

INTRODUCTION

ZECHARIAH

The Restoration and Cleansing of Israel through Messiah

A. SIGNIFICANCE

1. David Baron, whose commentary on Zechariah is highly recommended, gives two reasons as to why this prophecy is so precious to Christians.

First—because of the clear and striking manner in which it testifies of our Lord Jesus. Luther calls Zechariah *Ausbund der Propheten*—the quintessence of Old Testament prophecy—and this is especially true in reference to Messianic prophecy. Indeed it seems to be the special aim and mission of Zechariah to condense and concentrate in small compass, and in his own peculiar terse style, almost all that has been revealed to the “former prophets” about the person and mission of Messiah—about His Divine and yet truly human character, and of His sufferings and of the glory that should follow. . . .

Secondly, on account of the light it throws on the events of the last times preceding the great and terrible “Day of the Lord,” which is fast approaching.

The presence in Palestine of a representative remnant of the Jewish people in a condition of unbelief [published 1918]; the fiery furnace of suffering into which they are there to be thrown; their great tribulation and anguish occasioned by the final siege of Jerusalem by the confederated Gentile armies under the headship of him in whom both Jewish and Gentile apostasy is to reach its climax; how in the very midst of their final sorrow the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured upon them, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn; how this blessed One whom they so long rejected shall suddenly appear as their Deliverer, and His feet stand “in that day” on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; how God shall again say “Ammi” to the nation which during the long centuries of their unbelief were “Lo-Ammi”—“not My people” [Hos. 1:8-10], and how Israel shall joyously respond, “Jehovah, my God”; how Israel’s Messiah shall speak peace to the nations, and Israel himself enter at last on his priestly mission to the peoples for which he was originally destined, and Jerusalem become the center of God’s fear and worship for the whole earth—all these and other solemn events of the time of the end are spoken of in this book with a clearness and distinctness as if they were occurrences of history instead of prophecies of the future.¹

2. C. H. Spurgeon addresses the theme of this prophecy when he comments on 8:13, “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. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.”

¹ David Baron, *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, pp. 5-7. This author, born of Jewish parents in Poland, distinguished himself as a Yeshivah student, who later emigrated to England with his brother. There converted through a Hebrew Christian missionary, after working with the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, he eventually founded, with Charles Schonberger, brother-in-law of Dr. Adolph Saphir, *The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel*.

The Jews have for many a generation *been cursed* by all people. For ages no one had a good word or a kind look for the Jew. In every nation they have been persecuted, and hunted like beasts of prey. The followers of the fierce Mohammed have not been their only enemies, for the children of the Babylonian harlot have equally thirsted for their blood. In our own country, in the dark ages, it was accounted God's service to afflict the Israelites, and the day upon which the Church celebrated our Savior's passion was chosen for the public stoning of his own brethren if they ventured into the streets. To be a Jew was, in the estimation of that era, to be deserving of all scorn and cruelty, and of no pity or consideration. To what exactions, to what fines, to what imprisonments and tortures, have not the sons of Jacob been subjected by the professed followers of the Messiah. It is perhaps the greatest of all modern miracles, that there should be one Jew upon earth who is a Christian for the treatment they have received from pretended Christians has been enough to make them hate the name of Jesus; it has been not imply villainous, but diabolical. Devils in hell could not be more cruel to their victims than professed Christians have been to the sons of Abraham. They have been a curse indeed. The whole vocabulary of abuse from "*dog*" down to "*devil*" has been exhausted upon them; among all nations they have been a hissing and a bye-word. But the day is coming, yea it dawns already [preached in 1863], when the whole world shall discern the true dignity of the chosen seed, and shall seek their company, because the Lord hath blessed them. In that day when Israel shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for their sins, the Jew shall take his true rank among the nations as an elder brother and a prince. The covenant made with Abraham, to bless all nations by his seed, is not revoked; heaven and earth shall pass away, but the chosen nation shall not be blotted out from the book of remembrance. The Lord hath not cast away his people; he has never given their mother a bill of divorcement; he has never put them away; in a little wrath he hath hidden his face from them, but with great mercies will he gather them. The natural branches shall again be engrafted into the olive together with the wild olive graftings from among the Gentiles. In the Jew, first and chiefly, shall grace triumph through the King of the Jews. O time, fly thou with rapid wing, and bring the auspicious day.

Another meaning has been given to the passage by some very eminent expositors, namely, that the Jews have been for ages *the model of a curse* to all people. As old Master Trapp [seventeenth century English Puritan and Oxford graduate] says, they bear upon their backs the wheels of God's rod, or, as he puts it yet more strongly, like Cain, they carry upon their foreheads the mark of God's wrath. They have been a people scattered and peeled, not numbered among the nations, men of weary foot and haggard countenances. Their nation has been the football of providence and the butt of misfortune. They have been shipwrecked upon every sea, overturned by every storm, the victims of every calamity, and the objects of every misery. Everywhere have they been men evidently accursed of God and given up to his wrath. When men wanted a name to curse by, they said "Let me be as accursed as the Jew." But the day is to come when they are to be quite as manifestly the blessed ones of God. Their conversion shall show how God favors them: their gathering to their own land, the splendor of the reign of Messias in their midst, and all those latter-day glories which are dimly shadowed in the Book of the Revelation, and in the Book of the Vision of Daniel the Prophet, — when all these shall come to pass, then the sons of men shall speak of the Jewish people as a royal priesthood and a peculiar people. The seed of Abraham, God's friend, are very dear to him — the darlings of his bosom, the flock of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Oh, that the dark night would soon be over! Long has the Christian Church slept in forgetfulness of the Jew; even faithful men have scarce given a thought to Israel, and have left the Jew to perish, as though his heart were too hard to be melted by divine love. I trust that mistake has been discovered, and that there are many now anxiously praying for the restoration of the glory unto Israel, but too many are still indifferent where earnestness is needed. May the Lord in his infinite mercy first put it into his people's hearts to pray for Israel, and then to work in love, and labor in faith: may he hasten in his own time the

fulfillment of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then shall the whole earth be covered with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. We may work and we may toil, but till Israel be gathered God's glory cannot be universal, nor even widely spread. Until the Jew acknowledges Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the fullness of the times of restitution shall not have arrived. Make no tarrying O our Lord! Come quickly, and send thou as the herald of thy coming thine own brethren, who once despised thee when thou camest to thine own, and thine own received thee not.²

B. AUTHORSHIP

1. "Zechariah" זְכַרְיָהּ, Zekaryah, Zacharias in the LXX, means "Jehovah/Yahweh remembers," being the most important book of the Minor Prophets.
2. Zechariah was the son of Berechiah, grandson of Iddo, who was the chief of one of the priestly families returning from Babylonian exile (Zech. 1:1; Neh. 12:4, 16; Ezra 5:1).
3. Zechariah was an evangelical prophet/priest who was ultimately slain in the sanctuary (Matt. 23:29-36; cf. II Chron. 24:20-22). Thus he was a preacher slain by his associates!

C. HISTORICAL SETTING

1. Date, 520-480 B.C. The following commonly accepted two-fold division is based upon differences in style and subject matter.
 - a. Chapters 1-8, 520 B.C., during the building of the post-exilic Temple.
 - b. Chapters 9-14, 480 B.C., or later, after the building of the post-exilic Temple.
2. The setting is much the same as that of Haggai, who probably returned with the first contingent of 50,000 under Zerubbabel, 557 B.C., but prophesied about two months before Zechariah.

C. RELATION TO OTHER PROPHETS

1. Isaiah and Zechariah are the two great Messianic prophets.
2. While Daniel concentrates upon the Gentile prophetic future, so Zechariah concentrates upon national Israel's prophetic program.
3. Both Haggai and Zechariah were associated in prophesying concerning the Temple.
4. Zechariah reemphasizes the prophecies of Joel and Zephaniah concerning the coming Day of the Lord, a day of reversal for the fortunes of Jerusalem (14:1).

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, 9:543; cf. 53:3045; 7:399, Ages Software CD.

5. Zechariah emphasizes and correlates all the prophecies of the prophets concerning the restoration of Israel to the land under Messiah, including Messiah's first and second advents.

D. PURPOSE AND THEME

1. The historic purpose is to encourage the remnant from exile to work on the seemingly meager post-exilic temple, trusting the Lord for blessing and His presence.
2. The prophetic purpose is to present a somewhat detailed picture of Israel's future in relation to Messiah. This subject has gained renewed interest on account of the establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948, fostered through the Holocaust and the United Nations, and the obtaining of Jerusalem by the Jews as a result of the Six Day War in 1967.
3. The theme is the restoration and cleansing of the nation of Israel through the redeeming and delivering work of Messiah.
4. For a brief overview read 1:12-17; 2:6-13; 3:3-4, 8-10; 4:8-10; 6:11-15; 8:1-8; 9:9; 10:9-12; 11:4-17; 12:8-13:2; 14:1-4, 9-11.

PART I

ISRAEL'S MESSIANIC PROSPECTS DECLARED DURING THE BUILDING OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

Zechariah 1:1-8:23

A. The call for national repentance, 1:1-6.

Although Zechariah is detailed in its prophetic revelation, it should be understood from the outset that this spokesman of God does not intend to merely stimulate our fascination with eschatological speculation. Rather he is primarily concerned with an ethical response, that is the renewal of God's prodigal people in godliness that qualifies them for blessed nearness to the LORD of Israel.

1. The command for present repentance, vs. 1-3.

While the New Testament word for "repentance," μετανοέω, metanoēō, means a change of mind that results in a behavioral response, in Zechariah a parallel expression is "return" (Zech. 1:3, 4) that brings to mind the desire of the father for his prodigal son to return home from the far country (Luke 15:11-24). Here God's people, having physically returned from captivity in Babylon, are now exhorted to return to the LORD in their hearts.

a. The time and source of the command, v. 1.

- (1) In this year of 520 B.C., Darius Hystaspes, is king of Persia following Cambyses and Cyrus. He is not the same Darius the Mede of Daniel 5:30-6:28, who was contemporary with Cyrus and most probably governor/king of Babylon under him.
- (2) In 538 B.C. Cyrus gave his decree allowing the first contingent of 50,000 captives to return to resettle the land of Judah. For two years they labored with zeal and laid the foundation of the second temple (Ezra 3:11-13), but Samaritans frustrated the work so that for fourteen years the building stopped (Ezra 4:4-5, 24), till the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes.
- (3) Probably Zechariah was brought from Babylon as a small child, with his father Berechiah and grandfather Ido, both priests. He first prophesied as a youth, cf. 2:4, "young man," the same word as "youth" in I Samuel 17:33 re David. Hence the young prophet/preacher should take heart!
- (4) Zechariah's co-patriot, Haggai, first prophesies to the returnees: "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house [of God] lies desolate? Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways!'" (Hag. 1:3-5). An awakening commences (Hag. 1:13-15), so that two months later Zechariah also prophesies, stirring the people to repentant

action. As a result, after twenty-four days, the word of the Lord comes to him in the form of eight night visions (1:7-6:8).

- (5) It is important to note that for Zechariah, even this introductory revelation is “the word of the LORD [Jehovah/Yahweh, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob],” that is before his night visions, as with chapters 7-8 (7:1) and 9-14 (9:1). He receives, verbal, propositional truth, not mere intimations.

b. The temper of the command, v. 2.

- (1) “The LORD was very angry with your fathers,” is a chilling reminder of God’s recent, severe chastisement. It describes vehement displeasure (cf. II Chron. 36:15-17), which was expressed against God’s covenant children.
- (2) Yet there is mercy mixed with this stern reminder. Obviously God is not as angry as He was, otherwise they would not have been allowed to return to the land of Judah.
- (3) But God’s displeasure goes deeper than a stop-work situation here due to Samaritan opposition. There is spiritual lethargy, a material intoxication (Hag. 1:4).

c. The text of the command, v. 3.

- (1) Note the emphasis upon God’s name as “Jehovah Sabaoth,” יהוה צבאות, or “LORD of hosts,” or Jehovah over *all*, being used fifty-three times in Zechariah. This title designates God as the commander of heaven’s angelic armies.
- (2) “Return to Me,” is the fundamental need, not simply “return to building.” However, physical lethargy is a symptom of an inner dullness of the soul.
- (3) “That I may return to you,” is proper synergism, a bilateral relationship, since it is addressed to God’s redeemed children, not pagans or the unregenerate. The reverse is ultimately true; but here the concern is stimulation to action based upon the promise of blessing, that is the use of command as a means designed to accomplish God’s sovereign ends.

2. The lesson from former repentance, vs. 4-6.

History is a great teacher provided we are prepared to be instructed by it, especially when it is history in which our descendants were involved, and even more so when we focus on Christian church history, the good and the bad.

a. Remember the obstinacy of your fathers, v. 4.

- (1) The “former prophets” constantly called Israel to repentance (Isa. 1:16-19; 55:6-7; Jer. 3:12-14; 4:1-2; Ezek. 18:30-32; 33:11; Hos. 14:1; Joel 2:12-13; Amos 5:4-6; Zeph. 2:2-3).

- (2) But the “fathers” would not listen or obey (Jer. 6:10, 17; 7:27; 11:7-8; 44:15-16; Amos 5:4-5; Zeph. 2:2-3).
- (3) By way of application, the call to repentance continues into the New Testament just preceding Christ’s earthly ministry by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2), by Christ after his resurrection (Luke 24:46-49), and by the apostles (Acts 3:19; 117:30).
- (4) David Baron comments:

And we may pause and ask, Is there less need for this kind of preaching now than there was in Jeremiah’s or in Paul’s time? Is man’s attitude and tendency more Godward and heavenward now than it was then? Is man all right, or is he radically wrong? Does man’s natural course lead to life, or does the end of it lead to death? Upon the answer to these questions depends the answer as to who are the true prophets and genuine friends of man; whether those who cry, “Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye doe?” or those who speak of “the world’s progress,” and tell corrupt, sinful men that they are themselves potentially Christs, who need only develop “the good that is in them,” and who still cry, “Peace, peace,” although there is no peace. We may be forgiven for digressing somewhat beyond the limits of the passage before us; but we believe that this question of repentance touches the very heart of man’s relationship to God. It shows us, as we have seen, man’s condition as apostate from God, with his face turned away from the fountain of light and life. It tells us that man’s great need is to forsake not only his outward ways, but also his *thoughts*, and to return to the Lord; and it reveals to us the grace and love of God, who has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but yearns for his return, “because He delighteth in mercy,” and has, at the cost of the sacrifice of His own Son, devised a means of reconciliation, “that His banished be not expelled from Him” (II Sam. 14:14).¹

- b. Remember the mortality of your fathers, v. 5.
 - (1) The fathers died in shame, captivity, judgment, and implicit is the suggestion that the returned exiles are in no way immune from such a destiny. Future domination by Syria and Egypt will prove this.
 - (2) But what of the comment, “And the prophets, do they live forever?” They were faithful! Baron, and the Talmud, suggest that this is the impudent reply of the rebellious hearers to Zechariah. It is as if a professing Christian was charged with dying as do all pagan sinners!
- c. Remember the repentance of your fathers, v. 6.
 - (1) So Zechariah replies to the cheeky challenge, “Yes, the prophets did die, but not the Word of the LORD which they proclaimed.”
 - (a) By way of application, the Word presently preached today may not have results until well into the future. Further, what counts here is that

¹ David Baron, *The Visions & Prophecies of Zechariah*, p. 15.

the Word of God was delivered, not that a preacher was remembered or acclaimed.

(b) David Baron comments:

Oh, that men would learn to distinguish between frailty and weakness of the best of God's messengers and the eternal character and unfailing veracity of His message! The prophets are no more, but the words which those holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost are still with us, verifying themselves, and in spite of man's unbelief accomplishing, whether in judgment or in mercy, that whereunto they were sent.²

- (2) So the Word of the LORD outlasted the prophets and eventually resulted in repentance. The Word has remarkable staying power, leaving indelible impressions that way outlast the messenger.
- (3) By way of illustration, many a young person has only come to the truth imbedded in the soul by a faithful parent long after that parent has died. Similarly with the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. . . . [Heaven declares of them] "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!" . . . so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them" (Rev. 14:12-13; cf. Luke 16:9).

B. The eight night visions, 1:7-6:8.

These eight scenes are distinguished from more usual direct prophetic revelations (Isa, 6:1-5; Jer. 1:11-16; Ezek. 1:1-3:15) in that they are mediated to Zechariah by means of a trance like state and an interpreting angel (cf. Dan. 7:16; 8:16; 9:21-27; Rev. 17:1-7; 21:9). As one commentator explains: "The whole narrative reminds the reader of *Pilgrim's Progress* of Christian at the house of the Interpreter."³ In summary we have: 1. The Angel of the LORD among the myrtle trees, 1:7-17. 2. The four horns and the four craftsmen, 1:18-21. 3. The survey of Jerusalem, 2:1-13. 4. The cleansing of Joshua the high priest, 3:1-10. 5. The golden lampstand and the two olive trees, 4:1-14. 6. The flying scroll, 5:1-4. 7. The woman in the ephah measure, 5:5-11. 8. The four chariots, 6:1-6.

1. Vision one – the angel of the LORD among the myrtle trees, 1:7-17.

The state of the world's people and the state of God's people are two entirely different entities. The world's people, so apparently monolithic and overbearing, seem untroubled and at rest in their worldly, materialistic, pagan pursuits. On the other hand God's people are often despised and belittled like refugees, foreigners (I Cor. 4:11-13). As Zechariah writes, Judah, but particularly Jerusalem, has been justly, severely humiliated, and even now it seems so relatively unimportant, so unimpressive in the light of the might of the surrounding nations. But God has plans that will indicate that He has not abandoned His people. Thus, "My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem" (1:17).

² Ibid., p. 17.

³ W. Emery Barnes, *Haggai and Zechariah*, p. 23.

a. The time, v. 7-8a.

- (2) It is approximately 3 months after Zechariah's initial call to repentance, of returning to the LORD, of rebuilding.
- (3) It is exactly 3 months after Haggai's final prophecy of promised blessing (Hag. 2:10-23).
- (4) It is night time, and perhaps in a form of a trance, yet mentally alert, the Word comes, and Zechariah sees, through the illumination of the Spirit of God (4:6; 7:12).

b. The vision described, v. 8b.

- (2) The man, who apparently dismounts His red horse, is "the angel of the LORD" in v. 11, a christophany or theophany, God the Son (Gen. 16:7-13; Exod. 3:2-6; Judg. 13:9-18, 22). Behind him are other red, sorrel, and white horses, presumably mounted with angels.
- (3) The myrtle trees in the ravine or deep abyss, being fragrant, evergreen bushes, represent Israel in the midst of troubles and oppression. The Hebrew for "Myrtle" is Hadassah, as was the name of Queen Esther. As Baron explains:

Not the proud cedar, not the lofty, far-spreading oak—the symbols of the great world powers—but the lowly, fragrant myrtle, growing for the most part in the shady valley out of the world's gaze, is chosen to represent the covenant people.⁴

- (4) The colored horses perhaps represent different aspects of the ministry of these angels; *red* (being that of the Angel of Jehovah) = judgment, blood, vengeance; *white* = victory, triumph, glory; *sorrel* (mixture/dappled/pie) = judgment and mercy. Also consider Revelation 6:1-8; 19:11-15 where a multitude of white, red, black, and ashen horses, associated with Christ's ministry, are referenced.

c. The vision interpreted, vs. 9-17.

- (2) The international angelic report, vs. 9-11.

It needs to be understood here, in the conversation that follows, that distinction must be carefully made between the regiment of angels and the commanding Angel of the LORD.

- (a) Zechariah does not make a guess at the meaning here, but humbly enquires of the correct interpretation from "My lord," an interpreting angel, v. 9. Distinction must also be made between "the angel who was

⁴ Baron, *Zechariah*, p. 24.

speaking with/in me” here, a mere angelic messenger, and “the angel of the LORD” in vs. 8, 10-11. Thus this angel “shows Zechariah” that which v. 10 reveals.

- (b) So the man of v. 8, who rode the red horse, the angel of Jehovah of v. 11, now standing introduces his patrolling angels who have been on duty around the earth. They are a regiment of angels of the LORD who have been commissioned for patrolling the earth and reporting upon its condition, v. 10.
 - (c) Thus the patrolling angels report that, “all the earth is peaceful and quiet,” v. 11. Their assessment is that the nations of the world are relatively untroubled and prosperous, that is in contrast with Israel! The pagan countries have secure borders, military strength, governmental stability, architectural advancement, and growing productivity, while Judah is an impoverished wasteland and Jerusalem has no walls and thus is defenseless.
- (3) The intercession of the angel of the LORD for Israel, v. 12.
- (a) The angel of the LORD has constantly shepherded Israel (Gen. 48:15-16; Exod. 13:21-22; 14:24; Isa. 63:9). Even during the Babylonian captivity, the Son of God has watched over His people (Ps. 121:4).
 - (b) Here then God the Son intercedes with God the Father for His destitute people who still grieve and are weak with regard to their former severe discipline (cf. John 17:9). The cessation of punishment and the subsequent return of the exiles have resulted in limited blessing.
- (4) The interest of the LORD in Israel, vs. 13-17.
- (a) The Word mediated to Zechariah, vs. 13-14a.

The LORD answers the Son through His messenger with content and tone that convey prospective grace and comfort. Thus the Lord’s messenger declares God’s Word to Zechariah.

- (b) The Word revealed to Zechariah, vs. 14b-17.

- 1) Proclaim, I am zealous for Jerusalem and angry with the nations, vs. 14b-15.

- a) The Lord’s zeal for Jerusalem, v. 14b.

God’s intense jealous concern for His City and the Temple area is a major theme of Zechariah (1:17; 2:4, 10; 8:3-4) that ultimately has as its goal His vindication and glory.

- b) The Lord's anger with the nations, v. 15.

There is tension here between God's appointment of punishment for His people by means of pagan oppression from the Babylonians/Assyrians/Edomites, and the accountability of those same pagan nations for their mistreatment of God's people. In particular, God was displeased with the goyim/Gentiles/pagans/nations on account of their excessive vindictiveness, their callousness at being "at ease," unconcerned about their captives. Paul expresses the same concern for Gentile insensitivity toward the Jew in Romans 11:17-22. History is full of indications of such insensitivity toward the Jews (cf. Gen. 12:3).

- 2) Proclaim, I will return to Jerusalem with compassion, vs. 16-17.

The immediate thought would be to see fulfillment here in the restoration ministry of Ezra and Nehemiah in which the temple and walls of Jerusalem were modestly rebuilt (Ezra 3:12-13; Hag. 2:3). Then followed the remarkable rise of the Hasmonean dynasty, the rededication of the temple, prosperity, and religious reform, that yet weakened with the rise of sectarianism. Total deflation came in 63 B.C. when the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem. His brutality included the massacre of 12,000 followers of Aristobulus the high priest in the temple precincts. He especially outraged the Jews upon his entry into the Holy of Holies in the temple. Yet do these accomplishments, in the midst of turbulent times leading to the birth of Christ, fully fit here (cf. 8:1-8; 14:1-11)? Thus Baron concludes:

There is some truth also in the contention of those commentators who argue that there was a fulfillment of the good and comforting words about Jehovah's returning to Zion with mercies in the first advent of our Savior. . . . [B]ut to deny that in its fullness it will yet find an exhaustive fulfillment in the Jewish people, which for nearly two thousand years has been in much greater bondage than they were during the seventy years in Babylon, is to misapprehend and misinterpret the scope of this as of all the other visions (Isa. 51:3).⁵

- a) My compassion will return, v. 16a.
 b) My house will be built, v. 16b.
 c) My Jerusalem will be built, v. 16c.
 d) My cities will prosper, v. 17a,
 e) My comfort will return, v. 17b.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

2. Vision two – the four horns and the four craftsmen, 1:18-21.

The previous vision concerning the fact that God has not overlooked His people Israel, especially in the face of a contrasting world that is “peaceful and quiet,” v. 11, should help us anticipate the related character of this next scene. Once again, the focus is upon God’s concern for “scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem,” v. 19.

a. The four horns that scatter Israel, vs. 18-19.

Whereas the world is reportedly “peaceful and quiet,” v. 11, this is not to infer that God is therefore untroubled by the Gentile nations, as v. 15 has indicated. Now we learn not only of their individual roles on the world stage under God’s dominion, but also their just destiny.

- (2) In Scripture horns depict power, assertiveness, dominion, offence and defence. A de-horned animal is humiliated, defeated, impotent (I Sam. 2:1; Ps. 132:13, 17-18; Dan. 7:7-8; 8:3-8).
- (3) Some identify these horns as opposition to Israel from the four ends or corners of the earth to date, true as this certainly is.
- (4) Evangelical commentators identify the horns as four specific nations or powers, but a difference remains.
 - (a) Some identify the four nations as preceding Zechariah because of the past tense, e.g. Calvin, the Moabites, Syrians, Babylonians, etc.
 - (b) Others, Baron, Keil, Hengstenberg, more correctly associate the horns with the four kingdoms of Daniel 2:31-35; 7:2-7, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome. Calvin admits this to be the Jewish interpretation.
- (5) If this be correct, and two world powers have yet to arise, then what consolation is there for Israel? It is that these foes shall never finally overthrow Israel (Ps. 129:1-4). Calvin applies this to the church, which is appropriate by way of illustration (Matt. 16:18). But Zechariah has in mind the earthly nation of Israel in unbelief (Jer. 30:11).

b. The four craftsmen that terrify the four horns, vs. 20-21.

- (2) The craftsmen are artificers, metal-workers, hammerers, forgers of divine judgment, instruments of God’s displeasure against the Gentile nations, cf. v. 15.
- (3) What specifically are these “hammerers”?
 - (a) Media-Persia against Babylon (Dan. 5:1-31).
 - (b) Greece against Media-Persia (Dan. 8:3-8).

- (c) Rome against Greece.
- (d) “A stone cut without hands” (Dan. 2:34-35, 45), that is God’s conquest of Rome through His Son, and any remnants of the other kingdoms. This replacement with the fifth kingdom of God comes, not with a gradual effect, but as a smashing, apocalyptic conclusion that results in “a great mountain [that] . . . filled the earth.” Thus, “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

(4) By way of illustration, for every enemy of God’s people, God has a corresponding instrument of judgment (cf. Ps. 73:3, 14, 18-19).

3. Vision three – the man with the measuring line, vs. 2:1-13.

Yet again we see the continuance of a theme perpetuated in the previous two visions. It is the fact that “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew” (Rom. 11:2). Here the language concerns “Judah” and “Jerusalem and Zion,” 1:12, 15, then “Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” 1:19, and now “Zion” and “Judah,” and “Jerusalem,” vs. 10, 12. The focus continues undiminished.

a. The measurement of Jerusalem, vs. 1-5.

Spurgeon 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.⁶

We add Calvin’s comment on v. 4 which represents a divergent interpretation that this writer does not follow, except it be employed merely by way of application.

There is then no doubt but that God intended here to bear witness respecting the propagation of his Church, which was to follow a long time afterwards, even after the coming of Christ. For though Jerusalem became wealthy and also large in its compass, and, as it is well known, a triple city, and heathen writers say that it was among the first of the cities of the East when Babylon was still existing, yet this prophecy was not verified in the state of Jerusalem, for it was not inhabited without its walls, nor did it spread through the whole of Judea. We hence conclude, that the spiritual Jerusalem is here described, which differs from all earthly cities.⁷

Both agree that fulfillment up to Christ’s first coming is not mainly intended here.

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, 10:604, Ages Software CD

⁷ John Calvin, *Commentary on Zechariah*, Internet sourced.

- (1) The surveyor measures Jerusalem, vs. 1-2.
 - (a) Remember that the exilic remnant is discouraged, despondent, building in a small fashion, 4:10, so that Zechariah receives comfort for Jerusalem, 1:13.
 - 1) Vision one, the man among the myrtle trees, ends with a great promise, 1:17.
 - 2) Vision two, the four horns and four craftsmen, ends with the judgment of Israel's enemies, 1:21.
 - 3) Vision three, sees Jerusalem surveyed for blessing, 2:11-13.
 - (b) Who is the "man" with the measuring line? While some suggest an angel, yet more likely it is the same "angel of the Lord," 1:11; cf. 1:16; 6:12-13.
 - (c) What is the purpose of the "measuring line"? No doubt this recalled similar surveying work presently going on. But here it is God's sizing up of Jerusalem for His future blessing. This is activity that necessarily precedes building, not indifference.
 - (d) Recall what God has formerly promised re Jerusalem prior to the captivity (Isa. 30:19-22; 52:1-2; 62:1-7; 65:17-20; Jer. 33:14-16).
- (2) The surveyor speaks of Jerusalem, vs. 3-5.

As surveyors do, the Son of God, in Old Testament form, communicates His architectural plans that they might be of comfort for future inhabitants. Towards the end of World War II, the German administrators of a certain concentration camp were particularly severe in their treatment of their captive soldiers. Yet the prisoners appeared to be increasingly joyful as the harsh conditions increased. How could this be? Because the prisoners had a hidden radio receiver, and they knew that relieving allied forces were not far away. They were "rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation," even as Paul describes the Christian in Romans 12:12. Here Zechariah learns of a similar message of hope when the City of God is so meager in this world.

- (a) "The angel" will interpret the vision, v. 3.

This "angel" is the interpreting angel of 1:9. He moves away from Zechariah to greet an angel coming to him from the Angel of Jehovah, the man standing among the myrtle trees who had dismounted from His red horse. Thus revelation from Christ is passed on to a ministering who angel in turns passes it on to the angel who is to instruct Zechariah.

- (b) The LORD will expand Jerusalem with people, v. 4.

The “young man” is Zechariah, recipient of a message to be proclaimed to the citizens of Jerusalem. The future Jerusalem will enjoy a prosperous population explosion in the midst of previously unknown safety (8:3, 8, 22-23; 14:9-11; Isa. 49:19-20). Being “without walls” certainly suggests a future economy without parallel.

- (c) The LORD will surround Jerusalem with fire, v. 5a.

In such an economy there will be no need for towering ramparts. The LORD Himself will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem, a perfect and unassailable defense (14:10-11; cf. Exod. 14:19-20). This will be the period suggested by Jesus, “Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

- (d) The LORD will inhabit Jerusalem with glory, v. 5b.

The LORD will Himself gloriously dwell in the midst of Jerusalem in a manner that has not been known to this present day (Joel 3:17; Zech. 8:3-8). The “I” here is emphatic. This will be the radiance of Christ which the apostles briefly beheld on the mount of the transfiguration (Matt. 17:2; cf. Isa. 4:4-6; John 1:14).

- b. The regathering of Jerusalem, vs. 6-13.

The preceding encouragement concerning the Jerusalem’s glorious prospects requires scattered Israel to be regathered.

- (2) The call of the remnant, vs. 6-7.

Here is imparted the divine urging which compliments the decree of Cyrus whereby the exiles in Babylon and beyond, “dispersed . . . as the four winds of the heavens,” were permitted to return. It is the completion of the formerly decreed exile. The Lord punishes and then He relents. Probably the long settlement necessitated strong exhortation.

- (3) The condemnation of the nations, vs. 8-9.

The pagan instruments that God used for the punishment of His people will in turn be the objects of divine justice, especially in view of 1:15.

- (a) For the sake of Israel’s vindication, v. 8.

Perhaps “with glory” is the intent here, whereby God will send the Angel of the Lord against the enemies of Israel. Through all of the trials of His people, He has maintained a jealous regard for these covenant children, even as the protected “apple of His eye,” that is Israel regarded as God’s sensitive, irreplaceable, protected “pupil.” (Deut.

32:10; Ps. 17:8; cf. Gen. 12:3; Isa. 49:16). To oppose Israel is to, as it were, hit God in the eye!

- (b) For the sake the Lord's vindication, v. 9.

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).

- (4) The coming of the Lord, vs. 10-13.

With gloriously restored Jerusalem garrisoned by the Lord, vs. 1-5, and the exiles both vindicated before their enemies and restored to Zion, vs. 6-9, what will the amalgam of these circumstances bring about?

- (a) He is coming to Jerusalem, v. 10.

The whole environment will be one of joyful singing as Zion anticipates the coming of the LORD to dwell with His people.

- 1) The first time, as a saving King, 9:9.
- 2) The second time, as a reigning King, 14:1-4, 8-9.

- (b) He will gather to Jerusalem, v. 11.

Many Gentile nations will also become "My people," so that "the nations will fear the name of the LORD and all the kings of the earth Your glory" (Ps. 102:15; cf. Isa. 2:2-3; 14:1-2; Mic. 4:1-2; Eph. 3:6).

- 1) The first time of His coming, the Gentiles will come to the Lord, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Rom. 11:13-15).
- 2) The second time of His coming, Israel will have been saved following "the fullness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25-29).

- (c) He will favor Jerusalem in "the Holy Land," only here in Scripture, and in the Lord's economy it shall be the center of the earth. Thus, out of covenant faithfulness, He "will again choose Jerusalem," cf. 1:17; v. 12.

- (d) He is aroused for Jerusalem, therefore "Be silent [hush]," for the Lord is excited for the cause of His people, v. 13 (cf. Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7). At the present time there is silence, but at the end of this age God shall stir for His covenant people (Rom. 11:28-36). Thus Barron comments:

The present Dispensation is the period of God's long-continued silence. How wonderful, how long, how deep, how mysterious, is this silence of God ever since the sound of the last words of Christ, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," died away on the barren rock of Patmos nineteen centuries ago! How often have the hearts of God's people grown impatient under the strain! How often has not the Church cried, "How long, O Lord, how long?" But there has been neither audible voice, nor sound, nor any *visible* interposition on the part of God. Moreover, while God has remained "silent," man has taken the opportunity of "speaking," and his words are becoming ever more foolish, arrogant, and blasphemous against the Most High; but "our God cometh *and shall not keep silent*," and then it will not only be the turn of "all flesh" to keep silent, but to stand in solemn awe while "out of his own mouth" man shall be judged, and all his thoughts and words which spell out his own condemnation are set in order before him.

But not only the ungodly and the sinners who have spoken "hard things" against God and His Anointed, but men in general, are called in a spirit of reverence and godly fear to await the solemn even announced; for the coming and visible interposition of God on this earth, while it will mean judgment to some, will mean the consummation of grace and fullness of blessedness to others; and when prophecy and vision is at last fulfilled, and "our God shall arise and His enemies are scattered, and they also that hate Him shall flee before His face"—then, also, "the righteous shall be glad, they shall exult before the face of God, yea, they shall rejoice exceedingly." The last practical word on this Scripture to you, dear Christian reader, is, "Abide in Him," that when He shall appear (when He shall be manifested) we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.⁸

4. Vision four – Joshua's cleansing by the Angel of the Lord, 3:1-10.
 - a. The redemption of a polluted priesthood and people, v. 1-5.
 - (2) To this point we have been concerned with national restoration of Jerusalem and Israel, but now this changes.
 - (a) Vision one, 1:16-17, Jerusalem will be built, blessed.
 - (b) Vision two, 1:21, Jerusalem's enemies will be judged.
 - (c) Vision three, 2:8-12, Jerusalem will reign with favor.
 - (d) Vision four, 3:4-5, Jerusalem receives righteousness.
 - (3) Joshua on trial before God and Satan, v. 1.
 - (a) Joshua here was the high priest who returned with the first contingent of 50,000 under Zerubbabel some 16 years before. He represents Israel.

⁸ Barron, *Zechariah*, pp. 81-82.

- (b) Satan is allowed proximity to God's presence as "the accuser of the brethren" (Ps. 109:6, 31; Rev. 12:10). Supremely he opposes God, but this means opposing Israel as the mediator of God's truth and salvation.
 - (c) What is Satan's accusation? Probably the filth and guilt of Joshua, cf. v. 3.
 - (d) Who is the judge? The "angel of the Lord," to whom all judgment has been given (John 5:22).
- (4) Joshua defended before Satan, v. 2.
- (a) Satan is rebuked, not because Israel was righteous or the charge was exaggerated or on account of fiery trials, but solely on the ground of God's election (cf. Isa. 50:7-9; Rom. 8:33-34; 9:16; 11:1-2).
 - (b) Further, this election is recently confirmed in that Israel was "a brand plucked from the fire." God does not keep saving for nothing (Cf. Jer. 31:37).
 - (c) By way of illustration, this verse was applied by Samuel Wesley to the rescue of his child John from the upper window of the burning Epworth parsonage.
- (5) Joshua guilty before God, v. 3.
- (a) Israel is depicted as religious yet wretched, decorated yet defiled, clothed yet condemned.
 - (b) No doubt Zechariah borrows from earlier prophetic statements (Isa, 4:3-4; 61:10; 64:6).
- (6) Joshua clothed with righteousness, vs. 4-5.
- (a) Joshua is utterly incapable of cleansing himself, v. 4.
 - (b) Sin is stripped away having been satisfied; it is not merely covered. Righteousness is imputed, v. 4.
 - (c) God's provision is complete from head to foot. The priestly tiara had a golden plate, "holy to the Lord," v. 5.
 - (d) By way of illustration, David Baron comments:

In this world men walk in a vain show, and there is often no inward correspondence between their actual character and the robe of office which they wear. There are kings who are not kingly, princes who are by no means princely, and priests who are far from being priestly; but it can never be so in the kingdom of God—in it there are no deceiving appearances. As many as are justified in Messiah's righteousness are also

being regenerated and sanctified by His blessed Spirit, and there is not one arrayed in the beautiful robe of His perfection who does not also make it the aim of his life to perfect holiness in the fear of God now, and who shall not in the end be conformed to His image, and be actually and fully like Him in character.

And what Israel shall be nationally in the day when, stripped of their own filthy garments, they are clothed in *machalatsoth* (the new priestly outfit), and, with the fair mitre with *qodesh layehovah* on their foreheads, go forth as “the priests of Jehovah” and as “the minsters of our God” among the nations—that also all believers in Christ are already now as individuals. We, too, are “a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,” and are sent forth into the world, not only with our lips, but also in our lives and conduct, “to show forth the praises (the excellencies) of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light”⁹

- (e) By way of application, this raises the problem of various forms of Christian ministry that need cleansing (I Thess. 2:9-12; I Pet. 5:1-3).
 - 1) An unconverted ministry.
 - 2) A defiled ministry.
 - 3) An ignorant ministry.
 - 4) A depressed ministry.

b. The Redeemer of a cleansed priesthood and people, vs. 6-10.

(2) The description of the justified, vs. 6-7.

- (a) They are known by the Justifier, v. 6.

Joshua is the priestly justifier, as the representative head of Israel. The people of God are admonished in terms of what they *shall* be, cf. vs. 8-10; v. 6.

- (b) They are to manifest the obedience of faith, v. 7a.

They are admonished to, and *shall* manifest the obedience of faith. Here is both the responsibility of the sinner and the sovereignty of God (cf. Eph. 2:8-10). There are three areas of obedience required, v. 7a.

- 1) Walking in the ways of the Lord (I Kings 2:1-3).
- 2) Performing service to the Lord (Lev. 8:35-36).
- 3) Governing the house of the Lord (Deut. 17:9, 12).

⁹ Ibid., pp. 102-103.

- (c) They are to inherit heavenly citizenship, v. 7b.

They inherit heavenly fellowship (citizenship) before the throne of God even as angels. Baron quotes a Jewish targum: "In the resurrection of the dead I will revive thee, and give thee feet walking among the seraphim."¹⁰

- (3) The duty of the Justifier, vs. 8-9.

- (a) He is foreshadowed, v. 8a.

1) The high priest with his fellow priests in front signify a new and superior priesthood yet to come (I Pet. 2:9).

2) Or the high priest and his fellow priests in front, as sinful brands plucked from burning, yet represent a greater salvation, now to be revealed.

- (b) He is the servant, a classic term for Messiah (Isa. 39-66; 42:1-6; 49:6; 52:13-53:12), who perfectly does the Father's will (Heb. 10:5-10), v. 8b.

- (c) He is the Branch (Sprout), of the Lord (Isa. 4:2), of David (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16), "where he is" (stock?), 6:12. Baron makes a fourfold distinction, v. 8c.

1) A Branch as the ideal King (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Matthew).

2) A Branch as the Servant (Zech. 3:8; Mark).

3) A Branch as the Man (Zech. 6:12; Luke).

4) A Branch as Jehovah (Isa. 4:2; John).

- (d) He is the stone, which is another common name for Messiah (Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; cf. Isa. 6:6; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; v. 9.

1) If the seven eyes are directed towards Messiah, then they are probably of the Father, cf. 4:10, or perhaps the hosts of heaven and earth!

2) But if the stone more likely has seven eyes, then the probable meaning is the divine omniscience of the Son of God (Matt. 9:4; John 2:24-25; 6:64; 16:30; 21:17; Col. 2:2-3).

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

- 3) What then is the inscription engraved on the stone by the Father? Perhaps (Baron) it is the personal name of God, יהוה, representing all of the divine fullness (Col. 2:9).
 - 4) What is the stone to accomplish? The redemption of Israel producing the obedience of faith. It shall happen in *one day* at Golgotha, and that day yet to come (12:1-13:2).
- (4) The delight of the justified, v. 10.
- (a) Israel shall enter into a prosperous spiritual relationship with the Lord, millennial blessedness (Mic. 4:1-5).

(b) David Baron comments:

And when once Israel's sin and guilt shall be removed, their sorrows and suffering, too, shall end. The vision closes, therefore, with the beautiful picture of tranquility and happy contentment depicted in the last verse, "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, ye shall call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree."

I close with the following quotation: "We are told in the Talmud (Yoma, vii. 4) that, when, on the great Day of Atonement, the high priest had performed the various duties of that solemn day, he was escorted home in a festive manner, and was accustomed to give a festal entertainment to his friends. The maidens and youth of the people went forth to their gardens and vineyards with songs and dances; social entertainments took place on all sides, and universal gladness closed the festival of that solemn day.

And this, in the last verse of this chapter, a picture is given of a day of similar gladness and joy of heart, when, on account of sin pardoned, free access to God's throne granted, and the Deliverer having com anointed with the plenitude of the Spirit and sealed by God the Father, each true Israelite would invite his friends a joyful guests to partake of festal cheer under his own vine and fig-tree. The days of peace are once more are seen. The glorious era of the earthly Solomon has indeed returned in greater splendor under the reign of the Prince of Peace. "Paradise lost" has become "Paradise regained."¹¹

5. Vision five – the golden lampstand and the olive trees, 4:1-14.

Whereas the previous vision depicted Israel's necessary cleansing and restored holiness, now the representation is of Israel's restored spiritual sustenance and radiance.

a. Israel's restored light illustrated, vs. 1-3.

- (1) Zechariah may have lapsed into a stupor of wonderment, but is suddenly aroused by the interpreting angel, cf. 1:9, 13, 14, 17; 2:3-4; v. 1.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 122.

- (2) The golden lampstand is similar but not identical with that of Exodus 25:31-40, in four areas, vs. 2-3.
 - (a) There is an additional bowl of oil above the lamp.
 - (b) There are seven spouts on each of the seven cups.
 - (c) There are two olive trees, one on either side.
 - (d) There are two golden pipes for emptying the oil, v. 12.
- (3) What then did the tabernacle lampstand represent? It was the only instrument of light depicting the light of God.
 - (a) It represented the light of God as the light of His people, especially the Messiah.
 - (b) It represented Israel as the custodian and representative of the light of God in the world (Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3; 62:1-2), as in the seven branched menorah.

b. Israel's light is sourced in the Spirit of the Lord, vs. 4-10.

- (1) The ignorance of Zechariah, vs. 4-5.

Perhaps the interpreting angels think that Zechariah could easily guess the meaning of this vision.

- (2) The encouragement of Zerubbabel, vs. 6-10.
 - (a) Zerubbabel was the head or civil prince of the tribe of Judah who led the first contingent of 50,000 exiles back from Babylon to Jerusalem, accompanied by Joshua the high priest. In leading the rebuilding of the temple, he faced depressing Samaritan opposition.
 - (b) The summary interpretation of the vision, v. 6.
 - 1) "Not by might [of many, an army] nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD." That is, the Lord's work must be built by the Lord's means.
 - 2) Note the earlier encouragement of Zerubbabel and Joshua in Haggai 2:4-5; cf. I Cor. 3:10-15.
 - 3) By way of illustration, Spurgeon expounds upon this verse:

God is jealous of his own honor; he will not suffer even his church to be delivered in such a way as to honor men more than God; he will take to himself the throne without a rival he will wear a crown

that never head did wear, and sway a scepter that never head hath grasped, for as truly as he is God, the earth shall know that he, and he alone, hath done it, and unto him shall be the glory. Now, my object this morning will be to glorify God, by showing to you, who love the Savior, that the preservation and the triumph of the church are both of them to be accomplished, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, in order that all the honor might be to God, and none of it to man. . . .

I was thinking, yesterday, my friends, what a magnificent change would come over the face of Christendom if God were on a sudden to pour out his Spirit as he did on the day of Pentecost. I was then sitting down meditating upon this sermon, and I thought! oh, if God should pour his Spirit upon me, should I not leap from this place where I am now sitting, and on my knees begin to pray as I never did before; and should I not go next Sabbath-day to a congregation who would feel a solemn awe about them! Every word I spoke would strike like arrows from the bow of God; and they themselves would feel that it was “none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven!” Thousands would cry out, “What must I do to be saved?” and go away carrying the divine fire till the whole of this city would be kindled.¹²

(c) The sovereignty of grace in the building, v. 7.

- 1) The great mountain of difficulty, opposition, will be leveled, whether the Samaritans, or Gentile world powers (cf. Dan. 2:34-35; Isa. 40:3-4).
- 2) So Zerubbabel is reassured that he will complete the temple building project, for he will see the last stone fixed in its place, and hear the prayerful shouts of admiration by the people, “Grace, grace to it!”

(d) The supremacy of God’s small things, vs. 8-10.

- 1) Israel has presently despised the relative lack of glory and size of the new temple, which may be a reflection of religious pride (Ezra 3:12-13; Hag. 2:3).
- 2) But God reprimands this carnal reasoning, for with God He is pleased to be present in “small things” (I Kgs. 19:911-12; Luke 2:25-32; I Cor. 1:27-28).
- 3) What counts is what God sees, with His seven eyes, and they are delighted with Zerubbabel’s plumb line, as in v. 10.
- 4) Barron comments:

Yet from God’s point of view the task of the rebuilding on which they were engaged was—because of its being a necessary step toward the fulfillment of His purpose as set forth in the symbolism of the candlestick—the *greatest and most important thing in the world, and formed the center and motive of His providential*

¹² C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, III, Sermon 149. Ages Software.

dealings on the earth at that time. Not on the great world-movements, but on the little “stone of lead” or “plummet” in the hand of Zerubbabel, who is thus indicated as superintending the work of building, do the seven eyes of God’s special providence rest with complacency and joy; and as those eyes run to and fro through the whole earth, and nothing is hid from His omniscience, He will see to it that *nothing from without* shall now prevent the work being brought to a happy completion.¹³

d. Israel’s light is mediated by the two anointed ones, vs. 11-14.

- (1) The two olive branches are the two “sons of oil,” which suggests more than being anointed, but agents who channel the oil from the bowl via the two pipes to the lampstand.
- (2) They represent Joshua, 3:1, and Zerubbabel, 4:6-7, who are the religious and civil leaders of Israel.
- (3) By way of application, God is pleased to use human means to convey His blessings, that is through both Israel and the Church. However, in this instance both individuals are divinely appointed and prepared.

6. Vision six – the flying scroll, 5:1-4.

a. Introduction.

The first five night visions have promised hope and ultimate glory for Israel, that is restoration, victory, peace, righteousness, spiritual power, through Messiah the Branch. But now the unrepentant are called soon to give account.

b. The measurements of the flying scroll, vs. 1-2.

- (1) This is a scroll of Scripture, often used to represent a pronouncement of judgment (Ezek. 2:9-10), which for the law breaker involves a curse (Deut. 27:26).
- (2) The scroll is unrolled and flying rapidly, like a flying carpet, suggesting imminent judgment.
- (3) The dimensions of the scroll, 10 x 20 cubits, are the same as the porch of the temple (I Kings 6:3), at the entrance from the court of the priests in front of the altar of burn offering. Here in time of trouble the priests would draw near to pray.
- (4) But the dimensions of the holy place were also 10 x 20 cubits, in which the golden candlestick stood. Hence God will judge according to His holy standards. Baron comments:

¹³ Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 139-140. The quotation is from C. H. H. Wright, *Zechariah*, p. 107.

The fact that the writing which brings the curse upon sinners has the same dimensions as the Tabernacle signifies that *the measure will be meted out according to the Holy Place*; or in the words of an English theologian, “Men are not to be judged as to sin by their own measures, or weighed in their own false balances—*the measure of the sanctuary* is that by which man’s actions are to be weighed (I Sam. 2:3).” And the judgment which is to fall on the unrepentant, unpardoned transgressor will not only be “according to the measure of the sanctuary,” but in strict correspondence with the majesty and holiness of the law which has been broken.¹⁴

c. The ministry of the flying scroll, vs. 3-4.

(1) To bring a curse on the thief and blasphemer, v. 3.

- (a) The thief breaks the eighth commandment, which represents the six manward commandments on one side of the scroll.
- (b) The blasphemer, or false user of God’s name, breaks the third commandment, which represents the four godward commandments on the other side of the scroll.

(2) To purge from Israel all who defile, such as the thief and blasphemer (Isa. 11:4-5, 9).

- (a) This cleansing concerns the pretended people of God, those who “are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside are full of dead man’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:27).
- (b) This cleansing may be likened to the Lord Jesus’ employment of His “winnowing fork” (Matt. 3:11-12).

7. Vision seven – the woman in the ephah measure, 5:5-11.

a. The wickedness of Israel identified, vs. 5-8.

(1) The illustration of the woman in the ephah jar, vs. 5-7.

- (a) An “ephah” was the most common dry and liquid measure of about 22 liters.
- (b) “This is their *appearance* in the land,” that is in context, the wicked of vs. 3-4, sin collectively.
- (c) A lead lid is removed, being used to contain a woman seated in the jar.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

- (2) The identification of the woman in the ephah jar, v. 8.
- (a) The restrained, contained woman is “Wickedness,” that is the full measure of it is there, in the feminine (cf. Prov. 2:16; 5:3-4; Matt. 23:31-33; Rev. 17:1-9).
 - (b) This full measure of “wickedness” then attempts to escape, but is sovereignly restrained. The lead lid is replaced over the neck of the jar.
 - (c) Baron adds the thought that the ephah, representing ungodly commerce, depicts the passing of a corrupt system worshipped as mammon, in the future.¹⁵
- b. The wickedness of Israel removed, vs. 9-11.
- (1) The illustration of the ephah jar removed, vs. 9-10.
- (a) Two women, necessary to carry the great load, are specially qualified angels. Again, their strength is pictured by means of “stork wings.”
 - (b) Thus the ephah is born away between heaven and earth that is *perhaps* to a location in neither realm.
- (2) The location of the removed ephah jar, v. 11.
- (a) A place of residence is to be built for this full measure of wickedness, at a special foreign location.
 - (b) It is “the land of Shinar,” more immediately Babylon (Dan. 1:2), or the Babel of Genesis 11:1-2.
 - (c) The ephah jar is yet set upon a pedestal, which may speak of that final exaltation of evil before Satan is cast into the lake of fire.
 - (d) Baron comments

All this may be regarded by some as a long digression from the subject before us; but it is not altogether so, for it shows from actual facts and events which are before us the very strong probability that “the land of Shinar”—which in the past was so “prominent in connection with the manifestation of evil on the part of man, and of judgment on the part of God, that it stands peculiarly as a memorial of proud ungodliness met by the visitation of righteous vengeance from above”—will yet, as Scripture forecasts, play a very important part in the consummation of human “wickedness” in the final anti-Christian apostasy, in which a godless Judaism and a corrupt, unbelieving Christianity will be united for the sake of the false peace, and pomp, and luxury, and a humanitarianism dissociated from God and the truth, which the system, outwardly

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 162-163.

symbolized by the ephah, will for a time minister to them, but which, as Scripture also warns us, will end in the terrible judgment which has yet befallen man upon the earth.¹⁶

- (e) However, we may be sure from this passage, as with Romans 11:26, that “the Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.”

8. Vision eight – the four chariots, 6:1-8.

a. The four chariots coming from the city of God, vs. 1-3.

- (1) The Rabbis considered each of these four chariots, with unnamed drivers, to be led by a team of four horses.
- (2) The four teams of horses were colored red, black, white, and dappled (speckled).
- (3) They proceed from “between *the* two mountains,” which are made of pure bronze.

b. The four chariots going to patrol the earth, vs. 4-18.

- (1) First recall the first night vision, 1:7-17 (8-11).
- (2) “The four spirits (winds) of heaven” drive these chariots, v. 5.
 - (a) They have a world-wide ministry (cf. 1:10; Rev. 6:1-10), carrying out the commands of God.
 - (b) They come from “standing before the Lord of all the earth,” that is from between *the* two mountains, that is the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion, between which ran the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Jehovah shall judge), cf. Joel 3:1-2).
 - (c) The number four recalls the four great Gentile world powers of Daniel 2, 7. Also consider Daniel 7:1-3 and the four winds stirring up the great sea! Yet the “four” here do not correlate since the emphasis here is upon aspects of judgment, not national characteristics. However, the four winds seem identical!
- (3) The distinctive ministry of the chariots, vs. 6-7.
 - (a) The black and white horses (Baron) go north, hence to act in judgment upon the Media-Persia and Greek kingdoms in that region, v. 6a.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 170.

- (b) The dappled horses, the strong ones, first go south to Egypt, where the Roman Empire first challenged the declining Greek empire and came into conflict with Israel, v. 6b.
 - (c) Further, the “strong ones” (dappled), then patrolled the whole earth to judge the Roman kingdom, v. 7.
 - (d) But why no mention of the red horses? Because they had already judged Babylon, now past.
- (4) The satisfaction of the Lord, v. 8.
- (a) The red horses have done their work against Babylon, the black and white horses are also seen as accomplishing judgment against Media Persia, Greece, and God’s wrath is appeased. More is yet to come!
 - (b) Barron comments:

In reference to the four great world-powers, whose successive course was to make up “the times of the Gentiles,” we have to note that three of them have already long ago disappeared, in accordance with the clear predictions of Scripture, and the fourth, which (as also foreseen and foretold) was to drag on longest, is now, as is generally agreed by all students of the sure Word of Prophecy, fast approaching its very last phase of existence. We may, therefore, say with confidence that we are on the eve of the most solemn events in the world’s history, and are very fast approaching “the day,” not only of our own final and complete “redemption” as believers at the manifestation of Christ, but the “set time,” when God shall again arise and have mercy upon Zion, and when, through the restoration and blessing of Israel, “the nations shall fear the Name of Jehovah, and all kings of the earth His glory.”¹⁷

C. The temple of the Branch, 6:9-15.

1. The coronation of Joshua as a type, vs. 9-11.

a. The crowning word, v. 9.

- (1) This opening statement indicates a distinct revelation that is separate from the eight night visions.
- (2) Yet this is a crowning revelation, a capstone on the eight night visions. They spoke of Israel’s future hope and judgment. Here is a glorious climactic illustration of Israel’s future in relation to Messiah, the Branch.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 183.

b. The crowning materials, v. 10.

- (1) Three Jews come as a delegation from the exiles remaining in Babylon, Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah.
- (2) Since the temple is still in process of building, they bring a contribution of silver and gold, and reside in the house of a Josiah, the son of Zephaniah.
- (3) Zechariah is commanded that “same day,” to go to these pilgrims and explain the Lord’s command to them.

c. The crowning deed, v. 11.

- (1) The silver and gold is to be used to make a crown, or “ataroth” plural, that is a splendid, ornate crown, as with Job 31:35-37.
- (2) Thus Joshua the high priest is to be crowned with this gift from afar, and become a picture of He who is to come!

2. The coronation of the Branch as an antitype, vs. 12-13.

a. The Branch will build the temple, v. 12.

- (1) “Behold a man,” is parallel to “Behold, My Servant” (Isa. 42:1; 52:13); “Behold, your king” (Zech. 9:9); “Behold your God” (Isa. 40:9); “Behold, the man” (John 19:5).
- (2) He is the “Branch,” that is Messiah (cf. Zech. 3:8-10; Isa. 4:2; 11:1-2; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16).
- (3) Specifically, “He will branch out from where He is,” that is “from under Him,” from His own root, from His native people, land, the seed of Abraham, David!
- (4) “He [himself, emphatic] will build the temple of the Lord,” obviously a temple distinct from that being built.
 - (a) It is the Millennial Temple of Ezekiel 40-48, after Israel’s national conversion(cf. Ezek. 48:35; Isa. 2:2-4; 56:6-7; Mic. 4:1-7).
 - (b) It is also the Lord Christ himself, who comes as the incarnate temple (John 1:14; Rev. 21:3).
 - (c) It is also “the church of the living God” (I Tim. 3:15; I Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22).
 - (d) Application. One day all three elements shall coalesce!

- b. The Branch will sit on His throne, v. 13.
- (1) He shall “bear the honor,” that is carry the weight of royal majesty and glory (Isa. 35:1-2; 40:3-5; Heb. 2:9).
 - (2) He shall “sit and rule on His [the Lord’s] throne,” that is as supreme autocrat, even being God (Rev. 11:15).
 - (3) He shall “be a priest on His [the Lord’s] throne,” that is after Melchizedek (Heb. 5:8-10).
 - (4) He shall be “the counsel of peace . . . between the two offices,” that is the combined roles of king and priest, as illustrated by Zerubbabel and Joshua. Here shall be the union of dynamic and ethic, productive of peace.
- c. The Branch shall draw alien builders, vs. 14-15.
- (1) For the present, the crown of Joshua is to be a reminder of the pilgrims from afar who received “kindness” [not Hen, Baron], from the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, cf. v. 10. It is to be deposited in the temple.
 - (2) But the fulfillment of this symbolic activity is that, “those who are far off will come and build the temple of the Lord,” that is dispersed Jews but especially Gentiles (Isa. 60:10-11).
 - (3) Paul (Eph. 2:13), and Peter (Acts 2:39) may have had this tuth in mind.
 - (4) Then Israel will know that Zechariah spoke the Word of God.
 - (5) Is the destiny of Israel under its Messiah conditional upon perfect obedience? Yes, but it will be an obedience induced by God (Jer. 32:38-41). *Only* the holy shall inherit. This statement explains components of God’s plan, not whether Israel has or has not ability.
- d. Appendix, concerning the future of Israel in Romans 11:25-32 and its relationship to the church in Ephesians 2:11-22.
- (1) Apart from Romans 11:25-32, Paul also in Acts 21:39; 22:3; Rom. 11:1; II Cor. 11:22; Gal. 6:15-16, yet maintains a present Jewishness in relation to his “kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:3-5).
 - (2) In Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8, to be truly Jewish is to be circumcised in the heart as well as the flesh, and be an heir of promise through faith (Gal. 3:29).
 - (3) However, Ephesians 2:11-22 describes Jew and Gentile becoming “one new man” as a new creation in the church.
 - (a) The blood of Christ has broken down the dividing wall of animosity that separates Gentile from Jew, vs. 13-14.

- (b) Faith in Christ for Jew and Gentile has created “one body,” the church, in which there remains the subsidiary distinction of male and female, Jew and Gentile, vs. 15-16.
- (c) This is a new building, distinct from Israel which continues on in unbelief except for a remnant (Rom. 11:1-5, 11, 15).
- (d) But when “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in,” then all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:25-27), that is “natural branches [will be] grafted into their own olive tree” (Rom. 11:24), the promise to Abraham.

D. The two fasting visions, 7:1-8:23.

1. The question about fasting, 7: 1-3.

a. The time of the question, v. 1.

- (1) The “fourth year of King Darius” is now two years since the eight night visions, and Joshua’s coronation, cf. 1:7.
- (2) It is a time of advance, reduced hindrance, material improvement (Hag. 1:4), and waning sorrow.
- (3) So the Word of the Lord is given to Zechariah in response to a question that is a product of these better times.

b. The pilgrims sent to question, v. 2.

- (1) A delegation of “Sharezer and Regemmelech” is Jewish with pagan Assyrian/Babylonian names given in captive times, probably important officials from Bethel, not as KJV.
- (2) The significance of Bethel is that it was 11 miles north of Jerusalem, just within the border of the earlier northern kingdom captured by Assyria, yet so close to the southern kingdom as to later suffer under Babylon.
- (3) First, they came seeking “the favor of the Lord,” which literally means, “the stroke of the face,” so as to enquire.

c. The priests receive a vital question, v. 3.

- (1) During the Jewish fifth month of Ab, was the fast, second only to that of the Day of Atonement, commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, for weeping.
- (2) Hence, the question was as to the present need to fast now that God smiled on Jerusalem and the exile was over.
- (3) Besides, fasting had become a tiresome burden. They had fasted satisfactorily at the appropriate time, but not now.

- (4) Application. Should redeemed sinners have to celebrate the Lord's Supper, since they progress in sanctification?
2. Fasting and the history of Israel, 7:4-14.
- a. Israel's past motives are investigated, vs. 4-7.
- (1) Did not Israel fast thoughtlessly in exile? vs. 4-5.
- (a) Note the mention also of the fast of the seventh month, that is Tishri, commemorating the murder of Gedaliah, governor of Judah appointed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C., shortly before the final assault on Jerusalem.
- (b) Also note that the word of the Lord now is for all the people and priests, not just the visitors!
- (c) "When you fasted . . . was it actually for Me that you fasted – these seventy years?" Obviously no!
- 1) Israel fasted to satisfy themselves, in offering a good religious performance, but not unto God accompanied with true repentance for sin.
- 2) They fasted concerning their calamities, because they were hurting, but not because God was hurt!
- 3) They had no sense of I Corinthians 10:31; cf. Isaiah 58:3-7.
- (2) Does not Israel feast selfishly in the land? v. 6.
- (a) Even now, is not Israel wholly obsessed with self and personal gratification in food and drink?
- (b) Hence, there is a *present* need for a fasting heart, just as there was in earlier days.
- (3) Did not Israel ignore the former prophets? v. 7.
- (a) The southern kingdom of Judah is here described in three segments, Jerusalem and its surrounding cities, the southern Negev, the desert region, and the western lowland, Shephelah, Mediterranean region.
- (b) As they presently self-indulge, cf. v. 6, so they are no different than before the exile when those prophets said the same things (Isa. 22:12-13; Jer. 22:21; Ezek. 16:13-19); cf. 1:4.
- (c) Application. How easily God's people forget their past sins that are identical with their present sins. This blinds us of present due judgment, as in the past.

b. Israel's past motives are found wanting, vs. 8-14.

(1) The Lord sought practical righteousness, vs. 8-10.

(a) Righteousness dispensing brotherly justice, vs. 8-9.

In other words, you have come concerning a weariness regarding a ritual, a religious custom, but would that you had a burden for spiritual graces, as mercy.

(b) Righteousness excluding brotherly oppression, v. 10.

Fasting avoids food, but would that you so avoid evil against the orphan, stranger, pauper.

(2) The Lord found flint hard hearts, vs. 11-12.

(a) Hearts that refused to listen, vs. 11-12a.

This was a fourfold process as follows:

- 1) They refused to listen.
- 2) They pulled away the shoulder.
- 3) They stopped their ears.
- 4) They made their hearts as stone.
- 5) Illustration. David Baron comments.

It is one of the terrible moral consequences of men turning away from *doing* the will of God, that the more they hear, the duller their perceptions become, so that in the end, though having eyes, they see not.¹⁸

The issue is not ignorance, but a defiant will, carnal motives, especially with regard to the law or Word of God.

(b) Hearts that earned wrath, v. 12b.

Baron points out that the Hebrew Bible appropriately ends at II Chronicles 36, and on that last page, vs. 14-16 are timely.

(2) The Lord gave suitable rewards, vs. 13-14.

(a) A deaf ear, v. 13.

These solemn words tell that if Israel would not listen to God, then God would not listen to Israel in distress. Baron comments:

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 221.

[These are] solemn and awful words, which have not only verified themselves in the terrible history of the Jewish people these past two thousand years, but are a warning to the individual sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, of whom language is used (Prov. 1:24-33), when he hears God's voice, not to harden his heart and refuse to obey His word as Israel did, "in the provocation and the day of temptation in the wilderness," and who entered not into God's rest because of unbelief.¹⁹

(b) A world-wide dispersion, v. 14a.

Why? Because a redeemed people rejected its Redeemer, desiring religion rather than righteousness. Hence, in this dispersion, God will not hear Israel's cries.

(c) A desolate land, v. 14b.

The "delightful" land became a wilderness, because of Israel's sin. And God can and will do it again, is the warning as Israel rebuilds. But cf. Amos 9:1-15, for ultimately "they will not again be rooted out from their land," v. 15.

3. Fasting and the future of Israel, 8:1-23.

a. Introduction. Though the question of fasting remains basic to this chapter as with chapter 7, yet some vital differences are clear.

(1) Chapter 7 is negative re Israel's past and present selfish indulgence, hard heartedness, judgment, vs. 5-7, 11-14.

(2) Whereas in chapter 7, "the Lord of hosts" is used 6 times, in chapter 8 this title, or "Jehovah Sabaoth," is used 16 times, to reassure that what God promises, He has power to fulfill.

b. Israel's salvation will be in truth and righteousness, vs. 1-8.

(1) He will save Jerusalem (Zion) with jealous wrath, vs. 1-2.

(a) This is a different word for "wrath" than in 1:2, 15; 7:12. It means "hot rage" born of fatherly jealousy. God may severely punish, but He does not disinherit.

(b) Hence, God will be hot in His punishment of Israel's enemies, oppressors, cf. 1:14-15; Gen. 12:3; Hab. 3:12-13.

(2) He will reestablish Jerusalem, v. 3.

(a) Jehovah will dwell in Jerusalem, not above the mercy seat between the cherubim, or for a mere four years that comprised the life of Christ.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 223.

- (b) Jerusalem will be called “the City of Truth,” and Mt. Zion “the Holy Mountain,” no doubt because God dwells there.
 - (c) It is difficult, considering the following context, to see this as having been fulfilled. Cf. Calvin.
- (3) He will promote contentment in Jerusalem, vs. 4-6.
- (a) Jerusalem will enjoy rest as opposed to strife. Even the brief respite during the Maccabean reign, hardly satisfies this description, especially in the light of v. 3, cf. Isa. 65:17-22. Shall there be progeny during the millennium? Why not?
 - (b) As if to answer skepticism, v. 6 gives the answer. The same word “difficult” is used in Genesis 18:9-14 (14); Jeremiah 32:1-18 (17). This will be an astonishing work!
- (4) He will regather Jerusalem, vs. 7-8.
- (a) So God will save “My people,” and none other (Matt. 1:21), His elect.
 - (b) Literally, God will save them “from the land of the rising of the sun, and from the land of the going down of the sun,” that is from the east and west.
 - (c) This is a future restoration from the west, not merely the north and east (cf. Isa. 11:1-12; Rom. 11:24).
 - (d) What then shall the new relationship be of God with His people? One based upon “truth and righteousness,” not as Isaiah 48:1. Only the future can witness this.
- c. Israel’s salvation will be in peace and prosperity, vs. 9-13.
- (1) Let there be a confident present hope, vs. 9-11.
- (a) Be strong, and get going with your building, in view of the sure promises of vs. 1-8; v. 9a.
 - (b) Be in remembrance, of the 13 year period of no building due to opposition and selfish interest, which was so unrewarding (Hag. 1:6, 9-11; 2:16-19), vs, 9b-10.
 - (c) Be reassured, about the certainty of present blessing, v. 11.
- (2) Let there be a confident future hope, vs. 12-13.
- (a) The immediate future for the “remnant” of material peace and prosperity, is but a pledge of that greater blessing which is to come, v. 12.

- (b) The ultimate future concerns the “house of Judah and house of Israel” *together*, being saved and exalted (Jer. 31:31-40; Ezek. 34:20-28; 37:15-28), v. 13. Spurgeon preached two sermons on this verse, both of which express his firm conviction in national Israel’s future restoration and conversion. In 1863 he declared:

It is perhaps the greatest of all modern miracles, that there should be one Jew upon earth who is a Christian for the treatment they have received from pretended Christians has been enough to make them hate the name of Jesus; it has been not simply villainous, but diabolical. Devils in hell could not be more cruel to their victims than professed Christians have been to the sons of Abraham. They have been a curse indeed. The whole vocabulary of abuse from “*dog*” down to “*devil*” has been exhausted upon them; among all nations they have been a hissing and a bye-word. But the day is coming, yea it dawns already, when the whole world shall discern the true dignity of the chosen seed, and shall seek their company, because the Lord hath blessed them. In that day when Israel shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for their sins, the Jew shall take his true rank among the nations as an elder brother and a prince. The covenant made with Abraham, to bless all nations by his seed, is not revoked; heaven and earth shall pass away, but the chosen nation shall not be blotted out from the book of remembrance. The Lord hath not cast away his people; he has never given their mother a bill of divorcement; he has never put them away; in a little wrath he hath hidden his face from them, but with great mercies will he gather them. The natural branches shall again be engrafted into the olive together with the wild olive graftings from among the Gentiles. In the Jew, first and chiefly, shall grace triumph through the King of the Jews. O time, fly thou with rapid wing, and bring the auspicious day. . . .

Oh, that the dark night [of national Israel’s unbelief and humiliation] would soon be over! Long has the Christian Church slept in forgetfulness of the Jew; even faithful men have scarce given a thought to Israel, and have left the Jew to perish, as though his heart were too hard to be melted by divine love. I trust that mistake has been discovered, and that there are many now anxiously praying for the restoration of the glory unto Israel, but too many are still indifferent where earnestness is needed. May the Lord in his infinite mercy first put it into his people’s hearts to pray for Israel, and then to work in love, and labor in faith: may he hasten in his own time the fulfillment of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then shall the whole earth be covered with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. We may work and we may toil, but till Israel be gathered God’s glory cannot be universal, nor even widely spread. Until the Jew acknowledges Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the fullness of the times of restitution [Acts 3:20-21] shall not have arrived.²⁰

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, IX, 543; also LIII, 3045. CD, *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software.

- d. Israel's salvation will involve goodness exhibited and expected, vs. 14-17.
 - (1) The goodness of God exhibited, vs. 14-15.
 - (a) God's goodness will contrast with His former unrelenting wrath (cf. Jer. 32:36-42), v. 14.
 - (b) God's goodness will come to Judah as a result of His sovereign purpose, v. 15.
 - (2) The goodness of Judah expected, vs. 16-17.
 - (a) Do truth and justice, v. 16, that is in your courts and places of government.
 - (b) Despise evil and deceit, as God does, v. 17.
- e. Israel's salvation will culminate in supreme blessing, vs. 18-23.
 - (1) Feasting will substitute for fasting, v. 18-19.
 - (a) All four of these fasts celebrated disastrous events just preceding the Babylonian captivity.
 - 1) 4th month = Breach in walls of Jerusalem.
 - 2) 5th month = Destruction of Jerusalem.
 - 3) 7th month = Assassination of Gedaliah, the Governor.
 - 4) 10th month = Chaldean siege of Jerusalem.
 - (b) Note these fasts are still observed today. Also in view of 7:4-7, they were not immediately to cease.
 - (c) But a day of radical change is coming, of feasting, joy, gladness. Hence, prepare with truth and peace.
 - (2) Fellowship will focus on Jerusalem, vs. 20-22.
 - (a) Israel will be a magnet for international blessing rather than international cursing, vs. 20-21.
 - (b) Israel will be an evangelistic nation, drawing other nations to seek God's grace (Ps. 67; Isa. 2:3; 60:3), v. 22.
 - (c) Concerning the allegorical understanding of these verses with regard to the present gospel age, Baron comments:

The allegorizing commentators, according to whom “the literal fulfillment of such passages is a sheer impossibility”²¹—as if it had not been foretold in this very scripture that the fulfillment of the great and glorious things which are here prophesied would appear too “wonderful” as impossible in the eyes of men—would have us believe that what is predicted by Isaiah, and Micah, and Zechariah (indeed, by *all* the prophets) in reference to the universal spread of the knowledge of Jehovah through the instrumentality of Israel, has already been fulfilled or is now exhaustively fulfilling itself in this gospel dispensation.

Thus one of them commenting on these verses writes: “Zechariah describes vividly the eagerness and mutual impulse with which not only many, but mighty nations should throng to the gospel, and every fresh conversion should win others also, till the great tide should sweep through the world.” . . .

That there is a *measure* of truth in all of this no one will gainsay, nor can any one deny the fact of the marvelous, rapid spread of the gospel in the first two or three Christian centuries, through those Jewish apostles and messengers whose hearts were all aflame with love and zeal for their all-glorious Redeemer, and through their first converts from among the Gentiles. But what about the subsequent history of the professing Church? Has it continued in its first love? Has it “gone on and on” in faith and purity, and in zeal for Christ’s cause and the salvation of men? Alas! Instead of converting the world, the Gentile Church became more and more merged *into the world*, and their candlesticks of corporate testimony were one by one removed from the earth. Not as if the Word of God has failed in that whereto it was sent: a people for His Name from among the Gentiles—a multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues—have been and are being, gathered into the fold of the One Great Shepherd. But this dispensation, according to the predictions of Christ and His apostles, instead of ending in the universal knowledge of God, and in peace and righteousness among the nations, is to end in almost universal apostasy and failure, and in the greatest conflict among the nations that the world has yet known.

Beside this, what is here predicted is something which, as we have seen, is to take place subsequent to the restoration and national conversion of Israel. Has that yet taken place? No; as we observed in the notes on chapter ii, it is only ignorance of God’s plan and self-delusion which can boast of the gradual conversion of the world, and speak of “Christian *nations*” in this present dispensation. But when Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel again and set them in their own land—when, after the long centuries of darkness and unbelief the eyes of the blind shall be opened and Israel nationally is converted, and the heart of each of them is fired with that love and zeal which burned in the heart of Paul after the Lord revealed Himself to him, saying: “*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*”—then this prediction of Zechariah shall be fulfilled, and “*many peoples and strong nations shall come and seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the face of Jehovah*”; and the still more ancient promise shall be realized: “*As truly as I live, saith Jehovah, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah,*” “*for the earth shall be*

²¹ C. H. H. Wright, *Zechariah*, p. 194.

full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea" (Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9).²²

- (3) Favor will be the international hallmark of the Jew, v. 23.
- (a) The most despised of all races will become the most admired and sought after, for they shall be the people of Immanuel, the King of the earth (14:9).
 - (b) Indeed, "a Jew" here may in fact refer to "the Jew" of Nazareth.
 - (c) Concerning ancient Jewish Midrash (commentary) concerning this verse, Baron explains:

[I]t is interesting to observe that even the Jews saw a reference in this scripture to the Messiah. Thus in an ancient Midrash we read: "All nations shall come, falling on their faces before the Messiah, and the Israelites saying, Grant that we may be Thy servants, and of Israel. For, as relates to the doctrine and the knowledge of the law, the Gentiles shall be their servants, according as it is written: 'In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"²³

²² Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 250-251, 252-253.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 255. The Midrash is from, *Pesikta Rabbathai*, in *Yalkut Shimoni*.

PART II

ISRAEL'S MESSIANIC PROSPECTS DECLARED AFTER THE BUILDING OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

Zechariah 9:1-14:21

A. The first burden concerning Messiah's first coming, 9:1-11:17.

1. Introduction. There is general agreement that chapters 9-14 are distinct from chapters 1-8, being written some 20 years hence. However, some have suggested two theories concerning alternative authorship.
 - a. Because Matthew 27:9-10 appears to designate Jeremiah as the author of Zechariah 11:12-13, some have suggested Zechariah 9-14 was written by Jeremiah or some pre-exilic author.
 - b. Other more higher critical scholars, in rejecting predictive prophecy and understanding references to Greece, suggest an author of the Maccabean period, C. 150 B.C.
 - c. However refer to eight reasons for the unity of Zechariah, compiled by W. H. Lowe and referenced by Baron.¹
2. The coming of Messiah and his kingdom, 9:1-17.
 - a. The prelude of the Alexandrian kingdom, vs. 1-8.
 - (1) There is considerable agreement that here we have a description of the movement of Alexander the Great upon Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, after defeating the Persian army under Darius at Issus, 333 B.C., cf. v. 13.²
 - (2) The region of Hadrach and Damascus (Syria), will experience the Lord's heavy hand through Alexander, so that Israel will look for the Lord's intervention, v. 1.
 - (3) The region of Tyre and Sidon will also experience the oppression of the Lord through Alexander, vs. 2-4.
 - (a) While Sidon surrendered, proud, isolated, wealthy Tyre, having once held off Nebuchadnezzar for 13 years in a siege, yet opposed Alexander with its 150' walls being surrounded by water.

¹ David Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 281-282.

² Refer to Baron, Feinberg, Hengstenberg, Wright.

- (b) But determined Alexander built a causeway that enabled his army to capture the island fortress city, and massacre 10,000 of its defenders! cf. v. 4.
- (4) The regions of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod (Philistia) will suffer Alexander's fierce judgment, though a godly remnant will remain, perhaps referring to the incorporation of this area into Israel's commonwealth, vs. 5-7.
- (5) The region of Jerusalem, which Alexander visited after his campaigns against Phoenicia and Philistia. Alexander had sought tribute, at the commencement of his Phoenician campaign, from the high priest who refused to pay on account of allegiance to the King of Persia. So Alexander was angry and intended to punish. Yet consider v. 8!
- (a) Refer to *Josephus*:

Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high-priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifices to God, whom he sought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest should appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced; and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king.

And when he understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations. It reached to a place called Sapha; which name, translated into Greek, signifies a *prospect*, for you have thence a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the temple; and when the Phœnicians and the Chaldeans that followed him, thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high-priest to death, which the king's displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high-priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his miter on his head, having the golden plate whereon the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high-priest. The Jews also did all together, with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about; whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, "I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with his high-priesthood; for I saw this very person in

a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind. And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high-priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him; whereupon the high-priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired; and they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired.³

- (b) Refer to Daniel 7:6; 8:3-9, 20-22; 11:2-3, which passages Alexander probably heard by means of the exposition of the Jews.

b. The prelude of the Messianic kingdom, vs. 9-10.

- (1) He shall ride as a just Savior into Jerusalem, v. 9.

- (a) The connection with v. 8 is that God's preservation of Jerusalem, "My house," will be for the purpose of Messiah dwelling there, in contrast with proud Alexander.
- (b) Here is as exact a Messianic prophecy as one could possibly expect, especially because of its detail in the realm of the unexpected and unguessable (Matt. 21:1-11). Baron quotes Edersheim:

Thus much may be said, that if there ever was a true picture of the Messiah-King and His Kingdom, it is this; and that, if ever Israel was a Messiah, or the world a Savior, He must be such as is described in this prophecy—not merely in the letter, but in the spirit of it. And, as so often indicated, it was not the letter but the spirit of prophecy—and of all prophecy—which the ancient synagogue, and that rightly, saw fulfilled in the Messiah and His Kingdom. Accordingly, with singular unanimity, the Talmud and the ancient Rabbinic authorities have applied this prophecy to the Christ.⁴

³ Josephus, *Works*, XI, VIII, 4-5.

⁴ Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 303-304.

- (c) He is to be the cause of rejoicing, not as is common amongst kings bringing terror and fear. Rather he is to cause singing, such as:
 - (2) He shall speak peace to the nations from Jerusalem, v. 10.
- c. The prelude of the Maccabean kingdom, vs. 11-17.
 - (1) Introduction.
 - (2) Release through the blood of the covenant, vs. 11-12.
 - (3) Respite through the Maccabean uprising, vs. 13-17.
- 3. The blessings of Messiah and his kingdom, 10:1-12.
 - a. Blessing that requires the call for repentance, v. 1.
 - b. Blessing that requires repentance from paganism, vs. 2-3.
 - c. Blessing that results in Messiah the cornerstone, vs. 4-5.
 - d. Blessing that results in restoration to the land, vs. 6-12.
- 4. The spurning of Messiah and his kingdom, 11:1-17.
 - a. Introduction.
 - b. The lament of Israel's shepherds, vs. 1-3.
 - c. The rejection of Israel's good shepherd, vs. 4-14.
 - d. The acceptance of Israel's bad shepherd, vs. 15-17.
- B. The second burden concerning Messiah's second coming, 12:1-14:21.
 - 1. He shall pursue to deliver Israel, 12:1-13:1.
 - a. The house of David will be rescued, 12:1-9.
 - (1) By divine omnipotence, v. 1.
 - (2) By an intoxicating cup, v. 2.
 - (3) By a crushing stone, v. 3.
 - (4) By a stupefying plague, v. 4.
 - (5) By a consuming Jewish zeal, vs. 5-6.

- (6) By the promotion of humility, v. 7.
- (7) By the exaltation of the feeble, v. 8.
- (8) By the destruction of the aggressor, v. 9.
- b. The house of David will be redeemed, 12:10-13:1.
- 2. He shall come to cleanse Israel, 13:2-9.
 - a. Cleansing from idolatry, v. 2a.
 - b. Cleansing from false prophets, vs. 2b-6.
 - c. Cleansing by the smitten Shepherd, vs. 7-9.
- 3. He shall descend to save Israel, 14:1-21.
 - a. His descent is to conquer for Israel, vs. 1-8.
 - b. His descent is to be king of the earth, v. 9-11.
 - c. His descent is to plunder the Gentiles, vs. 12-15.
 - d. His descent is to reign over the Gentiles, vs. 16-19.
 - e. His descent is to reign in universal holiness, vs. 20-21.