

Introduction to Zechariah  
Dr. Steven R. Cook

**Author:**

The author of the book is Zechariah, “Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo” (Zec 1:1). His name in Hebrew (זְכַרְיָהּ) means *Yahweh remembers*. Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and was important in encouraging the Israelites to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14).

**Audience:**

Zechariah’s audience consisted of the Jewish returnees from Babylonian exile.

**Date of Ministry:**

Zechariah prophesied from 520-518 B.C. (Zec 1:1, 7; 7:1).

**Historical Background:**

Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 586 B.C. and most of the Israelites were taken captive to Babylon. Babylon was defeated by the Persians in 539 B.C. when Cyrus came to power. Cyrus was favorable to the Israelites and promoted their return back to Judah, which included the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). Ezra chapter two records nearly 50,000 persons with positive volition who returned to Judah under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 2:2). Shortly after their return, in 536 B.C., many Israelites began reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem and were able to lay the foundation stones and build an altar for sacrifice (Ezra 3:1-13). However, the reconstruction stopped because of local persecution, which discouraged the Israelites (Ezra 4:1-5, 24). The temple remained unfinished for sixteen years, until 520 B.C., when God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Israelites to finish the work (Hag 1:1, 14-15; Zec 1:1, 7). The ministries of Haggai and Zechariah overlapped for a short period of time and proved effective in encouraging the people to reconstruct the temple, which was completed in 516 B.C. (Ezra 6:15). Note the following dates:

- August 29, 520 B.C. – Haggai’s first message (Hag 1:1)
- September 21, 520 B.C. – Temple reconstruction restarts (Hag 1:12-15)
- October 17, 520 B.C. – Haggai’s second message (Hag 2:1)
- October-November, 520 B.C. – Zechariah begins ministry (Zec 1:1)
- December 18, 520 B.C. – Haggai’s third and fourth message (Hag 2:10, 20)
- February 15, 519 B.C. – Zechariah receives eight visions (Zec 1:7—6:8)
- December 7, 518 B.C. – Zechariah delivers message to Bethel (Zec 7:1)
- March, 516 B.C. – Temple reconstruction finished (Ezra 6:14-15).

## **Zechariah's Message:**

The message God gave through Zechariah to the Israelites was encouraging and challenging. God wanted the temple rebuilt, and He also wanted the hearts of His people renewed. Previously, their forefathers had acted corruptly and violated the covenant, severely mistreating widows, orphans, strangers and the poor in the land; therefore, God sent them into captivity for 70 years. But now the returnees were coming back into the land and faced the challenge of rebuilding the city and temple, but most of all, He wanted them to live righteous lives, saying, “Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another” (Zec 7:9-10), and “These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate, declares the LORD” (Zec 8:16-17). Hopefully they’d learned the lesson of their forefathers and would walk humbly with God and do His will. “Zechariah’s vision of the future contained more than a rebuilt temple and a restored community. The later chapters in Zechariah look forward to the coming of a humble ruler from the house of David. The New Testament writers saw the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus (Zech 9:9–11; Matt 21:5; John 12:15).”<sup>1</sup> Zechariah provides much information about the future Messiah. “He presents Messiah as a king (9:9), a stone (3:9; 10:4), a slave sold for thirty pieces of silver (11:12), the smitten shepherd (13:7), the Branch (3:8; 6:12), and the glorious Redeemer and Ruler of Israel (14:1–4, 9, 16–17).”<sup>2</sup>

## **Outline:**

The book of Zechariah is basically divided into two parts. “Chapters 1–8 contain carefully dated visions and sermons, while chapters 9–14 consist of undated poetic oracles and narrative descriptions of judgment and blessing.”<sup>3</sup>

1. Introduction (Zec 1:1-6)
2. Eight visions (Zec 1:7—6:8)
3. Crowning of Joshua the high priest (Zec 6:9-15)
4. Four prophetic messages (Zec 7:1-8:23)
5. Oracles about Messiah and the future of Israel (Zec 9:1—14:21)

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<sup>1</sup> John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Heroic*, “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: ChariotVictor Pub., 1997), 83.

<sup>3</sup> D. Brent Sandy, “Zechariah,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1451.

## Zechariah 1:1-21

In the eighth month of the second year of Darius [October-November, 520 B.C., shortly after temple reconstruction began; see Hag 1:14-15], the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying, <sup>2</sup> “The LORD was very angry with your fathers. <sup>3</sup> “Therefore say to them [i.e. the returning exiles], ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts [i.e. God, Commander-in-chief of the heavenly armies], ‘Return to Me,’ [return to a righteous walk] declares the LORD of hosts, ‘that I may return to you,’ [in blessing] says the LORD of hosts. <sup>4</sup> “Do not be like your fathers [before the Babylonian exile], to whom the former prophets proclaimed [i.e. Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Ezekiel], saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’” [cf. Jer 25:5; 35:15] But they did not listen or give heed to Me,” declares the LORD [but became stubborn in their defiance; see Zec 7:11-14]. <sup>5</sup> “Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? [both are dead] <sup>6</sup> “But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers? [though God’s prophets died, the word they spoke lived on] Then they repented [after going into exile] and said, ‘As the LORD of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’” [i.e. acted according to the Mosaic Covenant] <sup>7</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius [February 15, 519 B.C.], the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows [Zechariah received eight visions in one night that run through the end of chapter six]: <sup>8</sup> I saw at night [vision #1], and behold, a man was riding on a red horse [the angel of the Lord; see vs. 11], and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him. <sup>9</sup> Then I said, “My lord, what are these?” And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “I will show you what these are.” <sup>10</sup> And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, “These are those whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.” [an angelic reconnaissance team] <sup>11</sup> So they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, “We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet.” [perhaps at ease after persecuting Judah; see vs. 15] <sup>12</sup> Then the angel of the LORD said, “O LORD of hosts [God the Father], how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?” [i.e. since the Babylonian destruction and exile in 586 B.C.; cf. Jer 25:11-12; 29:10] <sup>13</sup> The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words [not recorded]. <sup>14</sup> So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion [i.e. positively jealous to protect what He loves]. <sup>15</sup> “But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.” [i.e. the Gentile nations, who were used by God for judgment, went too far in their judgment] <sup>16</sup> “Therefore thus says the LORD, “I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,” [cf. Zec 4:9; Ezra 6:14] declares the LORD of hosts, “and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem.” [the measuring line was

used for construction, implying the rebuilding of the city] <sup>17</sup> “Again, proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.” [encouraging words] <sup>18</sup> Then I lifted up my eyes and looked [vision #2], and behold, *there were* four horns [horns were symbols of political and military power; see [1 Sam 2:10](#); [Jer 48:25](#)]. <sup>19</sup> So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these?” And he answered me, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.” [i.e. Gentile nations God used for judgment] <sup>20</sup> Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. <sup>21</sup> I said, “What are these coming to do?” And he said, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head [a picture of being humbled]; but these *craftsmen* have come to terrify them [i.e. the craftsmen will attack the horns], to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up *their* horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.” [God will use one power to destroy another]

### Summary:

In verses 1-6, God gave a message to His prophet, Zechariah, sometime in October-November, 520 B.C., which he delivered to His people, Israel. Though they had returned from Babylonian captivity back to Judah, they’d not fully returned to a righteous walk with the Lord, so the Lord challenged them, saying, “‘Return to Me,’ declares the LORD of hosts, ‘that I may return to you’” (Zec 1:3). This language reflects the responsibility of the Israelites to abide by the Mosaic Covenant, which was still in force, knowing their blessing or cursing was directly tied to their walk with the Lord and their obedience or disobedience to His commands (see Deut 28). They were not to be like their forefathers who disobeyed the Lord and died in captivity (Zec 1:4-6). What follows in chapter one is two of the eight visions that were given to Zechariah in one night, on February 15, 519 B.C. (Zec 1:7). Zechariah had an angel with him to help him understand the meaning of the visions (see vs. 9). The first vision pertained to an angel on a red horse—the *angel of the Lord* (see vs. 11)—who was riding/standing among myrtle trees with three other horsemen behind Him. The *angel of the Lord* is the second person of the Trinity (cf. Ex 3:2-4; Josh 5:13-15), and the three horsemen with Him were part of an angelic reconnaissance team who had been sent on a scouting mission throughout the earth and found the Gentile nations at ease after going too far in their persecution of Judah (Zec 1:8-15). Because God has great compassion on His people, He promised to restore and bless both the city and the temple (Zec 1:16-17). God’s people would have been encouraged to know the angel of the Lord was among them, and that God loved them greatly and planned to bless them. In the second vision, Zechariah saw “four horns” which represent Gentile nations (Zec 1:18-19), likely the ones that went too far in their persecution of Israel, Judah and Jerusalem. Then the Lord showed Zechariah “four craftsmen” (Zec 1:20), which symbolized other nations that God would use to discipline the “four horns” who persecuted His people. This shows that God knows who persecutes His people and that He deals out just retribution in His time and way.

## Zechariah 2:1-13

Then I lifted up my eyes and looked [vision #3], and behold, *there was* a man [angel #1] with a measuring line in his hand [*measuring line = an instrument used in construction*].<sup>2</sup> So I said, “Where are you going?” And he [angel #1] said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is.”<sup>3</sup> And behold, the angel who was speaking with me [angel #2, the one who’d been explaining activities; cf. *Zec 1:13-14*] was going out [away from Zechariah], and another angel [angel #3 – perhaps *the Angel of the Lord*] was coming out to meet him [angel #2],<sup>4</sup> and said to him, “Run, speak to that young man [i.e. Zechariah], saying, ‘Jerusalem will be [in the future] inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it [a promise of future residents, in contrast to the meager remnant in Zechariah’s day].’<sup>5</sup> ‘For I,’ declares the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire around her [a promise of future protection by God Himself], and I will be the glory in her midst [a promise of future magnificence].’”<sup>6</sup> “Ho there! Flee from the land of the north,” [i.e. Babylon, which invaded from the north] declares the LORD, “for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens,” declares the LORD.<sup>7</sup> “Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon.”<sup>8</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts, “After glory He has sent me [“Me” CSB = Messiah] against the nations which plunder you [or, “for his own glory he has sent me to the nations that plundered you” NET], for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye [harming Israel touches the most sensitive part of God Himself].<sup>9</sup> “For behold, I will wave My hand over them [i.e. the Gentile nations who persecuted Judah] so that they will be plunder for their slaves [those who were plundered shall plunder]. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts [God the Father] has sent Me [God the Son, likely at His second coming].<sup>10</sup> “Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion [*daughter = speaks of the closeness of the relationship*]; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst [i.e. Jesus at His second coming],” declares the LORD.<sup>11</sup> “Many nations [גוי גוי - Gentiles] will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people [Gentiles will belong to the covenant community during the future millennial kingdom]. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.<sup>12</sup> “The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land [*the holy land - the only place in the Bible where this expression occurs*], and will again choose Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> “Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD [“Let all people be silent before the LORD” CSB]; for He is aroused from His holy habitation.”

### Summary:

Verses 1-5 contain the prophet’s third vision of God’s work in Jerusalem, which will culminate in blessing, protection, and future glory. Verses 6-13 are an oracle of encouragement from the Lord about the future coming of Messiah who will put down Gentile oppression and dwell among His people. The small remnant in Jerusalem at the time of Zechariah’s message were helping to restore and rebuild the temple and city, and apparently there were angels involved as well. The vision opens with the description of a man with a measuring line which signified construction efforts (Zec 2:1-2). Today we

might say he had surveyor's equipment. Then Zechariah witnessed an exchange between the angel who was guiding his understanding of the visions and another angel who was sent to inform him of God's future plans to bless Jerusalem, to protect it supernaturally, and to be the glory in its midst (Zec 2:3-5). After the vision there was an oracle for scattered Israelites living in captivity to return to Judah (Zec 2:6-7), for Messiah would come against those nations that harmed Israel, who was regarded as "the apple of His eye" (Zec 2:8b). Some translators take the "me" of verse eight to refer to Zechariah (NASB), while others see it as a reference to Messiah (CSB). It seems Messiah is in view because of what He accomplishes. Dr. Thomas Constable states:

The person whom the Lord would send as His representative ("Me") could not be Zechariah, in view of what the following verses say He would do. He must be Messiah, the only one with sufficient power and authority to fulfill what God predicted here. He would simply wave His hand over these nations in a menacing gesture and they would become plunder for the Israelites whom they had enslaved (cf. Esth. 7:10; Isa. 11:15; 14:2; 19:16; Gal. 6:7-8). Then God's people would know that Yahweh of armies had sent this One (cf. Isa. 61:3; John 17:4). This would be the sovereign Lord's doing, so the Jews should rejoice, return to the land, and prepare.<sup>4</sup>

Part of the reason for the Israelites to flee Babylon was that the Lord intended to destroy it, with the result "that they will be plunder for their slaves" (Zec 2:9). That is, the slaves who were abused under Babylonian tyranny would plunder the city that had plundered their lives. Those who were returning to Judah would be fleeing to a place of refuge. The revelation Zechariah then receives speaks of a future time when Israelites would "Sing for joy and be glad" (Zec 2:10a) as God declares, "behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst" (Zec 2:10b). This refers to the future time when Jesus will establish His millennial kingdom and rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem. At that time, "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you" (Zec 2:12). The final comment is to all the world, saying, "Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation" (Zec 2:13). God's revelation to Zechariah would have encouraged the remnant of his generation by informing them that God was involved in their activities, which activities would last well into the future, to the time when God will send Messiah to establish His kingdom on earth. Likewise, we know God is with us when we do His will and that our work touches the lives of those in the present, and will have an impact on the future, even eternity.

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Zec 2:8.

Zechariah Chapter 2 – A Study of Angels  
Dr. Steven R. Cook

The word *angel* translates the Hebrew word מַלְאָכִים *malak* and the Greek word ἄγγελος *aggelos*, and both words mean *messenger*. Angels are created beings (Col 1:16), were present at the creation of the world (Job 38:4-7), have volition (Matt 8:28-32), emotion (Mark 1:23-26), and intelligence (1 Pet 1:12). Angels are spirit beings (Heb 1:14), are distinct from humans (Mark 1:23-26), have great power (2 Pet 2:11; cf. Dan 10:1-21), are innumerable (Heb 12:22; Rev 5:11), and do not reproduce after their kind (Mark 12:25), which means there are no baby angels. As creatures, angels are not to be worshipped (Col 2:18; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). Seraphim—angels with six wings—are devoted to the worship of God (Isa 6:1-3), and Cherubim—angels with four wings—are devoted to protecting the Lord’s holiness (Ezek 28:14).

As spirit beings, angels function in an invisible realm, unless God chooses to reveal their activity, either by direct observation or through revelation. For example, Elisha’s servant saw the angelic chariots of fire only when God opened his eyes (2 Ki 6:15-17), and John was permitted to see myriads of angels around God’s throne (Rev 5:11). Most of us are never given this opportunity, but learn about angels through the revelation of God’s Word.

Angels are basically classified as either *unfallen* or *fallen*. The former retain their holy state and service to God and are called *elect angels* (1 Tim 5:21), whereas the latter have defected from their original status and continue in constant rebellion against God, and these are commonly called *demons* (Matt 8:31) or *evil spirits* (Luke 7:21). Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, was once a cherub designated to protect God’s holiness, but he fell because of pride (Ezek 28:12-18; Isa 14:12-14). In his fall, Satan convinced a third of the angels to fall with him (Rev 12:3-4). Throughout human history, Satan and demons attempt to frustrate the purpose of God (Matt 4:1-11; cf. Dan 10:10-14; Rev 16:13-16). Demons can possess the bodies of men (Luke 11:24-26), and sometimes cause physical disease (Matt 9:32-33).

All angels, whether good or bad, are organized for service and effectiveness. Michael is called an *archangel* (Jude 1:9), a *chief prince* (Dan 10:13), and is assigned the task of guarding Israel (Dan 12:1). Gabriel is a messenger angel who was sent to deliver important messages to God’s people (Dan 8:16; 9:21-22; Luke 1:19; 26-38). Both Michael and Gabriel are recorded in Scripture as battling fallen angels who appear as commanders of regions of the world (Dan 10:12-13, 21). One fallen angel is called “the prince of Persia” and the other “the prince of Greece” (Dan 10:20). These no doubt function as Satan’s emissaries to promote his purposes, and are part of a larger group that Paul called *the forces of darkness* (Eph 6:12).

The book of Zechariah—which we are studying—contains 15 references to angels (Zec 1:9, 11-14, 19; 2:3; 4:1, 4-5; 5:5, 10; 6:4-5), three references to Satan (Zec 3:1-2), and six

references to *the angel of the Lord* (Zec 1:11-12; 3:1, 5-6; 12:8), who is God the Son in preincarnate form (cf. Ex 3:2-4; Judg 2:1-4). This divine and angelic activity reveals some of what was going on in the spiritual realm behind the human history of Zechariah's time. The Israelites knew only what their ears heard and eyes saw, and much of what was going on around them was frustrating and discouraging as they faced human opposition (Ezra 4:1-5; 24). However, through the prophet Zechariah, God revealed His activity behind the political, economic, and social activities of the day to expose angelic forces at work.

Zechariah had a personal angel that was helping him understand the visions that were given to him by the Lord (Zec 1:7—6:8). Daniel too had an angelic interpreter (Dan 8:15-19; 10:1-12), as well as the apostle John (Rev 17:7; 22:6). The angel assigned to Zechariah spoke “gracious” and “comforting” words to him (Zec 1:13), revealing God's compassion toward His people. He also revealed God would help the faithful remnant rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Zec 1:14, 16-17), and would punish the Gentile nations who had gone too far in their attacks against Judah (Zec 1:15, 18-21). We also learn there were other angels who spoke and moved through spirit-space—unlike material-space—while Zechariah watched and listened (Zec 2:3-4a), and who spoke God's Word concerning future blessings for His people (Zec 2:4b-5). The angel also revealed Satan as he accused Joshua, the high priest, before the angel of the Lord. Satan went after Joshua because he was doing the Lord's work on behalf of God's people, and this was a threat to him and his agenda. Satan's charge was that Joshua was unfit for service, but God purified Joshua and made him stand clean in the Lord's presence (Zec 3:1-5). Furthermore, in two separate visions, Zechariah was shown angelic forces who do God's will throughout the earth (Zec 1:8-11; 6:1-8). The first of these are described as three horsemen “whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth” (Zec 1:10), and the second group as “the four spirits of heaven” who ride on chariots and also “patrol the earth” (Zec 6:7). In all this we learn that angels are intelligent, active, and communicate God's will to others, both to people and other angels. We also learn there's an angelic enemy—Satan—who stands to accuse God's people. This revelation would have educated the people of Zechariah's day about the spiritual forces at work—operating in the invisible realm—behind their daily experiences. Above all, they were informed about the concerns and activities of God Himself, and how He uses His angelic forces to execute His will on the earth and among His people. All this would have encouraged them to keep working and rebuilding the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

The Battle that Rages  
Dr. Steven R. Cook

God created His universe and all creatures in it (Gen 1:1), and He made all things good (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Mankind was God's crowning creation, made in His image (Gen 1:26-27), and assigned responsibility to rule over this world (Gen 1:26-30). In addition to mankind, God created an order of beings that are called angels, who, like people, have the capacity to think, feel and act. At some point in time—and no one knows for sure when—there was a rebellion in heaven in which a special angel named Lucifer, of the class of cherubim, who, because of pride (Eze 28:11-18), set his will against the will of God (Isa 14:12-14) and convinced many angels to follow him (Rev 12:4). “The desire of Satan was to move in and occupy the throne of God, exercise absolute independent authority over the angelic creation, bring the earth and all the universe under his authority, cover himself with the glory that belongs to God alone, and then be responsible to no one but himself.”<sup>5</sup> After his fall, Satan then tempted Adam and Eve to set their wills against God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-7). When that happened, Adam handed his kingdom over to Satan, who has been ruling this world since then (Luke 4:5-6; Rev 11:15). Satan rules as a tyrant who has “weakened the nations” (Isa 14:12), currently “deceives the whole world” (Rev 12:9), and has well developed strategies of warfare (Eph 6:10-12). Satan's world-system touches all aspects of humanity, including politics, education, economics, music, art, literature, etc. It is this world-system that Christians are commanded not to love (1 Jo 2:15-16).

The *kosmos* is a vast order or system that Satan has promoted which conforms to his ideals, aims, and methods. It is civilization now functioning apart from God—a civilization in which none of its promoters really expect God to share; who assign to God no consideration in respect to their projects, nor do they ascribe any causality to Him. This system embraces its godless governments, conflicts, armaments, jealousies; its education, culture, religions of morality, and pride. It is that sphere in which man lives. It is what he sees, what he employs. To the uncounted multitude it is all they ever know so long as they live on this earth. It is properly styled “*The Satanic System*” which phrase is in many instances a justified interpretation of the so-meaningful word, *kosmos*.<sup>6</sup>

At the core of Satan's world-system is a directive for mankind to function apart from God, and when obeyed, people produce all forms of evil, both moral and immoral. And, to Satan's advantage, everyone born into this world is born *in Adam* (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21-22) and possesses a fallen nature, called “the flesh”, which is inclined to operate independently of God and His will (Rom 6:6; Col 3:9; Gal 5:17, 19).

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<sup>5</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Your Adversary the Devil* (Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan Publishing, 1969), 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis S. Chafer, “Angelology Part 4” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 99 (1942): 282-283.

Torn inside with desires to do that which we know is evil and new desires to please God, we experience the rage of the battle. The internal conflict manifests itself in everyday life as the believer is tempted to sin. The source of this conflict is the old sin nature, which is the root cause of the deeds of sin. In the conflict the believer is not passive. He has a vital role in determining to whom he will give allegiance—the old nature or the new nature. From the moment a sinner trusts Christ, there is a conflict in his very being between the powers of darkness and those of light. The one who has become a member of the family of God now faces conflicts and problems that he did not have before.<sup>7</sup>

At the moment of faith in Christ, the believer is transferred from Satan's kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13). However, though saved, we still possess our sin nature, continue to reside in the devil's world and face constant pressure from the enemy. *The flesh, the world, and the devil* make up the threefold enemy-front every Christian faces; a front that seeks to diminish or destroy her/his walk with God. But Christians are not defenseless. God has given us new life (John 10:28), placed His Holy Spirit within us (John 14:17; 1 Cor 6:19), and equipped us with the armor necessary to stand against our enemy and to accomplish His will (Eph 6:10-17). Christians defy and disrupt Satan's kingdom by submitting to God (Rom 12:1-2), learning Scripture (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18), living by faith (Rom 10:17; Col 2:6-7; Heb 10:38; 11:6; 1 Pet 5:9), being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18), walking by means of the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 21), praying for others (Col 1:9; 2 Thess 1:11), and sharing the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor 15:3-4). The Christian who is advancing spiritually will influence the thoughts and lives of others through biblical discussion; and this is done in love and grace (Eph. 4:14-15; Col 4:6), not by argumentation (2 Tim 2:24-26). When we learn God's Word, obey His commands, and show love to others, we are rebelling against Satan's world-system and sowing the seeds of spiritual insurrection in the lives of those who live and walk in Satan's kingdom. But Christians must always be on guard that we not fall into Satan's snares and come to love the world (1 John 2:15; cf. Jam 4:4).

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<sup>7</sup> Robert P. Lightner, *Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich., Kregel Publications, 1995), 206.

## Zechariah 3:1-10

Then he showed me [vision #4] Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD [*standing before the Lord* is a picture of priestly service; see [Deu 10:8](#); [2 Chron 29:11](#)], and Satan [[שָׂטָן](#) *hassatan* – the Satan – *adversary, accuser*; 1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6; 2:1] standing at his right hand to accuse him [[שָׂטָן](#) *satan* – *to accuse, stand against*, accuses Joshua of being unqualified for service].<sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! [God defends Joshua on the grounds that He chose him, and those whom God chooses, He also justifies; see [Rom 8:33](#)] Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” [Joshua represented the remnant who returned from Babylonian captivity where they were nearly destroyed]<sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments [[טִשָּׁה](#) *tso* - *excrement*] and standing before the angel [in this unclean state, Joshua would be unqualified to serve].<sup>4</sup> He spoke and said to those who were standing before him [perhaps other angels], saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes [see [Lev 8:6-9](#); [16:4](#)].”<sup>5</sup> Then I said [Zechariah speaks], “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” [which had a gold plate on the front that read: *Holy to the Lord*; see [Ex 28:36-37](#); [39:30-31](#)] So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by [this cleansing qualified Joshua to serve as high priest before the Lord; cf. [Isa 61:10](#)].<sup>6</sup> And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua [i.e. charged him with duty], saying,<sup>7</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service [i.e. live in obedience; see [Ex 18:20](#); [Deu 8:6](#); [10:12-13](#); [28:9](#)], then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts [likely the temple courtyards, but possibly a reference to judicial courts; see [Deu 17:9](#); [Ezek 44:23-24](#)], and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here [i.e. Joshua would have free access to the heavenly court].<sup>8</sup> ‘Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you [i.e. the other priests]—indeed they are men who are a symbol [i.e. they serve as a type of Messiah who has priestly functions; cf. [Isa 20:3](#); [Ezek 12:6, 11](#)], for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch [i.e. the future reign of Messiah; see [Isa 4:2](#); [Jer 23:5](#); [33:15](#)].<sup>9</sup> ‘For behold, the stone [probably the foundation temple stone] that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes [likely a reference to God’s omniscience; see [2 Chron 16:9](#)]. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,’ [stating its significance] declares the LORD of hosts, ‘and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day [perhaps what was written on the stone].<sup>10</sup> ‘In that day,’ [when Israel’s sin is removed and the nation restored to service, just like Joshua had been] declares the LORD of hosts, ‘every one of you will invite his neighbor to *sit* under *his* vine and under *his* fig tree.’” [a picture of peace in the land; cf. [1 Ki 4:25](#); [Mic 4:4](#)]

### Summary:

In the opening verse Joshua was seen standing before the Lord as high priest and Satan was standing beside him accusing him of being unqualified for service (Zec 3:1). But the

Lord defended Joshua because he was His chosen servant, a symbol of the nation (Zec 3:2). Now Joshua was, in fact, filthy, as his garments were covered with excrement (Zec 3:3), but the Lord had those garments removed and had new garments placed on him (Zec 3:4a), and said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes” (Zec 3:4b). Zechariah knew the high priest also wore a turban with a gold plate on the front, so he spoke up, saying, “Let them put a clean turban on his head” (Zec 3:5a). So the angels “put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by” (Zec 3:5b). Here is a picture of forgiveness and restoration to service, as the Lord had removed Joshua’s filth and clothed him in clean garments. Positional righteousness prepared him to walk in practical righteousness. It is true that God does not call the qualified, but qualifies those called for service. God informed Joshua that if he would walk in obedience to the Lord and fulfill his priestly duties, he would have charge over the temple and its courtyards, and God would grant him access to His heavenly court (Zec 3:6-7). This picture of Joshua, the high priest, being forgiven and restored to service would have encouraged the Israelites greatly, for the priesthood was not operational during the Babylonian exile, and the people could not worship as God had prescribed. This cleansing would, in turn, impact the other priests, who ministered under Joshua’s supervision and who served as a type of Messiah, the Branch, who was to come (Zec 3:8). God references “the stone” set before Joshua, which is likely the temple cornerstone. Apparently, this stone was to serve as a physical marker that represented God’s omniscience, signifying His awareness of all Israel’s sins and struggles. The Lord stated, “I will engrave an inscription on it” which said, ‘I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day’” (Zec 3:9). Here is a concrete statement that promises God will remove all Israel’s sin in one day. “Some say this refers to the day of Christ’s crucifixion, but it is more likely a reference to the day of His Second Advent when at the end of the future Tribulation period the merits of His death will be applied to believing Israel (Zech. 13:1).”<sup>8</sup> Lastly, the Lord spoke of a future day, in which “every one of you will invite his neighbor to *sit* under *his* vine and under *his* fig tree” (Zec 3:10). These promises of a restored priesthood, a rebuilt temple, and future peace, would certainly have encouraged the Israelites, who, while in Babylonian captivity, perhaps questioned whether their theological heritage would ever be restored. This message is very relevant to us because we too are God’s children and servants who serve as a kingdom of priests (Rev 1:6) and are called to live holy lives before the Lord. Scripture states, “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, ‘you shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:15-16). Living holy lives in conformity to God’s character and will is an ongoing choice to learn and live God’s Word in all aspects of our lives, always sowing to reap, and reaping what was sown.

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<sup>8</sup> F. Duane Lindsey, “Zechariah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1554–1555.

Zechariah Chapter 3 – A Study of Satan  
Dr. Steven R. Cook

Satan was originally created as a holy angel of the class of cherubim; however, because of pride (Ezek 28:11-18), he rebelled against God (Isa 14:12-14), and convinced many angels to follow him (Rev 12:4). The name Satan is derived from the Hebrew שָׂטָן *Satan* which means “adversary, opponent...accuser, opposing party...[or] the one who hinders a purpose”<sup>9</sup> The Greek Σατανᾶς *Satanas* carries the same meaning and is used “in a very special sense of the enemy of God and all of those who belong to God.”<sup>10</sup> Heavenly scenes are sometimes portrayed as a courtroom in which Satan appears as a prosecutor who attacks God’s people (Job 1:6-9; 2:1-4; Zec 3:1-2). Satan will lie to us to accomplish his purposes, but he tells the truth about us when talking with God, because our sin is apparent. Other names for Satan include the *shining one*, or *Lucifer* (Isa 14:12), the *evil one* (1 John 5:19), the *tempter* (1 Thess 3:5), the *devil* (Matt 4:1), the *god of this world* (2 Cor 4:4), the *accuser of the brethren* (Rev 12:10), the *prince of the power of the air* (Eph 2:2), the *serpent* (Rev 12:9), the *great red dragon* (Rev 12:3). Further, Satan is a *murderer* and *liar* (John 8:44), is compared to a *lion* that prowls about, looking for someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8), and one who disguises himself as an *angel of light* (2 Cor 11:14).

Lucifer became Satan at the time of his rebellion when he declared, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” (Isa 14:13-14). These five “I will” statements by Satan reveal that it was his every intent to set his will against the will of God and to make himself lord of the universe. Satan seeks to operate independently of God’s plan for him, and he leads others, both saved and unsaved, to do the same. Lucifer introduced sin and death to the first humans when he convinced them to turn from God and eat the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-7). At the time of the fall, Adam handed his kingdom over to Satan, who has been ruling this world since (Luke 4:5-6; Rev 11:15). Satan rules as a tyrant who has “weakened the nations” (Isa 14:12), and currently “deceives the whole world” (Rev 12:9). He personally attacked Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-7), Job (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-13), David, (1 Chr 21:1), Joshua the high priest (Zec 3:1-2), Jesus (Matt 4:1-11), Judas (John 13:27), and Peter (Luke 22:31-32). He continues to attack God’s people today (1 Pet 5:8), practices deception (2 Cor 11:13-15), and has well developed strategies of warfare (Eph 6:10-12). As a creature, Satan is confined in his abilities and relies on numerous fallen angels to carry out his will. During the Tribulation, his demons will lead political and military rebellions to try to stop the coming of Christ (Rev 16:12-14).

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<sup>9</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1317.

<sup>10</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 916.

Satan was judged at the cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:14-15), and awaits future punishment. His judgment is very near when he is cast out of heaven during the Tribulation (Rev 12:7-12); at which time his wrath is greatest against Israel. After the return of Christ (Rev 19:11-16) and the establishment of His kingdom (Rev 20:1-6), Satan will be confined to the abyss for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3). Afterwards, he is released for a brief time and will again deceive the nations and lead a rebellion against God (Rev 20:7-8), but will be quickly defeated (Rev 20:9), and cast into the Lake of Fire, where he will remain, with his demons and all unbelievers forever (Matt 25:41; Rev 20:10-15).

Currently, Satan supervises a world-system that seeks to govern all people, both saved and lost. His world-system touches all aspects of humanity, including politics, education, economics, social activities, music, art, literature, etc. At the core of Satan's world-system is a directive for mankind to function apart from God, and when obeyed, people produce all forms of evil, both moral and immoral. To his advantage, everyone born into this world (except Christ) is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3), powerless to save themselves apart from God's grace (Rom 5:6; Eph 2:8-9), and possesses a sinful nature that is always drawn to his enticements (Psa 51:5; 58:3; Rom 6:6; 7:14; 8:7-8; 1 John 1:8). If the devil were a radio broadcaster, the sin nature would be that internal receiver that is always tuned in to welcome his message.

So how do we overcome our enemy? Our victory starts at the moment we trust in Christ as our Savior (John 3:16; 20:31; Acts 4:12; 16:31; 1 Cor 15:3-4). At the moment of salvation we are forgiven all our sins (Eph 1:7; Heb 10:10-14; 1 Pet 3:18), given eternal life (John 10:28), imputed with God's righteousness (Rom 4:1-6; 5:17; 9:30; 10:1-4; 2 Cor 5:21; Phi 3:9), and transferred from Satan's kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13). Because we possess the very righteousness of God, we are forever justified in His sight and can never be condemned (Rom 8:1, 33-34). However, though our justification is settled once for all, our sanctification is a work in progress, and we must learn to walk according to our new spiritual nature (Rom 6:11-14; Eph 4:17-24; Col 3:9-10), while resisting our old sinful nature (Rom 7:18-23; Gal 5:16-17). Furthermore, as Christians, we continue to live in the devil's world and face all sorts of temptations and are commanded not to love the world (1 John 2:15; cf. Jam 4:4). We become successful when we submit to God (Rom 12:1-2), regularly learn Scripture (Psa 1:1-3; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:16-17; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18), live by faith (Rom 10:17; 2 Cor 5:7; Col 2:6-7; Heb 10:38; 11:6; 1 Pet 5:9), are filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18), walk by means of the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 21), rejoice always (1 Thess 5:16), pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17), and in everything give thanks (1 Thess 5:18; cf. Jam 1:2-4). As we grow spiritually and walk with God, we stand in opposition to Satan's world-system and sow the seeds of spiritual insurrection in the lives of those who live and walk in his kingdom of darkness. We disrupt Satan's kingdom when we share the Gospel (1 Cor 15:3-4), and influence the thoughts and lives of others through biblical discussion (Matt 28:18-20); which we do in love and grace (Eph 4:14-15; Col 4:6), not by argumentation (2 Tim 2:24-26).

## Zechariah 4:1-14

Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep [perhaps Zechariah was overwhelmed by the visions; cf. [Dan 8:18; 10:9](#)].<sup>2</sup> He said to me, “What do you see?” [vision #5] And I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand [perhaps referring to Israel, who was to be a light to the nations; see [Isa 42:6; 49:6](#); cf. [Rev 1:12-13, 20](#)] all of gold with its bowl on the top of it [oil reservoir], and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it [7x7 = 49 spouts = a very bright lamp];<sup>3</sup> also two olive trees by it [which symbolize Zerubbabel and Joshua; see [vss. 12-14](#)], one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.” [these fed oil directly into the lamp; see [vss. 11-12](#)]<sup>4</sup> Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, “What are these [i.e. these two trees; see [vss. 12-14](#)], my lord?”<sup>5</sup> So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.”<sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel [governor of Judah] saying, ‘Not by might nor by power [i.e. no military might or individual power], but by My Spirit,’ [i.e. divine enablement; cf. [Ex 31:3; Num 11:25-26; 1 Sam 16:13](#)] says the LORD of hosts [It would not be human resources, but divine power that would cause the temple to be rebuilt].<sup>7</sup> ‘What are you, O great mountain? [i.e. mountain of difficulty in rebuilding the temple] Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain [i.e. God will make the task manageable for them]; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!”’” [God’s grace enabled them to succeed in His work]<sup>8</sup> Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying,<sup>9</sup> “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house [he started the work; see [Ezra 3:1-13](#)], and his hands will finish it [completed on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 516 B.C.; see [Ezra 6:15](#)]. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.<sup>10</sup> “For who has despised the day of small things? [i.e. small projects compared to grander ones] But these seven [i.e. seven eyes of God’s omniscience; see [Zec 3:9](#)] will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel-- these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth [referring to God’s omniscience].”<sup>11</sup> Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?”<sup>12</sup> And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?”<sup>13</sup> So he answered me, saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.”<sup>14</sup> Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.” [Zerubbabel and Joshua were standing by the Lord to do His will]

### Summary:

The *Central Idea of the Text* is God encourages Zerubbabel with the news that He will strengthen him to complete the task of rebuilding the temple. The chapter opens with Zechariah being aroused—supposedly from sleep—by the angel who was guiding him in understanding the visions ([Zec 4:1](#)). Perhaps the prophet’s soul and body were fatigued by the visions he’d been given. After the angel revived Zechariah, he showed him a fifth

vision that included a golden lampstand and two olive trees that poured oil directly into it (Zec 4:2-3). This lampstand was different than the one used in the tabernacle, and later Solomon's temple, which illumined it so the priests could perform their duties (Ex 25:31-40), and which was maintained by the high priest on a daily basis (Lev 24:3). The lampstand Zechariah saw had a bowl on top that served as an oil reservoir and it had 49 spouts on it that served as lights. This was a bright lamp! No priest was needed to provide oil to the lamp, as that was given by the two olive trees, which symbolized Zerubbabel and Joshua (see Zec 4:11-14). The meaning of the lamp is not explained; however, it could refer to Israel as a nation, which God intended to serve as a light to the world (Isa 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3). If this is correct, then the two olive trees would represent God's leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, channels through whom He poured Himself into the lives of others so the work of the temple could be completed and made operational. The apostle John described churches as lampstands which are to serve as lights in a dark world (Rev 1:12-13, 20). The angel asked Zechariah if he knew what the candlestick symbolized (Zec 4:4), to which the prophet answered, "No, my lord" (Zec 4:5). The angel then gave an encouraging message from God, to Zerubbabel, that He would empower him to do the work, saying, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zec 4:6). Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David (1 Chr 3:17-19; Matt 1:12) as well as the governor of Judah (Hag 1:1), and God was using him to rebuild the temple (Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2). But Zerubbabel was facing great opposition from Israel's enemies (Ezra 4:1-5, 24), and apathy from fellow Israelites (Hag 1:2). God would take the "great mountain" of opposition that Zerubbabel was facing and would make it "a plain" (Zec 4:7a); with the result that the governor would complete the project, as he will "bring forth the top stone" of the temple, and this would all be a display of God's "grace" (Zec 4:7b). *Grace* refers to God's enabling power to help His leader do His work. Additionally, the Lord said to Zerubbabel (Zec 4:8), "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it" (Zec 4:9a). The completion of the work would validate the messenger (Zec 4:9b); presumably, the angel of the Lord (Zec 1:11-12; 2:8-9; 3:1, 5-6). The struggling remnant who had returned from captivity did not have the great resources that were at Solomon's disposal when he built the first temple (1 Ki 5:13-18), and so they were tempted to think of it as insignificant and to despise it as a "day of small things" (Zec 4:10a). However, they were to realize that what they were doing was God's will, and He was in it to see it through to completion. Zechariah asked the angel to help him understand the meaning of the "two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?" (Zec 4:11), as well as "the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden *oil* from themselves?" (Zec 4:12). The angel asked Zechariah, "Do you not know what these are?" (Zec 4:13a), to which the prophet replied, "No, my lord" (Zec 4:13b). The angel answered, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zec 4:14). Zerubbabel and Joshua are in view, as they are the Lord's anointed to serve as governor and high priest in Judah, and it's their relationship to the Lord, "who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth", that qualifies them for service.

## Zechariah 5:1-11

Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, *there was* a flying scroll [vision #6].<sup>2</sup> And he said to me, “What do you see?” And I answered, “I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.” [15x30 feet; the same size as the temple, perhaps implying its connection with God’s holiness]<sup>3</sup> Then he said to me, “This is the curse [that comes because of violation of the covenant] that is going forth over the face of the whole land [of Judah]; surely everyone who steals [Ex 20:15; 8<sup>th</sup> commandment – against people] will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears [Ex 20:7; 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment – against God] will be purged away according to the writing on the other side [The Ten Commands were written on both sides of the stone tablets; see Ex 32:15. These two commands represent the whole law and the basis for judgment].<sup>4</sup> “I will make it go forth,” declares the LORD of hosts [i.e. God will render judgment], “and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name [i.e. no hiding place]; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones.”<sup>5</sup> Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, “Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth.” [vision #7]<sup>6</sup> I said, “What is it?” And he said, “This is the ephah going forth.” [ephah – a unit of measurement; here, it refers to a container, likely a basket] Again he said, “This is their appearance in all the land<sup>7</sup> (and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah.”<sup>8</sup> Then he said, “This is Wickedness!” [here personified as a woman] And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening [sealed wickedness].<sup>9</sup> Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women [spirit beings, likely demons] were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork [unclean birds, see Deu 14:11, 18], and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.<sup>10</sup> I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “Where are they taking the ephah?”<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, “To build a temple [i.e. a place of worship] for her in the land of Shinar [Shinar = Babylon, which symbolizes hostility against God; see Gen 11:2-4; Rev 14:8; 17:1, 5, 18; 18:21]; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal.”

### Summary:

In Zechariah chapter 5, there is a vision of God’s judgment upon His people because of their sins (Zec 5:1-4), and a vision of God’s judgment upon wickedness which He intends to remove from the land (Zec 5:5-11). In vision #6, Zechariah saw a large scroll, 15 feet by 30 feet, with writing on both sides (Zec 5:1-2). The large scroll probably emphasized its large message for all to read. The writing contained the eighth and third commands of the decalogue (Zec 5:3; cf. Ex 20:7, 15), which pertained to sinning against people (stealing) and God (misusing His name). These two represented the whole of the Mosaic Law, which Israel, God’s people, were obligated to keep. These two types of sinners likely represented all who were guilty of doing evil, and God would judge them (Zec 5:4). Though God was working in His people to rebuild the temple and city (note previous

visions), He was still their God, King, and Judge, and they would not be able to hide in their houses. Next, in vision #7, Zechariah was shown a vision of a woman who personified wickedness (Zec 5:5-8). The Hebrew word for *wickedness* is feminine (רִשָּׁה *rishah*), and it's possible this is reason it is described as a woman. In the vision wickedness is identified, restrained and transported by two supernatural agents to Babylon (Zec 5:9-11). Some regard these winged women as angels; however, Unger states, "It is perhaps simplest to construe the women as agents of evil, suggesting demonic powers."<sup>11</sup> This would make sense, since storks were unclean birds (Deu 14:11, 18). Whether angels or demons, the message is that wickedness has no place among God's people, and the Lord will remove it to a land far away; the land of Shinar, which is Babylon. In Scripture, Babylon is identified as the birthplace of organized rebellion against God, in which people used the Lord's resources in defiance of His will. Babylon is mentioned in Scripture over three hundred times, and by the time we get to the book of Revelation, it is seen both as a city and a system that promotes religious, political, and economic agendas that are antithetical to God. In the book of Revelation, Babylon is described as a great harlot who influences all of humanity (Rev 17:1-5), is guilty of persecuting and murdering prophets and saints (Rev 17:6), is a dwelling place of demons and unclean spirits (Rev 18:2), and with whom "the kings of the earth have committed *acts of* immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality" (Rev 18:3). Eventually, Babylon is completely destroyed just prior to the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 18:2, 10, 21).

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<sup>11</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN. AMG Publishers, 2002), p. 1993.

## Zechariah 6:1-8

Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked [i.e. looked to see what God would show him], and behold [vision #8], four chariots [chariots = judgment] were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains [bronze mountains = hard and big obstacles facing the post-exilic community].<sup>2</sup> With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses,<sup>3</sup> with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses.<sup>4</sup> Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these, my lord?”<sup>5</sup> The angel replied to me, “These are the four spirits of heaven [angelic riders], going forth after standing [i.e. standing at attention, awaiting commands for duty] before the Lord of all the earth [i.e. the sovereign Ruler of all the earth; cf. 1 Sam 2:6-10; Psa 115:1-3; 135:5-6; Dan 2:20-21; 4:17, 25-26, 32, 34-35; Acts 17:24-28],<sup>6</sup> with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country [to Babylon – look at map]; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country [toward Egypt].<sup>7</sup> “When the strong ones went out, they were eager [שקצו *baqash* – Piel stem – to seek, search] to go to patrol the earth [i.e. eager to do God’s will among the nations of the earth].” And He said, “Go, patrol [הלך *halak* – to go, come, walk – hithpael imperative] the earth.” So they patrolled the earth [obeying His command].<sup>8</sup> Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, “See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north.” [i.e. the two angelic riders rendered God’s judgment upon Babylon].

### Summary:

In Zechariah 6:1-8, the prophet receives the eighth and final vision of the night (Zec 1:7-8). Like the first vision (Zec 1:8-17), this one included angelic beings that were used by God to render judgment upon the Gentile nations that were hostile to Israel, His people (Zec 1:10, 14-15; 6:7-8); but whereas the first vision included angelic riders on horses (Zec 1:8), the last vision had eight horses harnessed to chariots, and these were red, black, white and dappled (Zec 6:1-3). “If the colors are significant, perhaps **red** symbolizes war and bloodshed, **black** designates death and famine, **white** speaks of triumph and victory, and **dappled** denotes pestilence and plagues (see comments on Rev. 6:1–8).”<sup>12</sup> The angelic riders are sent out to patrol the earth and render judgment upon the Gentile nations; specifically, Babylon and Egypt. Zechariah apparently did not understand the significance of the horses and chariots (Zec 6:4a), so he asked his angelic interpreter, “What are these, my lord?” (Zec 6:4b). The angel replied, “These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth” (Zec 6:5). These were four angelic beings who stand before the Lord, eager to do His will. And God is described as “the Lord of all the earth” which emphasizes He is sovereignty over all (1 Sam 2:6-10; Psa 115:1-3; 135:5-6; Dan 2:20-21; 4:17, 25-26, 32, 34-35; Acts 17:24-28). He judges the Gentile nations of the world, and in this context, He’s using angelic beings to carry out

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<sup>12</sup> F. Duane Lindsey, “Zechariah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1557.

His judgment. He will do this again during the time of the Tribulation (Rev 9:13-15). The teams of horses and chariots broke up, with the black and white ones going to the north, and the dappled ones going to the south (Zec 6:6). The north country refers to Babylon, which attacked from that direction. Egypt was to the south. Nothing is mentioned about the red horses and chariot. Perhaps their mission was covert, or perhaps they were on standby waiting further instructions. These angelic beings were eager to do God's will, and the Lord set them loose, saying, "Go, patrol the earth", which is what they did (Zec 6:7). Then God told Zechariah, "See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north" (Zec 6:8). Those angelic beings who judged Babylon satisfied God's anger against them. God controls the fate of nations, bringing blessing or cursing, peace or judgment. And, at times, He uses His angels do His will. This appears to be the case here, as well in the future time of the Tribulation when He releases angels to bring judgment upon the world.

## Zechariah 6:9-15

The word of the LORD also came to me [transitioning away from the eight visions], saying,<sup>10</sup> “Take an offering from the exiles [i.e. wealthy Jews who had returned from Babylon], from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah [Heldai is later called “Helem” - חֵלֵם *Chelem* – strength – in vs. 14]; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah [Josiah is later called “Hen” – חֵן *Chen* - gracious one – in vs. 14], where they have arrived from Babylon.<sup>11</sup> “Take silver and gold [from the offering that was taken], make an ornate crown [חֹטֶטֶת *atarah* – crown, used only for royalty (2 Sam 12:30; Psa 21:3), not priests (Exo 29:6; 39:30)] and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest [adding royal authority to his priestly authority; here, a picture of Jesus, who is both Priest and King; cf. Psa 110:1-4; Heb 4:15; 5:6; 7:1-3, 11-21].<sup>12</sup> “Then say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, a man whose name is Branch [Branch = a Messianic title], for He will branch out from where He is [He = Jesus at His second coming]; and He will build the temple of the LORD [i.e. the future millennial temple].<sup>13</sup> “Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne [Jesus at His second coming when He establishes His kingdom on earth; cf. 2 Sam 7:8-16; Psa 89:3-4; 34-37; Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5; Mic 4:1-3; Luke 1:26-33]. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne [Jesus, the Priest/King], and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices [Jesus will serve in both capacities].”<sup>14</sup> “Now the crown [that Zechariah placed on Joshua’s head] will become a reminder in the temple of the LORD [where it would be stored] to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen the son of Zephaniah [the crown was to remind them of God’s future plan for Israel].<sup>15</sup> “Those who are far off [future returnees from Babylon] will come and build the temple of the LORD [i.e. the temple under construction in Zechariah’s day].” Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me [Zechariah] to you [Judahites who returned from captivity]. And it [the reconstruction of the temple] will take place if you completely obey the LORD your God [to walk with Him and do His will; cf. Deut 28:1-15].

### Summary:

In this pericope Zechariah was instructed to perform a symbolic coronation in which he placed a regal crown on Joshua, the high priest, who is a type of Christ, who is both King and Priest, and will build the future millennial temple. The Lord commanded Zechariah to meet three returnees from Babylon and take an offering from them, namely Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah (Zec 6:9-10a). These were staying at the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah (Zec 6:10b), who later is called “Hen” (Heb. חֵן *Chen*), which means *gracious one* (vs. 14). From these three men Zechariah was to “Take silver and gold, [and] make an ornate crown” (Zec 6:11a). The word crown is a translation of the Hebrew word חֹטֶטֶת *atarah*, which is used only for royalty (2 Sam 12:30; Psa 21:3). The high priest also wore a crown (Heb. נֵזֶר *nezer*), but it was different (Exo 29:6; 39:30). Zechariah was commanded to do something that had never occurred before; he was to take this royal crown and “set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest” (Zec 6:11b).

We must remember that Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David (1 Chr 3:17–19; Matt 1:12) as well as the governor of Judah (Hag 1:1), and legally the rightful person to wear the king’s crown. However, God was using Joshua as an object lesson concerning Jesus, Israel’s future Ruler, who is both King (2 Sam 7:8-16; Psa 89:3-4; 34-37; Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5; Mic 4:1-3; Luke 1:26-33) and Priest (Psa 110:1-4; Heb 4:15; 5:6; 7:1-3, 11-21). God spoke through Zechariah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD’” (Zec 6:12). The term Branch is a Messianic title that refers to Jesus Christ as Ruler in the line of David (Jer 23:5; 33:15); however, in this context, it reveals Him in His role as Priest. This will occur during the millennial reign of Christ. God then tells Zechariah, “Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices” (Zec 6:13). Jesus will unite the two offices of King and Priest. After the symbolic coronation ceremony, God told Zechariah to remove the crown from Joshua, saying, “Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the LORD to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen the son of Zephaniah” (Zec 6:14). This crown was to remain in the temple as a constant reminder of what God would do in the future for His people. In this way, the crown was an encouragement to all who saw it and recognized its significance; a crown that belonged to Israel’s future Ruler. Finally, addressing Zechariah’s generation, the Lord said, “Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And it will take place if you completely obey the LORD your God” (Zec 6:15). Those who were “far off” referred to Jewish exiles who were still returning to Jerusalem, who would come and help “build the temple of the LORD.” This would have encouraged those in Zechariah’s day to keep working, because God was helping them. The work performed by the returnees validated Zechariah’s ministry, confirming He’d been sent by the Lord. However, being the covenant people of God, these Israelites were obligated to resume their walk with God and obey His word; therefore, Zechariah states, “And it will take place if you completely obey the LORD your God.” This was a reminder about their obligation to the Mosaic covenant and the conditions of blessing and cursing written in it (Deu 28). Though the success of the rebuilding of the temple in Zechariah’s day was conditioned on their obedience to the Mosaic Law, Israel’s future success—both national and religious—is ultimately conditioned on the reign of Messiah, who cannot fail.

## Zechariah 7:1-14

In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, *which is* Chislew [December 7, 518 B.C.; about two years after his visions].<sup>2</sup> Now the town of Bethel [about ten miles north of Jerusalem] had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech and their men [Jewish returnees who settle in Bethel] to seek the favor of the LORD [at the temple in Jerusalem which was being reconstructed; cf. [Ezra 5:1-2](#)],<sup>3</sup> speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets [priests and prophets = spiritual leaders], saying, “Shall I weep in the fifth month [the month marking the destruction of the Solomonic temple on August 14, 586 B.C.; [2 Ki 25:8-9](#)] and abstain [i.e. fast], as I have done these many years?” [seeking an endorsement for their religious practices]<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me [Zechariah], saying,<sup>5</sup> “Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years [in Babylonian captivity; cf. [Jer 25:11](#)], was it actually for Me that you fasted? [or some other reason?]<sup>6</sup> ‘When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? [i.e. for personal benefit]<sup>7</sup> ‘Are not *these* the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets [i.e. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, etc.], when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited?’”<sup>8</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying [to the residents of Bethel],<sup>9</sup> “Thus has the LORD of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother;<sup>10</sup> and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.’ [abandon religious hypocrisy and live righteously; cf. [Isa 1:10-20](#); [Hos 6:6](#); [Mic 6:6-8](#)]<sup>11</sup> “But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing [turning away from God’s commands].<sup>12</sup> “They made their hearts like flint [acted harmfully against themselves] so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore, great wrath came from the LORD of hosts [divine discipline because of their stubborn rebellion against God].<sup>13</sup> “And just as He called [for obedience through His prophets] and they would not listen [refused to accept His direction], so they called [in prayer and fasting] and I would not listen [refusing to hear their prayers],” says the LORD of hosts [cf. [Jer 11:11](#); [Pro 1:24-31](#)];<sup>14</sup> “but I scattered them [i.e. disciplined them] with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known [sent them into captivity, Israel went to Assyria in 722 B.C., Judah went to Babylon in 586 B.C.]. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they [because of their disobedience] made the pleasant land desolate [i.e. destroyed their own house].”

### Summary:

In Zechariah chapter seven, God rebuked some Jewish returnees for their religious hypocrisy, calling them to obey His commands rather than continue empty religious practices. This prophecy was given to Zechariah on December 7, 518 B.C. (Zec 7:1).

Apparently, some Jewish returnees from Babylon had settled in the town of Bethel, which was located about 10 miles north of Jerusalem. They sent two men, Sharezer and Regemmelech, along with other men, supposedly “to seek the favor of the LORD” (Zec 7:2). They consulted the priests and prophets, asking, “Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?” (Zec 7:3). The fast they were asking about was practiced in connection with the destruction of the Solomonic temple, seventy years earlier, on August 14, 586 B.C. (see 2 Ki 25:8-9). The fast was not required under the Mosaic Law and had probably become a religious tradition. Since the temple was nearly rebuilt, they wondered if the fast would be inappropriate? Though the question was brought to the priests and prophets, God felt the need to answer them directly through His prophet, Zechariah (Zec 7:4). Though certain men from Bethel came with their question, God’s reply was broader, as He spoke “to all the people of the land and to the priests” (Zec 7:5a). God rebuked them for their religious practices which had replaced true piety, declaring they’d actually done it for themselves rather than for Him (Zec 7:5b-6). The message being delivered through Zechariah was exactly the same as that of God’s former prophets (Zec 7:7-8); a message that exposed their religious hypocrisy and unethical abuses of the vulnerable in society. God summarized the message of His prophets, saying, “Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another” (Zec 7:9-10; cf. 1 Sam 15:22; Pro 21:3; Isa 1:10-20; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8). Unfortunately, the record of Israel’s past was that God’s prophets were repeatedly ignored or mistreated and the vulnerable continued to be exploited. God was calling Zechariah’s generation to be different than their forefathers, men who “refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. They made their hearts *like* flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore, great wrath came from the LORD of hosts” (Zec 7:11-12). God repeatedly called for them to obey His commands, but they refused. “And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen” (Zec 7:13). The result was that they were judged and scattered among the nations because of their violations of the Law (see Ex 22:21-24; Deu 10:17-18; Jer 21:12; Mal 3:5). By their own sinful choices, “they made the pleasant land desolate” (Zec 7:14).

## Zechariah 8:1-23

Then the word of the LORD of hosts [phrase appears 18x, emphasizing God as Commander] came, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Zion [Jerusalem], yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.’ [to protect what He loves, see Gen 12:3] <sup>3</sup> “Thus says the LORD [concerning the millennial kingdom; vss. 3-8], ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts *will be called* the Holy Mountain.’ <sup>4</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. <sup>5</sup> ‘And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.’ [eschatological picture; cf. Isa 65:19-21; Jer 31:12-13] <sup>6</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?’ declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>7</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west [east & west = all nations]; <sup>8</sup> and I will bring them *back* and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’ [orthodoxy precedes orthopraxy] <sup>9</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts [to Zechariah’s generation], ‘Let your hands be strong [i.e. be encouraged to do God’s work], you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets [Haggai and Zechariah], *those who spoke* in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built [see Ezra 5:1-2]. <sup>10</sup> ‘For before those days [i.e. from 536-520 B.C.] there was no wage for man or any wage for animal; and for him who went out or came in there was no peace because of his enemies [social unrest created economic hardship; see Ezra 4:1-5; 24; cf. Hag 1:5-11], and I set all men one against another [God controls blessing and hardship; cf. Isa 45:7; Amo 3:6; Lam 3:38; Mic 1:12]. <sup>11</sup> ‘But now I will not treat the remnant of this people [i.e. returnees from Babylon] as in the former days [when He brought judgment],’ declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>12</sup> ‘For *there will be* peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their dew [i.e. God will bless]; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. <sup>13</sup> ‘It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel [collectively referring to Israelites who live in both regions], so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.’ [i.e. be encouraged to do God’s work] <sup>14</sup> “For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath [by violating the covenant agreement],’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and I have not relented, <sup>15</sup> so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear! <sup>16</sup> ‘These are the things which you should do [live righteously rather than follow religious rituals]: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates [cf. Isa 1:10-20; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8]. <sup>17</sup> ‘Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another [to cause unjust harm], and do not love perjury [i.e. lying in the courts; cf. Ex 20:16]; for all these are what I hate,’ declares the LORD.” <sup>18</sup> Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to

me, saying,<sup>19</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth *months* will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah [the fasts will give way to feasts]; so love truth and peace.’<sup>20</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts [concerning the millennial kingdom], ‘It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities.’<sup>21</sup> ‘The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go.”’<sup>22</sup> ‘So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.’<sup>23</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’”

## Summary:

In Zechariah chapter eight, God reveals He’s in control of current and future blessings, and He calls His people to walk in truth and righteousness. In the opening verses, God reveals He is “the LORD of hosts” which emphasizes His sovereignty over all; especially His people, whom He is jealous for (Zec 8:1-2). God reveals His plans for Israel by promising that the old and young will dwell safely in Jerusalem and will play in the streets (Zec 8:4-6). In addition, He will call His people from the nations of the world to dwell there (Zec 8:7-8), declaring, “I will be their God in truth and righteousness” (Zec 8:8b). The Lord spoke to the returnees in Zechariah’s day, saying, “Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets, *those* who *spoke* in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built” (Zec 8:9). He tells them to ponder the days of recent past, when they were experiencing economic and social unrest (Zec 8:10), when, because of their sin, God “set all men one against another” (Zec 8:10b). But now, because of their obedience, He would change their situation, saying, “For *there will be* peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these *things*” (Zec 8:12). Just as Israel had become a curse to the nations, because of their sin, now God would make them a blessing, because of their obedience (Zec 8:13-15). But He had expectations of them; specifically, ““speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,’ declares the LORD” (Zec 8:16-17). God answered the question that was posed concerning the fasts (Zec 8:18-19a; cf. 7:3), saying, they will be changed to “joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah” (Zec 8:19). Again, this would come as the people learned to “love truth and peace” (Zec 8:19b). Finally, God encourages His people with more promises of future blessings, for many Gentiles (Zec 8:20) will see God’s blessings in Jerusalem and will say, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts” (Zec 8:21). Because of God’s blessing, Jerusalem will be viewed favorably, and “many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD” (Zec 8:22). The blessing will be tied to the Jews

themselves, for “in those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zec 8:23). This message would have encouraged the Jews of Zechariah’s day, knowing God was with them as they pursued truth and righteousness.

## Zechariah 9:1-17

The burden of the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach, with Damascus as its resting place (for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel, are toward the LORD) [\[seeking Him during a time of attack\]](#), <sup>2</sup> And Hamath also, which borders on it; Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise. <sup>3</sup> For Tyre built herself a fortress and piled up silver like dust, and gold like the mire of the streets. <sup>4</sup> Behold, the Lord will dispossess her and cast her wealth into the sea; and she will be consumed with fire. <sup>5</sup> Ashkelon will see *it* and be afraid. Gaza too will writhe in great pain; also Ekron, for her expectation has been confounded. Moreover, the king will perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon will not be inhabited. <sup>6</sup> And a mongrel race will dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. <sup>7</sup> And I will remove their blood from their mouth and their detestable things from between their teeth [\[sacrificial meat with blood in it; Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17\]](#). Then they also will be a remnant for our God, and be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite [\[i.e. some of the Philistines will respond to God's judgment and turn to Him in faith\]](#). <sup>8</sup> But I will camp around My house because of an army, because of him who passes by and returns; and no oppressor will pass over them anymore, for now I have seen with My eyes. <sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey [\[Jesus at His first advent; see Matt 21:5; John 12:15\]](#). <sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He [\[Messiah\]](#) will speak peace to the nations [\[Jesus will bring world peace; see Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3\]](#); and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the river [\[probably the Euphrates River\]](#) to the ends of the earth [\[Jesus future reign will be universal; cf. Psa 72:8; Dan 2:35\]](#). <sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you [\[see Ex 24:8\]](#), I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit [\[i.e. a place of confinement; cf. Gen 37:24; Jer 38:6\]](#). <sup>12</sup> Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope; this very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you [\[i.e. compensation for unjust suffering\]](#). <sup>13</sup> For I will bend Judah as My bow [\[i.e. use Judah as His weapon to bring military defeat to Israel's enemies\]](#), I will fill the bow with Ephraim. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; and I will make you like a warrior's sword. <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD will appear over them [\[as Israel's divine Warrior\]](#), and His arrow will go forth like lightning; and the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet [\[signaling His attack\]](#), and will march in the storm winds of the south. <sup>15</sup> The LORD of hosts will defend them. And they will devour and trample on the sling stones; and they will drink *and* be boisterous as with wine [\[celebrating God's victory\]](#); and they will be filled like a *sacrificial* basin, *drenched* like the corners of the altar. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD their God will save them in that day as the flock of His people [\[God here portrayed as Israel's Shepherd\]](#); for *they are as* the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land. <sup>17</sup> For what comeliness and beauty *will be* theirs! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins [\[God promised to restore their crops and bless them\]](#).

## Summary:

Zechariah chapter nine is an undated prophecy that addresses how God deals with Gentile nations who threaten Israel (Zec 9:1-8), promises the future coming of Messiah (Zec 9:9-10), and the return of Israelites back to the land with blessing (Zec 9:11-17). The chapter opens with the names of cities familiar to Israelites in Zechariah's day; cities the Lord was against; namely, Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath, Tyre and Sidon (Zec 9:1-2). Though Tyre had built herself a fortress and accumulated great wealth (Zec 9:3), God would throw her wealth into the sea and destroy the city with fire (Zec 9:4). The surrounding cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod will be judged (Zec 9:5), and God will "cut off the pride of the Philistines" (Zec 9:6). He states, "I will remove their blood from their mouth and their detestable things from between their teeth" (Zec 9:7). This most likely refers to the eating of flesh with blood in it, which God detested (Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17). Interestingly, some of the Philistines would respond positively to God's judgments, turning to the Lord in faith, and "be a remnant for our God, and be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite" (Zec 9:7b). God promises to protect His people, saying, "But I will camp around My house because of an army, because of him who passes by and returns; and no oppressor will pass over them anymore, for now I have seen with My eyes" (Zec 9:8). Some Bible scholars see the events described in verses 1-8 as a prophecy concerning Alexander the Great's military conquests in the fourth century B.C. (Constable, Johnson, Ryrie, Wiersbe). That's possible, though one cannot be dogmatic here. What is emphasized in this section is God's sovereign control over Gentile nations and the promise to judge them because of their pride. Zechariah 9:9-10 is a split prophecy that refers to Jesus at His first and second comings. The entire church age fits in between these two verses. Other split prophecies are found in the OT ([Isa 9:6-7](#); [61:1-3](#); cf. [Luke 4:16-21](#)). The picture of the Messiah coming, riding on the colt of a donkey, is a picture of a humble and gentle ruler, not the splendor and pride one would expect of a ruler riding on a warhorse. We know Jesus was rejected by Israel just prior to His crucifixion; and the passage ultimately finds its fulfillment in the second coming (Rev 19:11-21), when Jesus establishes His kingdom on earth (Rev 20:1-6); a kingdom that will be universal (Psa 72:8; Dan 2:35), marked by righteousness ([Isa 9:6-7](#); [Jer 23:5-6](#)), and bring peace to the world (Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3). But to the Israelites of Zechariah's day, who were related to God by covenant, He would set them free from the pit of Babylon (Zec 9:11), and give them hope and a double blessing to make up for their suffering (Zec 9:12). God is then pictured as a divine Warrior who uses His restored people as a weapon to bring judgment upon surrounding Gentile nations (Zec 9:13-14). The Israelites will rejoice when this happens because God will both save them from their enemies (Zec 9:15-16) and bless their crops (Zec 9:17). In all this, God is portrayed as the sovereign Ruler over His people as well as the Gentile nations who surrounded them.

## Zechariah 10:1-12

Ask rain from the LORD at the time of the spring rain-- the LORD who makes the storm clouds; and He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to *each* man [God will bless if they obey].<sup>2</sup> For the teraphim [תַּרְפִּים *teraphim* = small household idols] speak iniquity, and the diviners see lying visions and tell false dreams [cf. [Deu 13:1-4](#); [18:9-11](#); [Jer 27:9-10](#)]; they comfort in vain [[Jer 14:13-15](#); [23:16-17](#); [28:15](#)]. Therefore, *the people* wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no [godly] shepherd [cf. [Jer 10:21](#); [23:1-2](#)].<sup>3</sup> “My anger is kindled against the [false] shepherds [shepherds = rulers, prophets and priests], and I will punish the male goats; for the LORD of hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like His majestic horse in battle [God will make them strong, unlike the false leaders who weaken them].<sup>4</sup> “From them [Judah] will come the cornerstone [Messiah], from them the tent peg [or wall peg NET], from them the bow of battle, from them every ruler [who rules with Messiah], *all* of them together.<sup>5</sup> “They [who rule with Messiah] will be as mighty men, treading down *the enemy* in the mire of the streets in battle; and they will fight, for the LORD *will be* with them; and the riders on horses will be put to shame [likely referring to the battle of Armageddon when Christ returns to establish His kingdom; [Rev 16:14](#); [19:11-21](#)].<sup>6</sup> “I will strengthen the house of Judah [Judah = southern tribes], and I will save the house of Joseph [Joseph/Ephraim = the northern tribes], and I will bring them [all] back [into the promised land], because I have had compassion on them; and they will be as though I had not rejected them [and sent them into captivity], for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.<sup>7</sup> “Ephraim [i.e. Israel in the north] will be like a mighty man, and their heart will be glad as if *from* wine; indeed, their children will see *it* and be glad, their heart will rejoice in the LORD.<sup>8</sup> “I will whistle for them to gather them together [like a shepherd who calls for his sheep], for I have redeemed them; and they will be as numerous as they were before [in the millennial kingdom].<sup>9</sup> “When I scatter them among the peoples [or “Though I scattered them among the nations” (ESV)], they will remember Me in far countries, and they with their children will live and come back [into the land].<sup>10</sup> “I will bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon until no *room* can be found for them [an eschatological regathering of Israel].<sup>11</sup> “And they will pass through the sea of distress [i.e. the Tribulation] and He will strike the waves in the sea, so that all the depths of the Nile will dry up; and the pride of Assyria will be brought down and the scepter of Egypt will depart [God will stop Gentile oppression].<sup>12</sup> “And I will strengthen them in the LORD, and in His name they will walk,” [in obedience to His will] declares the LORD.

### Summary:

In Zechariah chapter ten, God promises to bless His people if they will obey Him and turn from their idols and false shepherds (Zec 10:1-3a), and encourages them with promises of future millennial blessings (Zec 10:3b-12). God opens with a call to His people to look to Him for blessings (Zec 10:1), and to turn from the idols and false leaders who were

leading them away from the Lord. The Lord said, “For the teraphim speak iniquity, and the diviners see lying visions and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore, the people wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd. My anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the male goats” (Zec 10:2-3a). Idolatry is the sin of substitution in which we devote ourselves to worship something or someone in the place of God. It is foremost a sin of a covetous heart (Col 3:5) that leads us to desire more than what God provides, and to trust something or someone lesser than God to satisfy our wants and needs. The believer who is satisfied with God is content with what he has (1 Tim 6:7-11; cf. Phil 4:11), but the covetous heart is never content and always seeks more (i.e. money, success, friends, etc.) in order to feel secure or to please the flesh. In spite of their failings, God has a future for His people, and it is to make them majestic (Zec 10:3b), but only in connection with their future Messiah. God declares, “From them will come the cornerstone, from them the tent peg, from them the bow of battle, from them every ruler, *all of them together*” (Zec 10:4).

From the house of Judah would come the cornerstone of the building (kingdom) He would build, namely, Messiah (cf. 3:9; Gen. 49:10; Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Jer. 30:21; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:1–8). The cornerstone (Heb. *pinnah*) was a figure of a leader who would stabilize a nation and keep it from sliding down a slippery slope (cf. Judg. 20:2; 1 Sam. 14:38; Isa. 19:13). Messiah would also be like a tent peg (Heb. *yathed*) in that He would hold the tent (kingdom) firmly in place (cf. Judg. 4:21–22; Isa. 22:23–24; Acts 15:16). The Hebrew word also describes a peg inside a tent on which people hung beautiful things that glorified their homes (cf. 6:13; Isa. 22:22–24; Ezek. 15:3). Messiah would also be Yahweh’s bow by which He would destroy His enemies (cf. 9:13; Ps. 45:5; Rev. 19:11–16). All these figures picture the strong, stable, victorious, and trustworthy nature of Messiah’s rule.<sup>13</sup>

When Messiah returns at His second coming and leads His people in battle, they will tread down their enemies (Zec 10:5), and the divided tribes of Judah and Israel will be reunited (Zec 10:6), and they will rejoice in the Lord (Zec 10:8). This will occur when God reunites His people, when He whistles for them as a shepherd calls for his sheep (Zec 10:9), and He brings them back into the land (Zec 10:10). He declares this will happen after they’ve passed through “the sea of distress” (Zec 10:11), which likely refers to the time of the Tribulation (Rev chapters 6-18). At the time God establishes His millennial kingdom, He declares, “I will strengthen them in the LORD, and in His name they will walk” (Zec 10:12). The kingdoms of this world, and those of us who make up their citizenry, do not have the answers or resources for our biggest problems, and we eagerly look forward to the return of Christ, who alone will make the world a better place. Until then, we must let our lights shine as brightly as possible, speak God’s truth, walk in His love, and share the

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<sup>13</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Zec 10:4.

gospel of Christ that others might come to believe in Jesus and be saved out of this fallen world (1 Cor 15:3-4; cf. John 3:16; Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5).

He or They in Zechariah 10:11?

<sup>NAU</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** "And they will pass through the sea of distress And He will strike the waves in the sea, So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up; And the pride of Assyria will be brought down And the scepter of Egypt will depart.

<sup>CEB</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** They will pass through the sea of distress and strike the sea with waves. All the depths of the river will dry up. The pride of Assyria will be brought down; the scepter of Egypt will turn away.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** They will pass through the sea of trouble; the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria's pride will be brought down and Egypt's scepter will pass away.

<sup>CSB</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** Yahweh will pass through the sea of distress and strike the waves of the sea; all the depths of the Nile will dry up. The pride of Assyria will be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt will come to an end.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** He shall pass through the sea of troubles and strike down the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the Nile shall be dried up. The pride of Assyria shall be laid low, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

<sup>NET</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** The LORD will cross the sea of storms and will calm its turbulence. The depths of the Nile will dry up, the pride of Assyria will be humbled, and the domination of Egypt will be no more.

<sup>BGT</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** καὶ διελύσονται ἐν θαλάσῃ στενῇ καὶ πατάξουσιν ἐν θαλάσῃ κύματα καὶ ξηρανθήσεται πάντα τὰ βάθη ποταμῶν καὶ ἀφαιρεθήσεται πᾶσα ὕβρις Ἀσσυρίων καὶ σκῆπτρον Αἰγύπτου περιαιρεθήσεται

[διέρχομαι *dierchomai* – future middle indicative third person plural = *they will pass through*]

<sup>WTT</sup> **Zechariah 10:11** וְעָבַר בְּיָמָם צָרָה וְהָפָה בְּיָמָם גְּלִים וְהִבִּישׁוּ כָּל מְצוּלוֹת יָאֵר וְהוֹרֵד גְּאוֹן אֲשׁוּר וְשָׁבַט מִצְרַיִם יָסוּר

[עָבַר *abar* – qal perfect third person masculine singular = *he will pass through*]

Whether it's *He* or *they*, the end result does not change, as God is the one who brings His people to victory.

## Zechariah 11:1-17

Open your doors, O Lebanon, that a fire may feed on your cedars.<sup>2</sup> Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, because the glorious *trees* have been destroyed; wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down [*the trees likely represent rulers; cf. Isa 10:33-34; Dan 4:20-22*].<sup>3</sup> There is a sound of the shepherds' wail, for their glory is ruined; there is a sound of the young lions' roar [*shepherds and lions likely represent leaders; cf. Jer 23:2; Nah 2:11-13*], for the pride of the Jordan is ruined [*God controls rulers; cf. 1 Sam 2:8; Psa 75:6-7; Dan 2:21; 4:17, 25, 32*].<sup>4</sup> Thus says the LORD my God [*to Zechariah*], "Pasture the flock *doomed* to slaughter."<sup>5</sup> "Those [*bad rulers in Judah*] who buy them slay them and go unpunished, and *each of* those who sell them says, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich!' And their own shepherds have no pity on them [*corrupt leaders; cf. Isa 1:23; Mic 7:3-4*]."<sup>6</sup> "For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD; "but behold, I will cause the men to fall, each into another's power and into the power of his king; and they will strike the land, and I will not deliver them from their power."<sup>7</sup> So I pastured the flock *doomed* to slaughter, hence the afflicted of the flock [*Zechariah acts out a role to communicate a message; cf. Hos 1:1-3; Isa 20:2-4; Jer 27:1-11; Ezek 4:1-17*]. And I took for myself two staffs [*two staffs = shepherd's tools*]: the one I called Favor [*representing God's covenant; see vs. 10*] and the other I called Union [*representing Israel and Judah; see vs. 14*]; so I pastured the flock.<sup>8</sup> Then I annihilated the three shepherds in one month [*three shepherds - possibly three kings, three shepherds, or three offices of leadership (i.e. king, prophet, and priest)*], for my soul was impatient with them [*because of their rebellion*], and their soul also was weary of me [*who kept calling them to walk in righteousness*].<sup>9</sup> Then I said [*to the unresponsive nation*], "I will not pasture you [*i.e. not lead*]. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and let those who are left eat one another's flesh [*consume each other*]."<sup>10</sup> I took my staff Favor and cut it in pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples [*break my covenant = likely a metaphor describing a broken relationship*].<sup>11</sup> So it was broken on that day, and thus the afflicted of the flock who were watching me [*i.e. Zechariah's generation*] realized that it was the word of the LORD [*to them*].<sup>12</sup> I said to them [*the flock being judged*], "If it is good in your sight, give *me* my wages [*as a shepherd*]; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty *shekels* of silver as my wages [*the price of a slave; see Ex 21:32*].<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to me [*Zechariah*], "Throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price [*divine sarcasm*] at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD [*perhaps implying the temple reconstruction was completed. Matthew saw this verse as a prophesy related to Judas and his betrayal of Jesus; see Matt 27:3-10*].<sup>14</sup> Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.<sup>15</sup> The LORD said to me [*calling Zechariah to assume the role of a foolish shepherd*], "Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd [*i.e. one who does not walk with God and leads others*]

into sin].<sup>16</sup> “For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hoofs [At times, God appoints unjust rulers to discipline His people; cf. [Isa 3:1-5](#); [Jer 25:9](#); [Hab 1:5-10](#)].<sup>17</sup> “Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! A sword will be on his arm and on his right eye! His arm will be totally withered and his right eye will be blind.” [i.e. punished and rendered unable to lead]

## Summary:

The pericope opens with a pronouncement of judgment against the leaders and land to the north and east of Judah (Zec 11:1-3), perhaps because of some wrong they’d committed against the Israelites. God then called Zechariah to act out a message to His people (Zec 11:4). The prophet’s first role was as a shepherd who pastured a flock that was doomed to slaughter (Zec 11:5-14), and his second role was as a foolish shepherd who selfishly abused his flock and was cursed (Zec 11:15-17). The bad shepherds abused the sheep (Zec 11:5), and were judged by God Himself (Zec 11:6). Acting as a shepherd, Zechariah took two staves, which he named Favor and Union (Zec 11:7). God, speaking through Zechariah, stated, “I annihilated the three shepherds in one month, for my soul was impatient with them, and their soul also was weary of me” (Zec 11:8). The three shepherds are not identified and could represent three actual shepherds, three kings, or three offices of leadership such as king, prophet, and priest. Then, speaking to the nation again, the Lord states, “I will not pasture you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and let those who are left eat one another’s flesh” (Zec 11:9); this is presumably because of some sinful failing on their part. Zechariah took the staff he called Favor, and cut it in pieces, which represented God’s breaking His covenant with His people (Zec 11:10). This does not appear to be a reference to any of the major biblical covenants (i.e. Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, New), but a metaphor of the broken relationship between God and the people of Zechariah’s day. When Zechariah did this, he said, “the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized that it was the word of the LORD” (Zec 11:11). Speaking as their shepherd—who had broken his staff—he asked them to pay him his wages, and they gave him thirty pieces of silver (Zec 11:12). God told Zechariah to take the money and “throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them” (Zec 11:13a). So he “took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD” (Zec 11:13b). This might imply the temple reconstruction was complete at the time Zechariah received his message. Matthew saw this symbolic act as prophecy concerning Judas and the betrayal of Jesus (see Matt 27:3-10). Zechariah then cut in pieces his second staff, the one he’d named Union, “to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel” (Zec 11:14). This verse is difficult to know who he’s talking about, since the separation between Israel and Judah occurred historically after the death of Solomon in 930 B.C. God called Zechariah to assume a second role, that of a foolish shepherd (Zec 11:15). This role was to typify a leader God would raise up to punish His people, one “who will not care for the

perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hoofs” (Zec 11:16). At times, God appoints unjust rulers to discipline His people (Isa 3:1-5; 10:5-11; Hab 1:5-10). Finally, concerning the unjust leaders in Zechariah’s day, God declares, “Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! A sword will be on his arm and on his right eye! His arm will be totally withered and his right eye will be blind” (Zec 11:17). Because of his sin, the foolish shepherd’s strength and intelligence will be crippled, rendering him unfit to lead. Overall, the chapter emphasizes God’s sovereignty to administer just punishment to nations, leaders, and His people.

## Foolish & Worthless Shepherds Dr. Steven R. Cook

The term shepherd appears throughout the Bible. The word translates the Hebrew רֹעֵה *ro'eh* as well as the Greek ποιμήν *poimen*. Both words carry the same basic meaning “to pasture, shepherd, shelter, protect”<sup>14</sup> and “one who herds sheep, shepherd, sheepherder.”<sup>15</sup> Shepherding was tough and lowly work, often performed in solitude for long periods of time and in dangerous places (Gen 31:36-40; 1 Sam 17:34-35).

Shepherds stayed with their sheep day and night (Luke 2:8). They provided their flocks with food and water, defended them against thieves and wild animals (1 Sam. 17:34–35; Isa. 31:4; Amos 3:12), and searched for any sheep that wandered astray (Ezek. 34:12; Luke 15:4–6). Each shepherd carried a curved staff, used as a walking stick and for guiding and dividing the sheep (Lev. 27:32); a rod or club, used as a weapon; and a sling (1 Sam. 17:40). They might be aided by dogs (Job 30:1). Because shepherds were the sole source of provision, protection, and control for sheep, in ancient Near Eastern usage “shepherd” came to be a term descriptive of political leaders...Kings, priests, and prophets of Israel are characterized as faithful (Jer. 3:15; 23:4) or wicked shepherds (Isa. 56:11–12; Jer. 10:21; 23:1–2; 50:6). David in particular is called the shepherd appointed by God (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:70–72). Israel under inadequate leadership is spoken of as sheep without a shepherd (Num. 27:17; 1 Kgs. 22:17; Matt. 9:36). Shepherd imagery is also applied to God, who guides and cares for his people (e.g., Ps. 23:1–4; 28:9; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 31:10; cf. Gen. 48:15). The eschatological Davidic king is depicted as a shepherd (Ezek. 34:23; Mic. 5:4).<sup>16</sup>

The term shepherd is used figuratively in Scripture:

1. **God the Father.** God is referred to as the Shepherd who leads, feeds, and protects His people (Gen 48:15; Isa 40:11; Psa 23:1-4; 80:1; 100:1-3; Ezek 34:10-16).
2. **Jesus** as the “Good Shepherd” (John 10:14), the “Great Shepherd” (Heb 13:20), and the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet 5:4). As the ideal shepherd, Jesus has compassion for His sheep (Matt 9:36), feeds them with God’s Word (Mark 6:34), and lays down His life for them (John 10:11).
3. **Human rulers.** In the OT, these leaders primarily consisted of kings, prophets, and priests who were called by God to lead people into His will (Num 27:16-17; 2 Sam 5:1-2). These leaders were to feed God’s people with His Word (Lev 10:11; Deu 33:10; Ezra 7:10; Jer 3:15; Mal 2:7).

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<sup>14</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1258.

<sup>15</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 843.

<sup>16</sup> Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 939.

4. **Church pastors.** In the Church age, God has appointed under-shepherds (i.e. pastors) to lead, feed, and protect His people (Acts 20:28-32; Eph 4:11-14; 2 Tim 2:2; 4:2; 1 Pet 5:1-2). Pastors are appointed by God (Acts 20:28; cf. Eph 4:11) to work within the church, and with the church, serving as examples, and not “lording” their authority over others (1 Pet 5:3). Church pastors are to guard their flock against false teachers and their false doctrines, guiding believers into God’s will, and feeding them with the truths of Scripture. God’s Word is the food pastors serve to their flocks so they might be nourished and grow spiritually (1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:12-14; 1 Pet 2:2).
5. **Foolish and worthless leaders** (Isa 56:11-12; Jer 10:21; 23:1-2; 50:6; Ezek 34:1-10; Zec 11:15-17). The two words to describe the bad shepherd in Zechariah 11:15-17 are *foolish* and *worthless*. *Foolish* translates the Hebrew word עָלִיל *evili*, which, in this context, connotes an immoral leader who had no regard for those to whom he was to minister. “The word [fool] is used in Scripture with respect to *moral* more than to intellectual deficiencies. The “fool” is not so much one lacking in mental powers, as one who misuses them; not one who does not reason, but reasons wrongly.”<sup>17</sup> The foremost characteristic of a fool is that God is absent from his heart; as the Scripture states, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psa 14:1). Being devoid of any divine viewpoint or concern, the fool thinks only of self and will use others as a means of personal benefit. Zechariah describes the foolish shepherd-leader as one “who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hoofs” (Zec 11:16). The word *worthless* translates the Hebrew word עִלִּיל *elil*, which connotes something of no value. In Zechariah 11:17 it refers to the leader who is of no value to God or others. The worthless shepherd has no sense of commitment to the flock under his care, and “who leaves the flock” (Zec 11:17). Elsewhere, Scripture describes the *worthless* person as one who “digs up evil” (Pro 16:27), “makes a mockery of justice” (Pro 19:28), and “plots evil against the LORD” (Nah 1:11). He leads others away from God (Deu 13:13), is given to lewd behavior (Judg 19:22), hides from justice (Judg 20:13), is unreasonable (1 Sam 25:17), defies authority (2 Sam 20:1), is willing to lie against the innocent and promote injustice (1 Ki 21:9-13), and seeks to overpower the timid leader (2 Chron 13:7). It should be noted that *worthless* persons can be born into good families, for “the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD” (1 Sam 2:12). And, they can attach themselves to a godly leader and cause trouble, such as “the wicked and worthless men among those who went with David” (1 Sam 30:22).

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<sup>17</sup> Merrill Frederick Unger, R. K. Harrison, Howard Frederic Vos et al., “Fool”, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988).

## Zechariah 12:1-14

The burden [מַשָּׂא *massa* – burden, oracle] of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. *Thus* declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him [God, who creates the world and mankind, will bring to pass what follows], <sup>2</sup> “Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around [i.e. He will make the nations that come against Judah stumble with His judgments]; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. <sup>3</sup> “It will come about in that day [just prior to Christ’s return, at the Battle of Armageddon; cf. [Zec 14:2](#); [Joel 3:9-16](#); [Rev 16:13-16](#); [19:19](#)] that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured [though Jerusalem had been uprooted several times in their past, they will become immovable]. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it [to try to move it]. <sup>4</sup> “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness [God will protect Jerusalem by causing her enemies to suffer psychosis]. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness [i.e. stop military invasions against Jerusalem]. <sup>5</sup> “Then the clans of Judah [Israelites living outside Jerusalem] will say in their hearts [perceiving the reality of God’s work for them], ‘A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.’ <sup>6</sup> “In that day I will make the clans of Judah [Israelites living outside Jerusalem] like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves [which cannot stand against fire], so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples [i.e. defeat their enemies to the south and north], while the inhabitants of Jerusalem [residents inside the city] again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. <sup>7</sup> “The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first [i.e. the vulnerable residents outside the city], so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah [i.e. will not think one is more important than the other]. <sup>8</sup> “In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David [a strong warrior], and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. <sup>9</sup> “And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem [at the battle of Armageddon]. <sup>10</sup> “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication [i.e. God the Holy Spirit will change their hearts], so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced [Jesus at His crucifixion; see [John 19:37](#); [Rev 1:7](#)]; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn [Israel will experience national repentance over their rejection of Jesus as Messiah; see [Rom 11:25-27](#)]. <sup>11</sup> “In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo [perhaps referring to the mourning that occurred when Josiah was killed; see [2 Chr 35:20-27](#)]. <sup>12</sup> “The land will mourn, every family by itself [every Jew living at that time will mourn and turn to Christ as Savior]; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup> the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the

family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup> all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. [royalty, priests, and commoners will mourn]

## Summary:

Zechariah 12:1-9 refers to the time of the Tribulation; specifically, the battle of Armageddon, when the nations of the world gather against Jerusalem. Zechariah 12:10-14 refers to the national conversion of Israel just prior to the return of Christ. In the opening verse, God identifies Himself as the One who created everything, including mankind; and He is the One who will bring the future events to pass (Zec 12:1). He will make Jerusalem like a cup of strong alcohol to the nations, who will stumble and reel when they try to consume it (Zec 12:2). And, He would make Jerusalem like a heavy stone that will injure those who try to move it (Zec 12:3a). This will be a time when “all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it” (Zec 12:3b), and will be injured by their efforts to harm the city. The phrase *in that day* occurs 17 times in Zechariah chapters 12-14 and refers to the eschatological events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus. The Lord Himself will defend Judah, saying, “I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness” (Zec 12:4). The leaders of Judah will know that God is for them (Zec 12:5), and will work through them to defeat their enemies (Zec 12:6). The Lord’s deliverance will start with “the tents of Judah” so that those outside the city of Jerusalem will know He cares about them as much as He does “the house of David” and “the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Zec 12:7). And the Lord will defend and strengthen those within Jerusalem, declaring, “In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them” (Zec 12:8). God declares, He “will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zec 12:9). At that time, Israel will experience national conversion as the Lord pours out on them “the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn” (Zec 12:10). That is, they will mourn that their Messiah, Jesus, was rejected by them at His first coming, and will turn to Him in faith, accepting Him at His second coming. This time of mourning—as Zechariah talks to his generation—will be like the mourning that occurred when Josiah, one of Israel’s greatest kings, was killed by Pharaoh Neco “in the plain of Megiddo” (Zec 12:11; cf. 2 Chr 35:20-27). Every family will mourn, those representing the political (David and Nathan), the priestly (Levi and Shimei), and “all the families that remain” (Zec 12:12-14).

## Zechariah 13:1-9

“In that day [referring to the Tribulation and Second Coming of Jesus] a fountain will be opened [for spiritual cleansing] for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem [i.e. the political leaders and citizens of Jerusalem], for sin and for impurity [i.e. to cleanse the land of idolatry].<sup>2</sup> “It will come about in that day,” declares the LORD of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land [idolatry seeks to steal worship from God], and they will no longer be remembered [by God’s people]; and I will also remove the [false] prophets and the unclean spirit from the land [i.e. stop demonic activity during the kingdom age].<sup>3</sup> “And if anyone still prophesies [falsehoods], then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD’; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies [as prescribed in the Mosaic Law; see Deu 13:6-11; 18:20].<sup>4</sup> “Also it will come about in that day [because God’s justice is strongly executed] that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies [falsely], and they will not put on a hairy robe [a prophet’s garment; see Mark 1:6] in order to deceive [as they were accustomed to doing when the laws were lax];<sup>5</sup> but he will say, ‘I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground [i.e. a farmer], for a man sold me as a slave in my youth.’<sup>6</sup> “And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms?’ [likely cuttings from pagan practices; see Lev 19:28; Deu 14:1; 1 Ki 18:28] Then he will say [falsely, to cover up his past], ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’ [i.e. accidental wounds, perhaps while play fighting]<sup>7</sup> “Awake, O sword [an instrument of death], against My Shepherd, and [even] against the man, My Associate,” [Shepherd & Associate = Jesus, the Father’s equal] Declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd [God calls for His Son—the Good Shepherd—to be stricken; see Isa 53:4-10; Matt 26:42; Mark 10:45; John 10:11, 15; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28] that the sheep may be scattered [fulfilled with Jesus’ disciples; Matt 26:31, 56]; and I will turn My hand against the little ones [or “the insignificant ones” NET, perhaps referring to those who wrongly attacked Jesus].<sup>8</sup> “It will come about in all the land,” Declares the LORD, “That two parts in it will be cut off *and* perish [2/3 of Israelites will die during the Tribulation]; but the third will be left in it [1/3 = likely the believing remnant].<sup>9</sup> “And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested [i.e. the time of the Tribulation; Ezek 20:33-38]. They [the humble remnant] will call on My name [in faith], and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

### Summary:

Zechariah 13:1-6 refer to events surrounding the second coming of Christ and the suppression of idolatry and false prophets. Zechariah 13:7 refers to the first coming of Jesus and His crucifixion; and, Zechariah 13:8-9 refers to God’s further cleansing of the land during the Tribulation, just before Messiah comes. Zechariah chapter thirteen opens with the repeated phrase, *in that day* (Zec 13:1, 2, 4), showing it is a continuation of

chapter twelve, and refers to the eschatological events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus. In that future time, God declares, “a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity” (Zec 13:1). This means the Lord will offer spiritual cleansing to Israel’s leadership and people in anticipation of the coming earthly kingdom. The Lord also states, “I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land” (Zec 13:2). Israel has a long history of idolatry, which was promoted by false prophets (in the seen world) and unclean spirits (in the unseen world). These will be removed from the land; again, in anticipation of the coming earthly kingdom. The false prophets will not have a place to hide, not even in their own homes, as parents, who are wholly devoted to God, will not tolerate spiritual dissent among their children (Zec 13:3). The false prophets will be ashamed of their false visions and will no longer try to present themselves as true prophets of God (Zec 13:4); but rather, will say they are lowly slave farmers (Zec 13:5). One of the marks of false prophets was the cutting of their flesh in an effort to excite their pagan deity (cf. Lev 19:28; Deu 14:1; 1 Ki 18:28). When asked about his wounds, the false prophet will lie and say “I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zec 13:6). That is, the wounds were not self-inflicted, but inflicted by a friend, perhaps while horseplaying in his youth. The subject matter suddenly changes, as Zechariah prophecies about the first coming of Jesus, specifically with regard to His substitutionary death. God states, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate” (Zec 13:7a). Here, God the Father calls for a sword—an instrument of death—to be raised against His Shepherd and Associate, which is Jesus, His Son. This verse is similar to that of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, where God the Father crushes Jesus in our place (Isa 53:4-10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28); a crushing that Jesus willingly accepts, as He lays down His life for us (Matt 26:42; Mark 10:45; John 10:11, 15). The Lord further states, “Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; and I will turn My hand against the little ones” (Zec 13:7b). We know that Jesus’ disciples were scattered after He was crucified (Matt 26:31, 56), and the reference to “the little ones” might be better understood as “the insignificant ones” who were judged by God for the wrong they inflicted on Jesus (perhaps alluding the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). Lastly, Zechariah seems to jump back to the future time of the Tribulation, in which two thirds of Israelites will be cut off, and a third will be spared to enter into the coming earthly kingdom (Zec 13:8). This remaining third, likely the believing remnant of Israelites at the second coming of Jesus, will be refined and tested through the fire of the Tribulation (Zec 13:9a). God says of these believing Jews, “they will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, ‘they are My people,’ and they will say, ‘the LORD is my God’” (Zec 13:9b). Israel, God’s covenant people, will, at last, be in a healthy relationship with the Lord as they enter into the earthly millennial kingdom with Jesus as their King.

## Zechariah 14:1-21

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. <sup>2</sup> For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle [[the battle of Armageddon](#)], and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city [[cf. Joel 2:1-11; Dan 12:1](#)]. <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle [[the second coming of Christ](#)]. <sup>4</sup> In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south [[the second coming of Christ](#)]. <sup>5</sup> You [[persecuted Jews](#)] will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel [[divinely provided escape route](#)]; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah [[Amos 1:1; 760 B.C.](#)]. Then the LORD, my God, will come, *and* all the holy ones with Him! [[perhaps angels](#)] <sup>6</sup> In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle [[the disruption of stellar luminaries](#)]. <sup>7</sup> For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. <sup>8</sup> And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem [[the millennial kingdom](#)], half of them toward the eastern sea [[i.e. the Dead Sea](#)] and the other half toward the western sea [[i.e. the Mediterranean Sea](#)]; it will be in summer as well as in winter. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one [[i.e. supreme; cf. Deu 6:4-5](#)]. <sup>10</sup> All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. <sup>11</sup> People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. <sup>12</sup> Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. <sup>13</sup> It will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another [[divinely administered mass psychosis that results in interpersonal attacks](#)]. <sup>14</sup> Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. <sup>15</sup> So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps. <sup>16</sup> Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem [[and become humble](#)] will go up from year to year [[most likely a representative group from the nation](#)] to worship the King [[Jesus](#)], the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths [[which celebrated the ingathering of crops and commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt](#)]. <sup>17</sup> And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King [[expressing negative volition](#)], the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup> If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will*

*fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>19</sup> This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>20</sup> In that day there will *be inscribed* on the bells of the horses, “HOLY TO THE LORD.” And the cooking pots in the LORD’S house will be like the bowls before the altar [everything common made holy]. <sup>21</sup> Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite [i.e. a merchant trader] in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.

## **Summary:**

Zechariah 14:1-21 pertains to the day of the Lord, which is a future time when God will intervene in human history to rescue His people and judge the wicked, in order to establish His kingdom on earth. The chapter opens with a description of persecution by Gentile nations upon Jerusalem, in which the city is captured, houses plundered, women ravished, and many taken into exile (Zec 14:1-2). When all seems hopeless, “the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle” (Zec 14:3). This refers to the battle of Armageddon in which Jesus Christ “will stand on the Mount of Olives”, causing the mountain to split in two (Zec 14:4), and clearing the way for His people to flee to safety (Zec 14:5a). Apparently, Jesus will be accompanied by many of His holy angels (Zec 14:5b). This event will be so great, even the stars in the sky will be impacted (Zec 14:6-7). After the battle, there will be a fountain flowing out of Jerusalem that will extend outward to other nations (Zec 14:8), and “the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one” (Zec 14:9). The topography of the Middle East will be changed into a plain (Zec 14:10), and “People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security” (Zec 14:11). And God will punish those who attacked Jerusalem with great physical pain (Zec 14:12) and mental confusion, such that “they will seize one another’s hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another” (Zec 14:13). Apparently, some within Judah and Jerusalem will fight, and after the enemy is defeated, “the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance” (Zec 14:14). The plague which God brought upon Israel’s enemies, will also be upon all the animals in their camp (Zec 14:15), rendering them useless to those who use them in war. After the battle is complete, after God subdues Israel’s enemies, the remaining humbled nations will be required to go to Jerusalem annually “to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them” (Zec 14:16-17). This will be the punishment on nations near and far (Zec 14:18-19). It is likely that representatives from the nations of the world will be those who visit Jerusalem annually, as it would seem impossible for every person on the planet to gather there. More so, failure to attend these annual events implies that sin and pride are not completely removed during the millennial

kingdom, otherwise there would be no need for God to withhold the blessing of rain upon those nations. Lastly, when Christ establishes His kingdom on earth, common things such as bells on horse (Zec 14:20), cooking pots and dishes, will all “be holy to the LORD of hosts” (Zec 14:21a). “And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day” (Zec 14:21b), which likely refers to common traders influencing those who worship at the Lord’s temple.

The Day of the Lord  
Dr. Steven R. Cook

The phrase “the day of the Lord” appears twenty three times in Scripture.<sup>18</sup> It appears eighteen times in the Old Testament (Isa. 13:6, 9; 58:13; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joe 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Mal. 4:5)<sup>19</sup> and five times in the New Testament (Acts 2:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:7-14).<sup>20</sup> The day of the Lord refers to that future time when God will intervene in human history to rescue His people and judge the wicked. It refers to the battle that takes place at Armageddon. Warren Wiersbe writes:

The phrase “the day of the Lord” refers to that future time when God will pour out His wrath on the Gentile nations *because of their sins against the Jews* (see Joel 3:1–8). It will occur after the church has been taken to heaven (see 1 Thes. 1:10 and 5:9–10, and Rev. 3:10), during that period of seven years known as the Tribulation. It is described most fully in Rev. 6–19. This period will end with the Battle of Armageddon (Joel 3:9–17; Rev. 19:11–21) and Jesus Christ returning to the earth to establish His kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

From Scripture we can say with certainty that the future “day of the Lord” follows the first coming of Christ, (Mal. 4:5), will come upon the entire world (Joel 2:1-11; 30-31; 3:12-15; Isa. 13:6-11; Ezek. 30:2-4; Obad. 1:15), will be inescapable (Amos 5:18-20), is a day of wrath and destruction (Zeph. 1:14-18), will come unannounced (1 Thess. 5:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:10), and will follow the coming of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:1-4). The church will not experience this time of God’s judgment, for we are waiting for the return of Christ from heaven, “who rescues us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:10; cf. 5:9).

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<sup>18</sup> Old Testament writers use the Hebrew phrase יוֹם־יְהוָה *yom Yahweh*, and New Testament writers use the Greek phrase ἡμέρα κυρίου *hemera kuriou*.

<sup>19</sup> The day of the Lord appears twice in Amos 5:18 and Zephaniah 1:14.

<sup>20</sup> Other references include (Isa. 2:11-21; 4:2; 11:10; 13:13; 19:23-24; 24:21; 27:12-13; 30:25; 61:2-4; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 30:0; 36:33; 38:14-19; Hos. 2:16-21; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:11; Zeph. 1:8-10, 14-15; 2:2-3; 3:8; Mal. 3:2, 17; 4:1-3; Matt. 10:15; 11:22-24; 26:29; Luke 10:12; 17:30-31; Rom. 2:5; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Thess. 5:4; 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 4:17; Rev. 6:19).

<sup>21</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), Joe.

## The Second Coming of Jesus Dr. Steven R. Cook

The coming of Messiah into the world is a prophesied event in the both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament revealed Messiah would come, both as a Suffering Servant (Psa 22:6, 12-18; Isa 50:6-7; 53:1-12; Dan 9:26; Zec 13:7), and as a reigning descendant of David, who will establish an earthly kingdom in Israel (2 Sam 7:16; Psa 89:3-4, 34-37; Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-5; Jer 23:5; Dan 2:44; 7:13-14). The New Testament clearly identifies Jesus as the promised Messiah (Matt 1:1, 16; Luke 1:31-33; John 1:41-42).

At His incarnation—nearly two thousand years ago—God the Son added humanity to Himself (John 1:1, 14), walked among men and lived a righteous life, free from sin (Matt 5:17-18; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5). At His first coming, Jesus repeatedly offered the earthly Davidic kingdom to Israel (Matt 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7), but His offer was rejected by the Jewish leadership and people (Matt 11:20; 12:14; 27:22-23; John 19:13-16), so the kingdom was postponed for a future time (Matt 21:43).

As the Suffering Servant, Jesus went to the cross and died for our sins (John 3:16; Rom 5:6-8; 1 Pet 3:18), was buried, and raised again on the third day (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; Luke 24:6-7; Acts 10:38-41; 1 Cor 15:3-4). After His resurrection, over forty days, Jesus appeared to numerous persons, namely, Mary Magdalene and other women (John 20:10-18; Matt 28:8-9), two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32), the disciples without Thomas (John 20:19-25), the disciples with Thomas (John 20:26-29), the disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23), Peter, James, and more than 500 brethren at one time (1 Cor 15:5-7), and lastly, to the disciples at the Mount of Olives, before He ascended bodily into heaven (Acts 1:9-12). It is was no coincidence that Jesus ascended physically to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), for it is to this very mountain that Zechariah prophesied Messiah would come, saying, “In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south” (Zec 14:4). That the Mount of Olives is still in an undisturbed state makes clear that Jesus has not returned.

Jesus promised to return again (Matt 16:27; 19:28; 25:31), and this will happen after the time of Tribulation (Matt 24:21, 29-30). The return of Christ is praiseworthy news to those who are in heaven and on the earth who love Him and look forward to His coming. However, it is bad news to those who oppose Him (2 Thess 1:3-10; Rev 19:11-21). The Second Coming is distinguished from the Rapture of the Church where Christ takes all Christians to heaven (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor 15:51-53; 1 Thess 4:13-18). The Rapture of the Church occurs just prior to the seven-year Tribulation.

The major purposes of Jesus' Second Coming include:

1. Fulfilling Prophecy (Psa 2:1-12; Isa 11:1-5; Dan 7:13-14; Zec 14:1-9; Matt 19:28; 24:29-30; 25:31; Acts 1:11; 2 Thess 1:6-10).
2. Judging the world and establishing righteousness (Psa 96:13; Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5; Matt 19:28; 25:31-46; Rev 20:4; 11-15).
3. Rescuing persecuted believers from the Tribulation (Matt 24:22).
4. Bringing saved Jews into the Promised Land (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:8; Ezek; 37:21-25; Rom 11:25-26).
5. Fulfilling the promises of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 34:25-27; 37:26).
6. Judging the Antichrist and the False Prophet (Rev 19:20).
7. Casting Satan into the Abyss for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3).
8. Establishing the earthly Davidic kingdom in Jerusalem (2 Sam 7:16; Psa 89:3-4, 34-37; Luke 1:31-33; cf. Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5; Dan 7:13-14; Rev 20:1-6).