

Supplemental Notes:

The Prophets of the Post-Exile

Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi

*compiled
by
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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant end notes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

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Malachi 1:1 - 5

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Malachi 4

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Haggai

Introduction

Post-exile history: Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Post-exile prophets: Haggai, Zechariah (2 months later), and Malachi (100 yrs later).

Mentioned in Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14. Theme: Rebuilding the Temple.

Name: (Hag means “festival”) = “my festival.”

Style: practical. Work is the measure of life (cf. 1 Cor 15:58; Hag 1:8, 14). (Contrast to his contemporary, Zechariah, who was a visionary.)

Haggi 1:1-11: A Challenge to the People

The year 508 B.C. was significant enough for God to send a prophet to deal with it and to record what happened in the Word of God.

Sixteen years earlier, the Persian emperor, Cyrus, had issued a decree permitting the Jewish exiles in Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (cf. Ezra 1:2-4). About 50,000 returned under the newly appointed governor of Judah, Zerubbabel (also called Sheshbazzar) and Joshua, the high priest. (Technically only 49,897: 42,360, plus 7,337 servants and 200 singers.)

They cleared the temple court of rubble and replaced the altar of burnt offerings on its base, thus allowing the daily sacrifices to begin. In the spring of the next year the foundations of the temple had been laid, then the troubles began. Neighboring tribes—especially the Samaritans—were hostile. Cyrus died in battle, and his successor Cambyses [also called Ahasuerus (Ezra 4:6)] was pressured to stop the work.

When the work ceased, the people returned to their private affairs, and gradually became accustomed to worshiping among the ruins of the once-great temple. The desire to rebuild died out and they became reconciled to remaining the secular occupants in an impoverished land.

The sending of the prophet Haggai to challenge the people to rebuild led to a significant turning point in their history.

Haggai’s audience was the remnant. (They were *not* unbelievers.) They were the right people, living in the right place, wanting to do the right work, and for the right reasons. But their priorities were not right. They were caught up in their own pursuits. They were living for themselves rather than for God’s glory. [Isn’t that *us*?]

The Word of the Lord by Haggai

- 1] In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, {by: Heb. by the hand of} {governor: or, captain}

Darius Hystaspes began his reign in 521 B.C. Times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24) had begun; Gentile calendar used.

Zerubbabel = “sown in Babylon”; grandson of Jehoiachin (1 Chr 3:16-19); appointed by Cyrus to be governor of Judah.

Joshua was son of Josedech, the high priest at the time of the Babylonian invasion (1 Chr 6:15).

- 2] Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.

Opposition of Samaritans was intense. They stopped work and rationalized it as God’s will.

“...it’s not the Lord’s will” = excuses. (The Lord changes His mind a lot...?)

“This people”: the Lord is displeased.

- 3] Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,
- 4] [Is it] time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house [lie] waste?

“Cieled houses” = beautifully paneled. Their homes were elegant; but no Temple has been built. They had put their own homes before God’s house.

- 5] Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.

Consider...: Heb. Set your heart on your ways. 2X in ch 1; 3X in ch 2.

[Most important stewardship: not money, family, etc.: your *heart*!
Cf. Prov 14:12; Isa 30:21; 53:6; 55:7,9; Jer 10:2, 23.]

- 6] Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages [to put it] into a bag with holes. {with holes: Heb. pierced through}

God was judging them concerning *material* things.

Is “bad luck” God’s way of getting our attention? Difficulties can only come to a child of God for a *purpose*. All our difficulties—circumstances—are “Father filtered.”

[We now pay over 50% in taxes (Federal, state, excise, property, etc.) Inflation is also a hidden, deliberate, tax. Our 1995 dollar is worth 8 cents in 1940 dollars.]

What is the solution? It isn’t political activism, etc. It is obedience. It is getting on with what God has given us to do. Also, cf. 2 Chr 7:14!

- 7] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. {Consider...: Heb. Set your heart on your ways}

Matthew 6:33. Money can be spiritual. It is simply means to be applied. Your home can be spiritual. It can be as sacred as your church.

God’s Command

- 8] Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

Command of three things:

- 1) Go up to the mountain
- 2) Bring the wood
- 3) Build the house.

Life is not “complicated” if you put God *first*. God favors work. No easy (“miracle”) shortcut to success (in anything). The Holy Spirit never blesses laziness.

Approach: Mind. Heart. Will. (See *The Way of Agape* for an in-depth study.) This is the day of spectator sports, and spectator Christians.

- 9] Ye looked for much, and, lo, [it came] to little; and when ye brought [it] home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that [is] waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. {blow...: or, blow it away}

They had zeal only for their own interests. God caused the drought; and their lack of success. America: Hasn’t He sent floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, riots in the streets—you name it—to get our attention?

- 10] Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed [from] her fruit.

No rain. No crops. A trade deficit, et al.

- 11] And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon [that] which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

Famine in the Scriptures is often an instrument of God’s wrath (2 Kgs 8:1; Ps 105:16). The Torah foretold such visitations for disobedience (Lev 26:19-20; Deut 28:23-24).

He told Israel He was responsible. They had neglected Him.

[Is Washington to blame for our problems? Or are we ourselves? Cf. 2 Chr 7:14.]

Haggai 1:12-15: The Response to the Challenge

- 12] Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord.

The results of Haggai’s message: They 1) obeyed God (1 Sam 15:22) and 2) feared God (Prov 9:10; 1 Jn 1:7).

William Gladstone, the famous British statesman, was asked what was the mark of a great statesman. His reply: “A statesman is a man who knows the direction God is moving for the next 50 years.” We don’t have men who know God at all—let alone where He is heading in the next 50 minutes.

- 13] Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I [am] with you, saith the Lord.

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age (Mt 28:20).

["I will be with you..for that's who I AM."]

- 14] And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,

Shealtiel = "asking of God in prayer."

The leaders had their own sleeves rolled up. Leadership + action.

- 15] In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

It is now 23 days since verse 1.

Haggai 2

Discouragement of the People Encouragement of the Lord

- 1] In the seventh [month], in the one and twentieth [day] of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying, {by: Heb. by the hand of}

They had been working about a month. Note: It was the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the final feast of ingathering (Lev 23:39-44).

- 2] Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,
3] Who [is] left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? [is it] not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

Many could remember the splendor of Solomon's Temple, and this one was poor by comparison. They probably rushed, and improvised to have it ready for the Feast of Tabernacles (Ezra 3:8-13).

- 4] Yet now **be strong**, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and **be strong**, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and **be strong**, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I [am] with you, saith the Lord of hosts:

Notice how often God's messenger admonishes us to "be strong": Josh 1:6,7,9 (cf. v.8); 10:25; 1 Chr 28:20; Eph 6:10. Don't be discouraged. "I am with you."

- 5] [According to] the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

The covenant at Sinai (Ex 6:7; 19:5; 33:12-14).

Then, He was "among" them. Now, He is "in" us! "With Him we can't. Without us, He won't."

- 6] For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it [is] a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry [land];

[vv.6-9 are distinctly Messianic as Zech 9:9-10; Isa 61:1-3; Dan 9:24-27, etc.]

- 7] And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

(These words are repeated directly to Zerubbabel in vv 21,22.)

The Ionian Greeks had been subjected to the rule of the Persians under Cyrus since about 540 B.C. In 501 B.C., about 20 years after the date of Haggai's prophecy, they rebelled against Persia, bringing on a Persian invasion of Greece about a decade later. Darius, the king at this time, led a great army but was defeated at Marathon in 490 B.C. Darius' successor Xerxes marshaled an even larger army (1.8 million men) and the largest army ever seen. But in 480 B.C. the Greeks scattered the Persian navy and defeated the Persian army at both Thermopylae and Plataea. A year later the reassembled Persian navy was again defeated.

As the Persian Empire began a gradual collapse, Alexander the Great led the Greek armies over the Bosphorus against Persia and defeated the Persian armies at Granicus in 334 B.C., Issus in 332 B.C., and Arabela in 331 B.C. After Alexander's death, the Greek empire broke up and was eventually replaced by Roman rule of the Mediterranean countries.

The overthrow of the Persians by the Greeks; the rise of Alexander; etc., certainly involved a shaking of the nations during the subsequent period. However, the book of Hebrews applies Haggai's words to the shaking at God's final judgment (Heb 12:26,27). Note, "Once more..." (Cf. I will shake. Ezek 21:27 Dan 2:44,45 7:20-25 Joel 3:9-16 Lk 21:10,11.)

"The desired of all nations" = ? Many interpretations. Feminine singular subject with a plural verb. Some (Thomas V. Moore, et al.) regard this as the "wealth" of the heathen, which seems to be confirmed with the "gold and silver" in v.8.

Others believe it is the chosen, the elect, out of all nations.

Earliest Christian, and Jewish traditions ascribe this to refer to the Messiah. The grammar is not an objection since in Hebrew an abstract noun is often placed for the concrete, and sometimes the verb agrees with the second of the two nouns. [Feinberg, p.244]

"The glory of this house will be greater..."

The *shekinah* (1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chr 5:13-14) had departed the 1st Temple long before it was destroyed by the Babylonians. (During the days of Mannaseh?) The *shekinah* was not in the 2nd Temple .

Babylonian Talmud: Five things were missing from the Temple of Zerubbabel:

- 1) the ark of the covenant,
- 2) the holy fire from heaven,
- 3) the Urim and Thummim,
- 4) the Shechinah, or visible glory, and
- 5) the spirit of prophecy (the Holy Spirit).

However, One greater than Temple had arrived! (Mt 12:6; Jn 1:14) It will appear again (Mt 24:3).

- 8] The silver [is] mine, and the gold [is] mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

1Kgs 6:20-35; 1Ch 29:14-16; Ps 24:1; 50:10-12; Isa 60:13,17.

- 9] The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

(Rather, "The latter glory of this house..." Mt 12:6.)

"Peace": Rom 5:1.

Haggai 2:10-19: Appeal to the Law

- 10] In the four and twentieth [day] of the ninth [month], in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

[Dec. 24, 520 B.C.? The day before Hannukah would eventually be celebrated. (Authenticated in John 10:22)]

- 11] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Ask now the priests [concerning] the law, saying,
12] If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

(Ex 29:37; Lev 6:18, 27,29; 7:6; 22:4-6; Ezek 44:19; Mt 23:19.)

- 13] Then said Haggai, If [one that is] unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

Important principle: Holiness *cannot* be communicated by contact. Unholiness *can* be communicated by contact (cf. Num 5:2,3; 9:6-10; 19:11-22).

[Dirty water will discolor clean water; not the opposite. Measles is communicated by contact. The absence of measles is not. Ceremony cannot cleanse a sinner.]

Cf. Lev 22:4-6; Mt 7:16. You cannot run with the wrong crowd and stay clean. If we could see ourselves we could not stand ourselves. (Jer 17:9; Mt 15:18-20).

Lady Macbeth, walking in her sleep, rubbing her hand and exclaiming: "Out, damned spot! out, I say!...Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." How true.

Nor the heart. (Acts 8:21; Eph 6:6; Heb 10:22.)

- 14] Then answered Haggai, and said, So [is] this people, and so [is] this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so [is] every work of their hands; and that which they offer there [is] unclean.

Their unclean hearts made their service for God unclean. This is the reason that an unsaved person can do *nothing* that is acceptable to God.

- 15] And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord:
- 16] Since those [days] were, when [one] came to an heap of twenty [measures], there were [but] ten: when [one] came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty [vessels] out of the press, there were [but] twenty.
- 17] I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye [turned] not to me, saith the Lord.
- 18] Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth [month, even] from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider [it].
- 19] Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless [you].

Haggai 2:20-23: A Revelation of God's Program

- 20] And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth [day] of the month, saying,

(Two messages the same day? A day later to be celebrated as Hanukkah..)

- 21] Speak to *Zerubbabel*, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;
- 22] And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

“Throne” is singular, not plural. One supreme rule over the earth, permitted of God, but who will be replaced by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Rev 11:15)

- 23] In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.

“...that day”: not *this* day.

“Signet”: an authentication of royalty. Zerubbabel, son of a Shealtiel, appears in each of the genealogies of both Matthew and Luke—although they are different men.

[Temple completed 4 years later (Ezra 5:1). They viewed it as meager. God viewed it as great (Mt 12:6).

* * *

Appendix:

Ezekiel's “430 Years”

Ezekiel 4:1-8: 430 years of judgment predicted. 430 - 70 years captivity = 360 unaccounted for?

Cf. Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28: Multiply by seven. $360 \times 7 = 2520$ years.

360-day years: Genesis 7:24, 8:3,4, etc.; Revelation: 42 months; 3 1/2 years; 1260 days; being equivalent, etc.

$2520 \text{ years}_{360} = 907,200 \text{ days}$.

$2483 \text{ years}_{365} = 906,295 \text{ days,} + ?$

What About Leap Years?

The Julian year is 11 minutes 10.46 seconds longer than the mean solar year. Therefore the Julian calendar contains 3 leap years too many every 4 centuries. An error of 11 days occurred as of 1752 A.D. and was corrected by the Gregorian reform which declared September 3 to be September 14, 1752, and reckoning 1700, 1800, and 1900 as common years and 2000 as a leap year.

Dividing 2483 by 4 = 621, with 18 too many (3 excess every 4 centuries); 11 have already been corrected for by the Gregorian reform: $18 - 11 = 7$; $621 - 7 = 614$.

2483 years ₃₆₅	=	906,295 days
plus, for leap years		614 days
9 months		270 days
21 days		21 days
2520 years ₃₆₀		907,200 days

Don't confuse the "Servitude of the Nation" with the "Desolations of Jerusalem." The "Desolations of Jerusalem" was punishment for not yielding to the "servitude": Jeremiah 27:6, 8, 11; 38:17-21. Cf. Jeremiah 29:10; Daniel 9:2.

Both the "Servitude of the Nation" and the "Desolations of Jerusalem" were predicted to last 70 years, but these were 360-day years:

$$70 \text{ years}_{360} = 25,200 \text{ days} = 69 \text{ years}_{365} \text{ less 2 days.}$$

Servitude of the Nation

606 B.C. + 69 years = 537 B.C. If July 23, 537 B.C. was the release from the *Servitude of the Nation*, then:

$$\begin{array}{r} -537^y \ 7^m \ 23^d \\ \text{(no "year 0")}: \quad \quad \quad 1 \\ \hline 2483^y \ 9^m \ 21^d \\ 1948 \ 5 \ 14 \end{array}$$

which is **May 14, 1948**. It was on this date that David Ben Gurion declared on international radio, and using Ezekiel as his authority, the reestablishment of **Israel** as the new Jewish homeland.

Desolations of Jerusalem

587 B.C. + 69 years = 518 B.C. If August 16, 518 B.C. was the completion of the *Desolations of Jerusalem*, then:

$$\begin{array}{r} -518^y \ 8^m \ 16^d \\ \text{(no "year 0" 1 B.C. to 1 A.D.)} \quad \quad \quad 1 \\ \hline 2483^y \ 9^m \ 21^d \\ 1967 \ 6 \ 7 \end{array}$$

which is **June 7, 1967**. As a result of the "Six Day War", Israel regained control of the Old City of Jerusalem, for the first time since the time of Christ. Cf. Luke 21:24.

A stretch, but interesting.

* * *

Prayer issues: Right people. Right place. Right time. Right reasons. Help us with our priorities.

Zechariah

The Apocalypse of the Old Testament The *Most Messianic* book of the OT

Often called the Apocalypse of the OT, it presents the Messiah as:

The Branch who will remove iniquity;

The Stone;

His Throne;

His Temple;

The Coming King;

The Shepherd;

The Triumphal Entry, on a donkey;

His Betrayal for 30 pieces of silver;

His Crucifixion, and

His Second Coming: "looking upon me whom they pierced."

It also focuses on the Day of YHWH, the return of Israel in unbelief, and their passing through the Great Tribulation; the siege of Jerusalem by the confederated Gentile powers, and their deliverance by King Messiah.

Zechariah also gives us the only physical description of the Antichrist in the Scripture. [It also seems to suggest a neutron bomb in Chapter 14.] It also may hold the solution to the enigma of "Mystery Babylon" and its relation to literal Babylon in prophecy.

This most challenging little book is second only to Isaiah in its distinctiveness and importance as a Messianic prophet.

Introduction

The postexilic Prophet Zechariah was a Levite born in Babylon (Neh 12:1, 16).

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai the prophet, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 5:1-2; Zech 3:1; 4:6; 6:11). Zechariah returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with almost 50,000 other Jewish exiles. He was probably a relatively young man at the beginning of his prophetic ministry (cf. 2:4) while Haggai might have been considerably older.

Zechariah = “Whom Yahweh Remembers.”

Son of Berechiah = “Yahweh Blesses.”

Son of Iddo = “The Appointed Time.”

[Some confused: no word for “grandson”; i.e., Gen 31:28, et al.]

[Note also how the Holy Spirit dwells on the meaning of names, and their order, in the case of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:2. The Genealogy in Genesis 5 is another provocative example. See *The Flood of Noah* Briefing Package or our *Genesis* Commentary for further details.]

Nehemiah speaks of an Iddo as one of the priestly families returning to Judah (Neh 12:4, 16). Both Jeremiah (Jer 1:1) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3) were also priests.

There are 29 “Zechariahs” in the OT; at least 30 total.

Mt 23:35: “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.”

Jewish Targum states that Zechariah the son of Iddo was slain in the sanctuary and that he was both prophet and priest. Neh 12:4 includes Iddo as one of the heads of a priestly family.

Josephus (in *War of the Jews*, iv. 5, 34) mentions the murder of “Zecharias, the son of Baruch (Barachiah?) As perpetrated in the Temple by the Zealots just before the destruction of Jerusalem (Ellicots’s *Commentary on the Whole Bible*).

[It is possible, but not probable, that our Lord was referring to the martyrdom of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who was stoned to death in the court of the Temple (2 Chr 24:20, 21).]

Zechariah, in effect, closes the OT. Luke opens with the account of another Zechariah (“Yahweh Remembers”) and his wife Elisabeth (“His Oath”). Also a priest, the angel ends 400 years of silence with the announcement of the forthcoming birth of John the Baptist.

Written 520 B.C.; contemporaneous with Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Zechariah contains more *Messianic* prophecies than all of the other “Minor” prophets put together.

“Minor” is a designation from their length (although Zechariah is the longest of them). In the Hebrew Scriptures, they are “The Twelve” and form a part of the *nebhi'im 'aharonim*, the latter prophets. Among these, Zechariah is the preeminent.

It is the longest book of the 12 “Minor” prophets, and it is the most frequently quoted:

71	quotes or allusions in NT; 1/3 of these in the Gospels;
31	[name of God, <i>EI</i>] in Revelation; 20 from Chapters 1-8; 8 from Chapters 9-14.

The Historical Background of Zechariah

[Excerpted from John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.]

The fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. marked the finale of the kingdom of Judah, much as the earlier defeat at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 B.C. brought to an end the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Most of Jerusalem’s inhabitants were deported to Babylon for a period of about 70 years, as prophesied by the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer 25:11; 29:10).

During this Exile the Prophet Daniel received the revelation that Gentile kingdoms would be dominant over Judah and Israel until God would set up His kingdom on the earth under the rule of the Messiah (Dan 2; 7). This period was referred to by Jesus Christ as “the times of the Gentiles” (Lk 21:24).

When the Babylonian Empire fell to the Persian Empire (539 B.C.), Cyrus the Great decreed (2 Chr 36:22, 23) that the Jews could return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:2-4; cf. Isa 44:28). However, only a small minority of about 50,000 Jews (including Haggai and Zechariah) returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 2).

Levitical sacrifices were soon reinstituted on a rebuilt altar of burnt offering (Ezra 3:1-6), and in the second year of their return the foundation of the temple was laid (Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16). However, external oppression and internal depression halted the rebuilding of the temple for about 16 more years of spiritual apathy till the rule of the Persian King Darius Hystaspis (522-486 B.C.).

In the second regnal year of Darius (520 B.C.) God raised up Haggai the prophet to encourage the Jews in rebuilding (Ezra 5:1-2; Hag 1:1). Haggai preached four sermons in four months and then disappeared from the scene. Two months after Haggai delivered his first sermon, Zechariah began his prophetic ministry (cf. Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1), encouraging the people to spiritual renewal and motivating them to rebuild the temple by revealing to them God's plans for Israel's future. With this prophetic encouragement the people completed the temple reconstruction in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15).

The dated portions of Zechariah's prophecy fall within the period of the rebuilding of the temple. The undated prophecies of Zechariah 9-14 were probably written much later in his ministry. According to Jewish tradition, Zechariah was a member of the Great Synagogue, a council originated by Nehemiah and composed of 120 members. Ezra is said to have been the president of this council, which was later succeeded by the Sanhedrin. The following summary compares significant dates in the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah:

Dates of Key Events

August 29, 520 B.C.	Haggai's first sermon (Hag 1:1-11; Ezra 5:1)
September 21, 520	Temple building resumed (Hag 1:12-15; Ezra 5:2)
October 17, 520	Haggai's second sermon (Hag 2:1-9)
October - November	Zechariah's ministry begun (Zech 1:1-6)
December 18, 520	Haggai's third and fourth sermons (Hag 2:10-23)
February 15, 519	Zechariah's eight visions (Zech 1:7-6:8)
December 7, 518	Delegation from Bethel (Zech 7)
March 12, 515	Temple dedicated (Ezra 6:15-18)

[Dates according to Walvoord and Zuck]

The Unity of the Book

The arguments for a later date generally emphasize stylistic differences and alleged historical discrepancies. Such arguments have been answered satisfactorily by conservative scholars who have demonstrated that the entire Book of Zechariah was indeed written by the prophet. [Freeman, pp. 337-44; Unger, pp. 12-4; see also Baron, pp. 261-282; Pusey, vol.II, pp. 327-338; Lange, pp. 11-16]. The differences in subject matter, literary style, and probably a later period in

Zechariah's life account adequately for the stylistic differences found in Chapters 9-14.

[The reference to Greece in 9:13 does not require a late date if one accepts the reality of predictive prophecy.]

A related challenge emerges from Matthew 27:9,10, which assigns Zechariah 11:12 to Jeremiah. The Talmud specifically states (*Baba Bathra*) that Jeremiah was arranged by the Jews in their canon as the first of the prophets. In this way Jeremiah lent his name to all the prophetic books, and Matthew so treats it. [Feinberg, *God Remembers*, p. 10.]

The Lord Jesus received all The Twelve as the Scripture of God. Josephus and others present the book of Zechariah just as we now have it.

Outline of Zechariah

Introduction:

Eight (or Ten re: McGee) Visions (in one night!): 1:7 - 6:15
 Riders under Myrtle Trees: 1:7-17
 Four Horns: 1:18-19
 Four Smiths: 1:20-21
 Man with Measuring Line: 2
 Joshua and Satan: 3:1-7
 The Branch: 3:8-10
 Lampstand and Two Olive Trees: 4
 Flying Roll: 5:1-4
 Woman and the Ephah: 5:5-11
 Four Chariots: 6

Historic Interlude:

Queries regarding feast days (Zechariah was also a priest).

Messianic Prophecies:

First Advent of Christ: 9-11
 Second Coming: 12-14

The text suggests that Zechariah was a young man when he received his visions in Chapters 1-8. Chapters 9-14 were probably written much later, in Zechariah's old age. If Zechariah was 30 years old when he wrote the 1st eight chapters, he must have been 70 when he wrote the last six chapters. His age, and the changes in political circumstances (the revolt of Egypt in 486 B.C. and death of Darius in 485 B.C.) account for the differences in style, outlook, and themes between Chapters 1-8 and 9-14.

The Greek manuscript found in the Dead Sea Scrolls contains the end of Zechariah 8 and the beginning of Zechariah 9, with no gap or space between the two chapters.

Zechariah continued to minister long after Haggai's brief 5-month ministry from Aug 29 to December 18, 520 B.C. Zechariah's ministry may have stretched as long as 50 years, from 520 B.C. to 470 B.C. [A chronology of relevant events will be appended with the notes on Zechariah 9.]

* * *

Zechariah 1

The Call to Repentance

This call to repentance establishes the prerequisite for the spiritual blessings promised to Israel in the eight (ten?) visions to follow. G.L. Robinson has called this "one of the strongest and most intensely spiritual calls to repentance to be found in the Old Testament."

God would not bestow comfort on unrepentant hearts. God's covenants with Abraham (cf. Gen 12:2-3; 15:5-21) and David (cf. 2 Sam 7:8-16) rendered certain the fulfillment of His purposes for Israel. But those covenants did not nullify the need for each generation of Israelites to be obedient to God in order to experience His promised blessings. What are the implications here for us as Christians?

- 1] In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

"...eighth month": (which began October 27, 520 B.C.) = November. Haggai had begun in the 6th month of that year and prophesied in Sept,

Oct., and Dec., but not Nov. Zechariah seems to have filled a gap of some kind. [Haggai's timing: see Kaiser, p.286.]

[Convinced, but can't prove, dates are significant, re: Dan 9, Gen 8:4, et al.]

Haggai's task was to rouse the people to continue the task they had started 16 years earlier. Zechariah's task was to focus on a complete spiritual revival.

Significant is the fact that a Jewish prophet dated his prophecy according to the reign of a *Gentile* monarch, rather than by Judean kings in the line of David. This was a vivid reminder to all of Zechariah's hearers that "the times of the Gentiles" (Cf. Luke 21:24; Dan 2; 7) were in progress and that no descendant of David was sitting on the throne in Jerusalem (cf. Hosea 3:4-5).

Darius I the Great was an Achemenid prince, the son of Hystaspes, who saved the Persian empire in the revolt that followed the death of his predecessor, Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.), who in turn succeeded Cyrus the Great who founded the mighty Persian empire which ruled the world for over two centuries (539-331 B.C.). It was this Darius who is so prominent in the datings of the books of Haggai and Zechariah, who is no less famous archaeologically. It was he who recorded his triumph over his enemies trilingually on the famed rock of Behistun, the decipherment of which furnished the key to unlocking Babylonian-Assyrian cuneiform, the wedge-shaped writing of antiquity.

Four summons (1:3-6) delivered three months before the eight night visions (1:7-6:8); 18 years since Cyrus issued his famous decree allowing the Jews to return to their land.

"...came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah": This phrase occurs 14 times in this book. It is the same expression Haggai used. Here is identified the real author of this book!

He was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo the priest. Ezra and Nehemiah referred to him as "a descendant of Iddo" (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; cf. Neh 12:4, 16), implying perhaps that his father had died young and Zechariah became the successor of his grandfather (cf. Neh 12:4, 16). So, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, Zechariah was both a prophet and a priest.

Son of Iddo = “(At) The Appointed Time.”
 Son of Berechiah = “Yahweh Blesses.”
 Zechariah = “Whom Yahweh Remembers.”

- 2] The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

“...sore displeased” = lit. “Angry with anger”; emphasized by three grammatical devices: the initial position of the verb in the sentence; the use of the cognate accusative (“to be angry with anger,” a Hebraism meaning to be “severely angry;” the choice of the word *qatsaph*, further emphasizes God’s keen displeasure.

[34X: wroth 22, wrath 5, displeased 3, angry 2, angered 1, fret 1. to be displeased, be angry, fret oneself, be wroth; provoke to wrath or anger; to put oneself in a rage, anger oneself.]

This warning stating not to repeat the errors of their fathers is similar to Paul’s in 1 Cor 10:11.

This warning for the present (v.2) extended divine grace (v.3) and drew its severity from the threefold lesson from the past:

disobedience (v.4);
delay (v.5) and
doubt (v.6).

Both testaments affirm God’s wrath as well as His love (Ex 34:6-7; Deut 7:7-11; Jn 3:15, 36). God will deal with sin (2 Pet 3:9).

- 3] Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

“Thus saith the Lord of *Tsabaoth*” - 52X in this book (3X in this verse; 18X in Chapter 8).

צבאות *Tsabaoth*, (plural); צבא, *tsaba* (singular); “that which goes forth, army, war, warfare, host;

host (of an organized army);
 host (of angels);
 of sun, moon, and stars;
 of whole creation;
 war, warfare, service, go out to war; service.”

[485 occurrences: host 393, war 41, army 29, battle 5, service 5, appointed time 3, warfare 2, soldiers 1, company 1, misc 5;]

Armies of Israel (Judg 5:14; 1 Sam 17:45);
 Armies of heaven (1 Kgs 22:19; Lk 2:13; Rev 19:14).

“(Re)Turn”: to the Lord. In all of Scripture, this is the one prerequisite to receiving *any* of God’s blessings (Isa 55:6-7; Joel 2:12-13; Mal 3:7; Mt 3:7; 4:17; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; 2 Cor 7:10).

Are people today any more heavenly inclined than those of Zechariah’s day? (!) Personal repentance is always a prerequisite for any fellowship with the Living Lord (1 Jn 1:9).

We must be responsive to the lessons of history if we do not wish to be destroyed.

- 4] Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and [from] your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.

It is risky business to waste the lessons of previous generations.

History teaches that man learns nothing from history.

—Hegel

A call to repentance, one of the principal goals of all prophecy. Is it effective in *your* life?

We must realize how brief the time and opportunities are if we wish to do anything positive.

- 5] Your fathers, where [are] they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

Two rhetorical questions which highlight the brevity of human life (and thus the hazard of delay in repentance!). [How many “weekends” do you have left?]

Lord, teach us to number our nanoseconds...

Ps 90:12 (Intel version)

We must count on the unchangeableness of our Lord's Word if we wish to do anything that lasts.

- 6] But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, 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.

“But...”: this being with a strong adversative. God's Word is permanent, unchangeable, immutable. [We need to distinguish between the weakness and fragility of the best of God's servants—including televangelists and pastors—and the abiding veracity and eternal effectiveness of the message these prophets bring!]

“Did not my words overtake your fathers?” Like a highway patrolman pulling a speeder over, God's Word will nail us with precision for every infraction...

“Overtake” is direct quote from Moses (Deut 28:15, 45).

While there were *external symbols* of a turning back to God, such as sackcloth (Jonah 3:6,8; Neh 9:1; Dan 9:3; Joel 1:8; Isa 58:5) and ashes (Est 4:3; Dan 9:3; Isa 58:5), it is more important to *rend our hearts* (Joel 2:13).

Now are a series of eight (10? Re: McGee, Luck, et al.) visions given in a single night, which bridge the centuries between the rebuilding of the Temple until the kingdom is restored to Israel under the Messiah (Acts 1:6, 15:16).

Each has a similar pattern: introductory words, a description of things seen, a question of the angel for its meaning, and an explanation by the angel.

Vision of the Rider Among the Myrtle Trees

- 7] Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which [is] the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

The day the visions came was the 24th day of the 11th (Jewish) month of Darius' second regnal year (February 15, 519 B.C.). *Shebat* was the Babylonian name of the 11th month, adopted by the Jews after the

Exile. This date was five months after the building of the temple was resumed (Hag 1:14-15; 2:15), three months after Zechariah's first prophecy (Zech 1:1), and two months after Haggai's last prophecy (Hag 2:20—a prophecy regarding the destruction of world powers before the millennial rule of the Messiah; cf. Hag 2:21-23).

The 24th day of the month is specified in two other occasions during this period after the exile: Hag 1:15 and 2:10, 18, 20. This was the day when the work on the Temple was resumed. Israel's obedience seems to be memorialized by further revelations.

The eight prophecies appear in a *chiastic* pattern, with the theological climax coming in the 4th and 5th visions (with the 2nd & 3rd, 4th and 5th, and the 6th and 7th in pairs) [Kaiser, p. 303].

- a) The calm before the international storm (1:7-17);
 - b) Watching the nations punish one another (1:18-21);
 - b) Expecting the glory of God on Earth (2:1-13);
 - c) Removal of sin all in one day (3:1-10);
 - c) Receiving God's Spirit for His work (4:1-14);
 - b) Purging evil from Israel [Man's glory positioned for judgment?] (5:5-11);
 - a) Executing judgment on the Gentile Nations (6:1-15)
- 8] I saw by night, and [behold!] a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.

He *saw*: he was awake, as indicated by his questions (v.9) and interruptions (3:5).

The man riding the red horse was, apparently, the leader, receiving reconnaissance reports from the rest. (The other riders are only implied; only their horses are mentioned.) He is seen “standing” (astride his horse). [Note v.10] He is identified in v.11 as the Angel of the Lord. He is the center of *all* history.

Angel of the LORD: Gen 16:7 is the first reference in the Old Testament to “the Angel of the LORD” (lit., “the Angel of Yahweh”). In Exodus 23:20-21, God's “name” was “in” this one. This Angel is identified with Yahweh in Gen 16:13, as well as in 22:11-12; 31:11, 13; 48:16; Judg 6:11, 16, 22; 13:22-23; Zech 3:1-2. And yet the Angel is distinct from Yahweh (Gen 24:7; 2 Sam 24:16; Zech 1:12). Thus, “the Angel

of the LORD” may refer to a theophany of the preincarnate Christ (cf. Gen 18:1-2; 19:1; Num 22:22; Judg 2:1-4; 5:23; Zech 12:8).

[Don’t confuse Him with “the angel that talked with me,” Zechariah’s interpreter (1:8; 2:3; 4:1,5; 5:5; 6:4).]

Red suggests war and judgment (Rev 19:11; the treader of the wine-press, Isa 63:1-6); white, righteousness, mercy, and peace. “Speckled,” “sorrel,” “tawny” (translated “brown” or “speckled”) is unclear, used only here in the OT. (The Angel of the Lord is *not* on the white horse, perhaps to avoid confusion with regard to Rev 6:2.) The present participle here means that the riders (only implied) were in the act of riding at the time of the vision.

Christ is said to be “*among the myrtle trees.*” The myrtle, or *hadassah* shrub (the Jewish form of the name Esther), was an indigenous shrub that grew all over Israel and was a popular name for Israel. (Also, featured in the ritual of constructing booths in the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh 8:15; Lev 23:33-44); suggestive of the millennium (Isa 41:19; 55:13).

He was located “*in the hollow.*” מַצְחֻלָּה, *metsulah*, “a deep place,” “a low ravine.” This was a low time in the nation’s history, a period of deep humiliation. The “times of the Gentiles” had begun (Luke 21:24).

- 9] Then said I, O my lord, what [are] these? And the angel that talked with [in?] me said unto me, I will shew thee what these [be].

The interrogation element is present in each element of the visions. Don’t assume that “the angel that talked with me” is identical with “the Angel of the LORD.” [Pusey: “in me”: heart-to-heart communication?]

- 10] And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These [are they] whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

Their job was to reconnoiter and patrol the events, movements, and happenings on the earth.

[Cf. The “7 eyes,” 3:9; 4:10; Rev 5:6. Also, Noah’s raven (Gen 8:7); the Lord Himself (2 Chr 16:9); Satan (Job 1:7; 2:2); “many” of Dan 12:4, etc.]

- 11] And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

All the earth is resting quietly. The great shake-up of the heaven and the earth that God had promised in Haggai 2:21-2 had not come as immediately as some had hoped.

- 12] Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

The return of the exiles from Babylon was not yet the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jer 25:11 and 29:10 (Cf. v.11); there was more to come!

...and the wait continues to the present moment, even though the State of Israel has been reestablished (May 14, 1948) and Jerusalem was regained (June 1967); and the U.S. is forcing Israel into a retreat through the so-called “peace process.” How long will we poke our finger into the eye of God? How long before God’s promise is finally realized?

The scope of all eight night visions appear to parallel Revelation 5ff. These are a prelude to the unleashing of calamities which are the prerequisite to Israel’s restoration to millennial blessing (Hag 2:21,22; Zech 1:11,12).

- 13] And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me [with] good words [and] comfortable words.

Three Declarations and Four Words of Comfort

[Note: The Lord and the Angel of the Lord, and the Angel who has been talking with him are distinctly separate persons here.]

- 14] So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

[1] *God is zealous for Jerusalem.*

The focal point of the prophecy: the zeal of the Lord: זָקָה; *qana*’ {kaw-naw’} (From the Arabic root, *qana’a*, “to become very red.”)

[33X: - jealous 10, envy 9, jealousy 5, envious 4, zealous 2, very 2, zeal 1, to envy, be jealous, be envious, be zealous to provoke to jealous anger, cause jealousy.]

God is spoken of as being “zealous” or “jealous” (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 5:9). Indeed, a devouring fire (Deut 4:24; 6:15; 29:18,19; 32:16,21).

- 15] And I am very sore displeased with the heathen [that are] at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

[2] *God is exceedingly angry with the nations.*

How about *today*?

- 16] 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.

[3] (*Implicit:*) *God will judge these nations (Joel 3:1ff; Zech 6:1-8)*

Now, Four Comforting Words:

[1] *The Messiah will come to Jerusalem.*

The glory of the Lord (Shekinah) had departed: from the Holy of Holies, to the porch of the Temple, out to the eastern gate, finally up to the Mount of Olives, then ascended up to heaven (Ezek 10:18-19; 11:23).

[2] *My house shall be built in Jerusalem.*

The “second Temple” was only a partial fulfillment. The promise of a Temple (which had never before been seen, Ex 40-48) will be realized in the future. Zechariah will have more to say in Chapter 2.

[3] *Jerusalem’s boundaries would expand.*

The ravaging by the Babalonians in 586 B.C., and the Romans in 70 A.D., notwithstanding, the surveyor’s line would be “stretched out” to measure an enlarged Jerusalem.

- 17] Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

[4] *God would, once again, choose Jerusalem.*

“The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29).

[Since we are the “wild branches” grafted into the olive tree, we should derive comfort from what comforts Israel. 1:17 ends Chapter 1 in Hebrew Bible.]

Zechariah 2

Review

In a day when Israel felt discouraged and forgotten, a young prophet whose name means “Yehovah Remembers” rose in their midst to declare a coming day of unparalleled glory.

With a power and beauty unmatched since the days of Isaiah, this prophet-priest laid out God’s entire panorama, from the rebuilding of the Temple until the coming Messiah who would rule the entire earth from Jerusalem.

Note: Zechariah is *not* a sealed book (except to certain commentators!) Cf. Daniel (Dan 12:9), which was; and Revelation (Rev 22:10), which is not.

Eight (Ten?) Visions: *in one night!* [It is dated on the day—the 24th—that the work on the Temple was obediently resumed.]

Each connected by the Hebrew conjunction (the *waw* connective). *These carry through from the “Times of the Gentiles” until they are restored to their land with their rebuilt city and Temple under the Messiah the King.*

Babylonian Talmud: “This man is no other than the Holy One, blessed be He; for it is said, ‘The Lord is a man of war.’”

The peace among the nations did not mean that the blessing of God was upon them. They were at ease in a bad sense: in carelessness and

unfeeling security. (Cf. Amos 6:1; Isa 32:9, 11; Jer 48:11; also Ezek 38:8,11,14; 39:6,26.)

[1:17 Ends Chapter 1 in the Hebrew. Our English versions follow the Greek (and Latin) versions of the OT.]

* * *

The 2nd Night Vision: The Four Horns

18] Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

The horns, the pride and symbol of strength of animals, are used figuratively to represent the nations that have plagued Israel. (Ps 75:4,5; 102:10; Jer 48:25; Amos 6:13-15. Cf. Mic 4:13; Dan 8:3-4, 20-21.)

“To lift up one’s horn” was a sign of victory (2 Sam 2:1); “to lower one’s horn,” a sign of defeat (Job 16:15).

The Targum renders “four horns” “four kingdoms” here and in vv. 19 & 21.

[Also, note the prevalence of the number 4 in Zechariah: Four horses; four horns; four craftsmen; four chariots; four winds; four subordinate clauses (3:7); four words of comfort; four persons (6:14); four feast days (8:19); four admonitions (8:9f); four-fold guilt (7:13); four pronouncements (8:12); fourfold punishment (8:10); four cities (9:5,13,14,15); four verbs (9:15); groups of 4 things (10:2); four lamentations (11:2f); four animals (14:5), etc. (4 x 2 = 8 visions leads the book.).]

19] And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What [be] these? And he answered me, These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

These are the scatterers who have plagued Israel. Most [Jerome, Kimchi, Targum of Jonathan, et al.] identify them with the four great empires in Daniel (2, 7 & 8), marking the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

Others, specific enemies of the time:

Samaritans on the north;

Ammonites to the east;

Edomites to the south; and

Philistines and Tyrians to the west.

[Feinberg, *Minor Prophets*, p. 278]

More generally, the “4” could also simply signify the four cardinal directions of the compass: complete opposition until the consummation. In any case, the opposition to Israel was not contemporaneous but successive.

Four Smiths

20] And the Lord shewed me four workmen.

These could be any craftsmen: wood-workers (2 Sam 5:11); metal-workers (1 Sam 13:19) or masons (Ex 28:11).

21] Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up [their] horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

He didn’t ask about their identity, only their *function*. The verb is the active participle in Hebrew, indicating what they were doing was already in progress. Also, the “lifting up” horns was also an active participle, indicating that the persecution of the Jews has been continuous, not sporadic.

These workmen are to strike terror into the nations who have trodden down and scattered God’s people, and to bring about the overthrow of Israel’s enemies. They are the instruments of God to break the horns to pieces. For every horn, God has an agency to destroy it. (Some take the horns as the successive empires in Daniel 2 & 7, and thus also as the workmen as each successive “horn” puts down the previous—until the “carpenter” of Nazareth puts down the 4th: Rome, Phase II. He is, in any case, the “ultimate” craftsman!)

We tend to view them as more generic, as exemplified by the prevalence of the number 4 in this book.

[The world would do well to learn the lesson that such action does not pass unnoticed by God; He is still awake to Israel’s interests (Ps 121:4). God is not through with the nation Israel. When He says Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem, His geographic designations are not ambiguous or symbolic.]

God is sovereign over the nations (cf. Dan 4:17, 35). “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

* * *

Zechariah 2

[Just as the 2nd vision was an amplification of 1:15, the forthcoming 3rd vision is an amplification of 1:16.]

Man With a Measuring Line

- 1] I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.

An angel in human form (Cf. As preparing for the Temple, Ezek 40:3; 41; 42; Rev 11:1-2) (Most strongly identify him as Christ; also presented as a man, *'ish*, in Zech 6:12.)

- 2] Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what [is] the breadth thereof, and what [is] the length thereof.

A vision of Jerusalem's enlargement (v4-13). Just as a line was formerly stretched over the city to destroy (2 Kgs 21:13; Isa 34:11), it is now to be extended over Jerusalem preparatory to rebuilding (Job 38:5). According to Josephus, the population increased greatly by the time of the Maccabees.

- 3] And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,
4] And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited [as] towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:

na'ar, young man. Of David by Saul (1 Sam 17:33); Jeremiah of himself (>18); Joseph before Pharaoh (Gen 28). As a priest, he would begin at age 30 (Num 4).

"Without walls" = also speaks of vulnerability (Cf. 1 Sam 6:18; Est 9:19; Ezek 38, 39 where the enemy seeks to take advantage of this condition).

A city without walls (Cf. Isa 49:19-20). When a British Jew, Sir Moses Montefiore, began building houses outside the walls of Jerusalem in the mid-1800's, no one would live in them until he hired a private security force to protect the people. Montefiore's windmill still stands in Jerusalem today. [Note the Ethiopian airlift, spring 1991 (which broke the Guinness' Book of Records: the influx of Russian Jews in 1990, 1991.)]

...but the real scope of the eight night visions—which appear connected—are eschatological: the scope is through the consummation.

- 5] 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.

"I" is emphatic. Contrary to normal Hebrew practice, the verb "to be" is expressed as incomplete or future action. This is reminiscent of the pillar of fire in Exodus (14:19-24; also Isa 4:5; Zech 9:8); also the chariots of fire in 2 Kings 6:17; Isa 66:15; Joel 2:5). The Angel of the Lord had also been previously associated with the cloud (Ex 13:21-22).

"Glory" recalls the tragic reversal of that presence which had departed in Ezekiel's day (Ezek 9:3; 10:19; 11:23). Not until the Lord returns (in the 2nd Coming) would His "glory" come back (Ezek 43:1-7). In that day the name of the city will be "Yehovah-Shammah" - "The Lord is there" (Ezek 48:35).

The remainder of Chapter 2 is in poetry in two stanzas, vv. 6-9 and 10-13. Each begins with a command followed by "for..." Zechariah now speaks, first, to the exiles in Babylon; and then, the people of Zion whose return will act as a symbol of God's work in the final Day of the Lord.

- 6] 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.

הוי, *hoi*, woe, alas, etc.

A direct address to those still in Babylon (Jer 6:22; 16:16). This same command has been given in Jer 50:8, "Move from the midst of Babylon," and 51:6, "Flee from the midst of Babylon."

If Jeremiah's command had been intended to warn Israeli residents of Babylon to flee before it fell in 539 B.C., why did the prophet Daniel remain that fateful eve? He clearly knew and regarded Jeremiah's prophecy as Scripture (Dan 9:2; Jer 25:12; 29:10). When Belshazzar summoned him to interpret the famed "handwriting on the wall" (Dan 5), why didn't Daniel excuse himself and split?

It is the *second* regathering that is the final one—the one presently underway (Isa 11:11-12). Cf. Jer 23:3-8.

Note: the “four winds...” (9X: Jer 49:36; Ezek 37:9; Dan 7:2; 8:8; 11:4; Zech 2:6; Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27; Rev 7:1).

- 7] Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest [with] the daughter of Babylon.

This obviously refers to an eschatological event in which Babylon will be involved in the final events of history before the 2nd Coming of the Lord. [Cf. Rev 17, 18. The ostensible enigma with Papal Rome, we believe, will be resolved in Chapter 5.]

- 8] 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.

“After glory”: he is going to send the Messiah, not the prophet, to visit the nations which have plundered His people. (Mt 25:31-46). The One Sent, in v.8 & 9, can only be the Messiah.

“Sent me” Cf. Isa 61:1,2; John 10:30, 36. When? Psa 2.

“The apple of His eye”: (Cf. Deut 32:10; Ps 17:8; Prov 7:2.) Although the usual word for “apple” of the eye is *‘yshown*, meaning pupil (of the eye), Zechariah uses the word בָּבָה, *babah*, a word that occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible. Babah appears to be a cognate of “Babylon,” which in the Akkadian logographic writing is associated with “gate” in the presence of deity. It could well be then, that Zechariah’s “gate of the eye” is an ironic pun on the pride of Babylon, which called herself the gateway to God. [Kaiser, p. 316]

- 9] For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.

The shaking of the hand is a threatening gesture (Isa 11:15). “They shall know I am the Lord,” is also the watchword of Ezekiel (Cf. 38, 39.)

- 10] Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.

The rock of Behistun at the border of Persia records the two great rebellions of Babylon and of its seizure twice, each during Darius’ reign. The first about the time of Zechariah’s ministry, the 2nd some 6 years later. [Luck, p. 31]

[In the 4th year of Darius, the Babylonians, after much plotting, revolted and shut themselves up in their city, ready for a long siege.

Zopyrus, Darius’ friend and general, cut off his own ears and nose, and by pretending that he had been thus mutilated by Darius, gained entrance into the city and the confidence of the besieged ones. By his craft the gate were opened to the Persians, and when the city was mastered thousands of Babylonian nobles were crucified. (Feinberg, *God Remembers*, p. 50)]

While some of these predictions may have had a preliminary fulfillment at that time, clearly they will experience their literal fulfillment in the days of the reign of their Messiah.

The prophet moves continually from the then present to the far future. The Scripture always views the events in the national life of Israel as but links in a chain working towards the grand finale. All previous events are leading up to that blessed time. [Another of the innumerable examples which support the “premillennial” view, the prevailing view in the first four centuries. Premillennialism’s roots and significance goes far beyond the present “amillennial” criticisms. God will conclude history just as He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He will bring Israel back to her land, and then He will personally reside in the land and will be her King and Sovereign.]

Four Promises are Built Upon vv. 1-6:

1) *Behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst.*

- 11] 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.

2) *The 2nd promise: Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people.*

[“joined”: the same word from which *Levi* comes.]

The term “my people” was generally reserved for Israel, but now includes the *goyim*, or Gentiles, who would be joined by faith to form a new, one people of God. Isa 19:25 used the same term to describe converted Egypt.

[“After this”: Acts 15:14-17 (q.v. Amos 9:11-12). When? After the Rapture: Romans 11:25-26.]

(Cf. Ps 67:2,3; 72:7; Isa 2:1-4; 19:23-25; 60:1-3; Zech 8:20-23.)

The 3rd time the mention of dwelling among His people (cf. v.5, 10). שָׁכַן, *shakan*, is the root from which the *Shekinah* comes.) No can miss the reference to “tabernacling” among them in John 1:14, this reference is clearly to the 2nd coming. What was begun will be consummated at the appearing of glory (Titus 2:11-15; Mal 3:1; Isa 40:10).

The verse concludes in the same manner as v.10.

- 12] And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

3) The 3rd promise: The Lord will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land and will again choose Jerusalem.

[This is the only place where the phrase “holy land” is found in the Scriptures! (Although it does appear in the Apocrypha: *Wisdom* 12:3; *2 Macc* 1:7). However, it is more accurately a millennial epithet and is reserved for a time when the Lord will say, “I will remove the iniquity of that land in a single day...” Zech 3:9, in the next chapter.]

“Choose”: Ps 132:13-14; 78:67-68. Note that it is Judah, not Joseph or Ephraim.

Certainly God is not finished with the city He chose 3,000 years ago for the throne of David (Isa 2:2-3). God will manifest to the world the immutable character of His original choice in the renewed, restored, and resettled Israel. And there will never be peace on earth until there is peace in Jerusalem.

- 13] Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

Hush. The Lion is waking from His lair. Let the foes of Israel beware! He will leave His heavenly temple (Hab 2:20; Ps 68:6; Jer 25:30; Deut 26:15) to come to the earth.

4) The 4th promise is one of worldwide judgment at the Second Coming.

The silence will be broken when the Lamb of God opens the Seven-sealed book in Revelation 5:1-14. [One of my favorite bumper stickers: “Beware the Lamb!”]

Here is the hope of both Israel *and* the Church: “Say unto the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God.’”

What a day that will be:

- 1) The Lord will return.
- 2) The Gentiles will come to know the Lord.
- 3) Jerusalem will be rebuilt and become the New World Center.
- 4) World judgment from God will show right cannot forever be denied. The Lord will be King and truth will be the normal way of life, not the exception.
- 5) Babylon will be judged and Israel will be restored.

Great, indeed, will be the Day of the Lord!

Zechariah 3

Intro/Review

Eight (10?) visions an integrated whole; to be considered *together*: Joshua was the high priest at the time of the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, some 16 years before this (Ezra 4:3; 5:2; Hag 1:1, 12; 2:2; Zech 6:11-15).

Key Issue: How can an infinitely holy God accomplish such grand plans with a sinful and besmirched people?

This vision: the transformation of the nation from self-righteousness to the righteousness of God. [Prophetic: the future conversion of the nation to the Messiah.]

Christ *Intervenes* for Us as our High Priest

- 1] And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

“And” = the *waw* consecutive; all eight visions are an integral sequence.

Joshua = ye-ho-shua: “YHWH saves” (Num 11:28; 13:16; Deut 1:38). Cf. Jesus: “He shall save his people from their sins” Mt 1:21. [Here, Joshua, as high priest, stands as their representative. Cf. v.9.]

“Saw Satan”: He is a real person... Sin is the prerequisite for his attacks.

“To resist him”: “to satanize him”: a paronomasia upon the same root. That’s why we need an advocate. He is the “accuser of the brethren” Cf. Rev 12:10. Who’s our advocate? 1 John 2:1 (And the charges are against me *are* valid).

- 2] And the Lord said unto Satan, 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?

The Lord...the Lord: two persons of the Trinity, distinct. Cf. John 5:17. Cf. Psalm 110, which Jesus quoted to confuse the Pharisees (Mt 22:41-46).

“The Lord rebuke thee”: Cf. Jude 9 (note also that Jude seems to draw from Zechariah in v.23: “fire” and “garments” are echoed).

Repeated 2X for accentuation (Cf. Gen 14:10; Ecc 7:24; Rev 14:8; 18:2). [Satan probably the highest creature God created. Fell through *pride*. Isa 14:12ff.]

It is not Joshua’s sin, but Jerusalem’s; he was representing the people (v.9). The most remarkable aspect: the *basis* upon which God brings to nought the accusations of Satan:

Not because the claims were baseless;
Not because of their suffering;
Not due to a promise to better in the future;
Solely on God’s sovereign choice in *grace* (Rom 9:16; 11:5;
Cf. Rom 9:15; Ex 33:19).

“Brand plucked...” = not only Babylon, but all the worldwide suffering of Israel; as He showed Moses in the desert, He will not allow it to be “consumed” (Ex 3:1-8).

Fire, in connection with Israel:

Covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:17);
Offering of Isaac (Gen 22:7);
Burning Bush (Ex 3:2);
Giving of the Law (Ex 19:18);
Rearing the Tabernacle (Num 9:15);
Wilderness journeyings (Deut 1:33).

Christ *Cleanses* us as our High Priest

- 3] Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

Just as the high priest, on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, “impersonates” Israel. (Leupold) God had chosen him; God had chosen Israel.

“Filthy” - excrement-bespattered; not just vilely dirty, but offensively smelly. [That’s us...] (Only here as an adjective in OT; noun: *טִמְאָה* *tsuah*, from the root, *יָצָא* *yatsa’*, to go forth, to come out, to be evacuated.)

Our garments: Isa 64:6; Prov 30:12; Jude 23; Rev 7:14.

Joshua’s silence analogous to Christ’s in His six trials. Why? Because He was in *our* shoes!

How great it is to have God Himself as our advocate! Rom 8:31-34 (Cf. Isa 50:8-9).

- 4] And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

Joshua (as ourselves) cannot stand before a righteous, holy God with these filthy garments on. “Our righteousness is as (used menstrual cloths)” Isa 64:6.

Emblematic of the taking away of sin (Rom 3:25; Eph 1:7), and the imputation of the righteousness of God (Rom 1:16, 17; 3:22, 26). First occasion: Gen 3:7, 21 = Adam and Eve: by the shedding of innocent blood they would be covered (Cf. Rev 7:13-14).

What’s the answer to our plight? Rom 3:21-24; 8:31-34; 1 Jn 1:9.

High priest’s garments (Ex 28:4,5; Lev 8:7-9) included a “coat” of fine linen (Ex 28:39), the long garment worn next to the person, and the robe of the ephod (Ex 28:31-35) a seamless piece of blue linen worn over the coat; shoulder pieces set with onyx stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes; supported the breastplate (Ex 28:15-21) with an oblong gold setting with 12 precious stones also engrafted with the

names of the 12 tribes; a square pouch of linen (Ex 28:16) containing the Urim and Thummim (Num 27:21; Deut 33:8).

Christ *Challenges* us as our High Priest

- 5] And I said, Let them set a fair mitre (turban) upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.

“I said...”? Zechariah seems to be getting into the act!

Turban: *tsaniyph*, from the root “to wind around.”

“Holiness unto the Lord” (Ex 28:36-38). [Headdress can be seen today at the Temple Institute in Jerusalem.] Jer 2:3; Zech 14:20, 21.

On Yom Kippur, the garments of glory and beauty were put on *after* the full atonement ritual, ministrations which were in simple linen garments (Lev 16:1-24).

It is Israel the nation that is in view (Rom 11:25-29). This signified the complete reinstatement by the Lord. This was clearly God’s work, with no help from man: forgiveness, acceptance, restoration to a position of privilege (Cf. Isa 61:10).

God’s ultimate plan is for all of His people to be a “kingdom of priests.” OT: Ex 19:6; Isa 61:6; NT: 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 1:6.

[Cf. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the wedding garments: Mt 22:1-14; Rev 19:6-16.]

- 6] And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying,
7] 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 that stand by.

The Lord of the Armies. Despite (and yet because of) the new garments, *there remains a call to obedience*. Service is to flow out of a Godly life. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Christ *Delivers* us as our High Priest

- 8] 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.

Imperative followed by the polite; Cf. “If you please,” French, *si l vous plaît*.

“Thou and thy fellows”: not personal, but to the nation in the future. Joshua is that of the coming Savior of Israel.

“Wondered at” = even more glorious events to come!

“Servant”: (Isa 42:1; 49:3; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11; Ezek 34:23-24; Phil 2:6-8).

“The Branch”: צמח, *tsemach*, to sprout out (Cf. Isa 53:1, “a tender plant”).

Isa 4:2: “**Immanuel**” character of Christ (Isa 7:14) to be fully revealed to converted and restored Israel after His 2nd Advent (Mt 25:31).

Jer 23:5; 33:15: “**The Branch of David**” as the offspring of David, according to the flesh (Rom 1:3) to be manifest in His kingdom glory as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:16).

Zech 6:12, 13: as **Son of Man**, the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45-47) reigning as King-Priest over the earth forfeited by the “first Adam.”

1st Advent. (Zechariah uses it as a proper name.) 2nd Advent: נצר *netser*; from the root of David (Isa 11:1-16; Rev 19:16).

Another profile of the Branch, re: the Gospels:

Matthew:	As Royal King: Jer 23:5.
Mark:	As Servant: Zech 3:8 (here).
Luke:	As Son of Man: Zech 6:12.
John:	As Son of God: Isa 4:2.

- 9] 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, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

“The stone”: cut without hands, to smite the image (Gentile dominion), and brake them in pieces: Dan 2:34-35; Laid in Zion: Isa 28:16.

The stumbling stone and rock of offense (Rom 9:32; 1 Cor 1:23) => headstone of the corner (Zech 4:7). The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner (Ps 118:22).

“Seven eyes”: Rev 5:6; Zech 4:10. (Cf. Ezek 1:18; 10:12) Also, Col 2:3; 1 Cor 1:30.

“Engrave the engraving” = of an precious stone; (Isa 28:16; 1 Pet 2:6) (Ex 28:11, 21, 36; 39:6, 14, 30).

Where was He “engraved”? On His brow, and in His hands and feet; and His side. The only man-made things in heaven are scars. These are the divine engraving cut deeply in the precious chosen stone to bring out its beauty and flashing splendor.

The “iniquity of the land”: not Joshua’s personal sin at issue. Scripture is silent concerning his sin personally.

“In a single day”: Calvary, the antitypical Day of Atonement (Lev 16) when the Lamb took away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). After His rejection, the day will arrive when they shall look upon Him “whom they have pierced” (Zech 12:10).

- 10] In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.

“That Day”: The Day of the Lord! Peace and fulfillment.

“Under the vine and fig tree”: Judah and Israel under Solomon (1 Kgs 4:25) as type of Millennium (Mic 4:4), by “One greater than Solomon (is here)” (Mt 12:42).

Zechariah 4

It was God’s purpose that Israel should be His lightbearer and witness to the surrounding nations engulfed in the darkness of paganism. He set the boundaries of the nations accordingly (Deut 32:8; Mt 5:14-16; Lk 12:35; Eph 5:8-9; Phil 2:15; Rev 1:20).

Jerusalem was set in the center: Ezek 5:5 (All languages write “toward” Jerusalem: western, left to right; eastern, right to left!)

[There seems to be an interval between this and the previous visions.]

Israel, however, failed abysmally in her national calling. The rejection of the Messiah resulted in the destruction of the Temple and the

institution of national blindness (Lk 19:42) until the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” (Rom 11:25).

During this interval, seven (separate) lampstands bear the light: Rev 2 & 3, with a spiritual unity under the headship of Christ, yet each mutually independent and government and external order. (With the Lord *in their midst*.)

Lampstand and Two Olive Trees

- 1] And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

As Abraham in Gen 15:12; also, at the Transfiguration, Lk 9:32.

- 2] And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a lampstand 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:

This lampstand (of solid gold) was apparently similar to the lampstand placed in the tabernacle (cf. Ex 25:31-40), and the 10 lampstands of Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 7:49).

[Note: The official symbol of Israel is the *Menorah* (“lightbearer”)—not the *Magen David*. The “Shield of David” was originally the “Seal of Solomon,” an occultic symbol. [See *The Star of David* by Dr Asher Eder, and *The Magen David* by W. Gunther Plant.]

The Tabernacle “The House of Blood”

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he not only had two tables of stone with the Ten Commandments, he also had been given a highly detailed set of specifications for a portable sanctuary, known as the Tabernacle, that was to accompany them during their wanderings. In fact, Moses was apparently shown a model to follow in its building (Heb 9:24; Rev. 11:19. Complete details in Ex 25-27; 35-38).

It is important to keep in focus God’s purpose in having Moses prepare this sanctuary: that God might dwell among His people. (Ex 25:22.) The Tabernacle would serve this purpose until the Temple of Solomon was built.

This unique structure was composed of a linen fence enclosing a courtyard containing a portable building and seven articles of “furniture.”

The Courtyard

The outside element was a linen fence, supported by poles set in bronze sockets, with a single entrance on the east side. This area was approximately 75 feet by 150 feet, depending upon the precise length of a “cubit,” here assumed to be about 18 inches. (Various authorities estimate a cubit to be between 14 and 25 inches.)

Upon entering, the first item to be encountered was a bronze altar for sacrifices to be offered in accordance with the various Levitical ordinances.

The next item was a large laver for washing before entering the Holy Place itself. (This is translated “molten sea” in the King James Version. “Molten” is a way of referring to cast bronze.)

The Building Structure

The building itself was assembled from vertical wooden planks covered with gold, and fitted with rings which, when fitted with horizontal poles, would give it rigidity.

The structure was about 15 feet wide, 15 feet high, and about 45 feet long. The initial chamber was about 30 feet long, with the final 15 feet leaving a cubical chamber known as the “Holy of Holies.”

The entire structure was covered with four successive layers:

- 1) an embroidered linen tapestry;
- 2) a covering of goat’s hair;
- 3) a covering of ram’s skins dyed red; and,
- 4) a covering of porpoise skins. (“Badger skins” is an alternative translation.)

It seems strange that such a magnificent structure would be hidden under such an unattractive external covering. Each layer, however, had special symbolic significance.

The Holy Place

Upon entering the initial chamber, the Holy Place, three items would be in view: on the left, the Menorah, or seven-branched lampstand; on the right, the Table of Shewbread; and directly in front of the curtain covering the final inner sanctum, the Holy of Holies, was the Golden Altar, or Altar of Incense.

The **Menorah** was an oil-fed lampstand with seven branches, providing the only source of light within the structure. (Light: Ex 25:31, 32, 37; Heb. “His”!?)

The **Table of Shewbread** held 12 loaves of unleavened bread, one for each of the 12 tribes, and renewed every shabbat (sabbath day.)

Directly in front of the final chamber, the **Holy of Holies**, and associated with it, was the the Golden Altar for the offering incense.

The Holy of Holies

The final inner sanctum was the Holy of Holies which contained the **Ark of the Covenant** and its unusual lid called the Atonement Cover (or “**Mercy Seat.**”) (*Kappoeth*, or “Mercy Seat” is translated “propitiation” in Romans 3:25.)

This Ark, or chest, was made of acacia wood, covered inside and outside with gold. It contained the two tables of stone with the Ten Commandments, a pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded (Num 17:1-9).

The unusual lid was of gold and was emblazoned with two “cherubim” (a kind of “super angel”); man-like figures with wings. (Ezek 1,10; Isa 6; Rev 4.)

The *shekinah* glory (the cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night) entered the Tabernacle and dwelt above the ark, between the cherubim (Ex 25:22; Num 7:89; Lev 1:1).

The Day of Atonement

The Holy of Holies could only be entered by the High Priest, and only on one day of the year—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when

he was to sprinkle the blood from the sacrifices upon the Mercy Seat. The picture is one in which God, looking down from between the cherubim, would see the broken laws, but could justify His mercy (in satisfaction of His righteousness) because of the atonement provided by the blood shed in sacrifice. (Introduced in Eden, Gen 3:21).

The Mystical Architecture

The Tabernacle, in all of its detail and symbolic significance, is a vital study worth the serious student's careful attention. Every aspect of its design, every material used, every detail, contains special significance that goes beyond our space available here. (See our briefing package, *The Mystery of the Lost Ark*.)

It is interesting that every detail of the Old Testament points, in some way, to our Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 19:10; Mt 5:17,18, etc.). The Tabernacle is no exception. The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed; The Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.

"The Word was made flesh and *tabernacled* among us..." John 1:14. In fact, Jesus laid claim to each element of the tabernacle design.

The Courtyard

As we approach the Tabernacle from outside, all we see is the white linen barrier, symbolizing His righteousness.

The posts were set in bronze sockets. Everything outside the building itself was bronze, symbolizing judgment. Bronze was the metal that could endure fire; it was the Levitical symbol for judgement.

The tabernacle had only one *entrance*. "I am the door. Anyone who enters but by me is a thief and a robber..." (Jn 10:1-8).

The first item encountered was the Altar of Sacrifice. Everything begins (and ends) at the Cross, where the ultimate sacrifice was to be made.

Next is the laver, symbolizing the Word of God (Eph 5:26; Rev 4:6; John 4:10, 14; 7:37, 38).

As we approach the building itself, "it has no beauty that we should desire it." (Isaiah 53:2.) *Until we enter in.*

Each of the coverings has its Levitical significance. Linen: gold, purple, blue, scarlet, with cherubim; Goat's hair: sin bearer, Ex 26:7; Lev 16:19-22; Ram's skins (died red), Gen 3:21, 22:13; Porpoise (Badger?) skins: Ex 16:10, shoes!; Deut 8:4, 29:5; Neh 9:21; Ruth 4:7.

The Place of Fellowship

The building proper was built of acacia wood wrapped in gold. Wood, once alive, speaks of His humanity; the gold, of His deity. The planks rested on *silver* sockets: silver is the Levitical symbol for blood. Even Judas, as he threw the 30 pieces of silver onto the temple floor, exclaimed, "Behold, I have betrayed innocent blood."

Upon the entering the place of fellowship, the Holy Place, we encounter the lampstand, or Menorah. "I am the Light of the World," He claimed (Mt 5:14; Jn 8:12; 9:5). The construction of the lampstand was from a *single piece* of gold: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." $1 + 6 = 7$ (Cf. Lampstands of Rev 1, 4).

Across from the lampstand was the Table of Shewbread: "I am the Bread of Life," He claimed (Jn 6:35).

The Altar of Incense (or Golden Altar, not to be confused with the brazen Altar of Sacrifice) speaks of intercessory prayer, His current role on our behalf (Heb 7:25).

The Holy of Holies

The Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies was, of course, the climactic encounter, in which the supreme sacrifice would avail to atone for our own sins—a prophetic picture of the completed work of the Cross.

This is all part of a love story, written in blood, on a wooden cross, almost two thousand years ago. Praise His Name!

* * *

The Lampstand of this Vision

While the Tabernacle lampstand had to be filled with oil by the priests, this lampstand in the vision was automatically filled with an endless supply of oil *without human agency*. This is indicated by three significant and peculiar features:

- 1) A bowl for storing oil was suspended over the lampstand (Zech. 4:2);
- 2) Oil was transported by gravity from the bowl through seven channels or conduits to each of the seven lights of the lampstand, apparently 49 conduits in all (v. 2);

Hebraism: שִׁבְעָה וְשִׁבְעָה, *shibhe'ah weshibhe'ah*, a Hebrew idiom suggesting that seven were connected to each of the seven pipes, 49 in total (Cf. 2 Sam 21:20; 1 Chr 20:6); and

- 3) The lampstand was flanked by two olive trees which were tapped by two gold pipes through which golden oil flowed constantly into the bowl (vv. 3, 11-12).

Oil

- 3] And two olive trees by it, one upon the right [side] of the bowl, and the other upon the left [side] thereof.

Oil is one of the most clearly defined symbols in the Bible, speaking of the Holy Spirit. (Ex 27; Acts 2:16; Joel 2:28-32; etc.)

Seven attributes, each speaking of the Holy Spirit:

Oil is a source of light; illuminates.
 Oil soothes, heals.
 Oil lubricates; abolishes friction; soothes over.
 Oil warms.
 Oil invigorates.
 Oil adorns; emblem of adornment. Especially in sorrow or grief.
 Oil polishes. He's not finished with any of us yet.

- 4] So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What [are] these, my lord?

The seven branches were familiar (he was a priest). The other features of the vision were unusual.

- 5] Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.
- 6] 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.

“Word...unto...” *all of us*: 2 Tim 3:16. Unusual syntax: no subject. No predicate. Only an adverbial modifier of an implied predicate.

“Lord of *armies*”...highest source, authority.

- 7] Who [art] thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel [thou shalt become] a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone [thereof with] shoutings, [crying], Grace, grace unto it.

The king lays the foundation *and* the (final) headstone. “Grace, grace...” 2X for emphasis.

- 8] Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
- 9] 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.

Zerubbabel began it and his finishing the restoration temple would drive the critics to silence for they would know God had sent the prophet.

Also, a *type* of the ultimate Builder (Messiah) of the Millennial Temple... [Note: Joshua is not mentioned. (?) This might impact how we view v.14.]

- 10] For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel [with] those seven; they [are] the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

“Plummet,” (plumbline?): “stone of tin”; or “Chosen stone,” “stone of separation”; thus, capstone?

“Day of small things” may refer to the old timers who disparaged the restoration compared to Solomon’s (Ezra 3:12-13; Hag 2:3).

Some view the word for plummet as referring to a capstone; others, simply his supervision.

“(Seven) Eyes”: Zech 3:9.

- 11] Then answered I, and said unto him, What [are] these two olive trees upon the right [side] of the lampstand and upon the left [side] thereof?
- 12] And I answered again, and said unto him, What [be these] two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden [oil] out of themselves?

“Branch” = עֵצ *shibbole*, or ear of grain (Gen 41:5, 22; Isa 17:5; Ruth 2:2; Job 24:24). (Used as a discriminating password in Judg 12:6.)

- 13] And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these [be]? And I said, No, my lord.
14] Then said he, These [are] the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

“Anointed ones” = “sons of oil.”

“The Lord of the whole earth.” Indicates the Millennial scope of the vision. Micah 4:1-13. Some link Zerubbabel and Joshua as the two witnesses of Rev 11.

Review: Revelation 11:3-12

Two Witnesses

By two witnesses a thing is established (Deut 17:6; 19:15; Mt 18:11; 26:60; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28). God never leaves Himself without a witness (Acts 14:17).

- 3] And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

First half of the 70th Week? Sackcloth: speaks of the *law* rather than grace. Everything here speaks from the OT.

- 4] These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

Olive trees = “trees of oil.” Zech 4: Anointed ones = “sons of oil.”
Some: Ref to Zerubbabel and Joshua, who re-established Israel (Zech 4:10-14). Continuous filling by the Holy Spirit (Zech 4:12).

- 5] And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

[James and John would have duplicated Elijah’s acts, but Jesus rebuked them (Lk 9:54-56).]

- 6] These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

God has confidence in *them*.

Identities

- 1) Three were expected: John 1:20,21 [Talmudic expectations, etc.]

Messiah:	Mal 3:1-3, 5,6.
Elijah:	Mal 4:5,6 (Last words in OT).
Moses:	Deut 18:15-19.

John the Baptist: “I am not” (Jn 1:19, 20; Mt 11:14; 17:10-11). He did not “turn the hearts of the children” as Malachi predicted, nor usher in the “great and dreadful day,” etc.

- 2) Two ministries were unfinished:
Moses: Num 20:12; Deut 3:26-28.
Elijah: 1 Kgs 17:1; 19:13-16; 2 Kgs 2:11.

- 3) Unique Powers, Miracles:

Elijah (most agree on this one)
Fire from heaven: 1 Kgs 18:37; 2Kgs 1:10, 12 (Jer 5:14).
Shut heaven: 1 Kgs 17:1; (3 1/2 years! Lk 4:25; Jas 5:17).

Moses
Water into blood: Ex 7:19.
Plagues: Ex 8 - 12.

[vs. ministers of Church to be harmless: Phil 2:15; Rom 16:19. James and John would have duplicated Elijah’s acts, but Jesus rebuked them (Lk 9:54-56).]

- 4) It wasn’t necessarily Enoch: Heb 9:27 = general rule, exceptions: Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, Nain’s son, etc. He was a Gentile: Witnesses are Jewish. [Model of rapture? Born, translated, on 6th of Sivan, the Feast of Shavout?]
5) Staff Meeting in Mt 17; connected with 2nd coming: Lk 9:31; 1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 1:6-18

[Mystery: Why did Michael contend with Satan for the body of Moses?
Jude 9; Deut 34:5, 6.]

Alternatives

John the Baptist? (McGee). John, the Apostle (and writer)?

Previous chapter: “Thou must prophecy again” (Rev 10:11).
John 21:20-24 “tarry till I come...”

However, we would include John with the Church, which is in heaven.
John is viewing all this: Is this an “out of body” experience? [John expressly rebuked from desiring Elijah’s acts.]

- 7] And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Invulnerable until testimony is completed. [Moses and Elijah had their ministries interrupted.]

Antichrist now in power. (First mention. Note the origin of this beast.)

- 8] And their dead bodies [shall lie] in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Bodies = carcasses.

Jerusalem =
“Sodom” Isa 1:9-10, 3:8,9; Jer 23:14; Deut 32:30-33.
“Egypt” Ez 23:3, 4, 8, 19.

[“great” in Chapter 11: 8 times.]

- 9] And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Predicted in Ps 79:1-3, 10-11?

- 10] And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Only celebration on the earth in Revelation! A “Satanic Christmas”?

- 11] And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

CNN exclusive? [Same coverage as Mt 24:15?]

- 12] And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Film at eleven. Cf. Rev 4:1; 2 Kgs 2:11.

Zechariah 5

Review

The series of visions take a sharp turn. Comfort now turns to a stern warning.

Summary: The enlargement of Israel;
 The subjugation of her enemies;
 The internal cleansing and restoration;
 Her consequent ministry of illumination and witness;
 Now the coming judgment(s).
 A Holy God cannot brook evil.

The Flying Scroll

- 1] Then I [re]turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked[!] and behold[!] a flying roll.

“Behold”: הִנֵּה *hinneh*, a demonstrative interjection, signaling in a lively manner.

“Scroll”: מְגִלָּה, *megillah* [In contrast to our codex, where pages are separate and bound in a book form; leaves as we are familiar with them developed in the 3rd century. The largest papyrus roll was

about 10 in. wide and 30 ft. in length. (Cf. The copy of Isaiah from the Dead Sea discoveries presently in the Shrine of the Book, Israeli Museum, Jerusalem.)

“Flying”: עָפָה, ‘*aphah*. [Cf. Ephah in next vision?] Active energy suggested. Heb 4:12 “The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.”

Cf. v.3: “On this side,” “and on that side”: *two sides*. Two tables of stone: Ex 32:15; Seven sealed scroll (Rev 5:1); Also, Ezek 2:9-10;

- 2] 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.

Dimensions of the Tabernacle: Ex 26:15-25; also, Solomon’s Porch (1 Kgs 6:3).

1 Pet 4:17 “For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

- 3] Then said he unto me, This [is] the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off [as] on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off [as] on that side according to it.

“Curse”: (in this case) judgment of God (Num 5:23; Deut 29:18-20; 30:7; 2 Chr 34:24; Isa 24:6; Jer 23:10; Dan 9:11). אָלָה, ‘*alah* retribution, punishment; vs. “Allah” of Islam?!

“On this side”...”and on that side”: *two sides*. Two tables of stone (Ex 32:15); Seven sealed scroll (Rev 5:1).

“Stealing,” “swearing”: theft and perjury, representing the both tables of the Law (the middle commandment of each).

“Cut off”: cleansed out; purged from; prophetic perfect: “shall surely be cleaned out.”

Gal 3:13 - “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree.”

The Great Commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Mt 22:37-40).

- 4] I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

[Unger: Palestinian Covenant: Deut 30:1-10.]

Dispersion for disobedience; Deut 30:1; 28:63-68;

Future repentance (30:2)

Reversal of fortunes and return to Lord (v.3)

Final regathering and restoration (vv.3-5)

National conversion (v.6)

Judgment upon enemies (v.7)

Obedience and millennial blessing (v.9)

Preparation: Jer 30:7

Applies individually (v.10)

“I, the Lord of the celestial as well as terrestrial armies, will cause the curse to go forth, with certainty and celerity. With certainty because I will send it forth, with celerity because it shall go forth as a *flying* scroll.”

Rev 4:1 - 19:16; Jer 30:7.

None will be able to sin and hide from God in that day. In our present age—an “Age of Grace,” or call it patience, longsuffering —while the Gospel of salvation is patiently proclaimed, a God is, for the most part, silent to the blasphemies and crimes of ungodly sinners, while the heavens have received the crucified and risen Redeemer “until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21)... criminals, undetected, may appear to prosper.

The “destruction of the house”: as in the case of a leper (Lev 14:45; Amos 3:15).

The opening of the Seven Sealed Scroll (Rev 5:1-9) will loose judgments that will dispossess the usurper and his demons and wicked men from the earth, preparatory to the advent of the King of kings and Lord of lords to establish His rule and kingdom.

The Woman and the Ephah

Preamble: The Mystery of Babylon

(The “Fall” vs. “Destruction” vs. “Mystery”)

The Destruction of Babylon detailed: Isa 13, 14; Jer 50, 51
vs. The Fall of Babylon, 539 B.C.?
vs. “Mystery Babylon (Rev 17, 18)?

[See Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*; Dave Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast*; Missler, Hunt, *The Kingdom of Blood*.]

The Destruction of Babylon

The Prophecies of Isaiah

In Isaiah 13 and 14, the *destruction* of Babylon is predicted. In vigorous terms, Isaiah describes how Babylon will be destroyed and then will *never again be inhabited*. This identifies the *time* of the destruction as that particular period known as the “Day of The Lord” that is mentioned throughout the scripture and is associated with the final day of God’s vengeance (Joel 2:10; Mal 4:5; Dan 12:1; Mt 24:21-22). When God destroys Babylon, he will destroy all the evil in the world.

Isaiah 13

13:10 This exact imagery is used in Revelation 6 to describe the judgment of the Tribulation just before the Second Coming.

13:11-12 This startling idea parallels Matthew 24:21-22. We can’t say that the world’s population has been on the brink of annihilation before.

13:13 This clearly is yet future.

13:17 This reference to the Medes is one of the reasons why many have viewed this as referring to the events of 539 B.C. However, nothing prohibits the Medes from being involved in the future. The Medes were a people who occupied the mountainous area of northwestern Iran and northeastern Iraq, presently occupied by the Kurds today. They

have been fighting Turkey, Iran, and Iraq in an attempt to establish their own independent country of Kurdistan. Hundreds of Kurdish women and children were the victims of Saddam Hussein’s poison gas attacks in 1987 and 1988 and the hatred by the Medes for the Babylonians runs deep.

13:19 “The glory of the Babylonians’ pride”: not Rome, nor allegorical: literally, the Chaldeans’ pride. Overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, with “fire from heaven.” This has yet to happen to Babylon.

13:20 After the Fall of Babylon under the Persians, it was inhabited, even by Alexander and subsequently.

Isaiah 14

14:1-2 It is also important to note that this judgment on Babylon will take place at a time when Israel is resettled in their own land from many nations. This cannot be applied to the fall of Babylon to the Persians, during which Israel was still in captivity and in exile from the land.

14:22-27 Clearly, this is part of God’s climactic scenario as part of the “Day of the Lord” and is part of the final scenes at the end of the “Seventieth Week” of Daniel 9, and that is highlighted in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 through 19.

The Prophecies of Jeremiah

50:1-3 Does the “nation from the north” refer to Magog or the Russians?

50:4 Again, the spiritual position of Israel is described.

50:9 Again, it appears to be an alliance of many nations that are coming against Babylon.

50:10-3 Again, the absence of subsequent habitation marks this event as yet future.

50:15 Again, the period of time is the “Day of Vengeance” of God, a time of climax described throughout the Scripture and yet future.

50:20 The repeated references to the forgiveness of Israel imply a time that is after the New Testament period alluded to in Romans 11:25. It certainly cannot be applied to Israel at the time of her return from the Babylonian captivity (Zech 12:10; 13:1).

50:40 A repeated comparison to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which has never yet happened to Babylon.

50:41, 46 A multinational force, not just the Persians.

51:7 A reading of the language clearly links this with Rev 17 and 18.

51:26 Again, a reference to the non-reuse of remaining materials. When Robert Koldewey arrived in Babylon in the late 1800's, he found entire sections of the old city being mined for bricks. [Koldewey, p.168.]

51:45 Again, remarkably similar language as in Revelation 17 and 18.

The destruction of Babylon predicted by both Isaiah and Jeremiah *has never been fulfilled*.

Revelation 17

Notice that the prostitute is *not the beast*, but rides the beast. She initially exploits the beast, but is eventually destroyed by him (Rev 17:16,17).

The reference to the “cup” is another link with Jeremiah, et al. Again, note the distinction between the Woman and the Beast.

Mystery Babylon as a false religious system is here identified with the city of Rome from the first century until this present hour.

See our briefing package, *The Kingdom of Blood* for a more detailed review.

Revelation 18

The destruction of Mystery Babylon continues in Chapter 18, with commercial as well as religious overtones. Notice that there are three groups that bemoan her fall: kings, merchants, and those who trade by sea. Notice that here are 28 *literal* commodities listed: perhaps this is to prevent us from allegorizing these references.

The clear references to Rome, in both religious and commercial terms, have caused most commentators to identify “Mystery Babylon” as the Roman religious system commingled with the emerging European Union. This allegorical view has overlooked the re-emergence of a literal city of Babylon as well.

This apparent paradox may be resolved by the vision of Zechariah 5:5-11!

Zechariah 5

5] Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what [is] this that goeth forth.

“Then”: the *waw* consecutive continues the temporal sequence...

“Lift up your eyes, if you will”: angelic courtesy; cf. French, *S'il vous plaît*; German, *bitte*; English, “please.”

6] And I said, What [is] it? And he said, This [is] an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This [is] their resemblance through all the earth.

Ephah = dry measure containing 10 omers (Ex 16:36); equivalent to 1.05 bushels American. Used for flour (Judg 6:19) or barley (Ruth 2:17). Equal to a bath or 1/10 of a kor (Ezek 45:11,14) and contained one Attic metretres or 72 sextaries [Josephus, *Antiquities* VIII, 2, 9; XV, 9, 2.].

“This is their resemblance...” *Their*; a pronominal suffix whose antecedent is in the previous vision. [Keil, *Minor Prophets*, II, p.283] Also, Cyril and Jerome see the ephah filling up the measure of sins, etc. Cf. Gen 15:16. [Syriac and LXX: “This is their iniquity.”]

Cf. James 5:1-7. What John saw in Rev 18 (and Zechariah sees here) is not a *city* but a *system*.

7] And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this [is] a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

“Talent”: a weight used for items of trade and for precious metals as a medium of exchange. Largest weight: 20 gerahs were equal to 1 shekel; 50 shekels to 1 maneh; 60 manehs to 1 talent. 75.793 pounds avoirdupois, or 92.109 pounds troy. [Brown, Driver, Briggs, according to later Babylonian reckoning, 108.29 pounds.]

Lead synonymous with heaviness (Ex 15:10). The cover is “lifted up” to introduce *the [one]* woman into the ephah. (Not the indefinite “a” woman.)

“Sitting”: comfortably surrounded by, flourishing in the center of, the ephah.

- 8] And he said, This [is] wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

Woman is identified; (LXX: ἀνομία, *anomia*, “lawlessness.”) (Same as Rev 17, 18?)

All apostate movements since Bab-El of Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10). This will include pagan Romanism; apostate Protestantism; and demonic Judaism, and other evil religious forces in the last days.

The woman appears to also be echoed in the woman with the leaven (Mt 13:33) and the “Woman Jezebel” in Rev 2:20; and the woman riding (“sitting upon”) the beast in Rev 17:3-17. “Drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus”!? (Rev 17:6).

Two Women With Wings

- 9] Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind [was] in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

Two *women* again, not angels. Wings of a stork, an unclean bird (Lev 11:19; Deut 14:18). Agents of evil.

- 10] Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?

- 11] And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

Shinar: (7X) = the location of Babylon (Gen 10:10; 11:2; Isa 11:11, et al). History: Nimrod, BabEl, => Pergamos => Rome ...*back to where it all started*.

[The “Antichrist” will be an Assyrian, driven to the gates of Nimrod: Micah 5:1-6.]

[See our briefing package, *The Mystery of Babylon*, or our *Expositional Commentary on Revelation*, for further discussion.]

	Isaiah 13 14		Jeremiah 50 51		Revelation 17 18	
Many nations attacking	4, 5	2, 26	2, 9, 41, 46	7	16	
Israel in Land, forgiven		1	4, 20			
Like Sodom & Gomorrah	19		40			
Never to be inhabited; bricks never reused	20	23	13, 26, 39	26, 29, 37		
During “Day of Lord”	6, 10, 11, 13		25		✓	✓
Literal (Chaldean) Babylon	19	22	50	4, 24, 63		
King’s fornication, drunk with wine...				7	2	3, 9
Scarlet, purple, golden cup				7	3, 4	6, 16

Zechariah 6

The conclusion of the visions received that one night. This vision completes the cycle begun with the four horses.

- 1) Four Horsemen
Four Horns
Four Craftsmen
- 2) Man with measuring line
- 3) Joshua and Satan
The Branch

- 4) Lampstand and two olive trees
- 5) Flying Scroll
Woman in the Ephah
- 6) Four Chariots

[Traditionally, 8 visions; by some, 10.]

The Four Chariots: The Overthrow of Gentile Powers

- 1] And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass.

“Then I returned, and once again looked up...” finite verb with *waw* consecutive used adverbially.

“*The*” two mountains: Hebrew definite article. Most identify these with Mt. Zion and Mt. Olives [Keil, Baron, Pusey, Wright, Feinberg, Von Oreill, et al.].

The valley between them set forth as the theatre of divine judgment (Zech 14:4; Joel 3:2, et al). As early as Eusebius, 4th century, also Jerome, Valley of Jehoshaphat (“Jehovah Judges”) has been identified with the Valley of Kidron (Cf. Zech 14:2, 4). [However, no valley in antiquity actually bore that name.]

“Brass (bronze)”: Levitical symbol of judgment—ex. Brass serpent (Num 21:9; Jn 3:14) and Brazen altar in Tabernacle (Ex 27:2) (in Solomon’s Temple: 30 tons!)

Bronze: Copper + tin (from Cornwall, England, among other places). Harder and less malleable than copper alone; more suited for casting. Melting point about 1800-630°C (Tin lowers melting point). Tempering opposite from steel; hardens with repeated cooling.

Brass: Copper + Zinc (plus minor amounts of lead and tin); melting point about 1050-850°C (Zinc lowers the melting point.)

- 2] In the first chariot [were] red horses; and in the second chariot black horses;
- 3] And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.

[Compare with the four horsemen of Revelation 6:1-8:]

Red: take peace from the earth; war; bloodshed.

Black: inflation; famine.

White: conquering; victory. [Note: bow, a symbol of a covenant? Cf. Gen 9:13, LXX.] The world will think that it is entering the Millennium under a False Messiah, when it actually will be entering the Tribulation period.

Grizzled, dappled [בְּרָדִידִּים, *beruddim*, hail-spotted]: (Rev: pale green, χλωρόζ (*chloros*) death, pestilence.)

- 4] Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord?
- 5] And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

Spirits = winds. Standing before the Lord (Cf. 1 Kgs 22:19; Dan 7:10; Lk 1:19.) Thus, angelic powers.

Always *four-fold* winds when involving the earthly creation (Jer 49:36; Ezek 37:9; Dan 7:2; 8:8; Zech 2:6; Mk 13:27; Rev 7:1) [Could this be related to our four-dimensional earthly reality?]

“Lord of the **whole earth**” = millennial in scope; universal rule over the earth in the kingdom age (Cf. Gen 14:19, 22; Josh 3:11,13; Ps 97:5; Mic 4:1-12, 13; Zech 4:14; Rev 11:4; Rev 19:16).

[Also, cf. 7 trumpet angels and 7 bowl angels in Revelation 8, 9 and 15, 16.]

- 6] The black horses which [are] therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country.

Inflation, famine; then, conquest and victory. Pestilence, to the south. Much has been said about the directions, north and south; however, east and west are impassable (Mediterranean Sea and the desert); all enemy (and other) traffic always from the north and south.

- 7] And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth.

After the black and white horsed-chariots have executed their judgments in the north country, and the dappled have done likewise in the south, all go in every direction throughout the whole earth.

- 8] Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.

North: the traditional direction of Israel's enemies. Babylon (Jer 1:14, 15; 25:9) esp. after Zech 5:5-11. Also, Gog, Magog, et al. (Ezek 38:6, 15; 39:2).

Immediately *after* the overthrow of Gentile powers, comes the crowning of the Messiah King-Priest (Cf. Ps 2:5,6; Isa 3:24-26; 4:2-6; 10:33, 34; 11:1-10; Rev 19:19-21; 20:4-6).

[Another indication that the vision(s) of Zechariah 1 - 6:8 are an integral whole, and extend in scope to the establishment of the Millennial kingdom.]

The Crowning of Joshua

[*Not a vision*; an actual ceremonial errand is involved.]

- 9] And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

“Then,” *after* the conclusion of the night visions.

- 10] 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;

Receive, accept, the donation brought by the returned exiles.

Heldai = “Lord’s world”; or “robust”

Tobijah = “Yahweh is good”; “God’s Goodness”

Jediaiah = “Yahweh knows”

“Come...personally..same day” Zechariah is uniquely prepared to execute this errand as a fitting climax to the vision that night.

The delegation bringing donations for the construction of the temple were being entertained at Josiah’s house. [Josiah = “the Lord supports”: Zephaniah = “The Lord conceals.”]

Zechariah is to act out a climax to the visions of the night; in fact, *it represents the climax of the entire Biblical drama!*

- 11] Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set [them] upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

The delegation with princely gifts were a precursor of the vast numbers of Gentiles who would bring their homage to the King and their wealth to build His Temple in that future day.

Silver = Levitically, blood (Num 8:16; 18:15,16; Mt 27:4-6; Cf. Ex 28:25-27). Symbolizing the Priesthood. Given by Israelites for the Tabernacle (Ex 25:3; 35:24). Given by David and subjects for the Temple (1 Chr 28:14; 29:2, 6-9).

Gold = Deity. Kingship.

“Crowns” = note the plural. Rev 19:12. Not on the head of Zerubabel, which would have been misleading. The office of the king pertained alone to the house of David (2 Sam 7; Ps 89). The priestly office was confined to the tribe of Levi. [Uzziah’s intrusion into the priestly office was a warning of God’s irrevocable separation between these two functions (2 Chr 26:16-21).]

Joshua, the high priest, could not really wear a crown; this was a type pointing to the priestly kingship of Christ. Mechizedek was a king and priest, uniquely, as a type (Gen 14:18; Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-21; Ps 110:4).

[Verses 12 & 13 have been heralded as the most inclusive and complete portrait of the coming King of Israel to be found in the OT.]

- 12] 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:

The Targum, the Aramaic translation and paraphrase, renders the passage: “Behold the Man, Messiah is his name, who is to be revealed.”

“Behold the man” - echoed by Pilate (Jn 19:5), when the Messiah was wearing a crown *of thorns*. But once again the cry, “behold the man” will sound when He comes in the clouds of heaven, crowned with many crowns (Rev 19:12).

Joshua here prefigures Christ: kingship (Ps 2:6); priesthood (Ps 110:4).

The Branch:
As a tender plant (Isa 53:2);
Branch of righteousness (Jer 33:15);
A grain of wheat, dying (John 12:24);
Sprouted from the fallen trunk of David (Isa 11:2).

[At the time of Christ, the royal line of David had sunk into poverty and obscurity...indeed, a root out of a dry ground (Isa 53:2).]

The Branch, in a 4-fold way:

- 1) Branch of David: King (Jer 23:5);
- 2) The Servant (Zech 3:8);
- 3) The man whose name (Zech 6:12);
- 4) Branch of YHWH (Isa 4:2).

Cf. Matthew (King); Mark (Servant); Luke (Man); John (God the Son). [Cf. The Design of the Gospels, on following page.]

“He... (even he, v.13) ...shall build the temple”: the Millennial Temple is meant (Ezek 40-42; Isa 2:2-4).

- 13] 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.

“Throne” = clearly the Messiah, not Joshua the High Priest. He typifies the coming King, whose name, also, is *Yeshua!*

The heart of the Book of Revelation prefigures the dispossession of Satan, demons, and wicked men who usurped the blood-bought inheritance. Now the rightful owner, as King-Priest, comes into possession of the whole earth (Cf. Gen 14:19, 22) as the “Last Adam,” regaining the forfeiture of the first Adam. Cf. Isa 56:6, 7.

- 14] And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

Hen (“graciousness”) = nickname for Josiah.

Design Structure of the Four Gospels

	Matthew	Mark	Synoptic Gospels	Luke	John
Presents as:	Messiah	Servant	Son of Man	Son of God	Son of God
Face:	Lion	Ox	Man	Man	Eagle
Ensign:	Judah	Ephraim	Reuben	Dan	Dan
Camp Site:	East	West	South	North	North
Genealogy:	Abraham	--	Adam	Eternity	Eternity
	(Legal)		(Bloodline)	(Preexistence)	(Preexistence)
What Jesus:	Said	Did	Felt	Was	Was
To the:	Jew	Roman	Greek	Church	Church
1st Miracle:	Leper cleansed	Demon expelled	Demon expelled	Water into Wine	Water into Wine
Ends with:	Resurrection	Ascension	Promise: Spirit	Promise: Return	Promise: Return
			(Acts)	(Revelation)	(Revelation)
Style:	Groupings	Snapshot	Narrative	Supernatural Review	Supernatural Review
Key Word:	Fulfilled (38X)	Euthoos (42X)	It came to pass (40X)	Verily, Verily (24X)	Verily, Verily (24X)
Jesus:	151X	13X	88X	247X	247X
Facts:	Whole Camp (Outer)	Outer Court (Outer)	Holy Place (Outer)	Holy of Holies (Outer)	Holy of Holies (Outer)
Aspects:	Human	Human	Human	Divine	Divine
Ministry:	Galilean	Galilean	Galilean	Judean	Judean

Crowns a memorial: According to the Middot, a rabbinical authority on the Temple, the crowns (pl.) Were hung in windows in the height of the Temple as a memorial of this ceremonial crowning, reminding the people of the prophetic implications.

- 15] 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. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.

“Hath sent me”: The Branch Himself establishes the truth of the Word of God, and the reality of the Millennial Temple, etc.

It is interesting that even many students of Bible prophecy have no grasp—or confidence—in the Millennial Kingdom and this culmination of God’s plan for the Planet Earth, or Israel in particular.

“If ye...obey”: echoes Deut 28:1; conditions of *participation* in the blessings. Climax: Rev 5:9-10. That is the goal toward which we are moving: “...hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign upon the earth.”

Hallelujah, indeed! How important it is to see things from God’s perspective. It is coming. It is happening. It should affect every one of our personal priorities. Let us not lose sight of it!

Let us keep our eyes—our lives—focused on Him!

Zechariah 7

Organization of the Book

Chapters 1-6: Night Visions
Chapters 7, 8: Attitudes of Obedience
Chapters 9-14: The Fulfillment & Restoration

Approximately two years after the night visions of Chapters 1-6 describing the whole future of Israel, including the subjugation of her enemies, her regathering in the Land, her cleansing, restoration, and the establishment of the theocracy. (December 7, 518 B.C.; cf. v. 1 with 1:7) and about halfway through the period of temple rebuilding (520-516).

Result: Temple rebuilding encouraged (1/2 done?). Now 518 B.C. [Unger] Darius reconfirmed the original decree by Cyrus (Ezra 6:1-14). Residences emerged. (Hag 1:4).

The Question of Fasting

- 1] And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, [that] the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah in the fourth [day] of the ninth month, [even] in Chisleu;

Dated, again, by the Gentile reckoning (“Times of the Gentiles...”) Uses Nisan as the 1st month. (Contrast Genesis and post-Exodus reckonings...)

- 2] When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men, to pray before the Lord,

“House of God”: Unger reckons these as being sent from *Bethel*; nominative case. Bethel located about 12 miles N. of Jerusalem; prominent as a religious center under the Northern Kingdom from the time Jeroboam I set up golden calves, etc.

Saharezer = Babylonian name, *sharusur*; “protect the king.” Probably given to him during the exile (Cf. Daniel, *Belteshazzur*; Dan 1:7 et al. Also, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, *Abednego*, etc.)

Regemmelech = “king’s friend”?

Bethelites had returned with the remnant and rebuilt Bethel (Ezra 2:28; Neh 7:32; 11:31)

- 3] [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?

Tisha B’av: the mourning for the Temple and the city burned by the Babylonians on the (5th to the 10th day) of the 5th month = the “Ninth of Av.”

2 Kgs 25:8-10; Jer 52:13. Bethel acknowledged Jerusalem as the ecclesiastical center. (Authenticates Haggai and Zechariah as spokesmen for the Lord.)

Beth Yhwh contrasted with *Beth ‘el*.

Would that I (we) would be free of these customs..

Why should they continue to mourn over a past tragedy when the present prosperity and progress were being enjoyed. Why should they go on grieving when their calamities had apparently passed away?

Are We Serving Ourselves or God?

- 4] Then came the word of the Lord of hosts unto me, saying,
5] Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh [month], even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, [even] to me?

“The Word of the Lord.” Not just to Bethel, but to “all the people of the land.”

- 5th month: “Tisha B’av.”
- 7th month: the Fast of Gedaliah: anniversary of the murder of the governor whom the King of Babylon had appointed over the land after the captivity (Jer 41:1-18; 2 Kgs 25:22-26).
- 10th month (Tebeth) memorialized the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1).

[In Zechariah 8:19 another fast also added in the 4th month (Tammuz) commemorating the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem during the final siege by the Babylonians (2 Kgs 25:3; Jer 39:2-4).]

Man-made rituals not the real issue: a deeper problem of *attitude*. The matter of the inquiry itself is left unanswered in Chapters 7 & 8 and is inconsequential and left unsettled. They were not observed for God’s glory and purely for self.

These Bethelites had utterly lost the sense of voluntary dedication to the Lord in the matter of fasting: it had become a legalistic ritual, devoid of any glory to God or spiritual benefit to themselves.

“Me, even to me”: emphasis on the personal aspect. Did you really fast? Was there any self-denial involved? For God’s glory; not a legalistic asceticism.

- 6] And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat [for yourselves], and drink [for yourselves]?

Focuses on the complete self-centeredness of people’s fasting and mourning. “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). [Fasting: Mt 9:14, 15; Acts 13:2, 3; 14:23; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27; Cf. *God’s Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis.]

- 7] [Should ye] not [hear] the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when [men] inhabited the south and the plain?

In contrast with the prosperity of the past, the present community—struggling and poor—was the result of their precious disobedience.

Are We Listening to Ourselves or God?

- 8] And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying,
9] Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

“The Lord of the Armies”...

Man’s duties to man are stressed, which constitute the concrete and visible proof of the reality of their relationship with God. (Cf. Epistle of James in the NT. James 2:14-26)

Micah 6:8; 1 Cor 13.

- 10] 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.

Each of these represent a helpless member of society, particularly exposed to unscrupulous men (Ex 22:22; 23:6-9; Lev 19:15-18; Deut 10:18, 19; 24:14; Jer 7:6).

- 11] But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

“Pulled away the shoulder”: an agrarian term, relating to the difficulty in yoking an unyielding ox. Intractably refusing.

“Ears heavy”: dull; unresponsive.

- 12] Yea, they made their hearts [as] an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

“Adamant stone”: impenetrably hard substance; emery or diamond. Flint-like. It could not be graven itself, or receive the characters of God. Obdurate.

“Hearts”: singular, not plural; reference to the “inner man,” comprising mind, affections, and will (Deut 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; Josh 22:5; 1 Kgs 2:4; 14:18; Ps 86:11.)

This statement not only places the words of the preexilic prophets on a par with the Mosaic Law but also identifies the Spirit of God as the Source (and primary agency) of prophetic inspiration who spoke through human agents (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21) as secondary instruments.

- 13] 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:
- 14] 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.

“Pleasant land”: Jer 3:19; Ps 106:24; Dan 11:16, 41.

Zechariah 8

In the future, Israel’s fasts will change to feasts! If you believe that God is through with Israel, you cannot handle the Book of Zechariah! (Or most other OT prophets, for that matter! Or the Book of Psalms...)

[Prophetic Scriptures should always be expounded with a moral and spiritual appeal and challenge to present-day audiences.]

“Lord of the Armies” = 18X in this chapter.

“Jerusalem” = 6X; Zion = 2X.

“Jealous” = 3X.

“Remnant” = 2X (from all 12, not just 2, tribes).

“Thus saith the Lord” = 10X.

Are We believing a Lie or the Truth?

- 1] Again the word of the Lord of hosts came [to me], saying,
- 2] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

[Does God ever *change*? Don’t mess around with the “apple of His eye”!]

- 3] Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.

Millennial. [Did the *Shekinah* ever return after leaving the 1st Temple? (Ezek 11:23); Mt 12:6.]

- 4] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

John 1:14.

- 5] And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

(No automobiles!?)

- 6] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts.

“Marvelous”: “if it be difficult to do” or “beyond one’s power” (Cf. Jer 32:17, 27; Isa 11:11, 12; 43:5, 6).

- 7] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;
- 8] 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.
- 9] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which [were] in the day [that] the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.
- 10] For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither [was there any] peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour.
- 11] But now I [will] not [be] unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts.
- 12] For 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; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these [things].
- 13] And it shall come to pass, [that] as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, [but] let your hands be strong.

Diaspora predicted:

A result of apostasy and sin: Deut 28:15-62.

Worldwide dispersion: Deut 28:63-68.

Their national election set aside: Rom 11:1-12; Jer 24:9.

Not terminated until they “look unto Him whom they pierced” (Zech 12:10-14).

- 14] 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:

The trials of the captivity were not mere accidents or unexplainable calamities: they were according to the unerring purpose of an unchanging God.

- 15] So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.
16] 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:

Be *doers* of the Word. James 1:22.

- 17] 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.

Two positive; two negative.

Are We Ready for the Future?

- 18] And the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me, saying,
19] 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.

Fast of the 4th month lamented the opening of the city of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar as a result of the extremity of famine within the walls during Zedeciah's 11th year (Jer 39:2, 3; 52:6, 7).

Tisha B'av: Aug 9, 587 B.C., Jerusalem finally fell to Nebuchadnezzar.

It was also the day when God decreed that the people in the wilderness should not enter the land because of their unbelief.

It was not only the day on which Solomon's Temple was destroyed, but also the 2nd Temple by the Romans.

It was also the day on which the city of Behar was taken under Bar Kokbah (A.D. 135) only to fall in Gentile hands who put everyone to death including Bar Kokbah.

Also on Aug 9, wicked Turnus Rufus ploughed up the hill of the sanctuary and thus fulfilled Micah's prophecy, “Zion shall be ploughed as a field.”

Fast of the 10th month marked the beginning of the siege by Nebuchadnezzar in his 9th year (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1; 52:4).

Fasts to Feasts: Isa 61:2, 3.

- 20] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; [It shall] yet [come to pass], that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:
21] And the inhabitants of one [city] shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also.
22] Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

Isa 65:19. Isa 2:2,3. Psa 122.

- 23] Thus saith the Lord of hosts; 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.

[Messianic fellowships: 0% Gentile!]

Zechariah 9

The scope of this final section (9-14) is the same as the visions of Chapters 1-6: from Zechariah's time to the establishment of the Kingdom over Israel in blessing (Acts 1:6). The time the fasts become feasts.

9-11: The 1st Advent.

12-14: The 2nd Advent, the Shepherd-King

[The marvelous unity of the book binds Chapters 1-8 with 9-14 and argues against any “Deutero-Zechariah” theory.]

Supplemental Background:

Chronology of the Exile, Unger, p.9-12
Discussion of unity of book, etc. Unger, p.12-14

Many of the more competent commentators suggest that this section has a double application, setting forth the immediate, and also yet future, judgment upon the kingdoms surrounding Israel.

In verses 1-8, the campaign of Alexander the Great is highlighted: his successes in vv.1-7; the deliverance of Jerusalem in v.8.

Alexander The Great

- 1] 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.

Hadrach (only here in OT), now identified with Hatarika mentioned in the annals of Assyrian kings as an Aramaean country near Damascus and Hamath against which Assyria campaigned in 772, 755, and 733 B.C. [*The Minor Prophets*, p. 450 and also Robert C. Dentan, “Zechariah” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. 6, p. 1093.]

The reference to Hadrach on the 8th century B.C. stele of King Zakar or Hamath attests to its influence as a name for the entire hinterland region of Phoenicia, beyond the Antilebanon mountains from Damascus and South Syria to North Syria in the region of Arpad. [E. Kraeling, *Rand-McNally Bible Atlas*, map XI, p. 245.]

[Keep a weather eye out on Damascus, the oldest continually inhabited city on the Planet Earth: Isa 17:1 has yet to be fulfilled.]

- 2] And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

Hamath was the principal city of Upper Syria, on the Orontes. It was Antiochus Epiphanes who named it Epiphania.

At the Battle of Issus in SE Asia Minor (October, 333 B.C.) Alexander the Great inflicted a defeat upon Darius and the Persians which threw open Syria and Israel to his lightning-like conquests, and exposed Egypt to his victorious armies.

The prophet has in view the defeat of the historic enemies of Israel: Damascus, Hamath, and cities of the Syrian interior, and then the cities along the Mediterranean coast that stood in the conqueror’s way in his victorious sweep into Egypt.

Alexander—the prophet emphasizes—was visible as the instrument of the Lord.

Tyre

- 3] And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.

Tyrus (Tyre) is singled out for special mention. Tyre is the exemplar of the materialistic world. Here perverted wisdom and pride is manifested through her “prince” (Ezek 28:2, 4-8) which is then expanded by Ezekiel to embrace the pre-fall career of Satan (Ezek 28:11-19). [Merril F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, pp. 181-200.]

Tyre (Heb. *Tsor*; “rock”; Greek, *Tyros*) is involved in an intentional pun on matsor, “bulwark, citadel, or ramparts” from the root tsur, “to besiege.” Surrounded by a wall 150 ft. high as an off-shore island fortress, an insular bastion of wealth.

The Assyrians under Shalmaneser besieged it for 5 years unsuccessfully. The Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar tried for 13 years in vain. The pride and self-security of the Tyrians were proverbial.

- 4] Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.

Alexander *took it in only seven months!* He built a causeway, directed new siege engines against it, and exploited a navy amassed from nearby city states.

Gaza

- 5] Ashkelon shall see [it], and fear; Gaza also [shall see it], and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

Only 4 of the 5 capital cities of Philistia are mentioned. (Gath at that time was probably incorporated into Judah. Cf. Amos 1:6-8; Zeph 2:4; Jer 25:20.)

Gaza held out for five months; the king, Batis, was dragged to death; 10,000 of its inhabitants slaughtered, the rest sold into bondage.

- 6] And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

מִמְזֵר, mamzer, “bastard, illegitimate,” from a root meaning “to alienate.” [Could this be a remnant of the *Rephaim* (Gen 6:4, “also after that...”)?]

- 7] And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, [shall be] for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.

Reference seems to be made to the remnant of the tribes of Canaan who were incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel in the time of David and Solomon. (Cf. Araunah, 2 Sam 24:18; also 1 Kgs 9:20, 21.) Philistia will become part of the people of God and will share in the blessings of Israel.

The Deliverance of Jerusalem

- 8] 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.

Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI, 8:3-6. Alexander’s request for tribute was refused by Jaddua, the high priest, who refused to break his oath of loyalty to Darius. Alexander, in a rage, threatened severe punishment upon Jerusalem as soon as Tyre had fallen and he had reduced the Philistine strongholds. Juaddua ordered the population to make sacrifices to God and pray for deliverance. In a dream, Jaddua was told to go and meet Alexander.

When Alexander was not far from the city, the high priest led a venerable procession to meet him. When Alexander saw the vestments, etc., he saluted the high priest, adored the name of YHWH, and said he had seen this in a dream at Dios in Macedonia. Presented with the prophecies of his own career in Daniel (7 & 8), he treated the Jews kindly and spared the city.

“Oppressor not overrun...” Only true after the 2nd Advent; not the 1st. [After Alexander’s death, the Seleucids, and then the Romans, were cruel and terrible.] The prophet passes to the far future and the

final deliverance of the city (chapters 12 & 14. Cf. Isa 60:18; Eze 28:24).

In contrast with the conqueror Alexander, comes another figure of a King and Deliverer, a divine Prince, Israel’s own King.

Israel’s Own King

- 9] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he [is] just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. The Unexpected King

Irrefutably Documented

To fully appreciate the remarkable significance of the following, it is essential to realize that the book of Daniel, as part of the Old Testament, was translated into Greek prior to 270 B.C., *almost three centuries before* Christ was born. This is a well-known established fact of secular history.

After his conquest of the Babylonian Empire, Alexander the Great promoted the Greek language throughout the known world, and thus almost everyone spoke Greek. Even among the Jews, Hebrew fell into disuse, being reserved primarily for ceremonial purposes. (Somewhat analogous to the earlier use of Latin among the Catholics.)

The Septuagint

In order to make the Jewish scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) available to the average Jewish believer, a project was undertaken to translate the Hebrew scriptures into Greek. Seventy scholars were commissioned to complete this work and the result is known as the “Septuagint” (“70”) translation of the Old Testament. (This is often abbreviated “LXX” and is so shown on the diagram on the following page.)

It is critical to our interest to establish that the book of Daniel was in documented form almost three centuries before Christ was born.

(The Book of Daniel is actually one of the most authenticated books of the Old Testament, historically and archaeologically, but this approach is a convenient short-cut for our purposes here.)

Gabriel's Zinger

Originally deported as a teenage, Daniel was reading in the Book of Jeremiah near the end of the Babylonian captivity. He understood that the seventy years of servitude were almost over and he began to pray for his people.

The Angel Gabriel interrupted Daniel's prayer and gave him a four-verse prophecy that is unquestionably the most remarkable passage in the entire Bible: Daniel 9:24-27. The four verses include the following:

- 9:24 **The Scope** of the prophecy: 70 weeks (of years);
- 9:25 **The 69 weeks** of years;
- 9:26 **The interval** between the 69th and the 70th week of years;
- 9:27 **The 70th Week** of years (yet future).

The Scope: Daniel 9:24

9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

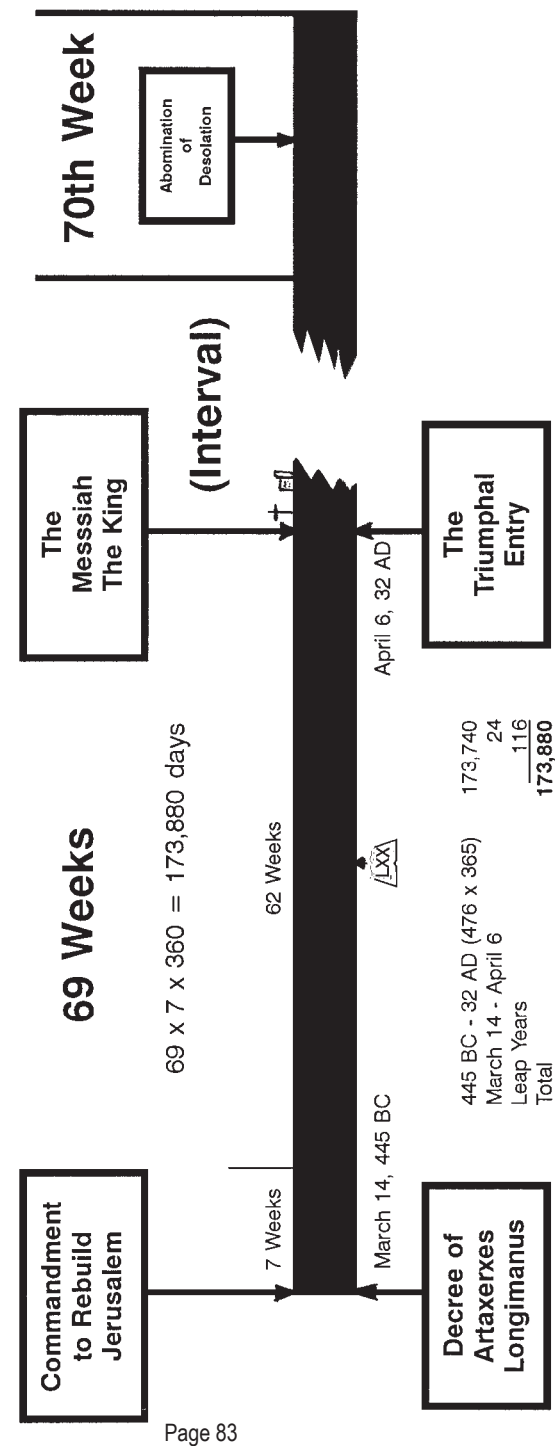
The idiom of a "week" of years was common in Israel as a "sabbath for the land" in which the land was to lie fallow every seventh year. (Lev 25:1-22; 26:33-35; Deut 15.) It was their failure to obey these laws that led to God sending them into captivity by the Babylonians (II Chr 36:20-21).

The focus of this passage is upon "thy people and upon thy holy city": that is, upon Israel and Jerusalem. (It is significant to note that it does *not* focus on the Gentiles nor the Church.) The scope of this prophecy is conspicuously broad and, without dwelling on the theology it embraces, it is clear that it has *yet to be fulfilled*.

The First 69 Weeks: Daniel 9:25

A measurable prediction occurs in verse 25:

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel



9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks: the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

This is a mathematical prophecy. As we have noted in previous articles, the Jewish (and Babylonian) calendars used a 360-day year (Gen 7:24; 8:3,4; Rev 11:2; 12:6; 13:3, 5; etc.), and 69 weeks of 360 day years totals 173,880 days. In effect, the Angel Gabriel told Daniel that the interval between the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem until the presentation of the Messiah as King would be 173,880 days.

Bull's Eye

The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes Longimanus on March 14, 445 B.C. (The emphasis on the street and the wall is to avoid confusion with other mandates involving the Temple itself.)

“The Messiah the Prince” is actually the *Meshiach Nagid*, “The Messiah the King.” (*Nagid* is first used of King Saul.)

During the ministry of Jesus Christ there were several occasions in which the people attempted to promote Him as King, but He carefully avoided it (Jn 6:15; always in control: Jn 7:30, 44; 8:59; 10:39). “Mine hour is not yet come.”

The Triumphal Entry

Then one day, He meticulously *arranges* it. (Lk 19:28-40.) On this particular day He rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey, specifically fulfilling a prophecy by Zechariah that the Messiah the King would present Himself in just that way. (Zech 9:9.)

We easily miss the significance of what was going on, but the Pharisees didn't. (They felt the crowd was blaspheming. Jesus endorsed it: Lk 19:38-40.)

This is the *only* occasion that Jesus presented Himself as King. This occurred on April 6, 32 A.D. (Lk 3:1: Tiberias appointed in 14 A.D.; 15th year, 29 A.D.; the 4th Passover occurred in 32 A.D.)

The Precision of Prophecy

When we examine the period between March 14, 445 B.C. and April 6, 32 A.D., and correct for leap years (Add one day for every 4 years, but subtract 3 for every century.), etc., we discover that it is 173,880 days *exactly, to the very day!*

How could Daniel have known this in advance? How could anyone have contrived to have that detailed prediction documented over three centuries in advance? But there's more.

The Interval: Daniel 9:26

There appears to be a gap between the 69th week (verse 25) and 70th week (verse 27):

9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The sixty-two “weeks” follow the initial seven, so verse 26 deals with events after the 69th week of years.

The Messiah is to be “cut-off”: the Hebrew is “*karat*” which means to be executed. Yes, the Old Testament predicts that the Messiah is to be killed! That is exactly what happened at the crucifixion. (See *Footprints of the Messiah* for an indepth study of the Old Testament predictions about the Messiah.)

Also, “the people of the prince that shall come” (see *Behold a White Horse* Briefing Package for a study of the different titles used in the Old and New Testaments) would destroy the city and the sanctuary. That very week Jesus also predicted the destruction of Jerusalem:

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.

Luke 19:43-44

It is significant that Jesus held them *accountable* to have recognized this very day from Daniel's prophecy.

Indeed, 38 years after Christ was crucified, in 70 A.D., Titus Vespasian, with the Fifth, Tenth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Roman Legions leveled the city of Jerusalem exactly as both Daniel and Jesus had warned in advance.

For over 1900 years, there has been no Temple in Jerusalem.

The 70th Week: Daniel 9:27

There is one week of years yet remaining to be fulfilled. This final seven year period is the subject of a great number of passages that we cannot even summarize here. But it is clear that the events of this remaining week of years requires the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (Mt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4; etc.). The provocative news is that they have begun! (Do see our briefing package, *The Coming Temple*.)

9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

We can expect the same precision in the fulfillment of the remaining portions of this remarkable prophecy. It is, indeed, time to do our homework. (For a detailed Briefing Package, including two tape cassettes, notes and diagrams, and a comprehensive bibliography, do see *Daniel's Seventy Weeks*.)

[The above article was excerpted from *Personal UPDATE*, March 1992, p. 5-8 and March 1996, p. 19-23.]

* * *

He is just, righteous: Isa 11:3-5; Ps 45:6, 8; 2 Sam 23:3; Jer 23:5, 6; Isa 9:6. Having salvation: 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:8, 9; Rom 3:26; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Jn 2:1. Humble, lowly: Phil 2:5-7; Isa 52:13-53:12.

Back to Zechariah 9

10] And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion [shall be] from sea [even] to sea, and from the river [even] to the ends of the earth.

[Between vv. 9 & 10 is an unseen interval embracing the church age in which we live. This was hidden in the OT (Cf. Eph 3:3-6).]

The rule of the Messiah will remove all the instruments of war from His people (Hos 1:7). His rule will be over the entire earth, centered in Jerusalem.

11] As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein [is] no water.

Abrahamic covenant: Gen 15:9-12, 18-20.

Mosaic covenant: Ex 24:8; Heb 9:18-20.

Joseph's predicament: Gen 37:24; Cf. Jeremiah 38:6.

12] Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare [that] I will render double unto thee;

Double portion to first-born: Deut 21:15-17.

Israel was "first-born": Ex 4:22.

13] When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

Judah + Ephraim: no "lost tribes" here.

Sons stirred: the War of the Maccabees (175-163 B.C.). Verses 13-17 seem to refer to the conflicts and victories of the Maccabean age, 2nd century B.C. (Dan 11:32; also 8:9-14).

14] And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

Shofar: the curved horn of the ram, used as an instrument of alarm (Ex 19:16; Judg 7:22) or in sacred ceremonies (Lev 25:9; Ps 47:5; 81:3; 150:3).

15] The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, [and] make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, [and] as the corners of the altar.

The Lord will defend them. Cf. Ps 2.

- 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 that day... the flock of His people... Protected by their Shepherd (Ps 23; Ps 100). Jewels (Mal 3:17). Ensign (Isa 11:11, 12).

- 17] For how great [is] his goodness, and how great [is] his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

Great is His goodness: Ps 31:19; 145:7; Isa 33:17, et al. Ps 45.

Zechariah 10

Verse 1 is viewed by many as the last verse of Chapter 9.

- 1] Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; [so] the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

Literal or symbolic? Both. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17, 18.
Literal: Deut 11:14-17; Jer 3:3; 14:22; Joel 2:23.

I'm told that the rainfall is increasing. But water is still the biggest problem—next to the legacy of hate from Islam—in Israel. [The best way for Israel to get more water would be to turn to God!]

Productivity of the land was promised as a direct reward to obedience of the nation in its covenant relationship (Lev 26:3,4; Deut 11:13-15).

Scarcity of rain is one of the curses in the Tribulation period (Rev 11:6).

Idols

- 2] 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.

Idols: *Teraphim*, (15X in OT) household gods.

Near Nineveh, at a place called Nuzu, excavations have revealed tablets which illuminate the customs during the patriarchal period.

Possession of these “household gods” implied leadership of the family and also were the key to the father’s property. This also explains the issue when Rachel stole the teraphim from the home of Laban and concealed them (Gen 31:30-34ff).

Diviners: the occultic counterfeiting of prophecy.

Divination = “to cut or divide.”

Hepatoscopy: divination by examining the liver; the shape of things to come. Ezek 21:21. Also, entrails of birds and animals (Josh 13:22; 1 Sam 6:2).

Balaam was a diviner (Num 22; Josh 13:22). Of Philistines (1 Sam 6:2). Of Babylon (Isa 44:25; Ezek 21:21). Of false prophets of Israel (Jer 27:9; 29:8; Mic 3:6; Ezek 13:23; Deut 18:10).

This passage connects with latter day idolatry of Israel, as does Zech 13:1-8. Divination is prohibited by God (Deut 18:10).

False dreams: Jer 23:32; 27:9-10.

The coming deceptions will include those of cosmic proportions: UFOs? Aliens? Abductions? [Do see our briefing package, *The Return of the Nephilim*, for further study.]

Shepherds

- 3] 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.

“Punished” and “visited”: same Hebrew word, פָּקַד; *paqadh*. Two meanings: with direct of the person, with favor. With the preposition ‘al and the person, with disfavor.

Shepherds: leaders. (Jer 23; Ezek 34). People, like sheep, require guidance; apt to wander. (Will always find and exploit, a hole in any fence.)

False shepherds who had turned to the occult (Cf. Zech 11).

Goats: uncomplimentary term. Isa 14:9, “chief ones of the earth; Ezek 34:17, distinguished from His sheep (Mt 25:32-33); Jer 50:8,

leaders. [Cf. The “judas goat” at the John Morrell Company for United Brands...]

False comfort from counterfeits. [Having a million dollars hidden in your safe; only to discover they were counterfeit, and thus worse than useless.]

Are we too intelligent to be swayed by superstition? The Greeks were intelligent, yet they made their trips to the Oracle of Delphi. The murmurings of the Oracle would launch navies, remove kings, and alter the course of history. Were these just superstitions? Or were they demonic?

How do UFOs appear on radar and leave radioactivity behind? Are the “alien abductions” hallucinations or are there really alien beings attempting to foster hybrids? “If it were possible, they will deceive the very elect” (Mt 24:24). What’s the answer to the occult?

The Coming One

- 4] Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.

“Out of him:” out of Judah, v.3.

“Corner(stone)”: Cf. Zech 4:7 headstone of the corner (Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Peter in Act 4:10; Isa 28:16; 1 Pet 2:1-8; Eph 2:20).

To the Jews, a stumbling stone (Rom 9:32, 33; 1 Cor 1:23). The Rock (1 Cor 10:4, Ex 17:6).

Mt 21:44 determines your eternity.

Dan 2: stone cut without hands will smite...

“Nail”: stake, or peg (Tabernacle pegged with silver). Also, to hang things on; establish leadership, as when unworthy Shebna was replaced by Eliakim (Isa 22:22-23; Cf Rev 3:7).

[Note also, in Acts 15:16, it was the tabernacle of David, not Moses which is referred to in Amos 9:11; Isa 16:5.]

“Battle bow” as an avenger, conqueror.

YHWH is a man of war (Ex 15:3). The Lord of the Armies will triumph over Israel’s Gentile oppressors (Zech 12:1-9; 14:1-8).

- 5] And they shall be as mighty [men], which tread down [their enemies] in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the Lord [is] with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.

70 A.D., and the diaspora begins. [J. V. McGee: Israel may yet again to be put out of the land?]

[*Gibborim*, mire, etc.? Could this be a veiled hint of weirder things?]

Judah

- 6] And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I [am] the Lord their God, and will hear them.

Judah and Joseph: southern and northern kingdoms, having broke away in 931 B.C.

Given after Dec 7, 518 B.C. (Zech 7:1): almost 20 years after the return from exile had begun. This may indicate a return from a subsequent dispersion. (Kaiser; McGee, et al).

Yet, even in Zechariah’s time: remember the delegation from Bethel (one of the capitals of the northern kingdom).

Ephraim

- 7] And [they of] Ephraim shall be like a mighty [man], and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see [it], and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the Lord.

The 10 tribes are not lost. Hos 11:8. Cf. The accounts of the Macab-beans against the Syrians. Turned into mighty men. [IDF today?]

- 8] I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.

“...hiss” is more like a whistle, or whisper—”pssst” (Isa 7:18-19).

Some estimate that there 12 million people in Israel at the time of the Roman destruction in 70 A.D., more than today.

- 9] And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again.

[Will they be “sown” again, for a subsequent regathering? Some expositors think so.]

“Remember me in their countries”: Lev 26:40-42. Zechariah = “The Lord Remembers.” [Ezek 4: 430-70=360 yrs; x 7 = 2520, etc.]

- 10] I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and [place] shall not be found for them.

“...Egypt”: very few Jews there today. [Could this also suggest another dispersion?] Or is it idiomatic for bondage? (Isa 11:11; Hos 11:1, 11; Mic 7:15).

“Assyria” for the enemies of the north?

“Gilead” = Golan Heights of today.

“Lebanon”: this was part of the Promised Land.

Abrahamic Covenant Gen 15:18; Palestinian Covenant: Deut 30:3-5; Davidic Covenant: 2 Sam 7:16; Ps 89:30-37.

[Israel “too narrow”? Isa 49:20-22. To be enlarged, Isa 54:1-3.]

- 11] And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.

The language reflects the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt the first time (Ex 14:21-32); as well as the Jordan (Josh 3:14-17). In the future, it will be by even greater miracles. Jer 23:7-8. [Including the Euphrates? (Isa 11:15).]

Some regard “Egypt” and “Assyria” as representative of the enemies of Israel.

- 12] And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.

Not by *Chutzpah*, but by the power of God. Millennial language (Mic 4:5). Recalls (3rd time) the words in Zech 1:10, 11 and 6:7.

Zechariah 11

Introduction

The predictions of this chapter were given long after the completion of the Temple of Zerubbabel, and address concerns in the more distant future from the prophet. There is to be a scattering of the people even after the time of Zechariah.

This chapter explains why the blessings and promises of the previous chapter are in abeyance for Israel. By rejecting their true Shepherd-Messiah at His first advent, they will experience rejection themselves, climaxing in their taking up with the False Shepherd in the time of their greatest woe. All the attendant dark and dismal storm being a necessary prelude to the Second Advent of their Deliverer and King bringing in the Millennial Kingdom.

It presents the Good Shepherd in His first advent, who will give His life for the sheep. It will also present a glimpse of another shepherd who will shear the sheep and kill them for food.

While there are many views as to which desolation Zechariah has in mind in the highly poetic style of the first 3 verses, the context of the rest of the chapter suggests that the judgment which resulted from the rejection of the Shepherd of Israel and the destruction which overtook the land in 70 A.D. is in view here.

- 1] Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.

Lebanon is north of Israel, and takes its name (“White One”) from the snow-covered mountains in the area.

The cedars of Lebanon furnished the timber for the Temple (1 Kgs 5:6), and it is thus addressed. This is the ancient rabbinical tradition.

- 2] 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.

Bashan was also an area in the northern part of Israel east of the Jordan River: The Golan.

God's judgment fell upon the land from north to south in 70 A.D.

Voice of Lions

- 3] [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.

The thickets on the banks of the Jordan south of the Sea of Galilee were lairs for lions (Cf. Jer 50:44). The young lions, *kephirim*, were weaned and began to rove to satisfy an insatiable appetite (Judg 14:5; Ps 17:12; 104:21). Lebanon, Bashan, and Jordan are thus indicative of the whole land in the vision.

The verb destroy, passive intensive of *shadad* (3X: v.2; 2X v.3), and the “wailing” or “howling” (2X as an imperative (v.2), once as a noun (v.3); and the interjectional idea “listen!”—all speak to the severity, the reality, and the suffering, of the coming judgment upon the land.

The Flock

- 4] Thus saith the Lord my God; Feed [tend?] the flock of the slaughter;

[Some feel that Zechariah may have had to act out these things representatively the role of the Messiah...]

This a commission of the Son of God by the Father: The Messiah is given the task of feeding the flock of slaughter.

Ra'ah = pasture, tend, graze, feed (Ps 23:1-6. Cf. *Ru'ah*, Spirit) the flock destined for butchering.

- 5] 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.

Terrifying! Untold suffering lies ahead. And their own unprincipled teachers and rulers—while claiming piety in bare-faced hypocrisy. Their avarice proved to be colossal.

[The plural nouns with singular predicates—as opposite to grammatical agreement—is an emphatic mode of construction.]

- 6] 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].

“We have no king but Caesar,” (Jn 19:15).

How accurately this portrays the Roman invasion and the disasters of the late 1st and the 2nd centuries... and destructive measures the Romans used to crush the Jewish state. Over 1,100,000 Jews perished in the fall of Jerusalem, and a half million more died during the course of the war and siege.

...With the Diaspora following... and the centuries of abandonment under the Ottoman Empire, etc.

- 7] 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.

[Compare the rod and staff of Psalm 23:4. These were to protect the sheep against a two-fold danger: outward enemies and inward strife.]

Beauty (“grace, or graciousness; pleasantness”); Naomi is of the same root, *Na'om*. (v.9 is an antithesis) Like a shepherd's crook used to keep the sheep in line.

Bands (word has to do with making a covenant; *Hobhelim*: hobbel, bind, pledge.) A heavy stick, used to fight off wild animals or those who would try to steal the sheep.

False Leadership

- 8] Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

[Over 40 interpretations of the three shepherds... none convincing. “In one month” suggests their own national leaders, in rejecting their promised Messiah, sealed the fate of the Jewish state. They rejected Him and He rejected them.]

God made a covenant with the peoples of the earth relative to His own people Israel. He has placed them under restraint lest they work

Israel harm or ill (Gen 12:3; Cf. Job 5:23; Ezek 34:25; Hos 2:18ff).
[After Keil, Feinberg..]

When this restraint was removed, the Romans destroyed their city and economy. Neither Alexander, nor Antiochus Epiphanes, nor Pompey was allowed to mar their national existence. But when the Messiah broke His staff, neither Titus nor his generals could spare the Temple, nor could Julian the Apostate later restore it (Cf. Lk 19:41-44; 21:24).

- 9] 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.

Against the false leadership: remember Malachi had also described their stinginess and failure to offer proper sacrifices. Rather than offer sickly offerings, “let them die.”

Josephus records the famine and cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. [*Wars of the Jews*, VI, 201-13] Cf. Deut 28:54-57; Lam 4:10. See Ezek 6:12.

The Shepherd withdraws from his traditional care... Disowned and disclaimed by the Good Shepherd, the sheep are exposed to destruction by their enemies.

The Broken Staff

- 10] 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.

“Cut it asunder” or chopped it to pieces. His patience finally exhausted.

Berith, “an agreement,” from the root *barah*, to cut up, as in sacrificing animals to seal the contract (Gen 15:10), or to eat a banquet together to seal a friendship (Gen 31:54).

God’s grace and mercy will be withdrawn. His promises to them (10:6) had been conditioned upon obedience. The *unconditional* promises are not the ones in view here. Here we are dealing with the divine restraint upon the nations preventing the decimation of Israel. This holding in check of forces inimical to Israel is spoken of under the figure of a covenant (Job 5:23; Hos 2:18, 20; Ezek 34:25).

[Remember, we too are called to holiness...]

- 11] And it was broken [annulled] in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it [was] the word of the Lord.
Cf. Mt 23:1-39. The summary of all history. The willing heart, then as now, perceived the truth and intent of God through His servant.

[If we *know* that the Bible is the Word of God, we find that apologetics seems a waste of time. We don’t need to “prove” that the Bible is true. It can take care of itself.]

[In Hebrew style, an effect is often stated first, then the cause is presented afterward. The cause—the rejection of the Good Shepherd—is now commented upon...]

The Good Shepherd

- 12] 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.

“If not, don’t bother!” Cf. Matthew 26:14-16. Remarkable!

Discounted goods? This was the price of a gored slave (Ex 21:32; the “ox” shall, indeed, be “stoned”: Rev 16:21). A freeman was considered worth twice that amount.

- 13] And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly [fancy] 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.

Cf. Matthew 27:3-10. It was not lawful to put the money into the treasury since it was “blood money” (Cf. Deut 23:18); but nothing prevented them from pre-paying anticipated expenses with it.

One of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible:

- 1) The price: 30 pieces of silver
- 2) The site of the transaction: the Temple
- 3) The ultimate recipient: a potter
- 4) The nature of the transaction: the purchase of blood.

This is alluded to in Jeremiah 18:1-4 and quoted in Zechariah 11:12-13. In Jesus’ day, Jeremiah was the first in the roll of the books of the prophets (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, et al.) and that section was

designated by the name of the first book. [Talmudic tradition, also.] Cf. Lk 24:44, where “Psalms” indicated the 3rd division of the Hebrew canon.

The Second Staff Broken

- 14] Then I cut asunder mine other staff, [even] Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between [with] Judah and Israel.

Thus is severed the relationships between Judah and Israel. The internal strife and divisions contributed largely to the downfall of Judea. Titus would soon scatter them all over the world...

The breaking of the first staff preceded; the breaking of the 2nd staff succeeded.

They are (temporarily) blinded (Lk 19:42) until the “fullness of the Gentiles” is come in (Rom 11:25).

Between vv. 14 & 15 comes the entire Church period.

In His reading of Isaiah 6 1:1, 2 in Luke 4:16-21, the interval implied when Jesus stopped at the comma (v.19) has now begun. That “comma” has lasted almost 2,000 years... Cf. Dan 9:26; Rev 12:5 vs. 6; et al.

The Coming World Leader: The Terrible Tyrant

- 15] And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet [again] the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

This will be a specific false “shepherd” and Terrible Tyrant yet to be seen on the horizon. John 5:43! OT: “Foolishness” = moral lack and failure.

The world seems to be getting ready to welcome a leader with answers. Some Bible experts believe he might even appear as an “alien” or with “alien” connections—with lying signs and wonders... (Dan 11:36-39; 2 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 13:1-10 or 11-18?)

(The opposite of what he should be: Isa 42:3; Jer 23:1ff; Ezek 34:1ff; Jn 10: 12, 13.)

I believe he will not surface until *after* the gathering of the Church. But the times seem to be ripe for his appearing...

- 16] 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 in pieces.

Notice the contrast with the Good Shepherd: he will feed on the sheep rather than feed them.

- 17] 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.

Woe: ‘oi an onomatopoetic interjection commonly used in laments (1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 22:18; Isa 1:4), here attest to the coming judgment.

“...the idol shepherd”: involving false worship. This appears to be the Coming World Leader: He “enforces the covenant” (Dan 9:27). In the first part of the “70th Week” of Daniel, Israel will believe they have (finally) received peace. But midway, he has become so powerful he sets himself up to be worshiped—the abomination of desolation (2 Thess 2:3-10).

Physical Description?

“Arm... right eye...” These specific designations are, indeed, provocative:

“Dried up” = shriveled (1 Kings 13:4).

“Darkened” *kahah*, to grow dim or faint; blind.

These seem too specific to be figurative. These appear to be the only *physical* descriptions of the Coming World Leader in Scripture. In Revelation, we find that he receives a mortal head wound that appears to be miraculously healed. (Rev 13:3, 12, 14. Cf. Ps 68:21?) Could the impaired arm and right eye be a vestige of this head wound?

Could this be why his loyal followers receive his mark on their right hand or forehead? (Rev 13:16). Thus, this chapter opens the way for the climactic portions of the book which begin in Chapter 12...

“In that day” = 17X

“Jerusalem” = 22X
“Nations” = 13X

[Note: We should not be looking for *him*. So what if the tribulation seems near.]

We are looking forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! We should be asking a different set of questions:

Do they serve seconds?
Who will we be sitting with?
What will we be wearing? Etc.

(Thanks to Sharon Bodine, NASA Astronaut.)

Jesus has been working in the potter’s field for a long time now. He purchased it. But He paid much more than 30 pieces of silver for it. And He did, indeed, purchase it with blood: His.

He purchased this entire field—the world—filled with broken lives; broken physically, mentally, morally, spiritually...

The Great Potter takes the clay that should be thrown away, puts on the wheel of circumstance, and shapes it into a vessel of honor. If we let Him.

Are you *completely* yielded to Him in your life?

Zechariah 12

The Siege of Jerusalem

General Organization of the Book:

Ch:

1. The Riding One
2. The Measuring One
3. The Cleansing One
4. The Empowering One
5. The Judging One
6. The Crowned One
7. The Rebuking One
8. The Restoring One

9. The Kingly One
10. The Blessing One
11. The Shepherding One
12. The Returning One
13. The Smitten One
14. The Reigning One

Section I	1 - 6	Night Visions
Section II	7, 8	Historical Interlude
Section III	1 st Burden:	Chapters 9 - 11.
	2 nd Burden:	Chapters 12 - 14.

From the standpoint of Israel’s history, these passages are among the most important to be found among the prophetic Scriptures.

Events Presented Include

The world confederacy against Jerusalem;
The victory of God’s people, empowered of the Lord;
The conviction of Israel nationally by the Spirit of God;
The presentation of Christ as their rejected Messiah;
The national Day of Atonement;
The cleansing of the hearts of the nation;
The purging of the land from idolatry and false prophets;
(The Crucifixion of the Lord);
The Time of Jacob’s Trouble;
The partial success of the nations invading Israel and besieging Jerusalem;
The appearance of the Messiah for His people;
Their rescue and His Second Coming with His saints;
The changed and renovated Holy Land;
The establishment of the Messianic kingdom;
The punishment of the nations for their futile assault upon Israel;
The celebration of the kingdom feast, the Feast of Tabernacles;
The complete restoration of the people of God to a holy nation.

Symmetry

9 & 10 correspond to Chapters 1-4, highlighting the blessings upon the covenant nation;

11, to Chapter 5, judgments upon the unbelieving nation, displayed in their rejection of the Messiah; 14, to Chapters 6:1-8, etc.

“The Day of the Lord”: 18X in Zechariah. Key period, detailed in Joel, Malachi, et al.

Chapter 12 deals with events *before* the reign of the Messiah, when Israel shall be besieged by the nations for their final death blow against God’s people. But it is God who puts down their evil designs. The prophet foretells the destruction of Israel’s enemies.

It is also worth noting that the Evil Shepherd (Chapter 11) must precede the nation’s deliverance. It is the cruel career of this sinister character that plunges the nation into its most severe time of testing.

Tribulation: Jeremiah 30:5-7; Dan 12:1; Mt 24:21-22.

“Jerusalem” 10X this chapter; “In that day” 7X.

- 1] 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.

“Burden” or *massah*; reveals its minatory character (Cf. 9:1).

“Stretcheth forth the heavens”: the dimensionality of space; Einsteinian geometry, re: mass and gravity...

“..spirit of man”: Man has a spirit.

The three participles emphasize that God is *sustaining constantly* His creation (Cf. Isa 42:5; 44:24). This majestic introduction is presented to dispel all doubt and unbelief concerning these predictions. God is abundantly able to carry out what He purposes to do (Heb 1:3).

A Cup of Trembling

- 2] 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.

“A gobblet of staggering” A cup is a well-known symbol of God’s wrath. (Cf. Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 13:13; 25:15-28; 51:7).

[Is Israel under siege today?]

- 3] 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.

“In that day,” *bayyom hahu*’, synonymous with “the Day of the Lord” which reverberates throughout Chapters 12-14.

“Burdensome stone...torn in pieces” = a global hernia? Those who would crush God’s city and people will be crushed by Jerusalem.

“All the peoples of the earth”: not a local or regional issue. Examine Israel’s predicament today!

The ostensible absurdity of Jerusalem being *globally* significant: No harbor; no river; no significant trade routes; no natural resources; no intrinsic strategic significance... yet...

Only significant to certain religious groups:

- To the Jews, but only a portion of them;
- To the Muslims, but only since they recognized it was significant to the Jews. For over a thousand years they controlled it, it fell into disuse and disrepair.
- To the Christians, but not to die for.

And combining all of these, creates an insignificant fraction of a non-religious, unbelieving world—why would the *entire* world be “in siege” against Jerusalem? It seems absurd...

...yet at this very moment the late lights are burning in every major headquarters throughout the world as the staff people of every nation of international significance is struggling with what to do about Jerusalem... Is the appointed time at hand? Little do the nations of the earth realize how they incur the wrath of God against them when they touch the “apple of His eye” (Zech 2:8; Deut 32:10) for harm, let alone seek to wipe them completely from the face of the earth!

The Returning One

- 4] In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

Same three plagues in Deut 28:28 (curses, 28:15ff, for disobedience, etc.) now visited upon her enemies. The victory will be *supernatural*.

- 5] And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

God *empowers* Israel; *overpowers* their enemies.

- 6] In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

(Sheaves burned: Samson, Judg 15:1-5; Absalom, 2 Sam 14:28-30.)

- 7] 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.

The “tents of Judah,” in contrast with the fortifications of the capital, Jerusalem, first.

The Lord Defends

- 8] In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

[“In that day” emphasized twice in this verse.]

(Glory of the House of David: 2 Sam 17:8; 18:3, et al.)

The Angel of the Lord before them: Ex 23:20; 32:34; 33:2; Josh 5:13 (as preamble to the Book of Revelation).

- 9] And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

“Seek...” as in Zech 6:7 concerning the steeds that “sought to go to and fro in the earth...”

The cup of their iniquity was full (Cf. Gen 15:16; Rev 16:13-21). Which nations will come against Jerusalem? God will summarily deal with the nations who seek to thwart His purposes in Israel for world blessing...

...but what moral and spiritual *shift* has occurred in Israel that would warrant the change from dispatching foes against them to giving protection to them? National conversion!

The Pierced One

- 10] And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

“Pour” שָׁפַךְ *shaphak* {shaw-fak’} used to indicate a transforming spiritual transaction, as in Joel 2:28ff (Cf. Isa 44:3; Ezek 36:26, 27; 39:29).

God also has spiritual purposes which must be accomplished in Israel. The nation is not yet in the place of obedience and trust in their Messiah. The prophet now sets forth in vividness and power, as nowhere else in Scripture, *the conversion of Israel*. This has yet to happen.

“House of David... Jerusalem”: metonymy standing for the whole covenant people.

“Spirit of Grace and Supplications”: both derived from the same Hebrew root: חָנָן *chanan* {khaw-nan’}: mercy, gracious, merciful, supplication.

The reference is to the Holy Spirit in all His influences (Cf. Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28-29. See our notes on Joel 2:28ff). Cf. Heb 10:29.

This is the time of Romans 11:25-27.

“...Pierced”

Their confession at this time is Isa 52:13 - 53:12.

Did they themselves pierce their Messiah? Indeed, in their unbelief and rejection of Him they made the deeds of their ancestors their own (as John 19:37; Cf. Rev 1:7).

“Bitterness”: מָרָר *marar*, to be bitter. [Note Ruth 1:20: Naomi (*Mara*) returns to the land before Boaz can do his part...]

Once they view Him as He was rejected, they will manifest their true repentance by mourning—of the most intense and forceful kind of grief: that of a firstborn son.

* * *

Rabbinical View: Two Messiahs?

The theory of two Messiahs, one to die and one to reign, is an invention of the rabbis without foundation in the Scripture, to explain the passages which present the Messiah as suffering and as ruling. These “two Messiahs” are referred to as the Messiah ben (son of) David, and a secondary, warfaring one, Messiah ben Joseph. Emerging in the 1st or 2nd century A.D., this view became rooted in the Talmud. (The earliest Talmudic reference to this “second” Messiah (Sukk. 52a and b) dates from the 3rd century A.D.) The various imputed references are confused and inconsistent.

The answer is to be found in two advents of a single Messiah, *as proved by this very passage*. The oldest interpreters of the passage, both Jewish and Christian, so understood it. [The Dead Sea Scrolls Qumran text, 4Q521, also underscores a 1st century single Messiah view, as reported by Michael Wise and James Tabor, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Dec 1992, q.v. *The Search For the Messiah*, by Mark Eastman and Chuck Smith, pp. 89-100.]

When pressed by Christian arguments about the OT prophecies of the sufferings of the Messiah, the fiction about the Messiah ben Joseph offered a welcome means of escape. The ill-fated Jewish rebellion under the false Messiah Bar Kochba (132 - 135 A.D.), their aspirations were quenched in blood, and the contrivance was used to rekindle Israel’s hope. [See *The Search For the Messiah*, Mark Eastman and Chuck Smith, pp. 89-100.]

Several passages (i.e., Isa 52:13 - 53:12; Dan 9:24-27; et al.) refute this view. As Eze 34:22, 23 and Eze 37:21-24. Hosea 3:4, 5: they shall have no king until they seek the son of David.

But none more clearly than Zech 12:10!

* * *

The Aleph and Tau?

There is an interesting identity that God uses of Himself in Isaiah 41:44: “...I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.”

And again in Isaiah 44:6: “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.”

And again in Isaiah 48:12: “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.”

This identity is continued in the Book of Revelation: “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...” (Rev 1:11). And, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev 22:13).

“The First and the Last” is, thus, linked to the “Alpha and Omega,” which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These are also continued as an identity: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev 1:8). And, “...he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely (Rev 21:6).

This identity is clearly the Jesus of the New Testament as further clarified in Revelation 1:17,18: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

And also in Revelation 2:8: “These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive...”

A Hidden Identity

In the Old Testament there is an interesting passage in Zechariah 12:10: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son...”

This passage is remarkable since it speaks of the end times, and yet presents the Messiah of Israel as the “One Whom They Have Pierced.” Thus, it is also an allusion to the crucifixion.

It is even more remarkable when one examines the *Hebrew* text. Below we have an extract from a Hebrew Interlinear Bible. The translation for each word is just below it. (But remember, the Hebrew goes from right to left.)



Notice that there is an *untranslated* word between the “me” and the “whom.” It is simply two letters, the *aleph* and the *tau*, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet!

This seems to suggest a more insightful translation could be:

....and they shall look upon me, the Aleph and the Tau, whom they have pierced...

In Greek, it would be “the Alpha and Omega”!

(There are some who have difficulty in recognizing Jesus as “Yah-weh-God” in the Old Testament. These “identity” links may assist in resolving these difficulties.)

There seems to be a treasure hidden in every corner. Isn’t our Lord fabulous! [This article was excerpted from *Personal UPDATE* of September 1993, pages 12-13.]

* * *

The Day of Great Mourning

11] In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

[v.10, domestic grief. v.11, public calamity. The historical calamity referred to was Pharaoh-Necho’s slaying of the godly Josiah, the last ray of hope of the nation between Hezekiah and the fall of the Jewish nation (2 Kgs 23:29-30; 2 Chr 35:22-27). This sorrow must have been great indeed to become a point of comparison.]

“**Hadad-rimmon**” is a compound of two Syrian gods (2 Kgs 5:18). It was the name of a site in the great plain of Esdraelon 4 miles from the fortified city of Megiddo on the SW side of the plain.

Famous in Israel’s history:

- Jabin and 900 chariots were overwhelmed;
- Gideon’s 300 defeated the Midianites, Amalekites and the children of the east;
- Samson triumphed over the Philistines;
- Barak and Deborah defeated Sisera;
- Saul slain by the Philistines;
- Ahaziah was lain by the arrows of Jehu, and
- Josiah slain by Pharaoh Necho. (1 Kgs 9:15; 2 Kgs 9:23, 27; 29:30; 2 Chr 35:22; Josh 17:11; Judg 1:27; 5:19.)

Also, Rev 16:16. Blood to the horse’s bridles...

12] And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

David, the King; Nathan, the prophet (2 Sam 7:2); Levi, the priest... Some identify Nathan as the younger son of David (2 Sam 5:14); this is the branch that Luke used in the genealogy of Mary, Lk 3:23.]

13] The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

Shimei was of family of Gershon, son of Levi (Num 3:17, 18, 21).

14] All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Intense sorrow: private and public; national and individual; personal and family.

The deepest grief seeks seclusion.

“Look unto me”: as in Num 21:9 (Jn 3:14-16); a looking away from self and mad-made endeavors to the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. Israel will come into the knowledge of sins forgiven by looking unto her rejected and pierced Messiah, the crucified Savior of sinners.

Rev 4:1 - 19:16 details what will now follow, as do Chapters 13 & 14.

Zechariah 13

There is the closest possible connection between Chapter 13 and Chapter 12. It continues on the theme of Israel’s conversion.

- 1] 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.

“In that day” = The Day of the Lord.

“Fountain” מַקּוֹר *maqor*; spring, fountain ; source of life, joy, purification.

The cleansing fountain of Calvary was opened long ago potentially, and now actually, for them. Cowper’s well-known hymn, “There is a fountain filled with blood,” had this verse as its basis.

Israel now enters into Calvary’s provision: Rom 11:26-27; Isa 33:24; 59:20,21; 65:19; Ezek 36:25; 39:29.

The text refers to moral—not ceremonial—uncleanness. Justification and sanctification as well. Their (and our) need for cleansing was summarized by Paul: Romans 10:3.

Idols Cut Off

- 2] 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.

God had forbidden even the mention of the names of idols (Ex 23:13; Ps 16:4).

This is the only place in the OT where the expression “unclean spirit” is found. It is diametrically contrasted with the “Spirit of grace and supplication” of 12:10.

Idolatry was not an apparent problem since the exile in Babylon. Yet, the ultimate idol worship will grip them yet future. There will be a revival of idolatry after the Church is taken to be with Christ.

Cf. Jn 5:43; Mt 12:43-45; Rev 13:1-18. Demonic outbursts described: Rev 9:1-11; 20, 21; Cf. Mt 12:43-45.

Rooting false prophets out will require stern measures. The very measures prescribed by the Mosaic law wherein the nearest of kin take the first steps to abolish evil are indicated here (Deut 13:6-10; 18:20).

“Cut off”: destroy, exterminate. The reference to the banishment of unclean spirits is the only passage in the Scripture which explicitly refers to the imprisonment of demons during the kingdom age. Cf. Rev 20:1-3. (Cf. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, p.74-5).

False Prophets

- 3] And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

False prophets and deceivers would abound: Mt 24:24; Lk 21:8; 2 Thess 2:7-12).

[Our continuous peril continues: 1 Jn 2:18, 22; 4:1-6; 2 Jn 7.]

Cf. Phinehas’ zeal, Num 25:7, 8.

- 4] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

A hairy mantle was the distinguishing emblem of a prophet in ancient Israel. [Elijah/John the Baptist legend (1 Kgs 19:13, 19; 2 Kgs 2:8, 13, 14).]

Shame, as for criminal action or indecorous conduct. Cf Micah 3:7; also Jer 22:22; Jer 15:9; Job 6:20.

- 5] But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

The Smitten One

- 6] 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.

“House of (His) Friends” = ? “with which wounded” ?

Friend:

Abraham: 2 Chr 20:7; James 2:23

Disciples: Jn 15:15

Thus, *among* His disciples, *after* His wounds...

Thomas (character: Jn 11:16); Cf. Jn 20:24-29.

- 7] Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

“My Shepherd” = Christ.

“My Fellow” : עִמִּית *amiyth* {aw-meeth'} (only here and Lev 6:2; 18:20; 19:11, 15, 17; 24:19; 25:14, 15, 17). Refers to persons united in law, rights, and privileges; from a verb “to bind together”; the Hebrew term for “people” (those united in common origin and interest) has the same root.

God is speaking of One as “My Companion, My Associate, My Friend, My Confidant, the One united to Me, the One whom I have associate with Myself, My Equal, My Nearest of Kin.” It is impossible to state in stronger terms the unimpeachable deity of the Messiah of Israel (Jn 10:30; 14:10-11; Phil 2:6).

“Man” denotes His humanity; “Fellow”, His deity.

“Smite the Shepherd”: 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 2:8; Ps 22; Isa 52:13-53:12. Quoted as fulfilled: Mt 26:31; Mk 14:27.

Also, of the diaspora: “Sheep” is a feminine *singular* collective; used frequently metaphorically of Israel to show both the unity of the “flock” as well as their helpless dependence upon the Lord, their Shepherd (Ps 23.1ff). (Unger)

“Shall be scattered”: *tphusena* is not third feminine *singular* (stress-ing the unity of the sheep) but third feminine plural, emphasizing the fact that in the consequent diaspora that unity shall be destroyed, and dispersed far and wide. [Feinberg: also includes the Diaspora...]

- 8] 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.

Just as in Chapter 11, there is a large gap of time from the rejection to the Great Tribulation (11:15-17).

In the Holocaust in Germany, 1 out of every 3 Jews were killed. In the next Holocaust, 2 out of 3 shall be killed.

The Remnant: Ezek 20:34-38; Cf. Mt 24:15-22; Mk 13:14-20.

- 9] 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.

Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jer 30:5-7; Rev 11 - 18)

“Fire”: Cf. Dan 3. [Where was Daniel?] Mal 3:2, 3; 1 Pet 1:7.

Physical deliverance will be followed by conversion; thus will the new covenant be fulfilled (Jer 30:18-22; 31:33; Ezek 11:19-20; Cf. Jer 32:37-42; Ezek 37:23-28).

“It is my people”: Hos 1:9,10; 2:23. Cf. Thomas’ declaration: John 20:29. This is the climax and culmination of Israel’s history: They are the people of the Lord and God is their Lord.

Only a literal application of these prophecies to the restoration and conversion of the Jewish nation at the Second Advent of Christ can satisfy the scope of these prophetic disclosures. Other interpretations ignore the true scope of Zechariah’s prophecies as a whole, violate the immediate context, resort to pointless mysticizing, and end up in a morass of uncertainty and confusion. Amen.

Unger, *Zechariah*, p.221

Chapter 14 will open as Chapter 12 did: with the last invasion of Jerusalem by the nations of the earth. It is the climax of the book, and of history as we know it...

Zechariah 14

The Final Siege of Jerusalem and the Return & Reign of the Messiah

Chapters 9-11 are foundational to preparations for the Second Coming and acceptance of the Messiah (12-14). 12 and 13 sets the scene for the return in 14.

Not historical; it is entirely literal and prophetic and the climax of the Book. The final closing of “the times of the Gentiles...”

[If you want to evaluate the position of a teacher, just ask him to interpret this passage; it will reveal volumes regarding his position on Scripture!]

- 1] Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

יָוֹם לַיהוָה *yom-ba'leyahweh*, “day is coming—the Lord’s. [Unger: “distinctively and preeminently His.” The *lamedh* before Yahweh denotes possession, belonging to, of (Isa 2:12; 22:5; 28:2). The author wished to accentuate the *certainly* of the coming of the day, employing the *future instance* and therefore attaching the participle *directly* to “day,” *yom*, so making a construct chain impossible, but achieving an added stress on “a day—the Lord’s” by substituting an adjectival phrase for the construct (gentitive) relationship.]

Background

The Day of the Lord (Isa 2:12; 4:1,2; 11:10,11; 13:9; Amos 9:11; Joel 1:15; 2:1,1; Mal 4:1-5); Ps 2; Rev 5:1-19:16.

The Tribulation: Daniel 9; Jeremiah 30:5-7.

- 2] For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city

shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

“I will”: God actively interposed...

All nations (representatively). (United Nations? Rev 16:13f.)

Jerusalem: precise location.

“Not be cut off...” decisive: not have already taken place; does not fit any past overthrow of Jerusalem.

The Reigning One

- 3] Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

יָצָא, *yatsa'*, go forth, as a Man of War (Ex 15:3). Judg 4:14; 2 Sam 5:24; Ps 68:7; 108:11; 1 Chr 14:15).

The theme of Zechariah: his name = “God Remembers.”

When did the Lord “fight”?

Red Sea (Ex 14:14);
Jericho (Joshua 5ff): model of Revelation?;
At Beth Horon (Josh 10:12-14);
General conquest of Canaan (23:3);
Barak vs Sisera, (Judg 4:15);
Jeshoshaphat (2 Chron 20:15);
...et al. (Num 21:14; Mic 1:3; Rev 19:11-16; Isa 63:1ff).

The Earthquake

- 4] 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.

The “Touchdown” Play! “His feet”: literally. After Edom (Isa 63)? (See also *The Next Holocaust and the Refuge in Edom* briefing package.)

“in that day”: 17X in Chapters 12-14.

“Jerusalem”: 22X

“Nations”: 13X

Mount of Olives (only mention in OT; Cf. 2 Sam 15:30). Highest peak in the area: overlooks Jerusalem (200 ft higher than Mt. Zion; 300 ft above Mount Moriah). The place of the Lord’s departure (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-12).

[This was the direction, to the east, that the *Shekinah* departed and would return (Ezek 11:22, 23; 43:2, 4).]

Earthquake: (Cf. Mic 1:4; Nah 1:5; Hab 3:6; Ps 18:7; Ezek 38:19-20). Seventh Bowl: Rev 16:18, 19.

The Flight

- 5] And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

Azal: possibly Beth-Ezel (Micah 1:11).

Flight compared with that during reign of Uzziah (Amos 1:1) two centuries earlier, which must have been extreme. Josephus relates the catastrophe to Uzziah’s attempt to offer incense in the temple against the protests of the priests (Antiquities IX, 10, 4. Cf. 2 Chr 26:16-21).

He will be accompanied *by both*: His Angels (Mt 24:30-31); and His Saints” (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 3:13; 4:14; Col 4:4!).

“Saints” *gedoshim*, separated ones, set apart for holy work is used of: Angels (Deut 33:3; Ps 89:5-7; Job 15:15) and Holy men (Ps 16:3; 34:9; Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:26; Num 15:40; 16:3; Dan 8:24; 2 Chr 35:3; Ps 106:16; Dan 7:18, 21, 22, 25, 27).

The “Bride” will be united to Christ in glory (Rev 19:7-9) before He returns to the earth in triumph (19:11-16) and will form part of the “armies of heaven” following in His train (19:14).

These celestial armies “clothed in fine linen white and clean” connect them with the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, whose garments “of fine, clean and white” are said to be the “righteousness of the saints” (19:8).

The Angels will also be in the retinue of the returning King (Mt 16:27; 25:31; Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26, etc.). Peter compares it with the world-wide flood of Noah (2 Pet 3:1-14).

Note that the prophet cries out, “The Lord my God” Cf. Thomas, and our notes re: Zech 13:6.

- 6] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

Cosmic changes (Cf. Isa 13:9, 10; 24:23; Joel 3:14-16; Mt 24:29,30; Mk 13:24,25; Rev 6:13; 8:12).

- 7] 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.

Global twilight? (Ex 15:8; Zeph 1:12; Job 10:10). Unparalleled, unique in human history (Cf. Ezek 7:5; Jer 30:7). “None is like it.” [Entropy laws lifted?] Isa 30:26; Rom 8:19-22 (Cf. Gen 3:17-19?).

- 8] 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.

Waters=purification, spiritual life, and refreshment (Ezek 47:1,2; Joel 3:18; Rev 22:1-2; Cf. Jn 4:10, 11; 7:38). Forsaking Him is compared to broken cisterns unable to hold water (Jer 2:13; 17:13). Living water is fresh, running water, however. Literal; but also spiritual [Isa 4:3,4 vs 5,6; Isa 35:2-6 vs 35:1, 7-10; Ezek 36:16-37:28 (restoration of the people) with Ezek 36:1-15 (restoration of the land).]

“...living waters shall go out from Jerusalem”: Jerusalem will be the capital of the millennial earth as well as the centroid of spiritual blessings.

One Lord

- 9] And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.
He alone will be worshiped. Isa 54:5; Dan 2:44; Rev 11:15

One Lord: Cf. *Sh'ma*, Deut 6:4f. [“Pure Language (Zeph 3:9)” suggests Hebrew as a universal language?]

- 10] 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, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.

Literal earthly kingdom.

“As a plain” = the Arabah, the deep “Great Rift” from the Dog River at the coast north of Beirut in Lebanon, above the Sea of Galilee, through the Jordan Valley, through the Dead Sea, down into the Gulf of Aqaba, and on into North Africa. (Cf. Deut 1:7; 3:17; Josh 11:2). Considered the deepest depression on the surface of the earth. Geva, modern Jeba, 6 mi NE of Jerusalem, in Benjamin (Josh 18:24);

Rimmon, En-rimmon (Josh 15:32; 19:7; 1 Chr 4:32), 33 mi SW of Jerusalem, a few miles S of Ziklag. (Inhabited upon the return from the exile (Neh 11:29) and therefore inhabited in Zechariah's day. “... south of Jerusalem” appended to distinguish from a Rimmon in Galilee (Josh 19:13)). Means “pomegranate.”

Jerusalem “lifted up?” (Mic 4:1; Ps 48:1-3).

Benjamin's gate: in north wall of city; also called the “Gate of Ephraim” (2 Kgs 14:13), as the road from it ran through Benjamin and on to Ephraim.

First Gate, apparently in the NE corner; Corner gate: (2 Kgs 14:13; Jer 31:38) NW corner of the city;

Tower of Hananeel (Jer 31:38): near NE corner of the wall (one commentator said, years ago, that this could not be literal because nobody could find this tower; archaeologists have since located it.)

Winepress of the King: SE of the city near the king's gardens and the pool of Siloam.

[Detailed topographical details testify to the literalness of the passage...]

- 11] And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

“No more curse” *cherem*, accursed thing; destruction (appointed to) or a ban to utter destruction (1 Kgs 20:42; Isa 34:5; 43:28; Mal 3:24).

[In the case of Jericho, Achan transgressed the “ban.” Saul ignored by sparing Agag (1 Sam 15:3).]

Cf. Zech 13:2, demons imprisoned; etc. (Cf. 1 Tim 4:1-5; 1 Jn 4:1-6; James 3:15.) Secure, for the first time in their history (Isa 2:2, 3; Mich 4:1).

The Plague

- 12] 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.

Strange symptoms. Neutron bomb? Animals, too (v.15). Shocking rapidity (vs. Lev 26:16; Deut 28:21, 22).

- 13] 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.

Cf. Judg 7:22; 1 Sam 14:14-16.

- 14] 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.
- 15] 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.

Why animals, too? Nuclear warheads?

The Feast of Tabernacles

- 16] 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.

Feast of Tabernacles (mentioned 3X here): Lev 23:33-44; Deut 16:13-17; Cf. Ex 23:16; 34:2. Also celebrated upon the return from of Israel from the Exile (Neh 8:14-18).

The feast of the millennial age (Rev 22:1). The other two mandatory feasts, Passover and Pentecost, not mentioned, have already been fulfilled. (See also *Feasts of Israel* briefing package for more background.)

- 17] 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.

All nations (representatively?). Rain withheld as punishment for lack of obedience. (There apparently will be some during the Millennium; Ps 66:3.)

There will, of course, be feigned obedience (a form of lying) then, as now. Not all church members are Christians!

- 18] 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.

Egypt is mentioned separately due its well-known independence from rain; an alternative plague is promised.

- 19] This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

A stern note. Cf. Zech 5:1-4, the rod-of-iron rule of the Messiah.

- 20] 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.

No vessels of dishonor: no longer secular vs. Sanctified; all are sanctified before the Lord. Where holiness prevails, ceremonial sanctity is unnecessary.

- 21] 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.

The "Canaanite" probably stands for the Phoenicians of N. Canaan, noted mariners and merchants of the ancient world, and known for their ungodly and unholy ways. (Hos 12:7). This is an inverted way of indicating that all will be holy.

Summarizing

Zechariah opened: "Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation" (2:13)

...And now climaxes with "The Time of the restitution of all things" *ἀποκαθίστανεζ* *apokatastasis* (Acts 1:6; 3:21).

...Just as Revelation carries us from Chapter 4 to the climax in Chapter 19:11-16.

Let us, too, close like Thomas: (v.5) "My Lord and My God!"

Indeed: Even so, Come Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

* * *

Betrayal of the Chosen A History of Modern Israel

Where Does Israel begin?

In one sense, Israel begins at Genesis 3:15, when the "Seed of the Woman" is first announced. (The summary of this Woman occurs in Revelation 12).

In another sense, Israel's beginning occurs at the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.

But the Scripture reckons the birth of the Nation Israel at the Exodus (Ex 4:22).

Chronology

B.C.

~1500?	The Birth of the Nation in the Exodus. They went into Egypt as a family; they came out as a nation.
~1450?	Conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua.
~1040	Saul appointed as first king.
~1003	David captures Jerusalem from Jebusites.
~917	Solomon dedicates the First Temple in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles.

~880	The civil war divides the Kingdom into “Israel” in the north and “Judah” in the south.
722	Israel defeated by Assyria; the northern tribes exiled.
606	First siege of Jerusalem; Daniel and his three friends taken captive to Babylon. Vassal king installed at Jerusalem.
605	Pharaoh Neco of Egypt defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish.
597	Second siege of Jerusalem by Babylon; 10,000 deported—including Ezekiel.
587	Third siege; Jerusalem falls; Temple destroyed.
539	Persian Empire conquers Babylon. Cyrus orders Jews’ return to rebuild their Temple. Thus, the first regathering (cf. Isa 11:11).
536-516	Temple reconstruction completed?
458	Artaxerxes permits Ezra to return to Jerusalem with additional exiles.
445	Nehemiah gains authority to rebuild the city (and walls) of Jerusalem. (Triggers the 69 weeks of Daniel 9:25. See <i>Daniel’s 70 Weeks</i> briefing pack.)
332	Alexander the Great conquers the Persians, beginning the Hellenistic rule of Judea.
167	Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) ransacks Jerusalem, prohibits Torah practice, and sets up the “Abomination of Desolation” in the Temple. Maccabean revolt begins.
164	Temple recaptured and rededicated. (Origin of Hanukkah celebration, cf. Jn 10:22.)
142-63	Hasmonean dynasty rules Jerusalem.
63	Roman army under Pompey conquers Judea.

40-37	Parthians conquer Judea.
37	Herod regains Jerusalem.
20	Herod begins reconstruction and expansion of the Temple.
4? 2?	Birth of Christ.
<u>A.D.</u>	
7	Caesar Augustus appoints Caponius Procurator, removed judicial authority: “The Sceptre departed from Judah” (cf. Gen 49:10).
26-36	Pontius Pilate procurator of Judea; establishes capital at Caesarea.
28-32	Ministry of Jesus. Crucifixion under Herod Antipas.
	The tragedy of all history (Mt 23: 37-39); National blindness decreed (Lk 19:40ff; Rom 11:25).
	Destruction of Jerusalem predicted. (The “Times of the Gentiles” begin: Lk 21:24).
	The Diaspora Begins
37-41	Roman emperor Caligula attempts to have his image established in the Temple.
66-73	Jewish revolt against the Romans.
70	Fall of Jerusalem. Second Temple destroyed by Titus.
73	Last stand of the Jewish revolt at Masada.
132	Bar Kochba revolt; destroys the 12th Legion; rebuilding of the Temple begins.
135	Romans crush the Jewish revolt. Hadrian orders Jerusalem plowed under and builds Aelia Capitolina on the ruins. Temple to Jupiter built over the site of the Jewish Temple.

313	Emperor Constantine legalizes Christianity in the Roman Empire. Moves his capital to Byzantium (Constantinople).
378	Emperor Theodosius makes Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire.
570	Mohammed is born at Mecca.
	The Rise of Islam begins. (Syria fell, 634; Jerusalem, 637; Egypt, 638; Persia, 640; North Africa, 689; Spain, 711. Stopped at Tours, 732.)
614	Persians sack Jerusalem.
628	Byzantines recapture Jerusalem under Heraclius.
638	Jerusalem conquered by Caliph Omar; Muslim domination of Jerusalem begins.
732	Charles Martel defeats the Moors at Tours, France, arresting the incursion of Islam into Europe.
750	Abbasid Dynasty of Baghdad seizes control of Jerusalem.
950	Egyptian-based Fatimid Dynasty conquers Jerusalem. All synagogues and churches destroyed.
1071	Seljuks conquer Palestine and vandalize Jerusalem, persecuting both Jews and Christians.
1097	Godfrey de Bouillon leads First Crusade to Jerusalem.
1099	Crusaders lay siege to Jerusalem and recapture city; wide-scale massacre of almost 40,000 Jews and Muslims; Crusaders declare Jerusalem capital of their Latin kingdom.
1187	Muslims recapture Jerusalem under Saladin, who encourages Jews and Christians to settle in Jerusalem and help him fight Latin Crusaders.

1241	Saladin dies; heirs battle each other; Germany brokers deal to return all of Jerusalem except Temple Mount to Crusader control.
1244	Crusaders expelled from Jerusalem by mercenaries hired by Egyptian Sultan.

Crusades (Summary):

- 1st 1097-1099: Captured Jerusalem.
- 2nd 1147-1149: Postponed the fall of Jerusalem.
- 3rd 1189-1191: Army failed to reach Jerusalem.
- 4th 1201-1204: Captured and plundered Constantinople.
- 5th 1228-1229: Took Jerusalem, but soon lost it.
- 6th 1248-1254: A failure.

1291	Mamelukes rule from Cairo; Jerusalem becomes city of exile for dangerous criminals and disfavored government officials.
1516	Ottoman Empire succeeds Mameluke Empire. Jerusalem in Turkish hands for next 400 years.
1537-41	Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt under Suleiman the Magnificent.
1544	Muslim authorities seal the Golden Gate because of a prophecy that the Messiah would enter through this gate.
1799	Napoleon moves against Ottoman Empire from Egyptian front; stopped before he reaches Jerusalem.

The Regathering Begins

1860	Mishkenot Sha'ananim, first Jewish neighborhood built outside Jerusalem walls.
1881	Widespread pogroms in Russia reinforce Jewish national awakening.
1882	Publication of Leo Pinsker's <i>Auto-Emancipation</i> , calling for the establishment of a Jewish state.

	Beginning of the first wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine.
1894	Theodor Herzl attends the trial of Alfred Dreyfus in Paris and witnesses outpouring of French anti-Semitism.
1896	Herzl's <i>Der Judenstaat</i> (The Jewish State) published.
1897	Herzl convenes First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.
1915	Joseph Trumpeldor founds Zion Mule Corps of British Army in World War I, the first Jewish fighting unit in centuries.
1916	Sykes-Picot Agreement signed by Britain, France and Russia. Carves up the former Ottoman Empire, defeated in World War I; Britain gains control of Palestine; France gains control of what is now Lebanon and Syria.
1917	Balfour Declaration commits Britain to supporting a Jewish National Home in Palestine. British forces under General Sir Edmund Allenby liberate Palestine from the Turks. Jewish Legion participates in freeing Galilee, Samaria, and "Transjordan."
1919	Versailles Peace Conference. Wilson argues for self-determination of peoples. Jewish-Arab accord: Jews claim Jewish home in Palestine; Arabs claim Arab state from Iraq to Yemen (excluding Palestine).
1920	San Remo Conference grants Britain Mandate over Palestine with the aim of encouraging immigration and settlement of Jews and establishment of Jewish National Home. British officials instigate Arab riots in Palestine. Rioters demand end to Jewish immigration and incorporation of Palestine into Syria. Valdimir Jabotinsky founds Haganah, the Jewish self-defense force in Palestine.

1921	British decide to install Abdullah in "Transjordan" (eastern Palestine). Samuel appoints haj Amin al-Husseini grand mufti of Jerusalem.
1922	League of Nations officially ratifies British Mandate over Palestine with aim of building Jewish National Home. Churchill White Paper creates "Transjordan" east of Jordan River, taking 78% of land allocated for British Mandate.
1925	Vladimir Jabotinsky founds Zionist Revisionism, forerunner of the Herut political party and the modern Likud party.
1929	Arab riots in Palestine. Massacre of Jews in Hebron and Safed. Arabs demand end to Jewish immigration.
1930	British White Paper limits Jewish immigration to Palestine.
1933	Hitler comes to power in Germany.
1936-39	Campaign of Arab violence in Palestine. Arab rioters murder 500 Jews and thousands of Arabs, demanding an end to Jewish immigration. Arab nationalist movements riot to stop Jewish homeland in Palestine and throw their support to Hitler in World War II.
1937	British Peel Commission asserts that Jewish National Home cannot be built in Palestine. Recommends repartition of Palestine into tiny Jewish state (5% of total area) and Arab state in remainder. Peel Plan is rejected by both Arabs and Jews. Britain halts Jewish immigration to Palestine, condemning millions of European Jews to the Holocaust.
1938	Munich Conference and betrayal of the Czechs. Hitler is given the Sudetenland.

1939	<p>Hitler overruns Czechoslovakia.</p> <p>Chamberlain White Paper announces end to Jewish National Home and promises control of immigration into Palestine to the Arabs within five years. British blockade Palestine against “illegal” Jewish immigration.</p> <p>Hitler invades Poland. World War II begins.</p>
1941	Mufti relocates to Berlin. Meets with Hitler; announces intention of creating “fascist” Arab state and agitates for the destruction of world Jewry. Instigates terrorism against Arab moderates also.
1942	Nazi conference at Wannsee decides on destruction of all Jews in Europe.
1944	Jewish Brigade, part of the British forces, fights alongside the Allies.
1945	<p>World War II ends. Liberation of the death camps where six million Jews died. Arabs demand end to Jewish immigration to Palestine.</p> <p>“Illegal” smuggling of Holocaust survivors into Palestine by Jews. Increase of Jewish underground actions against British blockade and British administration in Palestine.</p>
1946	Irgun bombs King David Hotel.
1947	<p>Britain announces withdrawal from Palestine. United Nations announces partition into Jewish and Arab states. Jews accept partition; Arabs reject it.</p> <p>Dead Sea Scrolls discovered.</p>
1948	<p>Invasion of Arab forces aimed at preventing the establishment of the Jewish State.</p> <p>Declaration of independence of the State of Israel. David Ben Gurion becomes first Prime Minister.</p>

1948-49	Israel’s War of Independence. Arab armies from five countries invade Israel. Jordanian forces occupy Judea, Samaria, and eastern half of Jerusalem, including Old City and Temple Mount; Jordan annexes East Jerusalem, destroying all Jewish settlements. Egypt occupies Gaza. War of Independence ends in Jewish victory.
1948-52	800,000 Jews expelled from Arab countries. Most flee to Israel and are absorbed. 650,000 Arabs flee from Israel and are confined to refugee camps.
1951	Yasser Arafat of the Husseini clan begins organizing Palestinian radicals in Cairo and recruits Abu Iyad, Abu Jihad, and other future leaders of the PLO.
1952-56	Terrorist raids into Israel from adjoining Arab states, including Egyptian-sponsored fedayeen raids from Gaza. Israeli army adopts policy of reprisals.
1956	<p>Sinai Campaign, Oct 29 - Nov 5. Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalizes Suez Canal and blocks Israeli shipping. Israel captures Sinai from Egypt.</p> <p>Terrorist bases in Gaza dismantled.</p> <p>U.S.-Soviet pressure forces Israeli withdrawal from Sinai without peace treaty. Dwight Eisenhower guarantees protection of Israeli shipping.</p>
1964	PLO is founded in Cairo with aim of “liberating” Palestine. PLO Charter calling for Israel’s destruction is adopted (still in place). Campaign of terror attacks across Israel’s borders escalates.
1967	<p>Egypt floods Sinai with troops and blockades Israeli shipping in the Red Sea. American guarantees to protect Israel fails to take effect.</p> <p>Six Day War, June 5-10. Israel defeats combined forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. Captures Sinai and Gaza, Judea and Samaria, and the Golan Heights. Jerusalem is reunited. Jewish settlements in eastern Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria reestablished.</p>

	Moshe Dayan gives administration of the Temple Mount to the Waqf, the High Muslim Council of Jordan.
1968	PLO hijacking of Israeli airliner to Algeria marks beginning of PLO campaign of international terror.
1969	Yasser Arafat, head of the Fatah guerilla wing, gains control of the PLO.
1969-70	War of Attrition. Egypt and Syria launch a campaign of continuous attacks along Suez Canal and Golan Heights. PLO steps up terror attacks across Jordan River. Heavy Israeli retaliation brings war to an end.
1970	Egypt's Nasser dies and is succeeded by Anwar Sadat. PLO attempts to take over Jordan. King Hussein massacres Palestinian Arabs and expels Arafat and the PLO in "Black September."
1971-75	PLO relocates to Lebanon and establishes de facto state on its territory, which becomes a base for all international terror organizations. PLO campaign of massacres continue in northern Israel.
1972	Munich massacre of Israeli Olympic athletes earns PLO international notoriety.
1973	Yom Kippur War, Oct. 5-24. Egypt and Syria launch surprise attack against Israel. Despite heavy casualties, Israeli army reverses tide and advances toward Cairo and Damascus. Arabs ask for cease fire after three weeks of fighting. Israel negotiates disengagement agreement with Egypt and Syria, setting cease-fire lines in the Sinai and the Golan.
	Arab oil embargo is imposed. International oil prices rise dramatically.
1975	United Nations passes resolution defaming Zionism as racism (!). PLO control of Lebanon is challenged, and full-scale civil war erupts between Moslems and Christians.

1976	Syria invades Lebanon and sets up permanent control over more than half of that country. (Western press ignores this.) Israeli raid on Entebbe airport in Uganda on July 4; frees 103 hostages held by PLO.
1977	Likud government elected in Israel. Menachem Begin is first Likud prime minister. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt responds to Begin's invitation and visits Israel. (Leads to peace treaty in 1979.)
1978-79	First wave of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union as a result of Soviet/American dÈtente reaches peak. Two hundred thousand Soviet Jewish immigrants arrive in Israel.
1979	Egypt and Israel sign Camp David Accords. Israel agrees to return Sinai.
1981	Sadat is assassinated.
1982	Israeli ambassador is shot in London by PLO. Israel invades Lebanon with aim of dismantling PLO terrorist bases. PLO is expelled from Lebanon and forced to relocate in Tunis.
1984	U.S. and Israel sign strategic cooperation agreement formalizing alliance.
1985	Israel withdraws from Lebanon and establishes security zone north of Israeli/Lebanese border. Syria remains in control of most of Lebanon. U.S. takes lead in war against terror after PLO hijacks Achille Lauro cruise ship. Midair interception of terrorists by U.S. fighter planes.
1986	U.S. and Britain bomb Libya in retaliation for Libyan-supported terror attacks.

1987	PLO banned in U.S. by law for terrorist activities. Intifada, the Palestinian uprising, begins.
1988	PLO pressures Jordan's King Hussein into renouncing all claims to the West Bank; from Algiers, PLO declares establishment of Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem.
1989-91	Collapse of Soviet Union. Second wave of Soviet immigration to Israel brings 600,000 in five years.
1990	Israeli airlift brings most of Ethiopian Jewry to Israel. Saddam Hussein of Iraq invades Kuwait.
1991	Persian Gulf War. U.S.-led international coalition drives Saddam from Kuwait. Israel is attacked by Iraqi Scud missiles but is kept from intervening by the U.S.
1991	Madrid Peace Conference among Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and a Jordanian/Palestinian delegation. Israel branded as the chief obstacle to peace, and is pressured to negotiate with PLO representatives.
1992	Labor returns to power in Israel. Yitzhak Rabin becomes prime minister.
1992-93	Secret negotiations with the PLO takes place in Oslo, Norway.
1992	Declarations of Principles ("Oslo I") signed at the White House ceremony, transferring control of Jericho and Gaza to PLO control.
1994	Peace Treaty signed with Jordan (cf. Dan 11:41). Gaza Strip and Jericho turned over to PLO control; Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres receive Nobel Peace Prize.
1995	Interim Agreement ("Oslo II") signed with the PLO which cedes Bethlehem, Hebron, and over 450 villages to Palestinian control. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated; Shimon Peres succeeds Rabin.

1996	Benjamin Netanyahu wins first national election for Prime Minister. Final status talks begin that will decide the fate of Jerusalem (cf. Zech 12:2ff).
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Malachi

Introduction

Malachi means "my messengers."

Despite many other scholastic conjectures, he was probably a person with this proper name. [Contrary to the *Septuagint* and *Targumim*.] The tradition of some of the ancient sources is that he was of the tribe of Zebulun, and that he died young.

[The Targum of Jonathan (after "Malachi," this targum adds, "who otherwise is called the scribe Ezra."), Jerome, and Rabbi Rashi (1040-1105) understood Malachi as a title for Ezra the Scribe. Pseudo Epiphanius and other church fathers (Dorotheus, Ephraem Syrus, Hesychius, and Isidorus Hisp, statements as cited by John M.P. Smith, *Book of Malachi*, p. 10) linked Malachi with a town of Sopha or Sophira in Zebulun (*Epiphanius, vitae prophetarum*, as cited by Smith, from Nestle's *Marginalien*, p. 28f.)]

Placement: Last book of the Old Testament. [Doesn't "complete" OT. John the Baptist does (Lk 16:16; Mt 11:13).]

Background, Setting

The Temple was rebuilt; priestly worship carried on; people had fallen into spiritual decline, and their attitudes developed later into the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Like today...)

Insensible to the love of God displayed toward them;
Unaware of the enormity of their departure from the will and the way of the Lord;
Lacked reverence for Him.

[Compare America and the Church today...]

Malachi ministered in the fifth century B.C., about 100 years after Cyrus had issued the decree in 538 B.C. which permitted Jews to return from exile to Judah. The destruction of Edom (re: Mal 1:3-5) was affected by the Nabatean Arabs who totally drove out the Edomites between 550 and 400 B.C., setting up their own Idumean state in its place.

In response to the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, the repatriated Jews had rebuilt the temple, completing it in 515 B.C. Houses had been reconstructed. Most likely in Malachi's day the wall of Jerusalem was being rebuilt or had been completed (by Nehemiah's crew). Nehemiah, whose activity in Judah began in 445 B.C., focused his reform efforts on ending intermarriage (Neh. 10:28-30), restoring the practices of honest tithing (10:32, 38-39) and of proper ritual (10:33-37), and ending exploitation of the poor (5:1-13).

Israel's Enigma

In their minds, the postexilic era was supposed to be different: the land was to rebound with miraculous fruitfulness (Ezek 34:26-30); the population would swell (Isa 54:1-3); the nation was to rise to a glorious reign of a new David (Jer 23:5-6); and all nations were to come and serve them (Isa 49:22-23).

The realities of life were just the opposite. The land languished under drought (Mal 3:10), the population remained a fraction of what it had been, and the nation continued under the political dominion of Persia (𐤌𐤕𐤕 *pechah*, Aramaic for "governor", Mal. 1:8, was a Persian title, also used in Ezra 5:3, 6, 14; 6:6-7, 13; Dan. 3:2-3, 27; 6:7).

Thus, the book may be placed in the reign of Xerxes I (486-464 B.C.), when the Persians were experiencing their first stinging defeats by Greek armies. At this time, Judah was a vassal state of the Persians, living under a non-Davidic governor appointed by the Persians, and may have been searching the international conflicts of the time for signs of divine intervention.

Harvests were poor and subject to locust damage (Mal 3:11). Most hearts were indifferent or resentful toward God. Both the priests and the people were violating the stipulations of the Mosaic Law regarding sacrifices, tithes, and offerings. The people's hope in God's covenant promises had dimmed, as evidenced by their

- a) intermarriages with pagans,
- b) divorces, and
- c) general moral ambivalence.

Parallel to America today: Biblical promises seem remote, resulting in neglect, disobedience.

Sins of Israel that provoked Nehemiah were the same as stirred up Malachi:

- 1) The defilement of the priesthood; (Mal 1:6-2:9 vs Neh 13:7-9);
- 2) Disregard of the Sabbath (Mal 2:8-9; 4:4 vs. Neh 13:15-22);
- 3) Foreign marriages, with divorce of the Israelite wives; (Mal 2:11-15 vs. Neh 13:23-27);
- 4) Neglect of tithes and offerings (Mal 3:8-10 vs Neh 13:10-14);
- 5) Oppression of the poor (Mal 3:5 vs Neh 5:1-13).

Malachi will present a triple rebuttal:

- 1) Their suffering was linked to their sins, from the top on down.
- 2) God's love was in evidence if they would abandon their pity-party and compare their lot with the Edomites.
- 3) The third response was that the Day of YHWH was coming (3:16-4:6).

There is a purpose that runs through all of history. That purpose will be realized when this age has been overtaken by the last days.

Style

Malachi's style differs from that of the other writing prophets. Rather than making direct proclamations, Malachi used a dialectical or disputational style. In this style he introduced each of his six messages by a charge or command addressed to the people. Malachi then characterized the people as questioning five of the six charges (each one except the third one), then he offered proof that each charge was correct. This style was an appropriate way to confront the apathetic Israelites. Dialectic style which became very popular in later Judaism.

Another theme also left its imprint on later ages, that describing the "messenger" (identified in 4:5 as Elijah) who would prepare the way for the Lord on the Day of Judgment (Mark 1:2; Matt. 11:10, 14; 17:10-13; Luke 1:17; John 1:21, 25.)

Key, pivotal, statements:

“I have loved you.” (Mal 1:2); *“I the Lord change not.”* (Mal 3:6)

Malachi 1

- 1] The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

“Burden”: a message of rebuke rather than comfort or encouragement. Ominous term, suggesting pending judgment.

“Israel.” *All 12 tribes.* [Note: no “Lost Tribes” here.]

Topical Insert:

Myth of the “Lost 10 Tribes”

A misconception from misreading of passages such as 2 Kgs 17:7-23, 2 Chr 6:6-11, etc.

Before the Assyrian captivity, substantial numbers from the northern tribes had identified themselves with the house of David (1 Kgs 12:16-20; 2 Chr 11:16-17). The rebellion of Jeroboam, and subsequent crises, caused many to repudiate the northern kingdom and unite with the southern kingdom in a common alliance to the house of David and to worship the Lord (2 Chr 19:4; 30:1, 10-11, 25-26; 34:5-7, 22; 35:17-18; etc.).

724 B.C.: Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria, 3 years. King Hoshea of Israel attempted to revolt against paying Assyrians annual tribute money; A treaty with Pharaoh of Egypt did not help. (2 Kgs 18:21. Samaria fell in 722 B.C.; Sargon II seized power in 721 B.C. Assyrians pulled down towers, took 27,290 captive; placed an Assyrian ruler over the city; looted it of 50 royal chariots, and other items, etc. Implemented the infamous policy of mixing conquered peoples to keep them from organizing a revolt. Israel mixed with Persians and others; strangers from far-off lands were resettled in Samaria. Mixed, quasi-Jewish populations resulted in “Samaritans”, John 4:20-22. (Fall: 2 Kgs 17.)

2 Chr 11:14-17. Tribes mix: faithful to south; (Idolaters to the north?) [Distinguish between the *territories* and the *people* themselves.]

The “tribe of Judah” (2 Kgs 17:18, et al) is used idiomatically for the Southern Kingdom (Cf. 1 Kgs 11:13,32, etc.).

[The total physical descendants were not the people to whom the promises were made (Rom 9:4-7).]

The remnant who returned from Babylon is represented as the nation (Mal 1:1, et al). Our Lord is said to have offered Himself to the nation, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:5-6). Other tribes than Judah are mentioned specifically in the NT as being represented in the land (Mt 4:13,15; Lk 2:36; Acts 4:36; Phil 3:5; “the twelve tribes” Acts 26:7; Jas 1:1).

(For a more detailed discussion, see our *Expositional Commentary on Joshua, Volume 2, The Twelve Tribes.*)

- 2] I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? [Was] not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob,

“I have loved you.” Key statement of the book. And to us.

What a way to begin! Opens with a declaration of God’s love. (Cf. Deut 10:15; 33:3; Amos 3:2)

Love = Heb. *‘ahab*: (in ancient Hebrew pictographs).










Topical Insert:

Hebrew Pictographs

Frank Seekins and Danny Ben-Gigi, Head of the Hebrew Department in Arizona State University, shared a provocative discovery that not only enriches one’s understanding of the Bible, but also proves to be a remarkable teaching aid in learning Hebrew.

Ideograms are forms of writing where pictures are combined to form a concept that describes the intended word, such as those found in Chinese or ancient Egyptian writings. The discovery of ancient Hebrew pictographs highlights the fact that the letters themselves carry basic conceptual values and ideas.

Pre-Babylonian Hebrew

Name	Literal Meaning	Ancient	Modern Sound	Symbolic Meaning
Alef	ox, bull	 	א (vowel)	strength, leader, first
Beth	tent, house	 	ב b, v	household, in, into
Gimmel	camel		ג g	pride, to lift up
Dalet	door	 	ד d, th	pathway, to enter
Hey	window, fence	 	ה h	"the", to reveal
Vav	nail		ו v, w	"and", to add, to secure
Zayin	weapon		ז z	cut, to cut off
Chet	fence, hedge, a chamber		ח ch	private, to separate
Tet	to twist around, a snake		ט t	to surround
Yood	hand, closed hand		י y	a deed, work, to make
Kaf	arm, wing, open hand	 	כ k	to cover, allow, personal strength
Lamed	cattle goad, staff		ל l	prod, go toward, the tongue
Mem	water		מ m	massive, overpowering, chaos
Noon	fish (moving)		נ n	activity, life
Samech	a prop		ס s	support, twist slowly, turn
Ayin	eye		ע	to see, know, experience
Pey	mouth		פ pf	to speak, a word, to open
Tzadik	fish-hook		צ ts	harvest, desire, need
Koof	back of the head		ק q	behind, the last, the least
Reysh	head		ר r	person, the head, the highest
Sheen	teeth		ש sh,s	to consume, to destroy
Tav	a sign, a cross	 	ת th, t	a covenant, to seal



Pre-Babylonian Hebrew

Moses and David wrote in Hebrew letters that were vastly different than the ones used today. The squared-off form of letters presently used emerged during the Babylonian exile. These were easier to write, but distanced from the original pictographs used previously.


Pre-Babylonian Hebrew letters were not only phonemes (phonetic to yield the sound of the spoken language), they were also semenes (basic elements of meaning).



Fortunately, the ancient script was never fully lost. The Samaritans, who never went into exile, still use it for their Scriptures today. A list of the letters is shown on the next page.

An Example



The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is Alef, currently written א, but in Pre-Babylonian times was written as  or , intended to represent an ox, and thus symbolizing "strength," "first" or "leader." That seems straight forward enough.

When this letter was later written, as it is today, only the sounds remain; the picture concept was lost.

The next letter in the Hebrew alphabet is Beth, which you may recognize from such Hebrew words as Beth Lehem (the house of bread) or Beth El (the house of God). Beth, originally written as , means a house and symbolizes the family or that which is inside. (You can easily see how it was eventually turned to become our "b.")

Knowing these simple letter-pictures, we can now explore our first Hebrew word. Remember, Hebrew goes from right to left. Our first word will be Ab, written originally as  .

This word means (A) **the leader of** (b) **the house or family: Father.** You may recognize its familiar form as "Abba." These ancient letters yield the meaning of the word as portrayed in Scripture and from God's view of what it should be. But there's more.

Another letter is named Hey, originally written as  representing a man with hands lifted up, or as , an open window. The letter symbolizes "behold" or "revealed."

If the letter (א) is place in the middle (the heart) of a word, it portrays **the heart revealed**. The Hebrew word *Ahav* (אהב) comes from the word-picture אהא which is **the heart of the father revealed**, which is the Hebrew word, Love (!)

Another example is the word Torah תורה: The last letter (on the left) is the Hey. The other three are the Tav (a cross), the Vav (a nail), and the Resh (a head of a man). Wow!

This article was excerpted from *Personal* UPDATE, of May 1995, pages 11-13. For more information contact: Frank Seekings, Living Word Pictures, 3346 E. Charter Oak, Phoenix AZ, 85032.

* * *

[Used 32X of God's love in the OT] God's love is unconditional (Deut 7:7-8) It is (always) *undeserved*. God's choice was by undeserved love (Deut 7:7, 10:18; Hos 11:1; Rom 9:13).

It is intimately *personal*. (Moses finds this amazing: Deut 10:14,15). As a father taking his son by the arms to teach him to walk (Hos 11:1-3); God draws His people with cords, but not ordinary ropes: cords of love (Hos 11:4)

As the love between husband and wife (Eph 3:22f).

Is willing to forgive the most (because love is willing to look beyond, and to pay the price for, the worst of faults), yet is a love that condones the least (because that love, while continuing to forgive, never ceases coaxing, urging, wishing, and hoping for the best in the other partner).

God is most generous in offering us pardon and acceptance while it still maintains the high and holy standard of His righteousness to which He calls us. Rather than giving up on and tending to condone our sins and failures to meet His high standards, He faithfully continues to love us without making excuses for our failures or lowering the standard to meet us where we are.

It is precisely in this tension of forgiving the most and condoning the least that we can understand the uniqueness of God's love.

Israel was called to reciprocate in kind. Yet, notice the scoffing skepticism: the hard times had caused them to veer toward pragmatic atheism.

When times are hard, it is difficult to believe that God loves us. That is what the Book of Malachi is all about. It was (is) necessary to raise their (our) sights from their myopic skepticism.

Their realities of life were quite different than the (millennial) blessing they were expecting:

Miraculous fruitfulness (Eze 34:26-30);
Swelling population (Isa 54:1-3);
Glorious Davidic reign (Jer 23:5-6);
Nations serving them (Isa 49:22-23).

Rather, the land languished under drought (Mal 3:10); population was but a fraction of the former, and continued under the thumb of Persia (1:8).

Malach's Three Answers

- 1) Present hardships brought on by frigid formalism and disloyalty to their Lord, and their resultant sins, which, in turn, resulted from deeper sickness of their hearts: which were external evidences of the lack of inward reality and fear of God. [Our danger, too?]
- 2) Emerge from their self-pity long enough to observe their blood brothers the Edomites. The Nabatean Arabs were the instrument of God to visit final destruction on their nation. (1:2-5) There is a law of righteousness and morality that operated inexorably in history (Jer 18:7-10), for on more than one occasion Edom refused to help or had urged the enemy on and joined in looting Israel when she was under attack (Ps 137:7; Obad 10-14; Amos 1:11-12; Jer 49:7-22).
- 3) The Day of the Lord was coming when all accounts would be reconciled. (3:16-4:6).

The prophecy of Malachi reveals God in several relationships: Father, Lord, God, and Judge.

Their response? Sarcastic, oblivious, supercilious. The root of all Israel's sins was her unawareness of God's love and her own sin.

- 3] And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

The problem with this verse isn't why God hated Esau! But *why he loved Jacob!* [Griffith Thomas]

Many see the word hate in a comparative sense as an antonymic pair (Gen 29:30-31; Deut 21:15, 15; Prov 13:24; Matt 6:24; Luke 14:26 with Matt 10:37).

However, the apostle quotes this (Rom. 9:13), and compares it with what the oracle said to Rebecca concerning her twins (Gen. 25:23), *The elder shall serve the younger*; to illustrate the doctrine of God's sovereignty in dispensing his favors. Jacob was chosen *before* he was born (Cf. Gen 25:23 vs Rom 9:11). The statement in Rom 9:13 is quoted from *this* prophecy and not from Genesis. Although born as twins, the hatred of Esau had been well deserved *after* the continued opposition to God through the centuries. He had no heart for God nor God's people.

This is pointing to God's election-love.

But there is also God's justice-love.

When all that part of the world was ravaged by the Chaldean army, the country of Edom was, among the rest, laid in ruins, and became a habitation *for the dragons of the wilderness*, so perfectly desolate was it; as was foretold, Isa. 34:6, 11. The Edomites had triumphed in Jerusalem's overthrow (Ps. 137:7), and therefore it was just with God to put the same cup of trembling into their hands. And, though Edom's ruins were last, yet they were lasting, and the desolation perpetual; and in this the difference was made between Jacob and Esau, and is made between the righteous and the wicked, to whom otherwise all things come alike.

Against Israel God was a *little displeased* (Zech 1:15), but against Edom he has indignation, and will have for ever, for they are *the people of his curse* (Isa 34:5).

- 4] Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will

throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.

Edom's wasting of his heritage made it a place for the jackals of the wilderness. Every attempt to rebuild will meet with defeat.

Jacob's cities are laid waste, but they are rebuilt; Edom's are laid waste, and never rebuilt. The sufferings of the righteous will have an end and will end well; all their grievances will be redressed, and their sorrow turned into joy; but the sufferings of the wicked will be endless and remediless, as Edom's desolations. Observe here,

1. The vain hopes of the Edomites, that they shall have their ruins repaired as well as Israel, though they had no promise to build their hope upon. They say, "It is true, *we are impoverished*; it is the common chance, and there is no remedy; but *we will return and build the desolate places*; we are resolved we will" (not so much as asking God leave); "*we will* whether he will or no; nay, we will do it in defiance of God's curse, and that sentence pronounced upon Edom (Isa. 34:10), *From generation to generation it shall lie waste.*" They build presumptuously, as Hiel built Jericho in direct contradiction to the word of God (1 Ki. 16:34), and it shall speed accordingly. Note, It is common for those whose hearts are unhumbled under humbling providences to think to make their part good against God himself, and to build, and plant, and flourish again as much as ever, though God has said that they shall be impoverished. But see,
2. The dashing of these hopes and the disappointment of them: They say, *We will build*; but what says *the Lord of hosts*? For we are sure his word shall stand, and not theirs; and he says,

First, Their attempts shall be baffled: *They shall build, but I will throw down*. Note, Those that walk contrary to God will find that He will walk contrary to them; for *who ever hardened his heart against God and prospered*? [When the Jews had rejected Christ and His gospel they became as Edomites, and this word was fulfilled in them; for when, in the time of the emperor Adrian, they attempted to rebuild Jerusalem, God by earthquakes and eruptions of fire threw down what they built, so that they were forced to quit the enterprise.]

Secondly, They shall be looked upon by all as abandoned to utter ruin. All that see them shall call them *the border of wickedness*, a sinful nation, incurably so, and therefore *the people against whom*

the Lord has indignation for ever. Since their wickedness is such as will never be reformed, their desolations shall be such as are never to be repaired.

The Nabatean Arabs (550 -400 B.C.) ransacked Edom leaving only pockets of refugees in the Negeb desert (1 Macc 5:25). It was these same Nabateans who set up the country of Idumea (4:29; Mark 3:8) with its capital in Hebron and one of its great cities, built into the cliffs, named Petra. [When was the last time you saw an Edomite?]

The judgment of God against Edom should also warn not only skeptical Jacob but also the present day church in America. Edom was known as “the wicked country” (Mal 1:4). America is called “the Great Satan.”

Cf. Dan 11:41.

(Many scholars believe Petra will be a refuge for the remnant in the final siege of Jerusalem. For the possible prophetic significance of this location in the end-times, see our briefing, *The Next Holocaust: the Refuge in Edom.*)

- 5] And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from (beyond) the border of Israel.

Traditional View

God is to be magnified beyond Israel alone (Cf. Psalm 35:27 and 40:16, 17).

God’s love—in its graciousness and in its judgments—exceeds traditional national, political, geographic, or cultural boundaries. It would go beyond them, even as God had promised Abraham when he was first called (Gen 12:1-3). [This “blessing” was called “gospel” by Paul in Gal 3:8].

All mankind has been offered salvation through Jacob. We must be careful not to doubt that love just because we may be in some affliction like the struggling remnant in Malachi’s day.

Eschatological View: Prophetic Significance:

Modern Jordan appears to escape the rule of the Coming World Leader (Dan 11:41). Many scholars believe Petra will be a refuge for the remnant in the final siege of Jerusalem.

The Remnant

Confidential Briefing (Matt 24:15): flee into (which?) mountains... These are the “non-many” of Dan 9:27, the “escaped” ones of Isa 10:20-23; 28:22; also Isa 4:2, 37:31-32; Joel 2:32; and Obad 17.

God protects them (Isa 41:8-16) and provides for them (Isa 41:17-20).

Referred to in Rev 12:6 & 14. Isa 33:13-16 reaffirms the provisions of Isa 41 and 68:8-16, and indicates that it will be in the mountains, amid “the munitions of rocks” and easy to defend.

Micah 2:12 pinpoints Bozrah, which was located in the region of Mount Seir, located on the western side of Edom in southern Jordan.

Bozrah means sheepfold. An ancient sheepfold had a narrow entrance so that the shepherd could count his sheep, and, once inside, he could guard a single entrance to contain them. (Cf. “I am the door” John 10). It appears that Sela, now **Petra**, fits the description, shaped like an ancient sheepfold, with a narrow passageway (the “Siq”) opening up to a spacious city surrounded by cliffs.

Daniel 11:41 indicates an interesting exception to the rule of the Antichrist:

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, [even] Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

It would appear that this is then the likely place for the remnant to flee to. It is also interesting that this area, Jordan, is the subject of a recent treaty with Israel...

The world army, from Armageddon, pursues the remnant which has fled to the mountains of Edom in Jordan. (Jer 49:13-14; Micah 2:12). Bozrah to Megiddo = 176 miles; 1600 furlongs (Rev 14:20)

At the Second Coming, Christ rescues the remnant who have taken refuge in Petra in Edom (Isa 63:1-4; Rev 19:13; Isa 34:5-6, 8). In a most dramatic way, the Lord will, indeed, be “magnified beyond the borders of Israel.” (For the possible prophetic significance of this location in the end-times, see our briefing, *The Next Holocaust: the Refuge in Edom.*)

Applications

The people of God were insensitive to God's blessings. Are we?

They were unaware of their departure from Him. In the Lord's 7 Letters to the 7 churches (Rev 2 & 3), *each one is surprised* by their report card! Thus, they had a lack of reverence for Him.

Cf. The Declaration of Independence: "All men *created* equal...", "...endowed by their creator with inalienable rights..." From Him, not by men. The Globalists must first deny Him before they can remove our freedoms.

Malachi is about the *love* of God. This precedes other issues. [*The Way of Agape* is a prelude to *Be Ye Transformed...*]

God is a person. (vs. Allah; or "the Force", or the pantheism of the New Agers. John 3:16.)

Is America analogous to Israel? Or the Edomites?

A Call to Be Authentic

*Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
sow a habit, and you reap a character;
sow a character, and you reap a destiny.*

G.D. Boardman

...yet today there seems to be little apparent linkage between character, and destiny...

It is becoming increasingly fashionable to charge the government, the media, politicians, and others as being false, insincere, hypocritical, and generally untrustworthy.

What about *ourselves*? Do we also have a credibility gap? Have we heeded the divine call to an authenticity that rises above the current fashions, slogans, or eddies of our day? We have abandoned the God who loves us!

Authentic in Our Profession

- 6] A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master: if then I [be] a father, where [is] mine honour? and if I [be] a master, where [is] my fear? saith the

Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

Quotes a proverbial saying: Sons (generally) honor their father; servants (generally) fear their master.

Since you openly profess that God is your "Father" and "Lord," where is your honor and fear? (Fear: >100X. Deut 10:12) How could their words and the deeds be so far separated?

Their lack of dedication was an outright despising :
of His very being and person (Ex 23:20, 21; Deut 28:58);
of His doctrine (Ps 22:22; John 17:6);
of His authority (Matt 7:22; Mark 9:39; Acts 4:7);
and of His attributes.

[What about sons who do not honor their father... Ten Commandments... Prophetic: children no longer honor their parents?]

"Wherein...?" "Who? us? Where's the proof?" They will resort to this protest of innocence 7X in this book.

["Priests"? v.14 expands this passage to all believers]

- 7] Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible.

Pollution was in Two Ways

1) **Offeror:** Polluted men and women cannot offer pure sacrifices to God while they simultaneously reject His lordship and fail to glorify and enjoy Him. He looks at the heart first.

"Put yourself in the offering plate first and then deposit your offering for God."

Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:3-4: the Hebrew strongly emphasizes the giver rather than the offering:

"Cain, he, he also, he brought" and "Abel, he, he also, he brought."

Four Elements: Proper name, personal pronoun, an adverb, and the verb with the personal pronominal ending on it.

There is a type of profanity that goes beyond cursing and swearing. (The common language is little more than a lack of vocabulary!)

[Cf. *Cyrano de Bergerac*—or the modernized version as *Roxanne*—is a classic example.]

The nation is also described as profaning His Name in Ezekiel 36:19ff.

2) **Gifts** also can be polluted in that they were blemished and not the choicest that could be given.

“Bread” is a metonym for “food,” etc. (Lev 21:6,8,17,22; 22:25; Num 28:2). Here refers to animal sacrifices (as in Lev 21:6, 8, 17). (Note “blind,” “lame,” “sick,” in v.8.)

Note they acknowledge: “Wherein have we polluted thee?” They knew what they did was ultimately directed against God Himself.

The sin of ingratitude.

“The Table of the Lord” (Altar: Ps 23:5; Eze 44:16) “is contemptible.” Same word is used of the Antiochus Epiphanes, desecrating the altar in 165 B.C. (Dan 11:21).

[The Lord’s Table today...?]

Be Authentic in our Gifts

8] And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.

They gave—but they gave leftovers.

Blemished offerings forbidden (Exod 12:5; 29:1; Lev 1:3, 10; 22:18-25; Num 6:14; 19:2; Deut 15:21; 17:1; Eze 45:23). They were willing to modify God’s requirements and laws by their own “circumstances.”

Every atoning sacrifice in the OT was designed to anticipate and depict the ultimate sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. A blemished substitute was direct insult to the gift of redemption it pointed to. It was an act of sacrilege and blasphemy.

How was this allowed? By a discount religion, fostered by those who were responding their analysis of the popular marketplace.

Malachi’s reference to a Persian governor (ܡܠܚܐ Aramaic for “governor”, was a Persian title, also used in Ezra 5:3, 6, 14; 6:6-7, 13; Dan. 3:2-3, 27; 6:7). This shows that the book was written *after* 538 B.C. Most scholars agree that the Book of Malachi was written around 450-430 B.C., for these reasons:

1) Malachi’s rebuke of the priests’ malpractice in the temple shows that the temple had been rebuilt and the priesthood reestablished.

2) The moral and spiritual conditions Malachi addressed were similar to those encountered by Ezra, who returned in 458, and Nehemiah, who returned in 444. These included:

- Intermarriages with Gentiles (2:10-11; cf. Ezra 9:1-2; Neh. 13:1-3, 23-28);
- Neglect in paying the tithes (3:8-10, vs Neh 13:10-14);
- Disregard for the Sabbath (2:8-9; 4:4 vs Neh 13:15-22);
- Corruption of the priesthood (1:6-9 vs Neh 13:7-9);
- Oppression of the poor (Mal. 3:5; cf. Neh. 5:1-13).

Either Malachi was addressing the same generation that Ezra and Nehemiah spoke to, or Malachi spoke to a later generation some time after Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s corrections.

The ultimate audacity (or *chutspah*)!

“Offer it to thy governor”: Irony, rather than a serious suggestion. Try paying your taxes with blemished animals... [We “tithe” over 50% to our government.]

[“Render unto Caesar...” *Whose* image is this... Yet, *Whose* image do *we* bear? God’s! (Gen 1:26, 27; 9:6)]

9] And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts.

There is no reason for us, either, to persist in doubts of God’s love (Cf. Last session on vv.1-5); which hinder His ability to demonstrate His love fully. It is our indifference, carelessness, and half-heartedness that blocks our privileged position, too.

Our Lord judges a gift by what the gift costs the offeror who placed it on the altar, not by its intrinsic worth. (Cf. Widow's mite, Mark 12:42, 43; Luke 21:1-4.)

Be Authentic in our Service

- 10] Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

ASV: "Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle (fire on) mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."

NIV: "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands."

So distasteful were the profane sacrifices permitted by the priests that Malachi now makes the outrageous suggestion: lock the double doors of the Temple Court and block all access to the altar of God! No worship at all is better than the perpetuation of cold, negligent, worthless worship.

[Cf. The church of Laodicea, Rev 3:15, 16.]

Can you imagine a church with a large sign over it: "Closed. Scandalous. A sure sign of a decadent society."

The chapter opened with the declaration that "I have loved you." In the letter to Laodicea, even though Jesus is on the *outside*, His offer is open to each individual who is the exception (Rev 3:20).

It is better to have no sacrifices than vain ones.

This type of profanity is worse than simply careless or tasteless speech... [Symptom of vacuous vocabulary!]

...pretended orthodoxy doesn't cover polluted gifts, services, ...lives... hearts. Many experience a emptiness, a vapidity, in blandness—Christian belief without object, purpose or goal. A perfunctory, dull, empty

routine, with paltry gifts and futile uncompleted commitments. It is like an inoculation: a mild injection to make one immune to the real thing.

A Burst of Good News to Break the Dirge

- 11] For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

God is not powerless to rescue His holy name! Notice that the focus is *His Name* (2X in this verse.)

"rising...going down" = extremities of the earth (Ps 103:12; Zech 8:7). [4 other times similar terminology is used to depict the universality of God's reign (Ps 50:1; 113:3; Isa 45:6; 59:19).] This is a confirmation of the hint given in 1:5: "Beyond the border of Israel."

His universal Lordship should not have surprised Malachi's listeners in 400 B.C..

Had not they been told that in Abraham's seed "all the nations of the earth would be blessed?" (Gen 12:3).

Had not God not purposed to bless "all the ends of the earth?" (Ps 67).

Had not the prophets anticipated the conversion of the nations? (Isa 2:2-4; 11:10; 55:3-5; 66:18-21; Eze 36:23; 37:28; 38:23; 39:7).

This, too, was a bombshell: In contrast to the odious pretense currently in Israel, the mere heathen would be offering sacrifices pleasing to God!

The offerings, however, are not of this present age. This is *not* a prophecy of either the mass of the Roman Church nor of the communion of the Protestants. This relates to the millennial era. Offerings will be present then (Ezek 40 - 48).

[Millennial offerings? *All* were but a memorial to the Cross: OT in advance; Millennium in commemoration...]

Israel has a destiny which will be fulfilled “when the fulness of the Gentiles come in” (Rom 11:25).

“In every place..” not just in the Temple! Cf. John 4:20-23.

This text carries us from Malachi’s day to the Messianic age (Isa 11:10; 66:20; Zeph 2:11; Zech 9:10).

- 12] But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

“But ye...” Reproof of v.7 repeated. The error of the priests was to tolerate substandard items on behalf of God. Do you demand high standards when God’s work is involved?

Be Authentic!

- 13] Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

Wearisome and burdensome, since their hearts were not in it. They snorted and sniffed at it: treated it with utmost contempt.

Boredom? Weariness? Dull routine? Drudgery and burden? Has this led to contempt?

Their blemished offerings was not because of poverty but because of greed. It was the offeror, not just the offering, that was polluted.

Are you a steward of God’s resources? Do you demand a high standard? Or do you accept substandard performance on behalf of *your* King? How about our private life? What is your “table grace” like? How do you begin your day? Or end it? Are you authentic?

- 14] But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I [am] a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name [is] dreadful among the heathen.

The curse is pronounced upon the deceiver who thinks he can vow—in such cases the best was promised to God—a proper sacrifice, and then fulfill the vow with an unsuitable animal. *Such were an insult to the majesty of God.*

They were actually attempting to *swindle* God! Do you? God means what He says and says what He means. He expects us to do the same. God does not want us telling Him something unless we mean it. (God never calls a real believer a hypocrite.)

[If the standards of Ananias and Sapphira were applied to us, many of us wouldn’t still be here! (Acts 5:1-5)]

Someone asked Mahatma Ghandi, the famed leader of India, “What is the biggest obstacle to Christianity in India?” “Christians,” was his considered reply.

Do our lives reflect the name, reputation, characteristics, and majesty our King? Read Ps 129 and Isa 40, and then see if our lives *authentically* reflect Him!

Here is the model of excellence, reality, and authenticity to which men and women are being challenged. To the degree to which we grasp the greatness of the person, character, and attributes of God—*His Name*—to that degree will our own inadequacies, falseness, and diluted worship take on credibility, substance, acceptance and posture. We, too, need to take up Malachi’s call to *be authentic*.

We can sit through a three-hour entertainment, and yet get restless in a one-hour sermon? We get uncomfortable in a quarter hour overrun in a Bible study, and yet rejoice when a sporting event goes into extra innings or periods?

Do our sacrifices reflect our estimation of His Majesty? Are *we* being authentic? Can we continue to claim our status as His Sons? Do we render to Him the honor that is due?

It is not God, but we who need to be credible. We must become more real and authentic in our profession, our gifts, and our service.

His supreme love has provided heaven’s richest treasure: the Messiah and King of Israel, our Redeemer of men.

How do we become authentic? Diligent study and a commitment to personal application. See also, *Be Ye Transformed*; cf. Jer 9:23-24.

* * *

Prayer

*Make me genuine and cleanse my polluted attitude, heart, and will.
Make me your clean vessel so that not only what I say and bring to
you, but also what I am, do, and believe may reflect a prior work of
grace in my life through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.*

Malachi 2 A Call to Love God Totally

Love for God's glory

- 1] And now, O ye priests, this commandment [is] for you.

Still dealing with the priests, and the *character* of their offerings.
(Not their *value*—that will come later.)

Five great offerings of Leviticus: each pointed to Jesus Christ. Each was to represent the Coming One: holy, undefiled, separate, perfect, without blemish. “The volume of the book is written of me” (Ps 40:8).]

God's specifications each have (at least one) purpose. Perhaps that's why Moses was so severely chastised for not *specifically* following God's instructions for the water from the rock (1 Cor 10:4) the second time: the two events would have modeled the 1st (Ex 17:6) and 2nd (Num 20:8-12) Comings. (He is not smitten the second time!)

[All believers are priests in this age. Malachi's warnings directed to the priests is for *us*. You and I must guard against misrepresenting God.]

- 2] If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay [it] to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay [it] to heart.

The chief end of the priests—as it is of us as Christians today—is *to glorify God*.

Glory = denotes all of the weight, gravity, of God's presence; the presence that defined His importance and the respect He was owed. Name = (appears for the 6th time in these first 16 verses of this book) the summation of all that He was in His person, attributes, reputation, doctrine, and ethical teaching. [Cf. Zond. Pict. Enc., IV:360-366.]

God's name had been disgraced and made to appear shabby and despised by the way the priests had professed their faith, offered their gifts, entered into their service of God, and thought about the time they had invested for Him. “A form of godliness,” without its power (2 Tim 3:5). Their works denied their words (Titus 1:16).

The curse of Deut. 27:15-26 and 28:15-68. “I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings” almost a quotation of Deut 28:20; together with Lev 26 offered the alternative prospects of blessing or judgment. All gifts, goods, production—even the promise of these (Num 6:24-26)—would fall under God's judgment. (As OT benediction, Num 6:24-26).

3X the text mentions the curse for disobedience and unbelief. God's name is serious business, and nothing pollutes it more than the misconduct of those whose business it is to honor it. [Is America already in this position?]

- 3] Behold, I will corrupt (rebuke?) your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, [even] the dung of your solemn feasts; and [one] shall take you away with it.

The “seed” (or descendants) is more likely the produce of the ground rather than one's offspring, though either view is acceptable (Cf. Deut 28:18-19, 21, 23-24). To rebuke the seed is to stop its growth.

The maw was the assigned portion of the priests (Deut 18:3), but the dung in the maw would be cast upon their faces, and they would have to taken away as an abhorrent thing. He's “rubbing their noses in it.”

Even more dreadful is that they would be removed from His presence, along with the dung, entrails, et al. (Lev 8:7; 16:27).

Love for God's Word

- 4] And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

The phrase “*then you shall know [that I am the LORD]*” regularly occurs in texts where the judgment of God is used as a lever to help men and women face up to the challenge that God has set before them. (e.g., the experience of Pharaoh in Ex 7:10; 9:14, 29-30; 10:2; 14:2, 18; of others in Ezek 15:7; 33:29, et al.)

God’s judgment would come if the priests would not respond to His call to change. [How about us?]

[“sons of Levi” (3:3). Denotatively, the priesthood descended from a narrower family within the tribe of Levi: the “sons of Aaron” (Lev 8:1-4) or, later, the “sons of Zadok” (Ezek 44:15). Malachi deliberately uses the broader term “Levi” to include all who served around the Temple, not just at the altar.]

Need not be limited to Phinehas (cf. Num 25:12-13), who was stirred to action by the evil done by the Simeonite Zimri and the Midianite woman Cozbi. While the entire congregation was assembled in repentance before God, Zimri and Cozbi walked brazenly across the encampment to commit fornication in the name of religious prostitution and worship of the dead (Num 25:6-8; Ps 106:28-31). Phinehas “stood up and intervened” (Ps 106:30) being “zealous with My zeal” (Num 25:11).

Also, at Sinai, being faithful in spite of the sin of Israel with the golden calf (Ex 32:25-29; Deut 33:8-11).

How different were the priests of Malachi’s day:

- 5] My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him [for] the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

God’s covenant with Levi included “life and peace,” God’s gifts to obedient persons. Deuteronomy and Proverbs taught that these blessings were the result of a total commitment to the commandments of God (e.g., Deut 4:40; 6:2; 30:15-30; Prov 3:1,2; 4:10, 22; 6:23).

Blessings of peace withheld from *them* because they denied Him their obedience.

- 6] The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity (injustice) was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

The real task of the servant of God: he boldly expounds the Law of God as it is found in His Word—all of it—whether or not it is popular or relevant. Faithful proclamation of God’s Word will “turn many to righteousness” (Dan 12:3).

“Walking with” implies a more intimate fellowship with the Lord than is implied in “walk after” (Deut 8:19; 13:4; 2 Kgs 23:3; Jer 7:9; Hos 11:10). Cf. Enoch (Gen 5:22, 24) and Noah (Gen 6:9). This expression is used sparingly to refer only to those who had an unusually close communion or fellowship (*koinonia*!) with God.

The priests were also called to exercise a judicial function (Deut 17:9-11 and 19:17). Thus, they were to exercise justice and impartiality.

- 7] For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he [is] the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

The Levite was the *teacher* of the people (Deut 33:8-11). (How about you men—are you the priest in your home?)

Paul appears to draw an analogy between the functions of evangelists and pastor-teachers in Ephesians 4:7-10ff, and the functions of the Levites in Numbers 8 and 18. The Levites were “taken” (Num 8:6; 18:6; hence, the figure of leading captives) and “given” back to God for service (Num 8:19; 128:17), just as God had “led captivity captive” (Ps 68:18, quoting Num 8 & 18). [Gary V. Smith, “Paul’s Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (1975) 18:181-189 (q.v. Kaiser).]

- 8] But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

God Himself was to be the priests’ portion and inheritance (Num 18:20). [Note, “*the way*” cf. Acts 24:14, 22; Rom 3:12, 17; et al.]

What a contrast with the early history of the Levites and those of Malachi’s day. (And *ours*?)

- 9] Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

The priests had become so corrupt that they had lost all respect in the eyes of the people and the eyes of God. They had courted popularity by modifying God’s requirements.

[Cf. The new “politically correct” Bible; the Jesus Seminar, et al., vs. the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).]

When we do not seek first God’s glory and totally love and respond to His Word, then our culture is in desperate trouble.

A Call to Be Faithful

Loyalty to the God of the Covenant

- 10] Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother [one another], by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

“Father” that is intended here is not Abraham (as some scholars have suggested, including Jerome and Calvin) but YHWH, the father of Israel, the One who created her (Isa 43:1). We do not find God referring to any *individual* Israelite as His son—only the corporate body of the nation as His son (Ex 4:22).

[Adam was called the son of God—made in His image. After the fall, Adam begat a son in his own likeness—the likeness of his own fallen nature. We suffer from that same genetic defect.]

(“brother” includes (injured) wives.) Israel is being taught that men *and women* stand in the same relation before God as Father and Creator. He not only created them physically, but had made them His covenant people (Isa 43:1; 60:21).

Every form of the people’s sins was an act of treachery against the whole body—as well as against God.

Loyalty to the People of God

- 11] Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

“Deal treacherously”=Heb. בָּגַד *Bagad*, related to the word בִּגְדָה *begeḏ*, “garment..” It is interesting how this word is linked to a “cover-up” of sin(s). [Note: distinctions between Judah (tribe), Israel (nation), and Jerusalem (capital).]

“a daughter..”: a worshiper is regarded in Scripture as a child to a father (Jer 2:27).

The Law of Moses had called them to be separate (Ex 19:5; Lev 20:24, 26; Deut 7:1-4.) This was a safeguard against importing idolatry into Israel. (Cf. Balaam’s counsel, Num 25:1-3; 31:16; Ahab and Jezebel, the Daughter of Ethbaal, king of Zidonians, 1 Kgs 16:31). Mixed marriages had been clearly forbidden in Ex 34:11-16; Deut 7:3; 1 Kgs 11:1-2.

These mixed marriages were also mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 9:1-6; 10:1-4, 18-19; Neh 10:30; 13:23-27). Nehemiah, finding that Tobiah, an Ammonite, an enemy of God, since his daughter married the son of the high priest, was living in a “father-in-law apartment” in the temple, threw him out, furniture and all and ran him out of town! Politeness and tact was sacrificed for purity! He was just as rough with those who had intermarried with pagans of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab (Neh 13:25).

Israel had thus profaned herself. Ezra likewise brought such charges (Ezra 9:1-3).

Paul also warned against being “unequally yoked” (2 Cor 6:15-16). [cf. Mt 10:34-40] The tragedy of a Christian son marrying a non-Christian wife... Tensions and worse. What will the children learn in such a household?]

- 12] The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

The true child of God will not continue to live in sin. The prodigal son could not endure the pigpen (Luke 15:18). [He never lost his *sonship*, however!]

Loyalty to the Partner of Our Marriage

- 13] And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [it] with good will at your hand.

“And this is another thing you do...” “Covered” figuratively—only priests had actual access to the altar.

Hypocrisy is a barrier to service. Their sacrifices were not accepted. They were blocked by the tears of their abandoned wives (14b).

- 14] Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [is] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Many ministers and teachers are intimidated to the point of silence on issues regarding the sexual practices of single people, the extramarital “affairs” of believers and unbelievers, and divorce.

God was a witness to a legally contracted marriage where God was called to witness the covenant. (Marriage is indeed a covenant: Prov 2:17; Ezek 16:8; et al.)

Solomon similarly enjoined couples to “rejoice in the wife of your youth” (Prov 5:15-21).

One Puritan commentator summarizes:

She whom you thus wronged was the companion of those earlier and brighter days, when in the bloom of her young beauty she left her father's house and shared your early struggles, and rejoiced in your later success; who walked arm in arm with you along the pilgrimage of life, cheering you in its trials by her gentle ministry; and now, when the bloom of her youth has faded and the friends of her youth have gone, when her father and mother whom she left for you are in the grave, then you cruelly cast her off as a worn-out, worthless thing, and insult her holiest affections by putting an idolater and a heathen in her place.

[T.V. Moore, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: A New Translation with Notes*, Robert Carter & Bros., New York, 1856, pp. 362-63.]

“Companion” = united, joined together. Cf. Gen 2:24, “one flesh”.

- 15] And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Most difficult verse in the book; problem to both Jewish and Christian interpreters. (One alternate rendering: “And not one hath done so who had a residue of the spirit.” i.e., no one had contracted such marriages with foreign women and divorced their former wives, if he had anything of the Spirit of God. Fine, but it does not go smoothly with the remainder of the passage.)

[Rabbinical sources understood the “one” to mean Abraham, who had taken more than one wife, and used him as a justification. Strained application which does violence to both the situation with Hagar and with the Hebrew text. See Kaiser, p.71.]

More likely a reference to the original institution of marriage by God Himself—“one” flesh (Gen 2:24). God *could* have made more than one wife for Adam. However, Adam and Eve, *ish* and *ishah*, are presented as composite whole, incomplete without the other. Each is only half complete. [Note: each cell of our body contains 23 *pairs* of chromosomes—one from each parent. We, indeed, are of “one” flesh.]

Gen 2:23-24: This excommunicates mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law! There's a concept of *leaving* as well as *cleaving*!

It was God who brought the woman to man. Sex is not to be despised. Its misuse and abuse is the death rattle of a fading nation. One of the troubles with this world is that people mistake sex for love, money for brains, microcircuits for civilization, and now there is no linkage between character and destiny in our society.

Best Love

Salvation is a love affair. [Contrast with the determinism of Calvinism and the uncertainty of Arminianism. See *The Sovereignty of Man* for discussion.]

Rev 2:4 Lost their *protan* love (= best, not first). (As in the prodigal son, the father put on the son the *protan* robe.)

- Jesus asks *us* (not only Peter in John 21): “Do you love me?”
- We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).
- Our redemption is expressed as a romance (Ruth..)
- Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians compares marital love with the love of Christ and the church.

Marriage is a religious ritual: her submission is for the purpose of headship in the home—glorious abandonment to the protection and fulfillment in God's chosen. Worship is respect that is paid to worth. Willing to die for each other. Are you worth that kind of commitment?

God hates divorce. Only OT basis: fornication, adultery: Deut 24:1-4; Mt 19:3-12 (where Jesus also refers to Gen 2:24 as the norm). Also, 1 Cor 7:10-15.

Polygamy and divorce are not conducive to nurturing children in the fear of God. Broken families are a cancer gnawing at the vitals of our nation.

Topical Insert:

Broken Families

Postwar generation: 80% grew up in a family with two biological parents who were married to each other.

1980: only 50% expect to spend their entire childhood in an intact family.

An increasing number of children will experience family breakup two or even three times during childhood.

Scientific evidence demonstrates that children in disrupted families do worse than those of intact families:

6X more likely to be poor; 22% of one parent families will experience poverty during childhood for 7 years or more, vs. 2% of children in two-parent families.

1988 study, National Center for Health Statistics: Children of single parent families:

- 3X as likely to have emotional and behavioral problems.
- More likely to drop out of high school, get pregnant as teenagers, abuse drugs, be in trouble with the law.
- Also higher risk for physical or sexual abuse.
- Less likely to be successful as adults: esp. in love, and in work.
- Harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.

Teen suicide rate has tripled; juvenile crime has increased and become more violent; school performance has continued to decline.

National policies contribute to family instability and breakup.

Divorce is the public acknowledgment of failure.

Problem since the 1960's: after the Supreme Court outlawed mentioning God in schools.

Divorce: 10/1000; then sudden growth to (1979) 23/1000.

1974: exceeds death as leading cause of family breakup.

1990: 1/4 women had a child unmarried.

Half of all marriages now end in divorce. Remarried couples are more likely to break up than couples in first marriages (56%).

1 in 4 children in the 1990's will eventually enter a stepfamily.

Hollywood: celebrates divorce and unwed motherhood.

Federal policy: celebrates social and sexual variance.

The "Me" Generation

Fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others as a positive moral value.

The adult quest for freedom, independence, and choice in family relationships conflicts with a child's developmental needs for stability, constancy, harmony, and permanence in family life.

Welfare dependency tends to be passed on from one generation to the next. Daughters of single parents are

- 53% more likely to marry as teenagers;
- 111% more likely to have children as teenagers;
- 164% more likely to have premarital birth;
- 92% more likely to dissolve their own marriages.

Each divorce is the death of a small civilization. It inflicts wounds that never heal. Survey after survey demonstrates that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals.

The Lack of Love in America

The love of many will grow cold: The most basic form of love: the family. Heterosexuals reproduce; homosexuals recruit. Family serves as the seedbed for virtues. This is the first generation in the nation's history to do worse psychologically, socially, and economically than its parents. (Excerpted: Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Dan Quayle was Right", *Atlantic Monthly*, April 93.)

* * *

- 16] For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [one] covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

This verse is one of the strongest protests anywhere in Scripture against divorce.

Reference is to the old custom of putting a garment over a woman to claim her as wife (Deu 22:30; Ruth 3:9; Eze 16:8). Instead of spreading their garment to protect their wives, they covered their garment with violence toward them.

Hems

Hem, border, fringe, bottom edge of skirt or train.

In ancient Mesopotamia, "to cut off the hem" was to strip one of his personality, authority, etc. A husband could divorce his wife by cutting off the hem of her robe. A nobleman would authenticate his name on a clay tablet by pressing the hem on the clay.

Symbol of authority, rank, in ancient Israel: Fringes on Levitical garments. Num 15:38,39; Deut 22:12; Ex 28:33,34.

David's removal of King Saul's hem (I Sam 24): In wilderness of En Gedi; David cut off the skirt (shuwl) of Saul's robe. The genealogy was woven into the threads of the hem. David was conscience stricken because he had personally interrupted the lineage to the throne and symbolically taken the away the authority from the Lord's anointed. Saul understood: I Sam 24:20.

God's Covenant with Israel: "I spread my (shuwl) over thee..." Ezek 16:8; Ex 39:25,26.

Joseph's Coat: [*Kethoneth passim* =? many colors? ...or seamless!] Brother's envious (Gen 37:3-4).

Jesus' Seamless Coat: Temple veil torn, signifying end of man as high priest; Jesus' hem not torn, because He is high priest forever...In 19:23,24; Mt 27:51.

A Touching Situation: Lord's hem sought for healing; Matt 14:36; Mark 6:56. Goal of the woman with issue of blood; Mt 9:20-21; Mk 5:31. Same "age" as Jairus' daughter: 12 yrs, and a Gentile! [Type of the Church.?)

Ruth & Boaz: "Spread thy skirt over thine handmaid..." Ruth 3:9. Hem = inheritance, and authority; a request to exercise his right & responsibility Jesus is our near kinsman; we request to be covered with His (shuwl) and allow Him to assume legal responsibility over us: ["train" = shuwl] Isa 6:1.

Few issues in today's world are more revealing about moral integrity than that of maintaining our covenant with our spouse, with whom we exchanged vows in the presence of God, a witness to the ceremony.

- 17] Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied [him]? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil [is] good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where [is] the God of judgment?

Wearying God? With evil skepticism. Can one exhaust His patience?

They raised the old argument against the providence of God from the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous. (cf Ps 73, Job, et al. Mal 2:17 is answered in 3:1).

We—as Israel did—forget that the blessings of God are conditioned upon faith and obedience. God will withhold these blessings if we walk in self-will.

Believer's must maintain their loyalty to the God who created them, the body of believers to which He has joined them, and the marriage partner He has given them. Anything less than this challenges our claim that He is our Father, Lord, and Master.

Truth: God will reward us with more as He sees how we respond to that which we have (Mt 13:12).

[The charges of 2:17 will be answered in the first six verses of the next chapter...]

Prayer

*Lord, Make us genuine
Cleanse our polluted attitudes, hearts, and wills
Make us your clean vessels so that
not only what we say and bring
but what we are, do and believe
...will reflect your prior work of grace in our lives...
...with the help of the Holy Spirit...*

Malachi 3

Review

- 17] Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied [him]? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil [is] good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where [is] the God of judgment?

Wearying God? With evil skepticism. Can one exhaust His patience?

The preaching of Haggai and Zechariah (beginning in 520 B.C.) was now a century past, but had not resulted in any dramatic reversals of the fortunes of the struggling Judean colony.

They raised the old argument against the providence of God from the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous (cf. Ps 73, Job, et al. Mal 2:17 is answered in 3:1).

We—as Israel did—forget that the blessings of God are conditioned upon faith and obedience. God will withhold these blessings if we walk in self-will.

God does not reward evildoers with good; neither does He take pleasure in them. He delighted in:

- Seeing His Law kept (Isa 56:4);
- Seeing mercy and the knowledge of God (Hos 6:6);
- Acts of justice, gracious love and humility (Mic 6:8);
- Truth in the inward parts (Ps 51:6).

Believers must maintain their loyalty to the God who created them, the body of believers to which He has joined them, and the marriage partner He has given them. Anything less than this challenges our claim that He is our Father, Lord, and Master.

Truth: God will reward us with more as He sees how we respond to that which we have (Mt 13:12).

[The charges of 2:17 are answered in the first six verses of Chapter 3.]

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Malachi 3: Introduction

The next two chapters are much better known than the previous two: they are full of prophetic disclosure concerning both the 1st and 2nd Comings of the Messiah.

- 1] Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

“My messenger” is a play on the name of the prophet Malachi.

Who is the messenger? Some see two messengers: The first, who is to go before and prepare the way, is John the Baptist. Cf. Mt 11:9-10; Mk 1:2; Lk 7:27. (Also Jn 1:23, drawing on Isa 40:3-5).

John was not the final or complete fulfillment of Elijah (Rev 11; Mt 17:11; Mk 9:12; Acts 3:21).

The 2nd is “the messenger of the covenant,” Jesus Christ. This appears to refer to His 2nd coming—as a judge, establishing His kingdom on the earth. “Messenger” = “Angel” in Greek. (Cf. “Christopanes” as Angel of the Lord; Ex 23:20-23. Also, Ex 33:14,15; Judg 6:12; 13:3; Isa 63:9.)

“Lord”: (*ha adon*) is in the singular, preceded by the definite article: it is referring to the divine Lord (Cf. Ex 23:17; 34:23; Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33).

Covenants With:

Eve	Gen 3:15
Shem	Gen 9:27
Abraham	Gen 12:1-3
Moses	Ex 6:2-8
Israel	Lev 26:9-13.; Deut 4:23
David	2 Sam 7:12-19
Age to come	Jer 31:31-34

Here, probably with the single plan of God reflected in all of them. Christ is the mediator of the old and new covenants (Heb 8:8-13; 12:24).

This was not the answer they were expecting. His justice would be observed in His preparation of the path by a forerunner;

His Preparation	3:1a
His Coming	3:1b-2
His Refining Work	3:3-4
His Judgment	3:5
His Long-suffering	3:6

He is called Lord, it is His Temple, and He is the messenger of the covenant: This the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2] But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he [is] like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

Cf. *The Next Holocaust* Briefing Package.

Judgment in view: the 2nd Coming. [2nd Coming separate from Rapture, do see *From Here to Eternity* Briefing Package for an in-depth study.]

“Fuller” = a person whose occupation was to clean, whiten, bleach, thicken, shrink, or dye cloth. The fuller cared for newly shorn wool or woven garments. The process but generally included washing with lye (“fuller’s soap”) and cleansing by pressure, usually the treading of feet, as the Hebrew word implies (Ex 19:10; 2 Sam. 19:24).

“Refiner’s fire”: “There is a dramatic moment when the refiner knows that all dross has gone from the silver. Peering over it, the silver

suddenly becomes a liquid mirror in which the image of the refiner is reflected. Then he knows that his task is done.” [Alan Robinson, “God, the Refiner of Silver.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 11, 1969: p. 190.]

- 3] And he shall sit [as] a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Focus of “Jacob’s trouble” is Israel. He is going to cleanse those who enter the Millennium.

- 4] Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.
5] And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger [from his right], and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

“Sorcerers”: the occult. Widespread today, and increasing. Demon worship. Drugs. Forbidden: Ex 22:18; Lev 20:27; Deut 18:14. (See our Briefing Package on *Halloween* for further study.)

“Adulterers”: glamorized by Hollywood, and our “popular” culture. Forbidden: Ex 20:14.

“False swearers”: liars. Forbidden: Ex 20:7; Lev 19:12 (Cf. Rev 21:8).

Exploiting the poor; cheating the laborer: Cf. Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15. Widows, orphans, exploited; “Turn aside the stranger”: Ex 22:22-24; Lev 19:10; Deut 24:19-32; Zech 7:10.

Instead of being a witness, they were a turn-off! When Mahatma Ghandi of India was asked, “What is the biggest barrier to Christianity in India?” He responded, “Christians.” [In my own experience, comparing “Christian” business ethics to that of my previous corporate experience, I must confess I find it tragically disappointing.]

- 6] For I [am] the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

This is the key theme for the message of Malachi: God is immutable.

They were not obliterated like the Edomites was because of grace. While a terror to the wicked, He is a comfort to anyone who will accept His grace.

God Is Faithful

- 7] Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept [them]. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

The sixth of their haughty rebuttals, their affected injured innocence. [Israel had spent 70 years in Babylon and was now out. But Babylon wasn't yet out of Israel.]

They were so far gone that they did not realize their true condition. [As today!] Cf. The Letters to Seven Churches in Rev 2 & 3 or our Briefing Package on these letters.

- Ritualism has been substituted for reality.
- Pageantry has been substituted for power.
- The aesthetic for the spiritual.
- Form for feeling.
- The vocabulary without the Spirit.

“Return to me...” OT word for Repent. Turn around. Malachi is telling it like it is. Not popular, but essential. The truth.

- 8] Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

“Rob”: rob, defraud, overreach.

“Wherein...” The seventh sarcastic question. Pretending their pious, affecting a petulant ignorance.

Feinberg lists four tithes: First-fruit—not less than 1/60 of corn, wine and oil (Deut 18:4); then:

- 1) 1/10th of the remainder after the first-fruits were taken, going to the Levites for their livelihood (Lev 27:30-33);
- 2) 1/10th paid by the Levites to the priests (Num 18:26-28);

- 3) A 2nd 1/10th paid by the congregation for the Levites and their own families at the tabernacle (Deut 12:18);
- 4) another 1/10th every 3rd year for the poor (Deut 14:28-29 q.v.).

We, “under grace”, are still to give, but the *basis* is broader. Consider the Macedonian example: 2 Cor 8:2-5. How much to you love Christ? [How did you “budget” your gifts to your loved one during courtship?]

- 9] Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation.

[How's this for a closing benediction: “Stop thieves!”...]

- 10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it].

Luke 4:12. An invitation to “test” a Sovereign God! He effectively *dares* us to put Him to the test. It is quite amazing that the Most High God would put Himself in that position—to be put on trial *by us!*

But there it is. This is an opportunity—in fact, a mandate—for a verifiable experiment in the supernatural. This is a means of *demonstrating*, in the material realm, the existence of God and His governorship over all temporal affairs, including yours and mine!

The Melchizedek Model

Tithing antedates the Law of Moses. Long *before* the giving of “The Law” to Moses, Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, the King and Priest of Salem (Gen 14:20.). This event is highlighted in the New Testament (Heb 7:5,6) as Melchizedek is an anticipatory model (often called, in Biblical jargon, a “type”) of Christ in at least three ways:

- 1) He was a king *and* a priest, which is a key cornerstone of the Epistle to the Hebrews;
- 2) His name itself means “King of Righteousness”;
- 3) He blessed Abraham and administered bread and wine to him.

Topical Insert:

Giving

Abraham, the “Father of the Faithful,” left *us* an *example* to follow. The tithe (or “tenth”) is clearly the ordained pattern in the Old Testament (Gen 28:19-22; Lev 27:30-32; 2 Chr 31:4-6; Neh 10:34-37; Mal 3:7-10), and in the New Testament nothing has changed.

Christ does *not* set aside the tithe in Mt 23:23; it also implied in the “Even so” of 1 Cor 9:13,14; the “lay by him in store” in 1 Cor 16:1,2 alludes to Mal 3:10; 2 Cor 8:14; Heb 7:5,6, etc. The fact that Christ is our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, not the Levitical priesthood, makes Abraham’s tithing to him an example for each of us.

There appears to be at least four reasons for the remarkable institution of the tithe:

- 1) It acknowledges the Creator’s rights. The Tenth of all is His.
- 2) It is the antidote for greed and covetousness.
- 3) It is a test of our faith.
- 4) It is the solution to every financial problem.

In fact, it would appear even *more binding* on us since our privileges are greater: “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48).

The “Windows of Heaven”? The only other use of that peculiar phrase was the “abundant outpouring” of the Genesis Flood! (Gen 7:11,12).

Can you imagine that phrase—“the windows of heaven”—being applied to *your* financial situation?

God changes not. God does not vary the principles of His government. God will not be *your debtor*! God is saying, “Trust me.” Do you?

The Practical Aspects

A tenth of all is His. Be strict. Be careful. Be systematic. Separate His funds upon arrival: a separate box, checking account, whatever (1 Cor 16:1, 2). Keep records; your “giving” only comes *after* the return of *His* tenth.

You *can* take it with you! They always say, “You can’t take it with you.” I believe you *can*! There is a strange parable of the Unrighteous Steward (Lk 16:1-13), in which he writes down his boss’ receivables in anticipation of an audit and his impending termination. Thus, he exploited his present, but temporary, circumstances to enhance his future opportunities.

Strange example. But notice that the Lord commends his *shrewdness*, not his *ethics*. I believe this suggests that there *is* a way to “take it with you”: you can *send it on ahead*!

Before traveling to a foreign country, you usually convert your domestic currency into “the coin of the realm” to which you’re traveling. If you take heaven seriously, then why not prepare for your eternity through your stewardship of your current assets?

Your Portfolio of Giving

In regards to your own program of giving, there is a rather unorthodox distribution approach you might consider.

I personally never give according to “need” alone. In fact, the more desperate the need, the more I’m suspicious. There are more “needs” than I can possibly respond to. In fact, it seems to me that there are many ministries that God would prefer to shut down, if their supporters were only more perceptive!

I tend to view my giving opportunities as a portfolio manager. A portfolio manager’s performance is measured in retrospect by the subsequent *results* of his investments. Why not look at your own program of spiritual stewardship the same way. I hope to invest my resources where I have a high degree of confidence that the Lord will get the return He desires.

This approach results in a different perspective of alternatives. I am not as interested in a “need” as much as in indications that *the Lord is in the action*. What is the evidence that *He is blessing* what is going on?

I prefer to commit my resources into those areas in which I have been blessed, and where I am confident that He is pleased with the fruits that are being yielded. Your home fellowship should come first; and then any specific supporting ministries through whom the Spirit has blessed you.

(Man's) Purposes for Money

- 1) provide for security
- 2) establish independence
- 3) create power and influence

Man's way	vs.	God's Way
Focus: power and position		submission
Emphasis: rights and freedom		personal responsibility
Desire: gain for self		meet needs of others
Concern: immediate fulfillment		lasting achievement
Yearning: praise of men		approval of God
Aspiration: to be served		to serve others
Need: to push ahead		for patience
Striving: to lead men		to follow God
Interest: competition		cooperation
Motivation: self-glorification		God's Glory

Financial Freedom

Realizing that true prosperity comes only from God (Deut 8:18).
Committing ourselves to God's purposes for money (Mt 6:30).

God's Four Purposes for Money

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| 1) Provision | I Kgs 17:4 |
| 2) Direction | I Kgs 17:7 |
| 3) Fellowship | I Kgs 17:9 |
| 4) Demonstration | Jas 5:17 |

1) To Provide Basic Needs (Mt 6:26-30; I Tim 6:8)

- To establish daily dependence on Him (Mt 6:11).
- To deepen our love for the Lord (Col 2:10; Jn 15:5).
- To develop a spirit of gratefulness.
- To teach us to live within our means (I Tim 6:6).
- To help us enjoy our possessions (Heb 13:5).

2) To Confirm Direction (Ps 37:7)

- To build our faith and vision.
- To determine who is the lord of our life (I Tim 6:17).
- To protect us from harmful items (I Tim 6:9).
- To teach us patience (Rom 5:3; as 1:3-4).
- To concentrate on true riches (Phil 3:7-8).

3) To Give to Christians (Rom 12:3)

- To unite Christians (II Cor 8:14).
- To demonstrate the mark of a Christian (Titus 2:14; II Cor 9:8).
- To initiate spontaneous thanksgiving (II Cor 9:11)
- To multiply the potential for giving (II Cor 9:6).

4) To Illustrate God's Power

- To cause Christians to trust Him (I Kgs 18:21-40).
- To mock the false gods of our age.
- To purify our lives and motives (Ps 66:18).
- To bring non-Christians to salvation (Acts 5:12-14).
- To glorify God (Ps 50:15).

* * *

- 11] And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

Judgment comes upon a nation when it rejects God. As in Amos 4:6-12 and Haggai 1:6, human spiritual progress—or the lack of it—can have an impact on nature, etc. At the Second Coming, all of nature will be healed (Rom 8:18-20).

- 12] And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

When Israel was right with God, they became a blessing to other nations (Gen 12:1-3). The ultimate fulfillment will be, of course, in the Millennium.

A Call to Take Inventory

- 13] Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken [so much] against thee?

With the eighth impotent response, their rebuttal continues.

- 14] Ye have said, It [is] vain to serve God: and what profit [is it] that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

[2 sets of answers: 13-15 by skeptics; 16-18, by believing remnant]

“What good is it to serve God? It is an empty thing.” (Because their hearts were not in it.) Do you go to church to be critical? To criticize? Or to really *worship*? Real worship has a life to back it up (Isa 58:3-8).

- 15] And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, [they that] tempt God are even delivered.

This is their atrocious statement of precisely the opposite of what God had stated in v.10.

They thought they could tempt God and get by with it. But as Habakkuk found out in his day, God was moving and was going to judge them. If we can look behind the headlines, I believe America is also ripe for judgment.

- 16] Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard [it], and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

These are those that “feared the Lord” (2X in this verse). A virtual synonym for righteous living (Lev 19:14; Deut 17:19; 2 Kgs 17:34). They *networked*.

They *meditated* on His name. (Cf. Isa 33:8; 53:3; Ps 144:3). God’s “name” comprises His person, His qualities, His doctrine, His ethical and moral standards—these were the things that the believers judged

to be their highest and most prized possessions! The believers thought on the name of the Lord and as a consequence it was reflected in their character (Mt 6:21; Prov 23:7).

“A book of remembrance”: Throughout Scripture, there is the theme that God keeps records (Rev 3:4-5, Dan 7:10; et al.). What does *your* “report card” look like? Where do you stand with respect to Him?

Every time we even *think* on Him, it is recorded!

Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: [are they] not in thy book?

Psalms 56:8

He loves you so much that He can’t take His eyes off of you!

- 17] And 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.

OT: Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4.

NT: Eph 1:14; 2 Thess 2:14; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9.

The Pearl of Great Price: the Church. [Oysters were not kosher...]

- 18] Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

The final judgment will end all verbal abuse against heaven.

* * *

In the Hebrew Bible, there is no 4th chapter of Malachi: the final 6 verses are part of the 3rd Chapter. In the final session, we’ll take up the rest which speaks of the Day of the Lord.

Malachi 4

Not a separate chapter in the Hebrew Bible, these verses are a part of Chapter 3.

The Day of the Lord

- 1] For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall

burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

“The Day” = The Day of the Lord.

Unlike 3:2-3, which emphasized the purification of Israel (in particular, the Levites), this passage emphasizes the destruction of the wicked (cf. Isa 66:15; Zeph 1:18; 3:8).

So complete will be the judgment that the wicked (the arrogant and every evildoer; cf. Mal 3:15), compared to stubble, will not have a root or a branch remaining. This does not mean annihilation in the sense of cessation of existence (the wicked will be resurrected, Dan. 12:2), but rather the complete exclusion of the wicked from God’s Kingdom (cf. Mt 25:46).

- 2] But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

The phrase **the sun of righteousness** appears only here in Scripture.

“Revere” translates the same Hebrew word rendered “fear” in 3:5 and “feared” in 1:14; 3:16. Revering God contrasts with saying “harsh things” against God (3:13).

“Wings” also, a fold in garment used for storing precious things.

The figure of **calves** enjoying open pasture after being cooped up in a pen (stall) expresses the future satisfaction and joy of the righteous (cf. Isa 65:17-25; Hos 14:4-7; Amos 9:13-15; Zeph 3:19-20).

- 3] And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do [this], saith the Lord of hosts.

This not only indicates the finality of the judgment on the wicked, but it also brings to a sharp conclusion the answer to the cynical question asked by the unfaithful Israelites, “What do we gain by carrying out His requirements?” (3:14).

- 4] Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, [with] the statutes and judgments.

The verb **remember** is used 14 times in Deuteronomy as an exhortation to Israel concerning this covenant **Law**. This command can refer to: (a) mental acts of remembering or paying attention to something, or to (b) mental acts combined with appropriate external actions (in other words, recalling and obeying), or to (c) acts of reciting or repeating something verbally (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:241). In light of Malachi’s insistence on obedience, meaning (b) seems to be the force of this command: “Recall it to mind and do it!”

My servant Moses not only speaks of Moses’ faithfulness (Heb 3:5) but also reminds the reader that the Lord Almighty (Mal 4:3) is the same God who powerfully displayed His judgments and His salvation at the time of the Exodus. And He is the Living God who gave the Ten Commandments to the people...

At Horeb (the ancient name for Mount Sinai; Ex 3:1; Deut 5:2; Ps 106:19). He graciously accepted Moses’ role as prophetic mediator in the giving of the entire Law (Deut 5:23-31).

The people in Malachi’s time needed a renewed fear of God; they needed to repent and be faithful to God’s covenant. Such repentance would cause them to benefit from rather than suffer in the coming day of the Lord.

- 5] Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

The Enigma of Elijah

God promised through Malachi that the Prophet Elijah would come and minister before the day of the Lord.

Many commentators have linked this prophecy to 3:1 which speaks of a messenger who prepares the way for the Lord’s coming. However, Matthew (Mt 11:7-10) specifically states that John the Baptist was the messenger (Mal 3:1) who prepared the way for the Lord.

But should John the Baptist also be considered the fulfillment of the prophecy about Elijah? (Mal 4:5-6) Before John the Baptist was born an angel of the Lord predicted that he would minister “in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:17). This would seem to put together the two prophecies (Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6) and to see John as fulfilling both of them.

However, while he freely admitted that he was the one who prepared the way for the Lord (Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1), John expressly *denied* that he was Elijah (Jn 1:21-23).

Even when Jesus called John “the Elijah who was to come,” He conditioned that designation with the phrase, “if you are willing to accept it” (Mt 11:14). A solution to the problem seems to be offered in Matthew 17.

The Transfiguration

Mt 16:27-17:13 (also Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36). This chapter division in Matthew is an unfortunate break in the flow of this biblical passage. Jesus had just said that some standing with Him would not die before they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Mt 16:28). The continuing story occurred six days later when Jesus took . . . Peter, James, and John with Him up a high mountain by themselves. (Luke wrote that this event occurred “about eight days after” (Lk 9:28), which includes the beginning and ending days as well as the six days between.)

There Jesus was transfigured (“changed in form”; cf. Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18) before this inner circle of disciples (Mt 17:2). This was a revelation of Jesus’ glory. The radiance of His glory was evidenced in His face and in His garments that became as white as the light. Moses and Elijah appeared from heaven in some visible form and talked with Jesus (thus demonstrating that conscious existence follows death).

Why were Moses and Elijah, of all Old Testament people, present on this occasion?

Perhaps these two men and the disciples suggest all the categories of people who will be in Jesus’ coming kingdom. The disciples may represent individuals who will be present in physical bodies. Moses may represent saved individuals who have died or will die. Elijah might represent saved individuals who will not experience death, but will be caught up to heaven alive (1 Thess 4:17).

These three groups will be present when Christ institutes His kingdom on earth. Furthermore the Lord will be in His glory as He was at the transfiguration, and the kingdom will take place on earth, as this obviously did. The disciples were thus enjoying a foretaste of the kingdom the Lord promised (Mt 16:28).

Peter seemed to sense the significance of the event for he suggested that he erect three shelters, for Jesus, Moses (The Law), and . . . Elijah (prophets). He saw in this event the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles which looked two ways:

- **backward** to the wanderings in the wilderness for 40 years, and
- **forward** to Israel’s full enjoyment of God’s blessings when He would gather His people to the land.

Peter understood that what was taking place: he saw the kingdom, in prospect. (Paul confirms that the feasts are prophetic in Col 2:16-17.)

While Peter was still speaking, a more important voice spoke from a bright cloud that had enveloped them. This voice said, This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well-pleased. Listen to Him! This authentication of the Son of God by the voice of God (as occurred at Jesus’ baptism (Mt 3:17)) carried great significance for the disciples. Years later when Peter wrote his second epistle he referred to this event (2 Pet 1:16-18).

As this small group returned from the mountain, Jesus told the three not to tell anyone what they had witnessed until after He had risen from the dead (cf. 16:20). Some people had already tried to make Jesus King by force, and if news of this event had become commonly known, perhaps others would have attempted to make Jesus King. The timing of the Triumphal Entry was critical to fulfill Dan 9:25.

Peter would later imply that they had been discussing the Second Coming (2 Pet 1:16-18?) Luke wrote that Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus about His coming death (Lk 9:31).

After Elijah appeared with Christ in His transfiguration, the disciples asked about Elijah’s future coming. Jesus, speaking apparently after John’s death (cf. Mt 14:1-2), affirmed that “Elijah shall truly first come and restore all things” (Mt 17:11). *This future expectation indicates that Malachi 4:5-6 was not fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist.*

Israel did not accept John the Baptist as the Elijah-like restorer of all things, so another Elijah-like forerunner is yet to come before the day of the Lord.

However, Jesus went on to say, “Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him” (Mt 17:12), and the disciples understood He was talking about John the Baptist (Mt 17:13). The solution to all this seems to be that though John did not fulfill Malachi 4:5-6 (for Elijah is yet to come), Elijah was a *type* of John in that there is a great deal of similarity between Elijah in 4:5-6 and the messenger (John the Baptist) in 3:1.

It is difficult to determine whether the Elijah to come is Elijah himself (as possibly indicated in Mt 17:11) or someone in the spirit and power of Elijah (as John was, so that Christ referred to him as simply Elijah, Matt. 17:12).

The most likely New Testament reference to this future Elijah-like ministry is Revelation 11:1-13, which speaks of the two witnesses in the Tribulation.

The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11

Numerous and varied interpretations have been given concerning the two witnesses. Some have suggested that they are not literal individuals. However, in view of the fact that they die and are resurrected, the implication is that they are actual people.

Also, Joshua—ostensibly a precursory model of the Book of Revelation—sends **two** on a mission, (vs. 12 by Moses 40 years earlier?) [Note also : always two: after resurrection; ascension; Gen 18, etc.]

1) Three were expected: John 1:20,21

Messiah	Mal 3:1-3, 5,6
Elijah;	Mal 4:5,6
Moses;	Deut 18:15-18

[John the Baptist: “I am not.” Jn 1:19, 20; Mt 11:14; 17:10-11]

2) Two ministries were unfinished:

Moses:	Num 20:12; Deut 3:26-28.
Elijah:	1 Kgs 17:1; 19:13-16; 2 Kgs 2:11.

3) It wasn’t necessarily Enoch:

Some have identified the two witnesses as Enoch and Elijah inasmuch as they did not die but were translated (cf. Heb. 9:27, which is a broad refutation of reincarnation and other related heresies). Heb 9:27 = general rule. “Once to die” argument: many died twice: Lazarus, Widow of Nain’s son; Jairus’ daughter, et al.

He was a *Gentile*: Witnesses were required to be Jewish males.

Model of rapture? Enoch believed to have been born, *and translated*, on the Feast of Shavuot, or Feast of Harvest, Pentecost. Will the Church follow this pattern?

4) Unique Powers, Miracles:

Elijah: Fire from heaven; 1 Kgs 18:37; 2Kgs 1:10, 12 (Jer 5:14); Shut heaven; 1 Kgs 17:1; (3 1/2 years! Lk 4:25; Jas 5:17)

It is noteworthy that Elijah specifically stopped rain for the precise period here indicated: 3 ½ years! [confirmed by two witnesses—by the Lord (Lk 4:25) and by His brother James (James 5:17)—a fact not expressly in the OT record (q.v. 1 Kgs 17, 18).]

Moses: Water into blood: Ex 7:19; Plagues; Ex 8 - 12. [vs. ministers of *Church* to be harmless: Phil 2:15; Rom 16:19.]

5) Staff Meeting in Matthew 17?

Connected with Second Coming: Lk 9:31; 1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 1:6-18. [Mystery: Why did Michael contend with Satan for the body of Moses? Jude 9; Deut 4:5, 6.]

John the Apostle

Some have also suggested John the Apostle as one of them after Rev 10:11; Jn 21:22. (I don’t see this since John was observing what was going on. Furthermore, there appears, to me, to be too much intentional linkage toward Moses and Elijah to dismiss.)

(The description of the two witnesses as olive trees and lampstands has an Old Testament background (Zech 4:2-14). The two witnesses in this passage were Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor. Their connection to the lampstands was that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the olive oil.)

- 6] And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

“Curse” is the last word of the Old Testament.

As a result of the ministry of the two witnesses many people will repent, thus uniting the hearts of . . . fathers with their children. This repentance will mean that they will not experience God’s judgment in the Day of the Lord.

In Conclusion

The last words of the Old Testament are Malachi’s ominous anticipation of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. This event of judgment, a climactic event in history, is a major theme of the prophets.

The force of the warnings and appeals in Malachi’s book hinges as much on the *certainty* of this coming judgment as on the covenant-based offer of grace.

(The Book of Revelation renders the same expectation of judgment and repentance at the end of the New Testament (Rev 22:12-17) but with greater details about the One who will return.)

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