. **1 Kings 7:2**). The Talmud spoke of the second temple as Lebanon for the same reason. The cedar also became a symbol of the royal house of Judah (**Ezek. 17:3-4, 12-13**).

**Biblehub.com:** The imagery of fire consuming the cedars is symbolic of destruction and judgment. Cedars of Lebanon were renowned for their strength and durability, often representing pride and human achievement. The fire signifies divine judgment, a common biblical motif (**Isaiah 10:17, Jeremiah 21:14**). This destruction can be seen as a warning to those who rely on their own strength and resources rather than on God. The prophecy may also foreshadow the fall of nations or leaders who oppose God's will, drawing a parallel to the judgment against Israel's leaders and false shepherds later in **Zechariah 11**. The cedars' destruction can be seen as a type of Christ's judgment upon the unrepentant at His second coming, emphasizing the need for humility and reliance on God.

B. Judgment on the Impenetrable Oaks of Bashan

*“Wail, O oaks of Bashan,  
For the impenetrable forest has come down.”*

**Biblehub.com:** Bashan, a region known for its fertile land and strong oaks, represents strength and prosperity. The oaks of Bashan symbolize robust and influential entities, possibly leaders or nations that are now called to mourn. The call to wail indicates that even the strongest and most prosperous are not immune to God's judgment. This serves as a reminder of the sovereignty of God over all creation and the futility of relying on human strength. The reference to Bashan connects to other scriptures where Bashan is depicted as a place of abundance and power, such as in Deuteronomy and Psalms.

### C. Judgment on the Pride of Jordan

*“There is a sound of the shepherds’ wail,  
For their glory is ruined.  
There is a sound of the young lions’ roar,  
For the pride of the Jordan is ruined.”*

**Eugene Merrill:** Attention to the following verses makes it rather apparent that the objects mentioned under the guise of trees and animals are the same as the shepherds. As already noted “*shepherd*” is a common way of referring to kings in the ancient Near East and the OT, an epithet particularly favored by Zechariah (**10:2, 3; 11:3, 5, 8, 15, 16, 17; 13:7**). The lament of the poem, then, introduces the occasion for the lament, namely, the destruction of the evil shepherds (**11:8, 17**). Perhaps next in prominence to shepherd as metaphor for king is that of a plant, especially a tree. One thinks of the parable of Jotham, a son of Gideon who tried to warn his countrymen of the danger in allowing his brother Abimelech to become king over them after Gideon’s death (**Judg. 9:7-15**). He said that the trees sought one who could lead them, and they first asked the olive tree to do so. He refused, so the trees next asked the fig tree, who also declined. The vine similarly refused the invitation, but at length the bramble agreed to serve if they would meet his harsh terms. To Jotham, Abimelech was the bramble.

**John MacArthur:** Those three verses are judgmental. They identify three different locations: Lebanon, Bashan, and Jordan. In the geography of Israel, that list begins in the north and descends to the south. It pictures judgment sweeping down like fire burning the vegetation in Lebanon and Bashan on down to the foliage around the Jordan Valley, where lions dwelt. The Holy Spirit used dramatic imagery to describe the ravaging of the whole land of Israel.

Zechariah was describing a fire of judgment that would consume the ungodly as a conflagration consumes trees. The trees symbolize portions of land. Lebanon was known for its cedars. The wood that was used to build Solomon's Temple was from the cedars of Lebanon (**1 Kings. 5**).

Moving down from Lebanon, which is on the northern border of Israel, we come to the area of Bashan, which is east of the sea of Galilee. It was known for its oak trees. Descending further south we come to the Jordan Valley, in which runs the Jordan River, which extends from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. At one time there appears to have been dense, jungle-like foliage along both sides of the river.

I believe that the judgment God is speaking about here is an actual devastation. Although a literal fire that burns trees may not be involved, the devastation is not limited to spiritual judgment only. It includes the death of people as the land of Israel is being judged.

There's an inevitability to this judgment. In **verse 1** Lebanon is told to open its doors, as if there's no sense in resisting. The fir and oak trees might as well wail because if the mighty cedars, which are relatively inaccessible, go up in flames the other trees aren't going to be able to stand. When the high and the mighty are fallen, every lesser tree is going to be unable to escape. Some people have likened these trees to the leadership of Israel, assuming this is a spiritual judgment on the hierarchy of Israel, which includes the priests, elders, scribes, and runs all the way down to the common people.

## **II. (:4-6) THE WATCHING SOVEREIGN – As God's Pity runs out and He withholds Deliverance**

### **A. (:4-5a) The Doomed Flock**

*“Thus says the Lord my God, ‘Pasture the flock doomed to slaughter.  
Those who buy them slay them and go unpunished,  
And each of those who sell them says,  
Blessed be the Lord, for I have become rich!’”*

**Biblehub.com:** This metaphorical language describes the people of Israel as a flock destined for destruction. The imagery of shepherding is prevalent throughout the Bible, often used to depict leadership and care. Here, it suggests a grim fate for the people due to their disobedience and the failure of their leaders. Historically, this can be linked to the period of turmoil and oppression Israel faced, particularly under foreign rule. Theologically, it foreshadows the rejection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is also depicted as a shepherd in the New Testament (**John 10:11**). The phrase "marked for slaughter" indicates impending judgment, a theme consistent with prophetic literature where God warns His people of consequences for their actions.

**Thomas Constable:** Those who bought sheep slew them (Heb. feminine) and went unpunished. This was bad because these were female sheep, ewes, intended for breeding and not for butchering. The slayers represent the foreign rulers who took over the Israelites, persecuted them, and had not paid the full penalty for their abusive treatment of them (**Gen. 12:3**). Those who sold the sheep were Israel's former rulers and leaders who, by their sins, had set the people up for divine judgment by foreigners.

### **B. (:5b-6a) The Disinterested Shepherds**

*“‘And their own shepherds have no pity on them. For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land,’ declares the Lord;”*

### **C. (:6b) The Devastated Land**

*“‘but behold, I will cause the men to fall, each into another's power and into the power of his king; and they will strike the land, and I will not deliver them from their power.’”*

**Eugene Merrill:** On balance, it appears best to understand this passage (v. 6) to mean that YHWH will withhold His compassion for His people Israel, delivering them instead to neighboring peoples and their kings who will beat down the land of Israel with no interference from YHWH. This, of course, is precisely what took place in the last decades of Israel's and Judah's history leading up to their respective captivities by the Assyrians and Babylonians, and on into the future as well.

### **III. (:7-14) THE WORTHY SHEPHERD = ZECHARIAH PREFIGURING THE MESSIAH –**

#### **As God's anointed shepherd is betrayed for 30 pieces of silver**

##### **A. (:7-8) Commitment to Shepherding Symbolized by the Taking of Two Staffs**

*“So I pastured the flock doomed to slaughter, hence the afflicted of the flock. And I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Favor, and the other I called Union; so I pastured the flock. Then I annihilated the three shepherds in one month, for my soul was impatient with them, and their soul also was weary of me.”*

**Thomas Constable:** The two shepherd's staffs that he named "Favor" (Heb. *no'am*, pleasantness, graciousness) and "Union" (Heb. *hobhelim*, binders, unifiers) represented God's blessing and the unity of the flock (Israel; cf. **Ezek. 37:15-28**).

**Eugene Merrill:** Zechariah says he shepherded the flock that, because it was destined for slaughter, was the most afflicted of the flock (v. 7). In this way he distinguishes between Israel as a whole and the oppressed remnant within Israel that had maintained its covenant faith. An indispensable instrument in shepherding was the shepherd's staff, so Zechariah says he took two of them, one named “pleasantness” and the other “binders.” With these, he says, he shepherded the flock (v. 7). The former name speaks of the relationship between YHWH and His people (v. 10) and the latter of that between Israel and Judah (v. 14).

**John MacArthur:** Verse 8 is difficult to interpret. I agree with those who say the three shepherds refer to the **priests, elders, and scribes of Israel**. I believe the Lord fulfilled the symbolism of bestowing grace and unity upon the populace, but when it came to the religious leaders He confronted their hypocrisy (**Matt. 23**). He "cut off" or disowned them with scathing denunciations. The time period of "one month" is best understood as referring to a short period of time.

##### **B. (:9-11) Breaking of the First Staff = Favor (Beauty)**

*“Then I said, ‘I will not pasture you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and let those who are left eat one another’s flesh.’ And I took my staff, Favor, and cut it in pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. So it was broken on that day, and thus the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized that it was the word of the Lord.”*

C. (:12-13) Contempt Shown to the Worthy Shepherd and the Word of God

*“And I said to them, ‘If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!’ So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.’ So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.”*

**David Silversides:** Initially it speaks of Zechariah – but ultimately fulfilled in Christ. Here is the shepherd of Israel giving you the Word of God. What value do you place upon it? They should have said it is priceless to have the Word of God and His covenant blessings. But they valued it as 30 pieces of silver (**Ex. 21:32**) = the price of a slave gored by an ox. It was twice as much for a free man. Like saying “throw it to the dogs.” **Matt. 27:3** Judas preferred 30 pieces of silver to Christ Himself – despising the goodness of God and the truth of God.

**Biblehub.com:** **This magnificent price at which they valued me.** -- The phrase is deeply ironic, as the "*magnificent price*" is actually a paltry sum, highlighting the contempt and undervaluation of the shepherd, who represents God Himself. In **Exodus 21:32**, thirty pieces of silver is the price of a slave, underscoring the insult. This valuation reflects Israel's rejection of God's leadership and foreshadows the betrayal of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who was also undervalued and betrayed for the same amount.

**and threw them to the potter** -- This act of throwing the silver to the potter signifies disdain and rejection. In the New Testament, Judas returns the silver to the temple, and the chief priests use it to buy the potter's field (**Matthew 27:7**), fulfilling this prophecy. The act of throwing the silver also symbolizes the ultimate rejection of Christ by the religious leaders of His time.

D. (:14) Breaking of the Second Staff = Union (Bands)

*“Then I cut my second staff, Union, in pieces, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.”*

**Thomas Constable:** Zechariah then symbolically broke his second staff, "Union," indicating the end of the unity that bound the Jews together. Just before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the Jews broke up into parties that were very hostile to one another. This condition accelerated their destruction by the Romans.<sup>262</sup> Evidently fighting among the Jews will also be common in the Tribulation. The order of events is significant, and it was historical: the breaking of God's favor on His people, their rejection of the Shepherd, and the breaking of their unity.<sup>263</sup> We know that this destruction would not be permanent, however, because of other promises that God would reunite and restore His people and that He would not cast them off permanently (e.g., **Rom. 11**).

**III. (:15-17) THE WORTHLESS SHEPHERD = ROMAN EMPIRE  
PREFIGURING THE ANTICHRIST – (CONTRASTED WITH THE WORTHY)  
As God’s flock is ravaged by the shepherd instead of protected**

**A. (:15) His Equipment – False Shepherd vs True Shepherd**

*“The Lord said to me, ‘Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd.’”*

As a faithful pastor, how should you be equipped?

**B. (:16) His Ministry – False Shepherd vs True Shepherd**

1. Related to Nurturing

*“For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing,”*

2. Related to Devouring

*“but will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear off their hoofs.”*

As a faithful pastor, how should you nurture your flock?

**C. (:17) His Reward – False Shepherd vs True Shepherd**

*“Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock!  
A sword will be on his arm and on his right eye!  
His arm will be totally withered and his right eye will be blind.”*

Arm indicates strength and eye indicates his intelligence

As a faithful pastor, what type of reward can you expect?

\*\*\*\*\*

**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What do we glory in that could prove to be unreliable like the cedar trees of Lebanon?
- 2) What value do we place upon God’s shepherding of us by providing us with the Word of Truth and the Shepherding of the Good Shepherd? What effort do we expend in trying to understand passages like this that superficially seem so difficult to understand?
- 3) What causes the Lord to come to an end of His pity and compassion towards a group of people?

4) What measurements of a faithful pastor-shepherd can be found in this passage?

\* \* \* \* \*

### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Eugene Merrill:** This climax to the long oracle beginning with **chapter 9** ends the oracle on a pessimistic note indeed. Throughout **chapter 11** the theme has been that of the sheep and the shepherds. The sheep are God's chosen people, Israel and Judah, and the shepherds the evil kings who abandoned their subjects in their times of greatest need, particularly just prior to the Babylonian conquest and deportation. Zechariah, playing the role of and speaking for YHWH, has done all he can as the good shepherd to minister to the flock but to no avail. They have spurned him utterly, counting his service to them as of no more value than the service of a slave. He therefore broke his covenant with them in terms of their appropriation of its benefits and also broke off the brotherhood between Israel and Judah. The only hope now is for a shepherd who will come and in tender love and omnipotent power effect a reunion and restoration. Such a one will come, as **Zechariah 9:9-10** makes clear, but not until the sinful rebellion of God's people runs its course. Before they can accept that Good Shepherd to come, they must have one last fling with a ruler who will utterly disappoint them. This is the shepherd on whom the prophecy now focuses. . .

### **David Silversides: Evaluating the Christ of God**

A warning of the dangers of apostasy and God's judgment. This passage finds its fulfillment both before the first coming of Christ, at His coming and after His coming.

#### **I. (:1-3) Fulfillment Before the First Coming of Christ**

The picture is of a storm that sweeps through Lebanon destroying the strong cedars. This storm is a picture of the period between the period of the Maccabees and the coming of Christ. Judea was deprived of all independence under the heavy hand of the Romans.

#### **II. (:4-14) Fulfillment at the First Coming of Christ**

Zechariah speaks of himself – but prefiguring Christ. Christ came as the great Shepherd of Israel to feed them and tend them. **Describes what will happen when they reject their Messiah.** There is a warning of both internal strife and a king that would come against them and destroy them. Two staves: *Beauty*, favor or kindness and then *Union*; the Lord preserved the Jews from obliteration; gave them a measure of favor among the nations and preserved a measure of harmony among them. *Three shepherds* of **verse 8** could refer to the offices of Prophet, Priest and King that all despised Christ at His first coming. After the death of Christ, the nation is abandoned to destruction. The favor is removed and the Romans devoured them. In A.D. 70 when the Romans came against Jerusalem, they stopped for a couple of days and the believing remnant had an opportunity to flee because they remembered the words of Christ (**Luke 21:20**); but the self righteous did not flee but remained in the city.

### III. (:15-17) Fulfillment after the Rejection of Christ

Describes the wicked rulers into whose hands Judea would be delivered. The Roman Empire would be used to judge the Jews but then that kingdom would be weakened and cut off itself.

**Application:** Contempt for Scripture is contempt for Christ. You cannot say: "I love the person of the Book rather than the Book."

**Paul George:** In Christ's time the chief priests and the elders who were the possessors of the flock, by their traditions, the commandments of men, and their impositions on the consciences of the people, became perfect tyrants, devoured their houses, engrossed their wealth, and fleeced the flock instead of feeding it. The Sadducees, who were deists, corrupted their judgments. The Pharisees, who were bigots corrupted their morals, by making void the commandments of God (**Matthew 15:16**). It can be said they slew the sheep of the flock, sold them. They didn't care what became of them so they could gain their own ends and serve their own interests. They justified what they were doing. They could see no harm in what they were doing. They never thought they would be called to give an account for what they were doing by the chief Shepherd. They acted as if their power was given to them for destruction, which was designed only for edification. They believed because they sat in Moses's seat, they were not under the obligation of Moses's law but might dispense it at their pleasure. Those have their minds woefully blinded will do evil in the sight of the Lord and justify themselves in doing it. But God will not hold those guiltless who hold themselves guiltless.

<http://sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=62038>

**John MacArthur:** Through Zechariah God has promised salvation to Israel--a regathering and restoration in the land. But suddenly in **chapter 11**, the prophet of hope turns into a prophet of doom and judgment. He turns from the glories of the Messiah at His Second Coming to the national apostasy and rejection that occurred at His first coming, which is the main theme of the chapter. It helps us understand why the promises of **chapters 9 and 10** didn't come to pass when Jesus came the first time. . .

I've studied many chapters in the Bible but one of the most difficult I've ever studied is **Zechariah 11**. The chapter's poetic style is difficult to interpret; however, its main theme is clear in spite of our lack of our understanding of some of the details. An important key to the chapter is understanding its style of prophetic utterance. In the Old Testament, prophets often prophesied by **acting out a symbolic scene**. Verbalizing God's revelation was not the only means of prophesying. For example, God instructed Isaiah to "*take a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz* [which means, *'make haste to the spoils'*]" (**Isa 8:1**). That was the name of Isaiah's second son, a symbolic demonstration of judgment upon Damascus and Samaria. God told Ezekiel to take a tile, draw the city of Jerusalem, and dramatically besiege it (**Ezek. 4:1-2**). While onlookers may have thought the prophet had gone crazy, he was acting out a message from God to them. In **Zechariah 11, God uses the prophet as an actor, playing the part of a shepherd to illustrate the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and the rejection He encountered. . .**

The message of Zechariah is clear. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, God Himself would appear in the person of Jesus Christ, the True Shepherd, and attempt to feed His flock of slaughter. Only the poor of the flock would follow His Word and the rest, especially the leaders, would reject it. The good Shepherd would have no more value to them than a common slave. As a consequence the people were given over to severe judgment, which included death, famine, war, civil strife, and the destruction of the nation. The nation went out of existence and the Jewish people were scattered all over the world because they rejected the true Shepherd. . .

The book of Zechariah is of tremendous prophetic importance in viewing history from the time of Zechariah to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the most significant prophetic events is the rise of an individual commonly known as the **Antichrist**. Although that it is not specifically his title in the Old Testament, it certainly fits him well. The apostle John said there were many antichrists present in his day (**1 John 2:18**), but spoke of one who would be the most vehement adversary of God to ever live, apart from Satan himself (**1 John 4:3**).

As we come to **Zechariah 11:15-17**, we come face to face with this being. He's not a demon or a fallen angel, but an evil person whom the prophet identifies as a foolish shepherd (**v. 15**). In **verse 17**, he is called an impostor (KJV, "idol," archaic for "pretender"). He is a false shepherd, a contrast to the true Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John, writing in the first century to a wide circle of believers, said, "*Little children ... ye have heard that antichrist shall come*" (**1 John 2:18**). So the coming of the Antichrist was common knowledge. . .

**Having just played the part of Christ, Zechariah now plays the part of the Antichrist.** "*The instruments of a foolish shepherd*" might have been a broken staff or a club with metal on it used to beat stubborn sheep into submission. Whatever the instruments were, they would clearly be inappropriate for a shepherd who wanted to tenderly care for his sheep.

The Hebrew word translated "*foolish*" in the Old Testament is a synonym for "*wicked*." The book of Proverbs in many places equates the wicked person with the fool. **Proverbs 5:22-23** says, "*His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be held with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.*" **Psalms 14:1** says, "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" The fool lives in rebellion against God. Foolishness doesn't mean that he's mentally incompetent, but that he is wicked.

The world will willingly accept the Antichrist as its shepherd, but will recognize too late that he doesn't carry a staff in his hand, but a club. He will allow the false church to exist (**Rev. 17:1-6**) once the true church has been raptured and taken to heaven. He will slaughter not only the false church after a period of toleration (**Rev. 17:7-18**), but also two-thirds of the Jewish people (**Zech. 13:8**).

<http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/sg2167.htm>

**John Mackay:** Shepherds in the East commonly had two staffs (“*your rod and staff*”, **Ps. 23:4**), one a stout cudgel to ward off attacking predators from the flock, and the other corresponding more to the traditional idea of a shepherd’s staff with a crook at the end to help rescue the sheep from difficult situations. The two staffs are given symbolic names which sum up the two main aspects of the shepherd’s ministry. The prophet called the one staff **Favour**, “pleasantness”, a symbol of the Lord’s care and protection of his people, providing them with fellowship with himself and all the bounty of his covenant (**Ps. 23; 27:4-5; 90:17**). The other staff he called **Union**, literally a plural expression, “bindings” or “ties”, expressing the unifying effect of Christ’s ministry, “*there shall be one flock and one shepherd*” (**Jn. 10:16**), particularly here in connection with the union of Judah and Israel (**11:14**). These two aspects of union and blessing had been brought together previously by Ezekiel in connection with the coming rule of David as the Lord’s servant over his people (**Ezk. 37:15-28**). With both these blessings, **I pastured the flock** (repeating the expression at the beginning of the verse), acting as the representative of the Lord caring for his people.

### **Steven J. Cole: The Tragedy of Rejecting Christ**

Big Idea: The greatest tragedy possible is to reject Christ, the Good Shepherd.

1. Rejecting Christ results in great tragedy, both personally and nationally.
  - A. Rejecting Christ results in being exploited by ruthless shepherds.
  - B. Rejecting Christ results in being exploited by your fellow man.
  - C. Rejecting Christ results in the devastation of the land.
  - D. Rejecting Christ results ultimately in being abandoned by God.
2. To reject Christ means not to value Him properly.
3. The alternative to rejecting Christ is to value Him properly.

### **Dr. Jerry Harmon: Rejecting the Good Shepherd**

**Introduction:** Zechariah **chapter 11** is an analysis of history's greatest tragedy.

It outlines with amazing detail the tragedy of the nation of Israel rejecting Jesus as their Messiah and the awful consequences that would follow because of that rejection. And it teaches us a vital lesson. The greatest tragedy possible is to reject Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, to reject Jesus Christ. That's the worst thing. And it leads to the worst possible consequences.

What I want you to see here in this chapter are three different shepherds that are looked at as we examine the chapter.

#### **I. The Poem of the Wailing Shepherds (:1-4)**

In Hebrew poetry, they try to rhyme thoughts. And normally, in Hebrew poetry, it's what is called parallelism. The first line is given, or it's called a stick. First line is given, and then a second line tries to, in some way, parallel the first line. The second line will either restate the first line in a different way, In other words, the first line will give a thought, the second line will complete that thought. Or maybe the second line sometimes would contrast the thought in the first line. Or sometimes the second line would compare the thought in the first line. And so that's Hebrew poetry, basically.

It's a complete, comparative, or contrastive. and the way that these lines go together. This is an example of where the lines basically are completed.

This points forward to the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so who would the shepherds be during that time? They would be the priests, the scribes, the elders during the earthly ministry of Jesus, the ones that were always giving Jesus a tough time. These were the shepherds that led the people of Israel to reject the Lord Jesus Christ. They sought to destroy the credibility of Jesus during his earthly ministry. They even started campaigns. against Jesus, campaign of lies, saying he does miracles in the power of who? Of Beelzebub. He doesn't do it in the power of God, he does it in the power of Beelzebub. And they look for a way to put him to death.

## **II. The Parable of the Worthy Shepherd (:4-14)**

Zechariah becomes a type of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, during his earthly ministry. The flock of Israel was destined for slaughter because of their wicked leaders. So look now in verse number four. Notice here's God talking to Zechariah. Thus saith the Lord, my God, feed the flock of the slaughter.

The question that some people ask when they read this passage is, did Zechariah actually buy a flock of sheep and become a shepherd? Or is this something that is only written down in a book? Well, again, this is, God, I think, is actually asking Zachariah to go and get a flock and act this out in front of the people. This was gonna be a drama that he would act out in front of the people. And many times, God would ask his Old Testament prophets to do things like that.

I want you to go get a flock. I want you to tend to that flock. Because in doing that, he was representing the good shepherd who was going to come one day, and that is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. And he sings, Zechariah, I want you to protect these sheep. And by the way, the people that saw this, they knew there was a message in it. Drop down to verse number 11. This is the reason I say that. He literally acted it out. Because look at verse 11, and it was broken in that day. And so the poor the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord. In other words, the people that were watching Zechariah do all of this, they knew that what he was doing was giving them what? The word of the Lord. He knew that he was giving them a drama of God's word.

Every shepherd has a staff, right? Well here, this shepherd, Zechariah, has two. And he has two staffs, one of them he called beauty, or we could say, we could translate that word favor, and the other staff he called band, or we could also translate that word union. So he has two staffs, one called grace or favor, one called union or unity, And he has these two staffs in his hand. So here's Zachariah the shepherd with a staff in each hand, shepherding these sheep. And he does something else that's very interesting. He fires three of his under-shepherds.

**Verse 8** – very difficult to interpret – wide range of views –

Remember, this is a prophecy about the earthly ministry of Jesus and how the leaders of

Israel rejected him. And the three shepherds here that Ezekiel, not Ezekiel, Zechariah is going to fire, they represent the leaders in Israel. The three main offices in Israel are what? **Prophet, priest, and king**, right? When it talks of one month, that represents a relatively short period of time. So during the earthly ministry of Jesus, the religious leaders rejected Jesus as the Messiah and abused their roles for personal gain, right? and they were false and worthless shepherds. But the worthy true shepherd, Jesus Christ the Messiah, guess what? He and his self and his own person fulfilled all of those roles. He was the perfect prophet, priest, and king. All those roles combined in the Lord Jesus Christ. So Jesus, during his earthly ministry, pretty much brought an end or abolished those other ministries. He abolished them. John the Baptist was the last of the prophets. After 70 AD, there was no temple, no high priest to offer sacrifices, no more need for a priest after that. And after that time, there would be no king of the Jews because there was no Jewish nation. And so, Jesus basically, in his earthly ministry, ends the role of those three because all of them are embodied in him. And besides that, they all rejected Jesus anyway.

He takes the one staff that he has called beauty, or we could say favor, and he breaks it in half. Why does he do that? Because that was a signal or a sign that the covenant that God made with Israel was invalidated. It was annulled, we could say. In other words, the favor that God had with his people before, he no longer had favor. God's favor to his people had come to an end. The promises that God made to Israel were now postponed. They wouldn't be permanently canceled because we know the Old Testament is pretty clear on that. Now, there's different opinion about what the agreement was. Some people say it was the agreement to protect Israel from invaders coming in. Others say this was God's original agreement to be their God. And since they had rejected God, since they had rejected their Messiah, God had rejected them. and postpone what he was going to do for them. But either way, they lost the favor of God.

So all of this parable then is about the good shepherd Jesus who demonstrates how he will be despised, he will be rejected, and as a result of people rejecting him, there will be a fearful price that will be paid because of that.

### **III. The Prophecy of the Wicked Shepherd (:15-17)**

between verses 14 and 15, the whole church age is going to take place there. Now, a lot of people don't like Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks. They don't like the idea that there's a gap between the 69th and 70th week, but it's there, and there's a gap between verse 14 and verse 15, because verse 15 is gonna describe what will take place when the, who is the wicked shepherd now? Since they didn't receive the good shepherd, since they didn't receive the Christ, then the Jewish people will receive who? The wicked shepherd, the **Antichrist**. And that will happen in the end.

TEXT: Zechariah 12:1-14

TITLE: ISRAEL PROTECTED AND TRANSFORMED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL BRING SUPERNATURAL DESTRUCTION TO ISRAEL'S ATTACKERS AND DIVINELY INITIATED REPENTANCE TO ALL THE JEWS WHO NOW RECOGNIZE THEIR MESSIAH**

**INTRODUCTION:**

“*In that day*” (12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11) is the emphasized time reference for this prophecy that speaks of the consummation of God’s great program for His people Israel. The reference is to the eschatological Day of the Lord. Just as God sovereignly created the heavens and the earth and breathed into man the spirit of life, He will fulfill all of His promises regarding the future conversion and deliverance of His chosen people Israel. The enemy nations who attack Israel (and specifically Jerusalem) with such great overpowering numbers and superior military force will be shocked to find that God will turn the tables on them and make Israel the scene of their ultimate defeat. The key will be the repentance that the Spirit of God will bring about as all of regathered Israel now is granted insight into the recognition of their Messiah = the one whom they pierced. They mourn in repentance as they come to grips with their great sin in rejecting their Messiah at His first coming.

**I. (:1-5) THE FRUSTRATION OF ISRAEL'S ATTACKING ENEMIES**

A. (:1) Introduction – the Lord deserves to be Heard

1. The Weighty Message

*“The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel”*

2. The Worthy Credentials

*“Thus declares the Lord:*

*who stretches out the heavens,*

*lays the foundation of the earth,*

*and forms the spirit of man within him”*

**Dr. John C. Whitcomb:** He created the whole universe, and the uniquely inhabitable earth; but the most spectacular of all His creations are human beings.

**Jeremiah 10:11** – *“Thus you shall say to them, The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”* -- the only verse in the whole book of Jeremiah which is not in the Hebrew language but in the common Aramaic, the language the Gentiles understood. Why? Because God wanted them to hear too. [Jeremiah includes the first two qualifications, and Zechariah adds the third, the creation of mankind. The Lord Jesus is thus thrice qualified to be worshipped as God.]

B. (:2-3) Two Images of God Turning the Tables on Israel's Attacking Enemies

1. (:2) Incapacitated by Drunkenness

*"Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah."*

Expectation of enemies of Israel: they could drink victoriously – Wrong!

2. (:3) Injured by Lifting a Heavy Stone

*"It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it."*

Expectation of enemies of Israel: they could defeat Jerusalem – Wrong!

**Biblehub.com:** "on that day" -- This phrase often refers to a future time of divine intervention or judgment. In prophetic literature, "that day" is frequently associated with the "Day of the Lord," a time when God will act decisively in history. It suggests a specific, appointed time known only to God, emphasizing the certainty and divine orchestration of the events to follow.

C. (:4-5) Contrast Between Frustration of Enemy Nations and Encouragement of Israel

1. (:4) Divine Intervention – to Frustrate Israel's Enemies and to Protect Israel

*"In that day," declares the Lord, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness."*

2. (:5) National Encouragement -- based on the Special Bond Between Jerusalem and Her Covenant God

*"Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the Lord of hosts, their God.'"*

**II. (:6-9) THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL'S ATTACKING ENEMIES**

A. (:6) Destruction of Enemies Leads to Security for God's People in Jerusalem

1. Two Images of Destruction

a. A Firepot

*"In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood"*

b. Flaming Torch

*"and a flaming torch among sheaves"*

2. Contrast between the Devastation of Israel's Enemies and the Security of God's People

a. Devastation of Israel's Enemies

*“so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples,”*

b. Security of God's People

*“while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem.”*

B. (:7) Jerusalem Not Magnified Above Judah

*“The Lord also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah.”*

**Biblehub.com: The LORD will save the tents of Judah first** -- This phrase emphasizes God's initiative in delivering His people, highlighting His sovereignty and faithfulness. The "*tents of Judah*" symbolize the more vulnerable, rural areas of Judah, as opposed to the fortified city of Jerusalem. This reflects God's concern for the humble and less prominent, aligning with His consistent biblical pattern of exalting the lowly (**1 Samuel 2:8, Luke 1:52**). Historically, Judah was the southern kingdom, often seen as the heartland of Israelite identity, and its salvation first underscores its significance in God's redemptive plan. This also prefigures the coming of Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (**Revelation 5:5**), who brings salvation to all.

**so that the glory of the house of David** -- The "*house of David*" refers to the royal lineage established by God through King David, a central figure in Israel's history. This lineage is crucial for the messianic prophecies, as the Messiah was promised to come from David's line (**2 Samuel 7:12-16, Isaiah 11:1**). The glory of this house is tied to its divine election and the promise of an everlasting kingdom. By saving Judah first, God ensures that the honor of David's house is not elevated above the rest of the people, maintaining unity and humility among His chosen.

**and of the people of Jerusalem** -- Jerusalem, the capital city, was the political and spiritual center of Israel, housing the Temple and serving as the focal point of Jewish worship. The "people of Jerusalem" represent the established and influential sectors of society. By not allowing their glory to surpass that of Judah, God prevents pride and division, promoting equality among His people. This reflects the biblical theme of God opposing the proud but giving grace to the humble (**James 4:6**).

C. (:8) Jerusalem – the City of David -- Magnified

*“In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord before them.”*

Lesson: The Lord can make both the weak and the strong to be victorious warriors (like King David) under the leadership of the Sovereign Messiah

D. (:9) Enemies of Jerusalem Destroyed

*“And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”*

Lesson: The Lord will fulfill His promise of destruction.

Transition: Turning from Physical Deliverance to look at their Spiritual Salvation:

**III. (:10-14) THE REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL’S REGATHERED INHABITANTS AS THEY TRULY RECOGNIZE THEIR MESSIAH**

A. (:10) National Conversion of Israel = Accomplished by the Spirit of God

1. Divinely Targeted towards Israel

*“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem,*

2. Divinely Initiated

*“the Spirit of grace and of supplication”*

3. Divinely Focused – Looking Upon their Rejected Messiah and Bitterly Mourning

*“so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”*

Firstborn or an only son = of highest value; most precious

B. (:11-14) Great Mourning Throughout the Land = Godly Repentance

1. (:11) Intensity of the Mourning

*“In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.”*

**David Guzik:** This refers to the mourning over King Josiah's death (**2 Kings 23:29** and **2 Chronicles 35:20-25**). He was such a godly king that the whole nation wept bitterly at his death.

2. (:12-14) Pervasiveness of the Mourning

a. General Introduction

*“The land will mourn, every family by itself;”*

b. House of David

*“the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves;”*

c. House of Nathan

*“the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves;”*

- d. House of Levi  
*“the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves;”*
  
- e. Shimeites  
*“the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves;”*
  
- f. Summary – all families  
*“all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.”*

**Biblehub.com:** This phrase emphasizes the inclusivity of the mourning described in the preceding verses. The context of **Zechariah 12** is a prophecy concerning the future deliverance and spiritual renewal of Jerusalem and the house of David. The mourning is a response to the recognition of the one "*whom they have pierced,*" which many interpret as a messianic prophecy pointing to Jesus Christ.

The mention of "*all the remaining clans*" suggests a comprehensive participation in this mourning, indicating that it is not limited to a specific group but extends to all families within the community. This inclusivity reflects the communal nature of repentance and spiritual awakening, which is a recurring theme in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament.

The reference to "*their wives*" highlights the family unit's involvement in this act of mourning. In ancient Israelite culture, family and clan structures were central to social and religious life. The inclusion of wives signifies the depth and sincerity of the communal repentance, as it involves every member of the household.

This phrase also connects to the broader biblical theme of collective responsibility and redemption. Similar themes are found in passages like **Joel 2:12-17**, where the entire community is called to repentance. The mourning in **Zechariah 12:14** can be seen as a precursor to the ultimate redemption and restoration promised in the messianic age.

In terms of prophecy, this passage is often linked to the eschatological hope found in **Revelation 1:7**, where it is said that every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all peoples on earth will mourn because of Him. This connection underscores the universal scope of God's redemptive plan and the recognition of Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What are our credentials for spiritual ministry?

2) Why do Israel's enemies persist in their attacks and opposition in light of the clear testimony of God regarding their ultimate defeat?

3) Why are the wounds of Christ still visible in His resurrection body?

4) How is godly sorrow differentiated from the type of worldly sorrow that does not lead to genuine repentance?

\* \* \* \* \*

## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**John MacArthur: Israel's Final Deliverance** (see web reference below for full notes)

### **Introduction:**

The Bible teaches there is coming a great day for the nation of Israel-- a day of tremendous spiritual salvation and political victory. That has been prophesied repeatedly in the Old and New Testaments, and is detailed for us in Zechariah 12. The tragic history of Israel will be reversed to culminate in a future of unprecedented joy.

## **I. THE SIEGE OF ISRAEL (vv. 1-3)**

### **A. The Burden for Israel (v. 1)**

#### 1. Its object

This prophecy is directed toward Israel. It begins by describing a siege against the nation. A siege is a military attack by an army, usually in the form of a blockade, against a city. There will be a great attack by the Gentile nations against Israel in the future. It will be another world war-- the battle of the centuries, the greatest war of history. It is commonly referred to as the Battle of Armageddon. All the nations of the world will converge on Israel in an effort to destroy it and prevent the Messiah's return to establish His Kingdom.

#### 2. Its source

Furthermore the burden is from God Himself. He is proclaiming in the first person through Zechariah what He will do. God sovereignly directs the course of events of history, whether through raising up a false shepherd or establishing His messianic Kingdom.

### **B. The Battle in Israel (vv. 2-3)**

#### 1. The symbolism explained

Verses 2 and 3 are parallels. They begin with God making Jerusalem "a cup of trembling" and "a burdensome stone," respectively, and state that the future siege of Jerusalem will make an impact on "all the peoples."

##### a) Intoxication

"Cup of trembling" refers to a large basin everyone can drink from (Heb., saph) rather than an individual cup (Heb., kos). This verse pictures the nations as a person who drinks too much wine and finds himself staggering. The trembling is not associated with nervousness, but with intoxication.

When the nations converge on Israel and besiege Jerusalem, they will find themselves as ineffective as a drunkard trying to walk a straight line. By the time the nations make their way to Jerusalem, they will become figuratively drunk with their over inflated sense of power. Their overconfidence will so disorient them, they will be unable to claim their coveted prize, becoming easy prey for divine judgment. Revelation 17:6 is another example of a figurative use of drunkenness. It mentions that Satan's evil world system will become drunk "with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

#### b) Injury

Verse 3 presents a second metaphor: that of "a burdensome stone" (lit., "a stone of burden"). That refers to a heavy stone that was used in weightlifting contests. The analogy is simple. Like a heavy weight, Jerusalem will give a hernia to any nation that tries to gain victory over it. The phrase "shall be cut in pieces" is best understood in context to mean they shall grievously injure themselves. It refers to a rupture or other internal injuries sustained from lifting something too heavy. The proud Gentile nations won't be able to subdue Israel.

#### 2. The setting examined

The phrase "in that day" refers to the time during the Tribulation when the nations gather together to besiege Jerusalem. It's an eschatological term that is also referred to as "the day of the Lord." The attacking nations will find themselves reeling around in a drunken stupor of confusion and irreparably injured because they try to do something that's impossible--destroy the people of God.

## **II. THE SHIELDING OF ISRAEL (vv. 4-9)**

### **A. The Panic of the Defiant (v. 4)**

God is comforting His people, explaining how He will protect them in that day. Since horses were the symbol of strength in ancient times, verse 4 emphasizes God's superior power over Israel's enemies as He smites the horses with terror and confusion. Furthermore, He inflicts their riders with madness, putting them into a wild and helpless state of panic.

When the great armies of the world converge on Jerusalem, their weapons and soldiers will be rendered helpless. Although they will think victory is at hand as they attack the seemingly vanquished Jews, they will find themselves rushing to their own destruction. The phrase "I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah" assures Israel that He will be concerned and actively involved in what's happening to His people. God will open His eyes of love and forgiveness toward Israel as He brings about their deliverance.

### **B. The Preservation of the Defenseless (v. 5)**

The people in Israel who lived outside the city of Jerusalem were the most vulnerable in war in ancient times, being without the protection of fortified city walls. But knowing that God had chosen Jerusalem to be the city of His special affection will give confidence to future denizens of the surrounding countryside. They will recognize that they have been preserved because God has chosen Jerusalem. His promises to Jerusalem, which is the heart of the nation, will assure them of their divine invincibility.

#### C. The Paradox of the Defeated (v. 6)

The prophecy compares the Gentile armies to kindling or sheaves that the governors of Judah as firepots or torches that devour wood in flame. The relatively weak and outnumbered leaders of Israel are going to devour their enemies "round about on the right hand and on the left." That will allow Jerusalem to "be inhabited again in her own place." In the final battle nothing will be able to ultimately destroy the city of Jerusalem, which shall again be peacefully inhabited.

#### D. The Priority of Deliverance (v. 7)

God will first deliver the defenseless country folk. That will show those in the well-defended capital, which is delivered last, that the battle was not won by their military might or strategizing.

#### E. The Power of David (v. 8)

The strong, represented by the house of David, shall be like God. More specifically they'll be like the angel of the Lord, who is Christ. They will be infused with the energy of the Messiah Himself, implying that He will be there leading His people to victory.

#### E. The Promise of Destruction (v. 9)

God is going to wipe out those who seek to attack His people. The Hebrew term translated "will seek" speaks of the concentration of the marksman, who focuses on his target without being distracted. Revelation 16 and 19 chronicle the wrath of God and the judgment of Christ as He comes out of heaven in glory and power to conquer His foes.

**Zechariah 12:1-9** prophetically describes Israel's great deliverance and the destruction of the armies of the world gathered against her. That's a political victory that will cause Israel and her enemies to recognize God at work. **Verse 10** now makes a transition into the spiritual transformation of Israel.

### III. THE SORROW OF ISRAEL (vv. 10b-14)

#### A. Its Cause

While Israel's spiritual eyes are focused on God and His deliverance, they will see God incarnate, their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ coming as their victor--the very One they once rejected. That realization will cause national mourning among every family and individual. The Hebrew word translated "mourn" means "to strike the breast in deep grief." That men will mourn apart from their wives indicates individual acts of repentance that permeate the entire nation. How ironic that after winning their greatest victory they will mourn. But that's the anguish of true repentance.

#### B. Its Comparison

The mourning and bitterness Israel will experience at that time is similar to that which took place when good king Josiah was mortally wounded at Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo. (Although not mentioned in **2 Chronicles 35:20-24**, the scriptural account of Josiah's defeat, the name Hadadrimmon was apparently preserved by tradition and later recorded by Zechariah.) Pharaoh Neco of Egypt killed Josiah in battle, and the

nation of Judah mourned its great loss. So Zechariah prophesies that the mourning of Jerusalem and Israel in the day that Christ returns will be reminiscent of the mourning over the death of King Josiah.

### C. Its Contrast

Commentator **David Baron** explains the singling out of the families of David, Nathan, Levi, and Shimei: "Through these ... aristocratic and privileged lines, the rulers and the priests, who, alas! in times past often set an evil example to the whole nation, will now be foremost in their self-contrition and mourning over the great national sin, their example for good will now also be followed by all the rest of the people" (The Vision & Prophecies of Zechariah [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1972], p. 453).

Israel's deep mourning reminds me of Jesus' statement, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). Israel's mourning of true repentance is coming, but she will be comforted.

## IV. THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL (v. 10a)

### A. Stated

God's pouring forth of His Spirit is the evidence of salvation because He never gives His Spirit to unbelievers (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit is identified as the "Spirit of grace" (cf., **Heb. 10:29**) because was He given out of grace, and the Spirit "of supplication" because God's grace toward the remnant will result in repentant prayer. Zechariah is saying that just as God pours out refreshing showers on thirsty and parched ground, so will He pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication on repentant, needy Israel.

### B. Supported

Joel prophesied essentially the same thing when he said, "*It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and, also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit*" (**Joel 2:28-29**). That prophesy will be completely fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ. Peter cited it at the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:15-21**), but then the church was getting just a little taste of it. Joel's prophecy is similar to Ezekiel's saying that God would replace Israel's stony heart with a heart of flesh and would put His Spirit within them (**Ezek. 36:26-27**).

Israel's repentance happens only because "*they shall look upon [Him] whom they have pierced.*" Because God is speaking in first person in **verse 10** as the One who was pierced--whom we know to be Christ--we not only have an affirmation of the deity of Christ, but also an implication of the Trinity as the perspective shifts from the first person to the third person in the phrase "*they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.*" There God sees Himself as well as the incarnate Son of God as the object of Israel's attention.

Don't let anyone tell you that Jesus is less than God or that the Jewish people weren't responsible at least in part for His death. God tells Israel that it was Him in the Person of His Son whom they pierced. They may have used a Roman spear and a cross (**John 19:34**), but it was their plotting of their religious leaders that put Him there. Yet God in His great mercy can forgive anything--even the murder of His Messiah.

### **Conclusion**

**Zechariah 13:1** reiterates the promise of salvation for Israel: "*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.*" God is going to wash away the sins of the nation. When they see Jesus and cry out, "My Lord and my God," they will realize it was the God of Israel whom they had pierced. And then God will turn on the fountain of spiritual cleansing and wash His people clean as He pours out His Spirit.

In any age, repentance like that--true, honest repentance--will lead to spiritual cleansing. The fountain is open today. The apostle Paul said, "*Now is the day of salvation*" (**2 Cor. 6:2**). While we as Christians look expectantly to the day of national mourning and blessing for Israel, meanwhile we can tell every Jew and Gentile that they don't need to wait until then, because the fountain of salvation is open right now. <http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/sg2169.htm>

### **Steven Cole: God the Mighty Savior**

#### **Introduction:**

Zechariah 12-14 contains the second "burden" that the prophet received from God (see **9:1**). This burden focuses on Israel, and specifically on Jerusalem (22 times in these chapters). The phrase "*that day*" occurs 17 times and "*the nations*" occurs 14 times, pointing to the period of time when God brings His purpose for Israel and the nations to culmination. As we saw last week, **chapter 11** predicts Israel's rejection of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and her subjection during the Tribulation to the worthless shepherd. This will plunge the nation into a time of severe testing, described by Jeremiah (**30:5-7**) as "*the time of Jacob's distress.*" Daniel (**12:1**) calls it "*a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.*"

This time of testing culminates in the Battle of Armageddon (**Joel 3:9-16; Rev. 16:16-21; Zech. 12:1-9; 14:2-3**), when God will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle. At the last minute, just before Israel is annihilated, God will supernaturally rout the enemy and deliver His people. Our text describes the physical deliverance of Israel in **verses 1-9**, and the spiritual deliverance of Israel in **verses 10-14**. The great military victory that God will achieve for His helpless people illustrates the great spiritual salvation that He also brings. Both sections emphasize the truth that God is mighty to save His people according to His purpose.

#### **1. God is mighty to save His people physically (12:1-9).**

A. God's supreme authority and power are seen in His sure word and in His role as creator and sustainer of the universe (**12:1**).

B. God's mighty power to save is seen in the way that He will deliver Israel from all her enemies (12:2-9).

**2. God is mighty to save His people spiritually (12:10-14).**

- A. God often prepares us for salvation through trials.
- B. God brings us to salvation through the Holy Spirit.
- C. God's salvation brings us to see the Savior accurately.
- D. God's salvation requires that we look to the Savior in faith.
- E. God's salvation produces genuine repentance in the hearts of His people.

**Conclusion:**

Why did God give this remarkable prophecy to people who lived at least 2,500 years before it would take place? It was not so that they could draw up prophecy charts and read books about how soon these things would take place. He gave these prophecies to comfort His people as they went through trials and faced threatening enemies with the solid truth that He is a mighty Savior, and that no one can touch His elect apart from His purpose.

**David Guzik:** The section begins with praise for God's creative power, reminding us that He is in control and completely able to accomplish what He predicts. God says that in a coming day Jerusalem will intoxicate and stupefy the surrounding peoples. If Jerusalem will be a cup of drunkenness to all her surrounding peoples, it will be a heavy stone - a burden - for all peoples, presenting a problem that cannot be solved (all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces). King David was renowned for his fighting ability, courage, and success. God promises a day when the weakest in Jerusalem will be as mighty as David - and the leaders can only be compared in might to God!

**Robert Morgan:** Studying the subject of prophecy in the Bible is like throwing firewood into our internal furnaces of hope and anticipation. The more we study God's plan for the future, the greater will be our excitement and sense of expectancy. And that's why we're devoting two or three weeks to the final chapters of the prophet Zechariah. . .

God is telling us all this not to frighten us, but to reassure us. He knows the end from the beginning. If He formed the heavens over our head and the earth under our feet and the spirit inside our bodies, He knows what's ahead on our calendars. He sees beyond the horizon of human history, and He is in control.

*And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight;  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll.  
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

<http://www.donelson.org/pocket/pp-050529.html>

**Eugene Merrill:** Once YHWH has accomplished His work of judgment on the nations through Judah and Jerusalem and has secured His people against further danger from

them, He will begin to work a work of grace among the redeemed. Whether or not there is a cause-and-effect relationship here—the act of judgment elicits a response of mournful repentance—is not clear. There can be no doubt, however, that the one follows the other, nor can there be any question as to the ultimate means whereby the contrition of this passage comes to pass. It is YHWH who pours out a spirit of grace and supplications. . .

In summary, v. 10 anticipates the day when the royal house of David and all Jerusalem will receive from YHWH a spirit of grace, enabling those people to seek His forgiveness for millennia of waywardness. Once this is granted, or simultaneous with it, they will look to YHWH, the one they have mortally wounded by their heartbreaking behavior, a look that produces in them a sense of great sorrow. The only sorrow comparable is that of the loss of a first-born son in death. Such sorrow is a sign of genuine repentance, as the following verses on into chapter 13 make clear.

**Mackay:** When Josiah died, all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him. Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah, and to this day all the men and women singers commemorate Josiah in the laments. These became a tradition in Israel and are written in the Laments (**2 Chr. 35:24-25**). Josiah's death involved a bitter loss of hope as the last reforming king of Judah was taken from them, and the possibility of averting the course of events which ended in the exile of 586 B.C. was lost. So too the rejection of the good shepherd had fearful consequences (**11:9, 11, 14**) for the Jewish people.

#### **Dr. Jerry Harmon: Will Jerusalem Survive?**

**Introduction:** You might be here tonight and say, you know, what does that got to do with me? I'm not Jewish and I'm just trying to survive myself getting through the week. What's it have to do with me? Well, it's got everything to do with you because your salvation and your future is directly linked to the promises that God made to Israel. Almost 100% of Bible prophecies are related to Israel. Israel continues to be a focal point in today's world.

If you try to destroy Jerusalem, you better be careful. You may be cutting yourself to pieces or smashed to pieces. The Bible teaches us that Israel will be the peace center of the world one day. There's never gonna be peace in this world until there's peace in Jerusalem. And there won't be peace in Jerusalem until the Prince of Peace, Jesus, comes back and takes his throne in Jerusalem. That's the reason the Bible tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Israel will also be the glory center of the world. The Bible says, So in God's sight, Jerusalem is his capital city. It's his most important city.

In this oracle, Zechariah assures all of the people there that the city would not only survive, but it'll be around until the end of the age. Although many nations would come against it, God will protect her from her enemies.

Now, some say, well, these prophecies that Zechariah gives here, they don't look at them as being future, and they look at them as being already fulfilled. And my question

to that would be, when? When were they fulfilled? I think these are yet future for two reasons.

First of all, nothing yet in history fulfills this prophecy. There's been no coalition of nations or battles as of yet that can compare to what Zechariah is prophesying here. Zechariah describes how Israel will be sifted and purged in the final conflict of the earth's history. She'll be forced to face the nations of the earth alone. This burden can't be applied to any of the calamities that we've seen so far. It can't be applied to what Israel went through under Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. It can't be applied to Antiochus Epiphanes and his Greco-Roman Macedonian Empire against Israel.

Certainly, the Messiah has not yet appeared on the Mount of Olives, as described in chapter 14. We know that hasn't happened. The Messiah hasn't come and split the mountain in half, like it says. And also, there's another reason why I think this is yet futurist, because the repetition of the phrase that we see here, is *in that day*, in that day. We see that several times in this section. In fact, it's used in these next three chapters, it's gonna be used about 17 times. And this is an **eschatology expression**, an eschatological expression about what is going to happen in the future.

Now, we saw in chapter 11 of Zechariah, the prophecy of how Israel will reject the true shepherd. And that happened literally during the earthly ministry of Jesus. And their rejection of the true shepherd will open up the door for them to receive a wicked shepherd, as we saw in chapter 11. And so, this will plunge the nation into a time of severe testing, as Jeremiah talks about in chapter 30, and Daniel talks about it. He calls it a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation. And all this will take place, I believe, during that period of time that the Bible calls the **Great Tribulation**. The time of trouble culminates in the Battle of Armageddon, and when a contingent of all the armies of the world will come and bring their forces against Israel, and the Lord will step in just before Israel is annihilated.

Now, with all that in mind, I want you to see **two reasons why Jerusalem will survive**.

### **I. Because of the Sovereign Command of the Father (:1-9)**

Our God is the creator. He is the sustainer of the universe. He formed the stars. He formed the seas. He formed the spirit of man. That means he's sovereign over not only the material world, but also the spiritual world. He's sovereign over everything. Make no mistake, beloved, God is the one who's in charge.

Verses two and three uses two images that describe the fate of the armies that come against her.

- Behold, I will make Jerusalem a **cup of trembling** unto all the people around about. Trembling is the word that means reeling. It's the idea of drunkenness. And a cup is a familiar image for judgment. And so the nations will greedily swallow up Jerusalem like a cup of wine. But instead of that wine satisfying them, it'll make them stagger and fall to the ground. The contents of that cup will make them sick, and the nations will reel around like a drunken man. And so, you know, they're not gonna get what they

expected. It's gonna be a judgment from God. History shows that every nation that's ever tried to destroy the Jews has been itself destroyed. And it'll be no different when the nations collectively attack God's people in that day,

- here's the other image. And in that day, I will make Jerusalem a **burdensome stone**. That's the next image there, a burdensome stone, literally a stone of burden. This is a heavy stone, a stone that's unmovable. In fact, if you try to move this stone, you're going to get injured. This stone's so heavy that you might try to move it, but it'll smash you to pieces.

And verses four to nine, God gives a detailed description of his protection. First of all, this is what I call **the confused calvary**. . . The next thing I see here is **the enlightened governors** in verses five and six. . . But then there's also **the humble inhabitants**. Look in verse seven. And the Lord shall save the tents of Judah first, before God defends Jerusalem in that day, he will defend the tents of Judah. What are the tents of Judah? That's a reference to the outlying area. And God will defend them first. . . And then there's **the destroyed enemy**. Look in verse 9, and it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. In that day, God says, I will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Jerusalem will survive because of God's sovereign command. Make no mistake about it, God's in charge of all of this.

## II. Because of The Second Coming of the Savior.

A. First of all, notice an amazing providence I call this. Look in verse number 10. This is one of the most remarkable prophecies in all the Bible. Look at verse 10. *And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication. and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one that mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

This is an amazing verse. And you can't explain this verse apart from the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of the one who is both God and man. Think about this with me. Now, throughout this passage, who's the speaker? It's God, right? God's doing the talking. And here, God says, they will look upon me whom they have pierced. The word pierced here is consistently used in the Old Testament to talk about being run through with a sword or being run through with a spear. Now, the question is, how are you gonna pierce God with a spear? How can you do that? God's all the way in heaven. God's a spirit. You see, in order for this to happen, God has to become a man. He has to take on human flesh. And the Jewish nation, Israel, cannot someday look on this one whom they've pierced unless he is then living, having been raised from the dead. And so, This all speaks about the incarnation, God becoming a man, God being crucified, and then being able to be raised in order for them to look upon him one day. Raised and ascended. All that is implied in this prophecy.

B. But then I want you to see next an amazing deliverance. Amazing deliverance. Now, in the earlier verses of chapter 12, Israel is delivered from physical harm, but the

rest of this chapter and on into chapter 13 is something far more wonderful. Israel is delivered from spiritual harm. God will deliver Israel from sin.

C. But then here's the third thing, an amazing repentance. we see true repentance. Look again in verse 10. And this true repentance of Israel is demonstrated by their deep sorrow.

And notice what it says in verse 11. And in that day there shall be great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadad, Rimon, in the valley of Megiddon. And what does that mean? Hadad, Rimon, is a site near Megiddo. It's named after two Syrian gods, Hadad and Rimon. But this was a place where the great king of Judah, Josiah, was killed by the Pharaoh Necho in a battle there. And when Josiah was killed, they all mourned. And that's what he's saying. The people will mourn, just like their firstborn was taken from them. Or like the day when people mourned for Josiah when he was killed by Pharaoh Necho in that battle. God's salvation produces genuine repentance in the hearts of people. Ongoing repentance is the thing that marks a true believer. If you're truly a believer, you'll know it by your ongoing repentance. I'm not just sorry for my sin yesterday, I'm sorry for them today. . . this repentance is not only gonna be collectively, but it must be personally, individually.

### **Conclusion:**

God often prepares us for salvation through trials. He often prepares us through trials. And what I mean by that is, before God saves the Jews spiritually, he's gonna take them through the awful events of the tribulation. And it'll culminate with that horrifying campaign of Armageddon. And again, it's God who will bring those nations together there. It's God that's gonna put his people through these trials. And why does God do that? God is softening their heart. God is preparing their heart so that they will turn to their Messiah. That's often what God will do to get people's attention.

Now, why did God give this remarkable prophecy to people who lived at least 2,500 years before it would take place? Well, it was not so that we could draw up our prophecy charts and read books and see how soon these things would take place. He gave these prophecies to comfort His people as they went through trials and faced threats. He was demonstrating to all that He is a mighty Savior and that no one can touch His people apart from His purpose. And that's how God wants us to apply it. If you haven't repented of your sins and trusted in Christ, God's kept you alive until now so that you will, that you'll reach out to him. And even if you have trust in Christ and you are a child of God, he wants you to know that no enemy, whether tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or sword or peril or even death itself, will be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

TEXT: Zechariah 13:1-9

TITLE: NATIONAL CLEANSING FOR THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE REJECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS TO A REFINING PROCESS WHERE THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL IS EVENTUALLY CLEANSED AND RESTORED TO ITS LOYAL COVENANT RELATIONSHIP**

**INTRODUCTION:**

What does the future hold for the nation of Israel? Many Christians believe that God is finished dealing with Israel as a nation. They would attribute some type of allegorical interpretation to passages like this – making reference to God’s dealing today with His church. But the details revealed here must be given full weight and not spiritualized away. After Israel rejects her Messiah and the Good Shepherd has been pierced through with the sword, there will be a time of blindness and hardening upon the nation. But her setting aside will not be permanent. In the end times, the fountain of the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness and cleansing will be abundantly opened for the remnant of the nation of Israel. There will be a painful process of refining in the crucible of God’s judgment. But the end result will be restoration of the nation to its loyal covenant relationship.

**I. (:1) SUMMARY: CLEANSING AVAILABLE FOR ALL ISRAEL = THE FOUNTAIN OF GOD’S MERCY**

A. Anticipated Timeframe = Coming Day of the Lord

“*In that day*” = special emphasis in this whole section

B. Imagery of Abundant Cleansing

“*a fountain will be opened*”

- Fountain provided by the Lord; false fountains cannot cleanse
- Fountain available to all but the Lord must prepare the heart
  - remove spiritual blindness
  - initiate the response
- God’s mercy and grace in forgiving and cleansing is abundant; endless supply

C. Target Beneficiaries = All of Israel

“*for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem,*”

D. Need for Cleansing = Filthy Transgression

“*for sin and for impurity.*”

- No salvation apart from confessing sin and impurity; must call sin what it is
- No one excluded because they are too sinful; the fountain is sufficient
- Holy Spirit must convict of sin

## **II. (:2-3) RADICAL JUDGMENT OF ALL INIQUITY PURGES THE LAND**

### A. Anticipated Timeframe

*“It will come about in that day,’ declares the Lord of hosts”*

### B. Radical Purging of Idolatry

*“that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered”*

### C. Radical Purging of False Prophets

*“and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land.”*

These were the two main areas of transgression for Israel = idolatry and false prophecy. False doctrine always associated with unclean living.

### D. Radical Support from the Parents of False Prophets

*“And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the Lord’; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies.”*

## **III. (:4-6) THE ASHAMED FALSE PROPHETS TRY TO HIDE THEIR IDENTITY**

### A. Anticipated Timeframe

*“Also it will come about in that day”*

### B. Despising Their Role as False Prophets

*“that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies”*

### C. Denying Their Identity as False Prophets

#### 1. Disguising Their Appearance

*“and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive”*

Cf. the mantle all the prophets wore around the neck = distinguishing characteristic

#### 2. Denying Their Occupation

*“but he will say, ‘I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground, for a man sold me as a slave in my youth’”*

#### 3. Lying About Their Past Participation

*“And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms?’ Then he will say, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’”*

#### IV. (:7-9) PROVIDENTIAL REFINING PURIFIES A LOYAL REMNANT FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD

##### A. (:7) The Role of the Good Shepherd

###### 1. Relationship to God the Father

*“Awake, O sword, against My shepherd,  
And against the man, My Associate,  
Declares the Lord of hosts.”*

###### 2. Rejection of the Shepherd and its Effect on the Nation of Israel

*“Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered”*

**Biblehub.com:** This prophecy is directly referenced in the New Testament, specifically in **Matthew 26:31** and **Mark 14:27**, where Jesus predicts His disciples will abandon Him after His arrest. The "Shepherd" being struck refers to the crucifixion of Christ, and the "sheep" symbolize His followers, who would be disoriented and dispersed without their leader. This scattering fulfills the prophecy and highlights the human tendency to falter in faith during trials

###### 3. Rejection of the Nation of Israel for the Times of the Gentiles

*“And I will turn my hand against the little ones.”*

**John Mackay:** “little ones” = They are the Lord’s “little flock” (**Lk. 12:32**).

The Lord is going to subject His people Israel to a time of rejection and blindness before the nation will be regathered, restored and cleansed.

##### B. (:8) The Remnant of Israel Protected from Destruction

*“It will come about in all the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it.’”*

##### C. (:9a) The Refining of God’s People = a Painful but Necessary Process

*“And I will bring the third part through the fire,  
Refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested.”*

##### D. (:9b) The Reciprocal Loyalty Between God and His People

*“They will call on My name, and I will answer them;  
I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”*

\* \* \* \* \*

#### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How excited are we to tell others about the availability and sufficiency of God’s fountain of mercy and forgiveness and cleansing?

- 2) How serious is God about disciplining and refining His own people so that they are devoted to Him in purity and loyalty?
- 3) How was the sword deployed against God's Good Shepherd?
- 4) What can we learn in this passage about making our boast in the Lord?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

##### **Steven Cole: God's Fountain for Blessing**

God has graciously provided a fountain for sinners to be cleansed so that they may become His holy people.

1. We all need God's fountain to cleanse us from sin and impurity (**13:1**).
2. Cleansing from sin should lead to separation from sin (**13:2-6**).
3. God is the only one who can open a fountain for cleansing, and He has done so by killing His Shepherd (**13:7a**).
4. Those whom God cleanses from sin He purifies through the fires of affliction (**13:7b-9**).

Here are some questions to ask yourself to apply these verses:

- Have you come in faith to the fountain of Jesus Christ and His shed blood to cleanse your heart from sin and impurity?
- Are you regularly confessing and forsaking your sin in accordance with God's Word?
- Are you looking daily to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who was willing to be put to death for your sins?
- Are you striving to grow in holiness?
- Are you growing to love and submit yourself to all of God's truth and growing to hate false teaching?
- Are you submitting to God as He refines you through trials, calling out to Him as your God, and knowing His assurance that you are His child?

##### **Thomas Constable: The Restoration of Judah**

##### **Israel's cleansing 13:1-6**

##### **The smiting of the Shepherd and the scattering of the sheep 13:7-9**

In that day God would open a fountain for the complete spiritual cleansing of the Israelites, both for their moral sins and for their ritual uncleanness (cf. **Ezek. 47**). The figure of a fountain pictures abundant cleansing that would continue indefinitely. This will be the fulfillment of God's promise to forgive the sins of His people Israel in the New Covenant (**3:4, 9; Jer.31:34; Ezek. 36:25; cf. Zech. 3:4, 9; Rom. 11:26**). "*The blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin*" (**1 John 1:7**). The cleansing is available now, but God will cleanse multitudes of Israelites in the future, after they turn to their Messiah in faith (**12:10-14**) . . .

In **11:17** it was the worthless shepherd whom the Lord would strike, but here it is the Good Shepherd. The one doing the striking is evidently God Himself since "*strike*" is masculine in the Hebrew text and agrees with "*the LORD of hosts*." If so, Zechariah presented Messiah's death as God's activity (cf. **Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23**) as well as Israel's (**12:10-14**).

The striking (death) of the Shepherd would result in the scattering of the Shepherd's sheep (i.e., Israel, 11:4-14). The Lord Jesus quoted this part of the verse, claiming the role of the Shepherd, when he anticipated the scattering of His disciples following His death (cf. **Matt. 26:31, 56; Mark 14:27, 50**).

**David Guzik:** Idolatry and false prophecy were the two principle ways Israel was led astray from God. God not only provides a fountain to cleanse, but He also promises to cut off the source of uncleanness - in this case, idolatry and false prophecy. . . "Those who posed as prophets will so fear exposure that they will deny ever having made such a claim" (**Baldwin**). They will put away the "uniform" of the prophets (a robe of coarse hair) and earn an honest living. . . The man accused of being a false prophet insists the scars on his body are not the self-inflicted wounds often associated with false prophets, but merely the result of a brawl in his friend's house.

### **John MacArthur: The Cleansing of Israel**

- I. CLEANSING FROM THE DEFILEMENT OF SIN (v. 1)
- II. CLEANSING FROM THE DECEPTION OF SPURIOUS PROPHETS (vv. 2-6)
- III. CLEANSING THROUGH THE DEATH OF THE SHEPHERD (v. 7a)
- IV. CLEANSING FROM THE DISPERSION OF THE SHEEP (v. 7b)
- V. CLEANSING FROM THE DEVASTATION OF SLAUGHTER (vv. 8-9a)
- VI. CLEANSING THROUGH THE DECISION OF THE SOUL (v. 9b)

The cleansing of Israel is a sovereign act of God, but it occurs in concert with the will of the people of Israel. God does not sovereignly redeem His people apart from their faith in Him. The people that were "*not my people*" (Heb., *lo ammi*) will become "*my people*" (Heb., *ammi*), according to God's prophecy in **Hosea 1:9-11**. From the midst of their fiery ordeal the remnant of Israel will see Jesus Christ and they call upon Him as their Lord. Their decision will consummate their cleansing. Isaiah said, "*The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*" (**Isa. 35:10**). What a blessed consummation!

Our God is a forgiving God who will forgive His people Israel even though they descended from those who killed His Son. Who is a pardoning God like that? Do you know of any other? Because we are sinners, we need a God who can take away our sin. The fountain is open for all who will come. There is no need to wait.

### **S Lewis Johnson: Israel's National Cleansing**

Reference is to false prophecy in the last days. Mutilation was a common practice for false prophets. Anticipation and excitement in light of the soon coming of the Lord.

Israel is the outstanding phenomenon of our times. Israel must recognize that they have sinned against God. Not enough to believe in the coming Messianic Kingdom. There is coming a day when Israel will have a change of heart. In that one day the iniquity of the land will be cleansed (**3:9**). Zechariah expands on that thought and gives us some more detail. National repentance (**chap. 12**) is to be followed by national cleansing – based on confession of having pierced the Lord of hosts. The fountain is something that is dug out (something that is pierced – direct reference to piercing of **Chap. 12**). That fountain was opened when Jesus died; but they will only experience the benefits of that fountain in the future. Israel has been blind to the facts right before their eyes; but God will remove the blindness of their eyes and the hardness of their hearts.

The false prophet is the second beast talked about in book of Revelation. These verses have their ultimate reference to the defeat of that false prophet. Prophets wore a mantle around their shoulders from animal hair. Today there are some outward signs that men put on as well to try to be identified as a prophet of the Lord. All of that anti God worship will pass out of the land.

The means for that righteous cleansing = the death of the Good Shepherd – spoken from God’s perspective. John 10 – It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Reference to the deity of Christ – the God-man. Lord Jesus referred to this passage – the smiting of God’s shepherd and the scattering of all of the sheep.

In the last 2 verses the prophet speaks of the pathway to national cleansing. We are inclined to forget that sometimes many years may elapse between just a couple of verses. Between **verses 7 and 8** lies the age in which we live right now. The process by which God will regain His people for Himself. There will be great tribulation in the future – bringing Israel back to faith in God. Only a third will turn. It is not true to say that all of Israel shall be saved – just all Israel when Jesus Christ returns. But on the way to that great event, the majority of the Jews shall fall to the judgment of God. If the time necessary for the refining be exceeded, the silver will be damaged. The silversmith knows the completion of the process when he can see his own image reflected in the silver as he intently looks at the crucible and watches the entire process.

How sad if there is a fountain and you still die unwashed -- something that bubbles up constantly with continual provision. It is approachable directly. You don’t have to go through any priest. It is for those who know they are sinners and unclean before God.

**F. Duane Lindsey:** The surviving remnant will have been purged and purified by the persecutions in the Tribulation, as well as by God’s judgment on living Israel at the Second Advent (cf. **Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:1-30**). They will **call on the name** of the Lord in faith (**Zech. 12:10-13:1**) and become a restored nation (**Rom. 11:26-27**). Their renewed covenant relationship with the Lord (**Hosea 1-2; Jer. 32:38-41; Ezek. 37:23-28**) will be reflected in God’s words, **They are My people** (cf. **Zech. 8:8**), and the people’s response, **The Lord is our** (lit. ‘my’) **God** (cf. **Hosea 2:21-23**).

**Dr. Jerry Harmon: There is a Fountain**

**Introduction:** So just prior to the second coming, God will pour out His Spirit on Israel so much so that they will recognize their Messiah. And the Bible says, as Paul would later put it in Romans 11, all Israel will be saved. But, you know, even though the primary reference is to Israel, this also applies to us. Since the Gentiles have now been made partakers of the new covenant, we also can, through the gospel, claim these promises. This applies to all people. For us, as well as for the Jews, God has opened a fountain. cleansing, a fountain for cleansing from sin and impurity. Everyone who's dirty, everyone who's defiled by sin can come to God's fountain for cleansing.

Now, I want you to notice just **three basic simple things about this fountain**

**I. The Provision of God's Fountain.**

You must use God's standard of measurement

If we compare ourselves with others, we might not think that we're all that sinful. . . That's one of the first evidences that God's Spirit is at work in your life, that you recognize your sinfulness in the presence of a holy God.

**Notice three things about God's provision.**

A. God's fountain is supplied graciously.

B. God's fountain is multiplied inexhaustibly.

Aren't you glad that God's grace never, ever runs dry? The fountain just keeps flowing.

C. God's fountain is applied individually.

Notice where it says, to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The house of David speaks of Israel as a whole. The inhabitants of Jerusalem speaks of each person individually. So the fountain must be applied personally, individually.

**II. The Purpose of God's Fountain.**

God wants his people to be holy. That's the purpose. The cleansing should lead us to separation from sin.

The next process in your life is a lifelong process, and that is the process of sanctification and holiness. So notice some principles we can learn about sanctification.

A. Radical separation from sin -- God wants you and I to be radical in purging ungodly influences out of our life. He wants us to be radical in that.

Verse 3 gives an illustration of how radically false prophecy will be purged from the land.

This reminds me of what Jesus said in the New Testament. If your right eye offends you, what? Pluck it out. If your right hand offends you, what? Cut it off. Obviously, Jesus is using hyperbole there to get across his point. We have to be thorough when dealing with sin in our life. We have to be thorough in dealing with false prophecy.

B. God uses Trials in the sanctification process -- Also, through spiritual sanctification, through trials. God wants us to radically separate from sin.

God is going to allow Israel to go through the fires of trials. Why? So that they will run to the Lord. They will depend upon the Lord in a greater way. And they'll say, He's my God. And God will say, These are my people. . . This will apply to the remnant of Jewish people during the tribulation period that go through such a difficult trial, and they turn to the Lord. So that's, I think, the two-thirds parts that's mentioned as a general term for the majority. that will perish, but God will bring the third part through the fire to refine them.

### III. The Prophecy of God's Fountain.

This is an incredible prophecy that we see here in verse number seven. God is going to open this fountain. How will he do it? By killing his shepherd. . . the Hebrew word translated here, *the man that is my fellow*, or the man who stands next to me, it's used in other places in the Old Testament. It's translated *neighbor*, but the word indicates a close relationship. And so when the Lord refers to a shepherd in this way, it's in a positive way, not in a negative. So some translations translate like this, *my associate, my companion, my partner who is close to me, even my friend*. So think of it that way in verse seven. *Awake, O sword, against my companion. Awake, O sword, against my friend, my close associate*. It means someone who is an equal, someone who is an equal. Now remember, God's the one you're talking here, right? So who can be equal to God? That's the thing you have to ask yourself.

It was God the Father that killed his son on the cross, that put his son to death on the cross. The sword here speaks of the wrath of God the Father. The sword of the Father fell upon the son on the cross. That's the whole idea. And so Jesus took the wrath on the cross that should have fallen upon you and me. And so this is an amazing, amazing passage of Scripture. Again, it was God the Father that put his Son on the cross. because he wanted his son to bear the sins of the world, and Jesus became our willing substitute.

Now you say, wait a minute, it was evil men that put Jesus on the cross, and that is true. They did according to their own sinful desires and choices. They did what they wanted to do, and yet what they chose to do was fulfill the purpose and plan of God. And that's why we can call God both the just and the justifier, because He put His Son on the cross, who would be the propitiation for our sins.

#### **Conclusion:**

And so thus Zechariah shows that we all need God's fountain to cleanse us from our sins. So we see the provision of God's fountain, we see the purpose and the prophecy of God's fountain.

**William Cooper** was a friend of **John Newton**. John Newton wrote the hymn, *Amazing Grace*. I'm sure you know that. William Cooper was born into the home of an English clergyman. He was educated in private schools. He earned a degree in law. But William Cooper was a man who struggled with depression and anxiety all his life.

And that depression was brought about by **three traumatic experiences** that took place in his life. The first was his mother died when he was only six years old. And that experience was so traumatic. It caused him to be so emotionally unstable all of his life. This incident at such an early age caused him to go into bouts of depression. And it left him unable to deal with many things in life. It affected him really for the rest of his life. The other traumatic thing that happened to him was at the age of 21, he fell in love with a woman, but the woman's father refused to allow her to marry him. And this again plunged him into depression. And then later, his father died. And right on the heels of that, his stepmother. And then right after that, his closest friend drowned. And then after that, he was practicing to be a lawyer. And doors had opened to him for a great opportunity, but he had to make a public speech, and he was so gripped by fear that he could not speak. In fact, all of his life, he had a problem with stuttering, and he wasn't very good at speaking, and he couldn't perform. And because of this, the door shut, and he didn't get that position. And this, for William Cooper, just, again, plunged him into terrible darkness. He felt that he was under God's wrath.

And all of these circumstances together led to a complete breakdown, a mental breakdown. His brother committed him to an insane asylum in London. These were not good places to go. They really just put him in a dungeon there by himself. But while he was there, William Cooper found a way to treat himself because he found the Bible and he began to read the Bible. As a child, he had a spiritual upbringing from his father and his mother. But it wasn't until this point in his life when he was at his darkest that He began to consider having a relationship with Christ and what all that meant, the things that his father and mother told him when he was a child. And so he began reading the Bible.

And one day he read Romans 3.25, *whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God.* And finally, William Cooper understood that Christ's atoning sacrifice sufficiently covered all of his sin. And he recalled at that moment, he wrote, I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. And he was soundly converted to Christ on that day and delivered from the burden of guilt. That burden of guilt caused much of his emotional trauma. Now, he still wrestled with depression, but now he found a source in Christ that would help him through those dark times.

Now, he later met John Newton. John Newton invited William Cooper to come and stay with him and live with him. And John Newton found out that William Cooper was a gifted poet and songwriter, and he encouraged him to write down his thoughts, write down, you know, what's on your heart, help me to write some hymns. And William Cooper did just that. And one day he was reading Zechariah 13.1, this very passage. And that day there shall be a fountain open. And he knew that that fountain was Jesus Christ. And so he picked up his pen and he wrote,

*there is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins.  
And sinners plunge beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.  
E'er since by faith I saw the stream, Thy flowing wounds supply,*

*Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die.*

And it wasn't long after he wrote this hymn that he did die on April the 25th, 1800. But what helped William Cooper through many difficult sorrows was knowing God's fountain. Have you come in faith to God's fountain, the Lord Jesus Christ? and allowed His shed blood to cleanse you from all of your sin and all of your impurity? Are you regularly confessing sin, forsaking sin? Are you looking daily to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who is your help, your sanctification? Are you striving to grow in holiness? Are you submitting to God as He refined you through the trials, calling you out? Affirming that you are his, you are definitely his, and he's doing his work of holiness in your life. And if you feel dirty, remember, God's fountain is open daily, doesn't have business hours. That fountain is always open, always available.

TEXT: Zechariah 14:1-21

TITLE: KING OF THE HILL – TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF THE WARRIOR-KING

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE PROMISED MESSIAH WILL RETURN AS THE TRIUMPHANT WARRIOR-KING TO DEFEAT ISRAEL'S ENEMIES AND USHER IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Just as God fulfilled His detailed promises very literally regarding the first coming of the promised Messiah, the events surrounding His second coming and the Day of the Lord must also be taken at face value. Yes, there are figures of speech involved. But you cannot do justice to the text to spiritualize away the details that are revealed in this chapter or to try to substitute the church for the physical nation of Israel as the focal point of these promises. Just when things look the darkest for the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, the Warrior-King will return in power and triumph to destroy all enemies and rescue His besieged remnant. The worship of the one true God will be exalted in the millennial kingdom with very severe judgments for those people who persist in the foolishness of rebellion.

*“And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”*

**I. (:1-5) THE LORD WILL HAVE HIS DAY AS THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR-KING – RESCUING HIS REMNANT**

**A. (:1a) A Day is Coming for the Lord**

*“Behold, a day is coming for the Lord”*

God-centered theology; not man-centered

**Thomas Constable:** The Lord announced through His prophet that a day was coming, for His benefit primarily, when the nations that had plundered Israel victoriously would divide their spoil among themselves in Jerusalem. This would be the Lords' day in which He would do His will, in contrast to man's day in which man conducts his affairs without divine interference.

**B. (:1b-2a) A Day of Terrible Devastation for Israel -- Hopelessness**

**1. Jerusalem Plundered**

*“when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.”*

**Steven Cole:** The first verses of chapter 14 go back to the last two verses of **chapter 13**, and to the battle mentioned in **12:2-9**. The earlier description did not mention that Jerusalem would be overrun before the Lord would intervene, but that is the picture

here (14:2-3). In 14:1, the enemies are leisurely dividing the spoil from Jerusalem in its streets, thinking that they have defeated the Jews. Then Jesus will return, His feet will touch down on the very place from which He ascended, the Mount of Olives, it will be split in two, the surviving remnant will escape, and Jesus will rout His enemies.

**John Mackay:** refers to the plunder that has been taken from the people of Jerusalem. This verse is a summary statement which anticipates what is spelled out more fully in following verse. The people will be overcome by their opponents and will have to watch helplessly as their own possessions are leisurely shared out by their conquerors before their very eyes. It is a picture of the seemingly hopeless situation of the people of God.

2. Judgment Initiated by the Lord

*“For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle,”*

3. Jerusalem Captured

*“and the city will be captured,  
the houses plundered,  
the women ravished  
and half of the city exiled,”*

C. (:2b) A Day of Deliverance for the Remnant

*“but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.”*

D. (:3) A Day of Conquering for the Ultimate Warrior-King

*“Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.”*

He comes to rescue His remnant in the nick of time

E. (:4) A Day of Supernatural Upheaval Centered Around the Mount of Olives

*“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”*

F. (:5a) A Day of Desperate Escape for the Lord’s Remnant

*“You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.”*

**Dr. John C. Whitcomb:** In 760 B.C. Judah was hit by a gigantic earthquake, recorded in **Amos 1:1**. Josephus said this happened when Uzziah walked into the temple as a king-priest. 250 years later, Zechariah referred to that stupendous earthquake.

- G. (:5b) A Day of Revelation of the Lord along with His Holy Ones  
*“Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!”*

**Thomas Constable:** The Israelites would flee for safety through this valley with mountains on either side (cf. **2 Sam. 15:16, 30; 2 Kings 25:4; Ezek. 11:22-25**). The valley would reach as far as Azel (lit. "be joined to" or "be at the side of, near;" cf. **Mic. 1:11**), a site presently unknown but obviously some distance east of Jerusalem. They would flee as they did during the great earthquake that happened during King Uzziah's reign over Judah (cf. **Amos 1:1**). Then the Lord would come with all His holy ones with Him, namely, Christians in heaven and angels (cf. **Ps. 89:5, 7; Matt. 25:31; Col. 4:4; 1 Thess. 3:13; Jude 14; Rev. 19:11-16**).

## **II. (:6-11) THAT DAY OF THE LORD WILL BE UNIQUE IN MANY RESPECTS**

- A. (:6-7) Unique Illumination -- Special Lighting and Darkening Effects  
*“In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.”*
- B. (:8) Unique Provision -- Continual Flow of Living Waters  
*“And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.”*

**John MacArthur:** The highest elevation of the temple mount in Jerusalem is more than 300 ft. lower than the Mt. of Olives, but the topographical alterations described in vv. 4, 10 will allow the spring to flow toward the Dead Sea (E) and the Mediterranean Sea (W). It will not dry up in summer, as most Palestinian streams do, but will flow all year, making the desert *“blossom like the crocus”* (**Is 35:1**).

**Thomas Constable:** The Israelites divided their year into two seasons instead of four: summer and winter (cf. Gen. 8:22; Ps. 74:17; Isa. 18:6). Probably the water will be literal, but it certainly has symbolic significance as well (cf. **Ps. 46:4; 65:9; Isa. 8:6; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 47:1-12; John 4:10-14; 7:38; Rev. 22:1-2**).

- C. (:9) Unique God -- Enthronement of the Lord Alone Over all the Earth = Key Verse  
*“And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”*
- D. (:10) Unique Topography -- Topographical Changes Further Elevating Jerusalem  
*“All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses.”*

**John Mackay:** Geba was six miles north east of Jerusalem. Though it actually lay in the traditional territory of Benjamin, it was taken as the northernmost limit of Judah (1 Kgs. 15:22; 2 Kgs. 23:8). Rimmon was 35 miles south west of Jerusalem, and was on the southern border of Judah where the hill country merged into the Negev (Josh. 15:32; 19:7).

- E. (:11) Unique Security -- Security for those Living in Jerusalem  
*“People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.”*

### **III. (:12-15) THE LORD WILL STRIKE THE ATTACKERS OF ISRAEL WITH A DIVINE PLAGUE**

A. (:12a) Divine Plague Introduced

1. Divine in Origin

*“Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike”*

2. Comprehensive in Scope

*“all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem”*

B. (:12b) Divine Plague Described

1. Upon their flesh

*“their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet”*

2. Upon their eyes

*“and their eyes will rot in their sockets”*

3. Upon their tongue

*“and their tongue will rot in their mouth.”*

C. (:13) Divine Panic Attack – Confused so that they fight one another

*“It will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on them; and they will seize one another’s hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another.”*

D. (:14) Divine Victory

1. Unified Nation

*“Judah also will fight at Jerusalem”*

2. Abundant Spoils

*“and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance.”*

E. (:15) Divine Plague Spread to all the Animals

*“So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps.”*

#### **IV. (:16-19) THE GENTILE NATIONS IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM WILL WORSHIP THE LORD IN JERUSALEM AT THE FEAST OF BOOTHS OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES**

##### **A. (:16) Worship Requirement**

*“Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”*

##### **B. (:17-19) Divine Consequences**

###### **1. (:17) Impartial Judgment – Applies to all the nations**

*“And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them.”*

###### **2. (:18) Example of Nation of Egypt**

*“If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the Lord smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”*

###### **3. (:19) Example Applied to All the Nations**

*“This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”*

#### **(:20-21) CONCLUSION – TOTAL CONSECRATION TO THE LORD**

##### **A. Horses Consecrated to the Lord**

*“In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, ‘Holy to the Lord.’”*

**F. B. Meyer:** In the days which the prophet anticipated, the knowledge and love of God would be universally diffused. The method in which he expresses this is as significant as it is beautiful. Horses were forbidden under the Jewish law, because of the temptations they presented to pride and war; but they would become dedicated to God, and their furniture or trappings would be emblazoned with the same sacred words that shone of old from the high priest’s golden frontlet. So, the commonest utensils in the Lord’s house would become as sacred vessels.

##### **B. Common Cooking Utensils Consecrated to the Lord**

*“And the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the bowls before the altar. Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them.”*

**David Guzik:** These were the cooking utensils used by worshippers to cook for their own the sacrificial meat intended for them from the peace offerings. The bowls before

the altar were used to gather and sprinkle sacrificial blood on the altar. These show that animal sacrifice will continue in the millennium, but not as atonement for sin - which was perfectly satisfied by the atoning work of Jesus. Sacrifice in the millennium will look back to the perfect work of Jesus.

C. No Unholy Heathens Allowed

*“And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.”*

**Thomas Constable:** The Canaanites throughout Israel's history represented people who were morally and spiritually unclean, reprehensible to Yahweh, and doomed to death (cf. **Gen. 9:25; Isa. 35:8; Ezek. 43:7; 44:9; Rev. 21:27**). Probably that is the significance of the name here, not just the ethnic Canaanites alone. There would be no more people like the Canaanites in the land because all would acknowledge Him as God and King.

\* \* \* \* \*

**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Why would the Lord send heathen nations against His people and then return personally to defeat those same nations and rescue His people?
- 2) What symbolism is involved in the special lighting effects and the outflow of the living waters?
- 3) When in history has Jerusalem been able to dwell in security?
- 4) What is the significance of the Feast of Booths?

\* \* \* \* \*

**QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**John MacArthur:** Chapter 14 is an amplification of **13:8,9**. Prior to Israel's national conversion (cf. **12:10-13:1**), the Jews will make a pact with a false messiah (cf. **Da 9:27**), known as the foolish shepherd (cf. **11:15-17**) or Antichrist. In the middle of that 7-year covenant, Antichrist will break his treaty with Israel and require the worship of him alone (**Da 9:24-27; Mt 24:15; 2Th 2:3,4**). When Israel refuses, the armies of the world will gather to do battle, climaxing in a great siege of Jerusalem and the Battle of Armageddon (**Rev 19**). Following the Lord's victory at that battle (cf. **Rev 19:11-16**), will come the full restoration of Israel as anticipated in **Hos 14:4-7; Joel 3:18-21; Am 9:13-15; Mic 4:1-3; Zep 3:14-20**.

**Steven J. Cole: The Triumph of the Coming King**

1. The return of Christ as King will mean the defeat of His enemies (14:1-15).

- A. It will be a sudden defeat—Do not be deceived!
- B. It will be a powerful defeat—Do not despair!
- C. It will be a thorough defeat—Do not be wrongly aligned!

**2. The return of Christ as King will mean the establishing of His righteous kingdom over all the earth (14:16-21, 8, 9,11).**

- A. A righteous reign means refreshment, peace, and joy for those who submit to Jesus Christ (14:8, 11, 16).
- B. A righteous reign means punishment on those who refuse to submit to Christ (14:17-19).
- C. A righteous reign means that every aspect of life is sacred for God’s people (14:20-21).

The defeat of God’s enemies at Armageddon will be accompanied by an awesome display of power. As we’ve seen, a powerful plague will rot off the flesh of His enemies while they are still standing. In addition, there will be frightening changes on the earth and in the heavens. The Mount of Olives will be split in half, creating a large valley (14:4). A new river will flow out of Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean Sea. I understand this to be a literal river that also has a spiritual meaning (which I will explain in a moment). The land surrounding Jerusalem will be leveled into a broad plain, with Jerusalem elevated above it (14:10). While we cannot determine the exact locations of all these sites now, the specific names show that they should be taken literally.

There also will be cataclysmic changes in the heavens (14:6-7). (The NIV translation, “no cold or frost,” is not based on the Hebrew text and should be rejected.) The sun, moon, and stars will be dimmed (Isa. 13:9-10; Joel 2:31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12-14; 8:10-12; 16:8-10). It will be a kind of murky twilight, unlike any time before. The phrase “*at evening time there will be light*” probably refers to the end of that period of judgment when light from the heavenly bodies will be restored and the light of the glory of the Lord will illumine the earth. It will be an eerie, frightening time, demonstrating God’s mighty power through His creation. . .

The Feast of Booths was the last of the feasts in the Jewish calendar year. It commemorated when Israel lived in temporary shelters after their deliverance from Egypt (Lev. 23:33-44). It was also a feast of ingathering, or harvest (Deut. 16:13-15). Thus was a joyous celebration (Lev. 23:40; Deut. 16:15) of God’s salvation and provision for His people.

On the last day of this feast, the Jewish priests would leave the temple, go to the Pool of Siloam, draw water, and carry it back to the sanctuary. They would pour it out while the worshipers recited **Isaiah 12:3**, “*You will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.*” One day as they completed this ritual, a young man stepped forward and cried out loudly, “*If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living*

*water*” (John 7:37-38). When that speaker, the Lord Jesus, reigns in holiness in your heart, His Holy Spirit, the living water, will fill you with refreshment, joy, and peace.

**John MacArthur:** The Return and Reign of Jesus Christ – The Day of the Lord

I. THE COMING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD (vv. 1-8)

A. Declared (v. 1)

B. Described (vv. 2-8)

II. THE CORONATION OF THE LORD AS KING (vv. 9-11)

A. The Primacy of the Potentate (v. 9)

B. The Prominence of the Palatial City (v. 10)

C. The Peace Among the People (v. 11)

The phrase "*holiness unto the lord*" was engraved on a gold plate attached to the high priest's turban. It signified that he was set him apart from every other man. He had a uniquely holy function. There was no one like the high priest. Zechariah prophesies that everything--even mundane and ordinary things like the bells that decorate horses and common pots and pans--will be as holy as the high priest and the altar bowls once were to Israel in days gone by. The Kingdom won't be like the world is today with its division between sacred and secular. Everything will be sacred.

The promise that there will no longer be "*a Canaanite in the house of the Lord*" is a euphemistic way of saying that the morally and spiritually unclean person will be excluded from entering the millennial Temple. Before Israel conquered the Promised Land, the vile Canaanites inhabited it. The term "Canaanite" became proverbial in Israel for a morally degenerate person.

In the Kingdom the whole world will be considered holy to the Lord. The Lord wants a holy people and He has called His church to be holy. In **Ephesians 5** the apostle Paul tells believing husbands, "*Love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it ... that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (vv. 25-27). God wants a holy church and a holy people. And in that day He's going to have it!

**S. Lewis Johnson:** The Consummation of the Plans of God for This Earth

The conclusion of the second great burden – **chaps. 12-14.**

**3 Subjects: Battle for Jerusalem, Second Advent and Messianic Kingdom of God on Earth**

Some people find it very difficult to believe such details as are presented in Zech 14. Is it possible for us to believe something like this? Cf. the pronouncements of our politicians = they change from day to day when you examine the facts of history. Is it really true that these things are going to occur? We can count on God's faithfulness to His Word.

## **I. The Battle for Jerusalem**

There is something in Jerusalem that the nations of the world desire – both materially and strategically. They hope to capture the booty of this important city. When they go to drink it, they will find it does more damage to them than they can handle. You cannot spiritualize this passage or it will be absolutely impossible to understand. **Jer. 32:42** – in the same way that the Lord brought evil upon Israel, He will bring good upon them as well – you cannot apply the second half to the church. Take **Zech 14** in the plain, straightforward fashion in which it was written. We might find some figures of speech, but that does not justify allegorizing the entire passage. The message is very plain regarding these three primary subjects.

We must presuppose certain things from the previous chapters.

- Israel will be gathered into the land again in unbelief. Ezekiel 37 read in the context of Israel being reestablished in 1948. There is a twofold stage: first a return in unbelief; then ultimately they will come to personal faith in Jesus Christ. How was this scripture expounded before 1948)
- Must presuppose the rise of a world ruler who will succeed in uniting the nations
  - This Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews that will restore the ancient worship; the temple will be rebuilt
- In the midst of the tribulation period, the covenant with the Jews is broken by this ruler and he begins to persecute them
- Then there comes the Great Tribulation = the time of Jacob's trouble
- The kings of the earth struggle for power and there are campaigns involving the strategic locale of Jerusalem; the nations will unite against the city of God and against the Lamb of God; common antipathy to the Lord Jesus; the Lamb shall overcome them – the great wild beast loses! Surprising that man should attempt to overthrow God! Proof of depravity.

The situation in Jerusalem appears utterly hopeless. Cf. Israelites penned up against the Red Sea by the Egyptians. *“Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”*

## **II. The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus** to provide ultimate victory

**Acts 1** – As you saw Him ascend into heaven, so He will return. He comes personally and visibly and bodily to the Mount of Olives. After crossing the Red Sea, no one looked back and gave any credit to human effort; clearly seen to be a work of God. So it will be in this ultimate battle. No one will be taking the glory from God. Earthquake very plausible in that area given the great fissure researched by the geologists. All the believers will return with Him and stand on Mount of Olives with Christ. We will see with our own eyes the national conversion of Israel. When the Lord Himself becomes the light, there is no need for light from other luminaries.

## **III. The Messianic Kingdom**

The living waters are designed to be symbolic of the great redemption that have come through the Word of God. Beautiful picture of purification – purify the acrid waters of the Dead Sea.

The Lord shall be king over all the earth; the one greater than David; The famous petition “*Thy kingdom come*” will be fulfilled. All other gods are gone.

Annual celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles = designed to represent their happiness over the gathering in of the harvest. Past: Celebrated God’s care over Israel during the wilderness journey and bringing them into the promised land. Future: Also looked forward to the Messianic Kingdom promises. **John 7:38** – spoke of the Holy Spirit – I am the one of whom this ceremony speaks!

All promises fulfilled in Messiah Himself.

The prophet’s name means “*The Lord Remembers*” the promises He has made to Israel.

**Eugene Merrill:** The restoration and dominion cannot come until all the forces of evil that seek to subvert it are put down once and for all. Specifically, the redemption of Israel will be accomplished on the ruins of her own suffering and those of the malevolent powers of this world that, in the last day, will consolidate themselves against her and seek to interdict forever any possibility of her success. The nations of the whole earth will come against Jerusalem, and, having defeated her, will divide up their spoils of war in her very midst. . .

The order of events thus far appears to be as follows:

- (1) YHWH allows the nations to attack, despoil, and deport His people in Jerusalem (**vv. 1-2**);
- (2) He comes to their defense in a triumphant march that brings with it cosmic and terrestrial transformation (**vv. 3-8**).
- (3) He defeats the hostile nations and takes their treasures as booty (**vv. 12-15**).
- (4) Jerusalem is elevated and becomes the center of YHWH’s universal reign (**vv. 9-11**).

Thus, **vv. 12-15** logically and thematically follow **vv. 3-8**. **Lamarche** suggests that the present structure reflects a chiasm, one that alone is sufficient to account for the order of events. His approach (somewhat abbreviated here) is as follows:

- a) “*A day is coming*” (**1-2a**)
  - b) Jerusalem attacked and insecure (**2a-b**)
    - c) “*in that day*” (**3-5**)
      - d) “*and it will come to pass in that day*” (**6**)
        - e) “*there will be a unique day*” (**7a**)
          - d) “*and it will come to pass in that day*” (**7b-8**)
            - c) “*in that day*” (**9-10a**)
              - b) Jerusalem protected and secure (**10b-11**)
                - a) “*it will come to pass in that day*” (**12-15**)

### **Dr. Jerry Harmon: The King Is Coming**

**Introduction:** In 1526, the famous reformer Martin Luther wrote a commentary on Zechariah. His commentary, however, stopped at the 13th chapter. It didn’t include anything on chapter 14. One year later, he wrote a second commentary on the book of Zechariah. This time he had some brief remarks on chapter 14, and this is what he

wrote. He said this, here in this chapter I give up, for I'm not sure what the prophet is talking about. It's a very honest admission on behalf of Martin Luther. We have to appreciate his humble admission. But we have to ask the question, why didn't Martin Luther say that? We see Luther's approach to Zechariah 14 was a figurative approach rather than a literal approach. He tried to interpret it symbolically or we could say maybe somewhat allegorically. And so that's why when he sought to interpret that way after coming to this chapter, he said, you know, I surrender. I don't know what the prophet's talking about here. In other words, approaching this chapter from a figurative or symbolic angle, Luther could make no convincing sense out of it. It just didn't make any sense to him.

If you come with a literal approach, the meaning of what he's saying here in chapter 14 is really simple. And let me just give it to you.

**Jesus will return to earth, defeat all the enemies of his people, and he will literally reign on earth.**

The great Old Testament scholar, **Walt Kaiser**, who interprets this chapter literally, he wrote this, quote,

*and no other chapter of the Bible is the interpretation of the name Israel more important than in Zechariah 14. To say that Israel means the church, as many have done, would lead to a most confusing picture in this chapter and in the end of chapter 13.*

And he's absolutely right.

In 1919, there was an excellent commentary written on Zachariah by a man by the name of **David Barron**. And he took a literal approach to this chapter. And by the way, that was in a time when taking a literal approach was not very popular, simply because in 1919, it just looked impossible for these things to happen. But what David Barron wrote in 1919 was this, he said, It seems from scripture that in relation to Israel and the land, there will be a restoration before the second coming of our Lord. So Barron predicted a literal actual return to the land of Israel, a restoration of the nation. And again, that was back in 1919. He went on to say, a Jewish state will probably be formed under international protection. And guess what? He was exactly right. Because in 1948, you know as well as I do, under the protection of the United Nations, Israel became a nation.

What Zechariah teaches us is when Christ returns as king, he will defeat his enemies and establish his righteous kingdom over all the earth. And so we can divide this chapter up into two major sections.

### **I. The Victorious Return of the King (:1-15)**

And this is future yet to come. Again, we know that Israel is a nation now, under the international protection in 1948 of the United Nations. However, Israel is in unbelief, and that again is, predicted in Scripture that they would be in unbelief until salvation would come, they're waiting for the time of salvation. And it can't come until

the Messiah comes, Jesus Christ. And so prior to that time, they'll make a pact with the false messiah.

Since they rejected the true shepherd, they will open their hearts up to the false shepherd (cf. Chap. 11). They will make a pact with the Antichrist, and in the middle of that seven-year period, the Antichrist will break that. that covenant. And when he does, he will require that they worship him and him alone. And when the people of Israel refuse, he gathers armies of the world together, and they begin to march against Israel and Jerusalem. And the idea is to exterminate all of Israel.

And if you come to the end of chapter 13, it looks like that he's going to be successful in this. There's tremendous devastation. It seems like the Antichrist is gonna be victorious in his goals. But that's when chapter 14 starts, and verse number one, look at verse one. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. So the enemies here, just picture this in your mind, they have attacked and they've already had success in some devastation, and now they're dividing the spoil right there in the streets of Jerusalem, verse one of chapter 14. Look at verse 2, and I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. While two-thirds of the land is perishing, one half of the city of Jerusalem will be taken captive, according to verse 2.

So picture in your mind people being chained They're in captivity, right there in the streets. The remaining third of the country's population will be brought through these events. They'll be refined, they'll be chastised. And just when the Antichrist and his forces seem to be victorious, the Lord will enter into the battle. The Lord will come right there at that moment, and he will defeat his enemies. Look in verse number 4. and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. So Jesus will come back, he will touch down on the Mount of Olives, and what'll happen is there'll be a great earthquake, and that thing will split. . . The Bible says he did ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives. And he is going to come back and touch down there on the Mount of Olives. We know that's going to happen. . .

Evil will not win, beloved. In spite of how things look, evil will not win. God will win out in the end. He is sovereign over all and over all the nations, and his purpose for all the ages is to enthrone Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, and he will, and he will. So it will be a sudden defeat. but also it'll be a powerful defeat. The defeat of Christ's enemies will be accompanied by awesome displays of power from God, as we read here. There'll be changes in the earth and in the heavens. . .

Look again at verse number five where it says, yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Now there he's referring to an event that took place in the days of Uzziah, the king of Judah, This must have been

an awesome earthquake because if you remember an earthquake 200 years later, that had to be a serious earthquake. He's referring to this earthquake 200 years later. He said it's gonna be just like the earthquake that hit when Uzziah was king of Judah. You remember that? And of course everyone in the nation of Israel would know about this. And so this was a literal event that he's referring to. So this leads me to believe that this next earthquake that Zachariah's talking about is also gonna be a literal event. Why would you use a literal event in the history of Israel to talk about something that's gonna be non-literal? So this, again, this will take place in the future. Archeologists have suggested that this earthquake that Zachariah's talking about here destroyed the city of Hazor in 760 BC. Amos talks about this earthquake. The historian Josephus talks about this earthquake. And here, Zachariah says, when the Lord comes again, and there's an earthquake, and the mountain splits, it's gonna be like that earthquake back in the days of Uzziah.

## **II. The Righteous Reign of the King (:16-21)**

You know what Zechariah says is gonna happen in that day when Jesus comes back? And all those that are left, all of those that are left, that are from when Jesus defeated his enemies of the nations. They're all going to come and they're all going to worship Jesus in Jerusalem. They're going to have to come up once a year. Jerusalem will serve as a religious center of the world. And we will worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And Jesus will take his place there on the throne. And notice that he says in verse 16, that the nations will observe the Feast of the Tabernacles. That's interesting. What's the Feast of the Tabernacles? Well, once a year Jews would go, they would basically live in a small booth that they built. They would live in it for a week or eight days. . .

They would, in essence, just put up a temporary shelter. Normally it was four by four, sometimes bigger. It would be decorated. They would decorate it just like we decorate our Christmas trees. They would do it with palm branches and myrtle branches and willow branches. And they would live in that booth for a week. In the Hebrew, it's called a Sukkot. And the feast would begin on October the 9th, and again, last for about eight days. It was a happy time. It was a time during the harvest when they would also, at the same time, it was also called the Feast of the Ingathering. They would gather in the harvest. It was kind of a Jewish Thanksgiving and Christmas combined. It was a lot of joy.

We'll say, why this feast? Why will this feast be observed during this time? It seems like a strange thing to do. Well, again, the purpose of the feast is to commemorate God. The decoration of the booth really spoke of God's glory that led the children of Israel through the wilderness. The booth was meant to remember the Jews in the wilderness when they lived in temporary shelters, and they were covered by the glory of God. Again, that's what the decorations really spoke of, God's glory. But also, it was a time, again, it was a time of joy, It was a time of in-gathering, the harvest.

**Alfred Eldersheim** says the most joyous of all festival seasons in Israel was the Feast of the Tabernacles. But also, it again pointed forward to what God was going to do one

day in that future millennial kingdom. You see, why will all nations celebrate this feast? Well, again, just like the Feast of the Passover pictured the death of the Messiah, and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread depicted the walk of the believer in fellowship with the Savior, and the Feast of Firstfruits kind of foreshadowed the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Feast of Pentecost foreshadowed the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Feast of the Tabernacles pointed forward to the time when all the nations would come together. There would be the ingathering of all the nations, and they would all worship God. There would be rest in the kingdom of God, and they would all worship God. . .

They don't come and worship. Then what'll happen is they'll be punished, just like everyone else. What does that say about God's expectation of his people to come to worship? When God sets a worship service up, he expects his people to be there. He wants his people to be there. Worship is regarded in this context as a very necessary act Jesus himself will be there. He'll be the one teaching the law and speaking. . .

A **righteous reign** means that every aspect of life is sacred for God's people. Look at verse 20 and verse 21. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses holiness unto the Lord. And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem, in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts. And all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and see therein. And in that day, there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."

Now, what does God mean by this? In the Old Testament, the high priest wore a turban on his head, and on the turban, there was a plate that said, holy to the Lord, as he wore that turban. And during the millennium, those words will be engraved on everything. They'll be even engraved on the bells of the horses. Horses and the animals of commerce, they are in transportation. It was quite common in the ancient days for horses to be decorated with ornaments like that. And God says the pots used in everyone's home will be sacred pots, just like the bowls and the vessels that are used in the house of the Lord, they're used for a sacred purpose. Every bowl will be holy to the Lord.

What does this mean? Basically, he's conveying the idea here that all of life, even the mundane things, all of it will be sacred and holy to God in that time. When he says, no Canaanite in the house of the Lord, that means that no spiritually or morally unclean person will defile the Lord's house in that day. This verse means that when the Lord in that day reigns in righteousness, his people will not divide up their life into the secular and then the sacred.

The bottom line for Zechariah in this chapter is this, if Christ is returning to defeat his enemies and establish his righteous reign over all the earth, then we must walk in holiness before the Lord. That's really the way we apply this. It's like John says, every man that has his hope purifies himself, even as he is pure. Peter said it like this. 2 Peter 3.11, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation in godliness,

looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God?

So, we see then the victorious return of the king and the righteous reign of the king.

Now, you may be thinking, how can we know for sure that these prophecies will literally come true? I've been arguing that this is all literally gonna happen. We don't take this figuratively. This is literally gonna happen. You say, how can you be sure that this will literally happen, it'll come true? Well, Zechariah has prophecies about the first coming of Christ. Were they literally fulfilled? Have you been with us on our study? In Zechariah 9, 9, the Messiah will come into Jerusalem, humble, mounted on a donkey, even the foal of a donkey. Did that literally It was literally fulfilled. Zechariah says that Jesus would be rejected by the nation. He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, and the money would be thrown to a potter's field. Did that literally happen? Yeah, it was literally fulfilled, literally. And Judas Iscariot fulfilled that prophecy as we saw in the Gospels.

So the point is, if Zechariah was accurate in predicting these things at the first coming of Christ, and they were literally fulfilled, why should I believe that his prophecies about the second coming of Christ are anything but literally fulfilled? It will literally happen, just like He said right here. So, this should encourage us. Evil will not win. Christ will come back and He will reign in righteousness. So, Jesus is coming, the King is coming, and His reward is with Him.

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<http://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?SpeakerOnly=true&currSection=sermons&speaker=&keyword=Pastor%5EEd%5EAnderson>

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Dr. Thomas Constable

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