**Zechariah Commentary**

**Zechariah Chapter 1**

Zec 1:1

**“In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of Yahweh came.”** The Bible does not say what day of the eighth month God spoke to Zechariah. This was the beginning of his visions and hearing from God. His next vision came about four months later, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (Zech. 1:7).

**“Zechariah the prophet.”** Zechariah was also a priest (Zech. 1:1, 7; Neh. 12:16), but what is important here is his prophetic calling.

**“the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.”** Zechariah was the son of Berechiah, who was the son of Iddo. As is sometimes done in biblical genealogy, names are omitted for various reasons. That is the case in the genealogy of Zechariah in the book of Ezra, where Zechariah is called the son of Iddo, when he was actually the grandson of Iddo (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). It is likely that Berechiah was left out of the genealogy in Ezra because he was not as prominent as Iddo, and also perhaps because he died young and so Iddo was the primary influence in his life. These are things that would have been known when Zechariah lived but are lost to us today.

Zec 1:2

**“Yahweh was angry with your fathers.”** God was angry with the people of Israel from the time they left Egypt. The Israelites regularly ignored, disobeyed, and defied God, and he was angry with them and their disobedience brought consequences upon them. This can be seen throughout the Old Testament and the number of verses that reveal it would be too long to be listed (cf. Num. 14:11-12, 22-23; Jer. 7:19-20, 25-26; Ezek. 20:4-21; Isa. 1:2-15; Hos. 1:2-9; Amos 2:4-16; Mic. 1:2-7). God created humankind and He expects love, respect, and obedience. That has always been the case and still is the case today. Disobedience to God brings consequences in this life and in the next. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God (Prov. 9:10).

Zec 1:6

**“so that they turned and said.”** Even the disobedient and rebellious among the Israelites had to admit that they had been told that if they continued to disobey God’s commands there would be grave consequences.

For the translation “so then they turned” see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch,[[1]](#footnote-17942) although some other versions are very similar (cf. ASV, CJB, DBY, RV, JPS). The 1985 JPS Tanakh gets the sense: “and in the end they had to admit, ‘The LORD has dealt with us according to our ways and our deeds, just as He purposed.’” The NET has, “Then they paid attention and confessed…,” which also gets the sense. Quite a few English versions translate the Hebrew as “they repented and said” (cf. CSB, ESV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NJB, and RSV), but although the Hebrew word “turned” can also be understood to mean “turned back” or “repented,” that is not the case here. The Old Testament is very clear that in most cases the people did not listen to the prophets and died in their sin. Furthermore, when they did destroy their idols, often it was not because their hearts had changed, but instead, it was because they could see that their idols were not helping them and they were in such dire circumstances that needed Yahweh’s help and so they had to get rid of their idols and turn to Him. There are many examples of Israel not repenting of sin or temporarily changing but then going back to idols when things were better. Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness as a consequence of their sin and there was no national repentance during that time; the book of Judges covers more than 400 years of history and records slavery to Syria, Moab, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines and each slavery was the result of turning from God. Israel so completely turned from God during the kings period that they were conquered and taken away from their land by Assyrians (2 Kings 17) and Judah so abandoned Yahweh during the kings period that He let his chosen city, Jerusalem, and his “House,” the Temple, be destroyed and the people of Judah to be carried off to Babylon. Furthermore, here in Zechariah’s time, in the post-exilic time when many from Judah had returned from Babylon, there was still much sin and disobedience to God. So Zechariah 1:6 reflects the reality that although the majority of idolaters in Israel did not repent, they still had to admit that the words of the prophets about the consequences of their sin had come to pass.

Zec 1:7

**“On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month.”** The visions that God gives Zechariah in the night of that one day are so important that God tells us the exact day that Zechariah received the visions. Zechariah has a series of eight prophetic visions in one night (Zech. 1:7-6:8).

**“as follows.”**Although the Hebrew text is more literally “saying,” in this context that translation is confusing, so the REV and some other English versions translate the word as “as follows” (cf. NASB, NET, NJB), while other versions simply leave it off (cf. CJB, CSB, NAB, NIV, NKJV). The NRSV and RSV have “and Zechariah said,” to show that what followed was what Zechariah said in describing his vision.

Zec 1:8

**“I had a vision in the night.”** What a night for Zechariah! He had eight separate visions from God in that one night. The eight visions were:

1. The man among the myrtle trees (Zech. 1:7-17)
2. The four horns and the four craftsmen (Zech. 1:18-21)
3. The surveyor with a measuring line (Zech. 2:1-12)
4. The cleansing and crowning of Joshua, the High Priest (Zech. 3)
5. The gold menorah and the two olive trees (Zech. 4)
6. The flying scroll (Zech. 5:1-4)
7. The wicked woman in the basket (Zech. 5:5-11)
8. The four chariots (Zech. 6:1-8)

**“in the night.”** Much spiritual activity occurs at night. This makes sense because especially before reliable and bright electric and gas lights were invented, the daytime was used for productive work and people were busy. Beyond that, in general the culture in ancient societies was such that people had much less personal space than we modern Westerners are used to. In the ancient world people often crowded together and were constantly in each other’s business. At night people could slow down, calm down, and be more alone with their thoughts and with God. Mark Boda correctly observes, “Night was a time associated in the OT with heightened spiritual activity, whether longing for and seeking God (Isa. 26:9), praising (Job 35:10; Ps. 42:9[8]), meditating (Ps. 77:7), being tested by God (Ps. 17:3), and especially receiving revelation from God (Gen. 20:3; 31:24; 46:2; 1 Kings 3:5; Job 4:13; 33:15; Dan. 2:19; 7:2, 7, 13).[[2]](#footnote-31999)

**“red.”** Indicating war, vengeance, and bloodshed. This is not the red of the blood of Jesus, but the red of war. The red horse in Revelation 6:4 is representative of war. It is important to notice that there were two red horses—there was going to be significant bloodshed before the Messiah would reign on earth.

**“myrtle trees.”** The myrtle trees stand for Israel. The myrtle “tree” (sometimes called a “shrub”) is an evergreen tree that can grow to 20-25 feet, usually in cooler, wetter areas of Israel. It used to grow on the Mount of Olives, but it no longer grows there; it is now used as an ornamental shrub in Israel. It has a pleasant odor and delicate white flowers, and its branches were used as part of the booths built during the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. 8:15).

The significance of the myrtle is not revealed here, which has opened the door to a lot of guesswork on the part of commentators. Not being considered one of the stately trees of Israel but being an evergreen, it likely refers to Israel in its humble but hopeful state, at that time under Persian rule but promised restoration by the prophets, and that fits with what the angel said, “‘O Yahweh of Armies, how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which you have had indignation these 70 years?’ (Zech. 1:12). The myrtle trees do not represent the Christian Church, although some commentators think they do.

Note that the angel did not ask “if” God would someday have mercy on Israel and restore her to glory. God had said through the prophets that he would do that, so the angel asks how long before it will happen.

**“sorrel.”** The Hebrew word translated as “sorrel,” does not occur anywhere else as an adjective of color, so the exact color of the horse is unclear. In modern English, a “sorrel” horse is a chestnut color and without any black. Some English translations have “bay” as the color, which is also brown but the horse also has black markings. Also, a “roan” horse has a dark base color, like brown or black, but has white or gray hair. It is possible that the sorrel horse is indicating the mixed character of the mission of these angelic messengers. A sorrel, bay, or roan color would be about as close as one could get in mixing the red horse with the white horse; and the implication would be that the future of Israel would be one of both war and bloodshed and the victory of the righteous.[[3]](#footnote-14322)

**“white.”** White represents righteousness and justice, and in this context, it represents the victory of righteousness over evil.

Zec 1:10

**“the ones Yahweh has sent to go back and forth through the earth.”** Here in Zechariah 1:10, the angels are sent out by God to scope out what is happening on the earth and report that back to God, and in verse 11 they report what they have seen (Zech. 1:10-11).

Zec 1:11

**“the angel of Yahweh.”** It is widely believed that the angel of Yahweh is Jesus Christ before he was born of Mary, but that is not the case. The angel of Yahweh is an angel.

[For more information on the angel of the Lord not being Jesus Christ, see commentary on Gen. 16:7. For more information on God coming into concretion, see commentary on Acts 7:55. For more information on Jesus being the fully human Son of God and not being “God the Son,” see Appendix 6: “Jesus is the Son of God, Not God the Son.”]

**“all the earth is at rest and in peace.”** At this time in history, the known pagan world was largely at rest. Furthermore, there was no sign of the shaking of the nations that Haggai foretold, which we know was to precede the coming of the Messiah and the restoration of Israel: “in a little while…I will shake all nations…I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them” (Hag. 2:6-7, 21-22).

But while the pagan world was at rest, the people of God were in a sad state, ruled by pagans and not fully returned to God in their hearts (Zech. 1:3).

Zec 1:12

**“these 70 years.”** Technically speaking, the 70 years of the Babylonian Captivity had ended when Cyrus the Persian allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and they returned bringing furnishings of the Temple with them (cf. Ezra 1:1-4). Jeremiah had prophesied that the Babylonian Captivity would be 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). Although at the time Zechariah 1:12 was written the 70 years had passed, Judah and the Temple had not been restored, so the indignation and anger of Yahweh against Judah was still visible and Judah needed mercy from God to be more completely rebuilt and established, and we learn from Haggai and Zechariah that there were enemies within and without that were hindering the work and God’s mercy and help were needed to overcome the obstacles.

Zec 1:13

**“good words, comforting words.”** The REV translation is very literal but like the Hebrew text itself, it grabs the ear and the mind. The “good” and “comforting” words are in the next four verses, Zechariah 1:14-17: God was jealous (the Hebrew word can also mean “zealous”) for Jerusalem and Zion; God was angry with the nations (in the context this is the nations that afflicted Judah); God will show mercy to Jerusalem and the Temple will be rebuilt; and the cities of Judah will be rebuilt and God will again choose Jerusalem (implying that when the Temple is finished God will dwell there like He had done in the past).

Also likely included in the good and comforting words was the second and third vision of Zechariah, the vision of the horns and the craftsmen. God showed Zechariah the horns (the forces) that had scattered Israel and Judah, but then showed him the craftsmen who would defeat the horns that scattered God’s people so that they could receive God’s grace and mercy (Zech. 1:18-21).

Zec 1:16

**“I will return.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “I have returned,” but in the context that is a prophetic perfect, referring to a return in the future in a way that had not happened yet.

**“my house will be built in it.”** That the “house” of God, the Temple, will be built is a prophecy that became partially fulfilled during the time Zechariah lived, but it will ultimately be fulfilled when Jesus builds the Millennial Temple that is described in Ezekiel 40-44 (cf. Zech. 6:12). There was and will be several temples built before that last Temple. Solomon’s Temple, the First Temple, had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The Second Temple had been started in Zechariah’s time but was not complete at the time this verse was written. The Temple built in Zechariah’s time was totally rebuilt and remodeled by Herod the Great, and that was the Temple that Jesus taught in. That Temple was destroyed in AD 70. In the future, there will be another Temple that will exist during the period of the Great Tribulation (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2). That Temple will also be destroyed in the Great Tribulation, and then Jesus Christ will build the final earthly Temple when he reigns as king over the earth, and that Temple is described in Ezekiel 40-44. When the Millennium comes to an end (Rev. 20:7-10) the Heavenly Jerusalem will come to earth and it will last forever and not have a temple in it (Rev. 21:22).

**“a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.”** When a building or city was going to be built or changed according to a plan, the area was measured and laid out with measuring lines. Here God encourages His people that Jerusalem will once again be built according to His plan. Although Jerusalem would continue to be rebuilt during the time of Zechariah, and it would be destroyed or partially destroyed and rebuilt again several times in history, the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will be in the Millennial Kingdom when Christ rules the earth and the people live under a New Covenant and Jerusalem is rebuilt using a measuring line (cf. Jer. 31:38-40). The city of Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom will be a square with each side measuring 4,500 cubits, which is just under 1.5 miles on each side (Ezek. 48:15-16, 30-35).

[For more on the Millennial Kingdom, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 1:17

**“My cities.”** “My cities” are God’s cities, that is, the cities in Israel. By the time of Zechariah they had been devastated by the Assyrians and the Babylonians, but the prophecy is that they will be rebuilt and be prosperous. The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will occur in the Millennial Kingdom when Christ rules the earth. There are other prophecies that the cities of Israel will be rebuilt and be prosperous, and although they may have a more immediate partial fulfillment, the ultimate fulfillment will be when Christ rules (cf. Ps. 69:35-36; Isa. 51:3; 61:4; Ezek. 36:10, 33; Amos 9:14-15).

[For more on the Millennial Kingdom, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 1:18

**“four horns.”** By telling us about the four horns, God has told us what we need to know about the powers that attacked and scattered Israel and Judah. Yet the prophecy of the horns is short and the explanation seems incomplete. First of all, how did Zechariah see the vision of the horns? Were they on an animal, or suspended in the air, or what? The Bible does not tell us. Biblically a “horn” usually referred to power, strength, or even pride. Thus, “I have thrust my horn into the dust” (Job 16:15) refers to Job saying his power and strength were gone. When Hannah, Samuel’s mother, finally gave birth after being barren for years, she exclaimed, “my horn is lifted high in Yahweh” because her strength, attitude, and position in life had been lifted up (1 Sam. 2:1). A horn can also represent a ruler or kingdom (cf. Dan. 8:5-9, 20-23; Rev. 17:12). Scholars have put forth many different ideas about what the four horns in Zechariah are, including the four empires of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue and the four horns being a representation of many different opposing forces from the “four corners” of the earth, but frankly, no one knows for sure what they represent. What is clear is that there have been both spiritual and human forces that have been marshaled against Israel and Judah, but God is doing something about them, as the next vision reveals.

Zec 1:19

**“Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”** All these had been scattered by Israel’s enemies, and there are many prophecies in the various prophets that all these would be rebuilt and God’s people regathered, but that will not become a full reality until Christ rules the earth, an event which is still future (see commentary on Jer. 32:37). By the time of Zechariah, Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem had been scattered, and a remnant of the Judeans had returned. Jerusalem is mentioned because as the center of the worship of Yahweh in the world, one would think that Yahweh would have defended it and not allowed it to be scattered. But the fact that Jerusalem and the Temple were burned down shows that Yahweh is not interested in physical temples, He is interested in being worshiped with one’s whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. Priests and others who keep the Temple and “worship” at it are not going to do that, Yahweh has no interest in protecting His Temple for symbolism’s sake.

Zec 1:20

**“craftsmen.”** The Hebrew word means a skilled worker in wood, metal, or stone.

Zec 1:21

**“to cast down the horns of the nations.”** The craftsmen are spirits or spiritual forces that God sent to defeat the evil horns. What is not clearly set forth here in Zechariah, or clearly spoken about anywhere else in the Old Testament, is the war that is constantly going on behind the scenes between good and evil. Furthermore, for the most part, the Christian world is blind to it, believing that “God is in control” and that “everything that happens is God’s will.” Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a huge war going on all the time between God and the Devil and between God’s angels and His people and the Devil’s demons and his evil people. The war between David and Goliath is one small example of the war between Good and Evil that is occurring all over the earth every day. It is not that both David and Goliath were somehow working for God or God made Goliath do evil things such that at some level Goliath was an agent of God. David was a warrior for God and Goliath was a warrior for the Devil. Even if Goliath did not know much about the true identity of the Devil, he was working on Devil’s behalf, being guided by one of the Devil’s many forms or disguises such as pagan gods, hatred, greed, or demonic guidance.

When the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, Jesus corrected them and said that if Satan cast out Satan then his kingdom would be divided and it would not stand (Matt. 12:24-28). The same truth applies here. If God sent horn-angels to scatter His people, but then sent craftsmen-angels to cast down the horn-angels, then God’s kingdom would be divided and would not stand. God would never send angel against angel. When Israel and Judah sinned, God could not protect them and demons were able to ruin them. Eventually, when God’s people turn again to Him, He is able to protect and bless them and send angelic help to reestablish them. We learn this from the New Testament. It was Jesus Christ and the New Testament in general that revealed the war between Good and Evil (see verses such as Acts 10:38; 13:8-11; John 8:37-47; 10:10; and Luke 10:17-24).

God is “the Most High God,” and He always has the strength and resources to deal with evil and demonic forces. However, He has set things up here on the earth in such a way that humans can determine their own destiny. People make their own decision whether to accept Christ and be saved and live forever or reject Christ and die. Similarly, humans decide to obey God so He can bless them, or disobey God, which ties His hands and allows the Devil to act in ways he otherwise could not have acted. Unlike the Devil who sins in many ways, God has to act righteously, and if people continually reject, disobey, and defy Him, He cannot righteously protect them.

The reason that God did not clearly reveal the war between God and the Devil in the Old Testament is that the vast majority of the people had no power against demonic forces except to obey God and pray for His protection. When Jesus was on earth he gave his apostles authority over demons, and then he could reveal the spiritual war to them knowing they were equipped to deal with demons (Matt. 10:1). Then after his resurrection and before his ascension Jesus taught that when people received holy spirit they would have “power,” that is, spiritual power they did not have before, and then they could deal with demons and manifest the power of holy spirit in other ways as well (cf. Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:7-10).

[For more on the war between God and the Devil see commentaries on Luke 4:6 and 1 John 5:19.]

**Zechariah Chapter 2**

Zec 2:1

**“a man with a measuring line.”** There have been quite a few assertions about Zechariah 2:1-5 and who the men are in the vision God showed Zechariah. But the interpretation seems not that difficult. An angel had been speaking to Zechariah (Zech. 1:9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19), and here God shows Zechariah more angels who look like men (that angels appeared as men is quite common in the Bible, and often the human does not even know he or she is talking to an angel, cf. Gen. 18:1-2, 22; and 19:1; Judg. 6:11, 22; 13:3-6). So as the vision opens, Zechariah sees a “man” (an angel; Zech. 2:3) with a measuring line in his hand. Zechariah spoke directly to the angel and asked where he was going, and the angel answered that he was going to measure Jerusalem (Zech. 2:2). However, as that angel left Zechariah, another angel came and met that angel (the angel with the measuring line) and told him to go to the “young man,” that is, Zechariah, who was young at the time, and give him a message about how Jerusalem would be restored and be prosperous (Zech. 2:4-5).

Zec 2:2

**“to measure Jerusalem.”** Jerusalem will be rebuilt, but beyond that, it will be enlarged and be even bigger than it was before it was destroyed by Babylon (cf. Zech. 2:4).

**“width...length.”** In this context, since the orientation of the people in Bible times was to the east, “width” was the north-south measurement and “length” was the east-west measurement.

Zec 2:3

**“the angel who talked with me went out, and another angel went out to meet him.”** The Bible here reveals that the knowledge of angels is limited. God gives angels different assignments and they know different bits of information.

Zec 2:4

**“Run, speak to this young man.”** The “young man” is Zechariah himself. The angels are talking and one is told to go give Zechariah the message. It is not unusual that Zechariah would be young—Jeremiah was too (Jer. 1:6). There is a youthful energy and positive outlook among the young that older people often lack.

Zec 2:5

**“For I, says Yahweh, will be to her a wall of fire around it.”** Jerusalem had been vulnerable to attacks through the ages, and had been destroyed by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25:8-10). But God promised that in the future, He Himself would be a wall of fire around Jerusalem and thus she would be protected. We know this prophecy applies to the city of Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ because historically Jerusalem was sacked after this, with the most noteworthy of those times being the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in AD 70.

[For more on the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom On Earth.”]

Zec 2:6

**“Flee from the land of the north.”** The “land of the north” is Babylon, where Judah had been carried captive in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2 Kings 24 and 25). God warns the people to flee because Babylon was under the judgment of God and was conquered by her enemies (see commentary on Zech. 2:7).

Zec 2:7

**“Escape.”** God has to tell the people of Judah to “flee” (Zech. 2:6) and “escape” because many of the Judeans whose families had been carried captive to Babylon had now settled in there and had good jobs, houses, and family members who had been born there. They saw no good reason to leave Babylon, even though as Jews they were God’s people and God had said he would dwell in Jerusalem. Likely many people felt that since Solomon’s Temple had been destroyed that there was no compelling reason to go back to Judah. Also, Ezekiel had reported that the glory of Yahweh had left the Temple and Judah (see commentary on Ezekiel 11:23). Before Zechariah spoke this prophecy, Jeremiah had warned the Jews to flee from Babylon and escape the judgment of God that would befall her (Jer. 51:6, 45).

Ironically, Jeremiah, who lived in Jerusalem, had written a letter to the Jews who had been taken to Babylon and told them that the captivity would last 70 years and that they should build and plant and have families there and not expect to come home soon or listen to the false prophets who told them the captivity would end soon (Jer. 29:1-14). But even in that letter, Jeremiah told the people that God would bring them back from Babylon. Nevertheless, many Jews became so comfortable in Babylon that they did not return to Judah.

We now know from historical records and also the record in Ezra that more Jews stayed in Babylon than returned to Israel. That many Jews stayed in Babylon in part explains records like Esther, whose family stayed in Babylon which then became part of the Persian Empire.

**“Daughter Babylon.”** The Hebrew, “daughter of Babylon,” is idiomatic for Babylon itself (see commentary on Isa. 1:8).

Zec 2:10

**“Daughter Zion.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic for Zion itself, i.e., Jerusalem (see commentary on Isa. 1:8).

**“and I will dwell in the midst of you.”** The key to understanding Zechariah 2:10 is reading it together with Zechariah 2:11: “Many nations will join themselves to Yahweh in that day, and will be my people….” The “day” (the time) that many nations will join themselves to Yahweh and become His people is during the Millennial Kingdom when Christ reigns over the earth from Jerusalem, and Yahweh has a temple (cf. Ezek. 40-46). The idea that “many nations” will go to Jerusalem to worship God is also in Zechariah 8:23, and is also stated in Micah 4:2, and the context there is also the Millennial Kingdom.

The idea that Yahweh will “dwell” in the midst of His people when He dwells in His Temple is a common theme in the Old Testament. God first dwelt in the Tabernacle (Exod. 25:8; 29:45-46; 40:35; Num. 5:3; 9:17-18, 22; 10:12; 35:34; Deut. 12:5), and then He dwelt in Jerusalem, in His Temple (1 Kings 6:12-13; 8:12-13; 1 Chron. 23:25; 2 Chron. 6:1; Ezra 6:12; Ps. 68:16-17; 74:2; 135:21; Isa. 8:18; Ezek. 43:7, 9; Joel 3:17, 21). Given that, the clear implication is that when God comes to “Daughter Zion” to dwell in her midst, He is speaking of dwelling in the Millennial Temple (there is no Temple in the Everlasting Kingdom (Rev. 21:22)).

Zec 2:11

**“Many nations will join themselves to Yahweh in that day.** The phrase, “in that day” refers to the Day of the Lord, and specifically, the Millennial Kingdom when Christ rules the earth. During the Millennial Kingdom, as Zechariah 2:11 says, “many nations will join themselves to Yahweh,” that is, many nations will believe in Yahweh and follow His way (see commentary on Zech. 2:10). That time will be the fulfillment of many prophecies, beginning in early Genesis. In Genesis 12:3 and 18:18, God told Abraham that many nations would be blessed “through him,” i.e., through their connection with him, and that connection is through his seed, the Messiah (cf. Gal. 3:7-9, 14, 29).

Although there will be saved people from every nation in the Everlasting Kingdom, the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven (Rev. 21:1-4, 9-27), that is not primarily what this verse is speaking about. This verse says that “many nations” will join themselves to Yahweh, and in the Millennial Kingdom when Christ rules on earth, that will be literally fulfilled. At that time, the earth will be like it is today in many respects, and the nations will be where they are (or have been) on earth. For example, Egypt will still be where it has always been, as will Israel (cf. Isa. 19:19-25).

As more books of the Bible were written, God’s promise to Abraham was clarified and confirmed over and over. (Ps. 102:15; Isa. 2:2-4; 19:23-25; 42:6; 49:6; 51:4-5; 56:3-7; 60:3; 66:18-21; Ezek. 39:21, 27; Mic. 4:2; Hag. 2:7; Zech. 2:11; 8:22). Also, Jesus Christ told it to his disciples (Matt. 8:11)

[For more on the Millennial Kingdom, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom On Earth.”]

**“will join themselves to Yahweh...and will be my people.”** The terminology “will join themselves” is typical covenantal language. The language implies more than just that the nations will want what Yahweh has to offer; it implies that the people of the nations, Gentile people, will enter into a covenant with God, likely by becoming part of the New Covenant, and will follow His ways.

**“And I will dwell in the midst of you.”** Some Trinitarians suggest that this verse is proof of two beings who are rightly called Yahweh because Yahweh seems to be dwelling in their midst, and Yahweh is sending the one who is dwelling in their midst.

This understanding is exacerbated by some translations capitalizing “me,” making it certainly sound like there are two Yahwehs, one sent and one sending: “Sing and rejoice, Daughter Zion; for behold, I am coming, and I will dwell in the midst of you, says Yahweh. 11Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.” (Zech. 2:10-11 NKJV)

The first thing to note is that we need to be very careful not to use arguments in complicated passages such as this, with complicated pronoun use, to establish theological truths. The passage never states that there are two beings called Yahweh, and, in fact, it consistently uses singular pronouns in reference to Yahweh. Thus, to conclude that two beings are “Yahweh” from this passage is a weakly supported position.

The second thing to note is that Yahweh (God) speaks of himself in the third person often in Zechariah and the Old Testament, and even does so in the immediate context itself (Zech. 3:2). This is called illeism, and God does it often in the Old Testament. Also, Jesus does it in the New Testament when he refers to himself as the “son of man” (Matt. 9:6; 12:8; Mark 10:45). Realizing that God refers to himself in the third person here in Zechariah 2:11 when he says, “will join themselves to Yahweh in that day,” is critical to making sense of the passage.

This passage in Zechariah 2 is quite complicated. Zechariah is seeing a vision of an angel, that angel talks to another angel, and that other angel relays a message from Yahweh to the first angel to relay to Zechariah who is to relay the message to Israel. So, there are five characters: Israel, Zechariah, the first angel with a measuring rod, the second angel, and Yahweh.

So, because Yahweh speaks of himself in the third person and because there are so many characters involved in this passage, it is difficult to precisely figure out who is speaking and where to put the quotation marks in a translation. This confusion can be seen by the wide variety of differences in modern English Translations of Zechariah 2:10-13.

As mentioned at the outset, many Trinitarians understand Zechariah 2:11 to be referring to two beings who are Yahweh. One Yahweh sends another Yahweh, and thus, “Yahweh” can be said to “dwell in your midst.” This interpretation is problematic for several reasons.

The first reason is that in other places of the Old Testament, Yahweh (God) is clear that there is no other Yahweh. Take Isaiah 45:5-6 which reads, “I am Yahweh, and there is none else. Besides me, there is no God…I am Yahweh, and there is no one else.” So, if someone is using unclear pronouns in Zechariah 2:11 to conclude that there are two beings called Yahweh, this must be done by ignoring the clearer texts which explicitly teach that there is only one being who is Yahweh.

The second reason this interpretation is problematic is because in the entire book of Zechariah, Yahweh is never described as the one who is sent, but rather, Yahweh is the one who sends. The phrase “Yahweh of Armies sent me” is likely referring to the angel who was sent to deliver these prophecies to Zechariah.

In Zechariah 2:9, 11, 4:9, and 6:15, the same phrase, “you will know that Yahweh of Armies sent me to you,” is repeated. It is important to lay out who the pronouns are referring to in this phrase. In all of these instances, Yahweh (God) is speaking to Zechariah, either through an angel (Zech. 2:9-13), or through “the word of Yahweh” (Zech. 4:8-9; 6:9-15) which is also likely referring to an angel (cf. Zech. 4:6, 8). However, Zechariah is supposed to relay this message to the people of Israel. So, all of these things must be in mind when deciphering who the pronouns are referring to. In the phrase in question, the “you” is referring to Israel, the ones ultimately receiving the message, because they are the “you” in the phrase “dwell in the midst of *you*” (Zech. 2:11) and the “you” in the phrase “*you* who dwell in Daughter Babylon” (Zech. 2:7). The angel of God is the “me” and Yahweh is “Yahweh of Armies.” Thus, the phrase should be understood, “you (Israel) will know that Yahweh sent me (the angel) to you (Israel).”

Essentially, in all of these places (Zech. 2:9, 11; 4:9; 6:15) the angel, or messenger of God, is saying, ‘once these things come to pass, then you will realize that God sent me to forewarn you.’ So, the “me” in “Yahweh of Armies sent me,” is not a second Yahweh, but an angel. This proper understanding and breaking up of the text of Zechariah 2:11 is seen in the NET translation.

10“Sing out and be happy, Zion my daughter! For look, I have come; I will settle in your midst,” says the Lord. 11“Many nations will join themselves to the Lord on the day of salvation, and they will also be my people. Indeed, I will settle in the midst of you all.” Then you will know that the Lord who rules over all has sent me to you (Zech. 2:10-11 NET 1st ed.).

In the end, once one realizes that Yahweh (God) is speaking of himself in the third person in Zechariah 2:11 (“Many nations will join themselves to *Yahweh*”), and that God is delivering these prophecies to Zechariah through an angel, and when the quotation marks are put in the proper place, the meaning of Zechariah 2:10-11 becomes much clearer. Yahweh is not sending a second being to Zechariah who is also Yahweh, rather the text specifies that Yahweh sent an angel (Zech. 2:3) to deliver a message to Zechariah.

Zec 2:12

**“and will again choose Jerusalem.”** This is more than a statement that Yahweh would bless Jerusalem. As early as while Israel was still wandering in the wilderness God said he would choose a place to dwell, and then years later he said that of all the places on earth He would choose to live in Jerusalem and that He would dwell in the Temple there, and those prophecies were about to be again fulfilled. Yahweh had indeed chosen Jerusalem and had His Temple built there and dwelt in it, but the sin of Judah was so egregious that Yahweh and His glory left the Temple and Jerusalem and they both were burned to the ground. But now the years of God’s wrath on Judah were over and the Jews had been allowed to return to Judah and Yahweh’s Temple was being rebuilt, and so now the prophecy was that God would “again choose Jerusalem,” meaning that He would return to Jerusalem and dwell in the new Temple. But in fact, although the Jews—or at least some of them—returned from Babylon and built the physical Temple, they did not return to God in their hearts.

**Zechariah Chapter 3**

Zec 3:1

**“Joshua the high priest.”** Joshua was the High Priest, as we see here and in Haggai 1:14. “Joshua” and “Jeshua” are variant spellings of the same name, and it can be confusing to the English reader that Haggai and Zechariah use “Yehoshua” shortened to “Joshua” (cf. Hag. 1:14; 2:2, 4; Zech. 3:1), while Ezra and Nehemiah use “Jeshua” (cf. Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2; Neh. 7:7). To make matters more confusing, since “Joshua” was a very common name, many people had that same name, so the reader has to be very careful about who is who.

In this context, “Joshua” the High Priest is not representing himself, but is a vision and Joshua the High Priest represents the spiritual side of Israel and Judah and their situation in the eyes of God. Sadly, the nations of Israel and Judah had been very sinful. Zechariah 3:8 says that Joshua and the other men who were with him were signs, they represented things, and Joshua represented the spiritual side of Israel. In the vision, God removes the filthy garments on Joshua (Zech. 3:4-5), and what that symbolizes is that God will remove the sin of Israel (cf. Zech. 3:9). God had used the image of filthy cloth to represent moral filth earlier in the Bible (cf. Isa. 64:6), and clothing is used that way here in Zechariah as well.

**“Satan standing at his right hand to be an adversary to him.”** This “Satan” is the Satan from Job 1, the Devil, the evil spirit who has been the constant adversary of God. This phrase is one of the times when transliterating the title “Satan” from the Hebrew text takes away some of the punch and meaning of the original text. Also, the Hebrew text actually reads, “the satan.” The word *satan* in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek means “adversary,” and a more literal translation of this phrase would be, “And he showed me Joshua…and the Adversary standing at his right hand to be an adversary to him.” Although translating the literal Hebrew “the Adversary” as “Satan” makes the English reading clearer to most readers, we are in danger of losing the fact that God is revealing to us that the Devil always acts out of his nature: one of his “names” is “the Adversary” and he always is and always will be an adversary to God.

Satan and his followers are evil and hurtful, and the wise Christian keeps a wary eye out for them. Satan’s followers carry out the works of Satan (John 8:44; Acts 13:10) and often come in sheep’s clothing and are disguised as servants of righteousness (Matt. 7:15; 2 Cor. 11:13-15). But if we keep our eye on the fruit they produce, we will know them (Matt. 7:16, 20).

Satan can be in the presence of the angel of Yahweh and Joshua the High Priest because God is a righteous God and in order to be that He has to allow Satan to accuse people if the situation warrants it. In this case, it seems that Satan is present because he knows that Israel and Judah have not been obedient to God.

[For more on the names God gives to the Devil, see Appendix 8: “Names of the Devil.”]

Zec 3:2

**“Yahweh rebuke you, Satan!”** Since Yahweh alone knows the hearts of all humans and the reality behind every situation, He alone is in the position to make an accurate assessment of the situation and rightly rebuke Satan in accordance with what he deserves.

**“Isn’t this man a burning stick plucked out of the fire?”** In this vision, “Joshua,” the “man,” represents all Israel, and Israel has been a stick that God has rescued from the flames. God had been rescuing Israel for centuries, and He had just rescued them from the Babylonian Captivity.

In this context, the image of a stick in the fire would have been appropriate for Babylon because the Babylonians did occasionally execute people by burning them (cf. Dan. 3:6).

Zec 3:3

**“filthy garments.”** This English translation perhaps understates the situation because it is common to think of “filth” as just a lot of dirt, but that is not the case here. Actually, the primary definition of the English word “filth” is “foul or putrid matter” (*Merriam-Webster*), which would be correct, but we typically hyperbolize it and, for example, say that a child who has played in the dirt is “filthy.” The Hebrew word for “filthy” is *tsow* (#06674 צוֹא) and in its unpointed form it refers to excrement (cf. Deut. 23:13; 2 Kings 18:27) or extreme filth, such as “vomit” (Isa. 28:8) or menstrual blood (Isa. 4:4). This explains the translation in the Complete Jewish Bible, which reads that Joshua was “clothed in garments covered with dung.” This, of course, would exclude him from being able to carry out the duties of the priesthood until he was cleansed, which God did.

It seems that Joshua the High Priest is being described as unclean both in his own person and in his representative position for the nation of Israel. Both the priest and the people were unclean before the Babylonian Captivity and during the Babylonian Captivity, especially with the Temple destroyed and thus no proper cleansing sacrifices or Day of Atonement. But now, with the Temple being rebuilt and sacrifices reestablished, both the priest and the people will be able to be clean before God if they will turn their hearts to Him, which many did.

Zec 3:4

**“and I will clothe you with rich clothing.”** We must keep in mind that Joshua represents Judah, and thus in Zechariah’s vision when God takes the filthy garments off Joshua and puts “rich clothing” on him, it is representing that God has removed the filth off of Judah and is clothing her in His righteousness, which is “rich clothing” indeed. Furthermore, in Zechariah 3:5, the High Priest gets his turban placed back on his head, which represents the nation of Judah being restored to their position of being a priest to the nations, which, since the Temple was being built in Jerusalem, it would soon be in a position to be. The people of Israel are being positioned to be “the priests of Yahweh,” just as Isaiah foretold (Isa. 61:6).

Obeying God and being clothed in His righteousness is rich clothing indeed! Here we see God’s mercy in that He is always desirous that people would walk in obedience to Him, and He would then clothe them in righteousness. The ultimate righteousness before God comes when we accept His total provision via His Son, Jesus Christ, who is God’s Servant, the Branch (Zech. 3:8).

Here in Zechariah, however, the rich garments and turban are put on Joshua with the same conditions that have always been set by God for His people: they must walk in obedience to God (Zech. 3:7). Sadly, they did not.

Zec 3:5

**“set a clean turban on his head.”** This turban represents the office of the High Priest. In the vision, that God would command that the turban be replaced on the head of the High Priest is a prophecy that Israel was again to be—if they remained obedient to God—a priest nation to the nations of the world (see commentary on Zech. 3:4).

Zec 3:7

**“If you will walk in my ways.”** The blessings and privileges of God for Israel were always given upon the condition that she would obey God, but sadly she did not. Judah had been conquered by the Babylonians but was allowed to return to her homeland, Israel, after 70 years of captivity. But Israel rejected her Messiah when he came and she was conquered by the Romans, who, in AD 70 destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple like the Babylonians had done in 586 BC. The Temple was rebuilt in the lifetime of Zechariah, but since the time that the Romans destroyed it, the Temple has not been rebuilt.

Zec 3:8

**“you and your friends who are sitting before you, for they are men who are a sign.”** To Zechariah who was seeing the revelation vision, Joshua and the men with him were not literal people, but “signs,” people in the vision who stood for something else. In this case, “Joshua the High Priest” stood for the priesthood and the spiritual well-being of Israel (see commentary on Zech. 3:1 and 3:3). Joshua was a sign of the restoration of Israel. But Israel would not be fully restored until it was restored by “the Branch,” the Messiah Jesus Christ. The Messiah was foretold to conquer the earth and set up a worldwide kingdom with his throne in Jerusalem and the new Temple on Mount Zion.

It seems likely that one of the “friends” of Joshua the High Priest would have been Zerubbabel the governor because Zerubbabel is in some prophecies along with Joshua. The first governor of Judah after the return from the Babylonian Captivity was Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1:8), but he was succeeded at some point by Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1).

[For more on the 1,000-year rule of Christ on the earth generally known as the “Millennial Kingdom,” see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth”].

**“for behold, I will bring in my servant, the Branch.”** The phrase “my servant the Branch” refers to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Messiah was called both the “Servant” of Yahweh and also “the Branch.” The Messiah was called the “Servant” many years before Zechariah in what are now referred to as the four “Servant Songs” in Isaiah (Isa. 42:1-7 (esp. v. 1); 49:1-7 (esp. v. 5); 50:4-11 (esp. v. 10); and 52:13-53:12 (esp. 52:13); see commentary on Isa. 52:13), and here in Zechariah he is again called “my Servant,” i.e., the servant of Yahweh.

The Messiah is also called “the Branch” or “the Branch of Yahweh.” For example, speaking of the Day of the Lord, “In that day, the Branch of Yahweh will be beautiful and glorious” (Isa. 4:2). Jeremiah 23:5 says, “Behold, the days are coming, says Yahweh, that I will raise for David a righteous Branch, and he will reign as king and deal wisely.” Isaiah 11:1 also mentions the “Branch,” and that it will come from the stump and roots of Jesse, the father of King David (cf. Isa. 11:1-5).

The Messiah, the “Servant” of Yahweh and the “Branch” would do what the next verses in Zechariah say he will do, which is that he “will remove the iniquity of this land [Israel] in one day” (Zech. 3:9) and would set up a glorious kingdom on earth such that every person would “to sit under his vine and under his fig tree” (Zech. 3:10).

Zec 3:9

**“on one stone are seven eyes.”** Earlier prophets had identified the stone as being Jesus Christ. Hundreds of years before Zechariah wrote, the Psalmist wrote that the “stone” that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (Ps. 118:22), and that particular statement in the psalm was so notable that it is quoted or referred to six times in the New Testament (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:10-11; 1 Pet. 2:4 and 2:7). The prophet Isaiah, about 200 years before Zechariah, had written about the Messiah being the stone. He wrote: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone of a sure foundation” (Isa. 28:16). The stone, the Messiah, was set before Joshua, the representative of the priesthood of Israel, because he is the key to their deliverance and salvation.

The exact meaning of the seven eyes has been debated, but one of two meanings—or perhaps even both—is certainly correct. The Hebrew text can be interpreted to mean either that there are seven eyes “on” the stone, that is, looking at the stone, or that the stone itself has seven eyes. It has been pointed out that Zechariah says that Yahweh has seven eyes, which are apparently angels that keep watch for Him (Zech. 4:10), and it would be logical that the seven eyes of Yahweh watching out for the Messiah represent God’s watchful care over the lineage of the Messiah and then certainly over the Messiah himself. Also, however, the Messiah himself is said to have “seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent out to all the earth” (Rev. 5:6).

Indeed, it could well be that before the Messiah was given all authority by the Father, that the “seven eyes” of Yahweh, the angels that watched over the earth for Him and are mentioned in Zechariah 4, were then assigned to Jesus Christ to assist him in his rule over God’s creation, because Revelation 5:6 identifies them as “the seven spirits of God” even though they are now the “seven eyes” of the lamb.

Readers of the New Testament have even more evidence that Jesus Christ is the “stone” or “rock” in Scripture. For example, when Moses struck the rock in the wilderness and water came out, that was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and the living water that he would provide for believers (cf. 1 Cor. 10:4).

**“I will engrave an engraving on it.”** The meaning of this is not explained, and there are various interpretations, but the most logical and applicable seems to be the nail prints in Jesus’ hands and feet. The sentence is, “Behold, I will engrave an engraving on it, says Yahweh of Armies, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day.” So it seems that the engraving is closely tied to the removal of sin, which happened when Jesus died on the cross for our sin. The nail prints are visible in Jesus even after he was raised from the dead and in his glorified body. They are the evidence of God’s gift of His Son, the Son’s love and obedience, and the fact that Jesus died for our sins. They are engraved in his flesh even in his new body.

That God would give a veiled prophecy about the way Jesus would die here in Zechariah is perfectly logical. Hundreds of years earlier he did the same thing in David’s Psalm 22:16. It would have been verses such as Psalm 22:16, Isaiah 53:5, and Zechariah 3:9 and 12:10, that revealed to Jesus that he would die by crucifixion (John 12:32-33).

**“I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day.”** Many commentators have correctly noted that the “one day” in history that allowed the iniquity of Israel to be removed was the day Jesus Christ died on the cross. C. F. Keil plainly writes, “This one day is the day of Golgotha.”[[4]](#footnote-23196) That Jesus was the perfect offering that cleanses from sin is clearly stated in Scripture: “For by one offering he [Jesus] has perfected for all time those who are being made holy” (Heb. 10:14; cf. Heb. 10:11-14). This statement about the iniquity of the land being removed in one day further confirms that the “Servant” and “Branch” is the Lord Jesus Christ, because only his atoning death had the power to cleanse Israel (and all believers!) that way. Also, that Zechariah 3:9 would speak of removing the sin of the “land” in one day by this “stone” that is “set before Joshua” is more evidence that in this context “Joshua” is a sign and representative of all Israel, and by extension all people, for truly the sacrifice of Christ was for every person.

Zec 3:10

**“In that day.”** Here in Zechariah 3:10, the phrase “in that day” can be confusing because it is in such close proximity to the “one day” in Zechariah 3:9, but the two words “day” refer to totally different things. The “one day” in Zechariah 3:9 refers to the day Jesus died, while the “In that day” of Zechariah 3:10 is formulaic and refers to the Day of Yahweh, which has many different phases, from the agony that precedes Armageddon, to the Battle of Armageddon and its aftermath, to the Millennial Kingdom of Christ (e.g., Isa. 2:11, 17, 20; 4:2; 11:10, 11; 17:7; 19:19, 23, Ezek. 39:11; Hos. 2:18; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:11). In this context in Zechariah 3:10, the part of the Day of Yahweh that is being referred to is the later part when Christ rules the earth.

**“sit under his vine and under his fig tree.”** Zechariah 3:10 is about Christ’s kingdom on earth. Saying that people will invite their neighbors to come and sit down under their vine and fig tree, was an idiomatic way of saying that people would invite others to their house for a time of relaxation, conversation, and eating together (see commentary on Mic. 4:4).

**Zechariah Chapter 4**

Zec 4:1

**“The angel who talked with me came again.”** Here the Bible again confirms that the one who had been speaking to Zechariah was an angel. This would not even need to be said except for the fact that many Trinitarians believe it was Jesus Christ before he was born of Mary.

**“and roused me, as a man who is awakened out of his sleep.”** It is unlikely that Zechariah was actually asleep, and the text does not say he was asleep, but rather was roused “like” someone who is awakened from sleep. Zechariah had just had three very powerful visions, and it is likely that he was submerged in thought about what he had seen and what the visions meant, but now the angel returns and he is given a fourth vision, the vision of the gold menorah.

Zec 4:2

**“a solid gold menorah.”** There is almost no symbol that represents Israel as clearly as the menorah. No other nation or religion has a menorah like the Jewish menorah—a lamp holder with seven oil lamps on top of the branches. This explains why even when Zechariah said he did not know what the vision meant (Zech. 4:5), the angel did not explain it but rather gave the meaning of the vision. The vision itself is plain enough to figure out.

The menorah goes back to Moses’ Tabernacle, almost 1,000 years before Zechariah lived, and Solomon’s Temple had ten of them (1 Kings 7:49; 2 Chron. 4:7). The Hebrew word “menorah” means “lampstand,” and the menorahs in the Tabernacle and Temple were lampstands with seven upward pointing “branches” with an oil lamp on top of each branch (Exod. 25:31-36; 37:17-24). It was the duty of the priests to take care of the menorahs (Num. 3:31; 8:2-3; 2 Chron. 13:11). They kept the oil lamps filled with oil and trimmed and lit the lamps every night and snuffed them out every morning (thus the need for the “snuffers,” which are often mentioned in connection with the lamps—a “snuffer” is a little cap that is put over the wick to snuff out the flame of the oil lamp).

But the menorah in Zechariah’s vision was different from the menorahs in the Temple. It had a bowl with it that contained olive oil, and there were little “channels” that ran from the bowl to each lamp so that the lamps did not need to be filled by priests but were continually filled. Also, there were flourishing olive trees on each side of the menorah so that the menorah and its bowl would never run out of oil. The symbolism is clear: God Himself would sustain Israel and keep its light burning.

God placed Israel where He did, in the midst of many nations so they could be a light, but instead, they rebelled against Him (Ezek. 5:5-6). But a time was coming in the future when Israel would indeed be the light for the nations of the earth. Although that new light from Jerusalem could start during Zechariah’s time, sadly, as before, human weakness prevailed and by the time of Jesus evil people again managed the Temple and ruled Israel. However, there would come a time (it is still future) when Jesus himself will reign from Jerusalem and prophecies like those of Isaiah 60:1-3 and 62:1-2 will be fulfilled and light from Jerusalem will shine out to the whole earth.

[For more on Christ’s future Millennial Kingdom on earth, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 4:6

**“Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, “This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel, saying, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says Yahweh of Armies.”** Here the angel tells Zechariah what the message from Yahweh for Zerubbabel, the governor of Judea, is. Zerubbabel is building the Temple of God, but it will not be done by human effort, but by God’s power. This turned out to be very true, because the Temple then being built by Zerubbabel was completely remodeled by Herod the Great just before the birth of Christ (in fact, the work was still going on during Christ’s lifetime) and then destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, but a new one will be built by Christ during the Millennial Kingdom (cf. Ezek. 40-48), and unlike the Old Testament Temple that was for Jews only, it will be “a house of prayer for all nations” (Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

Sheshbazzar had been the first governor of Judah after the return from the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra 1:8). He was succeeded at some point by Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1).

The word “might” is also used of an “army,” and may refer to the might of many, while the word “power” likely refers to the power or ability of an individual. Thus, what God seems to be saying is that what will be accomplished will not be by the power of many or few, but by Him.

[For more on Christ’s Millennial Kingdom on earth, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 4:7

**“Who are you.”** The Hebrew text reads “Who.” Although there are occasions when the pronoun “who” can mean “what,” (and some English versions read “What”), there does not seem to be a compelling reason to change “who” to “what” here. There were plenty of influential people who did not want Judah to prosper and have a Temple, including some Jews, the Samaritans, and some people back in Persia. There were circumstances as well, such as the enormity of the task, but if all the people were like-minded about it, much like what happened in the days of Solomon, the circumstances would have been easily overcome.

**“O great mountain.”** In this context, the “great mountain” is not specific, but referred to any worldly or human obstacle that stood in the way of what Zerubbabel was doing in building the Temple of Yahweh. It has been suggested by some commentators that the great mountain is the mountain of rubble in Jerusalem from Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the city, but that does not seem likely in this context. The Judean workers were prepared to remove the physical rubble by their human strength. Also, the fact that the text reads, “Who are you, O great mountain” points to demonic and human opposition as the “who” causing the problems, and the biblical text supports that conclusion. Although some modern versions of Zechariah read “What are you” (cf. CSB, NASB, NIV), the Hebrew reads “who.” Although there are times when the Hebrew pronoun “who” is used generically and can be a “what,” there does not seem to be any reason for that here. There were plenty of people who stood in the way of building the Temple, thus the “mountain” in Zerubbabel’s way was mainly the people and worldly powers who tried to impede or stop the work (cf. Ezra 4:5).

When we read Zechariah 4:6-7 as a unit, we see that it is by the spirit of Yahweh that the building of the Temple will be accomplished, and “not by [human] might, nor by [human] power.” Removing the physical rubble could be done with human power, but removing the human and demonic obstacles had to be done by God. In this case, the building of the Temple was not going to occur because the Judeans were such powerful people that they could force their will on their Persian overlords. The building of the Temple occurred because God was working behind the scenes to accomplish His purposes. God foretold that Zerubbabel would finish the Temple (Zech. 4:7), and he did (Ezra 6:15).

There is much that we cannot accomplish by our human power that can only be accomplished by God working with us and for us. In this case, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed because of human disobedience, but they could only be rebuilt by God’s power. We are wise in our endeavors if we are humble and obedient to God and always pray for His help.

**“the capstone.”** In this context, this “stone” is the capstone, not the foundation stone (the “cornerstone”) although there could be a hint of a double meaning, and that in full application the “stone,” the Messiah, is both the capstone and the foundation stone (see commentary on Matt. 21:42). C. F. Keil writes that the Hebrew text “does not mean the foundation-stone… But the stone of the top, i.e., the finishing or gable stone. …That these words refer to the finishing of the building of the Temple which Zerubbabel had begun, is placed beyond all doubt in v. 9.”[[5]](#footnote-28434)

That Jesus Christ is the capstone (or “cornerstone”) is a very important concept. The concept is first mentioned in Psalm 118:22, and it is very important in identifying the great importance of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and so Psalm 118:22 is quoted or referred to six times in the New Testament (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4 and 2:7).

Zec 4:9

**“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house.** Zerubabbel was a governor of Judea and was a prime mover in the start of the building of the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 3:8-10), so the statement that Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the Temple is history; it had already happened. When the foundation of the Temple was laid there was great joy and shouting. But the old men who had seen Solomon’s Temple when they were very young boys wept when they saw this modest new Temple, and the rejoicing and weeping were so loud and so mixed that the noise of the shouting could not be discerned from the noise of the weeping (Ezra 3:10-13). This new Temple was “nothing” in the eyes of the people (Hag. 2:3), but prophets had foretold a new Temple coming in the future (cf. Ezek. 40-44; Isa. 56:5, 7; 60:7, 13; Joel 3:18; Mic. 4:2; Hag. 2:6-9; Zech. 6:12-15), and this Temple of Zerubabbel was a start and was important to God (Hag. 2:1-7).

**“His hands will also finish it.”** When this prophecy was spoken by the angel, the Temple was still being built. But the prophecy of the angel came to pass (Ezra 5:2; 6:14-15).

**“and you will know that Yahweh of Armies has sent me.”** God keeps his promises, and one of the ways we know that is by His predictions of the future that come true. That was in contrast with the prophecies of the false prophets who served the pagan gods—and there were a lot of them—whose words often did not come true.

Zec 4:10

**“these seven.”** The seven oil lamps that gave light to the things of Yahweh (Zech. 4:2) are the “seven” here in Zechariah 4:10, and correspond to the seven spirits in Revelation 3:1 and 4:5, which are under the headship of Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:6). Very little is known about them. Trinitarian commentators say that these “seven spirits” are “the Holy Spirit,” the “sevenfold Spirit of God” and third member of the Trinity, but there is absolutely no justification for doing that. In fact, that the seven lamps in the menorah represent these seven spirits argues strongly against it.

[For more on the identity of the Holy Spirit, see Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?”]

**“the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.”** The Hebrew translated “plumb line” is uncertain but likely, and if it refers to a plumb line this vision would be a blessing because Zechariah had just been told that Zerubbabel, the governor of Judea, would oversee the finishing of the Temple (Zech. 4:9), and the vision of the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel indicated that he would oversee the work.

Zec 4:14

**“These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”** In the context of the visions Zechariah was having, and also the historical context of what was happening in Judah at the time (cf. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai), the two “anointed ones” (literally, the two “sons of oil”) were Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the High Priest. These two men were standing as representatives of their offices: king and priest. As Zechariah 3:8 says, these two men are signs, and they represent their offices. The offices of king and High Priest will continue in Israel, and would one day be filled by the man who is both king and High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, but at that specific time, Zerubbabel and Joshua were two “sons of oil” who kept the light of God burning in Jerusalem and Judah.

It is quite clear that the two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, have to be signs and representatives of the offices of king and High Priest for the simple reason that the Temple will continue but they will not. They are mortal and will die, but their offices will continue forever and will eventually be filled by Jesus Christ.

**Zechariah Chapter 5**

Zec 5:2

**“a flying scroll.”** The scroll was “flying,” going quickly across the whole land, which would include Israel but also the rest of the world. The scroll flew so that it could represent God’s judgment coving the whole earth, because in God’s future judgment of people, everyone will be judged; no one will escape. Although there are times when wicked people are judged on earth, the size, scope, and context of this judgment show that it refers to God’s final judgment of the wicked, much of which will happen when Jesus comes and conquers the earth. No one will be able to hide and escape from being judged. God will send His angels and gather people (Matt. 25:31-32), and He will search cities with lamps to find any people trying to hide (Zeph. 1:12). There will be “no place” for people to go and escape God’s judgment (Rev. 20:11).

**“its length is 20 cubits and its width is ten cubits.”** The length and width of the curse scroll are important; the scroll is the size of the vestibule of Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 6:3) and most likely the size of the Holy Place in the Tabernacle of Moses (depending on the size of the cubit). Also, it is the size of the cherubim in Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 6:23-26). The curse is a spiritual reality, and it will have a devastating effect on those who disobey God. That the size that is specifically mentioned is related to things in the Tabernacle and Temple may be due to the fact that, although the curse is upon every sinner, it is also upon “God’s people,” the Jews who broke the covenant. Being a Jew did not mean that somehow a person was protected from God’s judgment, although many religious leaders at the time of Christ felt that way (Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8). The size of the scroll may also indicate that there is so much sin among the people that it takes a huge scroll to write down all the names of the sinners.

This scroll would be similar in many ways to the scroll that God showed Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9-10). However, the scroll God showed Ezekiel years earlier almost certainly contained things that applied to the people that Ezekiel was speaking to that did not apply in Zechariah’s time, but both scrolls would have contained material about the future judgment of sinners.

Zec 5:3

**“This is the curse that goes out over...the whole land.”** Zechariah had just been given visions of blessings (Zech. 1-4). For example, the Messiah would come, Judah would be restored, the Temple would be rebuilt, and Israel would be a light (a menorah) shining out to the whole earth. But before that glorious time can happen and the Messiah rule the earth, there must be a cleansing of the evil on earth, and that is what this sixth vision is about.

“The God of Israel has two methods in dealing with sin and removing iniquity, both of which are in perfect accord with the absolute holiness of His character.”[[6]](#footnote-18462) The two ways are “grace” and “judgment.” For those people who have a humble heart and ask for God’s forgiveness, God gives grace. For those people who defy God and continue in sin and selfishness, God gives judgment, and that is what we see here in Zechariah 5:3. People such as thieves and liars will be purged from Israel when Christ sets up his kingdom on earth. When Christ comes to rule the earth he will kill the wicked (Isa. 11:4; cf. Matt. 25:31-46).

Killing the wicked is an unpleasant but necessary task if Christ’s kingdom on earth is going to be a wonderful place. Even this earth right now would be a nice place to live if there were no evil people, and the future Kingdom of Christ on earth will be a wonderful place to live in large part because there will not be evil people. But God cannot remove people’s free will and force them to be godly and love and obey Him. To be a righteous God, He must allow people to choose whether or not they want to obey Him, and those people who persist in evil—which always hurts others—must be removed from the earth. Eventually, sin and godless sinners will be removed from the earth, so people have a choice: they can repent and be cleansed from their sin, or they can defy God and be cleansed from the earth along with their sin.

It is sometimes said that God cannot be love and also kill people, even wicked people, but that misunderstands what love really is. Love gives people choice and freedom, and expects people to understand the consequences of their choice. It is not loving to put up with evil people and all the harm and hurt that they do, but neither is it loving to force a person to worship God against their free will choice. It is because God is love that He lovingly gives people a choice about whether to obey Him or defy Him, and the consequence for obeying God is life, and the consequence for disobeying is death (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23). So here in Zechariah 5:3, we see one of the places in the Bible that speaks of God removing evil from the earth before Christ sets up his kingdom on it. Thieves and liars, two kinds of evil people representing all evil people, will be purged off of the earth. In contrast to people who say that God cannot be love and also kill wicked people, the truth is that love must recognize the free will choice of evil people and kill them so they stop being hurtful to others (see commentary on Exod. 21:12).

Those people who choose to humble themselves and obey God and ask for His mercy and forgiveness are forgiven because God is a merciful and loving God. However, it is important to know that God is not a dispenser of “cheap grace,” that just lets a sinner off the hook for their sin. A person’s repentance must be genuine, and in that light, it is important to recognize that God’s forgiveness, when genuinely asked for and received, leads to the sinner having increased love and reverence for God (Ps. 130:4). After all, it is not as if the sinner deserves to be forgiven, the sinner deserves to be punished. It is only because God is a loving and merciful God that forgiveness is granted to those people who ask for it from a humble and honest heart.

**“everyone who steals...everyone who swears falsely.”** Only two categories of sinners are listed here in Zechariah, but they represent in a kind of synecdoche all the different sinners on earth. Everyone will be judged; no one is exempt from their day of judgment. Nevertheless, we should ask why these two types of sin, lying and stealing, should be singled out to represent all sin. It has likely been correctly stated that these two sins were heinous and ongoing around the time that Zechariah wrote.[[7]](#footnote-28208) For example, the tithes due to the Levites were not being given to them (Neh. 13:10), the wealthy were stealing from their laborers (Mal. 3:5), and people were lying about and stealing their tithes and offerings from God (Mal. 3:8-10). Also, the priests were lying to God about their sacrifices (Mal. 1:14). Thus, Zechariah’s writing about these sins was an attempt to prick the heart of those involved so that they would stop their sinful behavior and live godly lives.

Zec 5:4

**“and it will enter into the house of the thief.”** This statement is metaphorical and very powerful. A person’s “house” was where they felt most safe, secure, and unreachable. Also, in the biblical world, a person’s house was often very close by the houses of family and friends who could give help or support in times of danger or need. But there is no hiding from God’s judgment. The sinner will die in their sin; the curse will enter the very house of the sinner if need be and find them.

**“and it will remain.”** God’s judgment upon a person will remain until it has accomplished its work. In this case, God’s judgment upon the sinner will remain until that sinner is destroyed. In the case of the unsaved, that means until they are totally consumed and annihilated in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

**“along with its timber and its stones.”** This statement continues the metaphor of the sinner and his house, and figuratively represents the fact that after the sinner’s final judgment is complete there will be nothing left of them. Their house will be completely consumed. Beyond that, however, Zechariah 5:4 likely contains a very purposeful comparison between the sinner’s house and the house in Leviticus 14 that has a plague of spreading mildew or mold (Lev. 14:33-45). Leviticus 14 is about leprosy on people and about plague on objects such as a house. It is well-known by scholars that the leprosy (or skin disease) in Leviticus 14 is used as a type for sin, which is why some of the consequences of having skin disease are so severe in the Mosaic Law, and the same is true with a spreading mildew on an object such as a house. According to Leviticus, if a house had a plague, its “stones” and “timbers” were to be carried away (Lev. 14:45), which meant that there would soon be no trace that the house had ever existed. Similarly, the unsaved sinner will be so totally destroyed that there will be no evidence that they ever existed.

[For more information on the death of sinners and their annihilation in the Lake of Fire, see Appendix 4: “Annihilation in the Lake of Fire.”]

Zec 5:5

**“that is going out.”** As we see as this vision develops, the evil in the basket is “going out” to the world (cf. ASV, ESV, DBY, JPS, KJV). The word is the same as in Zechariah 5:3 when the curse scroll goes out over the earth. This basket contains more evil that will go out over the earth. The two visions, the curse scroll (Zech. 5:2-4) and the wickedness in the basket (Zech. 5:5-11), are both about evil and destruction that is going to come on the earth. Like the 2 visions that Pharaoh had, the withered grain and the emaciated cattle, and they both pointed to the same disaster (Gen. 40:1-7, 17-25), so here in Zechariah 5 there are two visions but they both are about evil and destruction that will come on the earth.

Some Church Fathers and commentators assert this vision of the basket is about people’s sins being filled up, due to the large size of the basket, but the context and scope of Scripture militate against that. The wickedness, like the curse scroll, is “going out” to the earth.

Zec 5:6

**“this is the ephah basket that is going out.”** Various suggestions have been made about this ephah basket and its meaning. Mark Boda gives a number of good reasons why this is in a cultic context and associated with a temple. For example, the ephah basket would not be something that would have been found in a standard home. Boda points out that the two primary contexts in which an ephah basket would have been found were places where grain was grown, ground, or sold, and at sanctuary sites where grain was needed for all the offerings that required grain.[[8]](#footnote-27436) Furthermore, the lead talent-weight (a 66-pound weight) that was used as a lid for the ephah basket to keep the woman Wickedness from escaping out of the basket would have been found in a temple but not in a standard home (Zech. 5:7). Also, it seems clear that the “woman” in the basket was not just some regular woman but was almost certainly a goddess. She represented wickedness, just like “Babylon the Great” (Rev. 17:5) is represented as a woman—the “great prostitute”—in Revelation 17:1 and 19:2. Furthermore, the woman Wickedness and the basket she was in was taken by the two female spirits to “Shinar,” which was part of the ancient homeland of the Babylonian Empire and the place where the Tower of Babel was built (Gen. 11:2-5), and in time she will be placed in a temple there (Zech. 5:11).

**“This is their iniquity in all the land.”** Both the translation and meaning of this sentence are uncertain: there are many different translations of this sentence and many different explanations of what it could mean. The uncertainty is such that there is little profit in going over all the problems and potential meanings here; they can be found in good commentaries on Zechariah, but without any agreed-upon resolution. The fact that Zechariah has many symbols does not help the situation.

Zec 5:7

**“a round talent-weight lead *cover*.”** In the Babylonian/Persian period a “talent” was roughly 66 pounds (using the American 16-ounce pound). A round, flat weight of that amount would not have been found in the standard house, but would have been found and regularly used in a temple to weigh the offerings that were brought and consumed in the temple (see commentary on Zech. 5:6).

**“one woman.”** The Hebrew text is literally “one woman,” so the number “one” seems important although the text does not say why the number one is important. It would be easy for the text to say “a woman,” but it does not (for more on the woman, see commentary on Zech. 5:6).

Zec 5:8

**“This is Wickedness.”** Here, “Wickedness” is stated as if it were the name of the woman, who was given the symbolic name because of the wickedness she represented. Although our modern sensibilities may be offended by wickedness being represented by a woman, this was quite in keeping with the culture of the time, which often viewed women as being temptresses who lured men into evil (cf. the women in Proverbs who lure men to their death, Prov. 5:3-8; 7:4-27; 9:13-18).

**“and he threw her down into the middle of the ephah basket and thrust the weight of lead on its mouth.”** When the lead cover on the basket was lifted up, the woman was sitting in it (Zech. 5:7). But now it is apparent that she tried to escape because the angel threw her down into the basket and quickly put the lead cover back on top of it. The “mouth” of the basket is its opening at the top. Wickedness is always trying to break out into the world because the Devil and his demons are always active and always trying to cause hardship and devastation. God’s forces keep wickedness in check, but—as we see from many Scriptures—their ability to do that is directly related to the godliness and prayers of the people. The Bible commands over and over that people must obey God, and also commands over and over that people pray for God’s help, and that obedience and prayer are vital to keeping evil in check on earth.

It seems clear according to Zechariah 5:11 that there will be a time when evil is released, and that agrees with the prophecies that a time of great evil will come upon the earth. The Old Testament, Jesus Christ, and the book of Revelation all speak of this time of terrible evil, which is called the “Tribulation.”

[For more information on the horrible time of the Tribulation, see Matt. 24:3-22; the book of Revelation, and commentary on Dan. 12:1.]

Zec 5:9

**“two women.”** These “women” are spirit beings. God created both male and female spirit beings just as He created male and female humans, but of course, the spirit beings have different purposes than human beings do. Whereas humans marry and have children, angels do not. For example, Jesus said angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25), which points to angels having different sexes; in fact, Jesus’ statement about angels not marrying would not have made any sense if there were not different sexes among the angels. Both the Bible and ancient folklore have both male and female spirit beings. We see females here in Zechariah, and Isaiah 34:14 mentions the female demon “Lilith” (see commentary on Isa. 34:14).

We do not know if these spirits are good spirits or evil spirits, and the Bible may not have told us because it is not relevant here. Some scholars assert they are evil spirits because they have wings like those of a stork, and a stork is an unclean bird (Lev. 11:13-19; Deut. 14:11-18). But it is possible that they are good spirits and have the wings of a stork because storks are very powerful birds and would be a good choice of bird to carry a load (historically, for example, they have been said to carry babies to new parents, and that folklore likely goes back at least as far as Ancient Greece and appears in the folklore in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East).

Another indication they may be good spirits is that they suppress evil until the time is right—they pushed Wickedness back into her basket and put the lid on it until the time for her to be loosed, and that is in keeping with evil being held back now but loosed on the world in the Tribulation that will come in the future before Christ comes and fights the Battle of Armageddon and conquers the earth. Still another indication these spirits are good spirits is that it is a godly principle that women deal with women and men deal with men. Although it might seem more natural for male spirits to carry this heavy load from where Zechariah was in Judea the hundreds of miles to Shinar (ancient and ancestral Babylonia), men have a history of being tempted and deceived by women, and so it is best and godly that this Wickedness woman be taken to her place by female spirits.

[For more on the terrible time during the Great Tribulation, see commentary on Isa. 13:9 and Dan. 12:1. For more on the Sheep and Goat Judgment and the chronology of the events in the End Times, see commentary on Matt. 25:32. For more on the godly kingdom that Christ will rule when he conquers the earth, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 5:11

**“To build her a temple.”** The Hebrew word translated as “temple” is literally “house.” Although the REV often leaves the word “house” in the text, in this context, what the text is saying becomes much clearer when the word “temple” is used, and a number of English versions use “temple” (e.g., AMP, CSB, CJB, NAB, NASB, NET, NLT). The connection of the “woman” to wickedness and worship is much clearer when we see that she is connected with a temple (see commentary on Zech. 5:6).

**“Shinar.”** Shinar was the ancient ancestral home—the ancient core area—of the country of Babylon. However, “Babylon” conquered the areas around it and grew well beyond its ancient boundaries to the end that “Shinar” and “Babylon” were not the same, although sometimes the words might be used synonymously, depending on the context. Shinar was the home of the world’s first evil human empire and the place of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:2). That nation was so evil that God scattered the languages to keep that evil from controlling the world. Similarly, in the future, God will bring to nothing the evil system of “Babylon the great,” which is called “The mother of the prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). Zechariah 5 is almost certainly prophetically connected to the wickedness in the Last Days.

It has also been postulated by scholars that “Shinar” is used here as a symbol of the one-world political and economic power that existed in the Babylon of Genesis 11:1-4, and that in the End Times, the world will return to being influenced by a one-world system.

**“When it is prepared.”** The tie-in between the vision of the flying scroll (Zech. 5:1-4) and this ephah basket with the woman/goddess Wickedness in it is that both “go out” to their place on the earth (Zech. 5:3, 6). The point is that both the scroll and wickedness go out to spread what they have to the earth. However, the vision of the woman in the basket is fulfilled in a future time, and so also the vision of the flying scroll is ultimately fulfilled in a future time.

**Zechariah Chapter 6**

Zec 6:1

**“Again I lifted up my eyes and looked.”** This is the eighth and last of Zechariah’s eight visions, and it entails God’s angel army chariots going out over the earth to conquer and thus to prepare the earth for the coming of the Messiah. This vision is followed by the symbolic crowning of Joshua the High Priest (Zech. 6:11), and the words, “This is what Yahweh of Armies says, ‘Look! The man whose name is the Branch. And he will branch up out of his place, and he will build the Temple of Yahweh’” (Zech. 6:12).

**“four chariots.”** It should not surprise us that God sends his angels out on chariots to do His work. The chariots represented strength, speed, and power, and those things are certainly inherent in God’s army (the horses are called “strong ones” in Zech. 6:7). Furthermore, Psalm 68:17 says, “The chariots of God are ten thousands.” Although the phrase “chariots of God” can also refer to earthly human chariots under the command of godly men, God had many chariots in his angel army (cf. 2 Kings 6:17). God has an army of mighty angels who do His work (cf. Ps. 103:19-22).

**“the two mountains.”**Given both the future context of the prophecy and the fact that Zechariah was in Jerusalem when he saw the vision, the two mountains are almost certainly Mount Zion where the Temple was, and the Mount of Olives. The Hebrew text calls them “the” two mountains, indicating that they were well-known mountains, and the two most prominent mountains around Jerusalem are Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives. Furthermore, the mountains were bronze. The bronze indicates strength, which is inherent in Christ’s future kingdom on earth. Also, however, bronze often represents judgment. In the Bible, bronze (miscalled “brass” in some English Bibles) was associated with judgment and justification, and that certainly seems to be the case here in Zechariah 6:1. When Christ is king over the earth, judgment and justice will go forth from Jerusalem, and there will be great peace and safety on earth because Jesus will rule with a “rod of iron” (KJV Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). In the Millennial Kingdom when Christ rules the earth, he will rule from Mount Zion (Ps. 2:6; 110:2; Ezek. 40-48).

More evidence the two mountains are Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives is that the angelic chariots go out to the north and to the south (Zech. 6:6). But “north” and “south” of where? Where are they starting from? The logical place would be Mount Zion and Jerusalem. That is where God’s “house,” the Temple, will be. and where the city of Jerusalem will be (Ezek. 40:2-5; 48:30-35). Also, Jerusalem was the place where Zechariah was when he saw the vision, and so north and south to him would be north and south from Jerusalem.

Zec 6:3

**“dappled horses.”** A dappled horse has spots. The King James Version can be confusing because it says, “grizzled and bay horses,” but there were not two kinds of horses with the fourth chariot; “grizzled and bay” is the way the KJV represents the color of the fourth set of horses.

Zec 6:5

**“the four spirits of heaven.”** These spirits are sent by God to do His work on earth. It is Bible verses such as we see here in Zechariah 6 that show us that much of what happens on earth is due to unseen spirits that are working behind the scenes. Both angels and demons work behind the scenes in unseen ways to influence and even control what happens on earth, and they are at war with each other.

Some English Bibles translate the Hebrew word *ruach* (#07307 רוּחַ), which can mean “spirit,” “wind,” and more, as “winds” here in Zechariah, but that is not correct in this context. God did not send out “winds” on chariots, he sent his angels out (although some scholars think that “winds” in this context is the right nuance because the angels were fast as the wind, but that is speculation and makes the English meaning unclear). Also, some versions have “of the heavens,” but we must understand that in Hebrew the word “heaven” is always a plural noun. There is no singular word “heaven” in Hebrew, it is always “heavens.” In this context, saying “spirits of the heavens” is unclear; what could that mean? The context makes the meaning of the verse clear: these are “spirits of heaven,” that is, angels of God, and they are going out to do His will.

**“after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.”** Angels on horseback had searched the earth and then reported back to God in Zechariah 1:8-11. Now it appears that God, having received the report, sends out angel chariots to make things happen on earth.

Zec 6:7

**“strong ones.”** This is a reference to the horses, which represented military might.

Zec 6:8

**“quieted my spirit.”** This is a use of “spirit” where it refers to attitude and emotion. Whatever the angel chariots did in the north country, it quieted God’s anger. The NASB catches the sense and reads, “See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north.”

Zec 6:9

**“The word of Yahweh came to me, saying.”** The eight visions of Zechariah are now over. There is a prophecy of the Messiah and the building of the Millennial Temple in Zechariah 6:10-15. The first verses, (Zech. 6:9-11) are symbolic, with Joshua the High Priest standing in the place of the Messiah (it helps us to see the symbolism if we remember that the Greek name “Jesus” is “Joshua” (“Yeshua”) in Hebrew). Then the next verses (Zech. 6:12-15) are a literal explanation of future events.

Zec 6:11

**“crowns.”** It is unclear and debated by scholars as to whether the plural “crowns” is a plural of majesty, or if Joshua was given more than one crown, or if there were also crowns for others, such as those mentioned in the context. A crown was a symbol of honor and authority.

Zec 6:12

**“the man whose name is the Branch.”** This refers to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as it does in other places (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).

Zec 6:13

**“Indeed, it is he who will build the Temple of Yahweh.”** There are a number of Temples to Yahweh in the Bible. The first was Solomon’s Temple, which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. The second was the small Temple that was built in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and that Temple was completely remodeled and enlarged by Herod the Great. It was the Temple that Jesus Christ taught in and it was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans. There has been no temple in Jerusalem since AD 70, but the Bible tells us that the Jews will build a third Temple which will be the one mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 11:1-2, and that temple will be destroyed in the Great Tribulation and Battle of Armageddon. Then Jesus will oversee the building of a fourth Temple which is described in Ezekiel 40-47, and that Temple will last 1,000 years and be destroyed in the great fire that melts the elements of the earth. Then, in the new heaven and earth, there will be no temple because God and the Lamb are the Temple in that everlasting city (Rev. 21:22).

**“and he will have the glory.”** The first time the Messiah came, there was “no beauty that we should be attracted to him” and he was “despised and rejected by people” (Isa. 53:2, 3). But when he is present the second time, conquering and ruling the earth, he will “have the glory,” and be “beautiful and glorious” (Isa. 4:2).

**“both offices.”** That is, the office of king and the office of High Priest. Jesus will be king, and he will be a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11, 17).

Zec 6:15

**“Those who are far off.”** This phrase is often used for non-Israelites and used in the New Testament that way too, and it likely is here also (cf. Isa. 49:12; Jer. 25:26; Joel 3:8; Eph. 2:13). However, it can be used for Israelites who are simply far away. So this verse may be a prophecy with a double fulfillment, with Israelites who are far away coming and helping build the Temple and in the Millennial Kingdom non-Israelites helping to build that temple as well.

**Zechariah Chapter 7**

Zec 7:7

**“the Shephelah.”** The Shephelah is the area of rolling hills east of Israel’s coastal plain and between the coastal plain and the hill country (see commentary on Josh. 9:1).

Zec 7:11

**“hear.”** In this instance, the word “hear” has the pregnant sense of not just hearing, but also paying attention to and obeying what God said. The people did not want to obey, they wanted to do what they were doing—sinning and defying God—so they did not “hear” Him.

Zec 7:13

**“I will not listen.”** God does not hear prayers simply because people pray. Everyone sins, but some people are prideful and unrepentant about their sin, and God will not listen to the prayers of wicked and unrepentant people; those prayers are an abomination to Him (Prov. 28:9). It is the prayer of a righteous person that accomplishes much (James 5:16). There are a number of verses that say God does not answer the prayers of the wicked (cf. Job 35:12-13; Prov. 15:29; Isa. 1:15; 59:1-2; Ezek. 8:17-18; Mic. 3:4; Zech. 7:12-13; and James 4:3).

[For more on God not hearing the prayers of the wicked or honoring their sacrifices, see commentary on Amos 5:22.]

**Zechariah Chapter 8**

Zec 8:2

**“I am jealous for her with great fury.”** The idea is that God is extremely jealous about Judah and has great fury or wrath against the nations because of her.

Zec 8:3

**“I will return.”** The Hebrew text uses the prophetic perfect idiom and uses the past tense, “I have returned.” While the idiom makes the promise sure by stating a future event as if it had already happened, it can be confusing to the English reader, and for that reason the REV has “will return” (cf. HCSB) rather than “have returned” (cf. ESV).

[For more on the prophetic perfect idiom, see commentary on Eph. 2:6.]

Zec 8:8

**“and I will bring them.”** When Christ conquers the earth and sets up his Millennial Kingdom, the scattered Israelites will all be gathered to the land of Israel again (see commentary on Jer. 32:37).

**“in righteousness.”** In this context, “righteousness” is doing what is right and just to other people and in the sight of God (see commentary on Matt. 5:6). It can be confusing to read that God will be Israel’s God “in faithfulness and in righteousness” because it seems that God has always been faithful and acted in righteousness to His people, and in fact He has. But in this fallen world in which the Devil is the god of the age (2 Cor. 4:4) and people have made many free will decisions that go against God and His justice, God has not been free to execute His righteous acts. That will not be the case in the future when the Devil and demons will not be present and Christ will rule with a rod of iron. That Jesus will conquer the earth and rule with a rod of iron is a well-established prophecy and occurs four times in Scripture (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

[For more detail on Jesus ruling with a rod of iron, see commentary on Rev. 2:27. For more on Jesus Christ’s kingdom on earth, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 8:16

**“in your gates.”** The elders and judges in a city usually sat in (or by) the gate of the city. So “render judgments of truth and peace in your gates” is an exhortation to the elders and judges of the cities to be rendering true and honest judgments.

[For more on the elders and judges at the gate, see commentary on Ruth 4:11.]

Zec 8:22

**“will come to seek Yahweh.”** The Old Testament foretold that the Messiah would be a blessing both to the Jews and to the Gentiles, the “nations.” The first prophecy of the Messiah is the one God made to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:15, and that was thousands of years before the Jews existed. About 2,000 years after that first prophecy of the Messiah, God promised Abraham that all the people of the earth, not just the Jews, would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3). Then God repeated that promise to Isaac (Gen. 26:4); and to Jacob (Gen. 28:14). Besides those promises, the Old Testament had a number of verses that spoke of Gentiles being included in the Messianic Kingdom, which meant they were granted everlasting life (Ps. 102:15; Isa. 2:2-4; 19:23-25; 42:6; 49:6; 51:4-5; 56:3-7; 60:3; 66:18-21; Ezek. 39:21, 27; Mic. 4:2; Hag. 2:7; Zech. 8:22).

**“entreat the favor of Yahweh.”** The Hebrew is an idiom: “to pacify the face of Yahweh,” from a verb which means to soften by caressing: thus, “to soften the face of Yahweh by caressing it; although no one would actually think that Yahweh would want His face caressed. The full impact of the idiom cannot be caught in one English phrase. It means to ask for the blessing and favor of Yahweh (cf. NLT), as well as to pacify or appease Yahweh (indicating that He may have been upset at one’s past actions, and needed to be pacified while seeking His favor).

Zec 8:23

**“Jew.”** The “man” (Hebrew is “a man, a Jew”) in Zech. 8:23 is a Jew, a Jewish man, not the Messiah. This is a picture of the wonderful time to come in the Millennial Kingdom. There will be many feasts and festivals, always a fun time for people (Zech. 8:19). These will be held in Jerusalem (Zech. 8:22) and many people will come (Zech. 8:20, 22), even going to other cities and encouraging people to come with them (Zech. 8:21). Whereas in OT times not even all the Jews came, or wanted to come to Jerusalem, that will not be the case in the Millennial Kingdom. People from the nations (Zech. 8:22-23) will come, which means they are Gentiles, not Jews. There will not be just a few, but so many Gentiles will want to participate that there will be at least 10 for every Jew (likely much more, “ten” being a round number in these instances). These Gentiles will go to the Jews and want to go with them to Jerusalem. In the MK the Temple will be a house of prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:7). The Jew in this verse is not Jesus because 1) he is already in Jerusalem reigning as the King, and 2) this is general. There is not just one Jew with 10 Gentiles, but there are lots of Gentiles and at least 10 of them will grab each Jew. Although there are some Gentiles who will be born during the Millennial Kingdom, most will be resurrected into it, which means most of them loved God enough in this life to be in the resurrection, so in the Millennial Kingdom their love and understanding of God will grow and flourish. This is proof of that—they would rather be with the saints at a festival in Jerusalem than stay home.

**Zechariah Chapter 9**

Zec 9:1

**“burden.”** The word of the Lord can be a burden to the prophet, and then, when it is spoken, can be a burden to the people. It might have been more clear in English to say “burdensome message” instead of “burden,” but the Hebrew word is “burden.”

[For more information on “burden,” see commentary on Mal. 1:1.]

Zec 9:5

**“Ashkelon.”** A chief Philistine city. The Philistine city of Gath is not mentioned (see commentary on Zeph. 2:4).

Zec 9:7

**“his.”** Referring to the Philistines as if they were one person.

**“blood out of his mouth.”** This is the blood (Hebrew is plural, “bloods,” meaning much blood) of the idolatrous sacrifices which were not kosher and had blood in the meat. We can see this from the next phrase, “and his abominations from between his teeth.”

Zec 9:9

**“Daughter Zion.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic for Zion itself, i.e., Jerusalem (see commentary on Isa. 1:8).

**“Daughter Jerusalem.”** The Hebrew is similar to that of Daughter Zion (see commentary on Isa. 1:8). In typical poetic fashion, Jerusalem is referred to twice in the verse by two different names, “Daughter Jerusalem” and “Daughter Zion.”

**“He is righteous, and having salvation.”** The word “salvation” throughout the Old Testament often refers to physical deliverance, and that is the way people of the Old Testament times would have understood it here, especially since Zechariah 9:10 speaks of destroying the weapons of war and establishing a peaceful reign on earth. The people were expecting the Messiah to deliver them from all their oppressors and also from the general evils of life. Zechariah 9:9-10 is one of the many places in the Old Testament that connect Jesus’ first coming, when he was crucified, and his second coming, when he will come as the conquering king, without any indication that Jesus would die, be raised, ascend to heaven, and then a period of time would elapse (now some 2,000 years) before he would come as the conquering king.

Actually, there are many Scriptures in the Old Testament that speak of the coming of Christ and God’s vengeance on the wicked as if they were going to happen at the same time (cf. Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9; 61:1-3; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 9:9-10; Mal. 3:1-3; 4:1-3). Those many Scriptures, along with the fact that there are no clear Scriptures that portray the two comings of Christ, are the reason that at the time of Christ people did not think that Christ would die (cf. Matt. 16:21-22; Luke 18:31-34; 24:19-21, 44-46; John 12:34; 20:9).

[For more on Scriptures that directly connect the coming of Christ with his conquering the earth, see commentary on Isa. 61:2.]

Zec 9:14

**“shofar.”** The ram’s horn trumpet, not the metal trumpet.

**Zechariah Chapter 10**

Zec 10:1

**“spring rain.”** The spring rain is also called the “latter rain.” This is the rain that falls at the end of the rainy season which brings the grain to maturity. Without it, the grain will not mature and there will be no harvest.

[For more information on the former and latter rain, see commentary on James 5:7.]

Zec 10:2

**“For the teraphim have spoken wickedness.”** The teraphim were household gods, and they were sometimes consulted by various means of divination as we see here in Zechariah 10:2, when the teraphim “speak” (see commentary on Gen. 31:19). The Hebrew word translated “wickedness” is *aven* (#0205 אָוֶן), the common meanings of *aven* include trouble, wickedness, and sorrow. The BDB[[9]](#footnote-12726) gives the meaning of “thoughts of trouble” and “wicked imaginations” for the definition of *aven* in Zechariah 10:2, which makes perfect sense. The teraphim were idol gods and were an abomination to God. When they were consulted it was not God who answered through them, but demons, and those demons gave wicked advice and led people away from God. Consulting idols is a lose-lose situation. If the demons think they can get away with giving evil and harmful advice they do, and cause trouble for those who ask for answers from them. On the other hand, if the demons give good advice then people trust them and are pulled deeper into idolatry and disobedience to God which always has bad consequences.

[For more on demonic practices that believers are not to be involved in, see Deut. 18:9-14.]

**“there is no shepherd.”** There were no godly leaders. Here, as in many other places, “shepherds” refers to the leaders (see commentary on Jer. 2:8).

Zec 10:3

**“male goats.”** The male goat (he-goat) or ram was used idiomatically by the figure of speech hypocatastasis for the powerful people or rulers, and it was especially true when used of ungodly leaders, as it is here and Isaiah 14:9. When one studies the use of “goats” in the Bible, and also studies their destructive behavior, it is easy to see why, in the Bible, the “goats,” were often put for the unbelievers or the unsaved (cf. Matt. 25:33).

[For more on goats in the Bible, see commentary on Isa. 14:9. For more on the figure of speech hypocatastasis, see commentary on Rev. 20:2.]

Zec 10:6

**“the house of Joseph.”** This refers to Israel, the ten tribes that were carried away from the land of Israel by the Assyrians (c. 722 BC) and have not yet returned to Israel.

**“and I will bring them back.”** Many prophecies foretell the restoration of the country of Israel in the land of Israel, the Promised Land, and Ezekiel 40-48 gives a lot of information about what that restoration of Israel will look like.

[For more information on Israel’s return to the Promised Land, see commentary on Jer. 32:37. For more on the coming Kingdom of Christ on earth, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

**Zechariah Chapter 11**

Zec 11:3

**“shepherds.”** Here, as in many other places, “shepherds” refers to the leaders.

Zec 11:4

**“the flock *doomed* to be slaughtered.”** The literal Hebrew is “the flock of slaughter.”

Zec 11:5

**“shepherds.”** Here, as in many other places, “shepherds” refers to the leaders. The leaders did not take care of the people but only had their own interests in mind.

Zec 11:8

**“three of the shepherds.”** The Hebrew text can be read as “three of the shepherds” or as “the three shepherds.” There have been centuries of debate as to how the sentence should be translated and what it refers to, and there has never been a totally satisfactory answer set forth. We only know that some shepherds were removed.

Zec 11:17

**“right eye.”** The right eye was invaluable to the warrior because in order for the body to be protected in war the shield had to be mostly in front of the warrior, covering the left eye. If the right eye was blind, the warrior had to move the shield so far to the left to see to fight that the shield became essentially useless (cf. 1 Sam. 11:2).

**Zechariah Chapter 12**

Zec 12:1

**“burden.”** The word of the Lord can be a burden to the prophet, and then, when it is spoken, can be a burden to the people. It might have been more clear in English to say “burdensome message” instead of “burden,” but the Hebrew word is “burden.”

[For more information on “burden,” see commentary on Mal. 1:1.]

Zec 12:4

**“open my eyes.”** An idiom meaning to keep a watchful eye on. Yahweh will fight against those who come against the house of Judah, but keep a watchful eye on Judah.

Zec 12:6

**“but Jerusalem will yet again dwell.”** This use of “Jerusalem” is the figure of speech metonymy, where “Jerusalem” is put by metonymy for the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the people who live there.

[See Word Study: “Metonymy.”]

Zec 12:10

**“they will look to me because *of him* whom they have pierced.”** Some English versions of Zechariah 12:10 read: “They will look on me, the one they have pierced…” (NIV). However, there are textual issues involved in the transmission of the Hebrew text that we must examine so that we have the right translation and meaning of the verse. Some translators supply a first-person pronoun (“me”) because they see this verse as referring back to God and hence they translate “they will look on me.” But other translators supply a third-person pronoun (“him,” or “the one”) because they see the phrase referring to someone other than God. Both the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New American Bible (NAB) translate the phrase as “so that when they look on him….”

Translators and commentators who believe that the word “pierced” should refer back to the pronoun “him” cite textual variants that more clearly read “him.” This agrees with the flow of the sentence that continues with the word “him” in the phrases “they shall mourn for *him*” and “grieve bitterly for *him.*” The Jewish understanding of this verse has always been that the one pierced was one in an intimate relationship with God, but there is no record of any early Jewish commentator understanding Zechariah 12:10 to be saying that somehow *Yahweh* Himself would come into the flesh and be “pierced.” Instead, this verse relates to the piercing of the promised Messiah, whom many in Jerusalem would mourn and weep for, and thus it is apparent that the RSV and NAB offer a better translation of the verse in order to convey this meaning.

Another important reason to believe that “him” is the correct reading of the original text of Zechariah 12:10 is the way it is quoted in John 19:37, after the Roman soldier thrust his spear into Christ’s side. The Greek text of John 19:37 reads: “and again, another scripture says, ‘They will look on the one they pierced.’” Different English versions may disagree on whether the Hebrew text of Zechariah 12:10 says “me” or “him,” but none of them disagree on the translation of the Greek text in the New Testament. None of the versions include a first-person pronoun (“me”), and most of them supply the word “him” as the KJV, NAB, and RSV do. If the original reading of Zechariah 12:10 read “me” instead of “him,” then “me” would almost certainly be the reading of John 19:37. On the other hand, the New Testament quotation in John 19:37 agrees with the reading of Zechariah 12:10 in the RSV and other versions. Therefore, we believe that the proper reading of Zechariah 12:10 is “him,” and that is reflected in John 19.

Not only is Zechariah 12:10 quoted in John, but also it is alluded to in Revelation. Revelation 1:7 says, “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.” Commentators freely admit that this verse alludes back to Zechariah, and it uses the pronoun “him” and not “me.” This is more evidence that the Hebrew text of Zechariah should read “him,” or “the one,” and thus we conclude that the internal evidence of Scripture suggests that the one who is pierced in Zechariah is not God Himself but one who is in an intimate relation with God, i.e., the Messiah.

Zec 12:11

**“Hadad-rimmon.”** This compound word is made from Hadad, a storm and rain god (most modern scholars think Hadad was the same god as the Canaanite god Baal), and Rimmon, a thunder god (2 Kings 5:18. Some scholars believe Rimmon was also identified with Baal).

The use of the word here in the genitive case, “the mourning of Hadad-rimmon,” is unclear. It could refer to “the mourning for Hadad-rimmon” (cf. ESV, NAB, NLT), that is, the mourning done by the pagans when their gods were destroyed by Yahweh.

Also, however, Hadad-rimmon could be a place name, in which case the phrase would mean “the mourning done at Hadad-rimmon.” Although there is no known mourning event at a place by that name, the fact that Zechariah 12:11 says, “Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo,” has led many to believe that it is likely that Judah mourned the death of the righteous king Josiah at that place in the valley of Megiddo after Josiah was mortally wounded by an arrow (2 Chron. 35:22-25). The fact that it is the families of the Judeans who are mourning and not the pagans (Zech. 12:12-14), tends to support this latter interpretation.

**Zechariah Chapter 13**

Zec 13:1

**“*to cleanse them* from sin and from uncleanness.”** The Hebrew is literally, “for sin and for uncleanness,” but that abrupt Hebrew is not clear to most readers, letting them know that the purpose of the spring is to provide living water that is cleansing.

Zec 13:6

**“wounds between your hands.”** It is unclear exactly what this refers to, so it has been interpreted different ways. For example, “on your chest” (HCSB); “on your back” (ESV); “on your body” (NIV). “Between your hands” would be naturally historical, because the testimony from ancient cultures was that the hands and arms were often slashed. The question would be an honest one in the context because the false prophets sometimes slashed themselves to try to make their prayers more powerful (cf. 1 Kings 18:28). It seems like the person is avoiding the true answer that he received the wounds as a part of pagan worship, and instead is perhaps saying that they were scars from childhood chastisement from parents or teachers, who in fact were often that severe with children, although it would not be tolerated today.

Zec 13:7

**“Awake, sword, against my shepherd.”** The prophecy in Zechariah takes a dramatic turn in Zechariah 13:7. In the earlier verses we have seen the sin of Israel and its leaders, and see that it must be cleansed. Now we see how: through the substitutionary death of God’s “shepherd,” the “man” who is close to him—the Messiah. Jesus understood this verse to apply to him, and knew both that he would be smitten and his flock would be scattered (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27). This verse is one of a number of verses in the Old Testament that show the Messiah would be a “man” close to God.

**“sword.”** Here the sword is personified as if it had a mind of its own.

[For more on the figure of speech personification, see commentary on Prov. 1:20.]

Zec 13:8

**“two-thirds.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “two parts,” but here it refers to two-thirds.

**“die.”** The Hebrew verb *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

**Zechariah Chapter 14**

Zec 14:2

**“For I.”** The prophecy switches to a first-person narrative. Zechariah 14:3 switches back to the prophet speaking.

**“I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle.”** This is also in Zechariah 12:1-3. Jesus knew this was coming and warned his disciples to flee if they ever saw armies coming to surround Jerusalem: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation has drawn near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of her must leave, and do not let those who are in the country enter her” (Luke 21:20-21; cf. Luke 19:41-44). This confederation of nations coming to fight against Jerusalem will occur during the terrible time of Tribulation foretold in the Old Testament and by Jesus (see commentary on Dan. 12:1).

[For more on the terrible death and destruction in the Great Tribulation and Armageddon, see commentary on Dan. 12:1. For more on the duration of the last half of the Tribulation, as well as the days of Judgment following Armageddon, see commentary on Dan. 12:11. For more on the basic chronology of the End Times, see commentary on Matt. 25:32. For more on the worldwide kingdom that Jesus Christ will set up on earth after he conquers it at the Battle of Armageddon referred to as the Millennial Kingdom, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.” For more on the first and second resurrection, see commentary on Acts 24:15.]

**“and the women raped.”** Warfare is usually very brutal, and women are usually brutalized in war. The women were raped when Babylon conquered Judah (Lam. 5:11), and Isaiah foretold the same thing would happen when the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon (Isa. 13:16). The same thing happens in modern warfare, although civilized nations supposedly have rules that make it a crime.

Zec 14:3

**“Yahweh will go out and fight against those nations​.”** Yahweh will fight through His agent, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, just as he heals through Jesus Christ (cf. Isa. 63:1-6). Yahweh’s battle will be the Battle of Armageddon, when the enemy nations will gather on earth to fight with the Lord Jesus and his armies as they come from heaven (Rev. 19:11-21).

Zechariah 14:3-4 speak of Yahweh fighting and his feet standing on the Mount of Olives, but this is an example of the Semitic custom of agency, where the principal (or “author”) sends an agent who represents him, and the agent so fully represents the principal that he can act on behalf of the principal and even take his name (cf. Matt. 8:5).

[For more on the Semitic custom of agency, see commentary on Matt. 8:5). For a basic chronology of the End Times, see commentary on Matt. 25:32. For more on the coming Kingdom of Christ on earth, the Millennial Kingdom, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.” For more on the duration of the last half of the Tribulation, as well as the days of Judgment following Armageddon, see commentary on Dan. 12:11. For more on the terrible death and destruction in the Great Tribulation and Armageddon, see commentary on Dan. 12:1. For more on the first and second resurrection, see commentary on Acts 24:15.]

Zec 14:4

**“His feet will stand that day on the Mount of Olives.”** Grammatically, “his feet” would refer to Yahweh (Zech. 14:3). Yahweh’s feet will stand on the Mount of Olives in the person of His agent, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Yahweh’s agents often represent Yahweh (see commentary on Matt. 8:5).

Zec 14:7

**“It will be a unique day that is known to Yahweh.”** The word “day” in this verse could refer to “time,” so from the text alone we do not know if this “day” will be a regular day of 24 hours, or if it will be a somewhat longer time.

Although the text says that this day is known only to Yahweh, and there are aspects of it that are indeed known only to Yahweh, there is still a lot that we can know about it. From the context of Zechariah, we know that it is associated with the end of this “present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) and the beginning of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom on earth. The “Day of Yahweh” that is coming (Zech. 14:1) is the time of the Great Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon, and during that time Jerusalem will be attacked by many nations. Also, the time when Yahweh will go out and fight the evil nations (Zech. 14:3) will be the Battle of Armageddon, when Jesus Christ, Yahweh’s representative, will fight and conquer the earth (Isa. 11:4; 63:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-21).

Furthermore, the Mount of Olives will split around this time (Zech. 14:4), and that split will allow the water from the Temple to flow to the Dead Sea (Ezek. 47:1-12; Zech. 14:8).

At some point during the latter part of the Battle of Armageddon, or in the immediate aftermath of it, God’s unique day will begin. Before that “unique day” the earth is in the “present evil age” that we all live in today, but after that day, the earth will be restored to a state very similar to the Garden of Eden (“Eden” in Hebrew is “Paradise” in the Septuagint, and the Bible says that when Christ reigns as king on earth the earth will be “Paradise” again. See commentary on Luke 23:43).

God needed the “unique day” because there is a huge amount of things to change in a very short period of time, and much of it is so complex that it would take volumes for God to explain it to us. For example, animal nature will have to change. In this present evil age, many animals are dangerous. But in the Millennial Kingdom, the animals will be harmless like they were in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1:30; Isa. 11:6-9). Today the soil, water, and air are so polluted or affected by sin that people are starving, or else eating food and drinking water that is often dangerous, but in the Millennial Kingdom the soil, water, earth, and air will be healed and the earth will produce abundant food (Isa. 25:6; 30:23-26; 32:15; 35:1-7; 41:18-20; 44:3; 51:3; Jer. 31:5,11-14; Ezek. 47:1-12; Hos. 2:21,22; Joel 2:18-26; Amos 9:13). Today sickness and disease can make life very difficult and dangerous, but in Christ’s Millennial Kingdom people will be healthy (Isa. 33:24). Today the world is full of dangerous people, but when Christ comes to earth he will kill the wicked (Isa. 11:4) and will rule over the earth such that there will be peace and safety for everyone, and no war (Isa. 2:4; 9:4-7; 60:18; Hos. 2:18; Mic. 4:3, 4; Zech. 9:9, 10).

Those are just some of the things that will change in that one “unique day,” and there are more. The Bible does not explain how all this will happen, which is why this unique day is known only to Yahweh. We don’t know how the animals will become harmless or how the earth, water, and air will become unpolluted and healthy, but the Scripture says it will happen. Living forever on a wonderful earth, in a wonderful healthy body, with wonderful people will make everlasting life a truly amazing and joyful experience. After all, who doesn’t like good food, good friends, and cute fuzzy animals? But that wonderful life is part of the great Hope that people who take Christ as Lord and get saved (Rom. 10:9) can look forward to.

[For more on the “Day of Yahweh,” see commentary on Dan. 12:1. For more on the wonderful Millennial Kingdom on earth, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.”]

Zec 14:8

**“half of it toward the eastern sea.”** The eastern sea is the Dead Sea, and this eastern flowing river is described in Ezekiel 47:1-9. This river is also mentioned in Joel 3:18. The Hebrew text reads “half of them” instead of “half of it” because in Hebrew the word “water” is always plural so the pronouns associated with it are plural, but in English, we would say “water” and “it,” not “waters” and “them.”

[For more on this river, see commentary on Ezek. 47:1.]

**“the western sea.”** The western sea is the Mediterranean Sea.

**“in summer and in winter.”** This statement was very comforting to the people in Israel in biblical times because most of the rivers (actually “streams”) in Israel were not perennial, but dried up in the summer months. The rain in Israel usually fell from late October until mid-to-late April, and then it was without rain from May until October, and most of the streams dried up in those six rainless months. Here in Zechariah God promised that the river from His Temple would flow both east and west all year long.

Zec 14:9

**“In that day Yahweh will be alone.”** Yahweh has always been the one and only true God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. However, that fact has been obscured by all kinds of false gods, and even by the Christian Trinity. But there is a day coming when God will rule the whole earth, and rule it through Jesus Christ His Son. In that day, all false gods and theologies will be gone. In that day, the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4, “Yahweh is our God; Yahweh alone,” will not just be the cry of Israel, but will be the cry of all the people on earth. The Bible has many verses that say there is only one God, “Yahweh,” and other verses show that one day there will be only one God worshiped on earth (e.g., Isa. 54:5; cp. Ps. 72:19).

[For more on Yahweh being the only God, see Appendix 6: “Jesus is the Son of God, Not God the Son,” point 11, and commentary on Deut. 6:4. It is also helpful to see Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?”]

Zec 14:16

**“worship.”** Or “bow down to.” The same Hebrew verb, *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is translated as both “bow down” and “worship;” traditionally “worship” if God is involved and “bow down” if people are involved, but the verb and action are the same, the act of bowing down is the worship. The common biblical way of bowing down before people or God was to fall to one’s knees and bow the upper body to the earth.

[For more on bowing down, see Word Study: “Worship.”]

Zec 14:17

**“worship.”** Or “bow down to.” The same Hebrew verb, *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is translated as both “bow down” and “worship;” traditionally “worship” if God is involved and “bow down” if people are involved, but the verb and action are the same, the act of bowing down is the worship. The common biblical way of bowing down before people or God was to fall to one’s knees and bow the upper body to the earth.

[For more on bowing down, see Word Study: “Worship.”]

1. Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 10:508. [↑](#footnote-ref-17942)
2. Mark J. Boda, The Book of Zechariah [NICOT], 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-31999)
3. David Baron, Zechariah: A Commentary on His Visions and Prophecies, 27, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-14322)
4. Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 10:531. [↑](#footnote-ref-23196)
5. Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament: The Minor Prophets, 10:537. [↑](#footnote-ref-28434)
6. David Baron, Zechariah: A Commentary on his Visions and Prophecies, 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-18462)
7. See David Baron, Zechariah, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-28208)
8. Mark Boda, The Book of Zechariah [NICOT], 343. [↑](#footnote-ref-27436)
9. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon. [↑](#footnote-ref-12726)