

## **Intro**

## **Zechariah 1:1-6**

One of the most quoted OT books in the NT.

The exile to Babylon, the fact that they live under the rule of a Persian king (the book is dated by the reign of a Persian king), the fact that Jerusalem is in ruins – all these things recall how before the exile God's prophets had called God's people to repent and they had not and so God brought all this disaster upon them.

This book is written to comfort and encourage the people of God in difficult times. Just as Revelation is written to encourage seven churches who are experiencing difficulty and tribulation. Zechariah first calls God's people to repentance just as Revelation begins with a message to the churches for self-evaluation and repentance.

## **Vision 1**

## **Zechariah 1:7-17**

During the night I had a vision--and there before me was a man riding a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, light-red and white horses.

The man standing among the myrtle trees is:

- The rider of the red horse
- The one who has authority over and to whom the other riders report
- The angel of the LORD (The messenger of the LORD)  
(Yahweh's presence mediated through the angel/messenger)

The horses are red, light red and white perhaps reflecting fire and light as in "the chariots of fire".

"The myrtle trees" represent the people of God reflecting God's glory. – perhaps derived from the idea of Israel living in myrtle tabernacles during

Tabernacles or from the myrtles that grow in the wilderness in the messianic kingdom in Isaiah 41:19;55:13.

The myrtle trees are "in a ravine" or literally "beside the deep" - the threatening darkness of night and the waters of the deep are a symbol of chaos and rebellion.

The vision depicts Yahweh (*the angel*) of Hosts (*mounted horsemen*) walking (*in the midst of*) among his people (*the myrtles*) as they face opposition (*the deep*).

The angel of the LORD here may be Christ since he sometimes seems to be identified with God and at times he is distinguished from God. Vision is similar in meaning to the one in Revelation where Jesus walks among the church (the lamp stands).

The men on the other horses are patrols the LORD has sent to patrol the earth in some kind of a reconnaissance mission. These angelic riders patrol the earth and then report back to the Angel of the LORD. According to the report, the nations are enjoying peace and rest (if the nations are enjoying peace and rest then God's people are being oppressed) Presumably "the horsemen of the apocalypse" are about to bring about a reversal of this situation.

Therefore the angel of the LORD (the man riding the red horse) asks when God will reverse the above conditions. The LORD responds by indicating that the reversal is about to occur - the nations that feel secure will be judged for their having scattered God's people into exile whereas God's people will experience prosperity in their towns with Jerusalem and the temple being rebuilt.

## **Vision 2            Zechariah 1:18-21**

Horns in apocalyptic literature represent power. In this case the horns represent the power of nations opposed to God's people, that is, the nations that had scattered God's people.

The four craftsmen, now replacing the image of the four horsemen, terrify and throw down the power of the nations.

Although in history it may appear that various nations were simply overthrown by other nations, in reality their being overthrown is the action of God mediated by angelic beings using the instrumentality of the nations.

## **Vision 3            Zechariah 2:1-13**

The Angel of Yahweh with a measuring line in his hand measures Jerusalem.

In apocalyptic literature to count or measure something is a symbolic way of indicating that the thing is protected. A bit like how God numbers the hairs on your head. So Jerusalem being measured indicates that God will restore and protect his people.

The city will be without walls, Yahweh himself will be a wall of fire around it and its glory within it. Echoes the wilderness protection of a pillar of fire e.g. that came between Israel and Pharaoh's chariots. Point is that Yahweh will provide protection for his people – not that God will become literally fire.

Wall of fire designating them holy c.f. the walls of the New Jerusalem in Ezekiel and Revelation separate the holy from the unholy.

OT shadow of restoration which will become more fully revealed in Revelation 21-22 – the New Jerusalem and the new heavens and earth.

Application – leave Babylon and associate yourself with Jerusalem.

Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become his people. (This is happening but reaches climax in new heavens and earth.)

He will live among them and they will know that the LORD Almighty has sent the Angel of Yahweh to them.

## **Vision 4            Zechariah 3:1-10**

Joshua is standing before the angel of the LORD (possibly Christ).

Satan is standing at his right hand to accuse him.

Joshua is clothed in filthy garments – covered in human excrement and therefore extremely defiled and unable to serve in God's presence.

Filthy clothes are replaced with “rich garments” and “a clean turban”.

The priestly office is combined with the kingly office such that Joshua is called “my servant, the Branch”. Included is an appropriate commission: “If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts.”

The stone that is set before Joshua is the sacred diadem worn on the forehead by the high priest and engraved with the words “Holy to the LORD”.

Satan's eyes fastened on Joshua's soiled garments but the seven eyes of Yahweh look on the stone on Joshua's forehead, the stone that wins acceptance before the throne in heaven.

A promise to remove the sin of this land in a single day ushering in life in the messianic kingdom where people sit under their vines and fig trees.

## **Vision 5            Zechariah 4:1-14**

Zechariah sees a gold lamp stand flanked with an olive tree on each side from which comes rivers of oil that sustain the lamps.

The lamp stand is the people of God reflecting God's glory.

The olive trees are "sons of oil", prophets who stand before the LORD – members of the heavenly council, who represent God's glory-presence while mediating the Spirit (oil) into the midst of the people of God (the lamp stand).

The two olive trees overarching the lamp stand recall the olive carved cherubim overarching the glory-presence in the Holy of Holies. Both the Cherubim and prophets are part of the divine council.

The temple-building activity will succeed "not by might nor by power" but rather by "the Spirit".

## Vision 6

## ( the flying scroll)

## Zechariah 5:1-4

The flying scroll is the covenant document made with Moses (c.f. curses, whole land, writing on both sides, stealing, false oaths).

It's size is the same as the forecourt of the temple which was associated with judicial processes. Also the size of the Holy Place leading into the Holy of Holies. The flying scroll's dimensions thus direct us to the site from which it issued forth, to the ark in the holy of holies, where the Mosaic treaty texts were kept under the feet of their Author.

The scroll is unusually large – 20 cubits by 10 cubits. It is more like a billboard than a scroll because it is open for all to see – its message is intended to be noticed and read.

The scroll's message is not a good one. The message says that everyone who steals or swears falsely will be cleaned out. In other words the scroll's message is one of judgment and cursing.

Notice also in verse three that the flying scroll goes out over the face of the whole land. The reason that the scroll flies over the whole land is because the whole land is polluted by sin.

The scroll is like a heat-seeking missile honing in on every transgressor and transgression – it is a sin-seeking scroll.

And no sinner can hide – not even in his own house. The scroll is a bit like the Angel of Death passing through Egypt, entering every house bringing judgment.

In this case the judgment is complete devastation in which even their houses – timber and stones – are destroyed.

## **Vision 6            ( the flying ephah)            Zechariah 5:5-11**

A vessel measured as a volume – an ephah – is seen with a lid – a talent weight.

Ephahs and talents associate this part of the vision with the earlier part to do with those who used false weights and measures in contradiction with the Mosaic covenant.

Wickedness portrayed as a woman – like in Revelation where one has the Bride (New Jerusalem) and the Whore (Babylon).

Basket and leaden cover restrains sin (The circular lead lid is heavy making a prison).

Sin is removed from the city of God (Jerusalem) and taken to where it belongs the city of man, the city of the world – Babylon.

The stork-winged women may indicate unclean agents of evil who are used by the God of Israel to transport these unclean people to an unclean land (Babylon). The motifs of winged women and Babylonian temple may indicate a counterfeit to the cherubim and the true Jerusalem temple.

## **Vision 7            Zechariah 6:1-8**

Zechariah sees 4 chariots (with red, black, white and spotted horses). These chariots are 4 winds/spirits (attendants in the heavenly throne room) that stand before the Lord of all the earth.

They *stand before him* as the *Lord of the whole earth*, to receive orders from him and give up their accounts to him concerning their services on this earth, for it is all within his jurisdiction. But, when he appoints, they *go forth* as messengers of his counsels and ministers of his justice and mercy. (Matthew Henry)

Two mountains of bronze could be the two bronze pillars of the heavenly temple? i.e. the chariots come from within the temple from God's presence.

The Shekinah Glory throne in Ezekiel borne by a single chariot with 4 faced living creatures and 4 multi-directional wheels, here becomes 4 chariots still bearing the Shekinah Glory throne.

God comes in power and conquers Babylon and Egypt (symbols of world power opposed to God) resulting in rest for the people of God.

## **Conclusion            Zechariah 6:9-15**

The contributions of Babylon-returned exiles result in the making of a crown for Joshua the High Priest. Further comments link Joshua with the Branch and temple building.

The deposit of the crown in them temple seems to be a sign that in the future "those who are far off will come and build the temple of the LORD."

A final call is made to "completely obey the LORD".



## **Zechariah 11:4-14**

Zechariah plays the role of a good shepherd – representing God.

The sheep are headed for slaughter because of bad shepherds and merchants only interested in meat. The sheep themselves (neighbours to one another) also oppress each other.

Because of this behaviour the shepherd will give them over to destruction.

However, in verse 7 we learn that there are some sheep who are innocent, they are the “oppressed of the flock”.

For their sake judgement is delayed. The shepherd shepherds with rods called Favour and Union. He also removes three bad shepherds in a short period of time.

However the ultimate rejection of the shepherd by the sheep results death, destruction and the sheep devouring each other. The covenant (Favour) between shepherd and sheep is broken as is the brotherhood (Union) between the Judean and Israelite sheep.

The afflicted sheep (the faithful in Zechariah’s day) know that this is the word of the LORD.

For some reason the shepherd is paid 30 shekels of silver, a payment which is rejected and thrown to the potter in the house of the LORD.

## **Zechariah 11:15-17**

Zechariah plays the role of a bad shepherd – representing a figure opposed to God.

This shepherd exploits the sheep for his own gain. Eventually God judges him by causing his arm to wither and his right eye to be blinded.

## Zechariah 12-13

**God will judge the nations who make war against his people**

**(12:1-2) The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel:**

Thus declares the LORD ...

"Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem  
a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples.

The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah.

*What a scene: a huge bowl of wine; several men, representatives of Syria, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistaea, Phoenicia, crowding around the bowl and setting their lips to it! They are athirst to gulp down Israel. But, strange to say, one after another steps backs, reels and staggers as a drunkard, for God has made this to be a bowl of reeling ... They are rendered impotent by the wine of the wrath of God and stagger about like drunken fools. The city of God stands undefeated.<sup>1</sup>*

**(12:3) On that day** I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples.

All who lift it will surely hurt themselves.

And all the nations of the earth will gather against it.

**(12:4) On that day,** declares the LORD,

I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness.

But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open,  
when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

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<sup>1</sup> H.C. Leupold, *An Exposition of Zechariah* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 227.

*Initially, God merely confounds and shames them. Next he allows them to be wounded by what they are doing. In verse 4 they are sent into dangerous madness.<sup>2</sup>*

## **God will strengthen his people through whom he will judge the nations**

*Verses 6-8 refer to the clans of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and those belonging to the House of David. Collectively these three descriptions refer to the Southern Kingdom and post-exilic Judah, that is, the people of God in Zechariah's time.*

*God strengthens his people in order that he might execute judgement on the nations through them. Image used is of fire consuming either wood or harvested wheat.*

**(12:5)** Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves,  
'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength  
through the LORD of hosts, their God.'

**(12:6)** **On that day** I will make the clans (leaders) of Judah  
like a blazing pot in the midst of wood,  
like a flaming torch among sheaves.

And they shall devour to the right and to the left  
all the surrounding peoples,  
while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem.

**(12:7)** And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first,  
that the glory of the house of David  
and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem  
may not surpass that of Judah.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Phillips, *Zechariah* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2007), 260.

(12:8) **On that day** the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David,  
and the house of David shall be like God,  
like the angel of the LORD, going before them.

(12:9) **And on that day** I will seek to destroy all the nations  
that come against Jerusalem.

**God will cause his people to mourn in repentance**

(12:10) And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem  
a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy,  
so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced,  
they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child,  
and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

(12:11) **On that day** the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great  
as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

(12:12) The land shall mourn, each family by itself:  
the family of the house of David by itself,  
and their wives by themselves;  
the family of the house of Nathan by itself,  
and their wives by themselves;

(12:13) the family of the house of Levi by itself,  
and their wives by themselves;  
the family of the Shimeites by itself,  
and their wives by themselves;

(12:14) and all the families that are left, each by itself,  
and their wives by themselves.

Notice the order of events. First pouring out of Spirit causing them to look to Jesus which in turn causes them to repent. Their repentance is then met by Christ's provision in the next chapter.

### God's provision of mercy and cleansing

(13:1) **On that day** there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

(13:2) **And on that day**, declares the LORD of hosts, *I will cut off the names of the idols* from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also *I will remove from the land the prophets* and the spirit of uncleanness.

(13:3-6) And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. **On that day** every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.' And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'

(13:7-9) Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;

I will turn my hand against the little ones.

In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.

And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested.

They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'

## Zechariah 14

**The nations will gather against Jerusalem  
– capture, plunder, rape, exile**

- (1) Behold, a day is coming for the LORD  
when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.
- (2) For I will gather all the nations  
against Jerusalem to battle,  
and the city will be captured,  
the houses plundered,  
the women ravished  
and half of the city exiled,  
but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

NOTE: God in his sovereignty is the one who gathers the nations for judgment even though they are motivated within themselves to gather for rebellion.

Revelation 20:8-9 [Satan] will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to **gather them together for the war**; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and **surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city ...**

**The LORD will go forth and fight for Jerusalem  
People will flee through valley created by his standing on Mount of Olives**

- (3) Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations,  
as when He fights on a day of battle.
- (4) In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,  
which is in front of Jerusalem on the east;  
and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle  
from east to west by a very large valley,  
so that half of the mountain will move toward the north  
and the other half toward the south.
- (5) You will flee by the valley of My mountains,  
for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel;  
yes, you will flee  
just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.  
Then the LORD, my God, will come, *and* all the holy ones with Him!

NOTE: Christ's return to the Mount of Olives. Christ shall come with all the holy ones with him – angels and saints (clothed in white linen riding behind him who sat on a white horse c.f. Revelation 19).



## Eschatological Kingdom of the LORD

### No sun or moon because the LORD will be the city's light

- (6) In that day there will be no light;  
the luminaries will dwindle.
- (7) For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD,  
neither day nor night,  
but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

Revelation 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

### Living waters will flow from Jerusalem

- (8) And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem,  
half of them toward the eastern sea  
and the other half toward the western sea;  
it will be in summer as well as in winter.

Revelation 22:1-2 Then he showed me **a river** of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of **life** ...

### The LORD will be the only king over all the earth

- (9) And the LORD will be king over all the earth;  
in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one.

### Jerusalem will be raised and glorified

- (10) All the land will be changed into a plain  
from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem;  
but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site  
from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate  
to the Corner Gate,  
and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses.

Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to **a great and high mountain**, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God having the glory of God.

### There will be no curse

- (11) People will live in it,  
and there will no longer be a curse,  
for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

Revelation 22:3 There will no longer be any **curse** ...

### The wealth of the nations will be gathered into Jerusalem

- (14) ... and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered,

Revelation 21:24-26 The nations ... and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ... The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

**Returning back to the account of the LORD's defeating his enemies ...**

**Fire from heaven**

- (12) Now this will be the plague  
with which the LORD will strike all the peoples  
who have gone to war against Jerusalem;  
    their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet,  
    and their eyes will rot in their sockets,  
    and their tongue will rot in their mouth.

NOTE: Rotting flesh, eyes and tongues i.e. the purification of flesh while still standing on their feet.

- (13) It will come about in that day  
that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them;  
and they will seize one another's hand,  
and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another.
- (14) Judah also will fight at Jerusalem;  
and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered,  
gold and silver and garments in great abundance.
- (15) So also like this plague will be the plague  
on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle  
that will be in those camps.

Revelation 20:8-9 [Satan] will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to **gather them together for the war**; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and **surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city**, and **fire came down from heaven** and devoured them.

**The remnant of the nations will forever go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (i.e. participate in God's kingdom)**

- (16) Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

Feast of Tabernacles is strongly associated with the Kingdom of God (e.g. in David-Solomon's time, in the Psalms). Also in Revelation there are Tabernacle-like connotations.

Revelation 7:9,14-17 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ... "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation ... he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. ... Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them ... For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Zechariah describes kingdom participation as joining in the Feast of Tabernacles. Revelation 21-22 describes kingdom participation as being in the Lamb's book of life.

**The godless nations (typified by Egypt)  
who do not participate in God's kingdom (typified by Tabernacles)  
will have no rain (death)  
contrasting with Jerusalem's living waters (life)**

- (17) And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.
- (18) If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.
- (19) This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

The nations (exemplified by that classic anti-God nation Egypt) in Zechariah 14 aren't nations thinking "do we or do we not go this year". They are nations that have chosen rebellion and face the certain and complete judgment as a result.

The language of "no rain" is Old Testament language of judgement as is the New Testament language of being "cast outside the city". There is a degree of pictorial language in play (e.g. if on the new earth and you were to walk outside the gates of the New Jerusalem would you find sinners? Or is the language just speaking of judgement and exclusion in the common first century situation of dogs outside the city gates taken as a pictorial illustration?)

**Everything in Jerusalem will be holy even everyday objects  
and no unclean person will live there.**

(20) In that day there will *be inscribed* on the bells of the horses,  
"HOLY TO THE LORD."

And the cooking pots in the LORD'S house  
will be like the bowls before the altar.

(21) Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah  
will be holy to the LORD of hosts;  
and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them.

And there will no longer be a Canaanite  
in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.

Revelation 21:16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. (shape of the Holy of Holies i.e. the whole city and everything in it is holy).

Revelation 21:27 ... and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 22:15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Regarding the fact that even the bells on horses and cooking utensils will be holy to God, I think Revelation 21 describes the same thing in terms of the New Jerusalem being shaped like a cube (the shape of the Holy of Holies. In other words the whole city and all it contains is holy.

It seems that many Old Testament prophecies point to a restored Israel (and earth) described in prophetic-temporal terms while the New Testament interprets these in terms on a new earth and eternity. As Meredith Kline points out, the language reflecting Old Testament covenantal blessings is magnified in light of new heavens and earth. These blessings take us well beyond the natural order, but can only be understood in light of the natural order (Kline, Kingdom Prologue, 152-153).

### Summary

God gathers the nations who attack and defeat Jerusalem (described in normal terms of capture, plunder, rape and exile).

The Lord then descends onto the Mount of Olives saving his people (14:3-5) while judging the nations with a plague of fire from heaven (14:12-15).

Following the eschatological battle is the eschatological kingdom. Zechariah and Revelation both describe it in similar terms:

- No sun or moon because the LORD will be the city's light
- Living waters will flow from Jerusalem
- The LORD will be the one and only king over all the earth
- Jerusalem will be raised and glorified
- The wealth of the nations will be gathered into Jerusalem
- There will be no curse

The same sequence of events occur in Ezekiel, Zechariah and Revelation 20-22.

- (1) An eschatological battle - Ezekiel and Revelation both refer to Gog
- (2) A victory involving fire from heaven
- (3) The establishment of the eschatological kingdom

Zechariah 14 ends with:

- The remnant of the nations forever (year after year) going to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (i.e. participate in God's kingdom).

- The godless nations who do not participate in God's kingdom (typified by Egypt) have no rain (death) c.f. Jerusalem's living waters (life)
- Everything in Jerusalem, even everyday objects, will be holy and no unclean person will live there.