



# MY HOUSE SHALL BE BUILT

**Zechariah's Amazing Prophecy**



by John R. Ecob DD

FOR THE HERALD OF HOPE

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# Preface

**T**HE prophecy of Zechariah is to the Old Testament what the Book of the Revelation is to the New. Just as the Book of the Revelation begins with a prophetic outline of the Church age to the Rapture, and leads the reader through the events of the Tribulation to the Second Advent of Christ and His millennial kingdom, so the Book of Zechariah begins with prophecies of Israel's restoration in the Persian era, through the Grecian and Roman eras to the last-days Tribulation, the Second Advent of Christ, and the millennial kingdom.

There is no mention of the Church in Zechariah's prophecy, nor in any Old Testament book. The Church was not revealed by God prior to Pentecost. It was the *"mystery which was kept secret since the world began"* (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-12; Col. 1:17-27). Zechariah traced **Israel's** future to the kingdom of God, while John traced the future of the **Church** as the Bride of Christ, taken to heaven **before** the time of Jacob's trouble on earth and returning with Him to reign in His kingdom.

Two and a half millennia have passed since Zechariah wrote in the Persian era. It is therefore essential that we understand the historical context of the book if we are to reach any conclusions about its message.

The Persian era was a wonderful time for the nation of Israel. Beginning with Cyrus, the Jews had a sympathetic ear on the throne for much of this period. Jews rose to leadership in the Persian Empire beginning with Daniel, then Zerubbabel, Esther and Mordecai, and finally Nehemiah. They were trusted by the Persians, who hated idolatry and were therefore more comfortable with the Jews who abandoned idolatry at the time of the Babylonian captivity. The Persian Empire required special administrative gifts to manage its 127 provinces across many countries, and Jewish communities that were scattered throughout the world were able to network better than others.

Furthermore, Jeremiah had foretold that after the Babylonian captivity God would set His throne in Elam (Persia) (Jer. 49:38). This was accomplished by placing God's servants in positions of authority.

Much of the historical background is found in the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, but further information has been gleaned from Josephus (1st C.), and from the ancient historian Herodotus who lived in the 5th Century BC **We do well to gain a good understanding of the historical context if we are to rightly divide this portion of God's Word.**

# Historical Background to Zechariah

## THE PERSIAN ERA

**Z**ECHARIAH was a young prophet who prophesied in the second and fourth years of the reign of Darius the Great, the king of Persia who reigned from 522 to 486BC. Zechariah's first prophecy was given one month after Haggai's second prophecy recorded in Haggai chapter 2 (Hag. 2:1; Zech. 1:1).

We have no recorded prophecies from Zechariah other than those given to him in these two years. Jesus informed us that he was slain "*between the porch and the altar*" (Matt. 23:35).

At what age he died, we do not know, however declension had set in when Malachi, the last of the Minor Prophets, prophesied. Malachi's prophecy brought the Old Testament to a close about 400BC. Zechariah was young when he prophesied so he was probably slain some time after 500BC.

Zechariah and Haggai are mentioned in the Book of Ezra (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 606BC, 597BC and in 586BC, Judah was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Jehoiakim had been slain and his son Jehoiachin taken captive to Babylon. Zedekiah, Jehoiakim's brother, was captured and taken to Riblah north of Damascus. His sons were slain and his eyes were put out before he was taken in chains to Babylon where he died in prison.

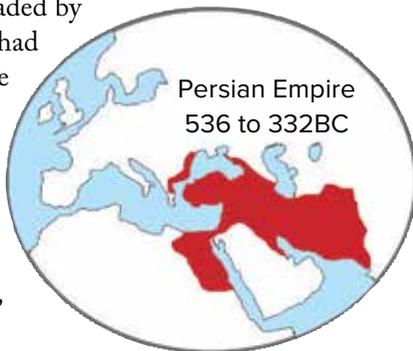
Jerusalem had been burned, the Temple destroyed, and the walls broken down.

Jeremiah had prophesied in 606BC that the land would be desolate for 70 years, after which God would punish the king of Babylon (Jer. 25:11-12). Then in 597BC, when Jehoiachin was taken captive, he prophesied that God would cause them to "*return to this place*" after 70 years (Jer. 29:10).

Isaiah had prophesied about 712BC that Cyrus would overthrow Babylon and even mentioned his name. This prophecy was 174 years before the event (Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4).

After Cyrus, the Persian king, had overthrown Babylon, he wrote a decree in 536BC allowing the Jews to return and rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:2-3).

It was in response to the decree of Cyrus that Iddo the prophet, the grandfather of Zechariah, returned with Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple.



The altar was built and offerings were made to the LORD. The foundation of the Temple was laid in the next year (535BC) (Ezra 3:10-13).

Cyrus was killed in battle in 530BC, and Cambyses (Ahasuerus) reigned till 522BC when he committed suicide at Damascus on the way home from his campaign in Egypt. The imposter Smerdis (Artaxerxes) took the throne for a few months before Darius slew him and began his reign in 522BC

Construction of the Temple was hindered by the Samaritans who appealed to both Cambyses and Smerdis (Ezra ch. 4), and work on the Temple ceased from 529BC to the second year of Darius the Great (Hystaspes) (520BC).

The Jews had recommenced construction at the bidding of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, and when the Samaritans complained to Darius, a search of the records revealed the decree of Cyrus. Darius, who was a friend of Zerubbabel, then issued another decree confirming the decree of Cyrus, and the Temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius - 516BC (Ezra 6:15).

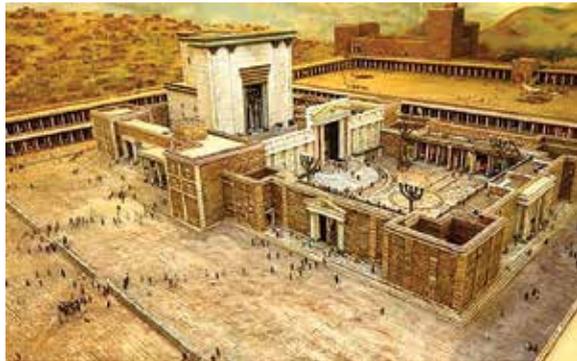
### *NEAR AND FAR VIEW*

Throughout the prophecy of Zechariah we find an immediate application to the remnant that returned in 536BC (Neh. 12:16), but the theme of restoration goes far beyond the reconstruction of the second Temple **to the last days**. He urged the people to recommence construction of the **house of God** and prophesied the words of God:

*“I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: **my house shall be built in it...**” (Zech. 1:16).*

However, the prophecy went further:

*“My cities through prosperity shall be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet **choose Jerusalem**” (Zech. 1:17).*



The restoration of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity is used to introduce **a greater restoration in the last days**, when Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom.

### *TWO PARTS TO THE BOOK*

The book is in two parts. The first section is found in chapters 1 to 6 and was given in the second year of Darius. The second is found in chapters 7 to 14 and was given in the fourth year of Darius.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Herodotus wrote that Cyrus was killed in battle fighting Massagetae in the Caucasus. After the reign of Cyrus there were revolts in Babylon, Media, and other areas.

Cyrus was followed by his son Ahasuerus (Cambyses), who subdued Egypt where Darius was his lance bearer. Cambyses slew his brother Smerdis and concealed it. He committed suicide at Damascus on the way home from Egypt. He was an evil man and caused building of the Temple at Jerusalem to cease (Ezra 4).

Upon the death of Cambyses **the Magi** took control and placed an impostor, who claimed to be Smerdis (Artaxerxes), on the throne for a few months, long enough to confirm the prohibition of Cambyses on building the Temple (Ezra 4:7). Smerdis and the Magi were killed by Darius and “the seven families of Persia” appointed Darius as king (*The Persians*, JMCook page 78).

Josephus records in his *Antiquities of the Jews* Book XI Chapters II & III, that before Darius became king he vowed that if he was made king he would **restore all the Temple treasures** to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. The vessels of the Temple had been given by Cyrus to Mithridates the treasurer, to be kept till the Temple was finished (*Antiquities*, Book XI, Ch.I). These must have been taken back by Cambyses but Darius ordered that they be restored.

Josephus states that Zerubbabel, the Governor of Judah and an old friend of Darius, returned to Persia and was made a bodyguard to Darius. After a feast Darius was unable to sleep and asked his three bodyguards to go away and think about which was the greatest: wine, the king, women or the truth.

The three later returned, and after Zerubbabel gave a scholarly dissertation on why truth was the greatest, and that

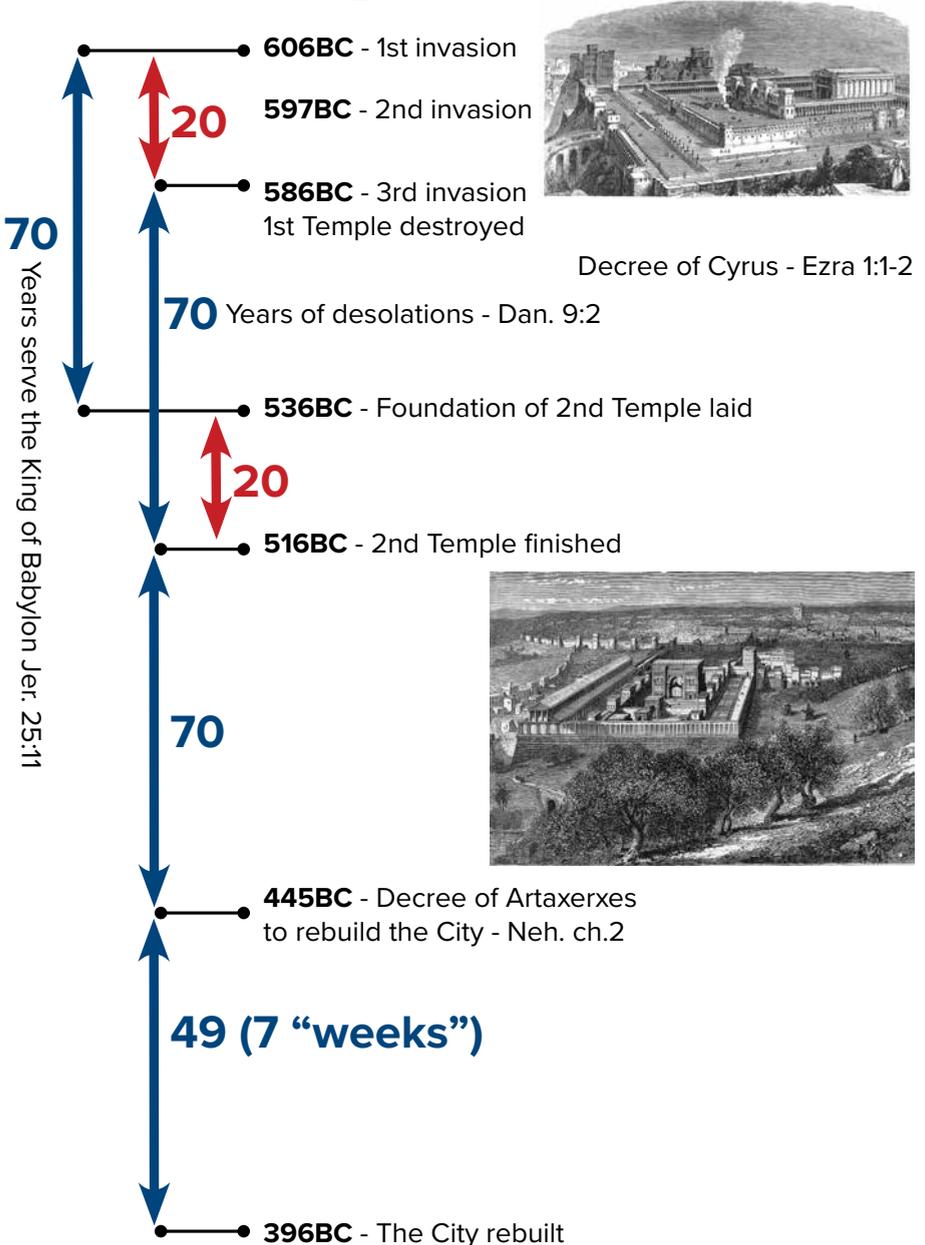
the God of Israel was the Truth, Darius offered him anything he asked, and said, “Thou shalt sit with me and be the King’s cousin”. The LORD set His “*throne in Elam*” fulfilling Jer. 49:38. Daniel, Esther, Mordecai, and Nehemiah also shared the throne-room of Elam (Persian Empire).

Zerubbabel asked that the Temple be finished and reminded Darius of his earlier vow to “**restore the vessels of the Temple**”. King Darius then wrote letters to the Samaritans, Idumeans, Celesyria, and Phoenicians, commanding them to supply cedar trees from Lebanon and to return villages which had been taken from the Jews. The **priests’ garments** and musical instruments were to be made at the king’s expense, sacrifices were permitted, and anything that the priests wanted was to be supplied. Land, and an annual allowance was given to the priests and those who guard the Temple. The Samaritans refused, but Zerubbabel went to Darius and he wrote ordering them to comply “that they (priests) leave not off their offering daily sacrifices, nor **praying to God for me and the Persians**” (Josephus, *Antiq.Book XI ch.IV*).

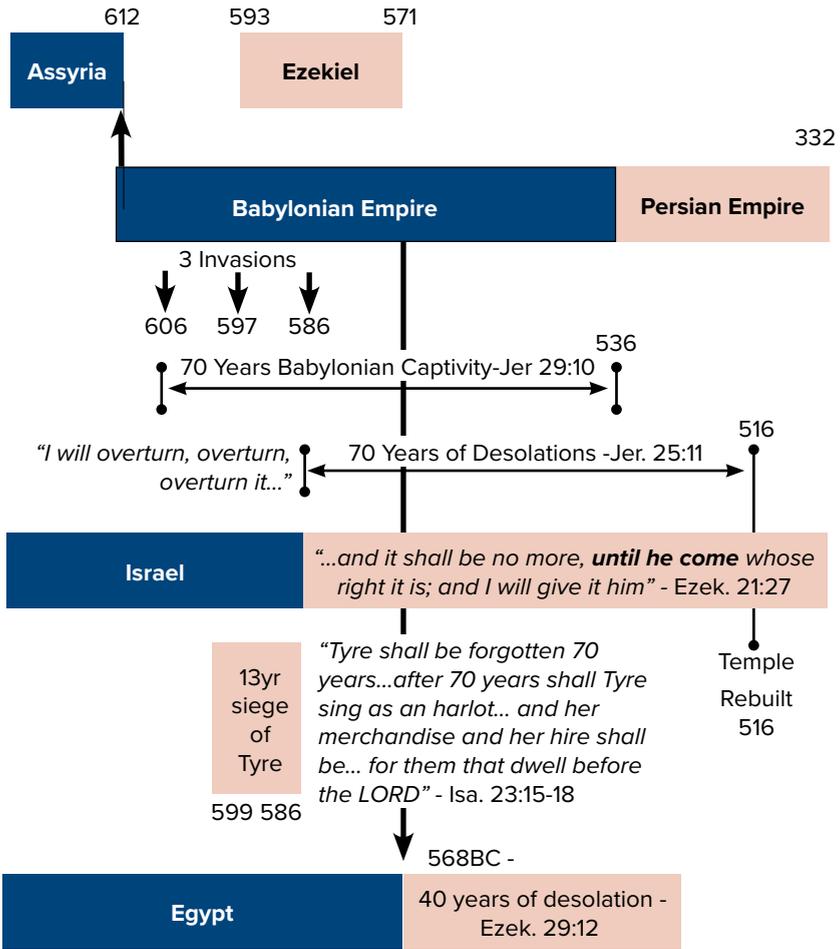
Thus the earth was at rest and there was peace (Zech 1:11; 6:8). “*All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest*” & “*These have quieted my Spirit in the north country.*” The reign of Darius brought peace in his 2nd year (520BC). In his first two years he claimed to have fought 29 battles and captured 9 kings (*The Persians* by JM Cook page 82).

Isaiah, more than 100 years before, spoke of Tyre’s destruction and that she would cease to operate for 70 years. The coastal city of Tyre was destroyed after a 13-year siege by Nebuchadnezzar (599 to 586BC), and began operations (516BC) **in time to supply** materials for the Temple service. “*Her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing*” (Isa. 23:15-18).

# The Destruction and Reconstruction of the Temple and Jerusalem



# Tyre's Role in the Restoration of Temple Services



NOTE: Ezekiel prophesied in 586/587BC that Tyre would be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. This was the 11th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezek. 26:1). The siege of Tyre began in the 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (according to Josephus). Tyre had been able to withstand the siege 13 years but Ezekiel foretold its imminent destruction. Only the coastal city of Tyre was destroyed however, and it is most likely that Nebuchadnezzar then moved his army to Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed. Since the destruction of Tyre was in 586BC the 70 years of inactivity would end at 516BC when the Temple was finished. **God remembers and blesses in His time!**

# Kings and Kingdoms

## ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

**Tiglath-pileser III** - invaded northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Menahem (771 - 761BC) and was paid to leave. He returned in the days of Pekah and took captives to Assyria.

**Shalmanaser V** (726 - 722BC) - began the siege of Samaria.

**Sargon II** (721 - 716BC) - captured Samaria and carried the northern kingdom into the "*cities of the Medes*" in 721BC

**Sennacherib** (716 - 681BC) - invaded Judah in days of Hezekiah.

**Esarhaddon** (680 - 669BC) - one of the greatest of the Assyrian kings.

**Ashurbanipal** (669 - ) - Under his reign the Assyrian Empire began a decline and was attacked by the Scythians, Medes and Babylonians, until Nineveh eventually fell in 612BC

## Babylonian Empire

**Merodach-Baladan** was twice king of Babylon in the Assyrian era and had to flee from Sargon II and again from Sennacherib; he died in exile. After the Assyrian army was destroyed by the angel of the Lord at Jerusalem, he visited Hezekiah about 712BC

**Nabopolassar** (625 - 605BC) - seized power in Babylon from Assyria.

**Nebuchadnezzar** (605 - 562BC) - married the daughter of Cyaxares the king of Media and led the Babylonian armies of his father Nabopolassar. He defeated Pharaoh-Neco at Carchemish in Syria (610BC) and became king during the siege of Jerusalem 606BC He destroyed the Temple and the coastal city of Tyre (586BC) and the land of Egypt in 568BC

**Evil Merodach** (562 - 560BC) - released Jehoiachin from prison.

**Nergalsharusur** (Neriglissar) (560 - 556BC).

**Nabonidus** was son-in-law to Nebuchadnezzar and reigned as co-regent with his son Belshazzar (556 - 539BC).

## Persian Empire

**Cyrus II** - (559BC - 530BC) - grandson of Astyages king of Media but his father was a Persian. He wrote a decree allowing Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple. Isaiah, about 174 years before, foretold his reign.

**Ahaseurus (Cambyses)** (530 - 522BC) - Married Queen Esther and appointed Mordecai Prime minister.

**Artaxerxes (Smerdis)** (522 B.C.) - an imposter from the Magi.

**Darius** (522 - 486 B.C.) - a friend of Zerubbabel confirmed Cyrus' decree.

**Xerxes** (486 - 465 B.C.) - Became extremely wealthy. Fought the Greeks.

**Artaxerxes (465 - 423BC)** - wrote decrees in 7th and 20th years of his reign. Ezra (458BC) returned and Nehemiah (445BC) began to rebuild Jerusalem.

# Bible History in the Persian Era

## CYRUS - 539-530BC

*“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, **Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah**” (Ezra 1:1-2).*

## *AHASEURUS (CAMBYSES) 530-522BC AND ARTAXERXES (SMERDIS, AN IMPOSTOR) 522BC*

*“The people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building... **all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus (Cambyses), in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes (Smerdis the impostor) wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes (Smerdis the impostor) king of Persia**” (Ezra 4:4-7).*

## *DARIUS - 522-486BC*

*“Darius the king made a decree (in his 2nd year), and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the **house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, . . . Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered**” (Ezra 6:1-8).*

## *XERXES - 486-465 B.C.*

*Xerxes is not mentioned in Scripture. Commentators mistakenly identify him as Ahasuerus the husband of Esther but Mordecai was taken from Jerusalem in the captivity of Jehoiachin in 597BC (Esther 2:16).*

## *ARTAXERXES 465-423BC*

***Ezra 459BC** - “I came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which is in the **seventh year of Artaxerxes**... This is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra... I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee” (Ezra 7:12-13).*

***Nehemiah 445BC** - “In the month Nisan, in the **twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king**...the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? ...I said unto the king, If it please the king...that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto **the CITY of my fathers' sepulchres**, that I may build it. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me” (Neh. 2:1-8).*

# Eight Visions & Five Messages of the Book of Zechariah

Riders among the myrtle trees report Babylon subdued & Temple will be built.	Ch. 1:7-17
Four horns (Babylon) scatter Israel but four carpenters (Persia) will scatter the horns.	Ch. 1:18-21
Jerusalem measured and will be rebuilt. God will defend Israel & future nations will turn to the Lord.	Ch. 2:1-13
Joshua consecrated as priest & in the future the BRANCH will cleanse the nation in one day.	Ch. 3:1-9
Candlesticks and olive trees foreshadow two witnesses in the Tribulation.	Ch. 4:1-14
A flying roll, God's law, to judge the Temple when it becomes a den of thieves.	Ch. 5:1-4
A woman (evil seed of idolatry) in an ephah flown back to Babylon. Israel abandoned idolatry.	Ch. 5:5-11
Four chariots between two mountains proclaim peace. Peace in the Persian era a type of Christ's kingdom. Memorial crowns for Joshua and real crowns for the man (Christ) who is the BRANCH.	Ch. 6:1-15
When Israel repents God will gather them to the land and the Gentiles will say, "We will go with you for... God is with you."	Chs. 7 & 8
Alexander's advance to Jerusalem via Damascus, Tyre and Gaza contrasted with Christ's entry on Palm Sunday.	Ch. 9
God's anger against evil shepherds but the sheep will be returned to the land after they are scattered among the nations.	Ch. 10
Three shepherds destroyed and the Good Shepherd sold for 30 pieces of silver. God will punish Israel with an "idol shepherd".	Ch. 11
Repentant Israel's conflicts in the Tribulation before Christ returns to reign over the whole earth. Worship in the kingdom.	Chs. 12 to 14

Eight Visions in the 2nd year of Darius - 520BC Chapters 1 to 6

Five Messages in the 4th year of Darius - 518BC - Chapters 7 to 14

# Summary of the Eight Visions

## VISION 1

**Chapter 1 verses 7 to 17.** The angel of the LORD appeared with horses and their riders among the myrtle trees and indicated that God was displeased with the Babylonians, and the world was now at peace. His house would be rebuilt and later Jerusalem would be restored.

## VISION 2

**Chapter 1 verses 18 to 21.** Four horns and four carpenters speak of the four kings of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar, Evil Merodach, Neriglissar and Nabonidus) who scattered Israel, but these had been replaced and there would be four carpenters, four kings of Persia (Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes) who would “*fray*” (terrify) the horns and allow the Temple and Jerusalem to be rebuilt.

## VISION 3

**Chapter 2 verses 1 to 13.** A man with a measuring line is seen measuring Jerusalem. Not only would the Temple be built but also the city, and God would defend her like a wall of fire about her. In a future day the Lord would come and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. At that time many nations will be joined to the Lord.

## VISION 4

**Chapter 3 verses 1 to 9.** Joshua the high priest is given clean clothes and consecrated to serve acceptably in the rebuilt Temple offering gifts and making atonement for Israel. Satan would resist him, but in the future God would bring forth His servant the BRANCH (Christ) and **the whole nation** would be cleansed on one day. This would be followed by universal **peace** in Christ’s kingdom.

## VISION 5

**Chapter 4 verses 1 to 14.** Seven golden candlesticks and two olive trees depict the restoration of Divine testimony at the Temple in Zechariah’s time AND at a future time during the Tribulation, when a third Temple will be built and Jewish testimony restored.

The two olive trees represent Haggai and Zechariah at the time of the second Temple and two Jewish prophets who will minister at Jerusalem in the third Temple in the first half of the Tribulation.

### VISION 6

**Chapter 5 verses 1 to 4.** A flying roll with the law written on both sides is seen entering the Temple which is described as a “*den of thieves*”. The house is cursed and destroyed. This prophecy foretold the first advent of Christ when He came from heaven to His Father’s house and found it to be a “*den of thieves*”. Jesus pronounced judgment against it in the Olivet Discourse and it was destroyed in AD70. Not one stone was left upon another.

### VISION 7

**Chapter 5 verses 5 to 11.** A woman in an ephah (a vessel used to measure seed) represents the error of idolatry, the **false seed**, that had begun in Babylon and had been sown in Israel. This seed was tares among the wheat. Idolatry was the cause of Israel’s downfall but was now returned to its place in the “*land of Shinar*”. In the last days “*Mystery Babylon*” will be burned, but in the meanwhile Israel would no more follow idolatry.

### VISION 8

**Chapter 6 verses 1 to 8-15.** Four horse-drawn chariots (angels) appear between two brass mountains (kingdoms). The chastening of Israel and Judah at the hands of the **Assyrians and Babylonians** in the north had been completed and the four angelic beings announce that God’s Spirit was “*quieted*” in the north country. The Persian Empire would be an **era of peace** and this is a type of the peace Israel will experience after **Gog and Antichrist** afflict Israel in the Tribulation. The millennial kingdom will bring peace.

Kingly crowns of silver and gold are made for Joshua who stands as a type of the Lord Jesus. Christ, as the great High Priest and “**BRANCH**” of David, would be crowned with many crowns and reign as “*a priest upon His throne*” after the Second Advent.

Joshua is crowned, but the crowns are kept for a memorial in the house of the Lord awaiting the return of the “**BRANCH**” and the rebuilding of the throne of David. Christ will build the millennial Temple.

# Part 1 - Zechariah's Eight Visions

*GOD REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT WITH ISRAEL AND WILL  
BLESS IN HIS TIME*

*CHAPTERS 1 TO 6*

**A**FTER an introduction in Ch. 1:1-6, we have **eight visions** which make up the first section of the book. In Chs. 7 through 14 we have **five messages** which make up the second section.

## INTRODUCTION - CH. 1:2-6

Zechariah was "*the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet*". His grandfather Iddo was listed among the chief of the priests who returned with Zerubbabel after the 70 years captivity (Neh. 12:4), and he was also a prophet.

Zechariah was brought as a child from Babylon in 536BC and was still considered a "young man" in 520BC when he prophesied (2:4). His father Berechiah is not listed among those that returned and it is likely he had died in Babylon. Zechariah was a priest, and this explains why he was slain between the "*porch and the altar*" some time after the Temple had been completed (Matt. 23:35).

The message of the Book of Zechariah is summarised in the meaning of the three names; Zechariah means "God remembers"; Berechiah means "God blesses"; and Iddo means "In His time". "**God remembers and blesses in His time**", summarises the messages given to Zechariah.

Israel is reminded of the reason for their captivity in Babylon: "*The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers*" (Zech. 1:2). Their fathers had refused to turn from their wicked ways when God sent His prophets to them, and had perished. God asks, "*Where are your fathers...But my words...did they not take hold of your fathers?*" (Zech. 1:5-6).

There could be no restoration without a full acknowledgement of the justice of God in punishing the sin of Israel. God said: "*Be ye not as your fathers...Turn ye now from your evil ways*" (Zech. 1:4).

The response was good:

*"Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us"* (Zech. 1:6).

This is a reminder to us that we will never experience restoration unless there is a full acknowledgement of failure and of the justice of God in chastening us for disobedience. The Lord has our good in mind, but requires repentance before restoration.

## VISION 1 - CH. 1:7-17

**THE RIDER ON A RED HORSE AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES**

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: **my house shall be built** in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" (Zech. 1:16).*

**O**N the evening of the 24th day of the eleventh month Zechariah saw a man riding a red horse among the myrtle trees. The man stopped and spoke to the prophet.

Behind the man were other horses, coloured red, speckled and white. This may indicate that there were four in total corresponding to the four horses of Revelation ch. 6.

In Zechariah chapter 6 we are introduced to four chariots drawn by horses. These are red, black, white, grised (spotted) and bay (strong).

Angels are seen symbolically as horses in Scripture. In Revelation chapter 6, four horses bring the first four judgments of the Great Tribulation. Other judgments, the trumpets and vials (bowls), are brought by angels, and Rev. 7:1-3 states that four angels are given power to *"hurt the earth"*.

The Psalmist wrote:

*"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even **thousands of angels**: the LORD is among them as in Sinai" (Ps. 68:17).*

The verse is followed by the prophecy of Christ's ascension when He *"ascended on high"* and *"led captivity captive"* (Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8-11).

We know that the Law was given on Sinai by the instrumentality of angels (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19), and when Christ ascended no doubt He was accompanied by angelic hosts as He led the resurrected Old Testament saints from captivity in paradise into heaven.

When Elijah was caught up and whisked away by God, Elisha saw *"a chariot of fire, and horses of fire"*. He cried, *"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"* (2 Kings 2:11-12). Elisha saw the angels of God.

When the Syrians compassed the city of Dothan where Elisha was, God opened the eyes of his servant to see *"the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha"* (2 Kings 6:17); God's angelic army.

When Elisha was near death, Joash king of Israel hoped to have his mantle fall upon him, and cried, *"O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"* (2 Kings 13:14). He anticipated the departure of Elisha who, like Lazarus was carried by the angels to *"Abraham's bosom"* (paradise) (Luke 16:22).

Isaiah chided Israel for trusting in Egypt to defend them from the Assyrian army, and said:

*“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help... Now the Egyptians are men, and not God: **and their horses are flesh, and not spirit**” (Isa. 31:1,3).*

Man was made in God’s image but the Egyptians were only men, and their horses were only animal flesh and not angel spirits. The horses of Egypt were not equal to the angelic members of God’s army.

Finally, when the Lord Jesus comes again in glory and power He will come riding upon *“a white horse”* followed by the armies of heaven *“upon white horses”* (Rev. 19:14). Jesus said that He would come *“with all the holy angels”* (Matt. 25:31).

Zechariah confirms that the horses are angelic beings when the man asked the angel, *“What are these?”* He was told,

*“These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth”* (1:10).

The horses then answer the angel:

*“We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, **all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest**”* (1:11).

### ***PEACE IN THE PERSIAN ERA***

This vision occurred 16 years after the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire and peace was now reigning. All pockets of resistance had been subdued. Cyrus died in battle in 530BC and his son Cambyses (Ahasuerus) subdued Egypt in 525BC. There was an attempted revolt by Babylon, Media and Armenia during the reign of Cambyses, and Cambyses committed suicide.

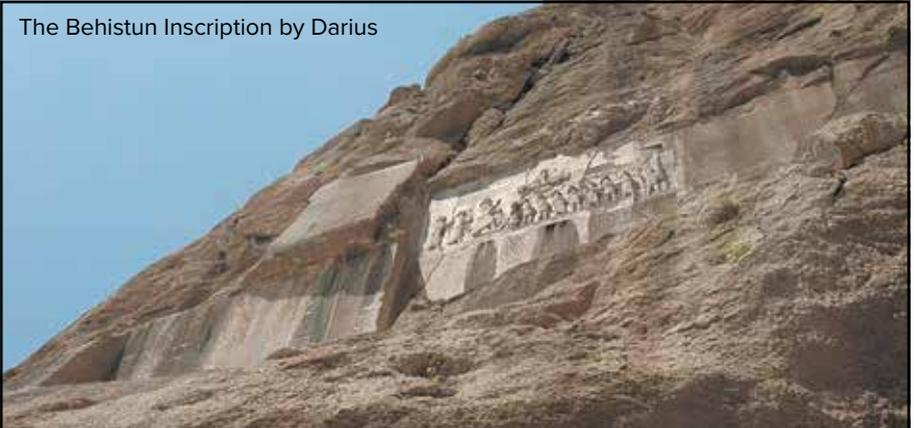
When Darius came to the throne in 522BC, he put down the rebellion and recorded his great victory on the Rock of Behistun in three languages. The Rock of Behistun was visible from the caravan road between Babylon and Ecbatana.

Thus the reign of Darius was at the beginning of a peaceful era under Persian rule and the angels could report, *“...the earth sitteth still and is at rest”* (1:11).

Not only was the earth sitting still in Persia, but the opposition of the Samaritans had been silenced by the decree of Darius in his second year allowing construction of the Temple to proceed. The decree read as follows:

*“Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed”* (Ezra 6:11-12).

The Behistun Inscription by Darius



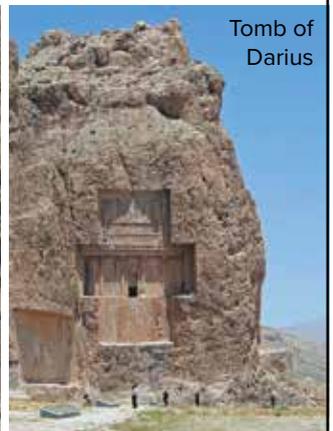
## The Behistun Inscription and Darius' Tomb

The Behistun Inscription, engraved in rock by Darius the Great, was in three languages including cuniform, thus enabling translation of cuniform writing just as the Rosetta Stone in Egypt allowed translation of hieroglyphics.

The sculpture depicted conquered kings with rope about their neck being brought before Darius. Another is under his foot.

The sculpture was to indicate what would happen to any who might oppose the King, but it also shows that there was peace in the Persian era just as Zechariah indicated in his prophecy.

Biblical history is confirmed by these inscriptions preserved in rock.



Tomb of Darius

The enemies who had frustrated the construction of the Temple for 16 years were silenced and compelled to assist the Jews, or experience the wrath of Darius the Great. Truly it could be said, *“the earth sitteth still and is at rest!”*

It is worthy of note that in 536BC the Jews had served the king of Babylon 70 years, and that the king of Babylon had been punished by Cyrus in fulfilment of Jeremiah’s prophecy. However, the land of Israel was to be *“a desolation and an astonishment”* for 70 years (Jer. 25:11).

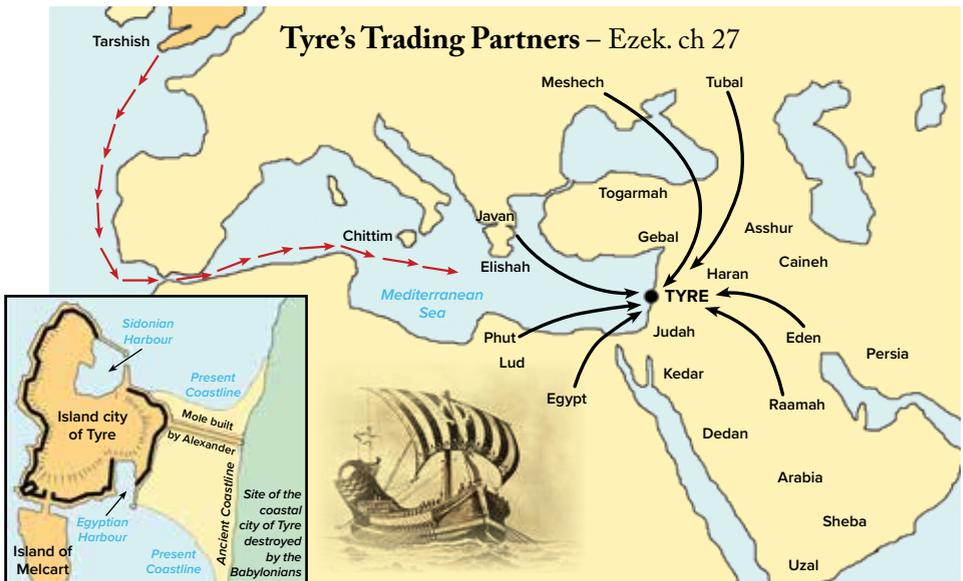
The desolation of the land, of Jerusalem and the Temple, began in 586BC at the time of the third invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and 70 years were accomplished in 516BC. The delay caused by the enemies of Israel were part of God’s plan, and **God remembered and blessed IN HIS TIME.**

Opposition from the Samaritans revived 75 years later when Nehemiah returned to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

### SUPPLIES FROM TYRE

God had said that the Temple would be built, but where would the building supplies come from? The Babylonians had left the region desolate, including the commercial city of Tyre where gold, silver, brass, and iron could be obtained.

Nebuchadnezzar had besieged the coastal city of Tyre for 13 years, but when he finally captured it the Tyrians had shifted their wealth half a mile off shore to an island. God then gave the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as wages for his army for *“his great service against Tyrus”* (Ezek. 29:18).



Egypt was desolated by Nebuchadnezzar 570 - 568BC and was thus for 40 years (Ezek. 29:12-13). It was therefore unable to help with building materials.

However, the city of Tyre had continued as an island city during the Babylonian era and was to have a part in supplying materials for the reconstruction of the Temple as prophesied by Isaiah.

*“And it shall come to pass after the **end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing**”* (Isa. 23:17-18).

Tyre did revive as a great trading city at the end of 70 years. Ezekiel gave an extensive list of commodities which were traded in the markets at Tyre in chapter 27 of his prophecy. Many of these materials, including minerals from Tarshish (Britain), would be required to rebuild the Temple. With the decree of Darius in place Tyre became an important part of the Persian Empire and would be obliged to send materials to Jerusalem.

Tyre thus became Israel’s materials supplier for the new Temple after she had been judged and remained desolate for 70 years. Just at the right time, she would be revived and trade with **all the kingdoms of the world** so that God’s people would be able to complete the work.

The Persian navy dominated the Mediterranean and her Phoenecian fleet was from Tyre and Sidon. God had everything planned. **He remembered and blessed in His time.**

### **WHY THE DELAY?**

We might wonder why completion of the Temple was delayed for 20 years. Well, we know from Josephus’ history that it took Nebuchadnezzar 13 years to destroy the coastal city of Tyre and the siege of Tyre began in 599BC The walls of Tyre were destroyed in 586BC Her 70 years of desolation therefore extended to 516BC when construction of the Temple was finished. Supplies of food and cloth would therefore be available just in time for priestly service. **It was all in God’s time.**

### **70 YEARS OF DESOLATION**

There is an important application for us. Delays and opposition that frustrate us are in the providence of God, part of His plan. Conflicts within the Persian Empire needed to be resolved so that worship in the Temple might proceed in peace. The 70 years of service to the king of Babylon had run their course, but the 70 years of “desolation” had not run their course and it was therefore necessary

for the work to be delayed. Other prophecies needed to be fulfilled, such as Jeremiah's prophecy:

*"The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet **against Elam** (Persia) in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah... Upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds ... **I will bring evil upon them**, even my fierce anger, saith the LORD."*



This was accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar. However, the Babylonians were to be **overthrown by Persia** and the king and princes of Babylon destroyed.

*"And I will set **my throne in Elam**, and will destroy **FROM THENCE** the king and the princes (of Babylon), saith the LORD" (Jer. 49:34-38).*

God did indeed set His throne in Elam (Persia). Daniel was made ruler over the presidents and princes in the Persian Empire (Dan. 6:3) and that empire was ruled by Jews.

Daniel was relocated to the palace in Shushan (Susa) and by the river Hiddekel (Tigrus) (Dan. 10:4). Esther became the queen and Mordecai was appointed prime minister over the Persian Empire in the reign of Ahasuerus (Esther 8:2). Nehemiah was the cupbearer for Artaxerxes (Neh. 1:11), and we will see in the second vision that there were four Persian kings who wrote decrees in favour of God's covenant people.

God has not finished with Persia (Iran) and in the **latter days**, during the Great Tribulation, they will turn to the Lord.

*"But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD" (Jer. 49:34-39).*

God is in no hurry, and He remembers and blesses IN HIS TIME!

### **BABYLON'S EXCESSIVE ANGER**

Not only was God "*jealous for Jerusalem*" (1:14), but He was "*displeased with the heathen*" who had vented their anger against Israel. Nebuchadnezzar is described by God as "*my servant*" (Jer. 43:10) for he was used to execute Divine judgments on Israel and upon the nations. However, the Babylonians had **gone beyond** what God had determined for Israel and thus brought themselves under judgment. Their motive in judging Israel was impure and "*they helped forward the affliction*" (Zech. 1:15).

It is an unchangeable law that vengeance belongs to God alone. He uses men as His instrument but personal hatred is wickedness before God. The measure of God's chastening will always be determined by God, and He will punish those who exceed that measure. God's ultimate purpose for His people is blessing. The Psalmist wrote:

*"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

***He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.***

*For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him ... For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 103:8-14).*

God's motive in judging Israel was to bring her to repentance, but the Babylonians had a different motive. They were idolators and mocked the captive Jews when they worshipped the Lord:

*"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there **they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.** How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? ... O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall be he, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Ps. 137:1-9).*

### **WHY MYRTLE TREES?**

There is no detail of the prophetic Scriptures which is superfluous. Everything is significant, and the fact that the rider on the red horse appeared among the myrtle trees is important.

The myrtle tree is a beautiful evergreen bush which has flowers and bears edible berries. The Hebrew name of Queen Esther, "*Hadasseh*", is derived from the name of the myrtle tree. Esther rescued the Jews from Haman and brought peace

The myrtle tree is mentioned in connection with the blessing of the land of Israel in the millennial kingdom. It is one of the trees that God will plant in the wilderness,

***"that they may see and know that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it" (Isa. 41:19).***

It will be a testimony to God's faithfulness as they see evergreen myrtle trees growing in the wilderness.

Then in Isaiah 55:13 we are told that the myrtle tree will replace the brier.



Myrtle Tree

*“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”*

So the beautiful, evergreen myrtle tree will be a **perpetual reminder** to Israel in the millennial kingdom that the curse has been removed; that **God has remembered and blessed in His time**.

During the kingdom age the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed, when the nation will gather for seven days each year to hear the Word of God. During that annual Bible conference the people will dwell in booths, shelters made from branches of **the myrtle tree** (Neh. 8:15).

Every detail of this prophecy is important. The myrtle tree symbolises the peace and prosperity of the kingdom when *“the earth shall be still and is at rest”*.

## VISION 2 - CH. 1:18-21

### **FOUR HORNS AND FOUR CARPENTERS**

**T**HE peace that had come to the world scene in 520BC was not the result of man's efforts. It was arranged by God the Creator and upholder of the universe. Earlier Nebuchadnezzar had come to realise that the Most High God ruled in the kingdoms of men, and

*“all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”* (Dan. 4:35).

The second vision deals with the Gentile kingdoms that were God's instruments in His dealing with Israel.

The first vision concluded with an expression of dissatisfaction by God that the Babylonian Empire had exceeded its authority and administered more judgment than required to fulfil God's purposes; *“so that no man did lift up his head”* (Zech. 1:21). The result was that Babylon herself must be punished and God would raise up the Persians as an instrument of His justice.

In the second vision Zechariah sees **four horns and four carpenters**. “Horns”, throughout Scripture refer to a king or kingdom. The ten horns on the beast in Daniel 7:24 are *“ten kings that shall arise”*. The statement is repeated in Rev. 17:12. These ten horns give their power to Antichrist who is described as a *“little horn”* in Daniel 7:8.

Alexander the Great is called a *“great horn”* on the Grecian goat (Dan. 8:8) that overthrew the two horns of Media and Persia (Dan. 8:3). Antiochus Epiphanes is also described as *“a little horn”* from the Seleucid kingdom (Dan. 8:9). Horns are a consistent symbol of kingdoms and kings.

Zechariah's four horns are said to be "*the four horns that have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem*" (Zech. 1:19).

It was **Babylon** that scattered Israel, and **these four horns (kings) were Babylonian kings** who reigned during the 70 years of Jewish captivity. They are also called "*the horns of the Gentiles*" (Zech. 1:21). The suppression of the Jews during the Babylonian era is described by the words, "*so that no man did lift up his head*" (Zech. 1:21).

Zedekiah had been blinded and died in a Babylonian prison. The 18-year-old King Jehoiachin spent 37 years in prison and was only released in 560BC, two years after Nebuchadnezzar had died (Jer. 52:31). The privileges given to Daniel and his friends were exceptional.

As we have already noted, the Jews in Babylon were mocked by the idolatrous Babylonians:

*"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there **they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.***  
*How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?* (Ps. 137:1-4).

Such mockery was against the Lord and was meant to show that the gods of Babylon were superior to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

The four horns (Babylonian kings) were:

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar (605 - 562BC).
- 2) Evil Merodach (562 - 560BC).
- 3) Nergalsharusur (Neriglissar) (560 - 556BC).
- 4) Nabonidus as co-regent with his son Belshazzar (556-539BC).

Nabonidus was the son-in-law to Nebuchadnezzar, which made Belshazzar the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

These were the four horns that had scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

In 539BC Cyrus king of Persia overthrew Babylon. **The four carpenters refer to four Persian kings** that "*came to fray* (terrify) **them**", i.e. the Babylonian kings. Their task was to "*cast out the horns of the Gentiles*" which had scattered the nation of Judah (Zech. 1:21).

The "carpenters" were to be destructive in terrifying Babylon but constructive in rebuilding Judah. The Bible makes it clear who these four carpenters were; four Persian kings who played a vital role in rebuilding the nation of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. They were:

- i) **Cyrus (559-530BC)**, who wrote the decree allowing the Jews to return in 536BC and rebuild the Temple in the days of Zerubbabel.
- ii) **Ahasuerus (530-522BC)**, who was the husband of Esther, decreed that the Jews could defend themselves against their enemies. He made Mordecai the prime minister of the Persian Empire and hanged Haman, the enemy of the Jews.
- iii) **Darius (522-486BC)**, who confirmed the decree of Cyrus in 520BC and silenced Samaritan opposition to the Jews' construction of the Temple.
- iv) **Artaxerxes (465-423BC)**, who decreed that the **city of Jerusalem** should be rebuilt by Nehemiah. It was this decree that was foretold by Daniel as the starting point for the "70 weeks" prophecy which traces Israel's history from 445BC to the millennial kingdom.

The overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and Persians created the environment for the **restoration of the nation of Israel** to the land which was promised after 70 years of captivity, and describes how God expressed His displeasure with Babylon. Thus we see how God is working behind the scenes in the affairs of kingdoms to bring the promises of His Word to pass. God raised up Cyrus and the other kings to fulfil His promises to Israel.

The story of Cyrus is quite remarkable, for he was raised up by God to "fray" the Babylonians and his birth and childhood are described by the Greek historian Herodotus, who lived about 450BC.

Herodotus relates how Astyages king of the Medes had no son, and his daughter Mandane married a Persian. Astyages interpreted a dream that Mandane's son would take the kingdom from him, and he ordered that Cyrus be killed as soon as he was born.

The wife of the man who was given the task of killing the baby had just had a still-born child so he adopted Cyrus in place of the dead child and claimed the dead child was Cyrus.

Eventually Cyrus was returned to Persia and later the general of Astyages' army, whose 13-year old son was murdered by Astyages, sent a message to Cyrus advising him to raise an army and attack the Medes. He promised that when Cyrus arrived he would surrender the Median army to him. Cyrus complied, the Medes surrendered, and Astyages was taken prisoner.

**Isaiah prophesied about 174 years before Cyrus was crowned that he would be God's servant to defeat Babylon**, and details of his prophecy are recorded in Isaiah 44:26-28 and 45:1-4.

After Cyrus conquered Babylon, the Babylonians sought to lead a revolt against

the Persians, but by the time of Darius the city and region was brought into submission. This was in fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy that Babylon would sink *"and not rise from the evil that I (God) will bring upon her"* (Jer. 51:64).

Attempts by Alexander and Saddam Hussein to rebuild Babylon brought untimely deaths to both because they were in defiance of the Word of God.

### **FOUR CARPENTERS TO FRAY THE GENTILES**

The four "carpenters" are to *"fray"* (terrify) the four horns of the Gentiles (Zech. 1:21). The Hebrew word translated *"fray"* means "to tremble, quake with fear and panic, terrify" and that is what happened historically. When Cyrus captured Babylon, Belshazzar was terrified.

*"Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers"* (Dan. 5:6-7).

That night Belshazzar was slain.

Herodotus wrote of the Persian kings:

"In the time of Cyrus there was likewise in this temple a figure of a man, twelve cubits high, entirely of solid gold. I myself did not see this figure, but I relate what the Chaldaeans report concerning it. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, plotted to carry the statue off, but had not the hardihood to lay his hands upon it.

Xerxes, however, the son of Darius, **killed the priest** who forbade him to move the statue, and took it away. Besides the ornaments which I have mentioned, there are a large number of private offerings in this holy precinct" (Herodotus, Book 1:183)

The removal of the Babylonian idols Bel and Nebo were foretold by Isaiah:

*"Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity"* (Isa. 46:1-2).

*Unger's Bible Dictionary* states that Xerxes plundered Babylon, but before him, Darius captured the city of Babylon when it revolted and ruthlessly destroyed its defenses. Herodotus wrote in Book 3:159:

"Darius having become master of the place, destroyed the wall, and tore down all the gates; for Cyrus had done neither the one nor the other when he took Babylon."



Marduk or Bel chief of Babylon

After he occupied the city **Darius put to death 3,000 of the leading men of Babylon. He “frayed” the Gentiles.**

Later, Xerxes (Ahasueras) issued a decree throughout the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire authorising the Jews **to slaughter all who dared to attack them. He “frayed” the Gentiles.** So great was the fear throughout every province that *“many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of them fell upon them”* (Esther 8:17).

The fourth carpenter was Artaxerxes, and his decree, issued in the 7th year of his reign (458BC), authorised Ezra the priest to take vessels of the Temple back to Jerusalem for the service of the Lord. After issuing orders that all the needs of the Jews be supplied for Temple worship, the king gave a solemn warning to any who might dare to oppose the Jews.

*“And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, **whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment**”* (Ezra 7:26).

Thus all four of the carpenters frayed (terrified) *“the horns of the Gentiles to cast them out”*(1:21). The Word of God was fulfilled exactly.

### VISION 3 - CH. 2:1-13

#### ***A MAN WITH A MEASURING LINE JERUSALEM TO BE REBUILT***

**I**N CHAPTER 2 Zechariah saw in vision a man with a measuring line in his hand and he asked the man where he was going. He replied:

*“To measure **Jerusalem**, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof”* (Zech. 2:2).

The man in the vision was an angel, and another angel told the first angel to give Zechariah a message:

*“**Jerusalem** shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her”* (Zech. 2:4-5).

We need to remember that at this time, the second year of Darius (520BC), the Temple was still unfinished and would not be completed for another four years (516BC). The city of Jerusalem was still a pile of rubble just as the Babylonians had left it, and its reconstruction would not begin until 445BC - 75 years later.

In 445BC when Nehemiah returned, he set about rebuilding the wall which was constructed sufficiently to provide protection in 50 days, but the houses had not been built. We read:

*“Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and **the houses were not builded**”* (Neh. 7:4).

According to Daniel's prophecy the city would take 49 years to rebuild (Dan. 9:25), which places completion of the city at 397BC

The angel was measuring the city for the purpose of rebuilding, and God was going to provide protection during the rebuilding period. He would be "*a wall of fire round about*".

Did God protect Nehemiah and the Jews at Jerusalem? He certainly did.

A number of attempts were made by the Samaritans to hinder the work and to do personal harm to Nehemiah, in spite of the fact that he had the support of the king of Persia. However, in every case the efforts of the Samaritans failed. When Sanballet and Geshem tried to entice him into the villages on the pretext of holding discussions, Nehemiah replied:

*"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"* (Neh. 6:3).

Then they accused him of appointing himself as king to revolt against the Persians. They hired men to make Nehemiah afraid and five times they sent their servants with messages to him.

When the wall was finally complete the heathen "*were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God*" (Neh. 6:16). **The LORD was a wall of fire about them!**

In this vision the LORD issued a call for the Jews to return from Babylon:

*"Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon"* (Zech. 2:6-7).

Nearly 50,000 Jews had returned with Zerubbabel in 536BC, and another 1,500 would come with Ezra in 459BC in the 7th year of Artaxerxes. More would be needed to populate the land, and they were reassured that God would protect them "*for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye*" (Zech. 2:8).

The song of Moses also recalls that God had kept Jacob (Israel) "*as the apple of his eye*" (Deut. 32:10) through 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

### **THE SPOILERS ARE SPOILED**

*"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye"* (Zech. 2:8).

*"After the glory"*, refers to **the departure of the glory** from the Temple at Jerusalem. **After this event** the angel was sent to the nations that spoiled them; at Babylon. While it was God who scattered Israel, His watchful eye was still upon them.

God warned David that if his son committed iniquity, "*I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men*" (2 Sam. 7:14), but while God

uses evil Gentile nations to chastise His people Israel, He still holds those nations accountable for how they treat them. God's unconditional promise to Abraham, that He would curse those who curse Abraham's seed, still applies.

Israel's sinfulness is no reason for ungodly nations to vent **their fury** on the nation that has been chosen to uphold God's name. The nations must see themselves as **God's instrument** to chastise Israel. Justice must be administered **as from God** and not from a desire to express their hatred against the Lord's people.

God sent Sennacherib into Israel because Israel had sinned (Isa. 37:26), but when he came to Jerusalem **he boasted that his gods were greater than the LORD** and that his gods had made him successful (Isa. 36:4-10). When Hezekiah cried to the LORD, God judged Sennacherib and the Assyrian army.

Isaiah prophesied approximately 100 years before the Babylonians invaded Judah that God would judge them for their treatment of Israel, even though they were the instrument in God's hand to administer justice upon Israel.

*“Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans ... I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke”* (Isa. 47:4-6).

Zechariah pronounced God's judgment against Israel's enemies:

*“For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them...”* (Zech. 2:9).

The word “shake”, according to *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*, describes the motion of God's hand and means to “vibrate up and down as **a stick is used** to administer punishment” (*Strong's Dictionary*). It can be applied to the action of **shaking a sieve** or of **a sickle** in the hand of the reaper. (*Theological Word Book*).

Those who dare to curse the seed of Abraham will evidently come under the judgment of God and their servants would rule over them.

*“...they shall be a spoil to their servants”* (Zech. 2:9).

Already the Medes and Persians, who **had been the servants of the Babylonians**, had risen up against them and ruled over them. At the time of this prophecy, 520BC, many countries throughout the Persian Empire had revolted, and it took Darius six years to finally put down the opposition. He then went on to extend the empire from India to Macedonia.

We have already noted that the walls of Babylon were torn down at this time and 3,000 of the leaders of Babylon were put to death. **God was shaking His hand over the Gentiles.**

Through Israel's prophets the nation was informed of God's purposes, and they knew from these prophecies that it was the LORD who had sent His angel to administer judgment.



### Vision 3 - A Man with a Measuring Line

*"...and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me" (Zech. 2:9).*

Daniel had reminded Belshazzar that he had defied the Lord God of Israel (Dan. 5:23), and when Cyrus took Babylon the Jews remembered the prophecies about Cyrus, that the LORD would hold his right hand,

*"loose the loins of kings", and "open the two leaved gates" of Babylon before him (Isa. 45:1).*

*"And ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me" (Zech. 2:9) - "unto the nations which spoiled you" (Zech. 2:8).*

The prophecies of Jeremiah had made it clear that the Babylonian captivity would last for 70 years, and that after that God would punish the king of Babylon (Jer. 25:11-12). Daniel **knew** that the time of their liberation had come when he interceded for Israel in Dan. 9:2. The angel had been sent to judge Babylon, and the LORD of hosts had shaken His hand with a sickle and reaped a harvest because her iniquity was fully ripe.

God was yet to shake His hand of judgment on the nations during the reign of Ahasuerus 530-522BC).

The *Book of Esther* tells how Haman planned the extermination of all Jews throughout the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire. He sent out a decree that on the 13th day of the 12th month people of all nations could kill the Jews. However, God overturned the devices of Haman and again shook His hand over those who would "spoil" (plunder) the Jews. Instead the Jews were offered all the possessions of their enemies, and the prophecy was fulfilled.

The Feast of Purim became a perpetual reminder to the Jews that those who dared to spoil them were touching the apple of God's eye.

### ***FUTURE PROPHECY IN THE 3RD VISION***

The 3rd vision also looks toward the last days when Christ will come. This would be a time of great rejoicing for Israel and it would be accompanied by great blessing on the Gentile nations.

*"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, **LO, I COME**, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.*

*And many nations shall be joined to the LORD **IN THAT DAY**, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, **and thou shalt know that the LORD***

*of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again” (Zech. 2:10-12).*

These words could not possibly refer to Israel’s return after the Babylonian captivity. There is no evidence that the glory of God returned to the second Temple. Yet the promise is that the Lord would come and dwell in the midst of His people Israel as He did in the Tabernacle and in Solomon’s Temple.

When Solomon dedicated the first Temple

*“the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for **the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God**” (2 Chron. 5:13-14).*

We also know that Christ’s millennial Temple will be filled with the glory of God. Ezekiel saw it in a vision and wrote:

*“And the glory of the LORD **came into the house** by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, **the glory of the LORD filled the house...** And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, **where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile**” (Ezek. 43:4-7).*

This did not happen in Zerubbabel’s Temple. It might be argued that the glory of God entered the second Temple when Christ came to the Temple. However, at His first advent His glory was veiled and the Temple was then a “den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13). His glory did not fill the Temple and He did not dwell among His people Israel thereafter. In fact Jesus prophesied the destruction of the second Temple when He said:

*“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate... Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:38-39).*

Zechariah’s prophecy from verses 10-13 must therefore apply to **a future day**, when Israel will turn to the Lord and Christ will return to His redeemed people and dwell among them.

Of special note is the part of the prophecy that:

*“Many nations shall be joined to the Lord **in THAT DAY**, and shall be my people” (Zech. 2:11).*

Some may seek to apply this to the Church in that it is composed of people of all nations, but the Church is composed of **individuals** from all nations. **Whole nations** are not serving the Lord in this Church age. Paul wrote that now

*“there is **neither Jew nor Greek** ...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).*

The Church is **not an earthly kingdom** but the heavenly Bride of Christ. James declared that

*“God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name”*  
(Acts 15:14).

The nations of this world are now under the dominion of Satan who is the god of this world. **The nations** do not come into subjection to Christ **until He returns as the King of kings.**

Halfway through the 7-year Tribulation the announcement is made of the impending victory of Christ. It states:

*“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever”* (Rev. 11:15).

The Church, however, will be removed at the Rapture before the Tribulation begins.

### ***A WARNING TO THE NATIONS***

*“Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation”* (Zech. 2:13).

The vision concludes with a command for ALL FLESH to *“be silent... before the LORD”* because He is *“raised up out of his holy habitation”* (Zech. 2:13).

This statement implies that God is not acting in judgment until the end of the age. This present time is a time of God’s **longsuffering and patience** when men are bold to oppose the Lord. However the time will come when God’s patience and longsuffering will run out and He will arise to act in judgment.

The parable of the wheat and tares teaches that the tares will continue until the time of reaping at the end of the age.

Paul stated that in that day,

*“...at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Phil. 2:10-11);  
*“that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”*  
(Rom. 3:19).

Isaiah spoke of the Great Tribulation as a time when God *“ARISETH to shake terribly the earth”* (Isa. 2:20,21).

The judgment of God was restrained *“when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing”*, but finally God rose up in judgment and the world was flooded (1 Peter 3:20).

Why does God allow evil in the world? Why did He allow a Hitler to act so wickedly?

This is not the time when God is acting in judgment although

*“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after”* (1Tim. 5:24).

There is a day of reckoning coming when the nations will answer to God, “*when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth*”. That day will be the Great Tribulation.

Thus the third vision begins with encouragement for Israel. Jerusalem would be rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity, but greater blessing would come upon Israel and the Gentiles in the millennial kingdom.

### VISION 4 - CH. 3:1-10

#### THE CONSECRATION OF JOSHUA

**I**N THE fourth vision Zechariah saw “*Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him*” (Zech. 3:1).

Before worship could commence in the rebuilt Temple it was essential for the priests to be consecrated. They had not served in the Temple for 66 years, and just as Aaron and his sons needed to be **consecrated before commencing service** (Lev. 8), so did Joshua and the priests that stood before him.

The lesson that we can draw from this is that worship must be done God’s way with a pure heart and a clean walk. Joshua must be clothed in the garments prescribed by God for service in the Temple, and he must have clean garments. It is not for any man to decide how he worships.

Jesus said, “*...the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:23). Under the New Covenant soulish worship that needs assistance from man-made rituals and ceremonies, or which is stimulated by loud beat music and flashing lights, is not according to God’s Word. Soulsh worship does not need the Holy Spirit or the Word of God, but true worshippers are led by the Spirit and the Word.

It is significant that the high priest in Zechariah’s day was named Joshua, which in the Greek is Jesus. This is evidence of God’s providential dealing for this high priest stands as a sign or type of the Lord Jesus, who is a Great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Joshua ministered at a time when Israel returned after the Babylonian captivity, and Jesus Christ will minister after the nation turns to the Lord and returns to the land in the last days.

That Joshua is a type of Christ is plainly stated:

*“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for **they are men wondered at**: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH”* (Zech. 3:8).



The words, “*men wondered at*”, could also be translated, “*a wondrous sign*”. The prophecy concludes with the promise that God would “*bring forth my servant the BRANCH*”, which is a title of the Lord Jesus.

They are therefore **a sign or type** of the Lord Jesus who is the BRANCH out of the stem of Jesse, as Jeremiah twice stated:

*“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I will raise unto David a righteous Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**”* (Jer. 23:5-6).

Jeremiah repeated the verse almost word-for-word in Jer. 33:15, and Isaiah stated the fact very clearly:

*“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, **and a Branch shall grow out of his roots**: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD”* (Isa. 11:1-2).

Zechariah’s final vision in chapter 6 points to **a future day** when Christ will come and build the millennial Temple:

*“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, **Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH**; and he shall grow up out of his place, and **he shall build the temple of the LORD**: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and **he shall be a priest upon his throne**: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both”* (Zech. 6:12-13).

This fourth vision is concerning the **consecration** of Joshua, and the last vision in chapter 6 deals with the **crowning** of Joshua.

### **THE NEAR VIEW OF THE PROPHECY**

First let us look at the near view of this fourth vision which deals with the **consecration** of Joshua the high priest.

When Zerubbabel returned in 536BC Joshua, his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel had erected the altar and begun burning the daily burnt offerings. The Feast of Tabernacles was kept but there was **no Temple for the priests to minister**.

In 520BC the Temple was still not finished, and it would be another four years before the priests could minister before the Lord. The message of Zechariah from God was, “*...my house shall be built*” (Zech. 1:16). Haggai was prophesying at the same time and he stated:

*“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, **and build the house**; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified”* (Hag. 1:8).

If the Temple was to be finished, then the priests must be prepared to serve, so Joshua and the priests, “...*thy fellows that sit before thee*” (Zech. 3:8), needed to be consecrated.

Isaiah prophesied of the day when Israel would return and serve in the millennial Temple:

*“Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.*

*The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of **all the nations**; and **all the ends of the earth** shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; **be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD**”* (Isa. 52:9-11).

In that future day the priests, who will not have ministered for 2,000 years, will also need to be consecrated for service.

### **SATAN STANDING AT HIS RIGHT HAND TO RESIST HIM**

Notice that when Joshua was preparing for consecrated service Satan was “*standing at his right hand to resist him*” (Zech. 3:1).

Satan has always been the enemy of God’s faithful servants and does all in his power to frustrate them. Satan is the accuser of the brethren and does so “*day and night*” (Rev. 12:10).

Joshua was clothed in “*filthy garments*” (Zech. 3:4), so Satan had good reason to accuse him before the Lord. Well might Satan say that Joshua was not fit to serve as high priest, but Joshua was high priest by birth and nobody else could usurp that position. If Satan could prevent Joshua from serving, then there would be no Temple worship and there would be no high priest to make atonement for the sins of Israel.

There is no indication that Joshua attempted to debate with Satan. It was the angel who proclaimed:

*“**The LORD rebuke thee**, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”* (Zech. 3:2).

Even Michael the archangel would not take it upon himself to rebuke Satan when he disputed over the body of Moses. He “*durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, **The Lord rebuke thee***” (Jude 9).

Too often Christians speak of the Devil as though they can contend with him. Job did not enter into controversy with Satan and neither did Paul, though he states

that “*Satan hindered us*” (1Thess. 2:18). Paul’s “*thorn in the flesh*” was a “*messenger of Satan*” to buffet him, but he allowed God to use it so that God might be the more glorified (2 Cor. 12:7).

*“To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; **Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices**”* (2 Cor. 2:10-11).

James tells us to resist Satan at the same time as we submit ourselves to God. By submitting to God we place ourselves under His protection:

*“Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**”* (James 4:7).

Peter says the same thing:

*“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: **Whom resist steadfast in the faith...**”* (1 Peter 5:8-9).

It would be foolish for us as believers to think that we can rebuke the “*prince of the power of the air*”. We are to resist **by submission to God** who fights for us.

### **THE CROSSROADS OF HISTORY**

Zechariah stood at the crossroads of history. God was about to oversee the restoration of the Temple and the priesthood, and later the city of Jerusalem. Already the decrees of Cyrus and Darius had given the green light for the Temple to be built and worship to recommence. In addition, Cyrus had **SAID that Jerusalem would be built** (Isa. 44:28). The decree of Artaxerxes that would authorise Nehemiah to begin reconstruction of the **city of Jerusalem** was still future (Neh. 2:1-8).

The prophecy of the 70 years of captivity in Babylon had been fulfilled (606-536BC). Jews had returned to the land (Jer. 29:10) but there was also to be **70 years of desolation** which began when the Temple and the city of Jerusalem were burned in 586BC (Jer. 25:11). That 70 years would be fulfilled in 517/516BC which was the 6th year of Darius. It was the year that the Temple was finished and when worship recommenced. God’s plan was being fulfilled and the LORD rebuked Satan for seeking to frustrate God’s plan, saying:

*“The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: **is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?**”* (Zech. 3:2).

Israel and Jerusalem were a **brand rescued from the burning**. The Temple and Jerusalem had been burned and the nation had been through the chastening fire, but the angels who administered this chastening had “*quieted my Spirit in the north country*” (Zech. 6:8) and reported back to God that “*the earth sitteth still, and is at rest*” (Zech. 1:11). The time of God’s chastening had been fulfilled and it was

time for Jerusalem to be blessed. As the theme of the book says, God remembers (Zechariah), God blesses (Berechiah), in His time (Iddo). **His time had come.**

Two men were God's servants to recommence the worship of God at Jerusalem: Zerubbabel and Joshua. Joshua was a descendant of Aaron through Phinehas and Zadok, and **Zerubbabel was the uncrowned king in the line of David.**

Zerubbabel could not reign on the throne of David because he was the **grandson of Jehoiachin**, and God said that none of his seed would sit on the throne of David (Jer. 22:30). God fulfilled His promise to David from another line of David's seed which led to Mary the mother of Jesus. The complete genealogy is recorded in Luke 3:23-38.

The descendants of Jehoiachin to Joseph the husband of Mary are recorded in Matt. 1:1-16, and we are specifically told that Joseph "*knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son*" (Matt. 1:25).

In Zechariah chapter 4 we find Zerubbabel hindered in rebuilding the Temple by a "*great mountain*" of difficulty, but God said He would make it a plain before him.

Joshua had a problem. He was dressed in "*filthy garments*" and was therefore unfit to perform his duties as high priest and Satan could accuse him before God. However God had an answer to his problem, which reminds us that failure is not final!

Immediately, the order was given: "*Take away the filthy garments from him*", and then Joshua is addressed: "*Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment*" (ch. 3:4).

God can remove filthy garments and can remove mountains. The angels that stood by dressed Joshua in clean garments and put a "*fair (clean) mitre*" on his head with the words, "*Holiness to the LORD*", inscribed on a gold plate (Exod. 28:38). Joshua was made fit to serve in the new Temple.

It was essential that the high priest should wear the mitre with the gold plate on his forehead when he entered the Temple to present the gifts of the people; otherwise the gifts would not be acceptable to God.

We should never be discouraged, for God is able to prepare us for His service no matter how unworthy we may feel. Satan would discourage us by reminding us of our inadequacies and failures, but God in His wonderful grace is able to lift us out of failure and make us a blessing.

### **CONDITIONS ON BLESSING**

*"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts,*

*and I will give thee places to walk among these (priests) that stand by” (Zech. 3:7).*

Joshua was high priest because he was a son and heir of Aaron, but if he did not walk in God’s ways he would be removed and another would take his place.

This is a solemn reminder that *“whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourges every son whom he receiveth”* (Heb. 12:6). Service for God is only acceptable from clean hearts.

### **THE FUTURE BRANCH**

*“Behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH...” (Zech. 3:8).*

The promise of Christ’s appearance is clear.

Mary *“brought forth her firstborn son”* (Luke 2:7). In Zech. 2:10 we read, *“...lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee”*, which is a promise of Christ’s **second advent**, but when He came to be the Great High Priest He came as the perfect man who could be *“touched with the feelings of our infirmities”* (Heb. 4:15).

Zechariah continues:

*“For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts...”*  
(Zech. 3:9).

Jesus Christ was the *“stone which was set at naught of you builders (Israel), which is become the head of the corner”* (Acts 4:11). To Israel, He was *“a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence”* (1 Peter 2:8). Israel fell upon Christ and was broken (Matt. 21:44), but He is also the stone on which, *“whomsoever it shall fall”* will *“grind him to powder”* (Matt. 21:44). This will occur at Christ’s second advent.

In a coming day Christ will return as the stone *“cut out without hands”* (Dan. 2:34) and He will smite the nations that are gathered *“against the LORD, and against his anointed”* (Ps. 2:2). They will become like *“the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind shall carry them away”* (Dan. 2:35).

Christ will be the stone that will become a mountain and *“fill the whole earth”* (Dan. 2:35).

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

### **SEVEN EYES ON ONE STONE**

*“Upon one stone shall be seven eyes” (Zech. 3:9).*

The subject of the passage is Jesus Christ, and in Him are *“seven eyes”*. What can this mean?

The eye is a part of the brain and the window of the soul. It speaks of intelligence. Seven throughout Scripture is the number of completion and perfection, and Christ was filled with the Spirit without measure.

*“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for **God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him**”* (John 3:34).

In Christ dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), and in Him are *“hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Col. 2:3).

Isaiah prophesied of this One who would be a *“rod out of the stem of Jesse”*; a *“BRANCH”* that would grow out of his roots:

*“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him (1), the spirit of wisdom (2) and understanding (3), the spirit of counsel (4) and might (5), the spirit of knowledge (6) and of the fear of the LORD (7)”* (Isa. 11:2).

Without any doubt this stone before Joshua represents Christ!

*“Upon ONE STONE shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof”* (Zech. 3:9).

On this stone God would put His engraving! The last time God put His engraving on stone was at Mount Sinai. The holy law of God was engraved in stone. That same law was engraved in Jesus (*“one stone”*) who perfectly fulfilled the law of God. His life was an open book for all to read God’s perfect law. He could say to His accusers, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”* (John 8:46).

None other than Jesus could make such a statement for there is only *“one stone”*. Jesus was the ONLY begotten of the Father. All other men were sons of Adam possessing a sinful nature. Only Jesus could say,

*“The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee”* (Psalm 2:7).

Thus we have the human lineage of Christ, the *“branch”* from the stem of Jesse, and His Divinity; the Son of God, the stone engraved with God’s perfect law. In vision 6 He appears as the **scroll** of the law.

### **ISRAEL’S CONVERSION**

*“And I will remove the iniquity of that land IN ONE DAY”* (Zech. 3:9).

The word translated *“land”* is elsewhere translated *“earth”* meaning the *“world”*, and also a location such as the *“land of Canaan”* or the *“land of Havilah”*. Only the context can determine how broadly the word should be interpreted. If the word is translated *“world”*, then it would mean that the iniquity of the world would be removed in one day.

If it is translated *“land”*, then it means that the iniquity of Israel will be removed in one day.

It is true that the work of Christ on the cross made atonement for the sin of the world on “one day”, when “*by one sacrifice*” He made atonement for the sins of the world.

However, the next verse tells us **when** the iniquity of the land would be removed:

*“IN THAT DAY, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree”* (Zech. 3:10).

This did **not happen** when Christ died. It indicates a condition of peace which did not exist in AD32, and will not exist until Jesus Christ reigns. The vision therefore refers to **a future day when the people of the land of Israel will turn to the Lord** and have their iniquity pardoned.

Ezekiel wrote of **this day** when, at the time of the invasion of the land by Russia and her Islamic partners, Israel will turn to the LORD (Ezek. 38 & 39). Satan will make a desperate effort to thwart the purposes of God after the nation is back in the land dwelling “*without walls, and having neither bars nor gates*” (Ezek. 38:11). However it will be this invasion that will cause the trumpet to be blown in Israel calling the people back to God.

*“Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people”* (Joel 2:18). God will “*remove far off from you (Israel) the northern army*” (Joel 2:20) and restore unto Israel the years that the locust has eaten. The Holy Spirit will be poured out and God will make a “*new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah*” (Jer. 31:31).

*“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God **FROM THAT DAY AND FORWARD**”* (Ezek. 39:22).

Isaiah also spoke of a day when Israel would turn to the Lord:

*“**BEFORE** she travailed, she brought forth; **before** her pain came, she was delivered of a man child”* (Isa. 66:7).

Israel’s travail will occur in the **first half of the 7 years** of Tribulation. When Jesus had described the events that **precede** the “*abomination of desolation*” which occurs at the mid-point of the Tribulation, He said, “*ALL THESE are the beginning of sorrows* (literally, *travail*)” (Matt. 24:8).

But “*as soon as Zion travailed*” she brought forth! Israel’s conversion, her new birth, awaits her travail in the first half of the Tribulation.

*“Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? **Shall the earth be made to bring forth IN ONE DAY? or shall a nation be born AT ONCE? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.***

*Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.*

*Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her” (Isa. 66:8-10).*

On that one day, *“all Israel shall be saved”* (Rom. 11:26-27). The iniquity of the land is Israel’s rejection of her Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the end of the Tribulation the whole redeemed nation will *“look upon me whom they have pierced”* (Zech. 12:10) and will mourn when they recall the rejection of their King.

The **crowning** of the man who is *“the BRANCH”* from the stem of Jesse is revealed in the last of the visions of Zechariah (Zech. 6:9-15).

### VISION 5 - Ch. 4:1-14

#### **THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK AND TWO OLIVE TREES**



*“The angel... said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof” (Zech. 4:1-3).*

**T**HE prophet Zechariah is awakened and the angel of the LORD who had been talking with him showed him another vision.

*“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep” (Zech. 4:1).*

It seems that this was not a dream but Zechariah was awake when he saw this vision. In the mind of the prophet he saw clearly things that were possibly not visible to the natural eye.

Balaam spoke of a similar experience when God showed him a vision:

*“Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but **having his eyes open**” (Num. 24:3-4).*

In the Mount of Transfiguration the three disciples saw the Second Advent in advance. They saw the Lord *“coming in His kingdom”* and His face shone as the sun (Matt. 16:27-28;17:1-9).

The Book of the Revelation is the record of what John SAW on the Isle of Patmos.

*“Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of ALL THINGS THAT HE SAW” (Rev. 1:2).*

John **saw future events** of the Rapture, the Great Tribulation, the Second Advent and Kingdom. He saw the new heaven and new earth and described them **in the present tense**. God dwells in eternity and is not limited by time. He knows the future as though it were present, and revealed it to His prophets.

The expression “*I saw*”, “*seen*”, or “*thou sawest*” appears 50 times in the 22 chapters of the Book of the Revelation. In the last chapter John wrote: “*And I John SAW these things, and HEARD them*” (Rev. 22:8).

### **DUAL PROPHECIES**

We must again remind ourselves of the historical context. The second Temple was unfinished at this time. God had said, “*My house shall be built*” (Zech. 1:16), and the immediate interpretation of the prophecy related to the second Temple which Zerubbabel built, but it also has a latter-day message concerning a **Temple that will be built during the Great Tribulation**. There is a “near” and a “future” prophecy running throughout the Book of Zechariah. For example:

- 1) The vision of the **man with the measuring line** had a near interpretation to the second Temple, but undoubtedly looked forward to the millennial Temple which Christ (“*the BRANCH*”) will build AFTER He comes again (Zech. 2:10).
- 2) The **cleansing of Joshua** and his service in the second Temple was necessary for the time, but looks forward to the cleansing of all Israel during the Tribulation (Zech. 3:9).
- 3) Joshua stands as a “type” of the BRANCH out of the stem of Jesse that God would bring forth, and the **crowning of Joshua** in chapter 6 looks forward to the future day when the BRANCH (Christ) will rule as a “*priest upon his throne*” (Zech. 6:13).

We will now see that the fifth vision has its near and future interpretation, for though it speaks of the restoration of the second Temple it also speaks of the Tribulation Temple as described in Rev. 11:1-14 when two prophets will be involved in testimony at Jerusalem. Perhaps the slaying of Zechariah “*between the porch and the altar*” foreshadows the slaying of the two prophets in the Tribulation.

It is important to see **the dual interpretation of these visions**. The prophecies reach down through time to the last days. They had a message for the time, but also gave God’s ultimate plan for Israel.

### **CANDLESTICKS, A BOWL AND TWO OLIVE TREES**

We are first introduced to the golden lampstand with seven lamps in the Tabernacle built by Moses. It was one of the three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place along with the golden altar of incense and table of shewbread. It was to teach Israel that they were God’s messengers in a dark world. God has chosen to shed His light abroad through the seed of Abraham, the Jewish people.

Daily, when the evening sacrifice was offered, the priests in the Tabernacle trimmed the wicks and added olive oil to the lamps, each of which held about

half a pint. The wick was trimmed using tongs which were also used to carry the live coal from the brazen altar. The olive oil was not taken from an olive press but was **beaten** out of the olives.

The fire on the brazen altar was ignited by God (Lev. 9:24) and was to be maintained so that it **never went out** (Lev. 6:13). Nadab and Abihu perished when they offered “*strange fire*” on the altar of incense (Lev. 10:1-2) which did not come from the brazen altar.

When Solomon built the Temple the golden lampstand was located in the Holy Place and continued there until it was removed to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 52:19).

When Ezra returned in the 7th year of Artaxerxes (459BC) he was entrusted with the vessels “*for the service of the house of God*” (Ezra 7:19).

Josephus records that in the 145th year of the Seleucid kingdom (167BC) Antiochus entered Jerusalem peaceably and then took all the vessels from the Temple, **including the candlestick**, the golden altar, and the table of shewbread (Antiq. Book XII, ch. 5).

Another lampstand must have been made, probably when Herod rebuilt Zerubbabel’s Temple, and when the Romans captured Jerusalem in AD70 they took it to Rome. There, the arch of Titus at Rome depicts it being carried by Jewish slaves as part of the spoil of battle.

When Zechariah prophesied in 520BC the golden candlestick was **still in Babylon**, and would continue there for another 61 years until Ezra brought it back to Jerusalem.

The candlestick in Zechariah’s vision was somewhat different from the one in Solomon’s Temple. It had a **bowl above it and an olive tree on either side**. Golden pipes connected the olive trees to the bowl and golden pipes connected the bowl to each of the seven lamps. The bowl was apparently a reservoir for oil supplied through **two branches** of the olive tree (Zech. 4:12). With a continual supply of oil the lamps would never go out while ever the olive branches were connected to the bowl.



Carving on the Arch of Titus at Rome

The golden lampstand represented Israel as the light of testimony for God in the world. The **olive tree** is a symbol of Israel, Abraham’s seed (Romans chapter 11), through which God has promised to bless the world (Gen. 22:18). The **oil is a**

**symbol of the Holy Spirit**, for we read:

*“Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but **by my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Zech. 4:5-6).



There were two **olive branches** on the olive trees that were connected to the bowl and through which the oil flowed. These branches are said to be *“the **two anointed ones** that stand by the Lord of the whole earth”* (Zech. 4:14).

Again we see a near and far interpretation of this prophecy.

In the near view God was working by His Spirit and though Zerubbabel was confronted with obstacles described as a *“great mountain before Zerubbabel”* (Zech. 4:7), yet he would finish the Temple and, by God’s grace, place the headstone.

*“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you”* (Zech. 4:9).

Who then were the two “anointed ones”? Usually it is assumed that they were Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, but in Revelation 11 they are **prophets**. Neither Zerubbabel nor Joshua was a prophet.

At this time however, there were two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, through whom the Spirit of God was working to urge the people to finish the Temple.

It was true that this second Temple lacked the glory of Solomon’s Temple, but the people are told not to despise *“the day of small things”* (Zech. 4:10); a message that some Christians need to learn.

Many Christians have been discouraged by the lack of results and have turned to the world’s methods to achieve success. They no longer rely upon the Holy Spirit but by *“might and by power”* have filled lavish church buildings with ungodly programs and worldly people. They have never learnt that *“except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it”* (Ps. 127:1). Better to be small and in the will of God, than big in the world’s ways.

## THE CHURCH AS THE CANDLESTICKS

When Israel rejected her Messiah God put the nation aside and turned to the Gentiles. The Church became the candlestick of testimony in the world.

John prophetically wrote to the seven Churches of Asia and foresaw the entire history of Christendom. The condition of each of the seven churches is a description of one of the seven stages of Church history from Pentecost to the Rapture.

It is significant that John described the seven Churches as seven lamps on a golden lampstand (Rev. 1:11-20). He stated:

*“The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches”* (Rev. 1:20).

During this Church age Israel, as the *“natural olive branch”*, has been plucked out of the olive tree, and Gentile believers, as a *“wild olive branch”*, are grafted into its place.

This will continue until *“the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”* (Rom. 11:25) *“And so all Israel shall be saved... for this is the covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins”* (Rom. 11:26-27).

## ISRAEL AGAIN GOD’S CANDLESTICK

There is a future fulfilment to this vision in the time of the Tribulation as described in Revelation 11:1-13.

As soon as the 7-year Tribulation begins, there will be 144,000 Jewish men sealed by God to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom in all the earth (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:1-9). Two witnesses will testify at Jerusalem and will be associated with worship in the Temple. They are called **prophets** (Rev. 11:10) and will perform signs and wonders similar to those performed by Moses and Elijah.

After 1260 days, when the testimony of the two prophets is finished, they will be slain by Antichrist and their bodies lie in the street at Jerusalem. However, after three-and-a-half days, there will be an earthquake and the dead bodies will be resurrected and caught up to heaven. The Bible makes an obvious reference to Zechariah’s prophecy and states:

*“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth”* (Rev. 11:4).

After the Church is removed at the Rapture Israel again will be the channel of blessing to the world and will be God’s lampstand. It is significant that Israel’s national emblem which is displayed at official functions, depicts the candlesticks and two olive branches.



Israel's emblem

VISION 6 - CH. 5:1-4

*A FLYING ROLL TO DESTROY THE TEMPLE*

*“Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits” (Zech. 5:1-2).*



**T**HE ministry of Zechariah relates largely to the rebuilding of the second Temple after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. However, the Lord knows the end from the beginning, and He knew that just as Israel failed when they had the first Temple, they would again fail when they had a second Temple.

The second Temple lacked the splendour of Solomon's Temple, so that the old men who had seen the first Temple wept when the foundation was laid (Ezra 3:12).

However, in 20BC Herod the Great began the long process of restoring the Temple to its former grandeur. When Jesus began His ministry construction had been in progress 46 years (John 2:20).

Spiritual decline had been evident long before Jesus came. About 400BC Malachi, the last of the Old Testament writers, rebuked the nation for its departure from the Lord and asked, *“Who is there even among you that would shut the doors (of the Temple) for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought”* (Mal. 1:10). Service at the Temple had become a chore and a paid position.

Malachi prophesied the coming of Christ and stated that God would send His messenger (John the Baptist) before Him to prepare the people. Messiah would *“suddenly come to his temple”* (Mal. 3:1).

The people were largely unaware that Messiah had come until John declared, *“Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29).

Also at the Passover Jesus appeared and found that the Temple was so commercialised that He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and drove the sheep from the Temple declaring:

*“Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise”*  
(John 2:16).

At the close of His ministry Jesus said that the magnificent Temple would be destroyed and

*“There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down”*  
(Matt. 24:2).

**This is the subject of the sixth vision of Zechariah.**

In this vision Zechariah saw a “*flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits*” (Zech. 5:2).

These were the dimensions of the Holy Place in the Temple where the priests served daily. The curse was to be upon the Temple.

The flying roll had written upon it the perfect law of God in its two aspects. On one side man’s relationship to man: “*every one that stealeth shall be cut off*”; on the other side the Law as it related to man’s relationship with God: “*every one that sweareth shall be cut off*” (Zech. 5:3). Swearing, or vows, were made to God.

The flying roll is said to be “*the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth*” (Zech. 5:3).

Paul made it clear that the Law brought man under the curse:

*“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”* (Gal. 3:10).

In Jesus’ day the Temple was a “*den of thieves*” and was known as Caiaphas’ market. Offerings could only be made in Temple currency and the money exchangers took their cut.

When a Jew brought a lamb it was examined for some blemish. Unless the animal was approved by the priests, the offerer was required to purchase an acceptable offering from the priests. The house which was meant to be a “*house of prayer*” had become “*a den of thieves*”. The practice was a means of stealing from the people.

Worship in the Temple had become hypocritical and legalistic. They were “*swearing falsely*” (Zech. 5:4).

In Matthew 23:16-22 Jesus denounced the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and **swearing falsely**. An oath in the name of God bound the swearer in some way. “*An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife*” (Heb. 6:16). The legalistic minds of the Pharisees invoked the name of God, His Temple, and the sacrifices with no intention of keeping their word.



The flying roll aptly describes the “*Lord from heaven*” (1 Cor. 15:47) in whom was fulfilled perfectly the law of God, and who entered His Temple pronouncing the curse of the law upon the hypocritical Jews.

*“I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief”* (Zech. 5:4).

The curse was fulfilled in AD70:

*“And it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof”* (Zech. 5:4).

## **JERUSALEM TO BE DESTROYED**

As Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday He wept over it and said:

*“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and **they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another**; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*



*And he went into the temple, (“the house of the thief” Zech. 5:4) and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Luke 19:42-46).*

On the Tuesday as He concluded His ministry in Jerusalem, Jesus again spoke of the destruction of the Temple:

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children... and ye would not! Behold **your house is left unto you desolate**” (Matt. 23:37-38).*

He then left the Temple for the last time, and as the disciples showed Him the buildings of the Temple He said:

*“See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, **There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down**” (Matt. 24:2).*

Jesus then led His disciples to the Mount of Olives where He told them **when** the House would be destroyed:

*“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh... For these be the days of vengeance... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-24).*

Fires lit by the Roman soldiers would “consume” (lit. “make an end of”) the timber and stones together. The gold melted and filled the joints of the stones which were pulled apart to recover it. What happened to the stones nobody knows. They may have been used in other buildings throughout history.

In Luke 12:16-40 Jesus spoke a parable about the folly of riches. He warned that He was coming again and they (Israel) needed to lay up treasure in heaven. The Jews did not heed His command to “watch” and were destroyed by the Romans.

Jesus said:

*“If the good man (high priest) of the house (Temple) had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered **his house to be broken through**” (Luke 12:39).*

The destruction of the Temple was to be a warning to Israel to watch for the Lord’s return.

### ***JEREMIAH’S PROPHECY - HISTORY REPEATED***

The Temple had become a den of robbers in Jeremiah’s day, and he reminded them that when the sons of Samuel robbed the people of their sacrifices and took what they wanted by force (1 Sam. 2:16) God had destroyed the Temple at Shiloh. He warned that God would use the Babylonians to destroy the Temple:

*“Is this house, which is called by my name, become **a den of robbers** in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD. But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for **the wickedness of my people** Israel... Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh” (Jer. 7:11-14).*

On the three recorded occasions when God judged the Temple, it had become a den of thieves. Evil men exploited religion for material gain, and this is the characteristic of the Church age in its final stage as seen in the letter to the Church of Laodicea. Jesus said:

*“Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17).*

The Bible describes Christendom as “Mystery Babylon” at the end of the age, and she will be burned with her vast store of riches (Rev. 18). Churches and denominations have hoarded vast sums of money and property and in these last days bear no resemblance to the early Church whose apostles could say, *“Silver and gold have I none”* (Acts 3:6).

### **VISION 7 - CH. 5:5-11**

#### ***A WOMAN IN AN EPHAH - EVIL SEED OF IDOLATRY RETURNED TO BABYLON***

**I**N THE seventh vision Zechariah sees an ephah, which was a vessel to measure grain. It was a measure equal to ten omers (Exod. 16:36). An omer was the daily quantity of manna collected by the Israelites and was about 5. 1 pints. An ephah therefore measured about 51 pints or approximately 24 litres.

The ephah was a universal measure for we read: *“This is the ephah that GOETH FORTH...this is their resemblance through ALL THE EARTH”* (Zech. 5:6).

What did the ephah measure? Normally it would measure seed but this ephah was to measure wickedness, symbolised by a woman.

The Word of God is described as “good seed” sown by the Son of man (Matt. 13:37), and the children of the kingdom are also “good seed” (Matt. 13:38). Wheat and tares describe truth and error which are sown in the hearts of men; good seed and evil seed.

Zechariah sees the measure of wickedness that has been sown by Satan. The woman is sitting in the ephah and a lid made of lead weighing a talent is cast onto the mouth of the ephah.

Lead is a toxic metal which has been removed from paint and petrol because it is a health hazard. It affects the brain and nervous system and produces deformity. It appropriately describes the spiritual impact that false teaching has on those who are deceived.

Zechariah then saw two women with wings like a stork and “*the wind was in their wings*”. The stork is listed among the **unclean birds** that Israel was not to eat (Lev. 11:19), and the wind is symbolic of spirits. The Hebrew word is the same for “wind” and “spirit”, and may refer to good or evil spirits.

These two women are not God’s angels, but two evil spirits that remove the ephah filled with wickedness and capped with poison to the “*land of Shinar*”, which is Babylon.

Babylon was the place where idolatry began. It is where the tower of Babel was built, and from Babylon idolatry spread over the whole world.

Israel had been sent into captivity for 70 years to Babylon because they had followed the idolatrous practices of Babylon. Now a remnant had returned to Jerusalem to build the house of God and idolatry had been rejected by the nation.

Never again did Israel turn to idolatry, and in the Grecian period when Antiochus Epiphanes tried to force the Jews to adopt the worship of Jupiter by placing an image on the altar of the Temple, the Jews resisted and finally drove out the Greeks. The Jewish Feast of Hanukkah each December commemorates the cleansing of the Temple by Judas Maccabees. It is also called the Feast of Dedication, and Jesus went to Jerusalem for this feast (John 10:22).

When Jesus came the Jews had rejected idolatry but had lapsed into formalism and legalism. They followed tradition and became hypocritical, but never again did they turn to



Marduk or Bel chief of Babylon

idols. The idols of Babylon had been sent back to “*the land of Shinar*” where it was established “*upon her own base*” (Zech. 5:11). Her own base was Babylon.

However, the woman in the ephah has continued her evil work “*throughout the whole earth*”. Many false religions have sprung from her. We see Jezebel in the Church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:20), and the woman that hid leaven in three measure of meal “*till the whole was leavened*” (Matt. 13:33). “*MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS*”, is symbolic of false religion located at Rome in the last days. She will be burned with fire (Rev. 17:16).

Pagan religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam all worship false gods, and apostate Christendom worships “*another Jesus*” (2 Cor. 11:4).

### VISION 8 - CH. 6:1-15

#### ***FOUR HORSES IN CHARIOTS BETWEEN TWO BRASS MOUNTAINS - PEACE WHEN CHRIST IS CROWNED***

**F**OUR chariots drawn by coloured horses appear from between two mountains of brass in the last vision. The horses are red, black, white, grisled (spotted) and bay (strong).

We are left in no doubt as to what the four horse-drawn chariots represent; they are angelic beings who “*go forth from before the Lord of all the earth*” (Zech. 6:5).

The Psalmist prophetically described the ascension of the Lord:

*“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men”* (Ps. 68:17-18).

Paul quotes this verse in Ephesians 4:8. The angels ushered the Lord back to heaven from the Mount of Olives.

The chariots of God were seen at other times. When Elijah was caught up Elisha saw “*a chariot of fire and horses of fire*” (2 Kings 2:11). When the Syrians besieged Dothan God opened the eyes of Elisha’s servant to see God’s army:

*“The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha”* (2 Kings 6:17).

*“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them”* (Ps. 34:7).

The four chariots in Zechariah’s vision were concerned with the affairs of the nations. They “*walked to and fro through the earth*” (Zech. 6:7) and reported on what they found. Of those that went “*toward the north*



country” (Babylon where the Jews had been captive), God said, these “*have quieted my Spirit in the north country*” (Zech. 6:8).

God’s Spirit had been stirred up against Israel and Judah because of their idolatry, but now the 70 years of Judah’s chastening had passed and the Persians had captured Babylon. The four horns (Babylon) that had oppressed Israel had been replaced by the four carpenters (Persia) who were rebuilding Israel (Zech. 1:18-21). The time to rebuild the Temple had arrived.

The two mountains of brass may represent the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon that had afflicted Israel and Judah for more than two centuries. Brass in Scripture is associated with judgment. The four chariots (angels) appearing between two mountains of brass declare that the earth had finally been “quieted” in the Persian era.

The northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah had endured the chastening of God for at least 230 years, from the Assyrians and then the Babylonians. Long years of disquiet had sapped the strength of both nations and led them away captive to “*the cities of the Medes*” in 721BC (2 Kings 17:6), and to Babylon in 586BC. Another 70 years of the Babylonian captivity followed.

There is no doubt that God’s Spirit had been disquieted by Israel and Judah’s idolatry and wickedness, and that He had sent the Assyrians and Babylonians as instruments of judgment to carry them away.

The first recorded incursion into Israel was in the days of Menahem about 769BC “*And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand*” (2 Kings 15:19).

Pekah reigned after Menahem, and in his days the Assyrian King Tiglathpilneser was sent by God into the land.

*“And the God of Israel **stirred up the spirit** of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day”* (1 Chron. 5:26).

When Sennacherib boasted that he was greater than the God of Israel, the LORD gave Isaiah a message for the Assyrian:

*“Hast thou not heard long ago, how **I have done it**; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have **I brought it to pass, that thou shouldst be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up**”* (Isa. 37:26-27).

In the same way God used Nebuchadnezzar to administer judgment on Judah. He even calls Nebuchadnezzar, “*my servant*”:

*“Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations”* (Jer. 25:9).

With the overthrow of Babylon, the Persian era brought peace. God’s Spirit was at last “*quieted*” in the north country and that is the immediate fulfilment of the prophecy. This last vision reaches down to a future day when Israel will experience peace after she is invaded **from the north**, and the man who is The BRANCH will reign as a “*priest upon his throne*” (Zech. 6:13). There is no doubt that this will be the time when Christ, the BRANCH from the stem of Jesse, will come and be both Priest and King reigning from Jerusalem.

The kings of Assyria and Babylon stand as types of Gog “*the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*”, (Ezek. 38:2) and Antichrist, who is the “*king of the north*” (Dan. 11:36-45). Both are from Israel’s north, and both will be allowed by God to prepare the nation for that day when Christ will return and bring peace. The Lord will be crowned with many crowns and reign as a Priest upon His throne.

God’s Spirit will be finally “*quieted*”, and the redeemed nation that has been “*scattered and peeled*” (Isa. 18:7) will be restored to the land. As Isaiah wrote:

*“The days of thy mourning shall be ended”* (Isa. 60:20).

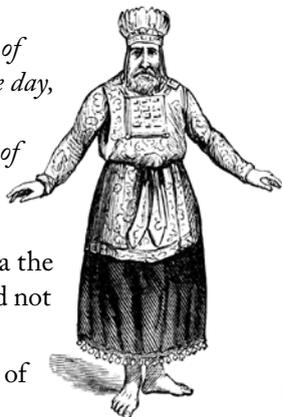
*“Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her... For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees”* (Isa. 66:10-12).

### JOSHUA CROWNED

*“Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest”* (Zech. 6:10-11).

In the near prophecy Zechariah is told to take three men to the house of Josiah where they are to make crowns for Joshua the high priest. These crowns are **royal kingly crowns** and should not be confused with the mitre of the high priest.

The place where the crowns were to be made was the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah.



This Zephaniah would appear to be the prophet who prophesied in the days of King Josiah. He had given his son the same name as King Josiah. His prophecies agree with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel who foretold the invasion of the land of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar.

The **crowning of Joshua** the high priest brings the visions to a climax. It is a type foreshadowing God's ultimate purpose to crown Jesus Christ as King of kings on the throne of David.

In the fourth vision Joshua is given clean high-priestly garments for service in the rebuilt Temple, where it was his responsibility to offer the gifts of the people and make atonement for the sins of the nation.

As high priest, Joshua stood as a type of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 4:15), and in both visions we are introduced to the BRANCH out of the stem of Jesse who will, in a future day, "*remove the iniquity of that land in one day*" (Zech. 3:9).

The high priest made atonement for the sins of Israel **on one day** of each year, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) which fell on the 10th day of the 7th month of the religious calendar of Israel, and is prophetic of the coming day in the first half of the 7-year Tribulation when "*all Israel shall be saved*" (Rom. 11:26).

Just as the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Firstfruits were prophetic of Christ's death and resurrection, so the Feast of Trumpets will be prophetic of the Day of the LORD; an alarm will be sounded as Israel is invaded by the Russian-led Islamic armies (Joel 2:1; Ezek. 38/39. See also Ezek. 39:22; Isa. 66:8.)

The Feast of Trumpets will also be the time when the nation will be called to repentance, and for **ten Days of Awe** (from the 1st to the 10th day of the 7th month) will acknowledge the sin of rejecting Messiah. This will culminate on the tenth day (Yom Kippur), when Israel repents and the nation is redeemed.

God promised Israel that when the trumpets are sounded, "*ye shall be saved from your enemies*" (Num. 10:9). Joel described this event in chapter 2 and verse 20 of his prophecy.

Throughout the remainder of the 7-year Tribulation Antichrist will seek to destroy every Jew, but the Lord will have a place of shelter for the nation and will return to again save them from their enemies (Zech. 14:1-3).

This eighth vision takes the prophecy of Christ as the BRANCH from the stem of Jesse forward to the second coming of Christ, when He is crowned with "*many crowns*" (Rev. 19:12). At that time Jesus Christ will occupy "*the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever*" (Luke 1:32-33).

Zechariah wrote:

*"He shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel*

*of peace shall be between them both*" (Zech. 6:13).

Christ will be both High Priest "*after the order of Melchizedec*" (Heb. 5:6) and King on David's throne. Mary and Joseph were from David's line, while Elizabeth and Zacharias were descendants of Aaron. However, Elizabeth was Mary's cousin (Luke 1:36), so there must have been some intermingling of the priestly line and the kingly line of David.

The statement, "*the counsel of peace shall be between them both*", indicates that there will be **complete agreement** between the spiritual service of the priest and the secular service of the king. At times the kings of Israel were at variance with the priests of the Lord, but when Jesus Christ is crowned on the throne of David every statute and judgment will be in perfect harmony with the will of God.

When King Saul intruded on the priests' office and offered a burnt offering his house lost the throne and God chose David, who was a "*man after his own heart*" (1Sam. 13:8-14). Uzziah became a leper when he intruded into the priests' office (2 Chron. 26:19). Priestly service was given to the house of Aaron and the tribe of Levi, but when Messiah returns He will be both King and Priest.

### **CROWNS FOR JOSHUA**

Zechariah is told to take certain men who had **returned from Babylon** to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. He was to "*then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua*" (Zech. 6:11).

The names of the men were Heldai (also called Helem v. 14), Tobijah, and Jediah. Later in this chapter Josiah is called Hen. Apparently Heldai and Joshua had more than one name, which was not uncommon.

The meanings of the names in the Hebrew language were:

**Heldai** - *time is fleeting, the world is quickly passing like a... (also called Helem - a dream)*

**Tobijah** - *goodness of Jehovah*

**Jedaiah** - *Jehovah has known*

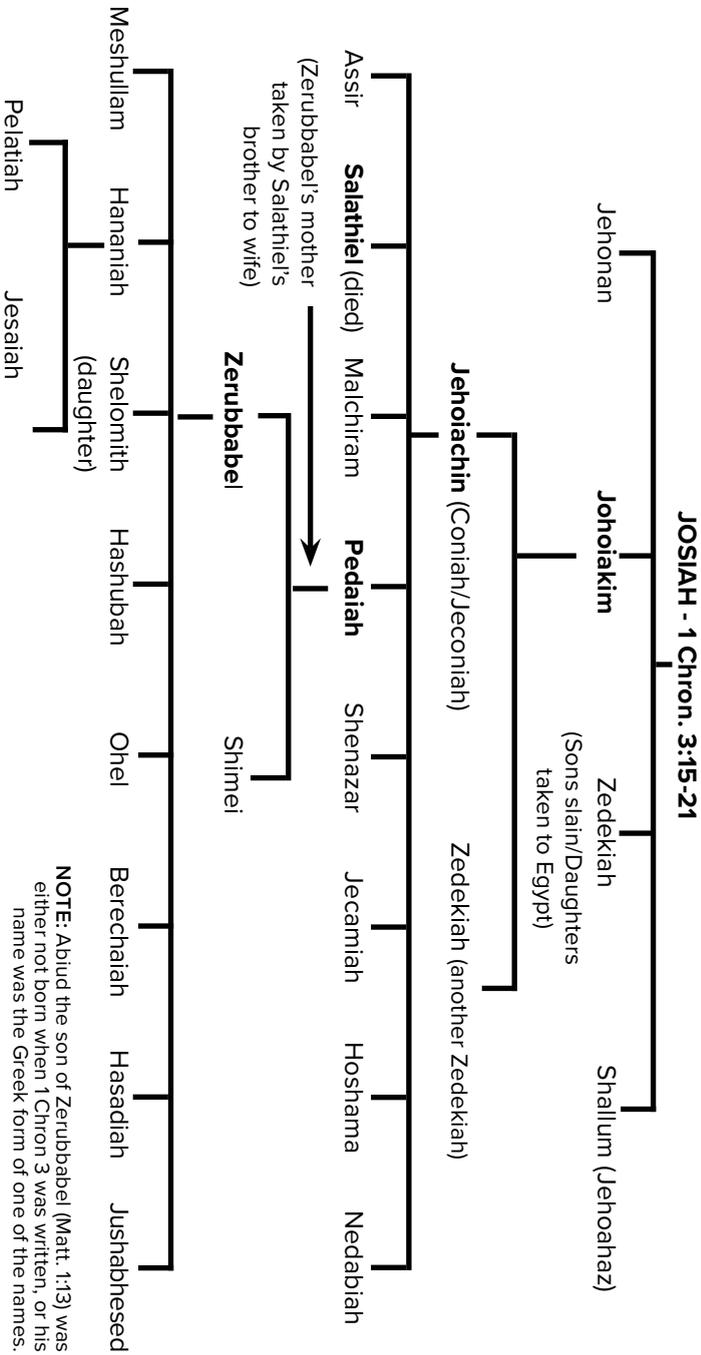
These three were to go to the house of Josiah (Hen) the son of Zephaniah, where **the crowns were made** before being placed in the Temple as a memorial. The names mean:

**Josiah** - *founded by Jehovah*

(also called Hen - *grace, kindness*)

**Zephaniah** - *hidden, protected by Jehovah (JAH)*

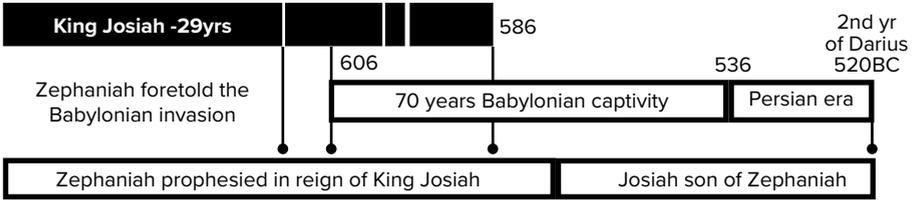
These men had left Babylon and its idolatry and their names remind us that the kingdoms of this world are passing. God, **who knows** the end from the beginning, **will establish** the throne of David which He has **founded by His grace**, and it will be preserved by Him **though hidden** for a long time.



**NOTE:** Abiud the son of Zerubbabel (Matt. 1:13) was either not born when 1 Chron 3 was written, or his name was the Greek form of one of the names.

*Jeremiah 22:24-30 - As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiachim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; and I will give thee into the hand ...of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. But to the land wherunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper IN HIS DAYS: FOR no man OF HIS SEED shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. (This meant that Joseph's line (Matt.ch. 1) from Solomon would not produce Christ - Nathan's line would (Luke ch. 3)*

**JOSHUA was the Son of the Prophet ZEPHANIAH?**



Only one king of Israel, Saul, reigned before David, and when he was killed in battle his crown was given to David (2 Sam. 1:10).

The throne of David was finally occupied by wicked King Zedekiah, and Ezekiel prophesied of him:

*“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and **take off the crown**: ...I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and **it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him**” (Ezek. 21:25-27).*

The crowns which were made for Joshua were to be placed in the Temple for a **memorial** till *“he come whose right it is”*.

It is important to note that **more than one crown** was made, which is a clear indication that the Lord Jesus will wear **many crowns**. John described the Lord at His second coming:

*“His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were **many crowns**...and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**” (Rev. 19:12,16).*

**A MILLENNIAL TEMPLE**

We have already seen that this second Temple would be destroyed. Messiah would *“consume it with the timber thereof”* (Zech. 5:4); but

*“the man whose name is **The BRANCH**...**he shall build the Temple of the LORD** ...**he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne**” (Zech. 6:12-13).*

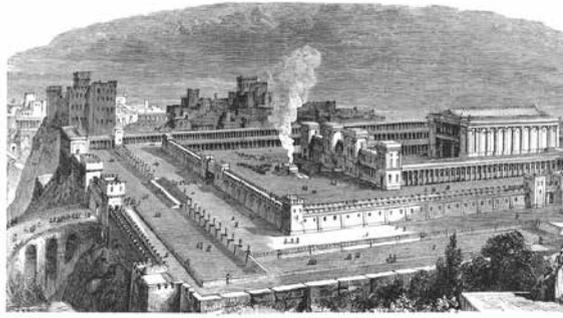
Ezekiel described the day when the glory would return to the millennial Temple.

*“And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east...and, behold, **the glory of the LORD filled the house**... And he said unto me, Son of man, **the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile**” (Ezek. 43:4-7).*

Only *“the BRANCH”* out of the line of David can sit upon the throne of David. One wonders what happened to the crowns which were made for Joshua. It may be that they were taken from the Temple in the Grecian era during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, or when the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD70.

James reminded the early Church:

*“God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name”, and that AFTER THIS, the Lord would return, and “build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up” (Acts 15:14-16).*



The Lord will build His Temple but will use the resources of the people. He will not miraculously cause it to suddenly appear for we read:

*“And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you” (Zech. 6:15).*

Just as the first Temple was built with the labour of Solomon’s men and the men of Hiram king of Tyre, so the millennial Temple will require the labour of the men of Israel and the redeemed Gentiles (2 Chron. 2).

Isaiah prophesied that Gentiles would be involved in the rebuilding of Jerusalem:

*“The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee” (Isa. 60:10).*

### **GOD’S CONDITIONS**

Israel’s future blessing is subject to the conditions of the Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 28 to 30; Lev. 26), so the final word in this vision states:

*“And this shall come to pass, **IF** ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God” (Zech. 6:15).*

The millennial kingdom cannot be established until the nation of Israel turns to the Lord, but during the Tribulation God will send the Russian and Islamic forces against Israel as described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. This will be the time when *“all Israel shall be saved”* (Rom. 11:26) and *“the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from **that day and forward**”* (Ezek. 39:22).

A similar statement is made in Ezekiel 36:37 where, after He had promised great blessing to the nation, God stated:

*“I will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”*

The promises of God to Abraham were unconditional. The land has been given as an everlasting possession to Abraham’s seed, and Abraham’s seed is the channel of blessing ordained of God for the Gentile nations.

However, God cannot allow rebellious people to enjoy His land and He awaits the repentance of Israel for the rejection of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

# Summary of the Five Messages

## Message 1

**Chapters 7 and 8 rehearse the Palestinian Covenant** under which God will bless Israel. It is therefore most important to become familiar with Deuteronomy chapters 28 to 30 and Leviticus chapter 26. The return to the land and rebirth of the nation in 1948 is only a partial return in unbelief in accordance with the prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 36 where God says: *“Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel”* (Ezek. 36:32 also v. 22). The whole nation will return when she acknowledges Jesus Christ as her Redeemer and King.

## Message 2

**Chapter 9 foretells the Grecian era** and the arrival of Alexander the Great at Jerusalem. This occasion is used to inform Israel of the coming to Jerusalem of her King, the Lord Jesus, on Palm Sunday.

## Message 3

**Chapter 10 foretells the restoration to the land** after God’s judgment on the evil leaders of Israel and the victory of the godly remnant in the last days during the Tribulation. As a result the entire nation will be reunited; the lost 10 tribes with Judah in the future Kingdom.

## Message 4

**Chapter 11 foretells the Roman era.** The Roman invasion under Vespasian to put down the Jewish revolt of AD66 ended in AD70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of the three evil shepherds who led the revolt. The reason for Israel’s destruction and dispersion in AD70 is their rejection of God’s Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who was betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver. As a consequence, God will send them an *“idol shepherd”* in the last days of the Roman Empire. Antichrist will seek to tear the nation apart during the Tribulation.

## Message 5

**Chapters 12 to 14 foretell Israel’s conflict in the Tribulation, the coming of the Lord, and the millennial kingdom, beginning from “that day”** when the *“idol shepherd”* appears.

## Part 2 - Zechariah's Five Messages

*God Remembers His Covenant with Israel and will Bless in His Time*

*Chapters 7 to 14*

### MESSAGE 1 - CH. 7:1-14

#### GENUINE WORSHIP BEFORE BLESSING

**T**WO years after the eight visions were given to Zechariah (518BC), the word of the LORD came to Zechariah and he received five messages for the Jews. The Temple was nearing completion in 518BC, and the Jews sent Sherezer and Regemmelech to Jerusalem to the house of God;

*“to pray before the LORD, And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the **fifth month**, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?”* (Zech. 7:2-3).

The names of these representatives indicate that they had come from Babylon. Sherezer is an Akkadian name meaning “protect the king”. Another Sharezer was the son of Sennacherib who slew his father (Isa. 37:38). Regemmelech means “friend of the king”.

The names may indicate that these men were leaders and had positions in the Persian Empire associated with the king. We recall that Daniel and his friends were given Babylonian names by Nebuchadnezzar, and Zerubbabel means “born in Babylon”.

The fifth month had etched itself indelibly on the minds of the Jews of the captivity for it was on *“the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month”*, that the Temple was burned (2 Kings 25:8-9).

Then in the seventh month *“Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpab”* (2 Kings 25:25).

These tragedies occurred in 586BC when the 70 years of desolation prophesied by Jeremiah were beginning.

Two other fasts are mentioned in Zech. 8:19. Those were in the 4th and 10th months.

During the 70 years of desolation the Jews had kept a fast each fifth and seventh month and afflicted themselves praying that Jerusalem and the Temple would be rebuilt, but now the Temple was near completion and the question is asked, *“Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?”* (Zech. 7:3).

It was recorded that Napoleon once passed a synagogue and heard Jews weeping.

When he enquired as to why they were weeping, he was told that they wept for their land and Temple. He replied that anyone who is so passionate about their land will one day have their desire. Napoleon closed the ghettos, removed the yellow armbands with the star of David which Jews were compelled to wear, and gave Jews equal status with other citizens. He also planned to declare Palestine an independent Jewish state, but he failed to capture Acre and didn't get to Jerusalem where he was to make the announcement. The proclamation was prepared on 20 April 1799 but was not delivered.

Similar passion possessed the Jews of the captivity in Zechariah's time, but when they saw that the Temple was about to be completed they wondered if they should continue to fast.

When the word of the LORD came to Zechariah they were challenged as to the sincerity of their fasting. They had longed for the Temple to be built and for the people to be restored to the land, but were they seeking the Lord?

*“When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, **did ye at all fast unto me, EVENTO ME?** And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink **for yourselves?**”*

(Zech. 7:5-6).

Here we see the seeds of legalism, ritual, and religion that replaced the idolatry of previous years. They forsook idols but had established a religious ritual that excluded the Lord. This trend continued until Christ came, when the nation so followed tradition that Jesus said they made the commandments of God of none effect (Matt. 15:3). Zechariah solemnly warned the Jews that they needed **a genuine experience**. They must heed what the former prophets had said and **turn from sin and do righteousness**.

Religion is a system, but God wants sincerity in the heart. Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

Zechariah reminded the people that the former prophets had said:

*“Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart”* (Zech. 7:9-10).

Religion knows nothing of the love of God but true righteousness is compassionate and caring. Its motivation is love for God and obedience to Him. On the other hand, religion imposes obligations but fails to fill the heart with the love of God. History is meant to be our teacher. We look back and see the mistakes which brought sorrow and distress and learn from those experiences. The Jews were told to do likewise. Their fathers had *“refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear”* (Zech. 7:11).

Such stubbornness could only result in judgment.

*“Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate”* (Zech. 7:13-14).

The Jews knew full well what Zechariah was saying. The land was still desolate and many were still scattered among the nations as a consequence of their failure to hearken to the former prophets.

Two years before, when Zechariah had delivered a similar message the people acknowledged:

*“Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us”* (Zech. 1:6).

Unfortunately history tells the sad story of failure. Malachi’s prophecy over 100 years later indicates that the people did not follow the Lord with all their heart. When the lawyer tested Jesus, He said:

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all thy heart**, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment”* (Matt. 22:37-38).

God wants our hearts. Love for God fulfills the whole law.

The Jews slew Zechariah between the porch and the altar and finally crucified their King. Again they were scattered, but when they turn to the Lord the whole nation will be restored to the land.

### **GOD’S GREAT PLAN FOR ZION – CH. 8:1-23**

God has a glorious future planned for Zion. When the Jews turn to the Lord, Jerusalem will be a “*praise in the earth*” as Isaiah foretold:

*“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

*And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.*

***Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.***

*Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*

*For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*

*I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace*

*day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and **till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth***" (Isa. 62:1-7).

Zechariah's second message tells the same story.

*"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy (zeal), and I was jealous for her with great fury (fervor)"* (Zech. 8:2).

There are four fasts mentioned in chapter 8 and these were the beginning of the Pharisaic practice mentioned by Jesus. It was not wrong to fast, but it had become an expression of their proud heart. Jesus said:

*"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast... But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face... and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly"* (Matt. 6:16-18).

Fasting was practised by the disciples of John and by the apostles after Christ returned to heaven.

*"Then came to him (Jesus) the disciples of John, saying, **Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast***" (Matt. 9:14-15).

We have already seen that in the years of exile Jews had fasted in memory of tragedies that had befallen the nation. It was a time of contemplation and grief, but also a time when they could examine their hearts before the Lord and seek the restoration of the nation to a place of favour with God.

Zechariah again refers to these fasts and points out that when God pours out His blessing on Jerusalem their sorrow will be turned to joy.

*"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the **fourth** month, and the fast of the **fifth**, and the fast of the **seventh**, and the fast of the **tenth**, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace"* (Zech. 8:19).

**The fast of the fourth month** was on the 17th day of Tammuz (July) and commemorated the capture of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:6-7).

**The fast of the fifth month** was on the 9th day of Ab (August) and commemorated the burning of the Temple (2 Kings 25:8). Note that Jeremiah states the Temple was burned on the 10th day.

(Josephus states in his book, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book VI Chapter 5:5, that the soldiers of Titus burned the second Temple on the 10th day of Av, and world Jewry still fasts on the 9th Av.)

**The fast of the seventh month** was in the month Tishri (October) and commemorated the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 40:4).

**The fast of the 10th month** was on the 10th day of Tebeth (January) and commemorated the **commencement** of the attack on Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 52:4).

Did these fasts cease after the second Temple was built? We have already noted that the 9th of Av is still an annual fast for world Jewry. The day when the sorrow of the Jews will be turned into joy is **therefore yet future**.

**SHOULD CHRISTIANS FAST?**

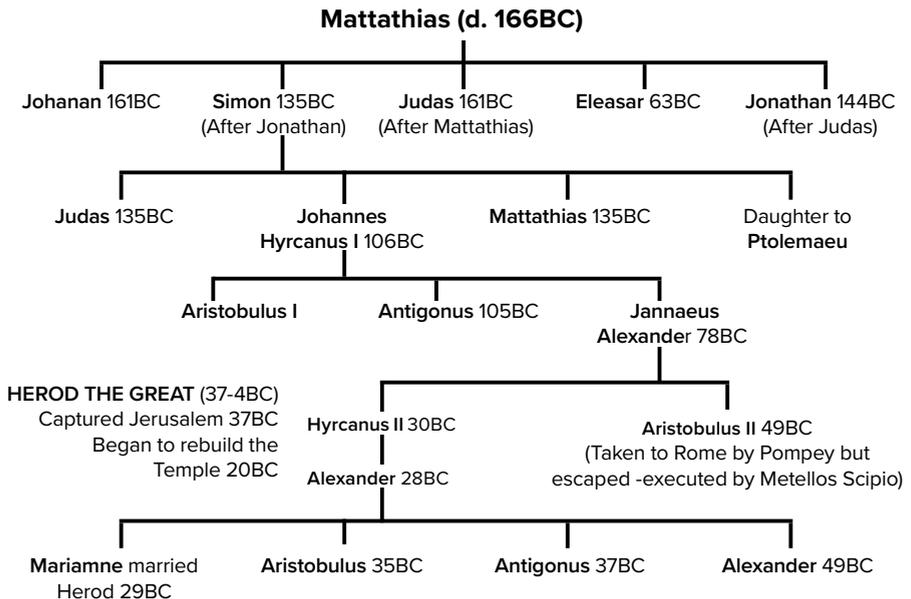
Jesus said that the disciples **would fast after He had returned to heaven**, so when and why should we fast?

Fasts were instituted in association with a crisis or special event. It may be that a burdened soul might set aside a day for prayer and fasting when a major decision is contemplated, or for a special need.

The disciples could not cast out a demon on one occasion and Jesus said, *“This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”* (Matt. 17:21).

Fasting is a personal exercise before the Lord. Fasting should be in *“secret”* (Matt. 6:18).

**The Asmonaeen Family (Maccabees)**



**NOTE:** Judas Maccabeus cleansed the Temple on 25 Kislev (December), 165BC The Feast of Hanukkah (Dedication) remembers the event.

## ***BACKGROUND TO JEWISH FASTS***

After the return from Babylon and the peaceful Persian era, the Jews suffered greatly in the Grecian era. They had abandoned the idolatry of Babylon, but the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes forced Hellenistic culture upon the nation and many Jews adopted the ways of the Gentiles. Antiochus even put an image of Jupiter in the Temple and insisted on worship.

Mattathias, a priest, and his five sons refused to offer sacrifices to the Greek gods, and Judas Maccabeus, his third son, finally defeated the Greeks and cleansed the Temple on 25 Kislev (December).

Jonathan (5th son of Mattathias) assumed the high priest's office after Judas died, but was captured and killed by Tryphon 143BC

Simon Maccabeus (2nd son of Mattathias) took over the leadership, and later his son John Hyrcanus I (134-104BC) took the leadership and claimed to be both high priest and ruler of the Jewish nation.

The nation gained independence and the support of Rome during the rule of Simon.

During the reign of Hyrcanus, son of Simon, different religious parties arose. **The Pharisees (separated ones), the Sadduces, and the Essenes were the main parties.** Tradition was given equal authority with the Word of God and ritualistic practice flourished. Worship became a religious ritual. Many fasts were kept, and when the disciples of John came to Jesus they observed that they and the Pharisees "*fast oft*".

However, Jesus said their fasts were only to be seen of men and were hypocritical. The seeds of this practice were evidently present in Zechariah's day, and he said: "*These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD*" (Zech. 8:16-17).

The Sadducees, on the other hand, refused to accept the **oral law** and kept to the first five books of the Bible, **the Torah**. They denied the existence of angels and the resurrection, and were in control of the Temple in Jesus' day. The Pharisees believed the passover lamb should be eaten on the 14th of Nisan but the Sadducees on the 15th of Nisan.

Since the Jewish day began at 6pm and the Sadducees controlled the Temple sacrifices, the Pharisees had to keep the Passover **without a lamb** on the evening of the 14th of Nisan. So Jesus kept the Passover without a lamb and died just as the lambs were being sacrificed after 3pm on Thursday the 14th of Nisan.

The message of Zechariah chapter 8 was given to challenge the Jews to **a genuine**

**righteousness** and not a religious self righteousness. They were to “*execute the judgment of truth and peace*” and not to “*imagine evil*” in their hearts against their neighbours. They were not to love “*false oaths*”. Zechariah made it clear that God hated hypocrisy. He hated it under the Old Covenant and He still hates it under the New Covenant.

### ***A GLORIOUS FUTURE FORETOLD***

In chapter 8 God revealed His future plan for the nation of Israel. He made it clear that He was “*jealous for Zion with great jealousy. . .with great fury (fervor)*” (Zech. 8:2). God was committed to ultimately blessing His people. The extent of blessing seemed impossible to the small, struggling remnant, and so the LORD said:

*“If it be marvellous (too hard) in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous (too hard) in mine eyes?”*

Nothing is too hard for God, even if it seemed humanly impossible, and He assures them that their numbers would increase. They would not remain a small struggling remnant.

*“Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, **in truth and in righteousness**”*  
(Zech. 8:7-8).

In order for the Jews to believe these promises God asked them to “*be strong*”, to believe His promise, and to heed the words of the prophets who prophesied when the foundation of the Temple was laid (536BC). Daniel (Dan. 9:2,17-18), Iddo (Neh. 12:16; Ezra 8:17), Haggai and others, had urged them to return and rebuild the house of God at this time.

Just to encourage the Jews to believe the promise, God reminded them that before they returned to the land lawlessness had prevailed and “*every one was against his neighbour*” (v. 10). There was no work and there was no peace, but God had already promised to be a “*wall of fire round about*” (Zech. 2:5) and the rains would be given for their crops:

*“The seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew”* (Zech. 8:12).

These things were evidence of God’s intention to bless the nation.

How like our God! Even when our faith is small and we, like the remnant, find it hard to believe His promises, He sends blessings across our path to reassure us of His presence and watchful care. The God who sends these blessings will fulfil His great plan for our lives, and He asks us to **be strong** in faith.

If the Jews believed the LORD and obeyed His Word then certain things were

promised. History, however, does not record that these blessings were ever completely fulfilled, and the nation must therefore await the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. They are:

- 1) The LORD would dwell in Jerusalem and Jerusalem would be called a “*city of truth*” and “*the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain*” (v. 3)
- 2) Old men and old women would dwell in Jerusalem and the streets would be filled with boys and girls playing games (Zech. 8:4-5).
- 3) Both the house of Judah and the house of Israel would be saved “*and shall be a blessing*” (v. 13). The Jews would go up to Jerusalem and worship the LORD while Gentiles would also be blessed. (v. 20). This prophecy shows that the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel are not lost and will be restored to the Lord and to the land in the last days.

The restoration of the northern kingdom in the last days is prophesied elsewhere in Scripture. Jeremiah wrote that God would make a **new covenant** with “*the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah*” (Jer. 31:31).

Ezekiel gave a remarkable prophecy of two sticks with the names of Judah and Joseph (Ephraim) upon them. These were joined together **to become one stick**.

- a) **Israel would be regathered from all nations** - “*Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land*” (Ezek. 37:21).
- b) **They would be one nation for ever** - “*And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all*” (Ezek. 37:22).
- c) **They would be a saved nation for ever** - “*Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God*” (Ezek. 37:23).
- d) **Israel would have David as her king** - “*And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them*” (Ezek. 37:24).
- e) **Israel would dwell in the land for ever** - “*And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever*” (Ezek. 37:25).

- f) **God will make a New Covenant with Israel for ever** - *“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore”* (Ezek. 37:26).
- g) **The Temple will be rebuilt and the Lord would dwell among them for ever** - *“My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore* (Ezek. 37:27-28).
- 4) The promises of God are irrevocable. Just as God determined to judge the nation of Israel and would not change His mind, so He has chosen to bless the nation and will not change His mind.

*“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not”* (Zech. 8:14-15).

God’s covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David must be fulfilled and periods of chastisement must not be interpreted as abandonment. However, God cannot bless an evil nation and He awaits Israel’s repentance. Thus He says:

*“These are the things that **YE SHALL DO**; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD”* (Zech. 8:16-17).

This principle was spelt out clearly in the **Palestinian Covenant** just before the nation entered the land of Canaan (Deut. 28-30 and Lev. 26). If Israel obeyed the LORD they would be blessed in the land. If they transgressed they would be scattered among the nations. However if, after they are scattered, they turn to the LORD, they will be restored to the land and blessed.

The conversion of Israel in the Great Tribulation will occur when the nation faces extinction at the hands of a Russian-led Islamic army, as described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. No doubt the 144,000 Jewish servants of God will be instrumental in calling the nation to repentance at that time as described in Joel chapter 2. Ezekiel wrote:

*“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God **from that day and forward**. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, **therefore** hid I my face from them”* (Ezek. 39:22-23).

- 5) Strong Gentile nations would come to Jerusalem to pray before the LORD

(v. 22). The blessing of the Gentiles will be a fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham that "*in thy seed shall **all the nations** of the earth be blessed*" (Gen. 22:18).

6) The Jews would be highly respected by the saved Gentile nations because they recognise that God is with them.

*"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you"* (Zech. 8:23).

There was a partial fulfilment of the promises given in the Persian era, but clearly not all have been fulfilled. The following prophecies have never been fulfilled:

i) The two kingdoms have not been regathered and reunited. They were scattered again by the Romans in AD70 and have wandered the earth for nearly two thousand years.

ii) Jerusalem has never been called a "*city of truth*" where God dwelt "*in truth and righteousness*". When Jesus came He wept over the city and declared:

*"Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round...and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; **because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation**"* (Luke 19:43-44).

iii) Gentiles have never taken hold of the garment of Jews and said, "*We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you*"! However, after Christ returns and establishes His kingdom on earth, the Jews will be exalted above all nations.

The Gentile nations and Christendom have hated the Jews and persecuted them in ghettos, pogroms, inquisitions and the gas chambers of the holocaust. Anti-Semitism is rife in Islamic and Western countries today, but in that future day Isaiah's prophecy to Israel will be fulfilled:

*"The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted"* (Isa. 60:12).

iv) Strong nations have not come to worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. Prior to the destruction of the Temple in AD70, under Seleucid rule the Temple was desecrated and Hellenistic culture imposed. Under Roman rule Herod began the process of rebuilding the Temple in 20BC but proved to be a wicked king with much blood on his hands. Before he died at Jericho he had "the principal men of the entire Jewish nation" locked up in the hippodrome and surrounded by soldiers who were to kill them as soon as he died to prevent the Jews from rejoicing at his death. Fortunately the order was not carried out.

Fulfilment awaits Christ's millennial kingdom.

## MESSAGE 2 - CH. 9:1-17

## ALEXANDER AS TYPE OF MESSIAH

**Z**ECHARIAH'S prophecy concerns Gentile nations that had some influence on Israel, as does Daniel's prophecy. Daniel lived in the beginning of the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) which began in 606BC. Daniel foretold the four Gentile world powers: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome - to the coming of Christ.

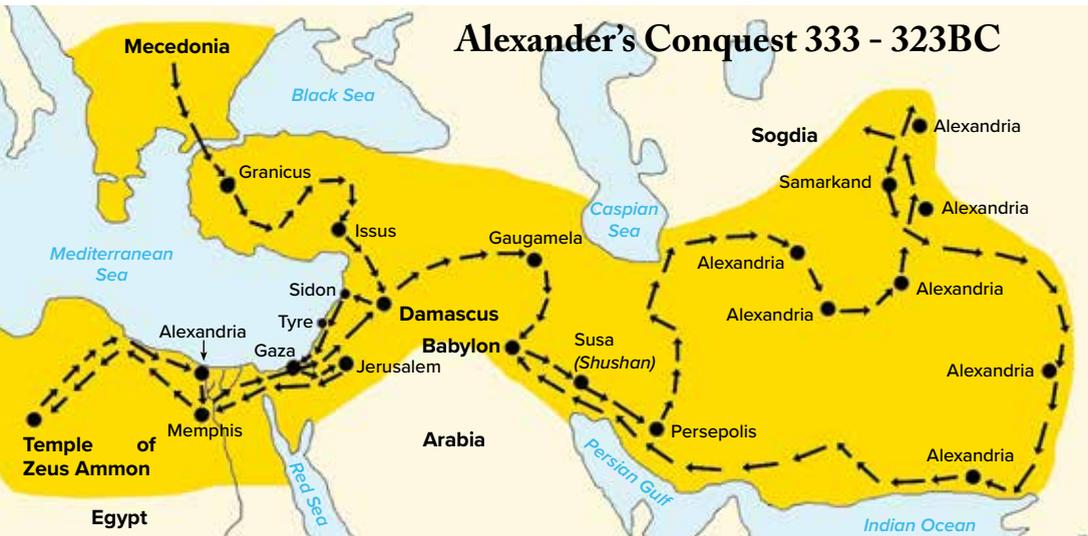
Zechariah prophesied of the four kings of Babylon who oppressed Israel and four kings of Persia who assisted in the rebuilding of Israel. These were the subject of his third vision (Zech. 1:18-21).

Now in chapter 9 Zechariah prophesies the conquest of Alexander the Great as he moved south after capturing Damascus, Tyre and Sidon, and the cities of the Philistines; Gaza, Ekron and Ashkelon (Zech. 9:1-7).

*"The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD" (Zech. 9:1).*

The land of Hadrach is the land near to Damascus. Hadrach appears in Assyrian inscriptions as a city near to Damascus. It does not exist today.

The destruction of Tyre was foretold long before by Isaiah (Isa.ch. 23), and it began with the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar in his 7th year. It lasted 13 years and resulted in the destruction of the coastal city, while the wealth of the city was transferred to an island about half a mile off shore.



Because Nebuchadnezzar received no riches for the service he gave in judging Tyre, God gave him the riches of the land of Egypt as wages for his army (Ezek. 29:18).

When Alexander led the Grecian armies into the land, he built a causeway (a mole) from the land to the island of Tyre using the debris from the coastal city which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed.

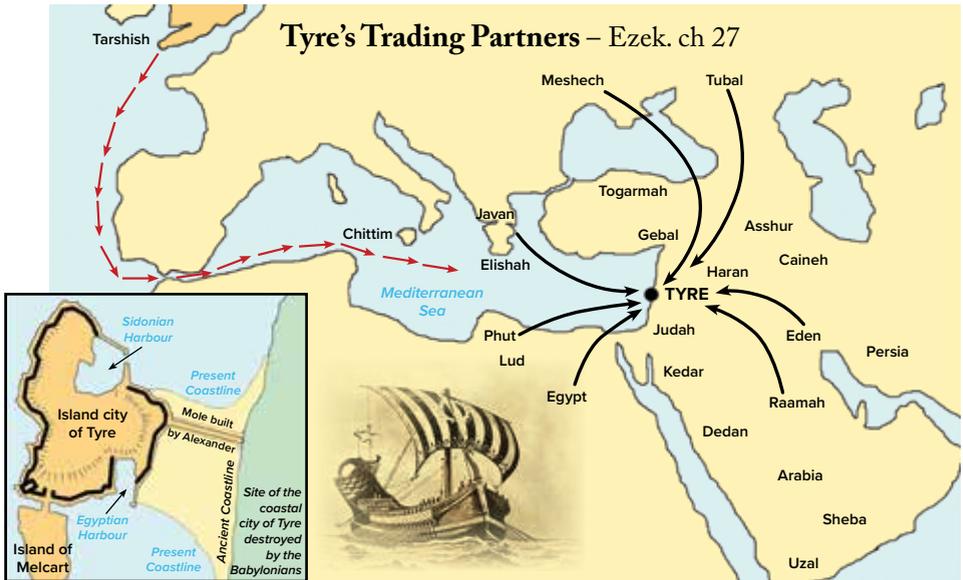
The city of Tyre had been the centre of commerce at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, as described in Ezekiel chapter 27. Under the Babylonians Tyre had ceased to function, but the Persians revived it and the Phoenicians provided ships for the Persian navy which controlled the Mediterranean.

Alexander had no navy, but by capturing all the seaports he denied the Persian navy supplies.

During the siege of Tyre Alexander had asked the Jews to supply food for his army, but they had remained loyal to Darius the Persian king.

After Alexander had captured the land of the Philistines he turned back to settle his account with Jerusalem for refusing to provide supplies for his army. The amazing story is told by Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews* Book XI:

“When the seven months of the siege of Tyre were over, and the two months of the siege of Gaza, Sanballat died. Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, **made haste to go up to Jerusalem**; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing



how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifices to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent.

Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced; and declared to all the warning he had received from God according to which dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king.

And when he understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations. It reached to a place called Sapha; which name, translated into Greek, signifies a prospect, for you have thence a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the temple; and when the Phoenicians and the Chaldeans that followed him, thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high priest to death, which the king's displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head having the golden plate on which the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest.

The Jews also did all together, with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about: whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind.

However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass, that when all others adored him, he should adore the high priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, "I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with that high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios, in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person

in it, and remembering that vision and the exhortation which I had in my dream, **I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.**”

And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, **he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest’s direction**, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests.

And **when the book of Daniel was showed him**, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed **that himself was the person intended**; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him: whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. **He granted all they desired: and when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws** also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired: and when he said to the multitude, that **if any of them would enlist themselves in his army on this condition, that they should continue under the law of their forefathers**, and live according to them, he was willing to take them with him, many were ready to accompany him in his wars.

So when Alexander had thus settled matters at Jerusalem, he led his army into the neighboring cities; and when all the inhabitants, to whom he came, received him with great kindness, the Samaritans, who had then Shechem for their metropolis (a city situate at Mount Gerizzim, and inhabited by apostates of the Jewish nation), seeing that Alexander had so greatly honored the Jews, determined to profess themselves Jew.” – End quote.

Thus was fulfilled the prophecy:

*“And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes” (Zech. 9:8).*

The Lord protected His house from the threat of the army of Alexander which had **passed by** to Gaza and had then **returned** to Jerusalem. The oppressor did not come back again, but gave special concessions to Jerusalem allowing the Jews to worship according to God’s law.

The appearance of the Grecian king at Jerusalem on a white horse is the basis of a prophecy that Israel’s King would come to Jerusalem, **not on a white horse**,

**but on an ass.** In the future, Israel's King would bring deliverance and "*cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem*" (Zech. 9:10).

Though His first advent would be lowly in fashion, He would be powerful to deliver the nation in **a future day,**

*"He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto **the ends of the earth**"* (Zech. 9:10).

This prophecy has never been fulfilled, and cannot be fulfilled until the meek and lowly Lord Jesus comes in glory and power to reign over the earth.

At that time Israel will be delivered from oppression. They will come "*out of the pit*" (Zech. 9:11) and return to "*the stronghold*" of Jerusalem. During the Tribulation the remnant of Israel will be protected in a wilderness location (Rev. 12:6,14).

Israel will be fighting for survival during the second half of the 7-year Tribulation, and because they are converted to Christ in the first half, the Lord will fight for them. Zechariah says that "*Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem*" (Zech. 14:14).

The conflict at this time is said to be between "*thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece*" (Zech. 9:13).

The Hebrew word translated Greece is *Yavan* (Javan), who was the son of Japheth. History books name ancient Greece, Iavan.

Greece, or the sons of Javan, were the European peoples which later were dominated by the Romans. Antichrist will be a European political leader over the Revived Roman Empire, or the EU as we know it. He will be the enemy of God's people in the Tribulation and will occupy the land during the second half of the Tribulation; but

*"the LORD shall be seen over them...and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet... The LORD of hosts shall defend them...and the LORD their God shall save them **in that day** as the flock of his people: for they shall be as stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land"* (Zech. 9:14-16).

When Israel is delivered "*they shall be as the stones of a crown*". Malachi wrote similar words:

*"They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, **IN THAT DAY when I make up my jewels**; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him"* (Mal. 3:17).

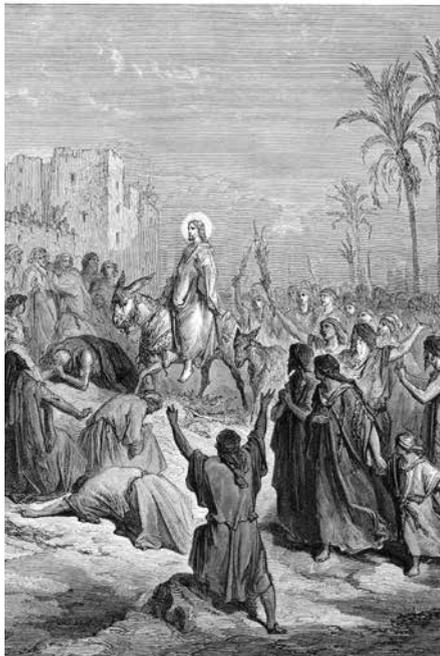
The crown is the symbol of regal power. We speak of land that is owned by the "crown" or "crown land". A kingly crown is adorned with precious stones and, in Christ's kingdom, Israel will be a part of Christ's rule and authority.

Alexander the Great and his European army are introduced to us in Chapter 9 of Zechariah and these are the springboard for prophecies of Israel's King, our

Lord Jesus Christ, who would come to Jerusalem not as Alexander did, but meek and lowly *“riding upon an ass, and upon the colt the foal of an ass”* (Zech. 9:9).

At a still future day Christ will return to rescue His people from annihilation by Antichrist. He will sound the trumpet to regather Israel and give them an exalted place in His millennial kingdom.

Matthew wrote that when Jesus returns God will send forth *“his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect...”* (Matt. 24:31). At this time the nations will be judged according to how they treated Israel during the Tribulation (Matt. 25:31-46).



## MESSAGE 3 - CH. 10

### *ISRAEL WILL BE REGATHERED AND REUNITED*

**T**HIS chapter deals with Judah from verse 1 to 6, and with Ephraim, or the northern kingdom of 10 tribes, in verses 7 to 12.

#### *CONCERNING JUDAH VERSES 1-6*

Following on from the prophecy of chapter 9, Israel will experience the *“latter rain”* that brings the nation to full fruitfulness following her punishment and repentance. Israel had turned to false gods and their diviners *“have seen a lie, and have told false dreams”* (Zech. 10:2). Thus the flock would be scattered and they would have no shepherd; they would cease to function as a nation **until the last days**. This has been the case since AD70 but the “dry bones” have been shaken and came together in the Zionist Movement which began in 1881. The nation now has sinews and since 1948 become a nation in the land, however their shepherds are ungodly men.

The 70th “week” of Daniel described in Daniel 9:27 will be the final years before Israel comes into blessing within the kingdom:

- 1) It is a time of **Judgment on the False Shepherds of Israel**. The ungodly leaders of the nation will enter into a covenant with the Antichrist. Isaiah wrote:

*“Ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we in agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge...Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it”*(Isa. 28:15-18).

Zechariah wrote:

*“Mine anger is kindled **against the shepherds**, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah”* (Zech. 10:3).

Ezekiel also drew attention to judgment against the ungodly shepherds of Israel in the last days:

*“Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves...**I am against the shepherds**...neither shall the shepherds feed them any more”* (Ezek. 34:2-10).

The invasion from the north by Russian and Islamic armies will bring the nation to repentance but not before the ungodly leaders are slain. Two thirds of the nation will perish before the remnant turns to the Lord on one Day of Atonement. When Egypt last invaded Israel the conflict was called the Yom Kippur War because they chose **the Day of Atonement** as the time to destroy Israel. They failed, but when Islam makes her final attempt to destroy the Jews they will do it at the same time when Jews are preoccupied on their holiest day.

During the wars with the Seleucids, the Greeks chose to fight on the sabbath and the Jews refused to fight and were slain. They finally decided it was lawful to defend themselves on the sabbath.

## 2) It is a Time of **Judgment on the Goats who Follow the False Shepherds.**

*“Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and **I punished the goats**”* (Zech. 10:3).

Those described as “goats” are no doubt those who willingly follow the ungodly shepherds. Jesus used the same expression when he spoke of unsaved nations at the judgment of the living nations after Christ returns (Matt. 25:31-46). They are the ones who follow Antichrist during the Tribulation. Antichrist is described as the “*idol shepherd*” in Zech. 11:17.

The “goats” among the Jews are destroyed during the Russian-led Islamic invasion (Ezek. 38/39; Joel 2) but the remainder of the nation will turn to the Lord and thus “*all Israel shall be saved*” (Rom. 11:26).

## 3) It is a Time when God will Visit His People.

*“...for **the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle**”* (Zech. 10:3).

When Israel turns to the LORD their God, then God will fight for them and they will be a formidable force against their enemies. This is an aspect of prophecy

that has been overlooked by many commentators. **Great emphasis has been given to persecution by Antichrist, and little or no attention has been given to Israel's defence in the second half of the Tribulation.**

Today Israel has one of the most efficient fighting forces in the world, and when the remnant are saved they will retain the military training and equipment which they received before they were saved. They will not just lie down and let Antichrist walk over them. Antichrist will pay a high price in his battles with Israel in the last 1,260 days of the Tribulation. The Lord describes Judah as His **goodly horse on which He rides into battle!**

Other Scriptures such as Zechariah 12:2-9 and 14:14 teach the same truth.

For this reason we see a preparatory fulfilment of this prophecy today in that the nation is established in the land and has **developed a defence industry which ranks among the leading nations of the world.** Israel's satellites, nuclear weapons, missiles, tanks and planes place the nation among the great powers of USA, EU, Russia and China. Most young Jews are trained and on call for conflict at a moment's notice.

#### 4) Why God will Defend Judah

*"Out of him (Judah) came forth the **corner(stone)**, out of him the **nail**, out of him the **battle bow**, out of him every **oppressor (ruler)** together"* (Zech. 10:4).

Judah is special to God because **out of Judah** came forth the cornerstone, the nail, the battle bow and every oppressor (ruler). Christ is here seen as:

- a) **The Cornerstone.** Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16 prophetically speak of Christ as the cornerstone who was rejected by the builders but is made the head of the corner. Peter quotes this passage claiming it refers to Christ, who was rejected by His people Israel but exalted by God (1Pet. 2:6-8).
- b) **The Nail would come out of Judah.** Isaiah wrote of Christ as a nail in a sure place. God said:

*"I will fasten him as **a nail in a sure place**; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall **hang upon him all the glory of his father's house**, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and **be cut down, and fall**; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off"* (Isa. 22:23-25).

Jesus was both the Son of God and the Son of David. He will one day sit upon the **throne of David** and He now sits at the Father's right hand on the **throne of heaven**. All the glory of His Father's house may be attributed to Him.

John wrote:

*"We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father"* (John 1:14).

Sadly, the nation of Israel rejected her Messiah and He was "cut down", in spite of the fact that He was the Son of David and heir to the throne of Israel. Daniel also prophesied that "*Messiah the Prince*" would be "cut off" after 69 "weeks" of his 70 "weeks" prophecy.

**c) The Battle Bow** would come from Judah. Jacob's prophetic utterance in Genesis 49:8-12 describes Judah among the tribes of Israel as having his "*hand upon the neck of thine enemies*" (Gen. 49:8), and that the sceptre would not depart from him. He is seen as "*a lion's whelp ... who shall rouse hm up?*" (Gen. 49:9).

Christ will overthrow His enemies. He holds the sceptre of the throne of David as the "*lion of the tribe of Judah*" (Rev. 5:5) and will release the judgments of the Tribulation. The warlike character of Judah will be exemplified in the Son of David at His second advent as the Messianic Psalm 45 indicates:

*"God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*

***Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre***" (Ps. 45:2-6).

This psalm is prophetic of Christ and is quoted in Hebrews 1:8. Christ is the "*battle bow*" out of the tribe of Judah who will visit his flock, the house of Judah, and make them His "*goodly horse in the battle*" (Zech. 10:3).

The effect on Judah will be remarkable. They will be strengthened and the lost 10 tribes will be saved, reunited with Judah, and restored to the land. Of Judah we read:

*"they shall fight, for the LORD is with them"* (Zech. 10:5).

In Zech. 14:14 we read a similar statement:

*"Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem"*.

There is absolutely no doubt that Israel, even after they turn to the Lord in the Tribulation, will be engaged in combat with the forces of Antichrist both in Jerusalem and wherever the lost ten tribes are found.

### **CONCERNING EPHRAIM VERSES 7-12**

In the year 2010 there were 5.7 million Jews in the land, but nobody knows how many there are of the lost 10 tribes scattered throughout Central Asia and wherever they have wandered throughout the centuries. The Pathan tribes numbering 15 million are located in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir, and claim to be descendants of Jacob.

The conversion of Israel during the Tribulation will not be confined to those living in the land. Ephraim, the northern kingdom, will be identified and redeemed.

The return of the lost tribes will not occur until Christ returns (Matt. 24:31), and when they are brought back it will surprise those in the land. They will say:

*“Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? **and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?**”*

*Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the **Gentiles**, and set up my standard to the people: **and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders**” (Isa. 49:19-22).*

Often the question has been asked, How will the lost tribes know which tribe they came from? God will reveal it to them and God will “*hiss*” (whistle) to call them from other lands “*afar off*”; Egypt and Assyria are noted. So many will come that Gilead and Lebanon will be crowded. “*Place shall not be found for them*” (Zech. 10:10).

Assyria and Egypt will be broken in that day and the Euphrates will dry up (Zech. 10:11). This agrees with Rev. 16:12:

*“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”*

Isaiah indicates that the River Nile will also dry up (Isa. 19:5-10).

### **THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL**

It is evident from Zechariah’s prophecy that the statement of Paul in Romans 11:26, “*So all Israel shall be saved*”, has a far wider meaning than the few million Jews located in the land. The judgment on the Islamic nations that invade Israel in the first half of the Tribulation will be so evidently of God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that, together with the powerful testimony of 144,000 Spirit-filled preachers, multitudes will seek the Lord.

Ezekiel states that the destruction of the Islamic forces will produce the following effect:

*“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward. **And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity**: because they trespassed against me, **THEREFORE** hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword” (Ezek. 39:22-23).*

The Jews rejected Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago and have been scattered and persecuted ever since. Then when facing annihilation they repent and acknowledge their Messiah, Jesus Christ, God again fights for them and Islam is destroyed! This will be the doom of Islam.

The British Israel theorists have long taught that the lost ten tribes are in Britain and America. However, we are told the region from which they will return and it is Egypt and Assyria.

During the Assyrian invasions of Israel Jews fled to Egypt and settled there. Many of these have changed their identity to avoid persecution; so in addition to those who have already been expelled there will be a great number who at this time may be thought to be Arabs or Coptics.

Similarly in Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia, where many Jews have been expelled, groups such as the Pathans may well be yet unidentified as Jews, but when God shows His hand for His repentant people they will make their stand and fight for survival against the forces of Antichrist. *“They shall remember me in far countries”* (Zech. 10:9).

## MESSAGE 4 - CH. 11

### *FROM IMPERIAL ROME TO ANTICHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE*

**I**SRAEL is seen as God’s flock of sheep in the Book of Zechariah as the following Scriptures show.

In Chapter 9 we have already seen that God saved His flock from Antiochus Epiphanes, and will in a future day deliver them from Antichrist of whom Antiochus was a type.

*9:16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.*

In chapter 10:2-3 Israel is seen as a wayward flock that is scattered but in the last days is regathered.

*“For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: **therefore they went their way as a flock**, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.*

*Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for **the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah**, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.”*

In chapter 11:4-11 we see Israel as *“the flock of slaughter”*, but among them there is a group called *“the poor of the flock”* who are preserved.

*“Thus saith the LORD my God; **Feed the flock of the slaughter; And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock.** And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; **and I fed the flock...** And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and **so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD.***

### ***INVASION OF ISRAEL BY THE ROMAN ARMY***

Chapter 11 begins with the doors of Lebanon being opened to allow **a fire to enter the land** and devour it. This accords perfectly with the Roman invasion under Vespasian. Nero's forces had suffered defeat before the Jews who revolted in AD66, and he chose his best commander, General Vespasian, to bring the eastern part of the empire under control.

Vespasian sent his son Titus, who was in Achaia (Greece), to Alexandria to bring the 5th and 10th legions while he crossed the Hellespont and travelled by land to Antioch in Syria, where he gathered the Roman forces for the invasion of Israel **from the north through Lebanon**. Zechariah wrote:

*“Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled” (Zech. 11:1-3).*

Vespasian marched his army south from Antioch to Ptolemais on the coast of Lebanon between Haifa and Tyre, where he was joined by Titus with the two legions from Alexandria. His army numbered 60,000 plus servants.

From Ptolemais, Vespasian took Joppa and Tiberias and then turned his attention to the Golan heights (Bashan), where the fortress of Gamala offered staunch resistance. It fell, and the Jews led by John fled to Jerusalem.

Thus did Lebanon open its doors that the fire might devour the cedars and fir trees, symbolic of Lebanon. The oaks of Bashan were symbolic of the Golan Heights where Gamala was situated east of the Sea of Galilee. The course taken by the invading Roman armies was therefore mapped out in the prophetic Word by the pen of Zechariah.

### ***THREE SHEPHERDS AND THE FLOCK OF SLAUGHTER***

With the invasion of the land by the Romans, there came awful slaughter from the sedition and finally by the Romans.

The Jews were a divided people, and the threat of the Roman armies drove many to flee to Jerusalem for protection.

At first the robbers from the countryside came. These were known as zealots led by Eleazar, and they occupied the Temple area. They engaged in the slaughter of notable men in the city and invited the Idumeans to come to Jerusalem's assistance. When the Idumeans came, they too slaughtered thousands in the city and finally withdrew.

Outside the city Simon had an army of 20,000 and he invaded Idumea. The Idumeans had occupied southern Judea including Hebron at this time, and

Simon drove them from their cities.

Finally Simon was invited into the city to protect the people, but when he came to Jerusalem he was no better, and his army made a third group in the civil war that raged between the Galilean group led by John and the Zealots led by Eleazar.

Zechariah wrote:

*“Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me”* (Zech. 11:8).

Vespasian was urged by his men to attack Jerusalem while the city was in confusion, but he refused because he believed a Roman attack would only unite the three factions. He preferred to allow the Jews to destroy themselves. Josephus recorded:

“It so happened that the sedition at Jerusalem was revived, and **parted into three factions**, and that one faction fought against the other; ...For **Eleazar**, the son of Simon, who made the first separation of the zealots from the people, and made them retire into the temple, appeared very angry at **John’s** insolent attempts which he made every day upon the people; for this man **never left off murdering**; but the truth was, that he could not bear to submit to a tyrant who set up after him.

So he being desirous of gaining the entire power and dominion to himself, **revolted from John**” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book V, Ch.I).

These three factions were led by wicked and ungodly men as the prophecy stated:

*“...my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.”*

However, on 1 January AD68 Nero committed suicide and Vespasian made haste to return to Rome where three contenders fought for the leadership. Galba from Spain, Otho, a palace guard, and Vitellius the General over the German army, each ruled for a few months totalling 18 months and perished before Vespasian returned. Vespasian was crowned Emperor by his own troops before he returned to Rome as Emperor. He left Titus his son in charge of the siege of Jerusalem.

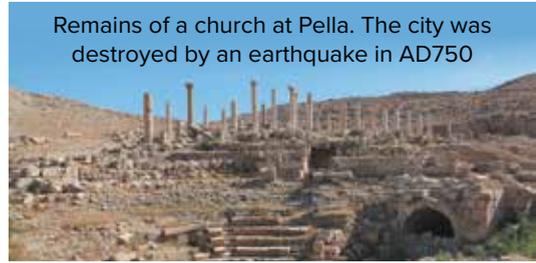
The plight of the Jews in Jerusalem is described by Josephus, the Jewish historian who led Jewish forces in the north but defected to the Romans and became interpreter for Titus.

### **THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM**

*“Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another”* (Zech. 11:9).

The Jewish people are well described as the *“flock of slaughter”* at this time. Those who tried to escape were slaughtered by the zealots and denied a burial. Only some of the rich escaped by paying bribes. The gates were guarded and anyone suspected of wanting to surrender to the Romans was murdered. Josephus records:

“...but for the present sedition, one should not mistake if he called it a sedition begotten by another sedition, and to be like a wild beast grown mad, which for want of food from abroad, fell now upon eating its own flesh” (*Wars of the Jews* Book 5 Ch. 1).



Remains of a church at Pella. The city was destroyed by an earthquake in AD750

The expression, “*that that dieth, let it die*”, refers to those who died of hunger, and “*that that is cut off, let it be cut off*”, refers to the multitudes that were slain. The gruesome details are given of a mother roasting and eating her own child. Thus the prophecy was fulfilled: “*and let the rest eat the flesh every one of another*”.

### THE POOR OF THE FLOCK

Among the “*flock of slaughter*” were some whom God called “*the poor of the flock*”, whom He would provide for and feed.

Tradition has it that when the Christians in Jerusalem saw the Roman armies they fled to Pella, in the east of Jordan, and thus escaped the final bloodshed of the siege.

*The Church History of Eusebius* (AD260-340) states:



“The people of **the church in Jerusalem** had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, **to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella**. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and His apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men” (Book 3, chapter 5).

Thus the “*poor of the flock*” were fed and provided for while the rest of the nation perished.

*“And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock”* (Zech. 11:7).

No doubt the believers remembered the words of the Lord Jesus:

*“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains...”*  
(Luke 21:20-21).

The Lord promised to shepherd the poor of the flock and He takes two staves, which He calls Beauty and Bands.

“Beauty”, in the Hebrew has the thought of “agreeableness, delight, grace”, and indicates that God’s attitude to the poor of the flock is one of grace and delight.

“Bands”, in the Hebrew carries the thought of being “bound by a pledge”, and is a reminder of the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God to the “*poor of the flock*” at a time when the nation had become a flock of slaughter. In the time of trouble the Good Shepherd would lead and feed His people. God states that the staff, Beauty, would be “*cut asunder*” that “*I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people*”(Zech. 11:10).

Josephus recorded that 1,100,000 died in the Jewish revolt and 97,000 went into captivity (*Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, Ch.IX). Many were sent to the mines of Egypt in fulfilment of Deut. 28:68.

### **THE REASON FOR JUDGMENT**

The Jews became the flock of slaughter because of God’s anger against a wicked nation

*“Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the LORD; for I am rich: and **their own shepherds pity them not.** For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor’s hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them”* (Zech. 11:5-6).

The three leaders of the Jewish insurrection were ruthless men who had no compassion for their own people, yet they continued to offer sacrifices in the Temple while animals were available. The followers of Eleazar who possessed the Temple area were zealous to continue the ceremony of the Temple.

Violence within the city was great, and the fall of Jerusalem was hastened by it. Each of the three parties attacked the other and burned down their storehouses where grain had been laid up for the siege. Josephus described the scene.

“Accordingly, it so came to pass, that all the places that were about the temple were burnt down, and were become an intermediate desert space, ready for fighting on both sides, and that **almost all the corn was burnt, which would**

**have been sufficient for a siege of many years.** So they were taken by the means of the famine, which it was impossible they should have been, unless they had thus prepared the way for it by this procedure.

And now, as the city was engaged in a war on all sides, from these treacherous crowds of wicked men, the people of the city, between them, were like a great body torn in pieces.

The aged men and the women were in such distress by their internal calamities, that they wished for the Romans, and earnestly hoped for an external war, in order to their delivery from their domestic miseries” (*Wars of the Jews* Book 5, ch. 1).

The wickedness of the nation had resulted in the rejection of Christ, the Good Shepherd, and for this reason God says:

*“Then said I, **I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another** (Zech. 11:9).*

The Good Shepherd fed the poor of the flock but He refused to feed the flock of slaughter. They died of hunger, by the sword, and were even killed and eaten.

#### ***THE CHRISTIANS WOULD UNDERSTAND***

*“And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me **knew that it was the word of the LORD**” (Zech. 11:11).*

When Israel rejected her Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, God raised Him from the dead and He returned to heaven. Fifty days later the Holy Spirit was given at the Feast of Pentecost, and in accordance with Jesus’ words He gave them an understanding of Israel’s position as a nation. Peter preached to the nation telling them to repent and God would send Jesus back to bless them again (Acts 3:19-21).

In Acts 15:13-18 James spoke on behalf of all the apostles and said that God was **now** calling out a people to His name, but that

*“...**after this** I will return, and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down.”*

Jesus’ words in the Olivet discourse were still in the memory of the early Christians. They knew that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed so in AD70, when the Roman armies were marching south toward Jerusalem, the believers knew that the words of the Lord Jesus were about to be fulfilled: *“they knew that it was the word of the LORD”*.

Israel would be scattered until the last days, when they would repent and God would *“make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah”* (Jer. 31:31).

## **THE VALUE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Having described the three wicked shepherds and God's judgment upon them, the prophecy now turns to the Good Shepherd. It is the Good Shepherd speaking and He says:

*"And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.*

*And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD. THEN I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (Zech. 11:12-14).*

The identity of the Good Shepherd is made clear. It is One who is God. It is obviously the Lord Jesus who is speaking for the things prophesied happened to Him and He asks,

*"If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear" (Zech. 11:12).*

In other words, "What value do you place upon Me? Understand who I am and give Me, your Redeemer, the honour due to Me as the Son of God."

The Jews knew who Jesus was for Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your king"? but they wilfully rejected Him.

The value the Jewish leaders placed upon Jesus was 30 pieces of silver which they paid to Judas to betray the Lord.

Judas had asked the high priests, "*What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?*" (Matt. 26:15).

The leaders of the nation determined the price.

The price of a free servant at the time of Christ was 60 pieces of silver and the price of a slave was 30 pieces of silver; their estimate of Christ was no more than of one captured in battle, who had no rights at all. Yet Jesus was the Son of God incarnate, the Word made flesh, the One who had created all things by the word of His power and who one day will judge the living and the dead.

The Lord was not asking for **their value** but for His **true value**. "*If ye think good...*" i.e. If you do the right thing, give me My rightful honour, and "*if not, forbear*"; don't place any other value on Me if you do not give the full honour which is My due.

The 30 pieces of silver were taken and cast "*to the potter in the house of the LORD*" by Judas. One has to wonder what was in the mind of Judas when he decided to betray the Lord:

*"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests*

*and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matt. 27:3-5).*

Whatever it was, the realisation of his awful mistake suddenly came upon him when he understood that Jesus would die.

Perhaps Judas remembered the words of the Lord when He had told the disciples that He would die at Jerusalem. The thought of Jesus rising on the third day would strike terror into his heart.

*“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and **be raised again the third day**” (Matt. 16:21).*

The money was gathered up off the floor of the Temple and used to purchase a potter’s field just as Zechariah prophesied:

*“And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day” (Matt. 27:6-8).*

Matthew attributes this prophecy to Jeremiah though it does not appear in the book that bears his name. It was not uncommon for people to have several names and it is possible that Zechariah was also named Jeremiah. There were 8 or 9 different people in the Old Testament called Jeremiah, so it was a common name.

### ***A NATION DIVIDED***

The proof of Jesus Divinity was evident in His miracles, His ministry and message, but the nation refused to acknowledge Him. This was the main reason for the judgment that befell the nation at the hands of the Romans. This is clearly indicated by the words,

***“THEN I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel?”***

If the Jews were to succeed in throwing off the Roman yoke they needed to be united, but God sent disunity among them.

John led the Galilean forces against the Roman legions in the north, but when he was defeated at Gamla on the Golan Heights (Bashan) he took his army south to Jerusalem and occupied part of the city. Eleazar led the local zealots and occupied the Temple area, while Simon, who had defeated the Edomites (Idumeans), was invited with his 20,000 soldiers into the city. The brotherhood between Israel (north) and Judah (south) was broken and wholesale slaughter took place within the walls of Jerusalem.

## THE FUTURE IDOL SHEPHERD

Again the LORD spoke to Zechariah:

*“Take unto thee the instruments of a foolish (impious, blasphemous) shepherd”*  
(Zech. 11:13).

When the three Jewish shepherds perished the Romans became Israel’s master, and the last three verses of chapter 11 look down through time to the end of the age, to the final Roman ruler who would become their shepherd and then turn and tear the flock. The experience in AD70 was but a foreshadowing of what will happen under the final Roman emperor.

Roman emperors were idolatrous men who claimed deity. They required worship from the people and many Christians perished for refusing to offer sacrifice.

In the context of Zechariah’s prophecy we find that this “*idol shepherd*” is yet to be revealed at a time when the final phase of Israel’s history will be played out.

*“For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws (hoofs) in pieces”* (Zech. 11:16).

The word “*claws*” is better translated “*hoofs*” or “*cloven feet*”, which is more consistent with Israel as sheep in a flock.

This idol shepherd will suffer a wound **by a sword to the head and right arm** and God says, “*Woe to the idol shepherd....the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.*” (Zech. 11:17).

John wrote in Revelation 13

*“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast”* (Rev. 13:3).

Another personality, the False Prophet, will serve Antichrist and have universal influence to direct worship to Antichrist (the beast). He will deceive

*“them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had **the wound by a sword, and did live**”* Rev. 13:14).

Zechariah described this future shepherd of Israel as both “*foolish*” (impious), and as an “*idol shepherd*”.



Another translation replaces “*idol*” with “*worthless*” but this is unwarranted. The word occurs 20 times in the Old Testament and 17 times is translated “*idols*”, once as “*no value*”, once “*a thing of nought*”, and once as “*images*”. There is no doubt that the passage is about a **false god** which is of no value and worthless. Antichrist will claim to be God and demand his image be worshipped.

*“Woe to the **idol shepherd** that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened”* (Zech. 11:17).

There are two woes pronounced at the end of the first half of the 7-year Tribulation, and a **third woe** announces the judgments of the second half. It is **at this point**, at the mid-point of the Tribulation, that the idol shepherd moves into the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem and sets up his idol in the house of God. Jesus called this the “*abomination of desolation*” (Matt. 24:15).

Daniel also makes mention of this event in Dan. 9:27, Dan. 11:45 and Dan. 12:11. The word “*abomination*” has a specific connection with idolatry.

Some of the third-woe (the seven vials) judgments in Revelation are directed at:

- a) Those who follow Antichrist and receive his mark (Rev. 16:2).
- b) The kingdom of the beast which will be enveloped in darkness (Rev. 16:10).
- c) The woman, Mystery Babylon, who brings Antichrist to power. She will be burned (Rev. 16:19 to 18:24).

### ***THE IDOL SHEPHERD TO LEAVE THE FLOCK***

There is no doubt that the “*idol shepherd*” is the same personality as the beast, the Antichrist, who will “*leave the flock*” and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease halfway through the 7-year Tribulation. At the beginning of the 7 years he will have a covenant relationship (a treaty) with Israel, and the statement that he will leave the flock indicates that he must be with them at the first.

It is clear from Scripture that Antichrist will be the political leader of the Revived Roman Empire, which we know as the EU. His treaty with Israel and other nations in the Middle East will be intended to guarantee the security of Israel. Under this treaty a Temple will be erected at Jerusalem and when Egypt (the king of the south; Dan. 11:40-43) invades Israel, Europe will come to her aid to preserve the security of the Middle East. Israeli forces will join with the European army to desolate Egypt (Isa. 19:4,17) for “*Judah shall be a terror to Egypt*”.

At some point in time this “*idol shepherd*” will change his attitude to Israel and cease to nourish and care for them. He will become violently anti-Semitic and “*eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their hoofs in pieces*”.

We must ask, Why the change in attitude toward Israel? Something must happen to cause such a radical reversal.

The change in attitude occurs **before** the mid-point of the 7 years so we must look at the events of the first three and a half years.

Israel will be aligned with the EU at the **beginning** of the 7-year Tribulation in a defense treaty. The 70th “week” of Daniel’s prophecy is for that period. This must occur immediately after the Rapture of the Church when the leaders of the nation are ungodly men. Godly leaders would never make a covenant with Antichrist. Isaiah wrote:

*“Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And **your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand;** when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it” (Isa. 28:14-18).*

The protection offered by Antichrist will not be any help when Russia and her Islamic partners move down from the north. Russia has great influence over Europe because she supplies the EU with much of her gas and oil through pipelines from the Caspian Sea and from the north of Russia. Russia has the largest gas resources in the world, and recent plans have been made to increase the supply through Turkey and in a pipeline under the Black Sea to Bulgaria. Russia and the Muslim world own and control much of the world’s oil and gas.

Daniel indicates that Antichrist will be greatly distressed when Russia and the Muslims move south.

*“But tidings out of the east (Iran) and out of the north (Turkey and Russia) shall trouble him: THEREFORE he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and **utterly to make away many.** And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. 11:44-45).*

The sequence of events is very clear in Daniel’s prophecy. First, Israel will make her “*covenant with death*” and Antichrist will honour his commitment to the ungodly leaders of Israel by responding to an attack from Egypt.

However, when Russia is added to the Islamic equation, Antichrist is powerless to interfere and Israel is in danger of extermination.

It will be **the conversion of Israel** that occurs at the time of the invasion by

Russia, that will change the whole scene (Ezek. 39:22-29; Joel 2:18).

The armies of the nations that can blackmail Europe by withholding oil and gas will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel, and only one sixth of their number will survive and retreat to Siberia as a spent force (Joel 2:20). The land of Magog (Russia) will be burned with fire (Ezek. 39:6) and Antichrist will suddenly have no threat from Russia or Islam. He will have a redeemed nation of Israel with which to deal.

Two thirds of Israel's population will perish and the ungodly leaders will be among them (Zech. 13:8; Ezek. 20:38; 34:1-12). **All Israel will be saved** (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 66:8; Zech. 3:9; Ezek. 39:22) and this will cause Antichrist to break his covenant and "*leave*" the flock which he had promised to protect. At this point he will "*go forth with great fury to make away many*" and to "*eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hoofs in pieces.*"

When the Rapture occurs, 144,000 Jewish men will realise the significance of **the global sign of missing persons** and turn to the Lord. They will be sealed by God to preach the Gospel of the kingdom in all the world (Matt. 24:14). These men are the "*firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*" (Rev. 14:4). They are martyred by the fury of Antichrist and appear around the throne in heaven at the mid-point of the 7 years (Rev. 14:1-5).

The Tribulation Temple will be built by **unconverted Jews**, but through the preaching of the 144,000 and the "*two witnesses*" at Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1-14) many will be saved. When the Russian/Islamic invasion occurs the godly priests will blow the trumpet to call the people to repentance (Joel 2:5-17).

By the time the **mid-point** of the Tribulation is reached sacrifices will be offered by godly Jews who will keep the feasts, and Antichrist will "*plant the tabernacles of his palace...in the glorious holy mountain*" (Dan. 11:45). It is then that he will "*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (idolatry) he shall make it desolate*" (Dan. 9:27).

It should be remembered that during the second half of the Tribulation special protection will be provided for Israel. She will be given

*"two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time"* (Rev. 12:14; also v. 6).

The judgments of this latter period of 1,260 days will be directed against Antichrist, and will be so severe that terrible disruption will occur over the entire world. This in itself will make Antichrist's task of eradicating God's people more difficult and give some protection to them.

Thus the simple statement that the "*idol shepherd*" would "**leave**" **the flock** and then tear it, is consistent with other prophecies of the same period. It implies a covenant with the nation at the beginning of the Tribulation.

## MESSAGE 5 - CHS. 12-14

### *ISRAEL FROM THE TRIBULATION TO THE MILLENNIUM*

**I**N THE first four messages there is a progressive presentation of prophecies related to Israel, from the Grecian era to the end of the Roman era in the last days, when Israel will be confronted by all nations in the Great Tribulation. Much of what we have considered is fulfilled prophecy, but mention of the “*idol shepherd*” brings us to the end of the age. Thereafter the prophecy concerns future events which will occur in the Tribulation, at the coming of the Lord, and in the kingdom of Christ. The following is a summary of the first four messages:

**Message 1** - Chs 7 & 8 - God’s conditions for blessing Israel as stated in the Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 28-30) are restated. When Israel turns to the Lord in the last days the nation will be greatly exalted among the nations and rule in Christ’s kingdom.

**Message 2** - Ch. 9 - The Grecian era beginning with Alexander the Great is foretold; especially how God would deliver Jerusalem from the Grecian army. Alexander’s entry into Jerusalem foreshadows the entry of Israel’s King, the Lord Jesus Christ, on Palm Sunday. He would one day have dominion “*from sea even to sea, and...to the ends of the earth*” (Zech. 9:10).

**Message 3** - Ch. 10 - Israel and Judah will be reunited in the last days, and the evil shepherds will be punished. Out of Judah will come the cornerstone, the nail, the battle bow and the ruler. All of these depict Christ who was the stone rejected by the builders; the nail upon whom hung all the glory of His Father but which was cut off on the cross; the battle bow which will smite His enemies at His second advent; and the ruler who will reign as King of kings.

God will use Judah to judge the nations and will restore the nation to the land.

**Message 4** - Ch. 11 - Israel is seen as the “*flock of slaughter*” and the early Church as “*the poor of the flock*”. God’s care for the “*poor of the flock*” and judgment on three evil shepherds at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (AD70) is foretold. The reason for this judgment is Israel’s rejection of the “*Good Shepherd*”, whom they valued at 30 pieces of silver.

In the last days God would send an impious, idol shepherd among them, who would tear the flock. This shepherd will be Antichrist.

**Message 5** - Chs. 12 to 14 - The first four messages bring us prophetically to the time of the Tribulation, which Jeremiah described as “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jer. 30:7).

At the beginning of the Tribulation Antichrist will make a 7-year covenant with Israel, but it is not until about the mid-point of the 7 years that he occupies the

Temple in Jerusalem, slays the two Jewish witnesses, and demands the worship of all mankind. At this time all human testimony will be silenced, the 144,000 Jewish servants of God are martyred and appear in heaven, and an angel will fly through the heavens proclaiming the “*everlasting gospel*”. The message of this angel will be:

*“Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters”*  
(Rev. 14:7).

Zechariah introduces his last message with the words:

*“The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him”* (Zech. 12:1).

As Creator, God has the right to judge a rebellious world. He made the heavens and earth and all mankind. Every person on earth is therefore answerable to God. The judgments that follow show God’s power over creation. The sea, the rivers, the sun, the earth, and meteorites from space become God’s instruments of judgment (Rev. 16:2-21) demonstrating the power of the Creator.

But why do these judgments fall? for Israel’s sake. While Antichrist will be mobilising the whole world to strike the final death-blow to the nation of redeemed Jews, God will use His great power to disrupt these evil designs.

We have seen in recent days what economic and logistic chaos can occur with a single typhoon, or an earthquake, or a tsunami, but when the Tribulation comes God will “*arise to shake terribly the earth*” (Isa. 2:19,21). Global calamities will occur and international aid to each location will be impossible. Every nation will have its own catastrophe with which to deal. Mountains will crumble, islands will be swallowed up by the ocean and shipping will be disrupted.

The theories of evolution will explode when the Creator makes bare His mighty arm.

Amidst all the confusion Israel will be preserved, for Jeremiah stated that “*he shall be saved out of it*” (Jer. 30:7).

### **IN THAT DAY**

In the last three chapters we find the phrase, “*In that day*”, recurring 16 times. It is obviously not a particular solar day for the expression is applied to events that occur throughout the Tribulation, at the Lord’s return, and during the millennial kingdom. We should therefore understand it to mean at the period of time which in each case is determined by the context. The context, beginning at chapter 12, is undoubtedly the Great Tribulation period in which the “*idol shepherd*” afflicts

the repentant nation. We know that this begins about the **mid-point** of the 7 years of the Tribulation.

Daniel 11:44 & 45 states:

*“But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”*

After Antichrist has guaranteed the security of the Middle East and the Temple has been rebuilt by unbelieving Jews, tidings from the east (Iran) and the north (Russia and Turkey) will trouble him. It will be of great concern for Europe is dependent on Russia for her energy requirements. Russia will have the power to bring the industry of the EU to a standstill in the event that Antichrist defends Israel as he did against Egypt (Dan. 11:40-43; Isa. 19:1-25).

However, when Israel turns to the Lord, God will smite the “northern army” (Joel 2:20) and only one sixth will escape to Siberia (Ezek. 39:2-7). It will not be the invasion that angers Antichrist but the conversion of the entire nation in one day (Isa. 66:7-9; Ezek. 39:22-29; Zech. 3:9-10). Antichrist’s 7-year treaty was with Christ-rejecting Jewish leaders, who entered into a “covenant with death” (Isa. 28:18) which could not deliver them.

Antichrist now finds that the evil shepherds of Israel have been judged by God, and in one day the whole nation has been saved in fulfilment of Romans 11:26. He breaks the covenant and causes “the sacrifice and oblation to cease” in the Temple, and plants “the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain” (Dan. 11:45).

The period of time referred to as “that day” therefore begins with Antichrist, the “idol shepherd”, turning upon the remnant who have sought the Lord.

There will be a scattering of the redeemed nation during the conflict that follows, as Daniel observed:

*“when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished”* (Dan. 12:7).

The return of Christ will rescue His people when Antichrist has brought all nations against Jerusalem to the battle of Armageddon.

### THAT DAY 1 - Ch. 12:1-5

#### JERUSALEM A CUP OF TREMBLING

This message is for Israel:

*“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in*

*that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (Zech. 12:2-3).*

The expression, “*a cup of trembling*”, describes the fear and shaking of a man intoxicated as he experiences the DTs (delirium tremens), or psychosis of chronic alcoholism involving hallucinations and tremors.

When Israel turned to idolatry God gave them the cup of trembling to drink as Isaiah stated.

*“Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out” (Isa. 51:17).*

Chapter 51 of Isaiah’s prophecy is a call to Israel to awake when they seek the Lord and become a righteous people (v. 1). The days of their chastening, when God made them to drink of “*the cup of trembling*”, are finally over and God is comforting them (v. 12).

*“I, even I, am he that comforteth you.”*

Then in verse 22 the Lord says:

*“Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over” (Isa. 51:22-23).*

For the past 1900 years Israel has been drinking “*the cup of trembling*” and they still live in fear of a nuclear attack from Iran. The forces of Islam, with assistance from Russia, are gathering for the final assault. However it will be that attack that will finally bring Israel to repentance, and “*from that day and forward*” Israel will know that Jesus Christ is “*the LORD their God*” (Ezek. 39:22).

In Zechariah 12:2 God says:

*“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (Zech. 12:2-3).*

In the first half of the Tribulation when Israel turns to the Lord, God will defend His people and Jerusalem will be “*a cup of trembling*” to all who besiege her, even though Antichrist can organise “*all the people of the earth*” against her.

John wrote of this time when Antichrist will mobilise “*the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*” (Rev. 16:14).

**IN THAT DAY 2 - Ch. 12:6-14**  
**REPENTANT JUDAH WILL FIGHT.**

Those who come against Jerusalem will be smitten with madness like men with the DTs trembling with fear and hallucination. They will be no match for “*the governors of Judah*” who will be “*like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf*” (Zech. 12:6).

Israel will be fighting for survival after Antichrist breaks his covenant with them (Dan. 9:27), but once they have acknowledged Jesus Christ as Messiah and King of Israel **God will fight for them** as He did in ancient times.

*“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle”* (Zech. 14:3).

It is significant that Israel today is amassing large stores of weapons. She is one of the leading nations of the world in the export of military equipment and after the collapse of the Soviet Union ranked second behind the United States. In 2010 she was 4th with exports of \$47.2 billion according to *Wikipedia*.

Israel is preparing for an attack from Islamic forces. She is building an underground command centre in the Judaeen wilderness at a cost of nearly a billion dollars. Israel has her own nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them. Her satellites constantly feed pictures of the Middle East back to the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). When all Israel turns to the Lord this equipment will be in the hands of a redeemed nation.

*“The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah FIRST, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah”* (Zech. 12:7).

There are two groups described in this verse; those dwelling in the exposed position of tents and those in the fortified city of Jerusalem. Those most exposed will be delivered by the Lord FIRST, so that Judah will not take the glory to themselves. Those in tents will need Divine help, and we find that it is God who is smiting (v. 4), saving (v. 7), defending (v. 8), and destroying (v. 9). With God fighting for Israel, the vast armies of Antichrist will be doomed.

Against all odds Israel will be victorious. The most “*feeble among them at that day shall be as David*” (v. 8), of whom the women of Israel said, “*Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*” (1 Sam. 18:7). Those well trained in warfare will be successful “*as the angel of the LORD before them*” (Zech. 12:8).

When the armies of Assyria besieged Jerusalem the angel of the LORD slew 185,000 in one night (Isa. 37:36)! History repeats.

Throughout the Old Testament Israel never lost a battle while she walked with

God. This will be her experience when she turns to the Lord in the Great Tribulation.

Israel will repent when the Russian/Muslim armies roll into the land. God will immediately show His power by destroying those armies with an earthquake, pestilence, hailstones, and by causing the armies of Iran, Turkey, Russia, Libya and Sudan to turn on each other: *“every man’s sword shall be against his brother”* (Ezek. 38:21).

The destruction of Israel’s invaders will be dramatic, for even the ungodly Gentiles will understand why the Jew has suffered for centuries:

*“The heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity...therefore hid I my face from them”* (Ezek. 39:23).

Thus we read:

*“And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem”* (Zech. 12:9).

Chapter 12 concludes with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel when she repents of her rejection of Jesus Christ. The realisation that the nation crucified the Son of God will cause the nation to go into mourning. All families and individuals will be struck with grief: *“All families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”*

This will not be just a national repentance by the leaders of the day. Paul wrote: *“So **all Israel** shall be saved”* (Rom. 11:26). He meant that on **one day** the whole nation, **every family** of those who remain, will turn to the Lord. A nation will be *“born at once”* (Isa. 66:8), and *“God will remove the iniquity of that land in one day”* (Zech. 3:9). *“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward”* (Ezek. 39:22).

The eyes of Israel’s understanding will be opened and the veil that has been on their heart *“shall be taken away”* (2 Cor. 3:16). At the present time Israel is blind to who Jesus Christ is, but the scales will fall from their eyes. *“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”* (Rom. 11:25).

The fact that the enemies of Israel are destroyed immediately after Israel repents will **confirm** who Jesus Christ is.

The *“fulness of the Gentiles”* is the completion of the Church, the Bride of Christ, and it will be the Rapture of the Church that will cause 144,000 Jewish men to turn to Christ. These are the *“firstfruits”* of Israel (Rev. 14:4), but the **whole nation** will be saved when the land is invaded by Gog. God will graft the olive branch that was broken off back into the olive tree.

The conversion of Israel comes BEFORE the return of Christ. Isaiah wrote that Israel will be a prepared nation, waiting for the Lord at His Second Advent:

*"It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; **we have waited for him**, and he will save us: this is the LORD; **we have waited for him**, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation"* (Isa. 25:9).

It is quite clear from the New Testament that Israel must be converted in the first half of the Tribulation, for Israel is given protection by God during the second half of the Tribulation and are described as the "remnant" who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17).

This could not rightly be said of any people who are still rejecting Jesus Christ. The period of protection is stated as 1260 days which is the second half of the 7-year Tribulation (Rev. 12:6,14).

When Christ returns at the end of the 7-year Tribulation, Israel will "look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him..." (Zech. 12:10). They would not do this if they were not already repentant. On the contrary, if they were still unrepentant, they would fear greatly for there is no opportunity for men to repent when Christ returns. He will come in "flaming fire **taking vengeance** on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8).

It is therefore incorrect to suggest that Israel repents when they see Christ at His Second Advent. The conversion of Israel will take place at the time of the Russian invasion described in Ezek. 38/39 and Joel 2. The nation will be greatly reduced by the conflict, but the moment Israel repents the tables will be turned on their enemies.

### IN THAT DAY 3 - Ch. 13:1-9

#### **IDOLATRY WILL BE REMOVED AND ISRAEL SAVED**

*"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land"* (Zech. 13:1-2).

During the Tribulation idolatry will be common. Antichrist is the "idol shepherd" and he will not only set up his idol in the Temple but will have replicas throughout the world. This idol will be unique for it will have the power to speak (Rev. 13:15). However, God will cleanse the land and the idols will be removed. The false prophets also will be exposed and put to death.

*"The prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive"* (Zech. 13:4).

Jesus warned that there would be such in the **second half** of the Tribulation:

*"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets"* (Matt. 24:23-24).

## THE TRUE SHEPHERD IDENTIFIED

Identification of the true Shepherd is clear for He will have the wounds of Calvary in His hands.

*“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends”* (Zech. 13:6).

Jehovah’s Shepherd was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He was wounded among His own people Israel - the house of His friends. *“He came unto His own but His own received Him not”* (John 1:12).

This shepherd is more than a man; he is the God-man for God calls Him *“the man that is my fellow”* (Zech. 13:7).

When Christ was smitten the disciples fled, which was the fulfilment of the prophecy *“...smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered”* (Zech. 13:7). Matthew applies this Scripture to the dispersion of the disciples.

*“Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad”* (Matt. 26:31).

For the nation, however, terrible events would follow. *“I will turn mine hand on the little ones”* (Zech. 13:7).

The people have been given their wish. *“Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children”* (Matt. 27:25).

Ever since, the Jews have experienced the loss of children. Isaiah referred to this in Isa. 49:20:

*“The children which thou shalt have (in the kingdom) after thou hast lost the other, shall say...”*

In the siege of Jerusalem the little ones were killed and eaten by mothers and the holocaust made no distinction between adults and children. Young children were thrown from upstairs windows and over one million died; shot and gassed.

Under the Tsar of Russia Jewish children were forced into the army and compelled to convert to the Russian Orthodox Church.

The nation has received her own wish that guilt for the blood of Christ should come on their children. God has *“turned His hand upon the little ones”*. Two thirds of European Jews perished in the holocaust but this is not what is referred to in the following verse:

*“And it shall come to pass, that in **all the land**, saith the LORD, two parts therein*



*shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God” (Zech. 13:8-9).*

This two thirds will perish from the land of Israel and as a result Israel will call on the Lord.

*“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God” (Zech. 13:9).*

Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be redeemed with judgment:

*“Zion shall be **redeemed with judgment**, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed” (Isa. 1:27-28).*

Another holocaust awaits the nation of Israel at the hands of Islam and Russia before they finally humble themselves and repent of rejection of Messiah. Only one third of the Jews in the land will survive.

The wonder of God’s grace is seen by the fact that after centuries of rebellion and rejection, when the nation finally calls on the Lord, God will hear their cry. Abraham’s children will be reunited with Abraham’s God. God will say: *“It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God” (Zech. 13:9).*

*“God hath not cast away his people” (Rom. 11:2).*

The judgments of the Tribulation are designed to turn men back to God, and Israel will heed the call in that day.

## IN THAT DAY 4 - Ch. 14

### The Day of the Lord

*“The day of the LORD cometh...” (Zech. 14:1).* Beyond all doubt chapter 14 describes events which Jesus said would immediately precede and follow His Second Advent (Matt. 24:29-30). The Day of the Lord is the Great Tribulation.

Paul places *“the day of the Lord”* after the Rapture of the Church.

*“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief... For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him”** (1 Thess. 5:1-10).*

This passage follows the description of the rapture of the Christians in 1 Thess. 4:13-18, which concludes with the words, “*so shall **we** (Christians) ever be with the Lord*”.

Jesus places the Great Tribulation immediately before His return to reign (Matt. 24:29). So the Tribulation is between the Rapture and the Second Advent of Christ.

Israel will be the centre of conflict in the Day of the Lord. The final battle during the 7 years of tribulation will be an all out assault on Jerusalem. John calls it “*the battle of that great day of God almighty*” (Rev. 16:14), when demonic forces will gather “*the kings of the earth, and of the whole world... to a place called... Armageddon*” (Rev. 16:16).

Joel describes this final conflict in chapter 3 of his prophecy:

*“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, **when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem**, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land”* (Joel 3:1-2).

Joel indicates that Israel will be God’s servants at this time for he states that it occurs when Judah and Jerusalem have submitted to the Lord.

In addition, Joel places Israel’s conversion at a time when the land is invaded by a “*northern army*” (Joel 2:20), which Ezekiel identifies as Russia, Iran, Turkey, Libya and Sudan, coming from “*the north parts*” (Ezek. 38:1-6,15). This does not refer to the kings of the whole earth.

Zechariah, Joel, and Ezekiel all agree that the conversion of Israel comes **before** the battle of Armageddon, and both Joel and Ezekiel place it at the time of the “*northern*” invasion (Jel. 2:18-32; Ezek. 39:22-29).

*“Thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee”* (Zech. 14:1).

It was normal for armies to carry away the spoil (booty) and divide it up later, but so aggressive will Antichrist’s armies be that they will not wait to apportion the spoils. Jerusalem is the target where Antichrist will be sitting in the Temple claiming to be God. Half the city will be overrun and the inhabitants suffer the atrocities of war. These will be led away captive but the other half will be holding out, facing extermination by the invading armies, when suddenly the Lord will appear in the open heavens like lightning flashing from one end of heaven to the other (Luke 17:24; Matt. 24:27).

It seems that Antichrist will appear to have almost succeeded in destroying God’s covenant people when deliverance comes from heaven. Daniel wrote of this time:

*“It shall be for a time, times, and an half; and **when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people**, all these things shall be finished”* (Dan. 12:7).

# The Church at the BEMA Seat of Christ for Rewards

The Rapture  
of the  
Church

2 Witnesses  
caught up

The Second Coming  
of Christ  
with His Saints

Gospel of  
the Grace of  
God  
preached by  
the Church

Gospel of the Kingdom  
preached by 144,000 Jews

The Everlasting Gospel  
preached by an Angel

The Law of  
the LORD  
preached by  
Jews

Temple  
built

Temple  
sacrifices cease

Israel flees to a  
wilderness refuge

Israel  
welcomes  
Messiah

Antichrist confirms a 7-year covenant with many - Dan. 9:27

The dead  
"In Christ"  
raised and  
the  
living saints  
changed

Occupies Egypt,  
many countries, &  
the glorious land

1,260 days

Abomination  
of Desolation

1,260 days

Tribulation  
martyrs raised

Living saved  
(sheep) of all  
nations enter  
the Kingdom  
Living unsaved  
(goats) of all  
nations cast  
into lake of fire

The dead  
"In Christ"  
raised and  
the  
living saints  
changed

1 2 3 4 5 6  
SEALS  
Israel  
converted  
when Russia  
invades Ezek.  
39:22

1 2 3 4 5 6  
SEVENTH SEAL =  
Four  
ecological  
judgments

1st WOE - Abyss open  
2nd WOE  
200 million  
army  
prepared  
Abomination  
of Desolation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
SEVENTH TRUMPET = SEVEN VIALS  
SEVEN TRUMPETS

1,000 years to the  
resurrection of all  
souls in hades to stand  
before the Great White  
Throne  
1,000 years  
reign of Christ  
on the earth

EGYPT, THEN  
RUSSIAN - ISLAMIC  
INVASION OF ISRAEL.  
WAR No. 1

3rd WOE - Judgment on Gentile Nations,  
Antichrist, and apostate Christendom  
THE KINGS OF THE EAST AND ALL NATIONS  
GATHER FOR THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON  
WAR No. 2

Church age  
from Pentecost  
to the Rapture

THE GREAT TRIBULATION = THE DAY OF THE LORD =  
ISRAEL'S 70TH "WEEK" = THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

## THE RETURN OF CHRIST

*“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zech. 14:3).*

Joel described this event:

*“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. **The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem;** and the heavens and the earth shall shake: **but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel**” (Joel 3:15-16).*

When Christ returns it will be to judge this evil world. It will be too late for men to repent. The world will be divided into two camps: those who have the mark of the beast, and those who have both heeded the message of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses and the everlasting Gospel preached by an angel from heaven. Some will be sheep and others will be goats.

The armies that come against Jerusalem will be destroyed by the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 19:15) as He appears *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thess. 1:8).

Some have suggested that the nation of Israel will repent of her rejection of Messiah **when she sees Him return**, but this is not possible. It will be too late to repent when Christ returns to judge.

The conversion of Israel occurs when Russia leads a coalition of Muslim nations into the land in the first half of the 7-year Tribulation. Halfway through the seven years Israel is described as those who were already keeping *“the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (Rev. 12:17). We must not confuse the Russian invasion with Armageddon. One is a Muslim invasion and the other involves *“all nations”*.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE TRIBULATION

- i) At the Rapture, Antichrist signs a 7-year security treaty with Israel allowing the Temple to be built.
- ii) The 144,000 are sealed to preach the Gospel of the kingdom in all the world for 1,260 days (Rev. 7).
- iii) Egypt invades Israel. Antichrist and Israel overrun Egypt (Isa. 19).
- iv) The Russian/ Islamic invasion brings Israel to repentance. For 7 months they bury the dead (Ezek. 38/39).
- v) The kings of the east **prepare** a 200-million-man army (Rev. 9:16).
- vi) Antichrist turns against Israel, destroys *“many”*, and moves into the Temple

causing sacrifices to cease (Dan. 11:44-45). He then begins his 42-month reign (Dan. 12).

- vii) By the **mid-point** of the 7 years the two witnesses and 144,000 have been slain and are seen in heaven (Rev. 11:3-7 ;14:3).
- viii) The 7th trumpet sounds and 7 vials are poured out (Rev. 11:14;15:8).
- ix) Antichrist gathers all nations to Armageddon, Mystery Babylon is burned, and Christ returns.

### ***AN EARTHQUAKE***

The topography of Jerusalem will be changed by a massive earthquake. The Mosques and the Tribulation Temple will be demolished as the Lord arises to shake terribly the earth (Isa. 2:12-21). The Mount of Olives on the east of Jerusalem will be split making a great valley from the city down through the Judean wilderness to the Dead Sea, a distance of 25km.

*“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and **the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west**, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south”* (Zech. 14:4).

Jerusalem is on Mount Zion, but the whole area will be flattened from Geba 6km north of Jerusalem to Rimmon 15km north of Beersheba or 55km from Jerusalem. **The total length of this plain will be 61km.**

At the present time Jerusalem is 795m above sea level and Beersheba is 268m above sea level, and **if** the whole area from Rimmon (15km north of Beersheba) to Geba is to become a plateau at the present elevation of Jerusalem, then Rimmon will need to be raised about 500 meters.

*“All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and **it shall be lifted up**, and inhabited in her place”* (Zech. 14:10).

The first stage of construction of any project is the **bulk earth works**, and God will do just that when Christ returns. A glorious Temple must be constructed at Jerusalem in which Christ will dwell in His glory, and the whole land will be divided among the tribes of Israel as described in Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48.

The earthquake which will occur when Christ returns may be the global earthquake described in Rev. 16:18.



This will happen at the last of the Tribulation judgments. At the seventh vial judgment Jerusalem will be divided into three parts. The fear it will cause is likened to the experience of Israel when a terrible earthquake struck in the days of King Uzziah.

Maybe God will use this earthquake to bury the armies that come against Jerusalem just as He caused the earth to open up and swallow Dathan and Abiram:

*“The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire... burned up the wicked”* (Ps. 106:17-18).

When the northern army comes into the land in the first half of the Tribulation, **the Jews will be seven months** burying the dead in the valley of Hamongog in Jordan; on the “east of the sea (Dead Sea)” (Ezek. 39:12), but Armageddon will have many more bodies that will need to be buried. The kings of the east will contribute 200 million! If God burned and buried the families of Dathan and Abiram, He may do the same after Armageddon.

Such an earthquake will disrupt Antichrist’s attempts to destroy God’s people Israel, and when the Lord returns the Mount of Olives will split making a way of escape from Jerusalem through to the Judean wilderness: “*Ye shall flee to (or through) the valley of the mountains*” (Zech. 14:5).

### **THE REIGN OF CHRIST**

*“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one”* (Zech. 14:9).

That Christ will personally reign over all the earth there can be no doubt. He is coming to reign and He will sit upon the throne of David. Gabriel made this clear to Mary:

*“Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”* (Luke 1:31-33).

When Christ comes He will have a name, “**King of kings and Lord of lords**” (Rev. 19:16).

Daniel described the Second Advent of Christ and then wrote:

*“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that **all people, nations, and languages, should serve him**: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and **his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**”* (Dan. 7:14).

Jesus said that He would reign and that the ungodly would be judged:

*“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his*

kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.** Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 13:41-43).

Jesus taught in His Olivet Discourse that He would return and sit upon “*the throne of His glory*” (Matt. 25:31), where He would judge the nations that survive the Great Tribulation. The goats, the unsaved followers of Antichrist, would be cast into the lake of fire, and the sheep, those who are saved and survive the Tribulation, would “*inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*” (Matt. 25:34).

The Psalmist wrote prophetically of Christ, the Son of God:

*“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling”* (Psalm 2:6-11).

Isaiah described the awful Tribulation and then stated:

*“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously”* (Isa. 24:21-23).

No doubt Isaiah was describing the gathering of the living nations to Jerusalem after Christ returns, when the sheep and goats will be judged.

The martyrs of the 7-year Tribulation will be raised when Christ returns and these will live and reign “*with Christ 1,000 years*” (Rev. 20:4). The Old Testament saints, already in heaven, are even more specific and state they will “*reign on the earth*” (Rev. 5:10).

Jesus promised His disciples they would reign with Him in His kingdom:

*“In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”* (Matt. 19:28).

There can be no doubt that Christ will reign over the earth from Jerusalem, and Israel will be an exalted people reigning over the nations as Isaiah wrote:

*“For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted”* (Isa. 60:12).

## STRANGE LIGHT

*“And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the light shall not be clear, nor dark:** But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” (Zech. 14:7).*

This follows the prophecy of a massive earthquake which will occur at the time of Christ’s Second Advent, and many Scriptures speak of cosmic disturbances at the same time. Just as the light is affected at the time of an eclipse of the moon so the light reaching earth will be affected when Christ returns. Matthew stated that *“the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven (meteorites), and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken”* (Matt. 2 4:29).

The moon will be *“confounded and the sun ashamed”* (Isa. 24:23). When the Lord reigns the glory of God will lighten the environs of Jerusalem. Isaiah wrote:

*“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and **his glory shall be seen upon thee.** And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising”* (Isa. 60:2-3).

The light of God’s presence will surround Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom:

*“The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but **the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light,** and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for **the LORD shall be thine everlasting light,** and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever”* (Isa. 60:19-21).

When Joshua pursued the Canaanites God caused the sun and moon to stand still by the space of about one day, and he turned the sun dial back 15 degrees in the time of Hezekiah. How He will readjust the solar system at His Second Advent we do not know, but it is evident that major upheavals will occur, as many Scriptures indicate.

We know that meteorites will strike the earth. These are already circling the sun in orbit beyond earth’s circuit in vast numbers and in sizes up to hundreds of kilometers in length. A large meteorite passing near to earth could influence the course of earth. God controls the planets, meteorites, and stars, as the Psalmist wrote:

*“The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men”* (Ps. 115:16).

Several times Isaiah prophesied of disturbances in space that will alter the light intensities on earth. His prophecies agree therefore with Zechariah’s prophecy.

The following are some of Isaiah's prophecies:

*"And in that day... if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, **and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof**" (Isa. 5:30).*

*"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh...and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For **the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.** And I will punish the world for their evil... Therefore I will shake the heavens, and **the earth shall remove out of her place**, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (Isa. 13:9-13).*

*"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isa. 34:4).*

In the second half of the Tribulation the sun will **scorch men** with great heat, as the Book of the Revelation states:

*"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him **to scorch men with fire.** And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues" (Rev. 16:8-9).*

Isaiah wrote of intense sunlight:

*"Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, **in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people**, and healeth the stroke of their wound. Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire" (Isa. 30:26-27).*

All of these Scriptures indicate dramatic activity in the heavens and it is fruitless to endeavour to find an explanation as to how God will do it. The time of these cosmic disturbances is obviously during the Tribulation because it is when God **binds up the breach of His people** (Israel), and that will be during the Tribulation. It is the Tribulation that brings Israel to repentance.

### ***A RIVER IN THE DESERT***

*"And it shall be in that day, that **living waters shall go out from Jerusalem**; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zech. 14:8).*

Zechariah is not the only prophet who prophesied of a stream of fresh (*living*) subterranean water flowing from an aquifer beneath the millennial Temple.

Joel and Ezekiel both give details of this torrent of water that will be released when God rearranges the topography around Jerusalem and forms a plateau **61km long**

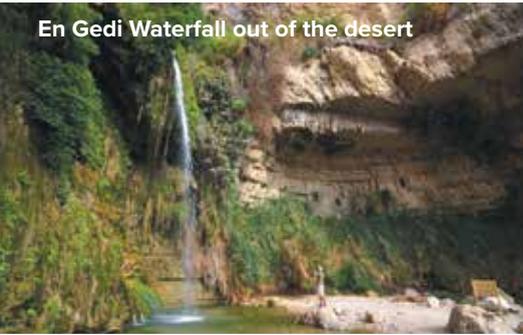
Hezekiah's Tunnel



Pool of Siloam



En Gedi Waterfall out of the desert



Dead Sea



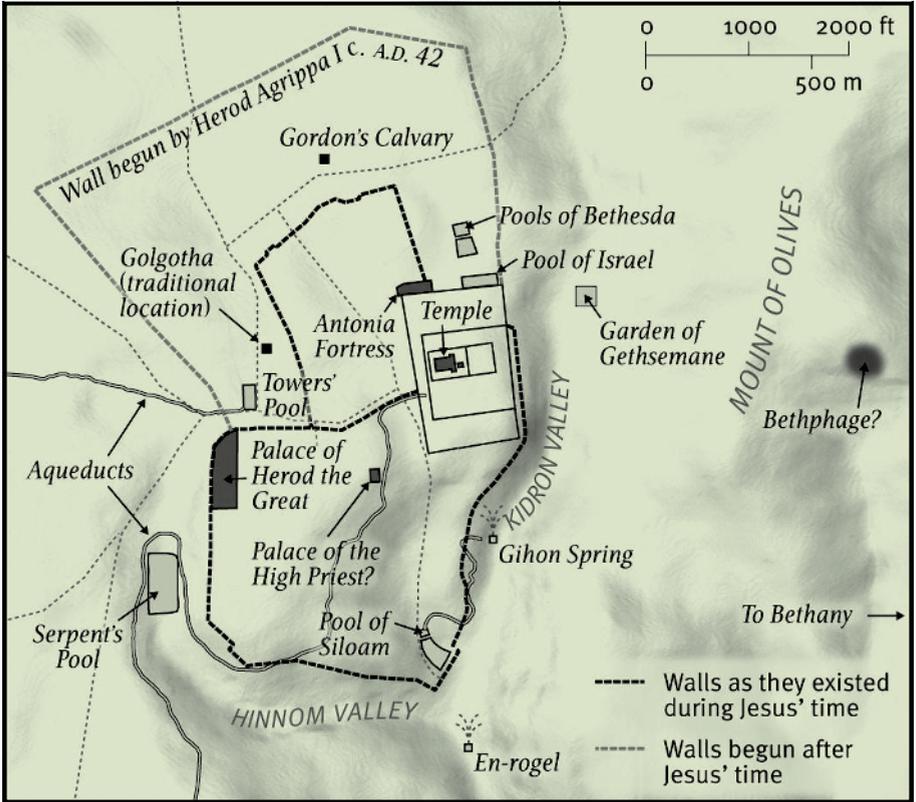
from Geba, 6km north of Jerusalem, to Rimmon, 15km north of Beersheba. The stream will course through a valley that is formed when the Mount of Olives splits and will surge down the gorges for 20km till it joins the Dead Sea, a drop of approximately 1,218 metres (3,775 feet). Ezekiel states that the river will be ankle deep after half a kilometer, knee deep after another half kilometer, waist deep after another half kilometer, and within 2 kilometers of the Temple it will be a river to swim in. Zechariah indicates it will not be dependent on rain but will flow from beneath the surface. He states it will have a continuous flow: “*In summer and in winter shall it be.*”

The **mountain aquifer** which will supply fresh water to this river **exists today**, and prior to the construction of Israel’s desalination plants supplied 30% of the nation’s water in 2011. It can be seen at the Temple Mount as it flows from the Gihon Spring through Hezekiah’s tunnel to the pool of Siloam.

At the Dead Sea there is further evidence of the mountain aquifer at En Gedi, where there is a waterfall pouring out of the Judean wilderness.

Joel wrote:

*“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, AND a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim” (Joel 3:18).*



Judaean Wilderness



The valley of Shittim is located at the northern end of the Dead Sea in Jordan. When the water flows from the Temple it will raise the level of the Dead Sea to such an extent that the Valley of Shittim will be flooded. Ezekiel states that the level will be so much higher that the salt water of the Dead Sea will be diluted and fish will be caught in the Dead Sea. For this to happen the volume of water must be very greatly increased.

The Dead Sea has a salt content of 33% and sea water has only 3. 5%, so if the Dead Sea is to support the same kind of fish as are in the oceans its volume must increase 10 times. A vast volume of water will be needed.

Joel prophesied that God would cause “*all the rivers of Judah to flow with water*” (Joel 3:18) so there will be an increase in rainfall in the land. This will cause the Judaeen wilderness to “*blossom as the rose*” so there will be a substantial contribution from rainfall. Isaiah wrote:

*“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom **abundantly**, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God”* (Isa. 35:1-2).

Ezekiel also speaks of an increase in rainfall:

*“And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause **the shower to come down in his season**; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase”* (Ezek. 36:26-27).

Anyone who has travelled from Jerusalem down through the Judaeen wilderness to Jericho will have seen the barren hills of the Judaeen wilderness. Yet even in this area there are wells and Arab boys lead their herds of goats in search of grass. It was an Arab shepherd boy who threw a stone into a cave in this wilderness area and heard the clay jar break which contained the Dead Sea scrolls. Isaiah wrote:

*“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, **and rivers in the desert**. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen”* (Isa. 43:19-20).

Ezekiel indicates that the Dead Sea will be a fisherman’s paradise, and commercial fishing will flourish from Engedi to Eneglaim at the northern end of the Dead Sea, a distance of 40km. The types of fish will be the same as those found in the Mediteranean.

*“And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a **very great multitude of fish**,*

*because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it **from Engedi even unto Eneglaim**; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of **the great sea** (Mediterranean), **exceeding many**" (Ezek. 47:9-10).*



Mount Ararat 5,137 m.-16,854 ft.

The Dead Sea is very deep (378m.) and is 453 metres below Sea level in 2011. Its level has dropped approx. 26 metres over the past 30 years. If the level is raised to the same elevation as Galilee as shown on our map, the Dead Sea would need to rise by 245 metres. That would make the Dead Sea 623 metres deep (almost 2,000 feet).

The mountain aquifer which is presently providing water at Jerusalem must be fed from much higher elevations such as snow-covered Mount Hermon (9,000 ft. - 2,900 m.), or it may even be supplied from further north; the mountains of Ararat in eastern Turkey. Ararat rises to a maximum height of 5,137 metres (16,854 ft.).

The top 233 metres of Mount Ararat have a permanent ice cap and its melting snow is sufficient to supply the mighty Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. If this is the source of water for the mountain aquifer in Israel there would be no difficulty in supplying the needed water to flood the Dead Sea, without the increase of rains that will occur when Christ returns.

### PEACE

*"And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be **no more utter destruction**; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zech. 14:11).*

Immediately after the turmoil of the Tribulation Christ will return and peace will finally be experienced on earth. The angels' message to the shepherds will become a reality and there will be "on earth peace" (Luke 2:14).

*"Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. **He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth**; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:8-10).*



Mount Hermon -2,900 m.

It has been said that the city of Jerusalem has been destroyed twice, besieged 23

times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times. Ultimately peace will come to Jerusalem and her warfare will be accomplished (Isa. 40:2) as Isaiah prophesied:

*“He (Christ) shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: **nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more**”* (Isa. 2:4).

#### **FOUR WAYS GOD WILL DESTROY THE NATIONS AT ARMAGEDDON**

We have already seen that God will disrupt the activities of the armies of Antichrist with a **great earthquake**. It would seem that this earthquake is the same as the one described by John in Revelation 16:18. It will be global and shake the cities of the nations. Its magnitude will exceed anything previously experienced and will therefore be well in excess of 9 on the Richter scale.

But this is not the only way God will show His wrath. A **plague** (pestilence) will strike men down in great numbers. Jesus warned us that in the last days there would be *“**pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places**”* (Matt. 24:7). Zechariah wrote: *“**And this shall be the plague** wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth...**And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague**”* (Zech. 14:12-15).

It is significant that the World Health Organisation has expressed grave concern about the “bird flu” virus that could kill a hundred million people. Viruses do not respond to anti-biotics.

Some have suggested that the symptoms of this plague are similar to those experienced after a nuclear explosion, but the Bible states it is **linked to animals**; the *“horse, the mule, the camel, the ass and all the beasts”*. Bird flu is a virus which crosses over from the animal kingdom to humans.

Mad cow disease also has been known to cross the barriers and attack humans turning the brain to jelly. It is called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). The transmissible agents that cause this disease in both cattle and humans are “prions.” Prions are not like bacteria or viruses that cause other infectious diseases, rather, they are infectious proteins. Diseased prions are found in the brain, spinal cord, eye (in the retina), and other tissues of the nervous system of affected animals or humans.

Another disease is the Ebola Virus which can kill within two weeks of infection. It has destroyed large numbers of cattle in the Middle East.

Scientists point out that the immune system of humans would have little ability to fight off these diseases which develop in animals.

There is abundant evidence that God has judged with disease in the past. He sent boils and other diseases upon the Egyptians (Exod. 9:9-10; 15:26). Miriam was struck with leprosy (Num. 12:1-15) and Jehoram king of Judah died with an incurable disease of the bowels. A plague was upon his family (2 Chron. 21:12-15). When David numbered the nation of Israel contrary to God's will 70,000 died in a plague (2 Sam. 24:15) and Nabal the husband of Abigail was given a heart attack for his anger against God's servants (1 Sam. 25:37).

When Israel committed whoredom with Moab 24,000 perished (Num. 25:9), and when Dathan and Abiram rose up against Moses 14,700 died in a plague sent by God (Num. 16:49).

When Sennacherib brought his army against Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, God answered the prayer of Hezekiah and the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night. We are not told how this was accomplished but it may well have been by a fatal pestilence (Isa. 37:36).

The third way that God will destroy the nations at the battle of Armageddon will be by turning the enemies of the Lord against each other:

*"And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour"*(Zech. 14:13).

The word translated "tumult" conveys the thought of "confusion" or "panic", such as when Gideon's 300 men blew the trumpets, smashed the empty pitchers, and held the torches high with the shout, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon!" The Midianites

*"ran, and cried, and fled...and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host"* (Judges 7:21-22).

We might well describe this as a tumult, and confusion, resulting in panic and destruction.

Dissension within the ranks of the armies of the nations will cause them to turn on each other, just as they did when Moab, Ammon and Mount Seir (Edom) came against Jehoshaphat. God said to Jehoshaphat: "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle", and when Israel began to sing and praise the Lord the armies of Moab and Ammon turned on the Edomites, and when the Edomites were destroyed, they turned on each other. When Jehoshaphat came on the scene "they were dead

*bodies fallen to the earth*” (2 Chron. 20:24).

That’s how God fought for Israel in Old Testament times. Israel never lost a battle while they walked with God, for God was bound by the Palestinian Covenant to fight for them while they walked in obedience to His laws (Deut. 28:7).

*“The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.”*

Finally, God will destroy the nations that follow Antichrist by **the armies of Judah**:

*“And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance”* (Zech. 14:14).

Already we have seen in chapter 12 that the governors of Judah will be

*“like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about”* (Zech. 12:6).

In this regard Israel’s present military build-up is most significant. Israel’s economy depends heavily on the sale of military equipment of the highest standard. A nation about the size of Sydney and Newcastle combined, ranks in the top ten nations for exports of military equipment. According to *Wikipedia*, exports in 2010 were:

- USA - \$US 864. 1 billion
- EU - more than \$US 667. 7 billion.
- Russia - \$US 603. 9 billion.
- Israel - \$US 47. 2 billion.

When Israel turns to the Lord those weapons, and the expertise gained in earlier conflicts, will be in the hands of a godly people.

It seems absurd that Antichrist will need to raise a massive army from all nations of the world to wipe out a few million Jews, but one man with God is always a majority. *“Judah shall fight at Jerusalem.”* In 2011 Israel has three quarters of a million trained soldiers to call on in an emergency, so they will be no “push over”.

There is an interesting comparison with the earlier northern invasion by Islamic nations led by Russia. When God destroys those armies He will use **four means** as described in Ezekiel 38:18-23:

- a) An earthquake.
- b) Every man’s sword will be against his brother.
- c) Pestilence.
- d) Great hailstones, fire and brimstone.

There are differences which indicate that these judgments are **not the same event** as those described in Zechariah. When the Russian armies descend, Israel will

be trusting in the security of Antichrist established by a 7-year treaty (Dan. 9:27). At the critical hour Antichrist will fail the nation of Israel, probably because Russian and Islamic nations have the ability to blackmail the EU with a threat to cut off all gas and oil supplies. *“Tidings out of the east (Iran) and out of the north (Turkey and Russia) shall trouble him (Antichrist)”* (Dan. 11:44).

After the Japanese nuclear power disaster in 2011 the EU decided to phase out all nuclear power plants. Nine out of the last ten power plants built in Germany have been fired by Russian gas. In 2011 more gas and oil lines are being built from Russia to EU countries, and the security of Europe is in jeopardy.

Germany alone has 17 nuclear power plants generating 74% of her power. If these are all phased out and replaced with gas-fired power plants using Russian gas, then Germany’s future will be in Russia’s hands. The total number of nuclear power plants in the EU countries in 2011 was 195, with 19 under construction.

Further, the judgments on the Russian/Islamic armies will include *“hailstones, fire, and brimstone”*, whereas at Armageddon there is no mention of hailstones but **Judah will be fighting for survival**. These facts alone indicate that the northern invasion, described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Joel 2, is NOT Armageddon, but an earlier conflict in the first half of the Tribulation; the Divine purpose of which will be to bring Israel to repentance.

### **ISRAEL’S WEALTH**

*“...and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance”* (Zech. 14:14).

The final conflict, Armageddon, will be won by Christ, and will result in the wealth of the nations pouring into Israel, whereas the northern invasion in the first half of the Tribulation will bring Israel’s conversion and cause Antichrist to vent his fury against the redeemed nation.

Zechariah is not alone in this prophecy, for Isaiah stated that the saved Gentiles who survive the Tribulation will pour their wealth into Jewish coffers:

*“Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because **the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces (wealth) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.** The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: **they shall bring gold and incense;** and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory...the sons of strangers (saved Gentiles) shall build up thy walls, and **their kings shall minister unto thee**”* (Isa. 60:5-10).

Jews have long been bankers, but after Christ returns and the blessings promised under the Palestinian Covenant become a reality:

*“The LORD shall open to thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thy hand: **and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.** and the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and not be beneath...”*

(Deut. 28:12-13).

The wealth of the Jews, plundered during the Tribulation, will be recovered, and God says:

*“Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to **bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them,** unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee”* (Isa. 60:9).

In Bible prophecy Tarshish is Great Britain, and her offspring; USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada etc.

### **WHO WILL INHERIT THE KINGDOM?**

*“And it shall come to pass, that **every one that is left of all the nations** which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles”* (Zech. 14:16).

At the conclusion of the Day of the Lord world population will be greatly reduced. Isaiah wrote:

*“The inhabitants of the earth is burned, and few men left”* (Isa. 24:6).

Jesus said:

*“Then shall be great tribulation... and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved”* (Matt. 24:21-22).

The judgments of the Tribulation include seven seals, trumpets and vials but in Revelation ch. 10:1-4 we read of seven thunder judgments which are restrained. John heard a voice from heaven saying, *“Write them not”* (v. 4). If these had been written it may have been the end of civilisation. God restrained those judgments and in the time of wrath remembered mercy.

Who are those that are *“left of all the nations”* which came against Jerusalem? They are the *“sheep”* who stand before the throne of Christ’s glory, to whom He will say, *“Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Matt. 25:34).

These are individuals from **all nations** who refused to receive the mark of the Beast or bow to his image. These are Gentiles who ministered to the needs of the 144,000 Jewish preachers when they were cast into prison for preaching the Gospel of the kingdom in the first half of the Tribulation, and who stood with the redeemed nation of Israel during the second half of the Tribulation as Antichrist relentlessly tried to wipe them off the face of the earth.

Christ will return at the end of 7 years of Tribulation, but it will take a little longer to convey the remnant of the world's population to Jerusalem to stand before the Lord. Daniel stated that it would take another 75 days, and that those who survived the 75 days would be blessed in the kingdom of Christ (Dan. 12:12).

When the sheep and goats are finally separated the world will be inhabited by 100% saved people. Only saved individuals will enter the kingdom, and these will give pure worship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Scripture makes it clear that when Christ returns, life will continue on earth. Amillennialists deny any earthly reign of Christ and teach a general resurrection at the Second Advent. This is a denial of a multitude of promises to Israel, and many prophecies of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth ruled over from the throne of David in Jerusalem (Acts 15:14-18; Luke 1:32-33).

Those who are “*left*” quite clearly do not have a resurrection body but go into the kingdom with the same body that they had before Christ returned. They will have children, and some of these will refuse to worship the Lord. This would not be possible if there was a general resurrection of all the saved and unsaved when Christ returned. Christ's everlasting kingdom begins with 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-15) on earth and continues into the new heaven and new earth for all eternity.

### **WORSHIP IN THE KINGDOM**

Worship in the kingdom of Christ will be led by the Lord's “*brethren*”, the Jews. A glorious Temple will be constructed at Jerusalem, and the sons of Zadok (Ezek. 44:15) of the line of Phinehas (Num. 25:13; Jer. 33:20-22) will lead the worship. All nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and keep the feasts of Jehovah just as Jews and Gentile believers did in Old Testament times, and we are specifically told that the “*feast of tabernacles*” will be kept.

The Feast of Tabernacles was a **Bible-teaching** feast which lasted seven days, from the 15th day to the 21st day of the seventh month, and was followed by an eighth day which was a special sabbath. (Lev. 23:34). Ezra and Nehemiah conducted the Feast of Tabernacles with those who returned from the Babylonian captivity. The people dwelt in booths made from branches of olive, myrtle, and palm trees, and each day listened to the law of God being read and expounded (Neh. 8:1-8). Isaiah made it clear that in the last days the nations would go to Jerusalem to hear the law of God:

*“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains...and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”* (Isa. 2:2-3).

The Feast of Tabernacles will not be the only feast kept in the millennial kingdom for Ezekiel mentions the Feast of Passover (Ezek. 45:21). Other sacrifices will be offered at the millennial Temple in memorial of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. Just as Old Testament sacrifices were but a shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1), so millennial sacrifices will point back to the cross-work of Christ.

### ***JERUSALEM A HOLY CITY***

*"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts"* (Zech. 14:20-21).

It was customary in ancient time to hang bells around the neck of horses and asses similar to the cow bells of more recent times. In Christ's kingdom even the bells of the horses will have inscribed upon them, "*holiness unto the Lord*". This indicates how devotion to God will pervade even the common activities of life. There will be no separation of holy activities by the priests and secular activities in the workplace of the common people.

This is a reminder to us that in every part of our lives, whether it be housework, farming, office work, every activity should be "*holiness unto the Lord*". Paul wrote: "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*" (Col. 3:17).

It is wrong to consider some activities as "spiritual" and others as "carnal" if we do everything for God's glory. It is a "spiritual" service to care for a sick person, work to provide for the family, study at school, if it is done for the glory of God. To preach in the pulpit, hand out a tract or teach a Bible class is no more spiritual. One of the faults of Old Testament times was the separation of Divine worship from secular life, and it is all too common today. Religion was left to the priestly class, but if we love the Lord with all our heart the most menial task will be a spiritual service. Herein lies the difference between religion and a relationship with God. In Christ's kingdom every activity will be to please Him.

### ***THE CANAANITES IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD***

The earliest Canaanites were the descendants of Ham, and after the Flood they occupied the land which was later given to Abraham.

Before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, Jerusalem was occupied by Melchizedek, the "*priest of the most high God*" (Gen. 14:18). We know little about him except that he was the "*king of Salem*" (Jerusalem). In those days society was governed by city kings.

In time Melkizedek died, and the city over which he reigned was taken over by evil people. The place where God had chosen to place His name became Satan's domain and the Canaanites possessed it.

We can trace the genealogy of the Canaanites from Ham but there is no record of the genealogy of Melchizedek. God has not revealed that to us so that Melchizedek might stand as a type of our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal Son of God without beginning.

After the Flood God chose Jerusalem as the place where true worship was to be found, and from which His Word could be spread to the nations.

Jerusalem and the land of Israel is at the **geographic centre** of the world; at the crossroads between the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Later, when the nation of Israel was established in the land, God said through Isaiah:

*"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth"* (Isa. 49:6).

Jesus said to the Jews:

*"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid"*  
(Matt. 5:14).

There were still Canaanites in Jesus' day and "*Simon the Canaanite*" was one of the twelve disciples (Matt. 10:4). Evidently he was a proselyte and a convert to the God of Israel.

Jesus healed the daughter of the woman of Canaan who was "*grievously vexed with a devil*" (Matt. 15:22).

The Canaanites were extremely wicked, so much so that Joshua was commanded to destroy them when he entered the promised land. Archeologists have found evidence of child sacrifice. They engaged in devil worship with all the attendant evil practices. They had no place in the House of the Lord. In times of apostasy Israel worshipped the gods of the Canaanites and came under judgment, but when the kingdom of God is established the evil Canaanites will no longer be able to influence true worship in the millennial Temple.



The unsaved will not enter the kingdom of Christ. However during the 1,000-year millennial kingdom, children will be born with the old Adamic nature and will need to personally turn to Christ and be saved. Some will feign obedience and be judged at the end of the 1,000-years (Rev. 20:7-10).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF JERUSALEM

Satan always wanted to occupy Jerusalem. He did it when the Canaanites possessed it after Melkizedek died and he regained it during the “*times of the Gentiles*”. During the Tribulation Satan’s agent, Antichrist, will sit in the Temple, but it will be recovered by Christ at His second advent.

God states that during the millennial kingdom the Temple at Jerusalem will be “*the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever*” (Ezek. 43:7).

At the end of the millennial kingdom Satan will stir the nations to encompass “*the camp of the saints about, the beloved city*” (Rev. 20:9), but God will burn those armies and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire.

In the new heaven and new earth the new Jerusalem will be the place of God’s throne for we read:

“*The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*” (Rev. 22:3).

Jerusalem on earth replicates the heavenly Mount Zion which exists in heaven today (Heb. 12:22) and which will finally be relocated on earth when

“*the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God*” (Rev. 21:3).

When Moses went into Mount Sinai and was given the design of the Tabernacle he was shown the heavenly Zion and the throne of God with the cherubims about the throne. The Tabernacle, and later the Temple, were shadows of the heavenly reality for we read:

“*Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount*” (Heb. 8:5).

It is little wonder that as we draw near to the end of the age Jerusalem is the centre of conflict. Satan wants Jerusalem for His throne in the place of God. In eternity past it was his ambition, for God said:

“*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north*” (Isa. 14:12-13).

“*Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee*” (Ezek. 28:14-15).

## UNBELIEVERS IN THE KINGDOM

*“And it shall be, that whoso **will not come up** of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; **there shall be the plague**, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations **that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles**” (Zech. 14:17-19).*

It is clear from this Scripture that the millennial kingdom is not the eternal state. There is no sin in the new heaven, the new Jerusalem, or new earth.

*“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27).*

At the end of the millennial kingdom the present earth will be burned with fire and there will be a totally new environment on earth. The present atmospheric conditions will not be required for the redeemed in resurrection bodies.

During the Millennium Satan is bound in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3), but at the end of the thousand years he will be released “*for a little season*”. He will deceive those who had never experienced personal salvation during the 1,000 years.

Finally, Satan will be cast for ever into the lake of fire (*gehenna*) with all the unsaved.

So while the Millennium will be a dispensation of great peace and prosperity, it will not be the perfect eternal state. That cannot occur while men are in natural bodies. Until the resurrection men are imperfect and prone to sin, but once a resurrection body is received redeemed mankind will be like Christ, and without a sinful nature.

Therefore, during the Millennium men will sin and if, after some centuries of Christ’s rule, any nation should fail to go up to Jerusalem “*to worship the King, the LORD of hosts*”, God, who controls the weather, will cause a drought and the rains will fail in their season.

If Egypt, which has no rain and depends on the Nile for her water supply, fails to come to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, then God will send the plague upon the nation.

Psalm 2:7-12 states:

*“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this*

*day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. **Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.***

*Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. **Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.** Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."*

Rebellion will be dealt with harshly and quickly in the Millennium.

It seems incredible that men would refuse to obey "*the King, the LORD of hosts*", when He will be reigning on the throne of David at Jerusalem, and it begs the question, Will Christ be visibly reigning? Will men see Him as the glorified Son of man seated on a throne?

There is no doubt that when Christ returns in glory with all His holy angels "*every eye shall see Him*", and this will include the saved Gentiles, the unsaved Gentiles, and those who pierced Him (Rev. 1:7).

John described the person of Christ as He will descend through the heavens. He spoke of Christ's head, crowns, eyes, mouth, thigh and His vesture. There can be no doubt that Christ will be seen as the glorified Son of man.

After Christ returns the nation of Israel will look upon Christ

*"And one shall say unto him, What are **these wounds in thine hands?** Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6).*

When Christ sits upon the throne of His glory to judge the living nations that survive the Tribulation there is no reason to believe He will not be seen as the glorified Son of man, for there is dialogue between Him and the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:32-40).

However once the sheep and the goats are judged, the Temple will be built and worship will be led by the priests who are of the line of Zadok. David, who was raised with Christ, (Matt. 27:51-53) will be the Prince to lead the nation at Jerusalem.

*"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant **David shall be their prince for ever**" (Ezek. 37:24-25). See also Ezek. 34:24.*

*“But they shall serve the LORD their God, and **David their king, whom I will raise up unto them**” (Jer. 30:9).*

Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah wrote concerning David more than 400 years after he died. David’s soul was then in Paradise (sheol) and he had not, at that time, been resurrected. He was raised bodily from the grave after Christ’s resurrection, when all the Old Testament saints in Paradise were taken to heaven (Eph. 4:8-10).

There is no doubt that David, in his resurrected body, will be visible during the Millennium, for he will appear in the Temple as described in many references from Ezekiel 44:3 to 48:22. As the prince of Israel, David will be given a special portion of land adjacent to the Temple and will have exclusive use of the eastern gate. The people will enter by the north gate and exit by the south gate, or enter by the south gate and leave by the north gate.

The twelve apostles will also be there in resurrection bodies to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. We read:

*“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, **in the regeneration** (the millennium) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, **ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel**” (Matt. 19:28).*

It would be difficult to argue that the twelve apostles will not be in a visible form when they judge the tribes of Israel.

In Old Testament times the Lord dwelt among His people Israel in His Temple between the cherubims. Eleven times Scripture speaks of the Lord dwelling “*between the cherubims*” on earth in His Temple. The cherubims were on the lid of the ark of the covenant in the most Holy Place where the shekinah glory shone. This glory was the visible presence of God in the midst of Israel. The glory of God was also visible to the Israelites as a pillar of cloud and fire when they came out of Egypt.

When God’s presence left the nation at the time of the Babylonian captivity Ezekiel witnessed its departure (Ezek. 9:3; 10:4,18-19).

We know that during the millennial kingdom the glory of God will again be seen at the Temple (Ezek. 43:1-7), and Isaiah states that it will be so bright that Jerusalem will not need the light of the sun and moon

*“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but **the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the***

*Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising... The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: **but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.** Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: **for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended**" (Isa. 60:2-3,19-20).*

It is obvious from this passage of Scripture that the presence of God will be visible to such an extent that the environs of Jerusalem will be lit up and kings will come to view it.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The prophecy of Zechariah begins with the reconstruction of the Temple after the Babylonian captivity, and concludes with the final restoration of Israel to the land after the second coming of Christ.

The journey through time is traced within this prophecy from the difficulties with the Samaritans who opposed the construction of the second Temple, through the Grecian era of Alexander the Great and the Maccabean period, to Roman times when the true Shepherd of Israel, Jesus Christ, was crucified.

The rejection of Israel's Shepherd at the beginning of the Roman era would lead to a treaty with the "idol shepherd", Antichrist, in the last days (Zech. 11:16-17).

Israel's conflict with Antichrist and her remorse for rejecting Messiah make very touching reading and her service in the millennial Temple is massive proof of God's faithfulness.

Zechariah's prophecy has therefore given us a panoramic view of history from the rebuilding of the second Temple to the millennial Temple in the kingdom of Christ.

Just as the Book of the Revelation sums up the prophecies of the entire Bible, Zechariah's message brings together the prophecies of the Old Testament.

AMEN.

# History of Lydia, Assyria, Media, and Babylon from Herodotus' Book I



Herodotus lived between 484BC and 425BC in the Persian era. He wrote 9 books called, The Histories of Herodotus.

He was a Greek from Halicarnassus in the SW of Asia Minor and travelled the world discoursing with priests who kept records of their nation.

## NOTES

Candaules boasted of his wife's beauty and encouraged his bodyguard, Gyges, to secretly see her undress for bed. The queen became aware but said nothing to the king. She gave Gyges the choice, Kill the King and reign in his place or be killed. Gyges stabbed Candaules while asleep and was confirmed as king by the oracle of Delphi to whom he gave great gifts.

Phraoetis attacked the Assyrians in Asia and was killed.

Cyaxares fought Alyattes for five years. In sixth a truce agreed and Alyattes' daughter given to Astyages.

**Alyattes'** daughter, **Aryenis** married **Astyages**

**Cyaxares** defeated Assyrians in Asia and turned on Nineveh but ran into Scythians pursuing Cimmerians. The Mede were defeated and the Scythians attempted to take Egypt but tuened back in Palestine.

Scythians rules Asia for 28 years.

The Scythians pillaged the land so **Cyaxarea** made a banquet for their leaders, When all were drunk, he slew them. H drove the Scythians out of Asia and conquered Ninevah and Babylon Media and Persia became part of the Babylonian Empire.

Nebuchadnezzar and his family ruled Babylon until **Darius the Mede** led Cyrus' army to conquer it in 538BC.

**Old Assyrian Kingdom**  
 approx. 1700 to 1225

↑  
**Assyria - 1225BC**  
 Tiglath-pileser I  
 Ashburnasirpal II 883-859  
 Shalmaneser III 858-824  
 Shamsi-Adad V 823-811  
 Adad-nirari III 810-783  
 Shalmaneser IV 782-773  
 Ashur-dan III 772-755  
 Ashur-nirari V 754-745  
 Shalmaneser V 726-722  
 Sargon II 721-705  
 Sennacherib 704-681  
 Esarhaddon 680-669  
 Ashurbanipal 668  
 Nineveh destroyed 612)  
 Total of 520 years  
 ↓

**Median Revolt**  
 approx. 705BC  
 Deices - 53 years  
 Phraoetis - 22 years  
 Cyaxares - 40 years  
 Made alliance with **Nabopolassar**.  
**Nebuchadnezzar's** father, to capture Nineveh 612BC.  
 Medes were priviledged in Babylon.

Astyages reigned during Babylonian era. Married sister of Croesus and had only one daughter, Mandane. Mandane given to Persian, Cambyses, and Cyrus was their son. After a dream, Astyages tried to kill Cyrus at birth but he was preserved. When he grew up he led a Persian revolt and overthrew Medes and then Babylo in 538BC  
 Cyrus attacked Asia made Croesus his slave.



The eight visions and five messages of Zechariah have been difficult for some to understand. The historical context, which is essential to interpreting this portion of Scripture is important.

The prophecy of Zechariah is set in the Persian era (538 - 332BC) which was a time of peace for Israel following the dark days of Assyrian and Babylonian oppression. Jeremiah's prophecy that God would set His throne in Elam (Jer. 49:38) was wonderfully fulfilled with the advent of Cyrus and those who followed him.

In the first century Josephus gathered up ancient records in his books "*Antiquities of the Jews*", and "*The Wars of the Jews*", these, together with the "*Histories*" by Greek historian Herodotus (about 450BC), provide us with much of the historical context of Zechariah's prophecy that will enable us to understand near and far fulfilments of prophecies which are summarised in the title of this book,

My House shall be Built!



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