

## The Visions to Zechariah Zechariah 3:1-4 – 5:11

### Lesson 2

Zechariah's first vision called for the people to return to the Lord. The second vision began with the Lord's anger because the entire world was at peace yet His temple in Jerusalem was still in shambles. He was angry with the four empires that had caused the Jews to scatter from Israel and He sent a craftsman to overturn each power. To Assyria, He sent Nebuchadnezzar II. To Babylon, He sent Cyrus the Great. To Persia, He sent Alexander the Great. To Egypt, He sent Ptolemy. The vision also revealed that Jerusalem, the Lord's city, will one day be inhabited without walls and He has measured every inch of it carefully to make sure it has enough room. Although it will be a city without walls of stone and brick, it will be guarded by a wall of fire when He inhabits the city. Then everyone will worship Him in silence. Silence? Worship in silence? Perhaps the church today should reconsider its program of worship. Perhaps we should trade a portion of its symphony of sounds for a prolonged sonata of silence before the Lord.

Continuing the vision, the Lord incorporated Zechariah's friend, Joshua the high priest.

#### **Clothed with Filthy Garments**

**Zechariah 3:**<sup>1</sup> Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. <sup>2</sup> The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" <sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. <sup>4</sup> He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." <sup>5</sup> Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. <sup>6</sup> And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, <sup>7</sup> "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing *here*.' <sup>8</sup> 'Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. <sup>9</sup> 'For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. <sup>10</sup> 'In that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to *sit* under *his* vine and under *his* fig tree.'"

Joshua was alive at the time of this vision. He had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with Zerubbabel and helped with the rebuilding of the temple upon his arrival. He is mentioned in Haggai 1:1 and Ezra 3:2-3 as a member of the priestly line. Once the temple was completed, he would be able to commemorate and consecrate the structure and reinstitute the sacrificial system. In the Jewish system, the high priest acted as the representative of the people when he was in the presences of the Lord. As Joshua stood as priest before the Lord, Zechariah saw Satan at his right hand to bring false charges against him. <sup>6</sup> His

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<sup>6</sup> Satan is standing to the left hand of the Lord's throne.

clothing was old and soiled, and Satan used his attire to try to discredit him. As the representative of the people, his life is a picture of the Israelites being put on trial. Convicted, they were sent into exile as their punishment. From exile in Babylon, the Israelites were plucked by the Lord as a hot coal might be plucked from a fire. They were special to the Lord. He had chosen them as well as the city of Jerusalem.

Satan's purpose was to convince the Lord that the priestly line had polluted the system to the point that neither Joshua nor the people he represented could present a proper offering to the Lord; therefore, according to Satan, the continuation of the construction of the temple was useless.

Joshua's garments were removed as a symbol of the forgiveness of Israel's sin and new ones were placed on him. The Lord's acceptance of His people was not based on their righteousness but on their willingness to make Him their Lord. Joshua and Israel were willing and a change of clothing was given to them despite Satan's attempt to thwart the process. Joshua was crowned with the clean turban. The priesthood was restored and the subsequent priests who would follow Joshua would be symbols of the true Branch, the Messiah, who would one day come to earth. He will be from the line of David, one that was almost extinct, but Joshua was from the Levitical line of Aaron just like John the Baptist will be. Even though the Messiah would come from the Davidic line, He would also come from the Levitical line. Jesus was the cousin of John the Baptist through their mothers, Elizabeth and Mary, who were of the Leviticus line. Mary married Joseph who was of the Davidic line. Joseph's adoption of Jesus made Him eligible to reign as king when the throne became available again.

In the vision, a stone was placed in front of Joshua and he heard the Lord promise to remove sin in one day – the day of the Lord. At the same time, Israel and the world will know true peace. What were the seven eyes? The next part of the vision will help with that answer.

### **A Lampstand All of Gold**

**Zechariah 4:**<sup>1</sup> Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep. <sup>2</sup> He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; <sup>3</sup> also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side." <sup>4</sup> Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, 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 saying, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts. <sup>7</sup> 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!' "" <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, and his hands will finish *it*. 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? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—*these are* the eyes of the Lord which range to and fro throughout the earth."

Zechariah was perplexed by the golden lampstand with the bowl on its top. It had seven lamps with seven spouts each, 49 in all. Additionally, the lamp had two olive trees beside it. Zechariah asked the Lord what they were. The angel answered, ""This is the word of the

Lord to Zerubbabel saying, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts. "What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" <sup>7</sup> The last vision of Haggai was directed at Zerubbabel. <sup>7</sup> In that vision, the Lord promised Zerubbabel that he would be like a signet ring, that special tool that made a document legal. When a letter, document or law was printed on paper, several drops of wax were dropped next to the king's signature and the signet ring was used to stamp the royal seal in it to signify the official status of the order. It stood out on the page and was necessary for the document to be considered legal and enforceable. Zerubbabel is that signet ring in the Lord's ancestry chosen by Him to notify everyone that the Lord has every right to be the King. One day, He will descend from the lineage of Zerubbabel and rightfully begin to rule the world. On that day, the day of the Lord which includes Armageddon, He will shake the universe and become its undisputed King. Zerubbabel was the one chosen to continue the heritage so everything could happen exactly as the Lord planned. As the governor of Judah, He started the building of the temple and he would finish it.

It was common in those days for the civil authorities to place the corner stone of the foundation and then place the final capstone when the building was completed. It was also common for the people to shout praises when the foundation was completed and when the capstone was installed. As Zerubbabel installed the capstone, the crowd as well as the governor shouted "Grace, grace to it." Little did they know that their actions symbolized the Messiah who would be the chief corner stone which would bring about grace, grace for all. A plumb line was used by Zerubbabel at the installation of the capstone; it had to be correct, horizontally and vertically. The capstone was the stone with seven eyes. The eyes were looking at the stone; they were not actually on the stone. They are the eyes of the Lord that constantly watch the earth for Him. They were carefully watching the stone to assure its destiny as the capstone on the temple. Therefore, the seven eyes are the eyes of the Lord which roam throughout the earth. Nothing can escape His notice. However, the angel has not revealed the identity of the seven lamps yet. They cannot be the seven lamps found in the Book of Revelation because in that passage, the Lord is standing among the lamps. In Zechariah's passage the seven lamps are connected with seven spouts on each lamp. What do the lamps represent? The angel delayed his answer.

## Two Olive Trees

**Zechariah 4:**<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."

Zechariah asked about the two olive branches, earlier called two olive trees. This passage states that there are two golden pipes emptying the golden oil into the bowl which feeds the seven lamps with seven spouts each. Whether they are trees or branches makes no difference at all. The main point, the most important point, is that the olive oil is being supplied to the lamp that lights the world. The more spouts on each lamp, the brighter the illumination. The branches feed the bowl with oil through two golden pipes representing the two anointed ones who were standing by the Lord of the whole earth. The Lord is the light of the world and the two who stand by Him are the Father and the Spirit. It is a picture of

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<sup>7</sup> Haggai 2:20-23

the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, who is also Lord of the earth, and God the Holy Spirit.

## A Flying Scroll

**Zechariah 5:**<sup>1</sup> Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, *there was a flying scroll.* <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." <sup>3</sup> Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side." <sup>4</sup> "I will make it go forth," declares the Lord of hosts, "and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones."

Zechariah saw the flying scroll unrolled so it could be measured and read. It was 30 feet by 15 feet with a curse written on each side - one to the thief and the other to the one who swears falsely. The first is the eighth commandment and the second is the third. Those who violate these two commandments violate the entire Law of God. No one who violates these two commands will survive - neither body nor worldly possessions. Those who are against the Lord will be judged by the Law of the Lord. But the scroll was not the only thing in the air in this vision. An ephah was there too. Within the ephah sits the woman who will be judged by the curses on the scroll.

## The Ephah Going Forth

**Zechariah 5:**<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." <sup>6</sup> I said, "What is it?" And he said, "This is the ephah going forth." 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!" And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening. <sup>9</sup> Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, 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 for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."

An ephah is a dry measure of grain, about the size of a bushel basket. Zechariah sees a woman who personifies wickedness pushed into the basket covered by a lead lid. The basket is carried away to the land of Shinar where a temple will be built for the wicked woman to sit on a throne. She is wickedness personified in an evil religion. She is everything the Lord is not. She is against the Lord and His followers. This vision has been completed, the temple is built and she is enthroned in the land of Shinar. She is Islam and the temple is in Mecca, an area considered part of the land of Shinar during the days of the Babylonian and Persian Empires.

## Four Chariots between Two Mountains

**Zechariah 6:**<sup>1</sup> Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. <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, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth, <sup>6</sup> with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country. <sup>7</sup> "When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth." And He said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth.

Zechariah saw four chariots coming between two bronze mountains. Bronze, or brass, was considered a hard, solid, immovable, resistant material in that day. In the vision, the chariots must travel around the mountains because they cannot be moved. Each chariot was pulled by a different set of colored horses - red, black, white and dappled or spotted. Some scholars try to associate these horses with those found in Revelation 6 but those horses are white, red, black and green. The Revelation colors are in a different order and the fourth is a different color altogether, indicating that these two passages are not speaking of the same event and cannot be interpreted as such. Things are always in the same order and have the same characteristics when the writers of the Bible are speaking of the same event or object.

In this passage, the black and white horses were seen going to the north and the spotted horses to the south. Where did the red horse go? History shows that the red horses were pulling the chariot of Nebuchadnezzar. Red was the color of Babylon, the civilization which destroyed the Assyrians who had scattered Israel as seen in Zechariah 1:18-21. The direction of the red horse was not included in the passage because Nebuchadnezzar had overthrown the Assyrians long before Zechariah's day. The black horses were pulling the chariot of Cyrus the Great, an event that Zechariah saw. To conquer Babylon, Cyrus had to travel north. The white horses were pulling the chariot of Alexander the Great. To conquer the Persians, he had to travel north also. Upon Alexander's death and burial in Babylon, his empire was divided among his four generals who fought each other while co-existing through intermarriages of their royalty. Their horses were spotted because of the division of the kingdom and they were strong. The general who took the southern part of the empire was Ptolemy, strong, fierce and eager to conquer not only his land, but also that of the other generals. The spotted horses were pulling the chariot of Ptolemy who conquered Egypt. Each of these men was sent by the Lord to fulfill prophecy and to prove the power and existence of God.

### To the North

**Zechariah 6:**<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."

The black horses which were pulling the chariot of Cyrus had already pleased the Lord by taking over the Babylonian Empire during Zechariah's lifetime. The change of power from the Babylonian Empire to the Persian was needed to facilitate the return of the exiles from Babylon by its conqueror Cyrus.

### Make an Offering

**Zechariah 6:**<sup>9</sup> The word of the Lord also came to me, saying, <sup>10</sup> "Take an offering from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon.

Little is known about these men to whom Zechariah was sent to extract the offering except that they had returned from exile in Babylon and they were priests. For some reason, they were in the home of Josiah, another one of the priests. Their offering of gold and silver was acceptable to the Lord because it had a purpose; Zechariah needed it to make a crown for the high priest, Joshua.

### **Make a Crown**

**Zechariah 6:**<sup>11</sup> "Take silver and gold, make an *ornate* crown and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. <sup>12</sup> "Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. <sup>13</sup> "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.'" <sup>14</sup> "Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the Lord to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen the son of Zephaniah. <sup>15</sup> "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.

Zechariah was instructed to make a crown of silver and gold to place on the head of Joshua the high priest. The priest was not the king and was never crowned with a crown of gold or silver; the crown was to be a sign and reminder that one day the Branch would come to build His temple in Jerusalem where He would sit as both priest and king. When the Lord says, "Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the Lord," He is speaking of time, not distance. The crown was a promise to the priests that one day in the future the Lord would build His temple and from there He would rule the world. When will it happen? When Israel has completely obeyed the Lord God! When will that happen? The next visions will give Zechariah that answer.