

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

* * * **PROPHECIES OF THE PERSON, WORK, AND GLORY OF KING MESSIAH** * * *

S.L.H.
Soli Deo Gloria!

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee ... and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."
Zechariah 9:9-10

AUTHOR: Zechariah (c. 470 BC)

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE. Zechariah means *the LORD remembers* (Berechiah means *Jehovah blesses*, Iddo means *appointed time*). Zechariah's grandfather (Iddo; Zech1:1) was a priest who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Neh12:1,4,16; Cp., Zech3-4). Zechariah began his ministry "in the second year of Darius" during the period of the Persian empire. Zechariah 1-8 can be dated precisely to 520-518 BC by chronological references provided in the book (cf. Zech1:1; 7:1). Allusion to the ascendancy of Greece in Zechariah 9 (Zech9:13) suggests Zechariah 9-14 was written later (c. 480-470 BC). According to Jesus, Zechariah was murdered in the Temple; he is noted as the last prophet to be martyred in the O.T. (Matt23:35).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT. Zechariah was a post-exilic prophet whose ministry was contemporary with that of Haggai (Cp., Hag1:1; Zech1:1). Both prophets wrote during the time of the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem by the small remnant of Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity (cf. Ezra5:1; 6:14); the historical background for this period of time is given in Ezra 4-6.

The Jews living as captives in Babylon were freed to return to Jerusalem by the decree of Cyrus, the king of Persia, in 538 BC (2Chron36:22-23; Ezra1:1-4). The first group of 42,360 Jews returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra2:2; 2:64) and began the task of rebuilding the Temple in 536 BC (Ezra3:8-10). However, the personal hardships associated with rebuilding their own homes and reestablishing their fields, combined with active opposition to construction of the Temple from the Samaritans, resulted in the abandonment of the rebuilding project in 534 BC (Ezra4:24). The LORD raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah in 520 BC (Hag1:1; Zech1:1) to exhort/encourage the Jews to resume rebuilding the Temple, and its construction was finally completed in 516 BC (Ezra6:15).

MESSAGE OF ZECHARIAH. Zechariah 1-8 revolves around a series of eight prophetic night visions given to Zechariah, all of which relate to fulfillment of the ultimate Jewish hope (i.e., restoration of the Kingdom to Israel; cf. Act1:6); none of these prophecies were fulfilled during Zechariah's lifetime, all look forward to the eschatological future. The prophet refers to the Temple throughout this section. He encourages the people to complete its construction (Zech4:9); since Messiah will use the Temple, the rebuilding of it is a necessary prerequisite to His coming (Zech6:12-13).

Zechariah 9-14 presents two prophetic "burdens": 1) the **first coming** and rejection of Messiah (Zech9-11), and 2) the **second coming** and acceptance of Messiah (Zech12-14). The scope and prophetic perspective of Zechariah 9-14 is identical to that of Zechariah 1-8; both sections of Zechariah look to the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth as the consummation of all prophetic hope.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

I. Introduction	Zechariah 1:1-6
II. Night Visions (8)	Zechariah 1:7-6:8
A. The Rider on the Red Horse	Zech1:7-17
B. The Four Horns and Four Carpenters	Zech1:18-21
C. The Man with a Measuring Line	Zech2:1-13
D. Joshua the High Priest Cleansed	Zech3:1-10
E. The Golden Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees	Zech4:1-14
F. The Flying Scroll	Zech5:1-4
G. The Woman Sitting in the Ephah	Zech5:5-11
H. The Four Chariots	Zech6:1-8
III. Symbolic Crowning of Joshua the High Priest	Zechariah 6:9-15
IV. Questions Concerning Fasts	Zechariah 7-8
V. Prophetic Burdens (2)	Zechariah 9-14
A. The Coming and Rejection of King Messiah	Zech9:1-11:17
B. The Return and Reign of King Messiah	Zech12:1-14:21

NOTE ON THE APOCALYPTIC GENRE. Zechariah is an example of the apocalyptic genre as used in the Bible (also Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation). It is a special type of divine revelation that focuses on the eschatological end of God's prophetic program. In the Bible, apocalyptic revelation is given to the people of God during times of extreme corporate suffering in which there is no prospect for their immediate or even near-term deliverance. During such times, even the people of God can be tempted to despair, believing that God has apparently forsaken them. The purpose of apocalyptic prophecy is to encourage/assure the people of God that He is in sovereign control of history, and that He will providentially bring it to His appointed end (Isa46:9-11). The believer's hope should not be in temporal deliverance from present tribulations (cf. Jn16:33), but an unwavering confidence in the surety of the coming/return of Messiah/Christ (Tit2:13) as the only solution to every world problem, which provides comfort (1Thess4:13-18) in any circumstance.

PROPHETS AND PROPHECY. According to Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the great value of the Book of Revelation is not that it contains a multitude of original information not given in the O.T., but rather that it takes the many scattered O.T. prophecies and sets them in chronological order so that the sequence of end-time events may be properly understood. Thus, students of the O.T. prophets like Zechariah should remember that while the great prophetic truths/events foreseen by the prophets and recorded in the O.T. are (without question) infallibly true, they are not always presented in their proper chronological order, or even as distinct events¹.

¹ For example, details concerning the first and second comings of Messiah often appear together in the same O.T. passage (or even the same sentence!), with no indication from the local context that they will actually be separated in time by thousands of years (cf. Isa61:1-2; Zech9:9-10). This is consistent with the N.T. revelation that the Church Age was a mystery not foreseen by the O.T. prophets (Eph3:1-10).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

- [1] Zechariah's prophecy opens "in the eight month, in the second year of Darius", which is contemporary with Haggai (Cp., Hag1:1; 2:1,10). Darius was a Mede (Dan5:31) who began to reign in 522 BC, so his "second year" would be 520 BC. Zechariah's name means *the LORD remembers*, his father's name Berechiah means *the LORD blesses*, and his grandfather's name Iddo means *appointed time* (i.e., the LORD remembers and blesses in His appointed time). Iddo was a priest who returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Neh12:1,4); Zechariah is listed as a priest after Iddo (Neh12:16), which probably means his father Berechiah died before entering the priesthood (cf. Num4:3).
- [2] Zechariah and Haggai were raised up as prophets because the LORD was "displeased" that work to rebuild the temple had ceased (cf. Hag1:2-8).
- [3] Under the Mosaic Covenant, the LORD's blessing was contingent upon Israel's faithfulness to Him (Lev26:3-13; Deut28:1-14), and for Israel to keep the Law of Moses required a temple.
- [4] The unfaithfulness of the previous generations of Judah had resulted in their exile to Babylon (Lev26:32-35; 2Chron36:19-21). Note that the reference to "the former prophets" refers to the pre-exilic prophets.
- [5] Their "fathers" died in the Babylon under the curse of the Mosaic covenant.
- [6] In asserting that "so hath he dealt with us", Zechariah emphasizes that the Jews who have returned to the land of Israel from Babylon are still under the Mosaic Covenant, such that they will be blessed or cursed according to their faithfulness to its terms—just as their fathers were.

1ST NIGHT VISION: THE RIDER ON THE RED HORSE

Zechariah 1:7-6:8 records a series of eight prophetic visions Zechariah received in one night. While given to encourage the Jews of Zechariah's generation, none of them were fulfilled in their lifetimes, and all await ultimate fulfillment at the coming of King Messiah to establish His kingdom on earth (i.e., they are **apocalyptic** revelations). The fact that these visions were given at "night" (Zech1:8) may be an implicit typological allusion to a lengthy Church Age (cf. Dan9:26; 1Thess5:2; Rev22:16) that intervenes between Zechariah's generation of Jews and those that see the fulfillment of these prophecies.

- [7] The night visions are received by Zechariah on Shebat 24, 520 BC. Shebat is the "eleventh month" on the Jewish calendar, occurring in January-February. This is approximately three months after the opening of the book (Cp., v1).
- [8] The key elements of the vision are: 1) a "man riding upon a red horse", 2) followed by "red horses", 3) followed by "speckled

horses", 4) followed by "white horses", and 5) the "man" is seen standing among "myrtle trees". Note, "myrtle" occurs 6 times² in the Bible, and the first mention of "myrtle" is in Nehemiah 8:15, where it is among the four kinds of branches to be used in constructing "booths" in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (the prophetic fulfillment of which will be the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom). Thus, the "myrtle"³ has a typological connection to the Millennial Kingdom. See note at v17 for the interpretation of the red, speckled, and white horses.

- [9] An "angel" is present to provide at least a partial interpretation of the vision, which is common in an apocalyptic revelation.
- [10] "These" are presumably the riders upon the many horses of v8. For the LORD to send them "to walk to and fro through the earth" suggests their possession of it/dominion over it (Cp., Gen13:14-17; Job1:7; 2:2).
- [11] Note that the man "that stood among the myrtle trees", who is also the rider on the leading "red horse" (v8), is "the angel of the LORD" (i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ in preincarnate form). Thus, the vision pertains to the Lord Jesus Christ at a time when He has taken possession of/dominion over "all the earth", which is "at rest".
- [12] The "three score and ten years" during which the LORD "hast had" (i.e., past tense) "indignation" against "Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah" refers to the 70-year exile in Babylon, which had concluded with the return of the first wave of Jews under Zerubbabel in 536 BC (~16 years before this vision). The preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ asks "the LORD", "how long" until "mercy" is shown to the Jews and the city of Jerusalem? The time element will not be answered as part of this vision, presumably because it had already been specified as part of the 70 Weeks prophecy received by Daniel (cf. Dan9:24-27).
- [13] The "words" of the answer by "the LORD" were "good" and "comforting"; though those "words" are not revealed, that they comforted the Lord Jesus Christ indicates there will be a future time when the LORD shows "mercy" to Jerusalem (v12).
- [14] The "angel" (i.e., of the LORD, the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ) subsequently assured Zechariah that the LORD remains "jealous" for "Jerusalem" and "Zion". That is, His harsh discipline of the nation of Judah has in no way changed their status as Jehovah's elect nation (Cp., Rom11:1-2,26-29). That Zechariah is instructed to, "Cry thou, saying" indicates that this is to be his prophetic message proclaimed to the residue of Jews that have returned to Jerusalem.

² At times, the number "6" is used in a typological way to point to the Millennial Kingdom. The history of the world will be 6,000 years, followed by a 1,000-year Kingdom (1Pet3:8); the subject of Revelation 20 is the Millennial Kingdom, and the phrase "a thousand years" occurs 6 times. In Genesis 1:1, the Hebrew letter aleph (א), which is used to represent the number 1,000, occurs 6 times.

³ Queen Esther's Hebrew name was Hadassah (Esth2:7), which means "myrtle". As Esther was wed to Ahasuerus, king over all the world (Esth1:1-3), so the nation of Israel will again be taken as a wife by Jehovah during the Millennial Kingdom (Hos1:10).

⁴ That the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ does not know the exact timing associated with the coming of His future kingdom is consistent with Mark 13:32 and Revelation 1:1.

- [15] The "heathen" with which the LORD is "very sore displeased" are those Gentile nations that He used to discipline the nation of Judah (e.g., Babylon; cf. Hab1:5-10). However, these nations who were justly used by the LORD to discipline Judah exceeded their divine mandate and "helped forward the affliction" (i.e., they went too far in their cruel dominion over Judah, endangering their continued existence). This pattern will be repeated during the Tribulation (cf. Joel3:1-2,12-17; Zech12:2-3; 14:1-3; Matt25:31-46).
- [16] The conclusion of the vision is that "the LORD" will indeed "return" to "Jerusalem" to show His "mercies"; this occurs at the second coming of Christ. At that time, the LORD's "house shall be built in it" (i.e., the Millennial Temple; Cp., Zech6:12-13; Ezek40-48). The "line" that "shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" is a measuring line (cp., Zech2:1-2). The fact that the future city of Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom needs to be measured suggests that its size has changed; this will indeed be the case, as the entire geography/topography of the region around Jerusalem will be changed in conjunction with the second coming of Christ (cf. Zech14:4).
- [17] Again, Zechariah is instructed to, "Cry yet, saying"; his prophetic message to the nation of Israel is that the LORD has prophetically predestinated "prosperity" and "comfort" for His chosen people of "Jerusalem". However, the time of this "prosperity" and "comfort" occurs when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to take possession of, and exercise dominion over, "all the earth" (v11).

The Red, Speckled, and White Horses. What is the interpretation of the red, speckled, and white horses that accompany the leading rider on a red horse (v8)? The rider on the leading "red" horse is interpreted to be the Lord Jesus Christ (v11). Although Christ's return from heaven to earth is upon a white horse (Rev19:11), it is seen here after the battle of Armageddon, at which time it has been stained "red" with the blood of his enemies (cf. Isa63:1-3; Rev14:20; 19:13). Accompanying Christ at His return are "armies ... upon white horses" (including the glorified Church as the Bride of Christ). Those closest to Christ during the battle that ensues have horses completely stained "red" with blood, as Christ's horse. Those farther behind are merely "speckled" with blood, whereas those farthest back remain "white". This emphasizes that Armageddon is a literal battle.

2ND NIGHT VISION: THE FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CARPENTERS

The vision of the four horns and four carpenters relates to the seemingly unrelenting oppression of Israel by the Gentiles (cf. Luk21:24), which leads to the destruction/defilement of its temples (necessitating their rebuilding). Whereas Zechariah was raised up to exhort the Jews to rebuild the (2nd) temple, there will ultimately be 4 temples in the history of Israel built by the four carpenters. The four horns are the four historical kings/kingdoms which scattered the Jewish people out of the land of Israel.

- [18] Note, "horns" when used symbolically refer to kings or their empires (cf. Dan7:24; 8:3-9; Rev17:12).

- [19] These "horns" are kings/empires "which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem". The traditional interpretation of the four horns is that they correspond to the four Gentile empires as prophesied in Daniel: 1) Rome, 2) Medo-Persia, 3) Greece, and 4) Rome (Dan2:36-43; 7:4-7). The seemingly insurmountable difficulty with that interpretation is that while Babylon and Rome did "scatter ... Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" in 586 BC and 70 AD, respectively, neither Persia nor Greece did so. In fact, Persia was a major force in regathering many of the Jews scattered by Babylon back to the land of Israel (cf. Ezra1:1-4).

Those empires that will have "scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" are: 1) **Assyria** in 722 BC (2Kgs18:9-11), 2) **Babylon** in 586 BC (2Chron36:20), 3) **Rome** in 70 AD (Luk21:24), and 4) the **revived Roman Empire** led by Antichrist during the Tribulation (Rev12:13-14).

- [20] The appearance of the "four carpenters" is explained in v21.

- [21] The four carpenters (v20) seem to be the men who built the four temples in Jerusalem: 1) the first temple built by **Solomon** (1Kgs7:51) and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (2Chron36:17-19) in 586 BC, 2) the second temple rebuilt by **Zerubbabel** (Zech4:9), defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan8:9-14; 11:31), and destroyed by Titus (Luk19:43-44) in 70 AD, 3) the Tribulation temple that will be rebuilt by **Moses** and Elijah (Rev11:3-4; cf. Zech4:11-14) and defiled by the Antichrist (Matt24:15; 2Thess2:3-4), and the Millennial Temple that will be rebuilt by **Messiah**⁵ (Zech6:12-13).

The Message of the Vision. The message of the vision of the four horns and the four carpenters is that in the sovereignty of the LORD, Israel will be dispersed from their land four times, but only four, after which they will dwell in their land forever; and that the temple of the Lord will be repeatedly destroyed/defiled and rebuilt/cleansed, but the fourth temple built by Messiah will stand forever.

CHAPTER 2

3RD NIGHT VISION: THE MAN WITH A MEASURING LINE

The vision of the man with a measuring line (i.e., a surveyor) has to do with the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been destroyed/rebuilt multiple times in history, and it will yet be destroyed again in the Tribulation (Zech14:2; Rev16:16). However, in the Millennial Kingdom the Messiah will rebuild Jerusalem in its most glorious version, and it will never again be destroyed.

- [1] A "measuring line" is used in construction. Here, the construction in view is that of the city of Jerusalem (v2). If Ezekiel 40:3,5 and/or Revelation 11:1 are a parallel passages, then it also pertains to the construction of the Millennial temple. The "man" of this vision is presumably the same as the "man" of the 1st vision (Zech1:8), who was "the angel of the LORD" (Zech1:12; i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ).

⁵ Note that at His first coming Jesus was a "carpenter" (Mk6:3).

- [2] The dimensions of the city of Jerusalem as it existed in Zechariah's day would have been well known, such that there would be no reason to "measure Jerusalem". The "Jerusalem" seen in this vision is a future city that will be constructed during the Millennial Kingdom.
- [3] Might "another angel" be the one seen by the Apostle John when he was instructed to measure the Millennial temple (Rev11:1)? The first "angel" is the one giving/interpreting the vision.
- [4] The vision is of a future, glorious city of Jerusalem at a time of peace, as suggested by the fact that it is seen "without walls"; this must be Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom (cf. Isa2:2-3). The "young man", to whom the angel (v3) is directed to speak, is apparently the prophet Zechariah.
- [5] During the Millennial Kingdom, the city of Jerusalem will not need walls because "the LORD" will supernaturally protect it. The "glory in the midst of it" undoubtedly refers to a return of the "glory" of God that Ezekiel witnessed depart from Jerusalem (cf. Ezek11:23).
- [6] In the vision, many Jews remain "spread abroad as the four winds of the heavens"; here, they are called to "flee from the land of the north" (i.e., return to the land of Israel from Babylon⁶; Cp., Jer1:13-14), yet their ultimate regathering does not occur until the second coming of Christ (Cp., Isa11:11-12; Matt24:31).
- [7] Apparently the dispersed Jews in view are those taken to "Babylon" by Nebuchadnezzar, most of whom in Zechariah's day had still not returned to the land of Israel (although under the Persian empire they were free to do so; cf. Ezr1:1-4). During the Tribulation, the kingdom of Antichrist will again be "Babylon" (cf. Rev17-18).
- [8] This is a promise of the LORD to avenge Israel of those "nations which spoiled you" (cf. Deut32:35). Whereas there would be some temporal fulfillments of this prophecy, its ultimate fulfillment will come during the Tribulation when Babylon is destroyed forever (cf. Rev16:17-19; 18:15-16; 19:1-3). Note that Israel is referred to as "the apple of [the LORD's] eye" (; i.e., pupil; cf. Deut32:10; Ps17:8; Prov7:2; Lam2:18).
- [9] The LORD's judgment of the Gentile nations will include their becoming a "spoil" for Israel. In the Millennial Kingdom, Israel will be made "high above all nations" (Deut26:19), and "all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of thee" (Deut28:10).
- [10] In the Millennial Kingdom, "the LORD" (in the Person of Messiah) will physically "dwell in the midst of [Zion]" (Cp., Zech14:9; Ezek48:35; Joel3:20-21; Rev21:2-3; 22:3).
- [11] In the Millennial Kingdom, all the Gentile "nations" will come to Jerusalem to worship "the LORD of hosts" (cf. Ps117:1; Zech14:16; Rom15:9-12). Note that at His first coming, Jesus repeatedly referred to Himself as the one whom the LORD had "sent" (cf. Luk4:18; Jn5:30,36-37; 6:39,44,57; 7:29; 17:25; 20:21).

⁶ Note that during the Tribulation the "people" of God are again exhorted to, "Come out of [Babylon]" (Rev18:2,4).

- [12] "Judah" (i.e., the nation of Israel) is the LORD's "inherit[ance]" (Deut32:9), and "Jerusalem" is the place He chose (cf. Deut4:20; 12:5; 1Kgs14:21; Ps132:13). In contrast, the LORD turned the Gentile nations over to other "gods" (cf. Deut32:8; Ps82:1-7). However, in the Millennial Kingdom the Lord Jesus Christ will "inherit all nations" (cf. Ps2:8; 82:8; Rev19:5).
- [13] When "the LORD" is "raised up" (i.e., aroused) to judge during the Tribulation, in preparation for the second coming of Christ and the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom, the command will go out to "all flesh" to "Be silent". That is, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom3:19) at the time of His righteous judgment.

CHAPTER 3

4TH NIGHT VISION: JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST CLEANSED

With a rebuilt temple comes the necessity of a priesthood for its operation. This vision foresees the cleansing of Joshua the high priest and the restoration of the Levitical priesthood to Israel in the near-term, as well as an eschatological fulfillment by Jesus the Messiah in the Millennial temple.

- [1] "And he showed me"; presumably "he" is the angel of second vision (Zech2:3). "Joshua" was the "high priest" during Zechariah's ministry (cf. Hag1:12; Zech3:8), but he could not minister as a priest without a rebuilt temple; note that "Joshua" is the namesake of the Lord **Jesus** Christ and is undoubtedly a type of Jesus in His office of high priest. The "angel of the LORD" is the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ. "Satan" is seen standing to "resist" Joshua, the Jewish people, and the restoration of their relationship with the LORD (via a functioning temple), as he ever does (Cp., Job1:12; Rev12:10).
- [2] Satan's antagonism toward the Jewish people is "rebuke[d]" (Cp., Jude9). Note that the LORD has "chosen Jerusalem" as the unique place on earth where He will be physically manifested (cf. Deut4:20; 12:5; 1Kgs14:21; Ps132:13). In the final sentence, the pronoun "this" refers to Joshua (perhaps as high priest representing all of Israel) as "a brand plucked out of the fire" (Cp., Jude23); namely, Israel is deserving of judgment because of covenant unfaithfulness, for which Satan acts as accuser (Rev12:10), but has been saved by the LORD for His purposes⁷.
- [3] Similar to the prophet Isaiah (Isa6:5-8), "Joshua" is an instrument to be used by the LORD, but he must first be cleansed. His "filthy garments" represent Joshua's unrighteousness (Cp., Isa64:6).
- [4] It is the angel of the LORD (v1), representing the Person of God Himself, who speaks. In commanding that Joshua's "filthy garments" be removed and replaced with new "raiment" provided by the LORD, a

⁷ The LORD's two great purposes for the nation of Israel were to produce and preserve the scriptures (Rom3:1-2) and to give birth to the Messiah (Rom9:3-5).

picture of Christ's righteousness imputed to the believer is in view (Cp., Matt22:11-12; 2Cor5:21; Rev3:5).

- [5] In wearing a "fair mitre" provided by the LORD (v4), the picture is that of a believer being clothed not in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness of God that has been imputed to him (Cp., Rom1:17; 3:22; 10:3; 2Cor5:21; 2Pet1:1). On the high priest's "mitre" is engraved in gold, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Exod28:36-37).
- [6] The angel of the LORD is God Himself speaking.
- [7] The cleansing of Joshua (vv4-5) was a picture of justification, a work performed by God on the condition of faith alone. However, as high priest in service of the LORD, Joshua must faithfully fulfill the demands of a priest under the terms of the Mosaic covenant in order to "keep my charge", "judge my house", and "keep my courts" (i.e., serve as high priest in the temple, which he has never done before).
- [8] Joshua's "fellows that sit before thee" are those who will serve with him as priests in the temple. That they "sit" is indicative of the fact that without a temple, they cannot perform their function (Cp., Heb10:11). Looking prophetically far beyond Joshua as high priest, the "servant" of the LORD who will be the ultimate high priest (in the Millennial temple) will be Messiah, who is called "the BRANCH" (cf. Jer23:5; 33:15; Is11:1; Zech6:12).
- [9] Another Messianic title is "the stone" (Ps118:22; Eph2:20; 1Pet2:4-8). The "seven eyes" are the "seven spirits of God" (representing divine omniscience), which are associated with Christ (Rev5:6). Note that it is not only the "iniquity" of Joshua that will be removed by the LORD, but "the iniquity of that land" (i.e., Israel). This foresees the "day" in which "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom11:26); that "day" on which the nation of Israel is saved and brought into the New covenant may well be a future, literal Day of Atonement.
- [10] "In that day" looks to the prophetic fulfillment of this prophecy at the second coming of Christ and the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom, including the construction and operation of the Millennial temple. The figures of the "vine" and "fig tree" are taken from the reign of King Solomon, representing peace, tranquility, and prosperity in the kingdom of Messiah (Cp., 1Kgs4:24-25; Mic4:4).

CHAPTER 4

5TH NIGHT VISION: THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND AND THE TWO OLIVE TREES

This vision not only assures the completion of the (2nd) temple, under the spiritual leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, but prophesies the completion of a future (Tribulation) temple under the spiritual leadership of "two anointed ones" (i.e., Moses and Elijah).

- [1] Again, the "angel" interpreting the visions remains the same (Cp., Zech2:3). Note that this is a vision, not a dream, as Zechariah is "wakened out of his sleep" to receive it; note, this could be a typological allusion to the resurrection, which for Israel occurs immediately following the Tribulation (Cp., Dan12:1-3).

- [2] This vision is of a "lampstand all of gold" with "seven lamps" (a seven-branched lampstand; i.e., a menorah), representing the lampstand that is the sole source of light in the holy place of the temple (cf. Exod25:31ff). However, the lampstand seen in the vision has "seven pipes" to continuously feed the lamps with oil. Note that oil is a common type of the Holy Spirit (cf. Exod29:7; Ps133:2; Eph5:18).
- [3] Furthermore, "two olive trees" are present, apparently to provide an inexhaustible supply of oil for the lamps. Note that the lampstand in the tabernacle/temple had to be manually filled with oil by the priests, which created the possibility that the lamps could run out of oil (as happened in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes). Note that in Romans 11:13-25, the "olive tree" is pictured as the source of spiritual blessing⁸ for both Jews and Gentiles.

Typology of the Lampstand. The lampstand was the only source of light in the holy place in the temple. As such, it is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the light of the world" (Jn8:12). However, as her Messiah, so the nation of Israel was called to be a "light to the Gentiles" (Isa49:6; cf. Deut4:5-8) and the temple is destined to be a "house of prayer for all people" (Isa56:7). Thus, the lampstand can be understood to represent the nation of Israel⁹ and its witness to the world.

- [4] Zechariah, who is himself a priest, does not understand the vision.
- [5] Zechariah had never functioned as a priest, since there had never been a temple standing and in operation in his lifetime.
- [6] This famous verse, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts", in this context is an assertion that the temple(s) will be rebuilt; it is a decree of the LORD that is not contingent upon human efforts. Against all odds (i.e., human viewpoint), it will be accomplished (Cp., 1Sam17:47). In the future, against all odds, the temple will be rebuilt during the Tribulation (which seems to be a geopolitical impossibility at present).

Note, "Zerubbabel" means *sown in Babylon*, which is consistent with the fact that Zerubbabel was a Jew born in Babylon during the exile, but who led the first group of Jewish exiles to return to Israel (cf. Ezr2:1-2; Matt1:12).

- [7] This verse is expressed in highly poetic language, but its meaning is clear. The "great mountain" represents all the obstacles set in opposition to the rebuilding of the temple, many of which are detailed in the Book of Ezra. Yet, under the leadership of "Zerubbabel", the "great mountain" will be transformed into a "plain". Thus, all obstacles will be overcome and the temple will be rebuilt (both in Zechariah's day, and repeated during the

⁸ A strong case can be made that the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was an olive tree.

⁹ Note that whereas the nation of Israel is represented by a single lampstand, which must be located in the temple in Jerusalem, the Church (which is not a nation) is portrayed as "seven lampstands" (Rev1:11-12,20; i.e., a witness in every city).

Tribulation). This is a work of the "Spirit" (v6) accomplished according to the "grace" of God.

- [9] The immediate, near-term application of the vision is an assurance that under "Zerubbabel", the (2nd) temple will be completed (cf. Ezr3:8); he will "finish it", such that the (2nd) temple will be Zerubbabel's temple (not Herod's temple). This prophetic pattern will also apply to the Tribulation temple, the construction of which will be overseen by the two witnesses (cf. Rev11:1-4).
- [10] The "plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel" indicates he will rebuild the (2nd) temple; that the "seven", which are "the eyes of the LORD" (Cp., Rev5:6), are associated with him indicates it is the LORD's work, Zerubbabel is merely His human instrument. Note, "they" of Zerubbabel's day should "rejoice" over the completion of the temple, in contrast to those "who hath despised the day of small things" (i.e., those present who remembered the "glory" of Solomon's temple, whereas Zerubbabel's temple "in comparison with it as nothing"; Hag2:3). This may also suggest that the Tribulation temple will be something far short of the glory of Solomon's temple.
- [11] The "two olive trees" associated with the lampstand in the vision were distinctively different from the lampstand associated with the temple, so Zechariah desires to know, "What are these"?
- [12] Adding detail to his question, Zechariah desires to know the significance of "the two olive branches", which "through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves". That is, the two golden pipes ensure an uninterrupted flow of oil from the olive trees into the lamps, a picture of the unceasing existence of the nation of Israel and its witness to the world of the true and living God.
- [13] It would seem that the angel is surprised at Zechariah's failure to understand the vision.
- [14] The angel reveals that "the two olive branches" (v12; "trees" in v3) are "the two anointed ones", and he goes on to say, "that stand by the Lord of the whole earth". The two olive trees are two individuals who stand with the Lord. This calls to mind the Lord's glorious appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, at which time Moses and Elijah stood with Him (cf. Matt17:3; Luk9:30). This comports well with the two witnesses who minister during the first half of the Tribulation, who are called "the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth" (Rev11:3), and who are introduced immediately following the revelation of the Tribulation temple (Rev11:1-2). This suggests that the two witnesses (i.e., Moses and Elijah) will oversee the rebuilding of the temple during the first half of the 7-year Tribulation. Thus, Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezr3:8) are the type, and Moses and Elijah will be the anti-type.

CHAPTER 5

6TH NIGHT VISION: THE FLYING SCROLL

The focus of the visions change at this point going forward. Visions 1-5 all communicated hope for the nation of Israel, if not in the near term, at least in the eschatological future. However, visions 6-8 take on a more somber tone. Though the nation is promised ultimate restoration to the land of Israel, with a rebuilt Jerusalem and temple, dwelling in peace with, and exercising authority over, the Gentile nations, the issue of sin and evil must yet be resolved decisively. The sixth vision concerns sin within the nation of Israel.

- [1] In the sixth vision, Zechariah sees a "flying roll" (i.e., scroll). Symbolically, a scroll denotes the written word.
- [2] With a length of "twenty cubits" (30 ft.) and a width of "ten cubits" (15 ft.), this scroll is far too big to be held by human hands. The dimensions are the same as that of the Holy Place in the tabernacle (cf. Exod26:15-30). The Holy Place contained the table of shewbread and the golden lampstand; bread and light are both types of the written word (cf. Deut8:3; Ps119:105).
- [3] Two sins are mentioned: stealing and swearing (i.e., oaths taken in the LORD's name; cf. v4). Jesus gave the two greatest commandments of the Law as, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luk9:27). To steal is to sin against one's neighbor, and to swear is to sin against God; the Law required such sinners to be "cut off" from the nation of Israel. These sins seem to denote a comprehensive failure to keep the Law, which under the Mosaic covenant brought a "curse" upon the nation of Israel. Thus, the nation of Israel must be redeemed from the curse of the Law (cf. Gal3:13) before the eschatological hope of the first five visions can be realized.

Written on Both Sides. Note that a Hebrew idiom is used in this verse: in reference to the scroll, it says, "on this side ... on that side". The implication is that the scroll was written upon both sides, which is not normally the case for a Torah scroll (i.e., Scripture). This type of scroll is more typical of a title deed (Cp., Ezek2:9-10; Jer32:9-14; Rev5:1).

- [4] The language used in the latter half of this verse is analogous to that in Leviticus 14:45, where leprosy is understood to spread unchecked unto it consumes a whole house; leprosy is a type of sin, and the nation of Israel is viewed as the house being destroyed. Thus, sin/sinners within the nation of Israel must be purged out before the Millennial Kingdom can begin. This will occur during the 7-year Tribulation (cf. Ezek20:33-38; Zech13:8-9; Jn3:3,5). This issue was the reason John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples preached "the gospel of the kingdom" to the nation of Israel at His first coming, "saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent**, and believe the gospel" (Mk1:14-15).

Important Cross-reference. Many commentators assume the flying scroll represents the Law of Moses (i.e., the ten commandments in particular, or the scriptures in general). However, it is possible

that this "scroll" is the scroll "sealed with seven seals" in Revelation 5:1-7, which "no man ... was able to open" (v3). This is further supported by the fact that the scroll has writing on both sides (Cp., Zech5:3; Rev5:1). If so, as seen in the vision the scroll has already been opened (i.e., all seven seals have been removed by the Lord Jesus Christ), indicating that His work of judgment during the Tribulation has been completed.

7TH NIGHT VISION: THE WOMAN SITTING IN THE EPHAH

Whereas the sixth vision dealt with sin/sinners within the nation of Israel, the seventh vision deals with evil in the Gentile world. There is a sense in which evil was introduced into the Gentile world at the tower of Babel, and it will again be concentrated in a rebuilt Babylon during the Tribulation. Babylon and the Gentile nations must also be judged and sin/sinners purged out before the Millennial Kingdom can begin. As the judgment of Babylon is viewed prophetically in Zechariah's 7th vision, so Babylon will be destroyed by the 7th bowl judgment at the end of the Tribulation (cf. Rev16:17-18:24).

- [5] The same "angel" (Zech2:3) continues to narrate the giving of the visions to Zechariah.
- [6] An "ephah" was the standard unit of dry volume in ancient Israel, analogous to a bushel today. It was used in the buying and selling of grains and other agricultural produce, and for this reason it is symbolic of commerce. Since the verse denotes this commerce is "through all the earth", it is international commerce¹⁰ that is in view in this vision.
- [7] A "talent" was the standard measure of commercial weight in ancient Israel, somewhat analogous to a ton today (although a talent was approximately 100 pounds). However, "lead" was not a valuable commercial metal commonly traded in the ancient world. That the "talent" is "lifted up" in the vision seems to suggest it is (in a sense) a lid covering the "ephah". When the lead lid was "lifted up", it revealed a "woman" sitting inside the ephah.
- [8] The "woman" (v7) is identified using an impersonal pronouns, both "This" and "it", suggesting she is not a literal person, but represents an ideal. That ideal is "wickedness"; this woman is an embodiment of evil "through all the earth" (v6). The "weight of lead" is again used to cover the "ephah", in effect confining the woman (i.e., wickedness) inside it.
- [9] These "two women" have "wings", so they are not human women; they might represent angels/spirit creatures. Their "wings" were "like the wings of a stork", which is an unclean fowl (cf. Lev11:13,19). Thus, these winged women that lift the ephah into the sky in order to transport it (and the "wickedness" it contains) also carry a wicked connotation. When used symbolically in the Bible, birds/fowls often represent evil spirits (cf. Matt13:4,19; Rev18:2).

¹⁰ During the second half of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will control all buying and selling (Rev13:16-17).

- [10] The central question relative to this symbolic embodiment of "wickedness" is, "Whither do these bear the ephah?" That is, in the eschatological future (i.e., during the Tribulation), where will "wickedness" be geographically centralized?
- [11] The answer to the question of v10 is, "Shinar". Shinar is equivalent to Mesopotamia, the plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the plain on which Babel was built (cf. Gen10:10; 11:2) as well as the city of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Dan1:2). Thus, in the eschatological end (i.e., the Tribulation), "wickedness" will be geographically centralized in Babylon.

Implications for Revelation 17-18. This vision is likely the key to unlock the understanding of Revelation 17-18. In Revelation 17, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT" (v5) is portrayed as the city of Rome as it existed in the days of John the Apostle (i.e., 1st century AD; cf. v18). However, Revelation 18 presents "Babylon the Great" (c2), which is destroyed by the 7th bowl judgment during the Tribulation, as a very different city, analogous to the Babylon of the end times portrayed by the prophets as the ancient city located on the Euphrates river (cf. Isal3-14; Jer50-51; esp. Jer51:63). This vision would seem to suggest that whereas "wickedness" was formerly geographically centralized in Rome, during the Tribulation it will migrate back to Babylon (where it originated; Gen10:9-0; 11:1-9). Thus, a rebuilt city of Babylon must exist on the banks of the Euphrates river during the Tribulation, which will be judged with fire from heaven as Sodom and Gomorrah were (cf. Isal3:19; Jer50:40).

CHAPTER 6

8TH NIGHT VISION: THE FOUR CHARIOTS

During the Tribulation, the Gentile nations which have "cursed" the nation of Israel will be judged according to the Abrahamic covenant (i.e., Gen12:3) in preparation for the righteous Millennial Kingdom of Messiah.

- [1] The "two mountains" probably represent Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives, between which is the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which means *Jehovah shall judge*. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that the Hebrew text includes the article, such that it is "the two mountains", indicating two specific and well-known mountains are intended. That the "mountains" are said to be of "bronze" further suggests that the vision concerns **judgment**. The "four chariots" will be identified in v5, but note that "chariots" were instruments of warfare. The number "four", when used symbolically, represents all the earth (Cp., Isal1:12; Mk13:27; Rev7:1). Thus, judgment proceeds forth out of the land of Israel, specifically the Valley of Jehoshaphat (cf. Joel3:2), such that the final judgment of all the enemies of Israel is in view (i.e., literally the entire Gentile world; cf. Zech12:3; 14:2).
- [2] "Before" signifies *harnessed to*; thus, the four chariots are harnessed to "red", "black", "white", and "grisled" (i.e., dappled) "horses" (cf. v3).
- [3] The distinctive colors of the horses drawing these four chariots undoubtedly connect them to the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (cf.

Rev6:1-8). The "red horses" represent war (Rev6:4), the "black horses" represent famine (Rev6:5-6), the "white horses" represent the power and deception of the Antichrist (Rev6:2), and the "grisled horses" represent Death and Hell (i.e., death by many and varied sources; Rev6:8). Thus, the context of Zechariah's final vision is the Tribulation.

- [4] Zechariah asks "the angel" to interpret the vision.
- [5] The "angel" reveals that the four chariots are "the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth". Thus, they represent literal angelic "spirits" (Cp., Gabriel; Luk1:19) who will be God's personal agents to execute His judgment of the Gentile world; this is consistent with the Book of Revelation, in which angels play a prominent role in executing the judgments of the Tribulation period. The appellation, "the Lord of all the earth", is used of God on only one other occasion, that of the LORD leading Joshua's generation of Israelites into the Promised Land to dispossess it of the enemies of God (cf. Josh3:11,13; Cp., Ps97:5). In this vision, God will dispossess the entire world of His enemies during the Tribulation.
- [6] The "north country" probably signifies Israel's historic enemies, Assyria, Babylon, the Seleucid-Greeks, and Rome (who attacked Israel from the north; cf. Jer1:13-14), as well as Magog (i.e., Russia) and Persia (i.e., Iran) which attempt to destroy Israel during the Tribulation (cf. Dan11:40; Joel2:20; Ezek38:15). The "south country" probably signifies Israel's historic enemy, Egypt, which along with Edom will also play a major role in the Tribulation (cf. Dan11:40; Obad15-16). Although neither east nor west is mentioned as directions, relative to Israel these directions are blocked by the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian desert, respectively, such that both directions are accessed from the land of Israel by travelling "north" or "south".
- [7] The fact that "north" and "south" connote "all the earth" (v5) is consistent with the fact that the "bay" (i.e., grisled) horses "walk to and fro through the earth". The fact that the red horses are not specifically mentioned is an enigma.
- [8] The conclusion to this vision regarding "the north country" is probably a fitting allusion to the destruction of Babylon, which under the seventh vial consummates all judgments during the Tribulation (cf. Rev16:17-18:24).

THE SYMBOLIC CROWNING OF JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST

Zechariah's 8 night visions conclude with the judgment of all of Israel's (and God's) enemies during the Tribulation, after which the Lord Jesus Christ will return to be "king over all the earth" (Zech14:9). The LORD subsequently directs Zechariah to symbolically crown Joshua, the high priest, as king, an object lesson to teach that when Christ returns He will in Himself unite the offices of King and High Priest. This was not a vision, but an actual ceremony conducted by the Prophet Zechariah, presumably shortly after the visions were given to him.

- [9] This object lesson is directed by "the word of the LORD".

- [10] "Heldai", "Tobijah", and "Jedaiah" were Jewish representatives who had come from "Babylon" (i.e., representing Jews who had remained in Babylon even after Cyrus' decree allowing them to return) bearing gifts of "silver and gold" (v11) to support the rebuilding of the Temple (cf. Ezr1:1-4). They were selected as witnesses to the ceremony, which was performed in "the house of Josiah". This "Josiah, son of Zephaniah" is not to be confused with the former king of Judah, whose father was Amon (Matt1:10).
- [11] The "silver and gold" were used to fashion "crowns" (i.e., plural, as the Lord Jesus Christ will return wearing "many crowns" as "KING OF KINGS"; cf. Rev19:12,16). These "crowns" were ceremonially placed on the head of "Joshua, ... the high priest", the namesake of **Jesus** (Cp., Luk1:31-33).
- [12] In this object lesson, Joshua the high priest represents "the man whose name is THE BRANCH", a Messianic title (cf. Isa4:2; Jer23:5; Zech3:8). That "he shall build the temple of the LORD" would be true of both Joshua, who along with Zerubbabel oversaw the rebuilding of the second temple, as well as the Messiah¹¹ who will oversee the building of the Millennial temple.
- [13] During the Millennial Kingdom, the Messiah Himself will "bear the glory" associated with the tabernacle and the original (Solomon's) temple (cf. Exod40:34; 1Kgs8:11; Ezek43:5; 44:4); there is no mention in Scripture of the "glory" ever filling either the second temple or the Tribulation temple.
- The profound revelation of this object lesson is that when Messiah comes, He will be a "priest" who is also crowned as a king who "shall sit and rule upon his throne" (cf. Luk1:31-33). While this was impossible in the original economy of Israel, in which the priests and kings necessarily came from different tribes (i.e., Levi and Judah), this will be possible for the Lord Jesus Christ as "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps110:4; Heb7:21). Note that the Lord Jesus Christ functions in the office of a priest (associated with His 1st coming) prior to being crowned king (associated with His 2nd coming). Only when the offices of priest and king are united in the Person of Messiah will there be "peace" (Cp., Isa9:6).
- [14] The "crowns" fashioned by "Helem" (i.e., Heldai), "Tobijah", "Jedaiah", and "Hen" (i.e., Josiah) for use in this ceremony were to be subsequently placed in the rebuilt (second) temple as a "memorial". Presumably these crowns were present in Herod's temple and could have been used to crown Jesus as king at His 1st coming (cf. Jn19:14).
- [15] "And they that are afar off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD" primarily pertains to the prophesied Millennial temple. Not only will all Jews scattered throughout the earth be regathered to

¹¹ Based on this verse of Scripture, Orthodox Jews today believe the Messiah will be recognized as the one who rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, this sets them up to be deceived by the Antichrist, whose covenant with Israel (Dan9:27) will presumably include a provision to allow the rebuilding of the temple during the Tribulation.

Israel and participate in the building of the Millennial temple (cf. Isa11:11-12; Matt24:31), but this likely foresees also the participation of the Gentiles (cf. Isa56:6-8; 60:7; Act2:39; Mk11:17; Luk19:46).

CHAPTER 7

QUESTIONS CONCERNING FASTS

The events of Chapters 7-8 took place just over two years after Zechariah received his 8 night visions (Cp., Zech1:1; 7:1). Zechariah's communication of the prophetic messages revealed in the visions motivated the Jews in Jerusalem to complete the building of the temple. Since the presence and blessing of the LORD had been restored, the question arose as to whether the fasts that had come to be observed, which commemorated the calamitous events that led up to the captivity of the nation and the destruction of the first temple, should be continued. The LORD answered this question through the prophet Zechariah.

- [1] This "word of the LORD" came to Zechariah just over two years after he received his 8 night visions (Cp., Zech1:1; 7:1). The "ninth month" (Chislev) is the month in which Hanukkah would come to be observed, several centuries hence.
- [2] A delegation of two men, "Sharezer" and "Regem-melech", was sent from "Bethel" to Jerusalem to make an official inquiry.
- [3] The official inquiry was made of the "priests" (i.e., Joshua and Zechariah) and the "prophets" (presumably Zechariah and Haggai). The question concerned whether a fast (v5) that had been instituted "in the fifth month" should be continued. The "fifth month" was Av, and the fast occurred on the 9th of Av (i.e., Tisha B'Av) to commemorate the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians¹² (cf. 2Kgs25:8-9; Jer52:12-13). This fast was nothing more than a human tradition, as it had not been ordained by the LORD. The phrase, "as I have done these so many years", seems to indicate the people had grown weary of observing these numerous fasts (cf. Zech8:19).
- [4] The LORD answered the inquiry through the prophet Zechariah.
- [5] The fast of the "seventh month" presumably refers to the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev23:27,32), which observed "those seventy years" outside the land of Israel during the Babylonian exile would have been nothing more than a "fast". The LORD seemingly questioned the people's sincerity in their observance of these "fasts" in Babylon.
- [6] The LORD further questions the sincerity of the people while in Babylon; whether fasting during times of mourning, or "eat[ing]" and "drink[ing]" on joyous occasions, was the intention of the people to honor the LORD (Cp., 1Cor10:31), or was it mere formalism (Cp., Isa29:13)?

¹² The second temple would subsequently be destroyed by the Romans on the very same day, the 9th of Av. For this reason, Jews observe Tisha B'Av to the present day in commemoration of the destruction of both the first and second temples.

- [7] The LORD reiterates His former rebuke (cf. Zech1:4) that they along with their fathers should have heeded the "words" of the "former prophets" (e.g., Jer7:5,23; Ezek18:30-32; Dan9:6-14), who called for the nation to repent and return to sincerely honoring and worshipping the LORD before the nation was carried away to Babylon.
- [9] The LORD exhorts Zechariah's generation that has returned from exile in Babylon to the land of Israel, which is now in possession of an operational temple, to return to the LORD by means of keeping the commandments embodied in the Mosaic covenant, so that the LORD may bless the nation.
- [10] Genuine "mercy and compassions" (v9) are codified in the Mosaic covenant, especially relative to the nation's treatment of "the widow, the fatherless, the stranger, [and] the poor" (e.g., Exod22:21-24; Deut24:14-18). The LORD's desire for the nation to honor its obligations under the Mosaic covenant reflected His desire to bless the nation.
- [11] Previous generations of the nation of Israel failed to honor its obligations under the Mosaic covenant, which is what resulted in the nation's most recent exile in Babylon (Cp., Lev26:33-39; Deut28:63-67).
- [12] Here, "adamant" means *hard*. The LORD's "wrath" poured out upon the nation of Israel was a result of their hard "hearts" (Cp., Rom2:5).
- [13] Eventually, after the prior generation of the nation of Israel had hardened their hearts and failed to repent, the LORD determined to judge the nation (with exile), after which even genuine repentance by the nation could not avert the LORD's judgment; for this reason, after a certain point Jeremiah was instructed by the LORD not to pray for the nation (cf. 7:14-16).
- [14] The LORD's rehearsal of His exiling Judah to Babylon is a pattern that will be repeated, when He "scatter[s] them with a whirlwind among all the nations", beginning in 70 AD and enduring to our present time. Note that when the land of Israel (i.e., "the pleasant land") is devoid of its people, it becomes "desolate".

CHAPTER 8

FASTS IN THE ESCHATOLOGICAL FUTURE

In Chapter 7, the LORD rebuked the nation of Israel for its insincere observance of fasts that commemorated the calamities that had befallen the nation, especially the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and Babylonian exile; the LORD made clear that these calamities had been a direct result of the nation's unfaithfulness under the Mosaic covenant. Chapter 8 prophetically foresees the fasts of Israel ultimately turned into joyous feasts as a result of the LORD's blessings to the elect nation by means of the Abrahamic (i.e., New) covenant in the eschatological future.

- [1] The world of the LORD comes "again" to Zechariah the prophet relative to the message of Chapter 7 (cf. Zech7:1).

- [2] The LORD is "jealous for Zion" (i.e., Israel), not jealous of Israel. Because He loves His elect nation (Deut7:6-8), He wants to fabulously bless Israel and set it "high above all nations" (Deut26:19; 28:1). Israel's unfaithfulness under the Mosaic covenant has prevented that from happening, but the Abrahamic covenant ensures that it will.
- [3] When the LORD said, "I am returned unto Zion" to "dwell in the midst of Jerusalem", He foresees the 2nd coming of Christ to establish the Millennial Kingdom; the "mountain of the LORD of hosts" connects to the consummation of world history in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan2:34-35,44; Cp., Isa2:2-4). Thus, the context is the eschatological future of the nation of Israel.
- [4] In the Millennial Kingdom, "Jerusalem" will be at peace, and coupled with the renewed long lifespans (cf. Isa65:20), "old men and old women" will abundantly populate its "streets".
- [5] This further illustrates the fact that Jerusalem will be at peace.
- [6] The prophecy of peace for Jerusalem sounded "marvelous" (i.e., beyond their power to imagine) to the "remnant" of Jews that had just returned from exile in Babylon, but such a consummation was not too "marvelous" for the LORD.
- [7] Because of His covenant commitments to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the LORD asserts that "I will save my people" (Cp., Rom11:26-29).
- [8] The LORD has committed to regather all Jews to the land of Israel when the Millennial Kingdom begins (cf. Isa11:11-12; Matt24:31; Mk13:27).
- [9] The LORD exhorts Israel to "hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets", by which He means Haggai and Zechariah (Cp., Ezr5:1-2).
- [10] Prior to the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, before the temple project was begun, the regathered nation of Israel was suffering from economic depression (e.g., "there was no hire for man") and strained political relationships with its near "neighbor[s]". These phenomena were Mosaic curses caused by Israel's failure to prioritize spiritual matters (i.e., rebuilding the temple; Cp., Hag1:8-9).
- [11] "But now" foresees a covenantal and dispensational change, from the Mosaic to the New covenant and from the dispensation of Law to Kingdom (Cp., Eph2:13).
- [12] These curses (v10) could be turned into blessings (cf. Deut28:1-14) by repentance on the part of "the remnant" that had returned from Babylon.
- [13] The LORD's salvation of the "house of Judah" and the "house of Israel" will come by means of the New covenant (Jer31:31-34), after which the regenerated nation of Israel will be a "blessing" to all other nations according to the Abrahamic covenant (Gen12:2-3; Rom11:12-15). Note that this prophetic promise is not conditioned upon Israel's repentance, such that it is sure, because it is grounded in the LORD's unconditional covenants with the nation of Israel.

- [14] Under the terms of the Mosaic covenant, the LORD was compelled to "punish" the nation of Israel when "their fathers provoked [Him] to wrath" (Cp., Jer31:29). God was not allowed to "repent" (i.e., change His mind) under that conditional covenant.
- [15] However, "in these days" (i.e., the eschatological future when the nation of Israel is brought into the New covenant) the LORD will be free to bless "Jerusalem" and "the house of Judah" because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Jer31:34; Ezek36:24-30).
- [16] "These are the things that [Israel] shall do ..." (vv16-17; i.e., in the future, under the New covenant, when every Jewish person is regenerated; cf. Jer31:33-34; Ezek36:26-27).
- [19] In the Millennial Kingdom, the "fasts" that Israel observed will become "cheerful feasts"; in other words, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ... for the former things are passed away" (Rev21:4). Note, the "fast of the fourth month" commemorated the fall of Jerusalem during Zedekiah's reign (cf. Jer39:2-3; 52:6-7), the "fast of the fifth" commemorated the destruction of the temple (i.e., Tisha B'Av), the "fast of the seventh" was part of the Day of Atonement (Lev23:32), and the "fast of the tenth" commemorated the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2Kgs25:1; Jer39:1; 52:4). Note that only the "fasts" of the fifth and seventh months had been included in the original inquiry (cf. Zech7:5).

JERUSALEM TO BE CENTER OF ALL WORSHIP

- [20] The context of this prophetic passage is clearly the Millennial Kingdom.
- [21] The implication is that the spiritual fervor at this time will include more than a regenerated Israel as the head of all nations, but the Gentile nations will also be included. Note that their desire to "pray" was a specific purpose of the temple (cf. Isa56:7; Matt21:13; Mk11:17; Luk19:46). Furthermore, the desire to "go" and "seek the LORD of hosts" implicitly assumes that He is present on the earth in a particular geographic location.
- [22] Here, "many peoples" and "nations" are explicitly mentioned, and worship of all nations is clearly centralized in Jerusalem (cf. Zech14:16-17; Cp., Deut12:11; 1Kgs11:36; 14:21).
- [23] Note that "ten" is the number closely connected to the Gentile nations. In the Millennial Kingdom, the Israel will finally realize God's original purpose for that elect nation, which is to be a "kingdom of priests" (Exod19:6) to lead all "nations" in the worship of JEHOVAH.

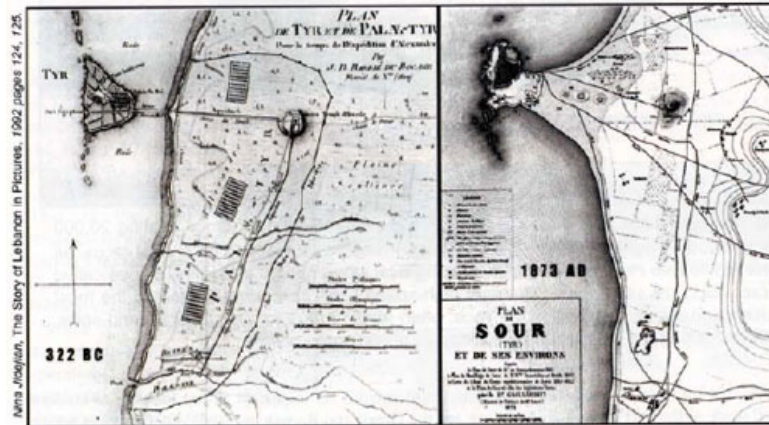
CHAPTER 9

THE RISE OF THE GREEK EMPIRE

The prophet Zechariah lived during the period of the Persian Empire (i.e., King Darius; cf. Zech1:1; 7:1), the second of the four Gentile kingdoms

prophesied by Daniel (Dan8:20) that will be persecutors of Israel during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luk21:24). Zechariah 9 looks into the prophetic future (from Zechariah's perspective) and anticipates the rise of the third Gentile kingdom, the Greek Empire (Dan8:21; cf. Zech9:13). Though the military conquest of the Levant during the meteoric rise of Alexander the Great would include the destruction of the peoples and cities surrounding Judah (Zech9:1-7), the LORD would providentially preserve Jerusalem (Zech9:8) in preparation for the (first) coming of Messiah (Zech9:9ff).

- [1] A "burden" is a prophetic oracle that includes a message of divine judgment. The "land of Hadrach" is an ancient designation for the land of the Arameans (i.e., modern Syria), of which "Damascus" was its most prominent city. The language used is idiomatic and suggests that the judgment in view will "rest" (i.e., abide) upon the land of Syria. The armies of Alexander the Great overran Syria in 332 BC. In watching the rapid conquests of Alexander, "the eyes of man" (i.e., all mankind), including "the tribes of Israel", would actually be "toward the LORD" (i.e., observing the LORD). That is, Alexander would be Jehovah's instrument of judgment upon the peoples surrounding the land of Israel.
- [2] Verses 2-4 concern Alexander's conquest of Phoenicia. "Tyre and Sidon", the most prominent cities of the Phoenicians, would also be included in judgment. "Tyre" was reputed to be "very wise"; the people of Tyre took great pride in their own wisdom, so much so that the prophet Ezekiel compared the pride of Lucifer to that of the king of Tyre (cf. Ezek28:11-17). Though most of the cities of Phoenicia quickly surrendered to Alexander and his Greek armies, including Sidon, Tyre refused to do so.
- [3] Tyre originally existed as an extremely well-fortified city on the coast of Phoenicia. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians besieged Tyre for 13 years (585-572 BC), which eventually fell and was destroyed. The surviving remnant migrated to an island approximately a half mile off shore, rebuilding the city of Tyre as a formidable island "stronghold" that came to be considered unconquerable. The wealth of Tyre, gained by facilitating international commerce as a result of its sea-faring prowess (v4), continued to increase.
- [4] Although Tyre was nominally willing to surrender to the Greek armies, they denied Alexander entrance into the city. The city was destroyed by Alexander in 332 BC following a siege of only 7 months. During the siege, Alexander's armies constructed a causeway from the mainland to the island, using in part the debris of the old city of Tyre that had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar over 250 years before (literally fulfilling a prophecy of Ezekiel; Ezek26:1-5); over time, Alexander's causeway has been greatly enlarged by tidal silting, turning what was originally an island into a peninsula (as shown in the 19th century map below). That Zechariah attributes the destruction of Tyre to "the Lord" indicates that Alexander the Great was used as Jehovah's instrument of judgment upon the prideful city.



Map of Tyre from 1873.

- [5] Verses 5-7 concern Alexander's conquest of Philistia. Four of the five prominent cities of the Philistines are mentioned: "Ashkelon", "Gaza", "Ekron", and "Ashdod" (v6; Gath is not mentioned, probably because it had been incorporated into Judah by this time). Ashkelon quickly surrendered to Alexander out of "fear". Gaza refused to surrender, but fell after a 5 month siege; Alexander had its "king", Batis, dragged through the city behind a chariot until he "perish[ed]".
- [6] The "Philistines" would never again be a people of significance (i.e., "pride") after their conquest by Alexander. Those who "dwel[t]" in their lands would be "bastard[s]" (i.e., illegitimate descendants).

Modern Palestinians. *Palestine* was the Roman (i.e., Latin) name for Philistia. Following the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 AD), a failed attempt of the Jews of Judea to win independence from the Roman Empire under the leadership of a messianic figure named Simon Bar Kokhba, Roman armies decimated many cities of Judea and implemented extreme Jewish persecution on those that remained, including forbiddance of Torah study, Sabbath observance, synagogue attendance, and circumcision. As a final affront to the Jews, the Roman Emperor Hadrian renamed their land the province of *Palestine*, the name of the ancient enemies of Israel. The people calling themselves modern Palestinians are a mongrel group of Arab peoples who are not legitimate descendants of the Philistines; the prophecy of Zechariah 9:6 that "a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod" has been fulfilled.

- [7] Following the Greek conquest of Philistia, the abominable practices of the pagan Philistines (which included the eating of bloody sacrifices offered to idols) would be put to an end. This was a necessary prerequisite for the land of the Philistines and its remaining inhabitants to be incorporated into the Land of Israel (i.e., in preparation for the Messianic Kingdom). The essence of the concluding thought is "he [of Philistia] that remaineth ... shall be like ... a Jebusite", expressing the idea that those continuing to dwell in this land would become loyal, albeit non-Jewish, citizens of

"Judah" akin to the "Jebusite[s]", the original inhabitants of Jerusalem whom David subjugated¹³.

- [8] During Alexander's conquest of the Levant, all its prominent cities were either subjugated or destroyed—with one exception. "I will encamp about mine house because of the army" prophesied that the LORD (Jehovah; v1) would sovereignly protect Jerusalem from the "army" of "him" (i.e., "Alexander") who would "passeth by" and "returneth", preserving it intact and undefiled for the coming of Messiah (v9). Alexander and his "army" passed Jerusalem twice, first on his march toward, and again when returning from, Egypt; on neither occasion did Alexander disturb the city.

The Testimony of Josephus. According to Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 11.8.5), when Alexander approached Jerusalem he was met by a delegation led by the Jewish High Priest Jaddua. When shown in the Book of Daniel the prophecy that the Persian empire would fall to the Greeks¹⁴, Alexander recognized himself as the "rough goat"¹⁵ and "first king" of "Grecia" (Dan8:21). As a result, he spared the city, consented to their request to continue observance of the Law of Moses, and waived their tribute payment (formerly to the Persians, subsequently to the Greeks) every seventh year.

THE COMING OF MESSIAH

Jews who understood the prophecy of Daniel should have known that the arrival of Messiah would not occur at the time of Alexander the Great (c. 330 BC; e.g., Dan9:25), but during the (Roman) empire that would follow that of the Greeks (cf. Dan7:8-13). Thus, their deliverance from the armies of Alexander would come by other (albeit equally providential) means. Nonetheless, the LORD's almost singular preservation of Jerusalem during the Greek conquest of the Levant was essential in preparation for the future coming of Messiah.

- [9] In contrast to Alexander who came as an exalted and conquering king, Messiah would come to "Jerusalem" as one who was both "just" and "lowly" (Cp., Matt11:29; Phil2:3-7). Messiah's humility was exemplified by his entrance into the city "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass", a prophecy fulfilled at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matt21:1-9; Mk11:1-10; Luk19:28-38; Jn12:12-15); fulfillment of this prophecy was the *terminus ad quem* of Daniel's 69 Weeks (Dan9:25), fulfilled to the very day (Luk19:41-44). Since an "ass" is a beast of burden not fit for use in battle, the symbolism is that of a King who comes in

¹³ Araunah/Ornan the Jebusite sold King David the land upon which the Temple would be constructed (cf. 2Sam24:18-25; 1Chron21:18-30).

¹⁴ That Alexander and the Greeks would conquer the mighty Persian empire was an extraordinary accomplishment and by no means expected. The Persians were famed for their supposed one-million-man army. While this number may have been somewhat exaggerated, the Persians generally outnumbered the Greeks on the field of battle by 20-to-1.

¹⁵ The "goat" was used as a national emblem by the Greeks. *Ægae*, the capital of ancient Macedonia, means *goat* and is the basis of the name for the *Ægean* sea on the east coast of Greece; Alexander the Great named his only son *Ægus*, which means *the son of a goat*.

peace¹⁶; in a similar way Solomon, who reigned over Judah during an extended period of peace, presented himself as king by entering "Jerusalem" riding on David's mule (1Kgs1:32-37). Messiah's entrance into "Jerusalem" in this prophesied manner was His formal presentation of Himself to the nation of Israel as "thy king", and the nation's ultimate obligation under the Mosaic Covenant was to "set him as king over thee whom the LORD thy God shall choose" (Deut17:15).

The "salvation" Messiah would bring at His first coming would not be physical deliverance of Israel from their enemies, but a genuine propitiation for sins (Jn1:29; 1Jn2:2) that "the blood of bulls and of goats" could never accomplish (Heb10:4). For this reason, the people of God are exhorted to "rejoice greatly" and "shout".

- [10] Between vv9-10 is a vast chronological gap, into which the entire Church Age will be unexpectedly inserted; it is unnoted here since its very existence was a "mystery" unrevealed until the Apostle Paul (Eph3:1-6). This verse looks ahead to the return (i.e., second coming) of Messiah, at which time He will bring "peace unto the nations" in the kingdom He establishes, one in which He will exercise "dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (fulfilling God's original purpose in His creation of Man; Gen1:26-27). In the coming Kingdom, Messiah will "cut off the chariot of Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off", signifying it will be a time of peace utterly free from war (Cp., Isa2:1-4).

PROPHECY OF JEWISH VICTORY OVER GREEK PAGANISM

Persian rule over the Jews did not interfere with their worship of the LORD. Cyrus allowed the Jews who had been dispersed by the Babylonians to return to Judah and rebuild both Jerusalem and the Temple (Ezr1:1-4). However, under Greek rule the freedom of the Jews to worship the LORD as required by the Mosaic Covenant was increasingly curtailed. The religious conflict between the Jews and the Greeks reached its zenith under Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus ruled the (Greek) Seleucid empire, which included Israel, from 175-164 BC. He purposed to enforce Hellenism (which included religious paganism) throughout his empire, but encountered extreme resistance in Israel. He was one of history's infamous persecutors of the Jews. He forbid circumcision, Sabbath observance, Torah possession/reading, and all forms of Jewish worship under penalty of death. Most offensive was his sacrifice of a pig on the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem, and his subsequent erection of an idol of Zeus in the Holy of Holies; this historical event, designated "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan11:31), foreshadows an analogous offense to be performed by the future Antichrist (Cp., Dan9:27; Matt24:15; 2Thess2:4; Rev13:7,14-15). The persecution of the Jews under Antiochus ended in a revolt led by the Maccabees (a family of Jewish priests), which temporarily threw off the Seleucid oppression of Israel.

- [11] "As for thee" returns the focus to the regathered Jews of Zechariah's generation who are struggling to rebuild the Temple (a prerequisite

¹⁶ In contrast, at His second coming Christ returns as a conquering king riding on a white horse and leading the armies of heaven to deliver Israel from her enemies at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev19:11-16).

to the coming of Messiah; Dan9:26). The "pit in which there is no water" seems to be an allusion to Joseph's confinement by his brothers in such a pit¹⁷ (Gen37:24), typologically signifying the death of Messiah (of whom Joseph is the greatest of all the O.T. types); this expression becomes a Hebrew idiom for *Sheol*/Hell. Thus, by "the blood of thy covenant", by which is meant Christ's blood which inaugurates the New Covenant (Matt26:28; Luk22:20), Messiah will release the "prisoners" (i.e., O.T. believers who died before Christ) from *Sheol*/Hell (Cp., Ps68:18; Eph4:8-10).

- [12] This verse is likely a "double" entendre. If the Jews will "turn to the stronghold" (i.e., rely on the LORD; v14), these "prisoners of hope" will be both physically delivered from Greek oppression as well as resurrected from *Sheol*/Hell in order to participate in the future Messianic kingdom (cf. Dan12:1-3).
- [13] Speaking metaphorically, the LORD views Himself as a warrior having "Judah" as His "bow" and "Ephraim" as His arrows, thus identifying intimately with His people Israel and their coming struggle against "Greece". As there was no armed conflict between the Jews and the Greeks at the time of Alexander, this verse looks ahead to the Maccabean revolt during the reign of Antiochus IV (c. 167-164 BC).
- [14] The LORD is viewed as a storm "over" the land of Israel, with "lightning" as His "arrow[s]" and thunder as His "trumpet". Storms (i.e., "whirlwinds") that came from the desert region "south" of Israel were the most violent.
- [15] In the armed conflict between the Jews and their Greek oppressors at the time of Antiochus, "the LORD of hosts shall defend them".
- [16] Under the leadership of Judas Maccabee and his brothers, the Jews will be victorious (cf. Dan11:32-35). Believing Jews are referred to as God's "flock" (Cp., Jn10:11-16); "like the stones of a crown", the converted nation of Israel will be an item of adornment treasured by the LORD (Cp. Isa62:3; Mal3:17).
- [17] This verse alludes to the testimony of "the flock of [God's] people" (v16) during the Messianic Kingdom. Both the "goodness" and "beauty" of the LORD are recognized to be "great" (Ps27:4; Isa11:1-10; 33:17). The Kingdom will be a time when the nation of Israel is abundantly blessed with material prosperity (e.g., "grain", "new wine"; cf. Isa62:8-9; 65:21-23; Amos9:13-14) as promised under the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Lev26:3-13; Deut28:1-14).

CHAPTER 10

THE REGATHERING OF ISRAEL IN PREPARATION FOR THE KINGDOM

Zechariah foresees that the Jewish people will be dispersed from the land of Israel, but that God will regather them in preparation for the coming of Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. This was true before the first coming, in that the Jews were brought back from exile in Babylon (Jer29:10); this will be true before the second coming, in that the Jews

¹⁷ Such pits in ancient Israel were generally man-made cisterns, so the fact that it had "no water" was unusual.

will be regathered from a worldwide diaspora that began in 70 AD (Isa11:11-12).

- [1] Agricultural productivity in ancient Israel depended upon the former and "latter rain"¹⁸ (Cp., Hos6:3; Joel2:23; Jas5:7), which came from "the LORD" as a blessing promised under the Mosaic Covenant (Deut11:14), and for which Israel was to "ask of the LORD" (i.e., pray). The obedience of Israel under the reign of King Messiah during the Millennial Kingdom will bring timely rains that result in the promised blessing of agricultural abundance (both literally true as well as being a general figure of material prosperity).
- [2] In contrast to faithful dependence upon "the LORD" (i.e., JEHOVAH, the God of Israel; Exod5:1), Israel has throughout its history worshiped vain "idols", sought lying "diviners", and desired "false dreams" (all pagan/occult practices forbidden by God; Deut18:9-14), none of which provided "comfort". As a "flock" with "no shepherd" is destined for disaster, so goes Israel apart from the LORD (cf. Jer50:17). Practically, the circumstance of having "no shepherd" refers to the fact that there has been no king in Israel since Zedekiah (1Kgs24:17; Jer37:1; Matt1:11), and there will not be another until Messiah/Christ (cf. Luk1:31-33).

The LORD is the Shepherd of Israel (Ps23:1), and Jesus Christ declared Himself to be "the good shepherd" (Jn10:11,14); note that all the major O.T. types of Jesus Christ are *shepherds*¹⁹ (e.g., Abel, Joseph, Moses, David).

- [3] Here, the LORD's "flock" refers to "the house of Judah". While it is not the case that every Jewish member of "the house of Judah" in Zechariah's generation was faithful to the LORD, nonetheless "the house of Judah" is being used here as a type of the believing remnant of the nation of Israel. The previous verse asserted that Judah had "no shepherd", meaning no legitimate or good shepherd (i.e., a king). But they had had many false "shepherds" (i.e., apostate Jewish leaders; cf. Ezek34:2-4,8-10). They had also had many "goats", a Hebrew word actually meaning *he-goats*, which were male goats used to lead the "flock" (Cp., Jer50:8), a reference to Gentile rulers who have oppressed Judah (Cp., Matt25:32-33). The poetic language of the verse speaks of a future day in which the LORD will rescue His "flock" from wicked leaders/oppressors and restore it to a place of prominence and dignity (Rev19:11-21).
- [4] The prepositional phrase, "out of him", refers back to "Judah" (v3). Genealogically, Messiah comes "out of [Judah]" (Gen49:10; Matt1:3,16). Messiah is characterized as the "corner[stone]" (i.e., the rejected One who ultimately rebuilds the nation; cf. Ps118:22; 1Pet2:6) and the "nail" (i.e., the sure and immovable anchor point; cf. Isa22:22-24), who will come as a conquering King who forcefully puts down "every oppressor" of His people (Rev19:11-21).

¹⁸ The former and latter rains in Israel become types of the 1st and 2nd Comings of Messiah/Christ (cf. Hos5:15-6:3).

¹⁹ In the Dispensation of Grace (Eph3:2), during which the nation of Israel is temporarily set aside (Rom11:11; Act15:16) and God is "visit[ing] the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name" (Act15:14), the people of God are organized into local churches, each of which is to have a shepherd (i.e., pastor; cf. 1Pet5:1-4).

- [5] When Messiah comes, "they" (i.e., "the house of Judah"; vv3,6) will overcome and "tread down" all their enemies (Rev19:11-21). Note that "the LORD is with them" in reference to the Messianic title Immanuel (Isa7:14; Matt1:23).
- [6] Messiah's coming will be to "strengthen ... Judah" and "save ... Joseph" (i.e., the whole, undivided nation of Israel) and to "place them" back into the Promised Land, from which "the LORD, their God" had "cast them off" in 70 AD (in ultimate fulfillment of the Land Covenant²⁰; Deut30:3-5).
- [7] "Joseph" was mentioned in v6, and here "Ephraim" is included. The emphasis is on the fact that the eschatological restoration of the nation will include the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah (Cp., Jer31:31).
- [8] Here, "hiss" has the sense of a *whistle*, or *call* issued by the LORD indicating it is time for the Jews to return home (Cp., Isa5:26). The completion of the "[re]gather[ing]" of the Jews to Israel will not occur until after they have been "redeemed" (which takes place after the Church Age, during the Tribulation; Rom11:25-27).
- [9] The worldwide diaspora of the Jewish people is foreseen. Whereas the first dispersion(s) of the Jews was only to Assyria (in the case of Israel) and Babylon (in the case of Judah), the second dispersion would be worldwide in scope; since 70 AD, the Jews have been scattered "among the peoples" and "in far countries". However, they will "[re]turn again" to the land of Israel (cf. Isa11:11-12; Matt24:31).
- [10] The LORD will regather the Jewish people from Gentile lands back into the land He has promised to give them. In this future, eschatological regathering, the Jews will return to both "Gilead" and "Lebanon". While "Gilead" was part of the promised land (east of the Jordan river) originally occupied by the Jews under Moses (Num32:1,29), "Lebanon" has never been possessed; yet it must be according to the land grant made to Abraham (Gen15:18). The expression "and place shall not be found for them" is figurative language meaning that when the Jews return to the Promised Land for the final time, their numbers will be greatly multiplied.
- [11] This verse is a highly figurative description communicating the truth that when the LORD begins to regather the Jewish people to the Land of Israel (the second time; cf. Isa11:11-12), every impediment to their return will be overcome. Israel's ancient enemies of "Assyria" and "Egypt" are mentioned as examples from history, both of which had leaders who were types of Antichrist (i.e., Sennacherib and Pharaoh).
- [12] And "I" (i.e., the LORD; cf. Zech10:1) "will strengthen them in the LORD". This recursive, mystical assertion hints at the plurality of Persons in the Godhead (i.e., the Trinity), latent in the O.T. (e.g., Isa48:16) but explicitly revealed in the N.T. (cf. Jn10:30; 1Jn5:7).

²⁰ While a partial regathering of Jews to the land of Israel began in the late 1800's and continues to the present day, it will not be completed until the Second Coming of Christ (cf. Matt24:30-31).

The expression "they [Jews] shall walk up and down" signifies possession of the Land (Cp., Gen13:14-17; Num13:2; Zech1:10-11).

CHAPTER 11

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL APOSTASY

In Zechariah 11, the burden of the prophet turns dark. Israel's ultimate return to her Land to enjoy the promised blessings of the millennial kingdom is to be preceded by national apostasy, including rejection of the good shepherd (i.e., Messiah; vv7-14) and the coming of the foolish shepherd (i.e., Antichrist; vv15-17).

JUDGMENT ON THE LAND FOR REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH

Though apparently out of order chronologically, verses 1-6 give a prophecy of divine judgment upon the Land of Israel that will occur as a result of Israel's rejection of Messiah at His first coming (prophesied in vv7-14). While all of the Levant today appears quite desolate, that is not the description of it given in the O.T. (cf. Gen13:10; Num13:23-27). Its current state of desolation began in the 1st century as a result of divine judgment (Lev26:32-32).

- [1] Throughout O.T. history, "Lebanon" was famously known for her "cedars" (cf. Ps104:16; Song5:15; Ezek27:5); Israel benefited greatly from Lebanon's forests, as they were indispensable in the construction of the Temple (1Kgs5:1-12). However, Lebanon is part of the land promised to Israel (Gen15:18), and it will be judged as a result of Israel's rejection of Messiah; her "cedars" will be devoured by "fire".
- [2] "Bashan", the northernmost portion of the Land east of the Jordan river occupied by Israel, was abundant in "fir trees" and "oaks"; those "vintage" (i.e., old growth) "forest[s]" will be destroyed.
- [3] Two groups are depicted as in despair as a result of the desolation of the land: 1) "shepherds", as the land will no longer nourish their flocks (Cp., Deut32:14; Num32:1-4), and 2) "young lions", as the land will no longer support their "pride" (Cp., Judg14:15; 1Sam17:34; 1Kgs20:36).
- [4] Zechariah as a prophet of "the LORD" is commanded to "feed the flock of the slaughter". As the object of this command, the "flock" is the nation of Israel, which has been given over to "slaughter" as a result of God's determination to judge the nation. The very fact that the prophet is commanded to continue ministering to the nation is an indication that the divine judgment they must endure will not result in their extermination (Cp., Lev26:40-44; Rom11:1-2,11).
- [6] The divine desolation of the Land of Israel will occur while the Jewish people are dispersed from it; while in exile in foreign lands (during most of the Church Age), the Jews will be persecuted by their Gentile hosts. This is the ultimate "curse" of the Mosaic covenant (Lev26:32-39; Deut28:63-68).

REJECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (MESSIAH)

- [7] Zechariah accepts the charge to "feed the flock of slaughter" (i.e., the nation of Israel given over to judgment). The "poor of the flock" is a reference to the righteous, believing remnant²¹ of Jews within the rebellious nation (Cp., Ps14:6; Isal:9; Matt5:3; Mk12:37).

Object Lesson. The prophet Zechariah begins acting out a prophetic object lesson for the nation of Israel in which he is a type of Messiah who comes as "**the good shepherd**" (Jn10:14; cf. Ps23). He takes up the "two staves" of a shepherd, one a stout club used to drive away wild predators that would attack the flock and the other a crooked staff used to retrieve wandering sheep (Cp., "rod" and "staff"; Ps23:4); he names the one "Beauty" and the other "Bands".

- [8] The "three shepherds" that Messiah "cut off in one month" at His first coming is a wildly debated topic. The best view may be to interpret them as the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees, the three sects of Judaism that openly opposed Him, each of which He decisively repudiated in the weeks leading up to the crucifixion (Matt22); they are said to have "abhorred" Messiah (Cp., Luk19:14), and Messiah is said to have "loathed them" (cf. Matt23:13-36).
- [9] In response to His rejection by the nation of Israel at His first coming, Messiah will (temporarily) set aside His flock. There will be a period of time in which He will not shepherd Israel, neither "feed[ing]" them, nor caring for their infirmities/afflictions, rather allowing them to "die"; this ultimately alludes to the setting aside of the nation of Israel during the Church Age (cf. Rom11:1-25). Finally, "let the rest eat, every one, the flesh of another" is a dark allusion to the cannibalism that resulted during the Roman siege of Jerusalem that occurred in 70 AD (Cp., Jer19:9; Lam2:20; 4:10) as a judgment on the nation (Luk19:42-44).
- [10] To portray Messiah's prophesied refusal to care for (i.e., bless; cf. Lev26:3-13; Deut28:1-14) the nation of Israel, Zechariah breaks the "staff" called "Beauty"²², which symbolizes the ultimate and catastrophic breaking of the Mosaic covenant.
- [11] Here, "that day" is the day the nation of Israel catastrophically broke the Mosaic covenant by rejecting Jesus (Messiah) as king at His first coming (Jn19:14-15; cf. Deut17:15). The "poor of the flock" is the remnant of Jews within the nation of Israel that believed in Jesus as Messiah at His first coming (e.g., Simeon, Anna, the disciples/apostles; Rom11:5). They are described as those "that waited upon me" and "knew that it was the word of the LORD" (Cp., Jn10:14,27).
- [12] This verse prophesies the betrayal of Messiah at His first coming for the "price [of] thirty *pieces* of silver". The price is offensive, as it was the value of a slave (Exod21:32). This prophecy was fulfilled

²¹ Since the Mosaic Covenant was a national covenant, a remnant of righteous Jews suffered under divine discipline (Lev26:14-39; Deut28:15-62) for the sins of the nation as a whole; this will not be true for the nation of Israel under the New Covenant (Jer31:29-32).

²² The Hebrew word translated "Beauty" connotes *grace/favor* (Cp., Ps27:4; 90:17).

literally when "Judas Iscariot" agreed to "deliver" Jesus to the "chief priests" for "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt26:14-15).

- [13] Continuing the prophecy, the payment is sarcastically referred to as a "goodly price" (i.e., the life of Messiah was valued to be no more than that of a menial servant). The payment would be "cast to the potter in the house of the LORD". This was fulfilled literally when Judas, afterward attempting to return the money to the chief priests, "cast down the pieces of silver in the temple" (Matt27:5); being blood money, the priests could not return it to the temple "treasury", so instead used it to buy a "potter's field" in which to "bury strangers" (i.e., a "potter" ended up receiving the money used to betray Messiah; Matt27:6-7).
- [14] The symbolic act of Messiah breaking His (Mosaic) covenant relationship with the nation of Israel, begun in v10, is completed in this verse with the breaking of the second "staff" called "Bands"²³. Thus, during the Church Age that follows Israel's rejection of Messiah at His first coming, the "brotherhood between Judah and Israel" will end (i.e., Israel will cease to exist as a nation).

THE COMING OF THE FOOLISH SHEPHERD (ANTICHRIST)

Israel's rejection of the Good Shepherd (i.e., Messiah) not only brings the ultimate curse of the Law upon the nation, which is dispersion of the Jews out of the land of Israel and desolation of the land itself (Lev26:22-23), but allows for the eventual advent of the Antichrist in the place of Christ.

Will Israel Accept Antichrist? No. Largely because of John 5:43, some believe that the Jews will accept Antichrist, in the sense of believing him to be their Messiah. This will not be the case, for several reasons. First, Antichrist will be a Gentile (Dan9:26-27), whereas Messiah must be "the son of David" (Matt22:42). Second, Antichrist will be the ruler of the Revived Roman Empire (Dan7:7-8,19-25), whereas Messiah will be the king of Israel (Luk1:31-33). Third, any person who worships the Antichrist will be damned for eternity (Rev14:9-11), whereas "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom11:26). As the Tribulation approaches, the unregenerate nation of Israel will sign a peace treaty with the Antichrist as the ruler of the Roman Empire (Dan9:27), believing he can ensure their peace and security (Cp., Isa31:1); but they will not believe him to be Messiah. As the nation of Israel chose Barabbas over Jesus (Matt27:15-26), that choice was a rejection of Jesus as Messiah, but not a reception of Barabbas as such.

- [15] The "instruments" of the good shepherd were the "two staves" (v7) used to defend and gather the flock. The "foolish shepherd" (i.e., Antichrist) will have different "instruments". The implication is that the "foolish shepherd" will not be motivated by the best interests of the flock; Antichrist's covenant with the nation of Israel (Dan9:27) will merely be a diabolical means to an end, the

²³ The Hebrew word translated "Bands" connotes *unity*, or that which binds together disparate parts.

safety and security of Israel will not be his genuine intention (cf. Isa28:14-15).

- [16] It is "the LORD" (v15) who "will raise up [the foolish] shepherd" (i.e., Antichrist) when the Lamb opens the first seal judgment (Rev6:1-2); whereas it is Satan's desire to do so, he is restrained until the LORD allows (cf. 2Thess2:6-8). The "foolish shepherd" does not care for the flock, but feeds himself upon them; so the Antichrist's motive will not be the security of the nation of Israel, but its destruction (cf. Rev12:13).
- [17] A Portrait of Antichrist. Antichrist is called an "idol shepherd", for he will demand the whole world worship his image (Rev13:15). He "leaveth the flock", meaning he will forsake the covenant he makes with the nation of Israel (Dan9:27) at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev12:13). He will have two distinguishing physical characteristics. Because of injuries caused by a "sword", his "arm" will be permanently disabled, and his "right eye" will be "darkened". Presumably, these are permanent disabilities resulting from his attempted assassination, from which he returns as if from the dead (Rev13:3,14).

CHAPTER 12

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE

The advent of the Antichrist initiates the 7-year Tribulation period, called in Scripture "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer30:7) and the 70th "week" of Daniel (Dan9:27). During the final three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation, Antichrist's singular mission will be the destruction of the nation of Israel (Matt24:15-22; Rev12:13-17) in order to prevent the second coming of Christ (Hos5:15; Matt23:39); Israel's only hope for deliverance will be the return of Christ (Rev19:11-21).

- [1] Zechariah 12-14 represents the second "burden" revealed by the prophet (Cp., Zech9:1). The surety of this prophetic "burden" is guaranteed by "the LORD", who is the Creator not only of the physical universe but also the immaterial "spirit of man".
- [2] Near the end of the 7-year Tribulation period, Antichrist's attempt to destroy Israel will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon (Rev14:19-20; 16:13-16). God "will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling" (i.e., a goblet filled with intoxicating drink, all of whom drink it will "tremble", stumble, reel about uncontrollably). Indeed, "all the peoples" will become as if drunk over the issue of "Jerusalem" and lay "siege" against "Judah" and "Jerusalem" (i.e., Israel).
- [3] This assault on "Jerusalem" will occur "in that day" (i.e., the Day of the LORD, and specifically the Battle of Armageddon) as a result of "all the nations"²⁴ of the earth" sending armies against Israel (Joel3:2; Zeph3:8; Zech12:3; 14:2). Here, Jerusalem is described as

²⁴ Here is the U.S.A. in prophecy. Whereas America has been the singular ally of the regathered nation of Israel since 1948, this will change at some point. As the end approaches, America will join "all the nations of the earth" in opposition to God's declared will for the nation of Israel.

a "burdensome stone", a burden so heavy it thwarts all attempts to lift; those who "burden themselves" with Jerusalem will be "cut in pieces". This description would seem to accurately characterize the geopolitical intrigue associated with the nation of Israel, and especially the city of Jerusalem, even today (and it will only intensify during the Tribulation).

- [4] Expressed using the language and military accouterments of the day in which the prophecy was written, this verse asserts that "the LORD" will supernaturally intervene in defense of Israel "in that day" (i.e., Armageddon; Cp., 7:19-22).
- [5] Since the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948, God has graciously blessed the Jewish people with decisive victories in the existential wars she has had to endure (i.e., 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, etc.); however, this unparalleled success in battle has made the people of Israel, and especially the government of Israel, trust in themselves and their own perceived military might, rather than trusting in the LORD (i.e., the Jews today remain an unbelieving people). During the Tribulation, this will change. The "governors of Judah" (i.e., the government of Israel) and "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" will "say in their heart" (i.e., with deep conviction, belief), "My strength [is] in the LORD of hosts, [our] God". This is the beginning of conversion of the nation of Israel.
- [6] Because of their genuine faith, the "governors of Judah" will be empowered to perform miraculous exploits in defense of "Jerusalem" and its inhabitants.
- [7] The LORD will "save the tents of Judah first". The "tents" are temporary dwelling places of the citizens of "Judah", likely a reference to the deliverance of the Jews who fled the land of Israel at the midpoint of the Tribulation to seek refuge in Bozrah (cf. Isa63:1-6; Matt24:15-20; Rev12:6,14-17). The LORD's supernatural deliverance of the nation of Israel will be so spectacular and compelling that the Jews will never again "magnify themselves".
- [8] The LORD will empower "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" to fight with supernatural might in its defense, though the city will ultimately fall to the forces of Antichrist in the days immediately preceding the return of Christ (cf. Zech14:2).
- [9] The fall of Jerusalem notwithstanding, the LORD "will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" at the second coming of Christ (cf. Joel3:12-17; Rev19:15-21).

ISRAEL'S CONVERSION

- [10] National repentance and trusting the LORD (v5) is one thing, but genuine (saving) faith for the Jewish people is not a return to Judaism. For the Jews, the issue of receiving Jesus Christ (i.e., Messiah) has been "a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense" (Ps118:22; 1Pet2:8). For Israel to be saved, she must "confess ... [Jesus is Lord], and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead" (Rom10:9).

JEHOVAH speaks directly in this verse. In that day, He will "pour" His "Spirit of grace" (in contrast to the Law; Jnl:17) out "upon the house of David" (Joel2:28-32), leading the Jewish people to "look [unto] Me, whom they have pierced" (cf. Num21:8-9; Isa45:22). It is the turning to Jesus (whom they crucified; Act2:36), and accepting Him as Messiah, that completes the conversion of Israel²⁵. It is not the second coming of Christ that results in Israel's salvation; rather, the salvation of Israel is a prerequisite for the Lord's return (Lev26:40-46; Hos5:15-6:3; Matt23:39).

- [11] "In that day", the day in which Israel accepts the fact that they put to death Messiah at His first coming, there will be "great mourning in Jerusalem". The mourning at that time is compared to the "mourning of Hadadrimmon²⁶, in the Valley of Megiddon", an allusion to the mourning of Judah over the death of the righteous King Josiah (2Kgs23:29-30; 2Chron35:24-25).
- [12] Verses 12-13 relate the nation-wide extent of the "mourning" (i.e., conversion/salvation) of the Jewish people. Descendants of "David" and "Nathan" (the prophet; cf. 2Sam12:1) will be saved.
- [13] Descendants of "Levi" and "Shimei" (a descendant of King Saul, and ancestor of Mordecai, who cursed King David on his return to Jerusalem after the death of Absalom; cf. 2Sam16:5-8; Est2:5) will be saved.
- [14] The extent of the conversion/salvation of the Jews will be total. All individual Jews who "shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt24:13), such that at the return of Christ the nation of Israel will be completely regenerate (Rom11:26). In contrast, those Jews who refuse to believe will die during the Tribulation (Ezek20:33-38; Zech13:8).

CHAPTER 13

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL CLEANSING

"For [Israel], being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom10:3). The Apostle Paul's description of the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel has been true since the first coming of Christ. Following the conversion of Israel, its great need will be for national cleansing. Some of what follows is a preview of cleansing that will not occur until after the return of Christ (see PROPHETS AND PROPHECY in the introductory section of the notes; p. 2).

- [1] "In that day" is the day of Israel's conversion/salvation. The "fountain opened to the house of David" is the indwelling Holy Spirit promised to all who believe as a blessing of the New Covenant (Joel2:28-29; Ezek36:24-29; Jn7:37-39; 14:16-17).

²⁵ Note that Israel is back in the Promised Land when converted, so the nation must have been regathered in unbelief (cf. Ezek37:1-14).

²⁶ Hadadrimmon was a town in the valley of Megiddo, apparently the place of King Josiah's death.

- [2] The "idols" that must be removed "out of the land" are images of the Beast (i.e., Antichrist; Rev13:14-15). The "prophets" that must be removed include the False Prophet (Rev13:11-14; 19:20). Finally, all "unclean spirit[s]" will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit along with Satan (Rev20:1-3; Cp., Isa24:21-22).
- [3] The context of "prophesy[ing]" in this verse is the false "prophets" of v2; in view are those who "speakest lies in the name of the LORD". No false prophet will ever again be tolerated in the land of Israel. In the Kingdom, false prophets will be executed as was commanded under the Law of Moses (cf. Deut13:1-9; 18:20).
- [4] The false "prophets" will repent of their "prophes[ying]", and they will no longer wear a "rough garment" (Lit., *hairy* garment; Cp., 2Kgs1:8; Matt3:4) in order to appear as a prophet.
- [5] When confronted, the false "prophet" will deny having formerly been a prophet, attempting to claim he was a simple farmer. Such attempts to deceive in order to escape judgment will fail.

--- MESSIANIC INTERLUDE BEGINS ---

- [6] As an example of the ultimate false prophet, who attempted to portray himself as righteous rather than diabolical, this verse is an allusion to Judas Iscariot (it is also yet another instance of 1st and 2nd coming prophecies smeared together, out of order, with no indication in the text that they will be events separated by thousands of years; see PROPHETS AND PROPHECY in the introductory section of the notes; p. 2). He associated himself with the "friends" of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn15:15), yet betrayed Him (Jn13:2). The prophetic import of this verse should not be missed; here is a clear prophecy that Messiah would be betrayed by a "friend", and that His death would include "wounds" in His "hands" (i.e., crucifixion²⁷; Cp., Ps22:16; Jn20:27).

Text Note. Unbelieving Jewish and liberal Christian scholarship have gone to extraordinary lengths to confuse the translation as "hands" (KJV) in an attempt to obscure a clear Messianic prophecy that unequivocally points to Jesus Christ. Modern English versions of the Bible have suffered serious corruption under such pseudo-scholarship. Rather than "in thine hands" (KJV), the Hebrew phrase is rendered as: "between thine arms" (ASV), "on your chest" (HCSB/CSB), "on your back" (ESV), "on your chest and back" (TLB), "between your arms" (NASB), "on your body" (NIV), "between your arms" (NKJV), "on your chest" (NRSV), and "on your back" (RSV). As the KJV, Young's Literal Translation properly renders it as "in thy hands". There should be absolutely no controversy concerning this Hebrew word (*yad*), as it is translated "hand" 1,359 times in the O.T. (e.g., Gen8:9).

- [7] With the Messiah and His betrayal at His first coming introduced in v6, that prophetic subject is continued. It is the LORD speaking, and He prophesies the death of "my shepherd" (i.e., Messiah). He refers to the Messiah as "the man who is my fellow"; this expression juxtaposes the humanity and deity of Messiah. Messiah will be a

²⁷ Note that at the time in which this prophecy was recorded by Zechariah (i.e., 6th century BC), the Roman Empire did not yet exist, much less practice crucifixion as a form of execution; the mode of execution under the Law of Moses was stoning.

"man", but He is also referred to as "my fellow" by the LORD; the Hebrew word translated "fellow" means *relation* or *associate*, and in this context carries the connotation of one whom the LORD considers to be His equal. Upon the death of Messiah, His "sheep" (i.e., disciples) will be scattered; this verse is quoted as a fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus Himself (Matt26:31; Mk14:2). Having "smit[ten]" the "shepherd", the LORD will then "turn [His] hand [**against**]"²⁸ the little ones", a prophecy of the persecution and martyrdom of the Jewish apostles/disciples of Jesus (cf. Jn15:18-20; Act8:1-4).

--- MESSIANIC INTERLUDE ENDS ---

- [8] Returning to the cleansing of the nation of Israel, no unbelieving Jew will be allowed to enter the Messianic/Millennial Kingdom (cf. Jn3:3-7). During the Tribulation, those Jews who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as both "Lord and Christ" (Act2:36; Rom10:9), and thus remain unconverted, are "rebels" that will be "purged out" (Ezek20:33-38). Tragically, the unbelieving Jews will comprise "two parts" (i.e., two-thirds) of the nation, with the remaining "third" being the believing remnant (Rom9:27).
- [9] The "third part" of Jews alive during the Tribulation "shall call upon my name" and be saved (Joel2:32; Rom10:13). This believing remnant of Jews will be supernaturally preserved through the Tribulation to enter the Kingdom as the regenerate nation of Israel (Rom11:26).

CHAPTER 14

THE RETURN OF MESSIAH

While some of Zechariah's prior revelations included allusions and interludes concerning the first coming of Messiah, Zechariah 14 is wholly devoted to the second coming of Messiah and the righteous Kingdom He will establish on earth, which is the grand theme and overarching purpose of the plan of God²⁹ (Gen1:26; Ps2:6-13; Rev19:15; cf. Matt6:9-10).

- [1] During "the day of the LORD", near the end of the 7-year Tribulation in the military campaign that is Armageddon, the enemies of Israel will take "spoil" from the Jews who remain in Jerusalem (Cp., Matt24:15-20).
- [2] Scripture records the city of Jerusalem being conquered/destroyed three times in history: 1) by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (2Chron36:17-20), 2) by Titus in 70 AD (Luk21:20-24), and 3) by Antichrist during the Tribulation (Zech14:1-2). During Armageddon, when the LORD will "gather all nations against Jerusalem" (Cp., Zeph3:8), the city will fall to the forces of Antichrist; Jewish homes will be looted, and Jewish women will be raped. Half of the Jews in the city will be

²⁸ The phrase "turn my hand upon" is a Hebrew idiom meaning *against* (e.g., Ps81:14; Isal:25; Ezek38:12; Amos1:8).

²⁹ While the personal salvation of individuals is vitally important, in the overall plan of God it is simply a necessary means to a desired end; saved people are needed to populate the Kingdom of God.

taken into "captivity", the other half will remain in Jerusalem as a "residue" (i.e., remnant).

- [3] "Then", "the LORD" Himself in the Person of Messiah, will "go forth [from heaven]". This is the **SECOND COMING**, in which the Lord Jesus Christ descends to earth leading the armies of heaven (Rev19:11-21; cf. Ps118:10-11; Isa29:7-8; 34:2-3,5-6,8; 63:1-6). The Lord Jesus will "fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle", an allusion to the conquest of the Promised Land in the days of Joshua in which the preincarnate Jesus personally fought on behalf of the nation of Israel (cf. Josh5:13-14; 10:13-14).
- [4] When the Lord Jesus returns, He will physically³⁰ "stand" upon "the Mount of Olives", returning to the very place from which He ascended in 32 AD, as was promised (Act1:10-12). At this time, a massive earthquake will split the Mount of Olives in two, creating a brand new valley running east to west; this would create a level path for Jesus from the Mount of Olives to the eastern gate of the city of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Eastern Gate. When Messiah returns, He will enter Jerusalem through its eastern gate (Ezek44:1-2). The eastern gate of Jerusalem is also known as the Golden Gate or the Beautiful Gate (Act3:2). The eastern gate was sealed by Suleiman the Magnificent, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, in 1540 AD, ostensibly as a symbolic act of denial that the Jewish Messiah would ever enter Jerusalem.



³⁰ A host of pseudo-Christian cults (e.g., Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Harold Camping) have falsely predicted a date for the return of Christ; when it failed to transpire on the predicted date, they all revised their teachings to assert that Christ's return happened, but it was spiritual and invisible. Scripture teaches that the return of Christ will be physical and visible to the entire world (Zech12:4; Matt24:30; Rev1:7).

- [5] The newly created "valley" will also provide a way for the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem to flee from the city. This future flight from the city is compared to a similar escape from "the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah" (cf. Amos1:1); "Azel" is apparently the city in which the Jews took refuge at that time.

The "LORD, my God, shall come" in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and "all the saints" (Cp., 1Thess3:13; Jud14) who come with Him include: 1) all believers from the Church Age (i.e., the Body/Bride of Christ which will be completed at the Rapture, after which "shall we ever be with the Lord"; 1Thess4:17), and 2) a myriad of angels (Matt16:27; 25:31; for examples of holy angels referred to as "saints", see Deut33:2-3; Job15:15; Ps89:5-7). O.T. "saints" (primarily Israel) are probably not included, as their resurrection occurs after the Tribulation ends (in preparation for the inauguration of the Kingdom; Dan12:1-2).

- [6] Here, "in that day" seems to have in view the literal "day" of Messiah's return (i.e., the second coming). That "day" will be accompanied by supernatural disturbances in the heavens unparalleled in human history (cf. Matt24:29; Mk13:24-25; Luk21:25-26).
- [7] This verse implies that the "day" of the second coming of Messiah will be analogous to the long day of Joshua (Josh10:13), in that the LORD will supernaturally extend the day to allow adequate time for the enemies of Israel to be utterly destroyed in "one day" (cf. Hab3:11-13).

MESSIAH'S KINGDOM ESTABLISHED ON EARTH

The establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth is the fulfillment of the great prophecies of Daniel (Dan2:44; 7:27; Cp. Rev20:1-6), for which Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Matt6:10).

- [8] The extensive changes in the topography of Israel/Jerusalem that result from the earthquake "in that day" (v4) will include the creation of a fountain of "living waters" that originates in "Jerusalem" (Ps46:1-4; Isa41:18) and flows from there eastward into the "former sea" (i.e., the Dead Sea; Cp., Joel3:18; Ezek47:1) and westward into the "hinder sea" (i.e., the Mediterranean Sea); this supply of "living water" into the Dead Sea will cause its waters to be "healed" (i.e., the Dead Sea will come to life during the Kingdom; Ezek47:8).
- [9] In the Kingdom of God (i.e., the Millennial Kingdom), "the LORD shall be king over all the earth" in the Person of glorified Lord Jesus Christ who will be physically present on earth (Ps2:5-12; Rev19:11-16). All peoples on earth will confess/submit to Him whose "name" is "JEHOVAH" as the "one" and only God (cf. Isa 43:10; 45:21-22; Matt28:19; Philip2:9-11). Pagan idolatry has existed on earth throughout its history, but it will be eradicated in both Israel and every Gentile nation in the Kingdom of God.

Trinitarian Note. The assertion that there shall be "one LORD, and his name one" does not preclude the triune nature of the Godhead.

The Hebrew word translated "one" is *echad*, just as in Deuteronomy 6:4, which can express the idea of unity in diversity (even diversity of persons; e.g., Gen2:24).

- [10] This verse expresses both a literal and a figurative truth. The earthquake that is associated with the Lord's return (v4) will massively reshape the topology of the whole land of Israel, such that "it shall be [literally] lifted up"³¹. The city of "Jerusalem" will be both raised and expanded to allow for a greatly increased population. The detailed geographical specificity speaks to the literalness of this prophecy. However, "Jerusalem" will also be "lifted up" figuratively as the spiritual and governmental capital of the world (cf. Deut28:10-13; Isa2:2-4).
- [11] In the Kingdom, "Jerusalem" will be "safely inhabited". With King Messiah ruling from the city, it will be safe from all its enemies. Furthermore, with righteousness enforced and individual sin swiftly judged (cf. Ps2:8-9; Isa11:4-5; Rev19:15), national chastisement will be precluded.
- [12] This verse describes the nearly instantaneous destruction of the armies that "fought against Jerusalem" at the battle of Armageddon (vv1-3). Many modern commentators have likened the effects upon the enemy combatants to those resulting from a nuclear explosion (particularly a neutron bomb). It is more likely, however, that this "plague" will be supernatural (cf. Rev19:15).
- [13] The soldiers of the enemy armies will be struck with confusion, and they will fight against themselves (Cp., Judg7:22).
- [14] The men of "Judah" will be supernaturally empowered to "fight" in defense of "Jerusalem".
- [15] The Battle of Armageddon will be an instance of divinely commanded Holy War³² (Heb., *haram*) in which no quarter will be given and absolutely no mercy will be suffered—all the enemies of Israel/God must be utterly destroyed, even including their "beasts" (Cp., 1Sam15:1-3).

WORSHIP IN MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

- [16] While the armies "of all the nations which came against Jerusalem" (Zech12:3) will be utterly destroyed at the return of Messiah, believing individuals from "all the nations" who are alive at the end of Armageddon will enter the Kingdom and comprise Gentile nations in the Kingdom (Cp., Matt25:31-46). Even these Gentile nations will be required "to worship the King, the LORD of hosts" (i.e., King Messiah) during the Millennial Kingdom (Isa56:6-7; 66:23). Participation of Gentiles in the "feast of tabernacles" at

³¹ Presently, the Sea of Galilee is 652 feet below sea level, the land of Israel descends south through the Jordan valley, and arrives at the Dead Sea almost 1,300 feet below sea level—making "the Arabah" deepest depression on the surface of the earth.

³² Holy War is ideological, not practical. Holy War is God's use of Israel to exercise divine judgment upon His enemies. Israel is never allowed to take spoil from their enemies in Holy War.

"Jerusalem" will be mandatory. Implicit in this command is the necessity that a Millennial Temple be constructed, in which priests descended from Zadok offer animal sacrifices³³ (cf. Lev23:33-43; Num29:12-38; Jer33:18; esp. Ezek40-48).

The Feast of Tabernacles. Of the seven Feasts of the LORD required under the Mosaic Covenant (Lev23; Lev16; Num28-29), only the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned as being celebrated during the Kingdom. This is probably due to the fact that the prophetic fulfillment of the first six feasts will be accomplished prior to the Kingdom, whereas the Kingdom itself is the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. The spiritual sense of the Feast of Tabernacles is the "ingathering" of all the peoples of God (Lev23:39) to receive His blessings (cf. Isa25:6). The fact that a total of 70 bullocks were to be offered over the course of the 8 day festival suggests that all the nations of the earth are included (Num29:13,17,20,23,26,29,32; cf. Gen10:1-32; Deut32:8). On "the last day, that great day of the feast" (Jn7:37), the Israelites leave their "booths" (i.e., temporary dwelling places; Lev23:42) to return to their homes; the Kingdom is God's intended home for all His peoples.

- [17] Gentile nations that fail to "come up ... unto Jerusalem to worship the King" will be judged with "no rain"³⁴.
- [18] Special note is made of the nation of "Egypt". Since the agricultural productivity of Egypt is not dependent upon rain, but upon the inundation (i.e., seasonal flooding) of the Nile river, its judgment for failure to "keep the feast of tabernacles" will be "the plague".
- [19] The idea is there will be no escape from judgment for any nation that refuses to worship King Messiah precisely as prescribed.
- [20] Unlike prior dispensations, there will be no distinctions between the sacred and the secular; everything will be sanctified and holy in the Kingdom of God (Cp., Isa4:3; Jer31:40). Whereas "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" was the inscription upon the miter worn on the head of the high priest (Exod28:36-38), in the Kingdom such an inscription would equally apply to the "bells of the horses", and even ordinary "pots" could be used as "bowls before the altar" (i.e., as implements in temple rituals).
- [21] Every "pot in Jerusalem" will be acceptable for use in "boil[ing]" those portions of the "sacrifice" that are intended to be eaten by either the priests or the people. The mention of "there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the LORD" has both a literal meaning and a universal connotation. In the days of Joshua, God commanded that all Canaanites be removed from the Promised Land, but this was never accomplished (cf. Deut20:16-17; Josh16:10; 17:12); it will be in the Kingdom. The "Canaanite" represents a reprobate people under the curse of God whose presence defiles the land of Israel (Gen9:25;

³³ Animal sacrifices were not propitiatory during the Dispensation of the Law (Heb10:3-4), and they will not be propitiatory during the Kingdom.

³⁴ The "rain" God provided to all nations as part of His common grace during prior dispensations (Matt5:45) will be contingent upon worship of King Messiah during the Kingdom.

12:6; Lev18:24-25); under the righteous rule of Messiah in the Kingdom, nothing that defiles will be tolerated.

--- S.D.G. ---

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