

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 Berechiaiah 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 Sabbaoth,” 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 the proud tyranny of Alexander the Great.
- (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, Palm Sunday). 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 to have 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:

Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore;
Mortals, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore:
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice; again I say, Rejoice.

- (d) He is to be the center of proclamation, “Behold, your king” (John 1:29; 19:5, 14-15) who is “coming to you,” that is “seeking you”!
- (e) He is a just Savior, that is He saves with holy integrity. Note the priority of justice or righteousness over salvation (cf. Isa. 59:15-17; 61:10-62:1; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 5:17-21).
- (f) He is a humble Savior, coming to “minister” (Mark 10:45), not as He will come a second time to judge (Matt. 24:30). He will contrast, on the foal of an ass, with Alexander who rode the legendary warhorse Bucephalus, all black with a white spot on its forehead.
- (2) He shall speak peace to the nations from Jerusalem, v. 10.
- (a) Suddenly we span the centuries from the first to the second coming of Jesus Christ. What man has been unable to accomplish through disarmament conferences, Messiah brings to pass, first peace to Jerusalem.
- (b) Then follows, “peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea.” To apply this, according to Calvin, to the present gospel dispensation concerning the outpouring of divine protection upon the enemies of the kingdom of Christ, as well as to evangelism reaching the Gentiles, seems forced.
- (c) Rather, as Baron comments:

A pause of nearly two thousand years has already ensued between the 9th and 10th verses of this great prophecy. . . . Indeed, we know by comparing scripture with scripture that before the instruments of war shall finally be “cut off,” and the Messiah is manifested as the Judge and “Reprover” of strong nations, so that they “shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks,” and neither learn nor practise war any more, the greatest war which this afflicted earth has ever seen is to take place, during which time the nations will “beat their ploughshares into swords, and pruning-hooks into spears.”

But this is sure and certain, that however long the pause may last, God never loses the thread of the purpose which He has formed for this earth; and as surely as the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ have been literally fulfilled, so surely will those also be which relate to His glory and reign; and although Israel and the nations have had to wait long for

it, the angels' song at the birth of our Savior, "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men," will yet be realized, and Christ will not only be owned by His own people as "the King of the Jews," but His rule will extend "from sea to sea, and from river even unto the ends of the earth."

Meanwhile, while He is still rejected on earth, He is exalted at the right hand of God in heaven; and to those who already recognize Him as King, and render to Him the glad allegiance of their hearts, He already "speaks peace," yea a peace which passeth all understanding even in the midst of outward strife and travail—such as the world can never give nor take away.⁵

c. The prelude of the Maccabean kingdom, vs. 11-17.

(1) Introduction. Having been encouraged with the promise of Messiah in vs. 9-10, including the promise of blessing even to the Gentiles (nations), now the Word of the Lord again focuses attention upon national Israel, "As for you also," v. 11, and its related covenant blessings.

(2) Release through the blood of the covenant, vs. 11-12.

(a) "The blood of My covenant," probably refers to Exodus 24:1-8, though possibly to Abraham in Genesis 15:9-12, 18. However, both anticipate He, Messiah, who confirms these promises with His own blood (Luke 22:20; Rom. 15:8-9).

(b) Hence, because of God's covenant faithfulness, he has and will deliver Israel from "the waterless pit/cistern," the past exile, alluding to Joseph (Gen. 37:24?), and future oppression from Antiochus Epiphanes (cf. Isa. 42:21-43:7).

(c) Thus David Baron comments:

So it is with Israel. They are likened to one bound and in a "pit," or "dungeon," which, alas! has also been literally the case with multitudes of Israel's sons and daughters during the period of their "captivity"; but God sees to it that there should be no water in the pit, and that His people, which is still bound to Him by covenant blood, should not utterly perish. And eventually, at the Word of God, Israel, like Joseph, shall be freed from the pit and lifted from the position of humiliation and suffering to become a nation of princes on the earth.⁶

(d) Thus Israel is invited to "return to the stronghold" since they have the hope of God's certain faithfulness (Ps. 130:7-8; Jer. 29:11; 31:17).

(e) Thus timid captives are invited to return to Israel, for their return will not be in vain.

⁵ Ibid., p. 317.

⁶ Ibid., p. 320.

(f) “I will restore double to you,” that is a “double portion” of favor since Israel has already received “double for all her sins” (Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18). Here is the explanation of Israel’s woes (Dan. 9:12), and her future exaltation! (Isa. 61:7).

(3) Respite through the Maccabean uprising, vs. 13-17.

(a) Judah will defeat the sons of Greece, v. 13

- 1) Following the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was divided amongst his four generals, one of whom, was Seleucus who received Babylon and Syria, becoming the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. Another general, Ptolemy, gained Egypt, and later Palestine. Thus commenced the Ptolemaic dynasty.
- 2) The Seleucids determined to take Palestine from the Ptolemies, which they eventually did in 198 B.C. through Antiochus the Great (III), whose younger son followed as Antiochus Epiphanes, “god manifest” (IV). His plan was to Hellenize Palestine by force and tyranny (cf. Dan. 8:8-12).
- 3) In I Maccabees 1-4, especially 1:20-25, 44-50, 54-64; 2:15-27, we are told of the successful revolt of Mattathias the Jew and his sons against Syria, leading to the recapture of Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple.
- 4) Thus Judah and Ephraim made war against the “sons of Greece,” v. 13.

(b) Judah will conquer in the Lord’s hand, vs. 14-15.

- 1) The Lord will fight for Israel, especially in the south, akin to notorious storm winds, cf. Isa. 21:1.
- 2) The Lord will fight for Israel, giving a feast in the enemies’ blood, as they trample on machines of warfare, in a feast of slaughter!
- 3) They will drink the blood being so plentiful, like blood collected in bowls at the corners of the altar of burnt offering, metaphorically speaking!
- 4) By way of illustration, refer to I Maccabees 4:1-51 (cf. Ps. 60:12).

(c) Judah will sparkle in the Lord’s land, vs. 16-17.

- 1) Yet while Maccabean times are described, certainly Messianic times of blessing are also envisaged.

- 2) Israel will be saved negatively (from enemies), but also positively (unto righteousness, blessing).
 - 3) Israel will be a secure, tended flock.
 - 4) Israel will be gems in the Lord's crown.
 - 5) Israel will be radiant and sparkling in the land (cf Isa. 62:1-3).
 - 6) Israel will be beautiful (not the Lord, KJV).
 - 7) Israel will be prosperous.
3. The blessings of Messiah and his kingdom, 10:1-12.
 - a. Blessing that requires petitioning for revival, v. 1.
 - (1) The connection with what precedes is that God expects the longing heart to yet pray for what is promised. Consider Ezekiel 36:33-38 (37), where Israel is to pray for what is certainly promised (II Sam. 7:25; Matt. 6:10; Rev. 2:20).
 - (2) The Lord is the source of true spiritual horticulture, that is He alone can turn barrenness and desolation into fruitfulness and productivity.
 - (a) The former rain was for ploughing and sowing, that is spiritual investment; the latter or spring rain was for ripening before harvesting that will yield spiritual produce.
 - (b) The timing of this prayer seems to be when there is a need due to lack. We are to especially pray when there is a famine, when fruit and produce are needed, for revival, the visitation of the awakening life of God.
 - b. Blessing that requires repentance from paganism, vs. 2-3.
 - (1) A repudiation of idolatry and divination, v. 2.
 - (a) "Teraphim," that is idol figurines, claimed to have protective, healing, magical properties. Consider today, crucifixes, relics, crystals, charm bracelets, witchcraft items, etc. But the end result is *false revelation*, "speaking iniquity," cf. Ezek. 21:21.
 - (b) "Diviners," or false prophets, speaking chaff (Jer. 23:25-28). Consider today, horoscopes, professional clairvoyants, necromancers, charismatic visionaries, etc. But vain comfort results in affliction, the traumas of real life.

- (c) “Resultant shepherdlessness,” that is not having true shepherds (cf. 11:4-5; Ezek. 34:1-10; Matt. 9:36). Such hirelings are religious sharks, hucksters, where money is central to their concerns. However, they result in scattering, affliction, impoverishment, fear of tyranny. This is the true Shepherd’s assessment!
- (2) A repudiation of wayward shepherds, v. 3.
- (a) Realize that God is angry with the existing false shepherds, those who give bad food, little food, debilitating food, such as liberals, sectarians, etc.
- (b) Realize that God is angry with the male goats, leaders, those who have bowed to and prospered the bad shepherds, cf. Ezek. 34:17-19.
- (c) Realize that God will rescue His flock, and not discard them in their emaciated condition (Ezek. 34:20-24), scattering the wolves (John 10:12-15).
- (d) Realize that God will elevate His people to a place of majestic dominion, even Judah who led God’s people when marching through the wilderness. The majesty is now described, essentially blessing from Judah!
- c. Blessing that results in Messiah the cornerstone, vs. 4-5.
- (1) “From them,” refers to “His flock, the house of Judah,” in v. 3, (cf. Deut. 18:15-19; Jer. 30:21), where Messiah will come forth from Israel.
- (2) “From them will come *the cornerstone*.” The allusion is to Isaiah 28:16 (cf. Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; I Pet. 2:4-8).
- (a) God’s Messiah is the only firm foundation (I Cor. 3:11).
- (b) Baron comments:
- And the “tried” and “precious” corner-stone which He laid as the basis of this mystical structure is His own Son, who is “perfected for evermore,” against whom even the gates of hell shall not prevail.
- This accounts for the continuance and immovableness of the Church of Christ, in spite of the many storms it has had to brave, and the insidious attacks from enemies and false friends. Let the storm rage; let infidelity assail; let men and devils do their utmost. Has it not been foretold in advance that the same precious foundation stone upon which millions would build unto their eternal safety, would also become a stone of stumbling and rock of offence against which many would stumble, and fall, and be broken to pieces?

But “the foundation of God remains sure,” and those whose feet are firmly planted on it have no occasion to fear.⁷

- (c) However, a cornerstone not only supports but also unites two walls (Eph. 2:14-15, 19-22).
- (3) “From them [will come] *the tent peg*,” or “nail.” The allusion is to Isaiah 22:22-25, which refers primarily to a palace governor, Eliakim, who receives “the key of the house of David on his shoulder,” yet this merges with *the* governor of David’s house (cf. v. 22, Rev. 3:7).
 - (a) Baron maintains that the “nail” or “peg” was not *a* pin or stake outside a tent, but the inside *supportive* stake, a burden bearer, which Isaiah 22:23-25 agrees with. So Messiah is a chief burden bearer.
 - (b) But Christ also supports glory as well as burden. In oriental times, captured wealth could be displayed on stakes inside a tent (cf. Isa. 22:24).
- (4) “From them [will come] *the bow of battle*.” Here Messiah is portrayed as a warrior at his second coming (Isa. 63:1-4; II Thess. 1:5-9; Rev. 19:11-16).
- (5) “From them [will come] *every ruler, all of them together*.” Messiah shall be the absolute ruler, dictator, potentate, in whom is vested all power (Matt. 28:18).
 - (a) Such a prospect will be a terror to the ungodly, but a delight to those who pray, “Thy kingdom come,” that is God’s holy, righteous kingdom.
 - (b) The ultimate form of good government is that of God over man, and not man over man or even man alongside of God, that is theocracy rather than democracy.
- (6) Thus, when Jehovah visits His flock by means of Messiah, v. 3, then His troubled flock will be transformed into His majestic horse, as triumphant mighty men, v. 5.
 - (a) They shall trample down the enemy.
 - (b) They shall fight victoriously for Jehovah.
- d. Blessing that results in restoration to the land, vs. 6-12.
 - (1) Introduction. Note that the following regathering is a result of the work of “the cornerstone,” in the preceding, v. 4.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 348-349.

- (2) The past of Israel will be expunged, v. 6.
- (a) God will “save the house of Joseph,” that is deliver His impoverished people even as He did with Joseph.
 - (b) God will strengthen, save, bring back, on the ground of pure mercy, not merit in Israel (Ezek. 36:22-32).
 - (c) God will blot out Israel’s past, “as though I had not loathed them” (cf. Jer. 31:34), on the ground that, “I am the LORD [Jehovah] their God,” the God of covenant faithfulness.
- (3) The heart of Israel will rejoice, v. 7.
- (a) “Ephraim” is simply the northern kingdom which together with “Judah,” v. 6, in the south makes up one nation in terms of the prospective regathering.
 - (b) There will be an inner renewal of the heart of God’s people producing spiritual strength, gladness, joy.
- (4) The dispersed of Israel will be regathered, vs. 8-12.
- (a) They will be whistled, v. 8.
 - 1) The KJV uses the word “hiss,” but it is the call used to draw an animal (Isa., 5:25-26; 7:18-19).
 - 2) Why this “whistle”? Because God has “redeemed” Israel; He calls His possession which will prosper.
 - (b) They will remember from afar, v. 9a. This seems to be formal recollection, being scattered amongst “far countries,” rather than a regenerate remembrance. Historically, Israel has clung to Jehovah, even if only in a shallow sense. Or does this refer to the time just preceding the return of the Deliverer?
 - (c) They will be regathered, vs. 9b-10. From Egypt and Assyria and the four corners of the earth, they will populate the *full* dimensions of the promised land, many times larger than that to date! Cf. Isa, 11:10-12.
 - (d) They will have a clear, prepared passageway for coming home, with obstacles overcome, just as was the case when Israel passed through the Red Sea, v. 11.
 - (e) They will be strengthened, v. 12. So Israel’s destiny will be fulfilled, as God originally ordained, and the name of the Lord will be glorified (Ezek. 36:22-25).

4. The spurning of Messiah and his kingdom, 11:1-17.
 - a. Introduction. To the Christian, the theme of “the Good Shepherd” has its central focus in John 10:1-18. But consider in the Old Testament:
 - (1) Genesis 48:15-16; 49:22-24, re the blessing of Jacob upon his sons.
 - (2) Numbers 27:12-18, re Moses and Aaron as shepherds of Israel.
 - (3) Isaiah 40:9-11, re Jehovah as a shepherd of Israel.
 - (4) Ezekiel 34:1-24, re the promise of the good shepherd.
 - (a) Condemnation of self-seeking, neglectful shepherds, vs. 1-10.
 - (b) Consolation for God will seek, feed, and restore His flock, vs. 11-16.
 - (c) Condemnation of self-seeking, belligerent sheep, vs. 17-21.
 - (d) Consolation for God will provide a shepherd-prince, vs. 22-24.
 - (5) Zechariah 11:1-17, re the spurning of the good shepherd.
 - b. The lament of Israel’s shepherds, vs. 1-3.

But before a glorious restoration comes about, 10:10, yet Israel’s darkest hour has to overtake the whole land when its authentic Shepherd is rejected for the false shepherd.

- (1) There will be judgment by fire, v. 1.
 - (a) The cedar was regarded as the highest, noblest, and most valued of woods. It was princely, regal.
 - (b) So the rulers and aristocracy of Israel will be consumed by God’s wrath (cf. Jer. 22:6-7).
- (2) There will be judgment by desolation, v. 2.
 - (a) The cypress was the second most esteemed wood, but it has cause to weep since it certainly will be judged, the middle-class, even as the superior.
 - (b) The oak, so common and widespread, will also be devastated by comprehensive judgment.

- (3) There will be judgment by humiliation, v. 3.
 - (a) The proud shepherds will be brought low. Their wealth and esteem and glory will be taken away.
 - (b) The young lions, used to hunting along the Jordan for their prey, being so hungry, are frustrated because their hunting ground is ruined. Perhaps this is a picture of the frustrated, devouring shepherds.
- (4) Thus *all* of Israel will be judged, whether the cedar, cypress, or oak, whether in Lebanon, Bashan (Isa. 2:13; Ezek. 27:6), or Jordan.
- c. The rejection of Israel's good shepherd, vs. 4-14.
 - (1) The shepherd of Israel toils for his flock, vs. 4-8.
 - (a) It is a flock worthy of condemnation, v. 4-6.
 - 1) A flock that is doomed to slaughter, v. 4.
 - a) Zechariah now takes on the role of the Angel of Jehovah, or Messiah, or the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:10-11; Matt. 9:36; 15:24).
 - b) Israel's condition is described as "sheep of slaughter," both present (foreign tyrants), and future (70 A.D., and beyond, cf. 10:9; Ps. 44:9-16, 20-26).
 - 2) A flock that is self-serving, factious, v. 5.
 - a) Here are specifics of Israel's slaughter. The Gentile tyrants cruelly make merchandise of Israel as "buyers."
 - b) The "sellers" of Israel, that is the mercenary shepherds, religiously chant, "Blessed be the Lord, for I have become rich," as hirelings.
 - 3) A flock that is destined to captivity, v. 6.
 - a) In effect, Jesus Christ is to shepherd Israel knowing he will be rejected and Israel judged.
 - b) But when Jesus Christ is withdrawn, when pity ceases, when Israel insultingly cries out, "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15), then terrible judgment will come, as at 70 A.D. and onward.
 - c) "I shall not deliver them," that is till the events of 12:7-13:1; 14:1-11.

(b) It is a flock lavished with grace, vs. 7-8.

1) A flock tended with favor and union, v. 7.

- a) Note that the flock is divided into two segments, “the flock doomed to slaughter” (national Israel), and “the afflicted of the flock” (the elect remnant according to grace, this term usually referring to the godly, pious), cf. Zeph. 3:11-13; Ezek. 34:17-22; Rom. 11:5.
- b) The two staves (cf. Ps. 23:4-5), “favor” grace, beauty, and “union” bands, binders, stress the shepherd’s major roles of saving and keeping, feeding, and protecting (cf. 10:3, 9-11).

2) A flock defended against three enemies, v. 8.

- a) Interpretations of the “three shepherds” are legion; one commentator counted forty! Further, what does the “one month” represent?
- b) Calvin suggests that God was rapidly replacing one useless shepherd after another. But the text does not specify succession.
- c) The three major Gentile powers is suggested, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, variously explaining the month as 30 x 7 prophetic years = 210 years (but it was 215 years), or 10 + 10 + 10 representing succession. But these are fanciful.
- d) Most likely is three classes, but which? Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes? Civil, ecclesiastical, military? Rather priests, scribes, elders (cf. Matt. 26:3, 57).
- e) The “one month” may have been Christ’s three year public ministry before his betrayal.
- f) Note that these shepherds were weary of Christ and stimulated his indignation (Matt. 23:8-14).

(2) The shepherd of Israel rejects his flock, vs. 9-14.

(a) His patience is exhausted, v. 9.

- 1) Here Christ abandons those who abandon him. Israel is left to the inevitable fruitage of its actions.
- 2) Several of Christ’s parables describe this moment of divide (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

(b) His favor is withdrawn, vs. 10-11.

- 1) The staff named “favor” is broken, representing the cessation of God’s covenant with “the nations,” *not* Israel. That is God’s restraint of the Gentile enemies is to be withdrawn (Ps. 44:4-8; 60:11-12). Since Israel’s rejection of Messiah, there has been constant Gentile suppression, till “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,” v. 10.
- 2) But “the afflicted of the flock,” cf. v. 7, that is “the remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5), will understand this word or act of condemnation of the Lord, commencing on “that day” of rejection, v. 11.

(c) His payoff is a pittance, vs. 12-13.

- 1) The Lord invites Israel, without coercion, to estimate his worth for disengagement as a Shepherd. The offered price is “thirty pieces of silver,” the exact paltry value of a slave gored to death by an ox (Exod. 21:32; cf. Matt. 26:14-15), v. 12.
- 2) The Lord is insulted. He commands that the price be flung to a potter as small change for a common, insignificant item. Further, the transaction is to be open before Israel and God in the temple precincts. Cynically, it is a “magnificent price.”
- 3) Matthew 27:3-10 seems to describe this passage, but ascribes it to Jeremiah. Either it is a scribal error, or a primary reference to Jeremiah 18-19, as the major prophet, although including Zechariah. Cf. Jeremiah 18:2-4; 19:1-2).

(d) His union is fractured, v. 14.

- 1) The Shepherd of Israel’s disemployment results in internal strife and division, illustrated by the earlier division between Judah and Israel. Cf. v. 9 where they “eat one another’s flesh.”
- 2) So one broken staff (Favor) represents external strife, v. 10, while the other staff (Union) represents internal strife, v. 14.

d. The acceptance of Israel’s bad shepherd, vs. 15-17.

(1) The bad shepherd’s equipment, v. 15.

- (a) Zechariah now plays an opposite role, that of a “foolish” or utterly incompetent shepherd, the opposition of the “good” or competent shepherd.

(b) David Baron comments here:

And he will indeed be the “foolish” shepherd; for as the Messiah is sometimes spoken of as Wisdom personified, so the Antichrist, in spite of his being wise in all the wisdom which is from beneath, will be the very embodiment of folly; for (to quote from an old writer) “since the extremest folly consists in the extremest wickedness, he will be the most foolish who reacheth the highest impiety, and this he will do by arrogating to himself divinity, and claiming divine honors.”⁸

(c) The “equipment” or tool, implement, cf. “sword, v. 17, is undefined, but will help accomplish that described in v. 16.

(2) The bad shepherd’s ministry, v. 16.

(a) Note *God’s* appointment of this shepherd, even as he sovereignly used Cyrus (Isa. 44:28), Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17).

(b) Negatively, he will not heal, care, seek, sustain.

(c) Positively, he will devour fat sheep, to the point of the last vestige that remains, even their hoofs!

(d) Hence he is careful for himself, careless for others!

(e) But who specifically is he, especially as he follows *after* the ministry of the good shepherd being rejected. Commentator William Plummer refers to sixty-four suggestions!

1) The Jews and others have suggested Herod the Great.

2) The Roman Empire (John 19:15), but the contrast is with two *individual* shepherds (cf. John 5:40-43).

3) The Antichrist, the very opposite and opponent of Christ (Dan. 7:7-8, 11, 19-26; 11:36-39; II Cor. 4:3-4; II Thess. 2:1-12; I John 2:18, 22).

(3) The bad shepherd’s judgment, v. 17.

(a) The Lord prescribes woe to the “worthless” shepherd, or “idol” shepherd, since this word is often a synonym for an idol in the Old Testament, meaning vain, nothingness.

(b) So the emblems of his might and intelligence, his militant arm and eye, will be withered, blinded, and thus defeated (Rev. 19:19-20).

⁸ Ibid., p. 417.

B. The second burden concerning Messiah's second coming, 12:1-14:21.

1. Messiah shall come to deliver Israel, 12:1-13:1.

a. The house of David will be rescued, 12:1-9.

(1) By divine omnipotence, v. 1.

(a) This second major burden of Zechariah 12:1-14:21, cf. 9:1-11:17, especially concerns the consummation of Israel's history, the certainty of it!

(b) God's absolute sovereignty guarantees Israel's future deliverance and glory (cf. Isa. 42:5; Jer. 31:35-37).

1) He only stretches out the heavens.

2) He only lays the foundation of the earth.

3) He only forms man's spirit within him.

(2) By an intoxicating cup, v. 2.

(a) The assailing Gentile nations will be given a goblet to drink from that contains the potion of God's wrath and judgment (Ps. 75:7-8; Isa. 51:17, 21-23; Jer. 25:15-28).

(b) But beyond Jerusalem, Judah and Israel as a nation will be suffering a siege from "all the nations," which God will confound with His potion that causes them to reel!

(3) By a crushing stone, v. 3.

(a) Israel is portrayed as a heavy, troublesome stone that needs to be removed, being surrounded by enemies (Ps. 118:5-14; Joel 3:9-12).

(b) Yet those who attempt to lift this stone are lacerated. Note that "all the nations of the earth" are united in opposing Israel. Surely this is yet future!

(4) By a stupefying plague, v. 4.

(a) Supernatural intervention will bewilder and madden the enemies of Israel, perhaps by way of a plague or rapidly spreading disease! This is part of the laceration described in v. 3.

(b) Will there be cavalry at such an "end-time" battle? Perhaps if certain disarmament steps are taken. Perhaps only certain leaders will still ride a horse! Probably this will be a high-tech cavalry, like an "iron horse."

- (5) By a consuming Jewish zeal, vs. 5-6.
 - (a) While the enemy is incapacitated, Judah will consume the enemy like a torch amongst sheaves.
 - (b) But note that this national victory is accomplished through “the LORD of hosts, their God,” v. 5.
- (6) By the promotion of humility, v. 7.
 - (a) The more defenseless regions will be saved before the more well defended capital. So Jerusalem will not be in a position to boast.
 - (b) The glory of the house of David, the aristocracy of Israel will not be more highly valued than outlying commoners.
- (7) By the exaltation of the feeble, v. 8.
 - (a) The tottering and feeblest inhabitants shall be raised to the rank of a King David!
 - (b) The house of David shall be raised to the rank of deity, the angel of the Lord!
- (8) By the destruction of the aggressor, v. 9.
 - (a) God will do the totally unexpected! How many times have the nations come to devastate Jerusalem and succeeded? It is customary, regular!
 - (b) But this future time, Jerusalem will be saved with God’s unshakeable purpose devouring the nations!
- b. The house of David will be redeemed, 12:10-13:1.
 - (1) By the Spirit of grace and supplication, v. 10a.
 - (a) The Spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon “the house of David and . . . Jerusalem,” not “all flesh” (Acts 2:17). It is the crowning act by which the Lord saves Israel, cf. vs. 1-9.
 - 1) It is *this* Spirit which causes Israel to *look, mourn, and weep*.
 - 2) Cf. Ezekiel 36:26-27; 37:1-4, 9-10, 14; 39:25-29.
 - (b) By way of application, God saves the Jews in the same way as He saves the Gentiles, through Holy Spirit regeneration that gives the needy sinner eyes to see Jesus as Savior.

- (2) By the piercing of the Lord's first-born, vs. 10b-14.
- (a) So, "they will look on Me [the LORD] whom they have pierced," v. 10b.
- 1) It was Roman soldiers who pierced Jesus Christ, yet at the instigation of the Jews (Acts 2:22-23).
 - 2) But what of John 19:36-37? Is this the sole fulfillment? In view of the rest of v. 10, also vs. 11-14, undoubtedly not. Also consider Revelation 1:7. As *all* of Israel paid off its shepherd (11:12), so all of Israel pierced the Lord, and will continue to do so to the end of this age. In effect John refers to a partial fulfillment, that is the specific act of piercing, but certainly not the national mourning yet to come.
- (b) Then, after Israel's regeneration, there will be bitter weeping, v. 10c.
- 1) Surely such comprehensive weeping has never yet been fulfilled, though in recollection of the centuries of rejection, the extensive grief is not unexpected. Imagine, national repentance with tears by the Jews on account of what their forbears did, and they by representation and agreement, to Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Notice how Israel has grief "as one mourns for an only son," even "over a firstborn," and thus the deity of Christ as the only begotten of the Father is suggested.
 - 3) Feinberg adds: "When the one who is greater than Joseph makes himself known to his brethren, they will be heartbroken with grief and contrition"⁹ (Gen. 45:14-15).
- (c) There will also be mourning in Jerusalem, v. 11. Illustrative of this is the mourning of Judah over the slaying of good King Josiah by Pharaoh Necco of Egypt (II Chron. 35:20-27).
- (d) Further, there will be total mourning throughout the land, vs. 12-14. But if Israel should so weep, should any saved Gentile weep the less on account of his guilty participation in the piercing of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- 1) By the king's family, v. 12a.
 - 2) By the prophet's family, v. 12b.
 - 3) By the priest's family, v. 13.
 - 4) By the families of the people, v. 14.

⁹ Charles L. Feinberg, "Zechariah," *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, eds. Pfeiffer and Harrison, p. 909.

(3) By the fountain that cleanses from sin, 13:1.

While the preceding reversal of circumstances for Israel is astonishing, but even more so the national turning of “the house of David” to its previously scorned Messiah (Rom. 11:15), the conclusion of this section describes the root of this spiritual revolution. Here is the ground of Israel’s salvation, as well as that of the Gentiles (Rom. 15:8-12). It is a divine springing up, a gushing forth of a purifying agent that is not explicitly identified. It is likely this fountain is associated with the eruption of “the Spirit of grace and supplication,” 12:10, this being the regenerative dynamic of Israel’s recovery of sight, that is authentic faith perception of its pierced Messiah. However, there is a cleansing emphasis here “for sin and for impurity” which leads us to comprehend the redemptive aspect of Messiah’s saving transaction, a bloody offering, not mere bodily or ceremonial purification. This being the case, Messiah’s bloody offering is in view through His pierced side (John 19:34; cf. Heb. 9:13). The construction here possibly suggests permanence so that the fountain remains open.¹⁰ Thus William Cowper has penned a well-known hymn based upon this verse.

There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
 And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

2. Messiah shall come to reform Israel, 13:2-9.

“In that day” appears to refer not only to Israel’s regeneration and redemption, 12:4, 6, 8-9, 11; 13:1, but also Israel’s reformation with regard to idolatry and false prophets, vs. 2, 4.

a. Cleansing from idolatry, v. 2a.

Idolatry was one of two major pre-exilic, besetting sins for Judah, but not the post-exilic period which Zechariah addresses. In the kingdom of Messiah these former idols, obviously numerous and various, having been utterly banished shall not even be remembered. Such is the cleansing power of Messiah’s atoning fountain in eliminating all man-made contestants (10:2).

b. Cleansing from false prophets, vs. 2b-6.

In necessary conjunction with idolatry is prophecy engineered by false prophets. After all, how can a dumb idol speak unless contrived speech is attributed to it? It should be noted that as the idolatry will “no longer be remembered,” v. 2a, so the false prophets will similarly be forgotten.

(1) The example of the unclean prophet, v. 2b.

¹⁰ Feinberg, *Zechariah*, p. 236.

Back of all of this religious falsity is “the unclean spirit” that has defiled the promised inheritance by means of inhabitation of false prophets; they are possessed. The present and future of this present age, with all of its religious deception, is portrayed to mirror the holiness of the future kingdom of Messiah. Then the ministers of Christ will be truthful and holy.

- (2) The example of the false prophet, v. 3.

Presently, often godly parents give birth to ungodly children, a godly Eli has ungodly sons in the ministry (I Sam. 2:12-17). But in Messiah’s future kingdom this will not be perpetuated.

- (3) The example of the shameful prophet, v. 4.

Whereas false prophets have been bold in asserting themselves, in Messiah’s future kingdom there will be no such ambition to put on the accepted insignia of a true prophet of God, that is a “hairy robe.”

- (4) The example of the deceitful prophet, vs. 5-6.

It has been customary for Israel to be easily deceived by false prophets, and so, as is not normally the case, a charlatan is challenged by a discerning child of God. The response is totally denied; he is merely “a tiller of the ground, . . . a slave.” But the zealous questioner won’t be put off. He notices “wounds between the hands/arms,” that is “self-inflicted wounds on his person in order to arouse his prophetic frenzy.”¹¹ However the false prophet responds that his scars were inflicted “in the house of my friends.” This is not a messianic prophetic reference. Rather we have an indication of not only how exceedingly devious the false prophet is, but also during the reign of Messiah just how difficult it will be for him to operate. Then the children of God will be intensely discerning and incapable of being seduced. How different that is from today!

- c. Cleansing by the smitten Shepherd, vs. 7-9.

From focus on the intense deceitfulness of false prophets, by way of contrast we turn to the suffering of the Good Shepherd. Yes He too “was wounded in the house of his friends,” yet by way of stark contrast with v. 6. Here is the righteous, judicial means by which Israel’s redemption and restoration will be accomplished. It also establishes the ground upon which the future kingdom of Messiah will be brought to pass, which chapter 14 describes in great detail.

- (1) The affliction of the Shepherd of the LORD, v. 7.

It is “the LORD of hosts” who commands the smiting of “My Shepherd, . . . My Associate” (Isa. 53:4, 6, 10). Astonishingly, the immediate result is that “the sheep are scattered,” and that the Lord “turns His hand against the

¹¹ Baron, *Zechariah*, p. 468.

little ones” (Matt. 26:30-31). In natural terms, when a shepherd is smitten, the sheep will flee in all directions and thus be subject to abuse at every hand. So here is the clearest indication that we are dealing with Israel as a nation and not the Gentiles (Matt. 15:24). At the violent smiting of its Messiah, the Jews become prey for every religious predator, and such is the history of Israel over the centuries.

(2) The judgment of the two parts, v. 8.

A large proportion of scattered Israel will be slaughtered after the smiting of the Shepherd, though not exactly two thirds. This is the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer. 30:7). What then are the most notorious instances of such encompassing racial devastation?

- (a) In 70 A.D., having been aroused by Zealot opposition since 66 A.D., the iron fist of Rome brought about a great slaughter resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem by Emperor Titus. According to Josephus, this city of 2,700,000 million was decimated by 50,000 Roman soldiers; 1,100,000 perished including the crucifixion of 500 leaders; 100,000 were sent captive to Egypt; the conclusion was the suicide of 960 at the high fortress of Masada near the Dead Sea.
- (b) In 132-135 A.D., the slaughter of 580,000 Jews and destruction of 985 towns by the Emperor Hadrian resulted from the messianic uprising of a Jewish zealot named Bar Cochba, and a consequent Jewish following. Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city and renamed Aelia Capitolina. On the Temple mound a column was erected honoring Hadrian along with a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus. Circumcision, Sabbath worship, and all Judaic worship was prohibited.
- (c) In 1096-1291 A.D., a great slaughter resulted from the Crusades, nine in all. Although the original plan was the liberation of Palestine from infidel Moslem desecration and occupation, en route from Europe the crusaders were incited to slay infidels of whatever sort, especially the Jews when they came upon them.
- (d) In 1366-1500 A.D., a great slaughter resulted from the Inquisition. Following the 14th century reconquest of Spain from Islamic domination and the consolidation of power under the Catholic tyranny of Ferdinand and Isabella there resulted a severe repression of the Jewish community that spread throughout Europe, with Poland becoming a place of refuge, then a place of slaughter as well. Synagogues were converted to churches. Even those Jews who converted to Christianity under threat of persecution were mistreated and called “Maranos” in Spain, that is “Pigs.” In 1492 A.D. Ferdinand and Isabella signed an edict expelling Jews from all the regions of Castile and Aragon resulting in over 150,000 refugees.

- (e) In 1900-1954 A.D., increasing anti-Semitism in Europe resulted in the greatest slaughter of at least 6,000,000 Jews, the culmination being the Holocaust, that is planned genocide to a degree never before known in human history. In Germany alone, the Jewish population in 1933 was 503,000; in 1945 it was reduced to 23,000. By a strange turn of providence, it was this Shoah that led to excitement in Europe under Theodor Herzl that resulted in the secular state of Israel.

However a small proportion, a remnant, will survive, indicating that God has not utterly forsaken Israel after the flesh (Hos. 3:4-5; Rom. 11:5). There has always been a remnant of Jews in Palestine. Even “a tenth portion will” remain, that is a “stump” or “holy seed” (Isa. 6:11-13). Thus, “I will make a full end of all the nations where I have driven you, yet I will not make a full end of you” (Jer. 46:28).

- (3) The refinement of the third part, v. 9.

Concerning the remnant, though they pass through a furnace of tribulation, yet this will nevertheless purify and stimulate faith. As Baron comments: “Blessed and most glorious consummation! The covenant relationship between God and His people, so long interrupted though never broken, is restored again.”¹² When in the highest agony, without any nation to turn to, then Israel will call out to God, and “I will answer them.” According to the revelation earlier given to Hosea, “I will say to those who are not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God’” (Hos. 2:23; cf. 1:10-11). So here, “I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’” As Isaiah declares, “Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people and will have compassion on His afflicted” (Isa. 49:13). Hence in Zechariah 14, the glorious future of God’s restored people, their elevation from humiliation, is played out in astonishing and earth-shaking detail.

3. Messiah shall descend to save Israel, 14:1-21.

Here is a more comprehensive explanation of the consequences of the preceding three verses. Whereas there is the prospect of terrible slaughter of God’s sheep as a consequence of the Shepherd being smitten, yet a remnant shall persevere “through the fire” that will declare, “The LORD is my God.” Then this experience of degradation and humiliation will be followed by a reversal of circumstances and consequent exaltation, even as previously indicated (8:13-23). Feinberg rightly comments:

Few chapters, if any, in the Scriptures are of greater eschatological significance than the chapter before us, and few passages reveal more clearly the vast difference between the literal interpretation of prophecy and the figurative or spiritualizing interpretation of prophecy.”¹³

¹² Ibid., p. 486.

¹³ Feinberg, *Zechariah*, p. 248. Baron is of the same opinion, *Zechariah*, pp. 489-491. Amillennialist Vern S. Poythress made a significant comment when, in having dialogue with premillennial dispensationalists under

Concerning the interpretation of this passage, while Calvin sees fulfillment here with regard to the Maccabean revival of Israel, we much prefer the understanding of C. H. Spurgeon who, in a sermon on Zechariah 14:20, declares that,

there are days *yet to come* for whose advent we may well be eager. There is the day when Ephraim shall not envy Judah nor Judah vex Ephraim, for all the Church of Christ shall be one in spirit. There is the day when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. There is the day, too, when Israel shall be restored to its own land, when its country shall be called no more desolate, but Beulah, and no more forsaken, but Hezibah shall its name be, for the Lord delighteth in it. There is specially the day of the Second Advent, that day of days for which methinks all other days that went before were made, that day which shall be the summing up, the total of all ages, for the fullness of time shall come, and Christ in the fullness of his glory shall reign among the sons of men.¹⁴

- a. His descent is to conquer for Israel, vs. 1-8.

What is the purpose of the second coming of Jesus Christ? Certainly “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him” (Rom. 10:12; cf. Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21), that is “His people” (Matt. 1:21). Yet consider Romans 11:26-27, and here where the Lord will come with a special interest in “Jerusalem,” “the Mount of Olives,” “the land,” “Judah” (Ezek. 34:11-14; cf. Zech. 1:16; 2:10-13; 8:3, 13).

- (1) The final humiliation of Israel, vs. 1-2.

Here is described the last savage triumph of the Gentiles.¹⁵ It will involve a confederation of nations that makes an assault on Jerusalem. This attack has already been mentioned in 12:1-9, along with the assurance of deliverance by means of God’s sovereign, crushing intervention.

- (a) Jerusalem will not be despoiled forever, v. 1.

How commonplace it has been over the centuries for the Jews to be assailed by every variety of Gentile oppressor. Nevertheless this vagabond existence shall come to an end, 9:13-15, and implicit is the judgment that will befall the Gentiles, especially the Arab nations, identified as “Mount Seir” or Edom (Ezek. 35:1-15, viz. v. 10; Ps. 83:2-8, 12), being the home of the children of Esau (Gen. 25:23-26; 36:8).

- (b) Jerusalem will endure a climactic assault, v. 2.

Overarching the raging of the nations against Jerusalem is the sovereignty of God; hence out of ruin will come redemption. There is

the auspices of *The Evangelical Theological Society*, he commented: “Zechariah 14, if read in a straightforward manner, is particularly difficult for an amillennialist. In fact, if I were to defend premillennialism in a debate, I would probably choose Zechariah 14 as a main text.” *Grace Theological Journal*, V. 10 #2, Fall 1989, p. 159.

¹⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 7:399, Ages Software.

¹⁵ Feinberg, *Zechariah*, p. 253, referencing B. W. Newton.

reason to believe that this temporary tragedy will result from Israel being deceived by a false Messiah (11:15-17; Dan. 9:26-27; 11:21-24; John 5:43). As a result there is seeming conquest; Jerusalem is ravaged; at least half the population is led away captive while the remnant remains humiliated. Here this supreme distress for God's people is as Jeremiah describes it: "Alas! For that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress" (Jer. 30:7).

(2) The final deliverance of the Lord, vs. 3-5.

The supreme tragedy for Israel is only eclipsed by the deliverance of the Lord according to His covenant faithfulness (Hab. 3:12-13). There seems to be a parallel here with Israel's deliverance under Moses in flight from the pursuing Egyptians by means of the rending of the Red Sea. However a far greater onslaught upon God's people demands One who is much greater than Moses (Matt. 17:1-5; Heb. 3:1-6). And we now consider *how* He will accomplish this apocalyptic salvation.

(a) The Lord will defend Jerusalem against the Gentiles, v. 3.

The language plainly teaches that the Lord Jesus will leave His heavenly throne and come to earth fully prepared to do battle for the cause of His beleaguered saints. Whereas the Gentiles have had their day, that is during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), or "the fullness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25), there is to be a turning of the tide which is bound to cause surprise, even jealous dismay, in view of centuries of supremacy over the Jew. The militant language here reminds us of Moses' declaration following safe passage through the Red Sea, "The LORD is a warrior, the LORD is His name" (Exod. 15:3), which was followed by supportive divine militancy in the conquest of the Promised Land (Josh. 10:14, 42; 23:3; Judg. 4:15; I Sam. 7:10; II Chron. 20:15). But all of this pales before the final dramatic rescue of God's people when they were never more in such a seemingly hopeless, satanic snare.

(b) The Lord will stand again on the Mount of Olives, vs. 4-5.

Contrary to the interpretation of Calvin,¹⁶ we believe that a unique historic, earthly event is here described. Our finite comprehension should not limit the reality of a revealed stupendous happening, without precedent, any more than was the case with Noah (Heb. 11:7). Thus the glorified Christ will descend to literally stand upon the Mount of Olives, 2,950', though not necessarily the highest point, His last stance

¹⁶ "Stand, he says, *shall his feet on the mount of Olives*. He does not here promise a miracle, such as even the ignorant might conceive to be literal; nor does he do this in what follows, when he says, *The mount shall be rent, and half of it shall thorn to the east and half to the west*. This has never happened, that mount has never been rent: but as the Prophet could not, under those grievous trials, which might have overwhelmed the minds of the godly a hundred times, have extolled the power of God as much as the exigency of the case required without employing a highly figurative language, he therefore accommodates himself, as I have said, to the capacity of our flesh." Calvin, *Zechariah*, pp. 411-412.

in this location being prior to His ascension (Acts 1:9-12). Hence the Son of God will personally oversee the deliverance of His people, again in a manner reminiscent of the Exodus (Exod. 13:17-22; 14:10-14, 19-20, 30-31), yet more final and glorious.

1) The Mount will be rent producing a valley, v. 4.

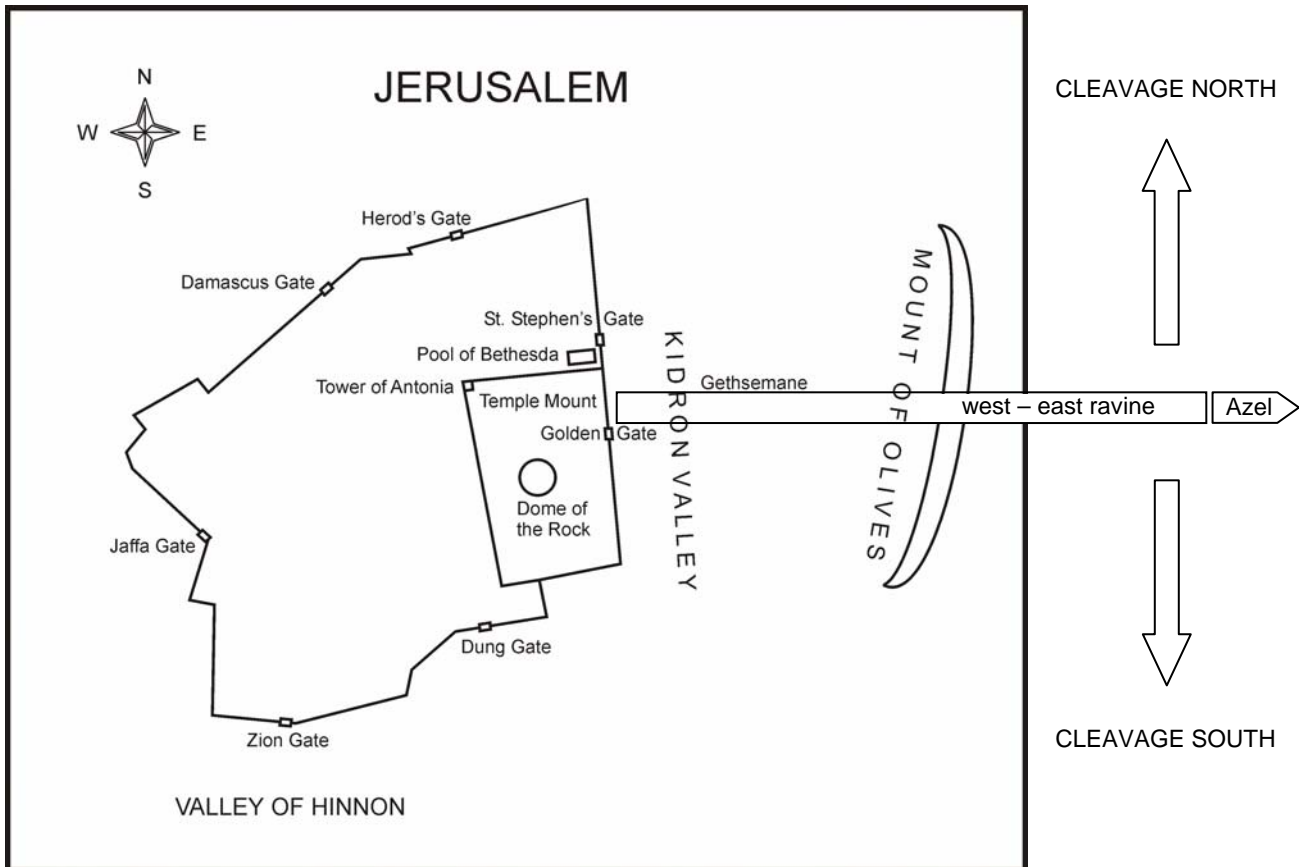
David, in fleeing from Absalom, had wept on the Mount of Olives (II Sam. 15:30). Ezekiel, in a vision, saw the glory of God ascend from here. Here, on the day of His triumphal entry, Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44). Here, every evening during passion week, Jesus lodged on the slopes of Olivet. Here Jesus delivered His memorable discourse in which he prophesied not only of the destruction of Jerusalem, but also the final day of tribulation which Zechariah here describes (Matt. 24:3, 29-31). And on the lower slopes in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus endured His agony, betrayal, and arrest. Thus a movement of earthquake proportions will divide the Mount of Olives from north to south, with a great ravine resulting from east to west.

Here the glorified, descended Christ will stand again where He stood many times before, and as usual, facing the beloved Jerusalem. There He will exercise the faith of which He spake on the day following His triumphal entry concerning the withered fig tree: “Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain [the Mount of Olives], ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in His heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him” (Mark. 11:23). A great topographical convulsion will form an east/west valley, like the divided Red Sea (Exod. 14:22), with Jesus as the great overseer.

2) The valley will be a refuge for fleeing Israel, v. 5.

The rent Mount of Olives in effect becomes “the valley of My mountains,” which extends to “Azal,” a small place eastward of Jerusalem. Into this valley half of Jerusalem will find refuge while the Lord Jesus, hovering above, instigates terrible retribution against Israel’s pursuing and persecuting enemies (12:4-13:2). This will be in conjunction with “all the holy ones,” inclusive of both angels and probably saints from heaven (Matt. 25:31; II Thess. 1:10). At this juncture will probably come about the turning of Israel to its delivering Messiah, then repentant mourning (12:10) that will eventually turn to praise (Isa. 62:10-11; Jer. 33:7-11). Truly this will be a spiritually auspicious day such as the world has never seen before, for the fleeing ungodly, the “wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:12-17), but especially for Israel, consummate “salvation” (Isa. 45:17; 46:13; 49:8; 62:1; Hab. 3:13; Zech. 9:9).

The following basic map, of what is known today as Old Jerusalem, indicates that the divinely imposed ravine, passing near Gethsemane and across the Kidron Valley in its westward direction, would abut the eastern wall behind which is the Temple Mount. Also near this juncture is the Golden Gate, or according to the Jews, the Gate of Mercy, blocked for centuries, having possibly existed since Herodian times. It is traditionally the place where Messiah will enter at His second coming. The ravine's position would also assist in the flight of the remnant from the city, vs. 2, 5.



Thus Charles Wesley has wonderfully portrayed this climax of history, according to Isaiah 60:13-14).

That place where once I walked below,
 On Olivet I will appear:
 My bleeding feet to Israel show,
 While those who pierced, behold me near.
 Again I will forsake my throne,
 And to my footstool earth descend;
 And fill the earth with peace unknown,
 With glorious joy that ne'er shall end.¹⁷

¹⁷ Horatius Bonar, "Charles Wesley's Millenarianism," *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, V. I, 1849, p. 97.

(3) The darkness yields to the light, vs. 6-7.

The Bible provides a chorus of references that all point to an apocalyptic time or “day” of darkness in terms of judgment that overtakes a world that is saturated with moral darkness (Isa. 13:10; Joel 3:1-3, 14-16; Amos 5:18-20; Matt. 24:29). “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:24-25). This devolutionary climax will utterly frustrate those with evolutionary hopes, especially since man’s aspirations for the establishment of a new world order, by means of his vaunted independence, not only end in total failure but also divine judgment!

(a) The day of the Lord’s darkness, v. 6.

Here Zechariah’s description of this coming day of darkness is distinctive in that it graphically portrays this apocalyptic night as a time when “the glorious/splendid ones will congeal/implode into extinction.” Thus the illuminating heavenly bodies will lose that familiar radiance by which man was enabled to contrive his evil ways. That is, by way of parallelism, we are told how God will “turn out the lights,” so to speak, or ring down the curtain on this world’s sordid, thoroughly depraved stage. Perhaps this darkness will allow the remnant of Israel to escape by means of God’s valley of deliverance while their enemies are enveloped in confusion, vs. 2-3, 5.

(b) The day of the Lord’s light, v. 7.

Not only is this day one of final closure on the age of man’s rebellion that has been perpetuated since Adam, but also the dawning of a new age according to radically contrasting terms.

1) It will be unique.

This will be “one day” that is like no other, whether past or future, that is an unparalleled event with which Noah’s flood certainly does not compare.

2) It will be a mystery.

This will be an unpredictable, very different day that man has not previously encountered or can envisage. The time is not known, though the place is. Here is no regular darkness or light.

3) It will be resplendent.

This will be the dawning of a triumphant evening of light that will utterly vanquish the darkness (John 1:5). Surely the coming of

Christ in his radiant, unclouded glory is envisaged. “Fire goes before Him and burns up His adversaries round about. His lightnings lit up the world; the earth saw and trembled. The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen his glory” (Ps. 907:3-6). Thus, “[i]n the hour of deepest gloom and blackness God causes the bright light of His deliverance to shine forth for the distressed ones.”¹⁸

(4) The spiritual irrigation of Israel, v. 8.

It is necessary to be reminded that v. 4 has already introduced tremendous topographical convulsions that will usher in the return of Jesus Christ (cf. Gen. 7:11; 19:24-28; Rev. 6:12-17), even as v. 10 describes similar earthquake-like movements. So here there is a similar representation of earthly renovation that yet has profound spiritual consequences, cf. v. 9. The physical change here is described by Feinberg.

Living waters are those which spring from the ground and last; rain water finds its way to the sea. . . . The water will flow through all the promised land bound on the east by the Dead Sea and on the west by the Mediterranean. These streams will be full not only in winter, when bodies of water are full everywhere in Palestine, but in summer also, when natural streams are dry in the holy land. The refreshing, abundant waters that God will give will flow perpetually.¹⁹

However a qualification is necessary with regard to a literal understanding here, even as Baron quotes the insightful explanation of B. W. Newton.

We read in many parts of the Scripture that the land of Israel will in that day teem with evidences of the miraculous power of God in dispensing blessings. On the sides of Zion, for example, the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, shall be seen together, and a little child shall lead them. Nothing shall hurt or destroy throughout God’s holy mountain. These will be sights which no one will deny to be in themselves blessed. But they are symbols also, living symbols, speaking of higher blessings; for they indicate the peace and harmony and love that will pervade all hearts and all peoples whom the power of Zion shall effectually reach. And if God has appointed that the spiritual influence of which I have spoken above should go forth from His forgiven and privileged nation in Jerusalem, we might expect to find some outward symbol of this, its relation. And, accordingly, a symbol is given in the perennial flow of those streams which, going forth from the sanctuary in Jerusalem, shall heal waters, which like the Dead Sea, have been accursed, and spread life and refreshment in the midst of desolation.²⁰

So Joel 3:18, in parallel with Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, graphically describes a similar future millennial scenario over which spiritual/substantial kingdom Jesus Christ shall reign in righteousness with unqualified blessing. Such a

¹⁸ Feinberg, *Zechariah*, pp. 255-256.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

²⁰ Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 504.505.

divine economy will include a river originating from Jerusalem, “a spring [that] will go out from the house of the LORD to water the valley of Shittim [the barren valley of the Jordan, above the Dead Sea].”

- b. His descent is to be king of the earth, v. 9-11.

Was Satan, through the agency of sin, the ultimate conqueror of the world as a result of the Fall? Certainly not, the Christian quickly replies, since Jesus Christ has vanquished Satan and sin and death so that He has become the final Conqueror. Thus we sing:

O loving wisdom of our God;
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

But what of the world, the original sphere of man’s domain, and especially the Garden of Eden in which our innocent first parents dwelt? Was the glory and perfection of that creation lost forever? Romans 8:20-23 would suggest that it, the material universe, along with those He came to save, will also be subject to redemption. Zechariah 14:9 would also indicate this to be true.

- (1) The universal dominion of the Lord, v. 9.

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.” Here is a most fundamental eschatological declaration concerning the consummate kingdom of Jesus Christ. It clearly follows the final trial and deliverance of Israel, vs. 4-5, the darkness of v. 7a that is eclipsed by the light, v. 7b, and the spiritual irrigation of Israel, v. 8.

- (a) *Jehovah* dominion. “And the LORD will be king.” This “Lord” is specifically He who has been variously identified up to this point.

- 1) This is “the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees,” is “angry with the nations” for their extreme savagery against Israel, and therefore “will return to Jerusalem with compassion,” 1:11, 15-16.
- 2) This is “the LORD [who] will be a wall of fire around her [Jerusalem], and . . . will be the glory in her midst,” 2:5.
- 3) This is the LORD who “will dwell in your [Jerusalem’s] midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. . . . [He] will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem,” 2:11-12.
- 4) This is “My servant the Branch,” 3:8, for “He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD, . . .

and He will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne,” 6:12-13.

- 5) This is the LORD who “will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain,” 8:3.
 - 6) This is the LORD who will “save My people from the land of the east and from the west; and . . . [He] will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness,” 8:7-8.
 - 7) This is the LORD who will cause “men from all the nations . . . [to] grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you,’” 8:23.
 - 8) This is the LORD, “coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey. . . . And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth,” 9:9-10.
 - 9) This is “the Lord their God [who] will save them [Israel] in that day as the flock of His people; . . . as the stones of a crown, sparkling in His hand,” 9:16.
 - 10) This is the LORD “who will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the Lord their God and I will answer them. . . . I will whistle for them to gather them together, for I have redeemed them. And they will be as numerous as they were before,” 10:6, 8.
 - 11) This is the LORD who pours out “the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on [Him] . . . whom they have pierced; and they will mourn,” 12:10.
 - 12) This is the LORD who is a warrior for His people, bringing confusion to their enemies, and the spoils of “the wealth of the surrounding nations,” 14:3, 12-14.
- (b) *Territorial* dominion. “Over all the earth [land].” While the consummate reign of Christ will be over all of this world, v. 16, yet the context of v. 10 suggests that here the dominion of Messiah is over “all of the [promised] land [*ha aretz*].” Baron well comments:

It is on earth, where God has been denied and forgotten; where His honor has been disregarded and His commandments have been transgressed; where nations and kingdoms, instead of seeking His glory and showing forth His praise—have not bowed to His authority and revered His law; it is on earth that the Lord shall reign; injustice, cruelty and war shall be banished; and instead of idolatry, selfishness and

sin, the fear and love and beauty of God will be manifest. Christ and the glorified saints shall reign over Israel and the nations.²¹

- (c) *Sole dominion.* “In that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

The essential distinguishing characteristic of God, when compared with paganism, is that of holy, personal, living monotheism, it being at the heart of the First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exod. 20:2-3; cf. I Cor. 8:4-6). Whereas at the dawning of humankind there was, in reality, only one God, and man worshipped Him alone, the subsequent Fall resulted in idolatry which was in fact man, in his rebellious autonomy, creating his own god(s) (Rom. 1:21-23, 25). Thus Israel’s cardinal sin was idolatry, the golden calf as a substitute for God mediated through Moses. However King Hezekiah, as a faithful child of God, opposed polytheism when he prayed to God seeking deliverance from Senacherib, the Assyrian: “O Lord, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.” Then he declared his supreme hope: “Now, O Lord our God, I pray, deliver us from his [Senacherib’s] hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O Lord, are God” (II Kings 19:15, 19). So this hope will be fulfilled when the consummated kingdom of Christ will bring about a total vindication of God as being utterly, exclusively unique. Then will true ecumenism be brought to pass.

- (2) The universal capital of the earth, vs. 10-11.

“Jerusalem,” meaning “city/foundation of peace,” variously called, “the holy city” (Isa. 52:1), “the city of God” (Ps. 87:2-3), “the city of the LORD” (Isa. 60:14), “the city of David” (Luke 2:11), “the beloved city” (Rev. 20:9), has great and sacred prominence in Scripture, but especially because it is “the city of the great King” (Ps. 48:2; Matt. 5:35). Whereas “the Lord will be king over all the land,” v. 9, the nucleus of His reign is to be a glorified Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 21:2).

- (a) The new prominence of Jerusalem, v. 10.

As with vs. 4, 8, the topographical convulsion of the land of Israel continues, though with effects that are even more far-reaching. The present Jerusalem, 2300', often identified with the south-west spur, Mt. Zion, 2500', higher than Mt. Moriah (the temple mount), 2400', yet less than that of the Mount of Olives, 2700', was visible only for several miles in certain directions. But now an elevated Jerusalem will have far greater singular visibility and prominence. As a result, God makes “Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62:7; cf. 60:18); He will “create

²¹ Ibid., p. 509.

Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness” (Isa. 65:18); it will be “the City of Truth” (Zech. 8:3),

1) The leveling of the region surrounding Jerusalem.

From Geba to Rimmon probably describes the northern and southern extremities of Judah. It will be “changed into a plain,” concerning which Baron comments:

This word, translated “plain” in the KJV is the proper name of the Jordan valley—“that remarkable depression which runs from the slopes of Hermon [in the north] to the Red Sea, known as the deepest depression in the surface of the globe”; the Sea of Galilee situated within it being 653 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, while the Dead Sea, which is also included in its course, is 1316 feet below that level, or the level of the Red Sea. Parts of this valley were distinguished for their luxurious vegetation, but the reference here is not its fertility nor to its deep depression, which probably will itself undergo modification in that day of great physical as well as moral upheavals, but to the fact of its being a plain.²²

In other words, the major effect will be the elevation of Jerusalem to visible dominance in contrast with the surrounding level topography.

2) The raising of Jerusalem to visible prominence.

The reference points here relate to the time of Zechariah, namely, “Benjamin’s Gate” to “the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate,” that is from the east to the west, and the “tower of Hananel” to “the king’s wine presses,” that is from north to south.²³ The Christ who has returned and stood upon the mount of Olives is a triumphant, victorious, glorified Christ whose dwelling place on earth must be suitable. “Thus says the Lord, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain’ (Zech. 8:3). “Behold, a king will reign righteously and princes will rule justly. . . . Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places” (Isa. 32:1, 18). Further, “in that day the nations [Gentiles] will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious” (Isa. 11:12).

Behold, the mountain of the Lord
 In latter days shall rise
 On mountain tops above the hills,
 And draw the wondering eyes.

²² Ibid., p. 511.

²³ Keil, *Zechariah*, p. 409.

To this the joyful nations round,
 All tribes and tongues, shall flow;
 Up to the hill of God, they'll say,
 And to His house we'll go.
 The beam that shines from Zion's hill
 Shall lighten every land;
 The King who reigns in Salem's towers
 Shall all the world command.
 No strife shall rage, nor hostile feuds
 Disturb those peaceful years;
 To ploughshares men shall beat their swords,
 To pruning-hooks their spears.

(b) The new peace of Jerusalem, v. 11.

This will be a spiritually substantial peace and not merely a secular Shangri-La since the dominion of Jesus Christ will be over every personal, domestic, and economic aspect of life. Life itself will be transcendently superior since it will be holy, eternal life from God and not the polluted, temporal life of a previous age. This will be the peace that has been prayed for over the ages (Ps. 122:6-9).

- 1) Jerusalem will be a *permanent habitation* for Israel. There will no longer be the prospect of exile and a scattered existence. Instead Israel will be a gathered people (Isa. 56:7-8; Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 37:21-23; 39:27-29; Zech. 10:8).
- 2) Jerusalem will be a *blessed habitation* for Israel. No longer will the city of David be under a divinely imposed ban and desolation due to continuous rebellion and ungodliness (Isa. 43:28; 60:10-14; Zech. 8:13).
- 3) Jerusalem will be a *secure habitation* for Israel. The reason for this safe-keeping will be that from David will come forth “a righteous Branch; . . . in His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely” (Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:25-29; 39:25-26).

c. His descent is to plunder the Gentiles, vs. 12-15.

We return to the final assault of the Gentiles upon Jerusalem, vs. 1-3, except that features of the divine vengeance upon the enemies of God's people are now made more horrifyingly explicit. Here is a further graphic description of “the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16). This is the just response of Jesus Christ upon His return to the Mount of Olives.

(1) He will afflict the enemies of Jerusalem, v. 12, 15.

The “plague,” מַגֵּפָה, maggephah, has as its root, “to beat, to strike down,” and in Scripture is always that which God directly inflicts, as with the

plagues of Egypt, and those whereby He judged Israel (Num. 16:41-50; 25:1-9). Calvin comments that:

He [Zechariah] means that it would be nothing to God, when resolved to punish the adversaries of his Church, whether they were many or few; for he can easily destroy them all, as though he had to do only with one man. . . . The meaning then is, that God has various means by which he can reduce to nothing our enemies, though they may seek aid on every side. We are therefore taught by these words to cast all our cares on God; for when our enemies seem to be placed beyond the chance of danger, and confidently boast that nothing adverse can happen to them, yet in God's hand is their death and life, so that they can be consumed by his breath only.²⁴

As true as such principles are, they utterly fail to deal with the specifics of the text and its context with regard to Israel. This is apocalyptic, not simply the tension of centuries between the believer and unbeliever. And this being the case, the horrors of modern warfare make such a scenario most believable.

- (a) There will be a plague upon all the enemies of Jerusalem. Their flesh, eyes, and tongue will rot, before expiration. The bodies that paraded before Jerusalem, the eyes that lusted after the treasures of Jerusalem, and the tongues that boasted and blasphemed against the LORD of Jerusalem, are permanently humiliated v. 12.
 - (b) There will be a plague upon all the instruments of oppression threatening Jerusalem, the horse, mule, camel, donkey, and cattle. Their numerical superiority will become piles of rotting corpses, animal as well as human. This will restrict even any attempted retreat. Instead of bragging, there will only be groaning, v. 15.
- (2) He will confuse the enemies of Jerusalem, v. 13.

When King Jehosaphat of Judah prayed to the Lord for deliverance from a host of Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, the prophet Jahaziel declared that God would deliver without the necessity of fighting. So: “When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another” (II Chron. 20:22-23). Hence the Gentile armies will be humiliated; their corruption will discover its own reward.

- (3) He will extract spoils for Jerusalem, v. 14.

Here, “Judah also will fight at Jerusalem,” though with divinely aroused strength, “like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch amongst sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples” (12:5-6). As a result, the wealth of the nations will

²⁴ John Calvin, *Zechariah*, pp. 434-435.

become the spoils of Israel, cf. v. 1. The fortunes of history in time will be reversed for eternity (8:20-23).

- d. His descent is to reign over the Gentiles, vs. 16-19.

The exaltation of the Gentiles over the centuries, while the Jews were humiliated (Rom. 11:11, 15), now culminates in their humiliation at the exaltation of Israel (Rom. 11:25, 28-31). Consequently God now sorts out the devastated Gentiles in their indignity and misery; although all of the world has been represented in their gathering against Jerusalem, v. 2, not all of the world has come to battle. Hence, like the former remnant status of Israel, the Gentiles are now designated as a remnant while not being utterly discarded.

It is strangely significant that the Gentiles are exhorted to celebrate the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles or Booths (*Sukkos*), vs. 16, 18-19, it being the longest and most joyous of Jewish festivals. But why Gentile participation in the new kingdom of Messiah? Consider the main elements of this Feast. It was the most joyous Jewish festival in that it was grounded upon the blessed consequences of the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, thus fruit and palm branches were waved, water and wine libations were offered in the Temple, while four giant candelabras offered illumination. Note that the Feast of Tabernacles followed only five days after the Day of Atonement. An eight day celebration, it was a remembrance feast concerning God's provision for Israel in the wilderness that anticipated the land flowing with milk and honey; hence the booths erected for seven days spoke of divine wilderness provision of manna, quail, and water. Then came the concluding solemn eight day (John 7:37-38), the extinguishing of the candelabras, after which Jesus testified (John 8:12). It was a thanksgiving feast concerning God's bountiful provision for His people at the conclusion of the harvest period; thus it was "the feast of the ingathering" (Exod. 23:16; 34:22). As a joyous feast it allowed for the heartfelt expression of gladness, thanksgiving. Thus,

Josephus, Philo, and the Rabbis (in many passages of the *Mishnah*) single it out from all the other feasts. And quite decisive on the point is the description of the "latter-day" glory at the close of the prophecies of Zechariah, where the conversion of all nations is distinctly connected with the "Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16-21).²⁵

This feast then is most appropriate for the ingathering of the Gentiles. Furthermore, if the Gentiles are to enter into the worship and celebration of Jehovah, then they too are to learn of this mode of worship that has been reinstated in Jerusalem under the reign of Jesus Christ (cf. Isa. 66:23). If they too have experienced redemption, then they also ought to remember it, give thanks for Jehovah's provision, and similarly express gladness. As Keil explains:

This feast will be kept by the heathen who have come to believe in the living God, to thank the Lord for His grace, that He has brought them out of the wanderings of this life into the blessedness of His kingdom of peace.²⁶

²⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 270.

²⁶ C. F. Keil, *Zechariah*, p. 412.

Peter, James, and John, anticipated this future celebration at the Transfiguration, though their perspective needed adjustment (Matt. 17:1-8). A more accurate representation is found in Revelation 7:9-10.

- (1) A faithful remnant will worship the King of Jerusalem, v. 16.

Notice here the primary roles of “worship” and “celebration,” as in vs. 17-19. It is presupposed that Jesus Christ, “the King, the LORD of hosts,” is gloriously, triumphantly seated and enthroned in Jerusalem; He is the supreme object of veneration. The instrumental means of this adoration is the re-instituted Feast of Tabernacles, except that it is surely “Christianized.” There will be diversity in the one people of God, with Israel in the land surrounded by Gentile nations that make periodic pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

- (2) An unfaithful remnant will suffer loss, v. 17-19.

Subsequent to the reign of Christ from Jerusalem, shall the whole fallen, pagan created order immediately be brought to perfection? According to vs. 17-19, it would appear not immediately, although vs. 20-21 seem to suggest an increasingly ideal economy of heaven on earth. It may be that as the topographical changes of vs. 4, 8, 10 have initially focused on Jerusalem, so there will be ever widening influence on a world-wide scale. Hence the Gentiles will rapidly come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

- (a) Neglect of worship results in lost blessing, v. 17.

Here remnants of a pagan world will suffer the discipline of God, the assumption being that, through the agency of the Spirit of God that has regenerated the nation of Israel, there will be a response of repentance rather than hardening. Jerusalem will set the standard for worship and celebration, and the nations will follow.

- (b) Neglect of worship results in the plague, v. 18.

What is the significance of “Egypt,” vs. 18-19? It is representative of the pagan nations, v. 19, because of its former brutal associations with Israel. An arid country yet with great potential via the Nile and its Delta, though formerly plagued at Israel’s redemption, its sufferings will increase while Jerusalem will be blessed, except there come repentance before the God of Moses. This must result in genuine national submission, worship, and celebration, even by means of representation at Jerusalem.

- (c) Neglect of worship results in universal punishment, v. 19.

So the nations will similarly suffer if they continue in rebellion. Whereas God has patiently suffered them to go their own way over the centuries (Mic. 4:5; Acts 14:16; 17:30), now He will bring them all into submission; rebellion will no longer be tolerated. Whereas Egypt in

particular was left to its ongoing paganism following the redemption of Israel, from now on this will no longer be endured. However the prospect of v. 9 must ultimately be kept in view. Jesus Christ will bring all things into subjection (I Cor. 15:25-28; Heb. 2:8).

- e. His descent is to reign in universal holiness, vs. 20-21.

It is highly significant that the conclusion of Zechariah has pervasive holiness for its fundamental concern. While the whole of the fourteenth chapter has been so climactic in terms of the future, consummate universal reign of Jesus Christ, especially in relation to Israel, yet the essential characteristic of this kingdom will be the very moral essence of God, that is His righteousness which is but the positive aspect of His holiness. Of course, according to God's original intention (Exod. 19:6), this holiness will have been communicated to His people, and in turn they shall reflect holiness in every aspect of their lives, even with regard to the seeming small and mundane matters of life.

- (1) The holiness of Israel's worship of the Lord, vs. 20-21b.

The expression, "Holy to the LORD" describes in particular that holiness which, having been communicated from His holy essence is, to use Jonathan Edwards' expression in terms of glory, "refunded back to the Lord,"²⁷ that is by means of personal reflection.

- (a) The bells of the horses, v. 20a.

For the Jew, the horse was an unclean animal mostly associated with engagement in war, even for Solomon (I Kings 4:26), and not civilian transportation. However the horse is employed to aid the Lord's messengers (1:7-11; 6:1-7), though it was certainly never associated with Hebrew worship. Even so it is significant that the here horses are decorated with bells having the same inscription on them as that which is on the turban of the high priest, namely, "Holy to the LORD" (Exod. 28:36-38). Thus in the consummated kingdom of Christ, every aspect of that heavenly society will be holy. There will be no disjunction between the sacred and the secular. Thus Spurgeon explains:

The simple plea of the text is just this, that the day shall come when in common life holiness shall be the guiding star, when the ordinary actions of human existence shall be as much the worship of God as the sacrifice of the altar or the mission of the high priest when he went within the veil. Everything, that which was most despised—the horses, the places

²⁷ "Thus we see that the great end of God's works, which is so variously expressed in Scripture, is indeed but *one*; and this *one* end is most properly and comprehensively called, *the Glory of God*. . . . In the creature's knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both *exhibited* and *acknowledged*; his fullness is *received* and *returned*. Here is both *emanation* and *remanation*. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God, are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole world is *of* God, and *in* God, and *to* God; and he is the beginning, and the middle, and the end." Edwards, *Works*, I, pp. 119-20.

which seemed the least likely to be consecrated—the stables, and those things which seemed the least holy, even the horses' harness,—all shall be so thoroughly used in obedience to God's will that everywhere there shall be, "Holiness unto Jehovah." Common things, then, in the day spoken of by Zechariah, are to be dedicated to God and used in his service.²⁸

(b) The sacrificial implements, vs. 20b.

The Jews had a hierarchical regard for various items employed in tabernacle, temple, and synagogue worship. There were "cooking pots," having a degree of holiness, used for the boiling of sacrificial flesh which the people as well as the priests could eat. Then there were the far more holy bowls containing sacrificial blood that was sprinkled or poured out. In the future glorious kingdom of Christ the former type of item will be equally as holy as the latter, doubtless because "the Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land." This principle would apply to food, clothing, days, etc. Hence it seems implicit that a temple here is not eliminated provided that the focus is now on the reigning Lord.

(c) The domestic implements, v. 21a.

Even the regular household cooking pots will be "holy to the LORD of hosts, which indicates that nothing will be regarded as unholy in this new realm of existence. The reason for this is that the matter of defilement has been dealt with and eliminated. The curse of the material world will have been removed (Rom. 8:20-23), though more importantly the corruption of sin in the mind will have been dealt with so that the redeemed, having holy affections and perception, will view every part of the regenerated earth as being holy. Such pervasive holiness will be derived from the Lord who returns to Jerusalem which becomes designated as "the Holy Mountain" (Zech. 8:3).

(d) The priesthood of believers, v. 21b.

There will be played out to the full the priesthood of all believers, as distinct from a "more holy" priestly caste, yet this would not necessarily eliminate rank. If the oblique reference here to "sacrifice" is taken literally rather than as part of an idiomatic expression, it could only refer to that which is symbolic and memorial, and that which every child of God could offer using the most commonly accepted means. However, worship will be regarded chiefly in terms of individual faith rather than elaborate form, of attitude rather than abundance (Mark 12:41-44).

²⁸ Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 7:399, Ages Software.

(2) The holiness of Israel's house of the Lord, v. 21c.

The history of Jerusalem is one of interminable, cyclical incursions of ungodliness by various means, but especially Canaanite religion. This is particularly evident in terms of repeated judgment being declared in the pre-exilic writings of the prophets (cf. Jer. 5:1-9; 7:1-7; 22:1-7; Ezek. 9:1-10; 22:23-31) and the restoration ministries of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (Ezra 3:10-13; 6:19-22; 9:1-4; 10:1-17; Neh. 2:11-20; 8:1-8; 9:1-4; 13:1-3, 15-22; Hag. 1:3-11; Zech. 3:3-5; Mal. 1:6-14; 2:7-9; 13-17; 3:8-12). Whereas the land was to be cleansed from Canaanite influences (Exod. 34:11-16; Josh. 17:17-1), nevertheless this cancerous/leprous influence remained (Ezra 9:1). But in the completed holy kingdom of Jesus Christ this will no longer be a problem, especially with regard to the importation of foreign worship. There will be no Judases, no leaven of the Pharisees, no tares among the wheat, no goats among the sheep. For "the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:23-27).

(3) The holiness of Israel's Lord.

Charles Feinberg concludes his commentary with a most appropriate summary of Zechariah that blends together the various representations of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and the nations. He encourages us to see Him in:

- (a) Chapter one as the Riding One.
- (b) Chapter two as the Measuring One.
- (c) Chapter three as the Cleansing One.
- (d) Chapter four as the Empowering One.
- (e) Chapter five as the Judging One.
- (f) Chapter six as the Crowned One.
- (g) Chapter seven as the Rebuking One.
- (h) Chapter eight as the Restoring One.
- (i) Chapter nine as the Kingly One.

- (j) Chapter ten as the Blessing One.
- (k) Chapter eleven as the Shepherding One.
- (l) Chapter twelve as the Returning One.
- (m) Chapter thirteen as the Smitten One.
- (n) Chapter fourteen as the Reigning One.

Come, let us worship as His feet!²⁹

²⁹ Feinberg, *God Remembers*, pp. 263-264.