

The Christadelphian Expositor

THE EXPOSITION OF HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI

— Based on the notes of
Bro. H. P. Mansfield, and the
expositions of our pioneer
brethren.

INTRODUCTION: The drama
of the Truth under adversity.
How the work of restoration
was first commenced with
great enthusiasm, but
degenerated because of
opposition. The ecclesia is
exhorted to continue faithful
in affliction.

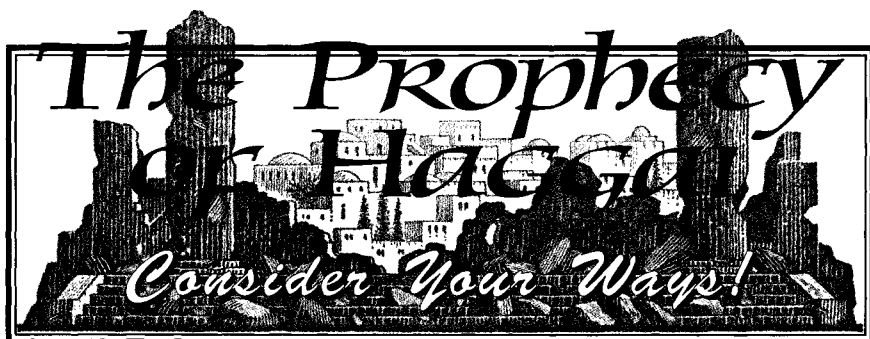


Haggai ch. 1:1 to 1:6

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A FIVE-FOLD MESSAGE OF GRACE, COMFORT AND HOPE!

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HAGGAI THE PROPHET

The Jews Return Under Zerubbabel

Haggai lived at a most significant epoch of Jewish history. The seventy years captivity in Babylon, predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2) had come to an end; Babylon had fallen before the Medo-Persian onslaught, and Cyrus had assumed sole authority over the empire.

The Persian monarch immediately instituted a policy of religious tolerance. One of his first acts was to issue a decree inviting the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, and rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2). This fulfilled the two hundred years' old prophecy of Isaiah who had actually named Cyrus as the one who would pave the way for the Jews to return (Isa. 44:28).

The greatest excitement was generated among spiritually-minded Jews in Babylon when the decree was made public (Psa. 126). Two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, commenced to organise the return. Zerubbabel (known also as Sheshbazzar — cp. Ezra 5:16 with Zech. 4:9) was a descendant of David (1Chr. 3:9-19), and became the acknowledged leader of the people, whilst Joshua was high priest. Together they combined the civil and religious offices.

Some 49,897 exiles (Ezra 2:64-65) of all the tribes of Israel and all classes of society responded to the call. Among them were the prophets Haggai and Zechariah through whom Yahweh subsequently revealed His purpose. This large company of people uprooted themselves from Babylon to commence the long and wearying trek back to the land of their forefathers. A difficult four months' journey lay before them (Ezra 7:9), but they commenced it full of enthusiasm, and undeterred by the difficulties facing them. They were stirred by religious zeal. They knew that Yahweh was with them, and they believed that they had sufficient faith to surmount any problem that might face them. Moreover, they had the full support of the powerful Persian Government. The decree of Cyrus had not only invited them to return, but actually granted them the vessels of the temple that Nebuchadnezzar had seized seventy years before (Ezra 1:7), as well as permitting them to raise a large sum of money to assist them in the work they had set themselves to do (v. 4).

For what more could they wish? With the backing of the most powerful monarch of the day, with sufficient wealth to accomplish their project, and with the assured blessing of Heaven above, they could not fail!

The only thing they lacked (but they did not then realise this) was sufficient faith to enable them to "remove mountains." They were to be faced with mountains of difficulties that would test them greatly, and find them wanting.

The Work is Commenced

On arrival in the Land, they saw the full extent of the work before them: cities

neglected, Jerusalem in ruins, the site of the temple a charred mass of burnt debris. It was a dismal sight, and one that might have caused them to abandon their project. But this destruction they had expected, and it did not deter them. Anxious to commence the work of reconstruction, they took up their abodes in various places, and awaited the seventh month when, appropriately, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles that commemorated their deliverance from Egypt through the divine blessing, and spoke of the restoration to the Land through the good Hand of Providence (Lev. 23:39-43). At this time, also, they set up the altar of sacrifice, arranged for regular services of worship, and made initial preparations for the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3).

But there were difficulties to be faced and antagonism to be met. The surrounding nations viewed the activity with hostility; and gradually the Jews became conscious of this growing hatred towards them. Though still full of enthusiasm for the work before them, it was now intermixed with a measure of fear, as they sensed the growing antagonism (Ezra 3:3). There were many enemies who did not want to see a powerful Judah arise again on their borders.

The work began in this uneasy atmosphere. The temple site was cleared of the rubble and rubbish of many years of desolation, and foundations were laid. At last some tangible results were to be seen for the labour expended, and the people celebrated with manifestations of the greatest joy, in a special service of thanksgiving.

But there were mixed feelings at that gathering. Some, who were old and had seen Solomon's Temple in its magnificence and glory, wept when they saw the reduced state of the ancient site, and compared the narrowness of the new foundations with the magnitude of seventy years before. They could not resist shedding tears of grief as they recalled the past glory of Israel. But their lamentations were drowned by the excited shouts of joy that arose from thousands of throats, as younger people saw the evidence of their accomplishment. Their cries of exultation triumphantly echoed among the hills and valleys of Jerusalem, until the whole city seemed wrapped in sounds of joy (Ezra 3:13).

The Work is Hindered

A shortlived joy it was! When the adversaries of the Jews, and particularly the Samaritans, heard that the children of the captivity were building the temple, they took counsel together and laid plans to defeat the project.

They first tried cunning; they offered to assist in the work, hoping to take the Jews off guard, and sabotage the work from within. But Zerubbabel was too astute to be deceived by such false offers of friendship. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God," was his response (Ezra 4:1-3). He recognised that the work of Truth ought not to be mingled with the spirit of the world about him; that those of a contrary heart had nothing in common with the people of God.

Nothing daunted by this opposition, the adversaries tried other means: "They

weakened the hands of the people, and troubled them in building” (v. 4). They corrupted the Persian officials with bribes, so that the promised help was delayed and tardy (Ezra 4:5, 7). They petitioned the court of Persia, making false accusations against the Jews, and calling upon the Government to stop the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

In the meantime Cyrus had died, and their requests were given sympathetic consideration by his successor.

It was a troublous time for the Persian administration. The death of Cyrus had been followed by the reign of his son, Cambyases, who continued for a little over seven years. On his death, the throne was seized by a usurper, known to history as Smerdis, but called by the title “Artaxerxes” in Ezra 4:7. His position as ruler was precarious, for he was opposed by many enemies. Desperately searching for allies, he was not prepared to support such an unpopular cause as that of the Jews. Pressed by the powerful adversaries of Zerubbabel, seeking to placate them and secure them as allies, he issued a decree that the building of the temple should cease forthwith (Ezra 4:21).

This seemed to toll the death-knell of all Jewish hopes. Triumphantly their enemies demanded that the work cease in compliance with the Persian decree. By “force and power” (Ezra 4:23) they saw that it was carried out.

The work stopped. No longer was the temple site a hive of activity. It became deserted; an empty shell. The people had turned to their own affairs, thoroughly discouraged by the course of event. The work of the Truth languished because the people became diverted through the pressure from those opposing them. It is a danger that has often been experienced by the remnant of the faithful in every age.

A state of depression settled over the nation. The enthusiasm of the people had evaporated. They turned from the work of God, and gave themselves to building their own material resources, spending lavishly on their homes whilst the real work of the Truth, the temple of divine worship, lay neglected (Hag. 1:4). They considered that the prophecies concerning the return were premature, that the “times and seasons” were confusing, and claimed that “the time had not come for Yahweh’s house to be built” (v. 2), thus using Scripture to justify their indolence in His work.

Why should this happen? Why did Yahweh permit the adversaries of Judah to triumph, and His work to languish, even if only temporarily?

Such questions are often asked as though the work of Yahweh should never suffer reverse, and as though the labour of the Truth should reveal a triumphant procession from one success to the next. And when temporary reversals are experienced (for absolute defeat is impossible in the work of God), it is sometimes interpreted as an indication that we should lay down our tools, declare that the “time is not ripe,” and turn to other things.

Thus the work of Yahweh is permitted to “lie waste” (Hag. 1:4).

These reversals are permitted because God desires to test His workmen. The

opposition that Judah received was the people's opportunity to demonstrate faith and courage. They should have considered it as a test on the part of Yahweh "to see what was in their hearts" (Deu. 8:2). Even though the time period decreed had not been fully met, there was no need to so completely turn from the work in hand. They should have heeded the example of David. He desired to build the temple; but when told that the time was not ripe, he did the next best thing, and made preparations for the building that Solomon later took in hand (1Chr. 29:2-5). The Jews could have done likewise in the days of Zerubbabel, patiently awaiting the time when God would remove the difficulties then facing them. Instead, they let their opportunity for a practical demonstration of faith pass by, and their enthusiasm withered because it rested in their own strength.

So the work ceased for a time.

The Prophets Revive the Work

It was at that time that the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, arose to revive the flagging enthusiasm of the people. The prophets would have understood that the seventy years "desolation" had concluded (cp. 2Chr. 36:21; Dan. 9:2, and see *Expositor: Daniel* pp. 216-217 for details of this period), and stirred up the people to respond. Ezra records: "Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them" (ch. 5:1).

These two faithful men co-operated together in a wonderful work, supplementing the labours of each other. Haggai was presumably the older of the two, for he wrote as though he had seen the first temple in its glory (Hag. 2:3). Zechariah was a younger man, for his grandfather had returned to the Land at the same time (Neh. 12:4). In these two men, experience and youth co-operated in a work that enthused the people to activity. How valuable are such labours; with faithful co-operation! How frequently the Word provides examples of age and youth uniting in the work of Yahweh. The experience of a Paul is greatly aided by the enthusiasm and virility of a Timothy, though naturally timorous, for the exuberance of youth is more profitably expended when guided by the experience of age. It is sad when this unity is disturbed by efforts to isolate groups within ecclesias; to elevate youth gatherings to the exclusion of those older, or to discourage the importance of the young in mature company. Far better for ecclesias to develop the true "family aspect," encouraging all ages to the singular wonderful purpose: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psa. 133:1), allowing "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). Thus the great work of the Truth in the rebuilding of the typical temple can be achieved when all are dedicated to strengthen and fortify one another.

Enthusiasm Replaces Apathy

The labours of the two prophets had the desired effect. They enthused the people to the work. Once again Zerubbabel and Joshua took the lead in reviving the labour of building the temple. The people became re-energised by a new-found zeal. The work of building was recommenced, and once again Jerusalem became the scene of enthusiastic labour.

But the adversaries of the Jews looked upon this activity with anger. They challenged the Jews as to their right to commence a work prohibited by the Persian authorities. They threatened to complain to the Government if it continued. But the people in Jerusalem were now determined to proceed come what may, and refused to capitulate to these threats. "The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease till the matter came to Darius" (Ezra 5:5).

The Work Completed

Darius Hystaspes now ruled in Persia, and a great change had been wrought in the Persian administration. It was certainly a blessing from the Hand of Providence. The adversaries of the Jews had sought the help of the usurper Smerdis to obtain a decree forcing the Jews to cease their labours, but he had been overthrown in favour of the legitimate ruler. Whilst the Jews had been opposed by Smerdis, they were now supported by Darius. He refused to take the complaint of the Samaritans on its face value, and made proper investigation into the matter. The archives of Persia were searched, and a copy of the decree of the former emperor Cyrus was discovered. Darius endorsed this, and added to its provisions in favour of the Jews, by calling upon their very adversaries to assist in forwarding the work (Ezra 6:7-12)!

This was clearly an evidence of divine blessing. It caused jubilation among the people, and enabled the work to be continued to a successful completion. Ezra records: "The elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, and they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel" (ch. 6:14).

Thus, through much tribulation, the work was completed. It is ever so, for it is only "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), and such principles are clearly revealed in the experiences of the past. Thus, the external evidence of work accomplished, was only incidental to the real purpose of God, which was to perfect characters for the kingdom yet to be established. The temple, which the Jews were at such pains to build, and that God desired to be built, would, in time (AD70), be again overthrown, but ultimately the throne of David will be rebuilt yet again, and finally restored by Christ at his second coming (Acts 15:16-17). Haggai prophesied of this (Hag. 2:9). Therefore, the people should have recognised that there was nothing permanent in the work that they were then doing, apart from the transformation of their characters, to fit them for the kingdom of the future, and to reveal a type of the greater building

yet to come. That is the case with work in every age. It shows the need of ever having in mind the ultimate result, and of striving to that end. There is nothing permanent, even in the establishment of an ecclesia, as the messages to the seven ecclesias in Asia show (Rev. 2-3). The ministry of Haggai also revealed that fact, and continues to teach us to avoid the mistake of viewing present activities (even though associated with the work of Yahweh) as an end in themselves.

The Greater Work to Come

Haggai witnessed dramatic events that typified the work of the Lord Jesus. As Zerubbabel and Joshua laboured to first lay the foundation, and then build the temple, so the Lord laid the foundation of his spiritual temple 2000 years ago (1Pet. 2:4-6), a building work that has continued throughout the years, and he will return to complete it in the near future as the “New Jerusalem” (Rev. 3:12; 21:2). At the same time, he will also supervise the erection of a literal temple in Jerusalem. His work, in both particulars, is foreshadowed in the stirring, heroic times of Zerubbabel and Joshua when the Jews struggled against tremendous odds to perform the work of God, and bring it to a successful completion.

In view of the imminence of the times that will see the completion of Christ’s labours, we need to heed the exhortation of Haggai, and “*Consider our ways!*” By so doing we will grace the work of the Truth with worthwhile and faithful labours, and reveal the means by which glory will ascend to Yahweh for His merciful kindness to us.

CHRONOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

(See Isa. 45:1-13; Jer. 25:11-12; Jer. 29:10)

- BC606**First invasion by Nebuchadnezzar. The captivity begins and is to last 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12; 27:8).
- BC589-7**Final invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in the ninth year of Zedekiah which resulted in a two years’ siege (2Kgs. 25:1-2; 2Chr. 36:21).
- BC536**Proclamation by Cyrus for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1).
- BC535**Second month. The foundation of the temple laid (Ezra 3:8).
- BC535-20** ..Samaritan opposition. The work ceases until the completion of 70 years from the final invasion BC587, when the temple was destroyed (Ezra 4).
- BC529**Cyrus dies, and is succeeded by his son Cambyses, then by Smerdis and Darius Hystaspes (522), a relative of Cyrus who reigned 35 years.
- BC520**Second year of Darius. Haggai (sixth month), and Zechariah (eighth month) prophecy. The work is renewed amid blessing (Hag. 2:19). By a new decree, Darius supports the Jews (cp. Ezra 4:24 with ch. 6).
- BC516**The temple is completed and dedication celebrated (Ezra 6:15).

The Second Year of Darius.

The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah are carefully dated. The two prophets laboured in conjunction with each other, rousing the people to give themselves completely to the work before them. They ministered in the second year of Darius, king of Persia (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1; Ezra 4:24; 5:1). Significant dates of this year are as follows:

BC520, 6th month....Haggai's first prophecy (Hag. 1:1-15).

BC520, 7th month....Haggai's second prophecy (Hag. 2:1-9).

BC520, 8th month....Zechariah's first prophecy (Zech. 1:1).

BC520, 9th month....Haggai's third and fourth prophecies (Hag. 2:10-23).

BC519, 11th month..Zechariah's second prophecy (Zech. 1:7)

BC518, 4th year of Darius ..Zechariah's third prophecy (Zech. 7:1).

BC516, 6th year of Darius ..Temple finished (Ezra 6:15).

In the above chronology we have followed the conventional dating, though evidence strongly suggests that the period of time was much closer to the birth of Jesus than that mentioned. There is support for this conclusion in both profane and sacred history, but for the purpose of this study, it is not necessary to go into the matter. It will engage our attention when we consider the books of Nehemiah and Esther.

PREVIEW OF THE PROPHECY

The style of Haggai is plain and direct. He constantly affirms that what he proclaims has divine authority (see ch. 1:1, 2, 3, 7, 12, 13; ch. 2:1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23).

Yahweh of Hosts — The Militant Title

Haggai uses the communal title of Deity (*Yahweh Tsva'ot* — *Yahweh of Hosts*) at least twelve times, to bring to the minds of the Jews, the strength of that One who gathers them together as a community of faithful labourers. The word is commonly translated "hosts" in the A.V., and is from a root *tsava* meaning, "go forth to war," or "to go forth to do service," which has been translated about thirty times as "army." It was said of the priests that they were to "wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Num. 8:24). The margin has: "war the warfare" (lit. "serve the service"). The priests were engaged in the spiritual warfare of *Yahweh*, to uphold His principles against the power of Sin. The apostle Paul expresses the principle when he exhorts Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (1Tim. 6:12).

It is significant that the great Name of *Yahweh* is a masculine noun in the Hebrew, whilst the title *Tsva'ot* is in the feminine gender. When brought together the words reveal the combined theme of a union (as with a husband and wife) between the Commander and his Army, revealed in the words of Isa. 54:5, "For thy Maker is thine husband; *Yahweh Tsva'ot* is His name; and thy Redeemer the

Holy One of Israel; The *Elohim* of the whole earth shall He be called.” The work of restoration described in the prophecy of Haggai is one in which Yahweh and his Israel-Bride co-operate together to destroy the power of sin and effect the original purpose that the earth should redound to the glory of the divine work: “So *Elohim* created man in His own image, in the image of *Elohim* created He him; male and female created He them” (Gen. 1:27). That purpose will soon be fulfilled when Christ and his Bride-host stand resplendent in divine nature as Yahweh’s glory covers the earth as the waters do the sea.

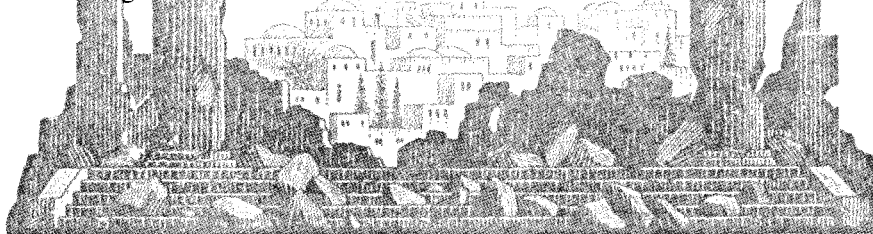
The august Name of *Yahweh Tsva’ot* is also associated with majesty and rulership in Isa. 44:6, where the heavenly voice declares: “Thus saith Yahweh, the King of Israel, and His redeemer Yahweh Tsva’ot; I the first, and I the last ones; and beside Me there is no *Elohim*.” The redemption by means of the divine rulership of the Age to come is revealed in “the first” (Yahweh) and “the last ones” (the multitudinous Christ). Together they form the company of the faithful, and the fulness of the divine character.

Consider Your Ways!

The key word of this book is the word “***Consider!***” (see ch. 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18). It not only provides an outline of the appeal of Yahweh to His people in Jerusalem, and a record of the activities undertaken under the direction of Ezra, Joshua, and Zerubbabel, but also a challenge to individual response at a time of changing environment. To “consider,” is to understand the reasons why Yahweh required of the people a recognition of their responsibilities and the benefits of service to Him, and to carefully observe the results of an obedient response to His demands.

Haggai provides a pattern to follow in the work of Yahweh. He ever had a “Thus saith Yahweh” to confirm his message. He not only rebuked, he also encouraged; he not only criticised, he also commended. Above all, he provided hope by speaking of the glory of the future age, which he set before his hearers as an incentive, urging them to the work of Yahweh.

Haggai was no mere theorist. He not only preached, he also practised, for he, too, with Zechariah, laboured with his hands (Ezra 5:1-2). His short book is divided into five distinct messages, each of which is severally dated, and in our analysis on page 2, accepting September 1st as the time of the first message (the “first day of the sixth month” in the Jewish calendar would be around about that time — Hag. 1:1), we have given the approximate date upon which each of the five messages were delivered.



A Message to Arouse

CHAPTER 1:1-11

Haggai's initial message was delivered to the people on the first day of the sixth month which would approximate to August/September. The Spirit came upon him, and moved him to call the people together in solemn assembly (Ezra 5:1) that he might deliver the message of Yahweh. It commenced with a well-merited rebuke because of the spiritual apathy they were manifesting. Discouraged by the opposition they had received from the Samaritans, they justified their inaction by claiming that the time was not ripe for the building of the temple urged upon them by Cyrus (Ezra 1:2).

Now, because of the prevailing circumstances, the work lapsed. However, as the prophet shrewdly observed, they did not permit opposition to restrain their efforts to build up their personal material resources. They had not merely homes, but panelled and decorated homes, luxurious homes, and yet Yahweh's house was permitted to lie waste! Therefore the prophet called upon them to "Consider their ways!" Though they worked hard in their own cause, they did not prosper. They earned good wages, but the money went nowhere! Haggai likened it to being put into a bag with holes. They laboured hard, but they received little return. Haggai showed them that though poor harvests and adverse conditions were the cause of this, such were brought upon them by Yahweh because they were neglectful of His work, occupying themselves exclusively with their own affairs.

He called upon them to correct this state of affairs: "Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Yahweh" (Hab. 1:8). Haggai thus exhorted that active labour is continuously required in the Lord's service, and that His servants should be "always abounding" in it (1Cor. 15:58).

The relatively short book of Haggai stresses four vital lessons for the people of Yahweh in every age and generation: [1] Listen attentively to His words of wisdom and instruction. [2] Carefully absorb with understanding the words received into the intellect. [3] Become totally committed to His cause. [4] Labour diligently in His service, for the honour and glory of His name.

This spirit was lacking in God's people in the days of Haggai. They were sharply reproved because of their indifference to the work of rebuilding the temple. They were admonished for their tardiness, their indifferent inclinations, and their ineptitude in regard to their spiritual responsibilities. What of today? The appeal of Yahweh goes forth to His people, as in the times of Haggai — and as it ever has. "Consider your ways!" or "Apply your heart unto your ways!" (Roth. mg.) Paul says: "Examine yourselves! See whether ye be in the faith!" (2Cor. 13:5). The spiritual temple of Deity is still under construction (1Cor. 3:16, etc.). How many are labouring diligently in this great work, for the honour and glory of Yahweh's name? All who are "called saints" should meditate upon their present way of life, and contemplate the extent of their service to their God, committing themselves fully to His cause.

Introduction — v. 1.

The prophet announces the authority of his message, and refers to the principle characters connected therewith. The first day of the month was an appropriate time for this purpose, because it was the day selected for the regular monthly festival of the new moon (Num. 10:10), commemorating a new beginning. It was a fitting time to urge the building of the temple, for in its absence the festival of the new moon could not be celebrated.

VERSE 1

“In the second year of Darius the king” — A title of the Persian monarchs, used by three rulers: Darius Hystaspes, Darius the Mede, and Darius the Persian. The reference here is to the former who reigned from BC522-486. After defeating his rivals, Hystaspes conducted campaigns which extended the boundaries of his empire. He was noted as an administrator and followed a policy of religious tolerance in governing his vast domain. He confirmed the earlier decree of Cyrus the Great given in BC536 regarding the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, instructing his officials in the area not to obstruct the work, and providing material assistance to aid the project (Ezra 6:6-15).

“in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king” — AD520. See Ezra 5:1; Zech. 1:1. Zechariah commenced to prophesy two months later.

“came the word of Yahweh” — This stamps the message as authoritative (Isa. 55:11). Prophetic utterances were the utterances of the Spirit (Heb. 1:1; Neh. 9:30; Heb. 10:15). When the Spirit came upon the prophets, they could not withstand the impulse to speak (Jer. 20:9; 1Pet. 1:20). Haggai repeatedly stated that the message he delivered was the “word of Yahweh” (vv. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13).

“by Haggai the prophet” — The name of the prophet signifies *The Festival One*, from *hag*, “a feast; sacrifice; solemnity,” and thus a gathering together to meet with, and rejoice before, Yahweh (cp. Isa. 30:29). It had particular reference to the Passover which was recognised as *the feast*

and which was a solemn gathering to celebrate the deliverance from the captivity in Egypt, and to rejoice before Yahweh. It recalled the liberation of the oppressed nation suffering the distress of Pharaoh’s persecution, which allowed for the building of the tabernacle of Yahweh in the wilderness. The people of Haggai’s time had been delivered from the seventy year’s persecution under Babylon, and now should have responded in thanksgiving in rebuilding the altar and temple of worship.

Haggai’s name indicated his mission. He was appointed of God to call the people

<p>The Message of the Names</p> <p>When put together, the listing of names in verse 1, as in many such occurrences in Scripture, provide an interesting outline of the work of God:</p> <p>The rejoicing festivals (<i>Haggai</i>) of those who are a shoot out of Babylon (<i>Zerubbabel</i>) but have asked of God (<i>Shealtiel</i>) and know that Yahweh saves (<i>Joshua</i>) for He has cleansed (<i>Josedech</i>).</p>
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together for a time of *festivity* and dedication, to remind them of their deliverance from the oppressor, to impress upon them their privileged position and their personal responsibilities.

Sixteen years had passed since the decree of Cyrus had invited the people to return to the land, and rebuild the temple, but a succession of frustrating difficulties, with bitter and unrelenting opposition, had caused the work to lapse, and apathy now held the people in its grip. Haggai’s message was designed to rouse them into activity once again (Ezra 4:23-24; 5:1-3).

“unto Zerubbabel” — His name means *Shoot of Babylon*. He was probably given this name because he had been born in captivity. In Ezra 3:2-8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Mat 1:12; Lk. 3:27, he is called the “son of Shealtiel,” but in 1Chr. 3:19, his father’s name is given as Pedaiah. Evidently he was the son of Pedaiah, but was adopted by his uncle Shealtiel on the death of his father (1Chr. 3:17-18, mg.). Significantly, in

Zerubbabel, the two royal lines from David converge, and then divide again until they meet again in the birth of the Lord Jesus. The blood line was through Mary (Lk. 3:27); the regal line came through Joseph (Mat. 1:12). Thus, the three royal figures in the two lines commence in David, continue in Zerubbabel, and conclude in Christ.

“the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah” — His name signifies *Enquired of El* (God). Thus, “Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel” can reveal: *The Seed of Promise Sown in Babylon*. He was as a branch shooting forth from the withered stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:1), and was both a type and predecessor of the Lord Jesus (Zech. 3:8; Mat. 1:12). As governor of Jerusalem he held the civil and royal authority, and in that capacity, typified the future work of the Lord Jesus.

“and to Joshua” — Joshua was high-priest. His name means *Yah shall save*. Anglicized, it is pronounced *Yahshua*, in Greek, *Jesus*. He was also a “man of sign” (Zech. 3:8), and foreshadowed the priestly duties of the Lord Jesus, proclaiming both the mission of the Lord, and the way in which it would be accomplished.

In fact, “Jesus” means more than *Saviour*; it means *Yah will save*, for his name reveals that the work of salvation was a labour that Yahweh effected through the willing co-operation of His Son. The Lord Jesus did not triumph in his own strength merely, but in that derived from his Father, for “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2Cor. 5:19). Flesh unaided could not have obtained the victory; it must ever seek a greater strength than its own (see Phil. 4:13). That is the paramount lesson of Christ’s work of atonement.

Zerubbabel and Joshua combined to labour in the service of God, and jointly represented the Lord Jesus in his dual position of King-Priest. The strength of Yahweh was with them through the encouraging messages of the prophets.

“the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying” — This name means *Yahweh hath cleansed*. Thus Joshua’s name in full was most significant: *Yahweh shall save for*

Yahweh hath cleansed. The high-priest, being associated with a sinful nation required to be cleansed of his garments (see Zech. 3:3), and the nation itself required cleansing from its waywardness and apathy. Similarly, the Lord Jesus fulfilled this in himself through his sacrifice (Heb. 7:27).

Consider Your Ways — vv. 2-6.

The prophet utters a vigorous call for self-examination with the object of reform. He suggests that the people consider their ways and observe how meagre were the results received from the labour expended. This showed that there was something wrong with their approach to God and to their labour.

VERSE 2

“Thus speaketh the word of Yahweh of hosts, saying” — *Yahweh Tsva’ot* is the militant title of Deity, used for His manifestation on behalf of His people (see Rom. 9:29) or in rebuke of them. It is the Name of power, by which Yahweh is seen in the company of mighty ones, all of whom reveal His awesome authority. As such, it is a name to be feared, because it commands such mighty power. The zeal of Yahweh Tsva’ot will establish the throne of David in spite of the opposition of Gentilism in the age to come (Isa. 9:7). See further comments on pages 9-10.

In the past, Israel was helped by the *Elohistic* heavenly host identified by this title, the “sons of God” mentioned in Job 38:7. Joshua met its captain whose appearance with drawn sword outside Jericho, indicated that the divine help would be with Israel in the impending attack against the Gentiles (Josh. 5:14-15). Elisha’s servant had his eyes opened to the tremendous forces available to defeat the enemy, if Yahweh saw fit to use them (2Kgs. 6:17). Hezekiah was able to reassure the people with the exhortation that there were more with them than with the Assyrian, for “with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is Yahweh our God to help us” (2Chr. 32:7-8). David declared that “the angel of Yahweh encampeth around those who fear

Him" (Psa. 34:7). On the other hand, the Lord Jesus revealed that sometimes those mighty forces of Yahweh are withheld because it is His purpose that His sons be brought under trial for their own benefit (Mat. 26:54).

The Hebrew word *Tsva'ot* ("Sabaoth" in Rom. 9:29; Jas. 5:4) is the normal word for "hosts." Yahweh *Tsva'ot*, therefore, signifies He Who will be (manifested in) Armies. The communities through which Yahweh's strength will be manifested are those revealed as following the Lord Jesus in the political heaven, and waging successful war against the Gentiles (Rev. 19:13-16). The Lord Jesus has been made commander-in-chief of these forces (Isa. 55:4); so that the call of the Gospel is a recruiting call to join his community of power (2Tim. 2:3-4). The mission of those divine hosts in the future age will be to "execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints" (Psa. 149:7-9). This will be accomplished through the power of Yahweh manifested in His saints: the company of the faithful.

Meanwhile, Haggai's use of the communal title of Deity reminded the people to whom he spoke, of the tremendous resources of power that were available to His family in their emergency. That Power is still available to us today.

"The time is not come" — Jeremiah had prophesied that a period of seventy years would be occupied in captivity (Jer. 25:11-12; Jer. 29:10), and the decree of Cyrus had been proclaimed seventy years after the first invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in BC606. This was some 15 years before the final destruction of the temple, however (see Chronological Outline on page 8), and the people justified their inactivity by claiming that the time had not fully come for the temple to be built. Though there may have been partial truth in their claim, they could, at least, have prepared their resources to build, as David did when he was told that the temple which he so

longingly desired, would not be built until the days of Solomon, but nevertheless he "set his affection to the house of God" and gathered wealth that it might ultimately be built, preparing much of the materials for that work (1Chr. 29:3).

Therefore Haggai reminded the returned exiles, that they were neglecting their responsibilities toward their God by neglecting to work for His temple, whilst directing all their energy into building up their own homes. Against this attitude they were clearly warned.

"the time that Yahweh's house should be built" — Repeated for emphasis. Having returned to Jerusalem their building projects should have focused upon the divine house of worship, as evidence of their reliance upon the One who had redeemed them.

Material Gains, or Spiritual Objectives (v. 4)

Unless the mind is set upon the things of the Spirit, time spent in the environment of Babylon can only prove ruinous to the people of Yahweh. In failing to destroy the Canaanites upon entering the land of Promise, Israel fell from grace upon this basis: They "mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them" (Psa. 106:35-36). The Jews of Haggai's time had recently returned from exile among the Gentiles. They had learned their love of material things, and had seen that the ordinary occupations of life, with time for easy and careless living, held far greater attraction than lives that were spiritually disciplined and self-sacrificing. It was difficult for these men and women not to fall back into a way of life to which they had formerly become accustomed. Devotion to the material pursuits of life comes naturally to the mind of man. Only a stronger influence towards serving Yahweh can cause men and women to sacrifice material gains in favour of spiritual objectives. — *J.U.*

VERSE 3

“Then came the word of Yahweh by Haggai the prophet, saying” — This short prophesy states no less than 23 times that the message was the Word of Yahweh, showing its authoritative nature, and the urgency of its appeal.

VERSE 4

“Is it time for you, O ye” — The voice of Haggai draws upon their claim concerning the “times and seasons.” They did not consider it the “time” to concern themselves with the work of the Truth, their minds being focussed on their personal needs.

“to dwell in your cieled houses” — The Hebrew word *capban* means “to hide by covering; to cover,” and here signifies “panelled” homes. They not only provided houses for themselves, but lavishly decorated them, whilst allowing the temple to lie in ruins. We need to exercise care that we do not allow the same spirit to dominate us, causing us to place all our thoughts into building up our possessions to the exclusion of the things of God.

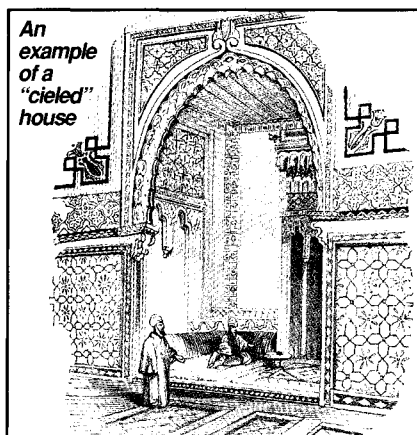
VERSE 5

“Consider” — The Hebrew signifies: “Set your hearts on your ways” (see mg.). This is a key word in the prophecy. The prophet called upon the people to deeply contemplate their ways, carefully, honestly and ruthlessly examining their every action and motives.

“your ways” — Heb. *derek*, a road-way; thus a course of life or a mode of action. They were indifferent to the requirements of Yahweh, and He repaid their indifference by turning His face from them. They are warned five times in this book to “consider” (vv. 5, 7; ch. 2:15, 18 twice) — like the four horns of the altar, that identifies the altar with the sacrifices attached to the horns. We need to heed that warning today.

VERSE 6

“Ye have sown much, and bring in little” — They laboured hard, but reaped little profit. They blamed their lack of



results on to natural causes, to poor seasons, drought, etc. (v. 10), but Yahweh was behind these natural causes (v. 11). He had warned Israel in the Law that if they neglected Him they would suffer in such a manner (Deu. 28:38; Lev. 26:26). On the other hand, He has promised a blessing on those who are liberal towards Him. This liberality must not be merely in money, but can be shown by the time we dedicate to the study of His Word, and it can manifest itself in other forms of patient loving service. Let us render Him His dues and He will abundantly repay (Mal. 3:10; Prov. 3:9-10).

“ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm” — They took great care concerning their own comfort, but found that they were dissatisfied with the results. They gave much attention to eating, drinking and clothing themselves, and imitated the attitude of the generation of the Flood (Mat. 24:38), which types the society in the latter days (Lk. 17:26). The Lord Jesus urged his disciples to “Take no [anxious] thought” about such personal matters. He did not suggest that we should be careless, or negligent in providing for the needs of our families, but that we should not put such matters before our responsibilities to the Truth.



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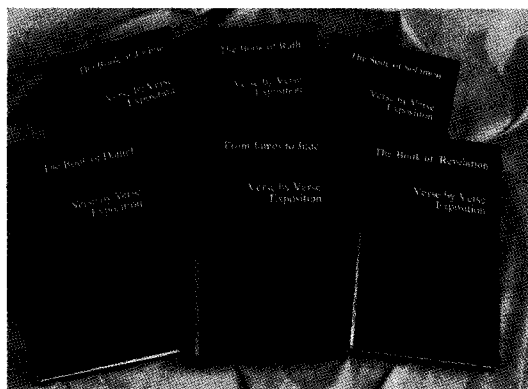
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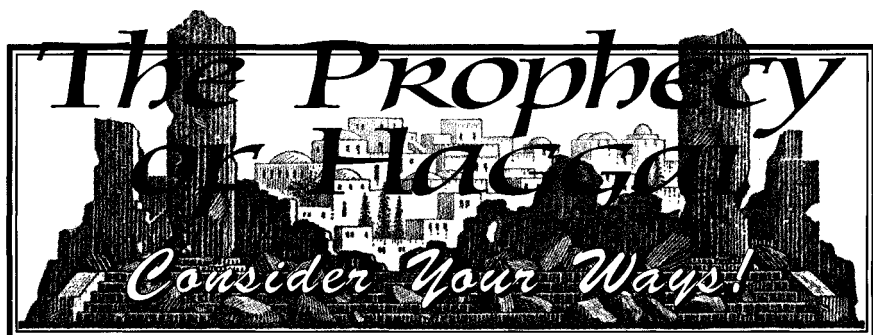


Haggai ch. 1:6 to 2:9

A **LOOKS** MAGAZINE

HAGGAI-MALACHI SERIES OCTOBER 2001

NUMBER 2



Analysis of the Prophecy

A FIVE-FOLD MESSAGE OF GRACE, COMFORT AND HOPE!

1. A Message TO AROUSE (1st of 6th month) — ch. 1:1-11.

"Build the house" (v. 8)

- a. Introduction.....v. 1.
- b. Consider Your Waysvv. 2-6.
- c. Consider God's House.....vv. 7-11.

2. A Message TO COMMEND (24th of 6th month) — ch. 1:12-15.

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- a. The People Respondv. 12.
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"In that day I will make" (v. 23).

- a. Future Judgment On Israel's Enemiesvv. 20-22.
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“and he that earneth wages, to put it into a bag with holes” — The people were afflicted with the effects of acute inflation; the money they gained had proved of little value. They earned good wages, but it seemed that they never had enough for their wants. The description is very graphic, for man’s lusts are naturally insatiable and inexhaustible. In the work of the Truth, however, treasure is retained in preserved bags (Lk. 12:33), for it is not subject to the vagaries of life.

Consider God’s House — vv. 7-11.

Having drawn attention to their selfish attitude in providing for their own material wellbeing at the expense of the things of Yahweh, the prophet proceeds to outline the measure of service expected of them. He urges them to examine their responsibilities.

VERSE 7

“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; Consider your ways” — This is the second appeal to that end. Previously (v. 5) it was coupled with a suggestion that they consider their ways in relation to their material wellbeing; this time it is coupled with the suggestion that they do so in the light of the state of Yahweh’s house. They were not merely to consider their own situation, but also in regard to the ways in which they were failing to fulfil their obligations to their Redeemer.

VERSE 8

“Go up to the mountain” — This was a personal challenge, and involved effort and toil to overcome an obstacle. Whether the people would be ready to respond and perform such tiring labour in the face of adversity, depended upon the measure of their faith and obedience. Significantly, the opening policy speech of the Lord Jesus was given on “a mountain” (Mat. 5:1) to teach his followers the need to expend themselves to heed the word he presented to them

“and bring wood, and build the house” — Yahweh did not require an elaborate building, but He did want the people

to labour with their hands to accomplish what they could. It is not purely the results that count with Him, but the motive and measure of faith that is reflected in work. Haggai exhorted the people to work actively in the service of God, with the assurance that no matter how humble the task might be, He would take pleasure in the effort. Thus the prophet’s first message was one designed to arouse them to the need for work!

“and I will take pleasure in it” — It is the delight of Yahweh to co-operate in the faithful labours of His people (cp. Psa. 147:11). This characteristic of the Father was seen in His Son, as the Lord Jesus sought to “build the [spiritual] house” (Isa. 42:1; Mat. 3:17; Heb. 3:1-4).

“and I will be glorified, saith Yahweh” — In addition to receiving pleasure, Yahweh is glorified, and honoured, in the faithful, willing, cheerful, though

“Build the House” (v. 8)

The people were urged to put aside their own personal interests, and labour to build the house of Yahweh. The greatest example we have in this respect is the Son of God. Paul states the fact simply: “For even Christ pleased not himself...” (Rom. 15:3). The Lord himself provided adequate evidence in his life that Paul’s words were true: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, to finish His work...” (John 4:34). To this he added: “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30). Finally, as a Son who had lovingly spent himself, without deviation, in the service of his Father, he stated: “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do...” (John 17:4). Christ’s example as one who fully dedicated himself to the work of Deity, is without parallel. With undiminished commitment, he heeded the exhortation: “Build the house!” (v. 8). In this, as in all other respects, he left us “an example” that we “should follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). — *J.U.*

“Ye Looked For Much”

The Brotherhood today is struggling to survive in probably the greatest era of gross materialism the world has ever known. The world produces — and offers attractively to potential consumers — a wider range of goods and services than has ever been previously known. Paul’s simple yet profound words reflect his own attitude towards the world and all that it proffers: “Godliness with contentment is great gain... And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1Tim. 6: 6, 8). He mentions nothing of houses or luxuries. Were he writing today he would not mention, as necessities, motor cars, refrigerators, wall-to-wall carpets, washing machines, nor any of the countless other items we take for granted as being our “right” to possess in this modern age. Indeed, we live in an era where the members of society “look for much.” Paul understood that the essentials of life were simple. Food and raiment. Nothing else. The ever-increasing desire to possess more worldly goods encourages a hardening of the mind towards “getting on in the world.” How does such an environment promote spiritual mindedness? How does it teach people to be totally dependent upon Yahweh and His wise guidance? It does neither.

On the contrary, present-day materialism is to be feared as one of the world’s most destructive weapons against the Truth. In the days of Haggai the people finally had to learn to “pause, and consider.” What were they working for? What did they gain? Where was the evidence of their love for Yahweh and His Word, as they madly chased higher incomes with little of worth to show for their efforts? There is a need for the Brotherhood today to “pause and consider;” to realise that the influence of worldly materialism can only draw minds away from Yahweh’s purpose in our lives. A constant vision of the kingdom will help the Brotherhood through these present times, not the tangible, materialistic aims and objectives of a godless world. — *J.U.*

humble, labours of His children.

VERSE 9

“Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little” — They expected much from their labours on their own behalf, but the results were meagre, and not commensurate with the efforts they put into it. This message had earlier been dramatically delivered by the prophet Isaiah: “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” (ch. 55:2). People look for far greater benefits than they receive from the labour they expend, without realising the reason for their failed expectations.

“and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it” — They had anticipated great harvests from their labour, but had gathered little; and what was gathered in was quickly expended in the high cost of living. The expectations of the Jews were not realised because their labours lacked the divine blessing. Their material poverty stemmed from the poverty of their worship. It was the result of divine chastisement “for their good” (Heb. 12:5-7). Unfortunately, they did not recognise that, but blamed their reverses onto natural causes. When labour in God’s field does not seem to bear fruit, let us analyse the cause; perhaps it is due to the poverty of our worship towards Him!

“Why? saith Yahweh of hosts” — Haggai anticipated the question that might be asked. The Jews blamed their poverty on crop failures, drought, natural causes; everything but the true reason: the poverty of their worship towards Yahweh. Haggai now revealed and publicly announced that God had brought all these reverses on them that they might be profitably exercised thereby (see Hag. 2:17; Lev. 26:3-5; Mal. 3:10; Mat. 4:4).

“Because of Mine house that is waste” — In spite of the fact that some work had been attempted — until the house is completed, it is of no real value in natural construction undertaken, nor in worship. The word *chareb* signifies, that which is parched or ruined.

“and ye run every man unto his own

house” — Plenty of enthusiastic effort was expended on their own projects, compared to the dilatory attitude toward the divine work. Their “own house” is contrasted to “Mine house,” and in this Yahweh exposes the selfish ingratitude of His people.

VERSE 10

“Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew” — In contrast to the days of the wilderness probation, when the Jews who escaped from Egypt were sustained by manna, which formed on the ground each morning. Moses recorded that “when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it” (Num 11:9). The dew bore the manna that was discovered each morning; but because of the dilatory attitude of the people in Haggai’s day, even the heaven was prevented from blessing the people.

“and the earth is stayed from her fruit” — Fulfilling the threatened punishments and curses on the Levitical covenant uttered by Moses should his people neglect their responsibilities to obey the voice of God (Deu. 28:23; Jer. 3:3). The word “stayed” (occurring twice in this verse) is from the Heb. *kala*, signifying to restrict; to hold back; prohibit. The hand of God was withdrawn, refusing to offer the blessings that might otherwise come upon them. It will occur again in the Kingdom Age, for when a people refuse to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, they will experience terrible drought (Zech.14:17).

VERSE 11

“And I called for a drought upon the land” — Yahweh had warned that He would bring a drought on the land if the people proved disobedient (Lev. 26:18-21). On the other hand, Naomi described the breaking of a drought in Canaan as a visitation of Yahweh “in giving them bread” (Ruth 1:6). Men identify such incidents as the laws of nature, but the Scriptures reveal that often they result from the predetermined purpose of Deity. The natural also illustrates the spiritual. The most dreadful drought and famine is that of “hearing the words of Yahweh” (Amos 8:11). Such a

drought, with all its disastrous consequences, is inevitable where His Word is neglected. In Haggai’s day, the drought on the land symbolised the spiritual state of the people.

“and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth” — The drought

The Terms of the Covenant

In vv. 10-11 the prophet draws the attention of the Israelites to the terms of the Mosaic covenant. It promised divine blessings for the people if they honoured the terms of the covenant, and cursings should they depart therefrom. “Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep... And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron” (Deu. 28:16-24). Such were some of the curses provided under the terms of the covenant, and which were so devastatingly affecting the people of Israel in the days of Haggai. Absorbed in their own personal “pressing” interests, they had little time for the things of Yahweh.

Is this not an every-day challenge in the warfare against the inclinations of the flesh? Has it not ever been so, since sin entered into the world? Is it not so that this disposition is an ever-present danger to the spiritual welfare of the people of Yahweh? The Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples the order of priorities: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). When the dictates of the flesh are followed, men will foolishly reverse this order, and then fail to prosper spiritually. As Israel experienced under the Law, Yahweh will provide blessings only upon the basis He has determined. — *J.U.*

If salvation is not worked out, it will die out. Nothing blights and kills our prospects like inattention and neglect. Everybody sees how true this is of our present fleeting fortunes: how few remember its equal truth in respect of that great and endless fortune which lies out yonder, substantial in its eternity (though covered at present with a golden mist) beyond the tomb. Neglect, like rust and rot, will ruin all. Most men know what it is to tremble in the presence of solemn issues, so let each brother grow grave with his profound responsibility; be filled with that fear which is no terror, and tremble, though not with dismay. Salvation is worth working for; gained, it is glory; missed, it is doom!

would remove every means of support. Significantly it would start upon the mountains, for the prophecies of the future speak of the “corn” flourishing on the “top of the mountains” through very bounty (Psa. 72:16).

“and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands” — The end result of the terrible drought would affect all the people and the beasts. Significantly, that which came upon the nation of Egypt in the days of Moses, that Israel might be redeemed, would rebound upon the people of Israel if they continued to act as did the Egyptians (cp. Exo. 9:3). Ultimately, under the wise rule of Messiah, Jerusalem will be “inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein” (Zech. 2:4), when the divine blessings will be experienced and when mankind will labour in harmony with God.

CHAPTER 1:12-15

A Message to Commend

What a grand experience it is when an appeal made to people finds ready response! How Haggai must have been encouraged thereby! The governor Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua immediately acted upon the prophet Haggai's exhortation and set a noble example before the people which they quickly followed. Their motives for so doing were right, for “they feared Yahweh” (v. 12), and in return experienced the divine blessing (v. 13). A spirit of exhilaration permeated all Judah. Enthusiasm had been engendered in both leaders and people, and thus encouraged they worked together vigorously in Yahweh's cause.

This second message came twenty-four days after the first, indicating that the people had favourably considered Yahweh's first message by the hand of Haggai, and had been moved by it to the point of action. The prophet now encouraged the people because they had “obeyed the voice” that they had heard (v. 12). To do so then or now is to honour God, and with such action He is well-pleased.

The People Respond — v. 12.

After considering the message of Haggai (cp. v. 15), and realising their solemn responsibility, both leaders and people willingly give themselves to the work. There is a measure of joy and gladness as the labours of the people were again joined together.

VERSE 12

“Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest” — Stirred by Haggai's searching criticism and stimulating appeal, both governor and priest took a prominent part in responding to the exhortation of the prophet. For the significance

of their names see v. 1.

“with all the remnant of the people”

— They followed the sterling example of their leaders in the enthusiastic response now evident in the nation.

“obeyed the voice of Yahweh their God”

— The “voice” of divine judgment was first heard in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8), when transgression had occurred. The monarch on the throne of Yahweh was required to express the divine Voice (1Sam. 15:1), but the very first king, Saul, refused to obey, and was deposed (1Sam. 15:22). David sought to obey his God (Psa. 40:7-8), and this spirit was fulfilled in the obedience of His Son (Heb. 10:7-8). Thus encouraged, the people in the days of Haggai also gave themselves to it (Ezra 5:1-2).

“and the words of Haggai the prophet”

— Though Haggai does not express this, the people were not stirred into action by his words only, but also by his faithful example. Together with his associated prophet Zechariah, Haggai laboured with the people, and thus demonstrated in deed what he proclaimed in doctrine (Ezra 5:2).

“as Yahweh their God had sent him”

— The divine Name, *Yahweh their Elohim* is repeated twice in this verse. It signifies *He who shall be manifested in Strong Ones*, and illustrates the purpose of the Eternal Spirit to see Himself reflected in those He has selected. It emphasized that if the people responded to the Father, He would co-operate with them, and His power will be clearly manifested.

“and the people did fear before Yahweh”

— To “fear” Yahweh is to reverence Him, by taking heed to His Word and obeying it (Pro. 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13). The “fear” of Yahweh includes a fear of offending Him, and when such is exhibited, it will be seen in obedience (Pro. 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13). He has elevated His Word above all His holy name, and true reverence finds expression in submissive hearkening to the instructions and wisdom found therein (Psa. 138:2; Isa. 66:1-2, 5; Mal. 3:16; 4:2; Psa. 147:11).

The People Commended — vv. 13-15.

With the general enthusiasm for labour came a message of commendation from Yahweh: “I am with you!” Thus both God and People co-operated together in the work at hand.

VERSE 13

“Then spake Haggai Yahweh’s messenger in Yahweh’s message unto the people” — The second message (vv. 12-

The People Obeyed

Having “considered their ways” and heard the words of Yahweh spoken forthrightly by the prophet (vv. 6-11), the people learned that their austere state was due to their careless and indifferent attitude towards their God. “I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not My voice” (Jer. 22:21).

But now, the people received Haggai’s exhortation. And responded with alacrity. Paul describes such an acknowledgement of the Word as “the obedience of faith” — a short but expressive phrase (Rom. 16:26). Faith may be defined in various terms, but, in essence, faith is what we do because of what we believe. Here is an appropriate example. The people had been slothful and inactive in their service to Yahweh. Now, they hear the Word spoken and promptly submit themselves to its requirements. The word rendered obedience in Rom. 16:26, (Gr., *hupakoe*) signifies “a hearing attentively, or listening; hence, obedience as the result of attentive hearing” (Bullinger). That which Yahweh desires to see in His people is submission to the lofty divine mental and moral ideals He has revealed in His Word. For men and women who are prepared to manifest “the obedience of faith,” Yahweh assures them: “I am with you...” (v. 13). Could one ask for greater encouragement than this? — *J.U.*

15) was delivered on September 24th, three weeks after the first one. The first was a voice of urgency; this one is one of encouragement to obedience.

“saying, I am with you, saith Yahweh” — How thrilling it must have been to the governor, priest, prophet and people to receive such words of commendation from Yahweh! Shortly after, further words of encouragement were received from Him through Zechariah (Zech. 1:1).

VERSE 14

“And Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel” — The word “spirit” is often used in the Bible as expressive of the state of mind and feelings of a person (cp. Mat. 5:3; 1Chr. 5:26; 2Chr. 36:22). Despite the opposition still being experienced by the Jews from the Samaritans (Ezra 5:3), Zerubbabel was stirred up by the message of the prophet to re-organise the work, and he, in turn, stimulated others. How valuable is such a spirit when applied to the work of the Truth. We have been granted so many privileges, and experience so many blessings, that we should never be discouraged by opposition or reverses. Yet the flesh is so weak! The spirit we should constantly strive to manifest is that engendered by the words of the Lord to the apostles: “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33).

“the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest” — See notes on v. 1.

“and the spirit of all the remnant of the people” — The sentiments of those whose faithful disposition now became evident, providing an enthusiastic response.

“and they came and all the remnant of the people” — The “remnant of the people” comprised those comparatively few in number who had returned to the Land.

“and they came and did work” — It was not merely that they laboured, but that it was work in the House of Yahweh in accordance with His will and direction. He

took pleasure in this labour (Hag. 2:5), though some despised its humble circumstances (cp. Ezra 3:12 with Zech. 4:10). That God takes pleasure in small things and humble service is a great encouragement for us today who labour in a similar day of “small things.” We are exhorted to “be instant in season, out of season” (2Tim. 4:2), and such labours should be performed as “unto the King,” and not in the light of results obtained, or public impressions. No matter how insignificant our efforts might seem, Yahweh will take pleasure in them if they are performed in faith (cp. 1Sam. 16:7; Mk. 12:41-44).

“in the house of Yahweh of hosts, their God” — The divine Name, “Yahweh Tzvaoth their Elohim,” *He Who Will Be the Armies of Israel’s Mighty Ones*, may be identified with the powerful Multitudinous Christ who will eventually occupy the great House of Prayer of the millennium. That “house” represented the presence of the Deity in the earth, but it was desecrated by the unholy community in the days of the Lord (Mat. 23:38-39).

VERSE 15

“In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king” — BC520. A period of twenty-four days separated the two messages (cp. v. 1), and doubtless during that time some considerable discussion had taken place among the people as to how they should react to the appeal. Finally, a decision had been reached to obey the Word of God, and follow after righteousness. They had “considered their ways,” and reformed.

Other prophets have spoken in similar strain (Mat. 6:25-34; Amos 4:6-13; Mic. 6:6-9). Their appeals and exhortations have come echoing down the corridor of time to our own day, and constitute a stirring challenge for the present generation! Is our first concern for the things of God? Are we busy building in His house (Eph. 2:19-22)? Let us *consider our ways!*

CHAPTER 2:1-9

A Message to Encourage

Almost another month had passed, until the voice of Haggai is again heard. This time, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, approximately October, he proclaims a timely message of encouragement. Meanwhile with the resumption of labour, by the remnant of the Jews, the Samaritans had mouthed threats, and had even approached the king of Persia to bring the work to a standstill. But Ezra recorded: "The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease" (Ezra 5:5). This endorsed the vital message that Haggai delivered to the people: a message calculated to encourage them in their labours, and give them the incentive to continue in spite of opposition. For, after exhorting the people to "be strong," Haggai reveals that they were not working merely for immediate benefits, but for ultimate glory. The appearance of the temple they were building was "contemptible" in the eyes of those who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple, but the prophet showed that the work was of God and should not be despised. Haggai, with true prophetic vision, revealed that there will yet be erected a latter-day temple, that will exceed in glory anything previously seen on earth, and that those who laboured faithfully in the face of discouraging circumstances will obtain an honoured position in the glorious future. In anticipation of that the people were to "quit themselves like men and be strong" (1Cor. 16:13).

Be Strong and Work — vv. 1-5

Haggai exhorted them not to be deterred or discouraged by the poverty of their efforts, but to faithfully labour in the realisation that they had Yahweh on their side, and ultimately could not fail.

VERSE 1

"In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day, came the word of Yahweh by the prophet Haggai, saying" — This was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-36) in which Israel were called together to celebrate the joy of deliverance from Egypt, and to rejoice before Yahweh for His overshadowing care. Those who had returned under Zerubbabel now had plenty in which to rejoice, for the work already accomplished was the tangible result of Yahweh's blessing on them. However, as the humble nature of the results of their efforts could still discourage some, it was important to remind those labouring that they could

anticipate a greater reward in the future. Therefore Haggai stood up before the people at the appointed time at the Feast, to publicly deliver unto them a further invigorating message.

VERSE 2

"Speak now to Zerubbabel, Joshua, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying" — See notes on ch. 1:1. As Zerubbabel and Joshua were "men of sign" (Zech. 3:8, mg.), and represented the dual offices of the Lord Jesus as king-priest, so the "residue of the people" represented his brethren. They combine together in the labour, and are all encouraged to the work before them.

VERSE 3

"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory?" — When the foundation of this temple was laid in

the second year of Cyrus (bc535) only 52 years had elapsed since the destruction of the temple of Solomon by Nebuchadnezzar in the year bc587. Some still remembered the glory of the former temple (cp. Ezra 3:12-13). Now, 17 years later, there still remained some who could recall the past and compare it with the present. In doing so, they could only view the present temple as greatly inferior in comparison with that which formerly graced the city of Jerusalem. Yet, in this, such an evaluation was odious, as both were constructed to the glory of God. Similarly, to compare the labours of individuals emulatively, is "not wise" (2Cor. 10:12).

"is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" — They considered the labour of building such a humble structure as being of little value or purpose. There is a tendency to deprecate a humble work, and view it with contempt. This can be most discouraging to those who are doing the work under difficulties. The antidote to discouragement, however, is greater dedicated labour. There is nothing more calculated to destroy depression or defeatism than faithful activity, but this is only possible when the objects and value of labour are properly recognised. In this case, it was to glorify Yahweh at a time of difficulty. Haggai tried to set this clearly before the people. A little later, Zechariah blended his voice with Haggai's in an appeal to the labourers to "despise not the day of small things," for great rejoicings would ultimately unfold for them (see Zech. 4:9-10).

VERSE 4

"Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Yahweh; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith Yahweh, and work" — Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), but faith must be blended with courage and determination to produce its best fruits. The words "be strong" are repeated three times for emphasis. The word *chazaq* has the idea of "fasten upon; to seize." Similarly, speaking about the kingdom, the Lord Jesus declared that the "violent take it

by force" (Mat. 11:12). The words signify that "men of force" are those who will obtain the kingdom; it requires people of zeal and eagerness to press their way into the kingdom. Those with an attitude of careless indifference will never achieve such a glorious destiny.

There is a need for activity on our part if we are to reap the fruits of faith. Yahweh was ready to bless the Jews, but they had to provide the basis whereby this could be done. Nehemiah not only "made his prayer unto God," but he also set a watch (Neh. 4:9), and the blessing of Yahweh brought success to his vigilance. It is not sufficient to pray for the divine blessing, we must also use the means that God has made available to us to that end. He will bless all efforts in accordance with His will if we labour with our hands by the means He has granted us, and seek His help in prayer.

"for I am with you, saith Yahweh of hosts" — What an encouragement to the faithful is such a declaration! The Samaritans were seeking the help of Persia to hinder the work of the remnant, but Judah could draw upon the help of Yahweh of Armies (see note ch. 1:2). Samaritan opposition (Ezra 4:4-5), decrees of kings (vv. 23-24), depression and discouragement (ch. 3:12) all failed in the face of the Almighty Power which was available to the Jews. If He is for us, who can successfully oppose us? (Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:6; Isa. 54:17).

VERSE 5

"According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt" — Israel was brought out of Egypt to become the "son" Yahweh had called from the land of Darkness (Hos. 11:1). They were constituted "a kingdom of priests" under the Mosaic Covenant at Sinai (Exo. 19:5-6). This covenant will be superseded by the original Abrahamic covenant of Gen. 15:18, which is restoring them to the Land today, and will transform them into a great nation in the future (Gen. 12:2).

"so my spirit remaineth among you" — When Israel was brought out of Egypt,

Yahweh placed His spirit within the prophets to deliver His message to the nation (Neh. 9:20; Isa. 63:11), and will do so again in the future (Eze. 36:27). Such expressions describe the power of divine teaching which is delivered through the Spirit (see Jn. 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1Jn. 5:7). This teaching proclaims Yahweh's purpose to preserve and re-establish Israel, to make it a great nation. On the basis of such promises the Jews had been restored to the land in the days of Haggai, and the temple was in the process of being rebuilt. Thus despite the sins of Israel, God had not abandoned the nation, for unlike flesh He changeth not (see Jer. 51:5; Mal. 3:6).

"fear ye not" — Though faced with Samaritan challenges, and the apathy of their fellows, courage and faith was required. This was the exhortation to Joshua, the great warrior who brought the people into the Land, and established Israel's power (Josh. 1:6-7; 8:1), and Joshua delivered the same message to his people (ch. 10:25).

A Greater Glory Yet to Come — vv. 6-9.

Haggai now provides the Jews with an incentive to be strong and to work with enthusiasm, for he reveals that what they achieve will lay the basis for what Yahweh has in store for them in the Age to come.

VERSE 6

"For thus saith saith Yahweh of hosts" — The significant militant title of the Deity, the voice of the Warrior-King, is stated to arouse the people with the divine purpose by which they might be encouraged to continue in their activities.

"Yet once, it is a little while" — Paul cites these words in Heb. 12:26-27, and interprets them, declaring that the word "once" limits the extent of things to be "shaken," for they could only be shaken once, not twice. According to the apostle, the use of this word in Hag. 2:6, demonstrates "the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." In application of this principle he declared: "Wherefore we receiving a king-

dom which cannot be removed..."

In this, Paul contrasted the future eternal Kingdom of Christ with the temporary kingdom established under the Mosaic code, and quoted Hag. 2:6 to show that the latter was to be taken away as imperfect, to make way for that which cannot be removed, and will last "for ever." To that end, the Jewish political "heavens and earth" were to be shaken once only, which was accomplished in the destruction of Judah's Commonwealth in AD70.

Paul used the word "remove" to describe the effect of this shaking. It is translated from the Greek *metatithemi*, and signifies "to transfer to a new basis, to transpose, to change" (Heb. 12:27). The Jewish "heaven and earth" were shaken out of position in AD70 in order that they might be replaced with a New Order under Christ in the Age to come. The things that were then about to be shaken out of position were those "things that are made," things that are finite and temporary, in contrast to those that are eternal and unchanging, relating to Messiah's kingdom.

"and I will shake the heavens, and the earth" — These are the things to be "once" shaken, in order that they might be changed to a new basis. The terms are used symbolically throughout Scripture for the upper and lower political orders; for the rulers and the ruled. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," declared Isaiah (ch. 1:2), and he then defined his terms as "Ye rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah" (v. 10. See also Deu. 32:1). As, in nature, the sun rules the day and the moon the night, so the civil and ecclesiastical systems govern the people. Thus Christ's rule is likened to the Sun of righteousness with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2; 2Sam. 23:4). Likewise, as in nature, the moon reflects the light of the sun, so this is also illustrated in the symbol, for the moon is likened to the bride of Christ, or the ecclesia (Song. 6:10; cp. 1Cor. 15:41), called to reflect the glory of her Lord. The moon has no light of itself, and derives its glory by that reflected from the sun; similarly the ecclesia has no inherent glory; its only beauty is that reflected from the Sun

of Righteousness.

In Psa. 89:36-37 the symbol is used with beautiful effect, where the throne of David is described as the sun in conjunction with the moon, shining as "a faithful witness in heaven." At nighttime, when the sun is not in evidence, the brightly shining moon witnesses to its existence by reflecting its light. Its presence assures mankind that there will be a tomorrow, and that dawn will ultimately appear. How appropriate as a symbol of the faithful witnessing of the ecclesia (the moon), at a time when the sun's presence is not visibly seen on the earth. In the "heavenlies" to which she has been elevated (Eph. 1:3), she testifies to the existence of the absent Sun by reflecting his light, and demonstrates that there will be a "tomorrow" by shining forth with that message out of the darkness that encompasses her.

It is scientifically proven that the moon affects the tides of the sea, and in accordance with the symbol, the rise and fall of nations (symbolised as the sea, Isa. 57:20) is said to be for ultimate benefit of the ecclesia (Acts 17:26; 2Cor. 4:15).

The occurrence of the symbol is frequent throughout Scripture. In Isa. 34:4-5, the terms are used for Gentile powers. Yahweh declared His intention to dissolve "all the host of heaven," so that the stars (statesmen) shall fall to the earth (be deposed). He declared that His sword would be "bathed in heaven," and in explanation thereof, proclaimed: "It shall come down upon Idumea to judgment." His sword bathed in heaven, therefore, represents His judgment executed upon the ruling powers of Idumea (Isa. 34:5-6).

A similar use of the symbol is found in Isa. 51:6, "The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner." This is obviously not literal, for it would contradict those Scriptures that proclaim that the literal heavens and earth are to remain forever (Psa. 148:6; Ecc. 1:4; Psa. 125:1); and, moreover, it would teach that not only are the "heavens" to be destroyed, but "they that dwell therein" will be likewise

destroyed, and that would include the angels and even God Himself!

The significance of the symbol is clearly explained in Isa. 65:17-18, "I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." The new heavens, or form of rule, that will find Jerusalem a rejoicing and "her people" Israel, a joy, will be the rule of Christ. He will entirely transform both the government and nation of Israel, so that it will radiate truth and power. The tremendous influence of that government is symbolised by Isaiah thus: "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun... as the light of seven days, in the day that Yahweh bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound" (Isa. 30:26). In the natural order of things, a sevenfold shining forth of the sun would destroy the earth, but the symbolic use of the terms implies the complete shining forth of divine Truth and authority by Christ and his Ecclesia as the Sun and Moon of the future political heavens. The Lord himself, took up this symbol, and declared that "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mat. 13:43).

The Jewish "heavens and earth" referred to by Haggai, were "shaken" in AD70, when the Romans overwhelmed the Jewish State, and took its people into captivity. Once having been thus "shaken" the terms of the prophecy are explicit that they will never again be so treated. That is the point Paul makes in Heb. 12:27. The kingdom shall be "restored to Israel" (Acts 1:6) upon a permanent foundation never again to be overthrown (Zech. 14:11; 2Sam. 7:10; Eze. 39:28-29).

"The sea and the dry land" — Whilst "heaven and earth" in this verse relate to Israel, "sea and dry land" are symbolic of Gentile nations (Isa. 57:20; Dan. 7:2-3; Rev. 13:1). This difference is carefully preserved by Paul in his treatment of this verse in Heb. 12:26-28. He limits his observation to the "heavens and earth" and says noth-

ing of the “sea and dry land” for Paul was concerned only to show the effect of the impending “shaking” of the Jewish heaven and earth by the Romans in his time. Haggai’s prophecy, however, takes in Yahweh’s intentions with both Judah and the Gentiles; then and in the future. He would first “shake” the former, and then the latter, and the result would be to retain only the unshakeable Kingdom of God. Thus “all nations” shall be shaken.

VERSE 7

“I will shake all nations” — By the use of this phrase, Haggai does not mean that the nations will be caused merely to tremble, but that their power and authority will be completely overthrown. At the time the surrounding nations were opposing the building of the temple by the Jews, and by their threats were bringing the workers under the influence of fear. The prophet, however, showed that his people were working for One far greater and more powerful than all the nations of men, and that He will in due time destroy all opposition to His will and purpose.

For this tremendous “shaking” of Gentile powers, see Zeph. 3:8. There will be both political and literal earthquakes in that day (Rev. 16:18; Isa. 2:12, 19).

“and the desire of all nations shall come” — This certainly does not indicate the “desire of all nations” in their antagonism to the divine purpose, nor their policies which are quite opposed to God’s determination. For example, the “desire” of Russia is to dominate the world; China “desires” to annihilate the influence of America; that of the western world is to establish its power and prestige in an environment of ungodliness and social wickedness. Obviously, therefore, Haggai’s words do not mean that these antagonising “desires” of the nations will be realised.

A change in the rendition of this statement therefore is necessary. Bro. Thomas renders it as: *“The Excellency of the nations, they shall come in.”* He shows that the Hebrew noun is in the singular, but is connected with a verb in the plural number. The Lord Jesus Christ is the “Excellency of

the nations” in that he is the greatest of the sons of Adam who ever trod the earth. But his power and influence will be manifested through his brethren. He is both singular and plural, for there is a personal Christ and a multitudinous Christ. The phrase therefore describes Christ and his brethren, united as one.

Bro. Thomas’ translation is supported by Rotherham’s translation, and is confirmed by lexicographers. *Davies’ Hebrew Lexicon* renders “desire” as: “object of delight,” which centres attention upon an individual. *Fürst’s Hebrew Lexicon* gives it as “the noblest of all peoples.” *Gesenius* comments: “Desire, delight (i.e., the desirable, precious things) of all nations.” *G.A. Smith* observes: “The Hebrew has a singular noun, ‘costly thing or desirableness,’ but the verb ‘shall come’ is in the plural, and the Septuagint has *ta eklekta*, the ‘choice things’.”

Christ and the saints comprise the most precious things found among men, as far as Yahweh is concerned. They are His special treasure (Mal. 3:17), and because of them and through them, He will fill the earth with His glory.

But from whence shall they come, or, as Bro. Thomas and others render it: “Come in?” The answer is supplied by the context in Haggai. They shall “come into” the future temple of the millennium, and in so doing, will fill it with divine glory (Eze. 43:1-2). This was lacking in the temple built in Haggai’s time. Unlike that built by Solomon, it had no *shekinah* glory shining between the cherubim and above the mercy seat (Psa. 80:1). There was no priest with Urim and Thummim, as Zerubbabel noted (Ezra 2:63). That divine glory is vested in Christ (Jn. 1:9, 14, 16), and will be manifested by his brethren (Col. 2:9-10). They imperfectly reflect it now in knowledge and character; but in the future they will possess it in its fulness (Rom. 5:2), in nature (2Pet. 1:4), and in name (Rev. 3:12); and being the complete manifestation of the *shekinah* or indwelling glory shall take their place in the temple of the future Age, filling it with a glory that was lacking in that built by Zerubbabel.

“and I will fill this house with glory, saith Yahweh of hosts” — In these words the spirit closely connected the temple that Zerubbabel was then building, with the glorious “house of prayer for all nations” to be erected in the Age to come (Isa. 56:7). The Lord did likewise when he described the temple in Jerusalem as “Yahweh’s house” (Mk. 11:17), though the Jews had converted it into a “den of thieves.” He confirmed the words of Isaiah, that the temple in Jerusalem will be one day called “of all nations the house of prayer” though, in the meantime, it would be completely thrown down (Mk. 13:2). The temple that the Lord will cause to be built in the future (Zech. 6:12) is thus a continuation of those edifices that were erected in Zion in the past (see Eze. 43:7-8), so that when Haggai spoke of “the house,” he did not mean the building then in construction, but rather, the temple of Yahweh — the one temple, whether built by Solomon, by Zerubbabel, or by Christ. The latter, of course, will house the new law and priesthood, as the beginning of the New World Order (Heb. 7:12).

“With glory” — In the past the *shekinah* glory shone above the Mercy Seat, and between the Cherubim (Psa. 80:1). Ezekiel, in vision, saw this glory withdrawn (see Eze. 8:4; 10:4, 18; 11:23), but also predicted its return in a different form: “His voice was like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory” (ch. 43:2). This is obviously a description of one individual at the head of a multitude. The individual, Christ Jesus, is suggested by the statement, “his voice,” which swells into the noise of a multitude, implied by the description, “the noise of many waters.” The multitudinous glorified Christ-body will constitute the divine glory in the Age to come.

VERSE 8

“The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith Yahweh of hosts” — The primary application of these words is to the literal temple to be erected in the Age to come. It will be beautiful both in construction and ornamentation. The divine plans

will provide the former, and the precious things extracted from the Gentiles shall supply the latter. The silver and gold of the nations belong to Yahweh, and He will demand it of them in due course. Isa. 60:9-11 declares that the “wealth of the Gentiles” will flow unto Zion (see margin).

References to the millennial temple are found throughout the Word. It is described as a “house of prayer for all nations” (Isa. 56:7; Mk. 11:15-17), the erection of which will be supervised by Christ (Zech. 6:12). Isaiah declares that, like Solomon’s temple, it will be built with the assistance of foreign labour (Isa. 60:10), and this will possibly form part of the tribute that those nations that submit to Christ, will willingly contribute (Psa. 72:10). When opened for service, Christ will officiate therein as King-priest (Psa. 110; Zech. 6:13; Eze. 43:7), assisted by his glorified brethren as the royal aristocracy of king-priests of that Age (Rev. 5:9-10).

All nations that survive the judgments of Armageddon will regularly send representatives to worship at Zion (Zech. 14:16), whilst the temple will continuously receive those voluntary worshippers who may like to present themselves there for that purpose on their own account (Zech. 8:22-23; Isa. 2:2-3; 66:23). The divine glory, manifested through Christ and the saints, will fill the temple (Eze. 43:1-2; Dan. 12:3; Mat. 13:43) for all to see (Isa. 66:18), acting as an incentive to the mortal population to strive to attain unto a similar glory at the end of the age (Rev. 20:12; 1Cor. 15:28).

This literal temple is typical of the spiritual temple that Christ is building, and to which the apostles made frequent reference (2Cor. 6:16; 1Pet. 2:5-9).

Silver and gold will glorify the spiritual temple also, for these metals are likewise used symbolically throughout Scripture. Silver is the metal of redemption (cp. Lev. 5:15; Exo. 30:11-16), whilst gold is that of a tried faith (1Pet. 1:7). The “precious sons of Zion” were likened to gold, until they revealed that they were but earthen pitchers. Being not of faith, they were rejected (Lam. 4:2). Symbolic silver

and gold (acts of sacrificial devotion and of faith) will adorn the spiritual temple, as the literal metals will the literal temple. Peter likens these metals to the means of redemption found in "the precious blood of Christ" (1Pet. 1:18-19). Those redeemed from "out of the nations" (Acts 15:14) constitute the precious things of Yahweh, His "silver and gold" extracted from the Gentiles, by which He will glorify His spiritual temple.

VERSE 9

"The glory of this latter house" — The Revised Version renders this: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former." This is a reference to the glory of the millennial temple, because the appearance of Zerubbabel's temple never equalled, let alone excelled, that of Solomon's. The shekinah glory was absent from the second temple altogether; it had been withdrawn in the days of Ezekiel because of the wickedness of the people (Eze. 11), but it will be manifested in that of the future Age, revealed through Christ and the saints.

"shall be greater than the former, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The latter-day glory shall excel that of Solomon's temple, for then the glory appeared only over the Mercy Seat and between the Cherubim, whereas the divine glory to be manifested in the future Age will be revealed through the family of Yahweh, each member of which will show forth "the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). Zerubbabel and his co-labourers were encouraged to labour in the hope of participation in this glory.

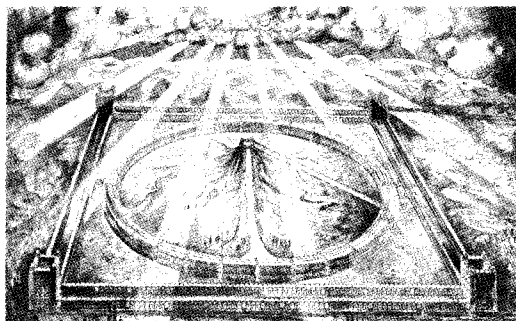
The apocalypse of it in the latter days (see Isa. 66:18) is closely connected with world peace (see v. 9; Isa. 9:6; 60:18), and this will bring to consummation the divine intention, initiated when the tabernacle was first set up in Israel, that Israel would become a witness to all peoples (Deu. 28:10).

The four aspects of the one temple (for the tabernacle is sometimes so described) are thus associated with Law, Grace, and Glory.

The tabernacle and Solomon's temple were associated with Law; the second temple witnessed Grace (in the restoration of Israel and the ministry of the Lord Jesus therein); the millennial temple will manifest the apocalypse of glory. The second temple was destroyed by war (in AD70), and did not witness the peace promised by Haggai, showing that the fulfilment of his words still awaits the future.

"and in this place I will give peace, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The Hebrew word for "peace" is *shalom*, derived from a root signifying "to join as one." The peace thus suggested is not merely the cessation of war, but a complete fusion in fellowship of the two parties involved (see Jn. 17:21). "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you," declared the Lord Jesus to his apostles, as he brought home to them the unique relationship they enjoyed with him and the Father (Jn. 14:27). This is the real *shalom*!

World-peace in the future is associated with Mount Zion and the temple to be erected there (see Zeph. 3:11, 15), for the sacrifices and services to be provided in that place will unite the world as one (see Psa. 85:8-9; Jer. 3:16-18; Eze. 43:7; Isa. 2:2-4; Psa. 122). Jerusalem will constitute the "throne of Yahweh" (Jer. 3:17; Mat. 5:35), and to it the nations will assemble for worship (Zech. 14:16). The peace that will then "flow as a river" from Zion was prefigured in the days of Zerubbabel, inasmuch as Yahweh blessed the work of the returning exiles with success and a measure of peace (see Ezra 5:5-6; 6:14-15, 22).





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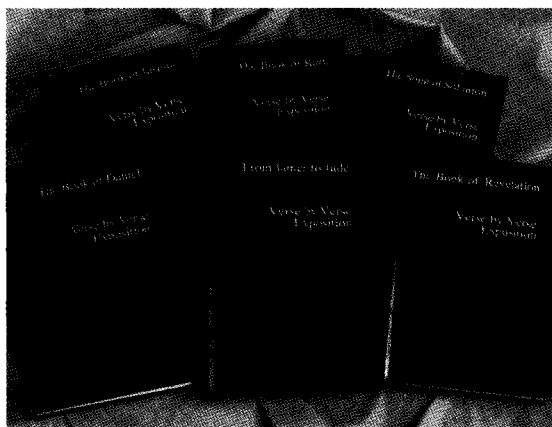
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— Based on the notes of
Bro. H. P. Mansfield, and the
expositions of our pioneer
brethren.

A MESSAGE TO CONFIRM
THE DIVINE BLESSING UPON
A WORK OF FAITH.

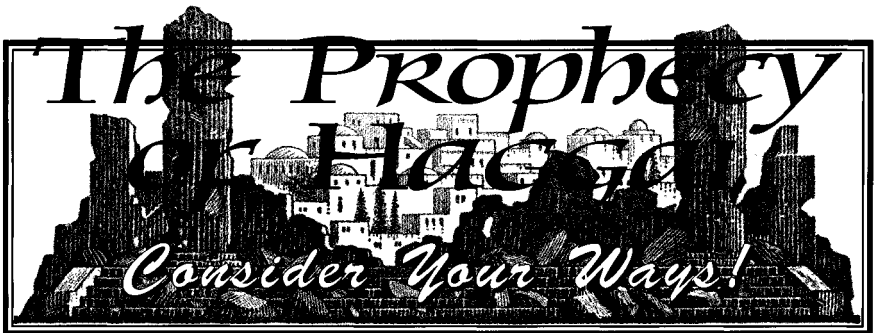
A PROPHECY TO ASSURE
THAT YAHWEH'S PURPOSE
WILL BE FULFILLED.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
CONTEMPORARY PROPHECY
OF ZECHARIAH.



Haggai ch. 2:10 to 2:23 Introduction to Zechariah

A **LOGOS** MAGAZINE



Analysis of the Prophecy

A FIVE-FOLD MESSAGE OF GRACE, COMFORT AND HOPE!

1. A Message TO AROUSE (1st of 6th month) — ch. 1:1-11.

"Build the house" (v. 8)

- a. Introduction.....v. 1.
- b. Consider Your Waysvv. 2-6.
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2. A Message TO COMMEND (24th of 6th month) — ch. 1:12-15.

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- a. Future Judgment On Israel's Enemiesvv. 20-22.
- b. Future Blessings For Israel's Sonsv. 23.

CHAPTER 2:10-19

A Message to Confirm

Encouraged by the words of the prophet and the action of their leaders, the people now work with enthusiasm, defying the opposition shown by the Samaritans and others. Over two months have passed since the previous reassuring message had been delivered to them, and now they could see some tangible results for their labour. The opposition of their enemies has been successfully countered, and the walls of the temple were beginning to rise. But what about their own affairs? Are they still to experience the frustrations of the past, when they laboured hard but brought in little, and even that came to less?

Haggai had declared that the curse of God rested on their efforts; is that to continue? Another message delivered to the people by the prophet declared that a change for the better could be expected. The previous frustrating and difficult conditions due to the poverty of their worship toward God revealed them as spiritually “dead,” their continuing problems witnessing to their state of defilement. But now that they are giving themselves enthusiastically to the work of God, they could expect a change for the better, for He had turned His face toward them, and they would be blessed. The prophet reveals that when the people applied themselves fully to the work of Yahweh, they would receive both temporal blessings now, and the promise of eternal blessings in the future. Whilst the material blessings they subsequently received are evidence of God’s goodness toward them, it must not be interpreted to mean that the possession of material things is inevitably an indication of godliness. On the contrary, many of the heroes of faith have “wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb. 11:37), whereas the spiritually decadent Laodiceans were “rich, and increased with goods” (Rev. 3:17). It is necessary to search deeply into circumstances to ascertain whether material prosperity is a blessing or a curse from God. Moses warned Israel that when “Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked” (Deu. 32:15), for flesh has a tendency to do that. If material blessings come, it is our duty to act as custodians of that which has been received from God’s bounty (1Tim. 6:17).

Previous Defilement of the People

— vv. 10-14.

By a reference to the law of defilement under the terms of the Mosaic covenant, Haggai showed the people why they had been suffering reverses: they had been “dead” to the things of God, and had ignored their solemn responsibilities in His service. Too much attention had been given to their own wants, rather than to the work of the temple. This gave their worship a

defiled character, unacceptable to the requirements of their God.

VERSE 10

“In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Yahweh by Haggai the prophet, saying” — This was a little over three months from the time the people had commenced to build, and two months since Haggai’s previous message

(v. 1). Meanwhile, the voice of Zechariah was heard in the eighth month (Zech. 1:1). The ninth month is *Chisleu*, approximately November/December. The success or failure of annual crops is largely dependent upon weather conditions at this time.

VERSE 11

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts" — See notes ch. 1:2.

"Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying" — Haggai posed a question of law to the people in order to demonstrate to them their true state in the sight of God. He called their attention to two dead bodies: one slain in sacrifice called "holy flesh," the other dead through natural causes. Anybody touching the former was constituted holy (Lev. 6:27; cp. Exo. 30:29), though that holiness could not then be passed on to others; each person had to make personal contact with the holy flesh for himself. On the other hand, anybody touching the body dead through natural causes was not only defiled thereby, but also defiled whoever or whatever was touched. Such defilement was contagious, representing the contaminating effect of sin.

The Law demonstrated the vital need to "put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Yahweh hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses" (Lev. 10:10). A twofold lesson was brought home to the people: [1] As a nation they were spiritually dead and defiled when they ignored their religious responsibilities; but having sacrificed their self-interest to serve Yahweh, they manifested the attitude appropriate to the holy nation; and [2] it is far easier to defile than to make holy.

VERSE 12

"If one bear holy flesh" — Holy flesh is flesh slain in sacrifice, constituted "holy" because it is separated for divine use. It is here contrasted with that which is dead through the mortality that came by sin (v. 13). The sacrificial death of Jesus as the culmination of a perfect and complete

offering upheld the righteousness of Yahweh, and therefore it cleanses that which is defiled (Rom. 6:2; Acts 2:38) — whereas normal death in a person under the Law, defiled ceremonially. By contact with Christ we are constituted "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1).

"in the skirt of his garment" — Lit., "the wing of his garment," from the Heb. *kanaph*, edge; emphasising the extremities of his covering: thus an extension of himself. The question, however, was rhetorical. Part of a sacrifice carried in the very garment of the priest would constitute a close identification with the offering made.

"and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy?" — Although the holy sacrifice be carried in the skirt, as a container, the skirt itself does not transfer the holiness of the sacrifice.

"And the priests answered and said" — The priests were divinely appointed to interpret the Law and expound it to the people (Deu. 17:8-9; Mal. 2:7; Lev. 10:10).

"No" — The question was, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his garment touch some other person, would this make the other person holy? The answer was in the negative because personal contact with the sacrifice that sanctified was necessary, in order to be constituted holy.

This answer should have impressed upon the Jews that membership of the holy nation availed nought unless they had personal contact with that which would sanctify them in the sight of Yahweh. Even contact with a sacrifice, however, availed little unless the people were prepared to apply the principles of the sacrifice in their lives. Previously they had been pleasing themselves by building up their personal wealth at the expense of the temple; but now they were sacrificing self-interest to serve God. The question and answer is most relevant to our standing in the sight of God. Only those are accounted "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1) who have made personal contact with that which sanctifies: the slain Lamb through baptism (Jn. 17:17, 19; Heb. 10:10; 13:12; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 2:11). It is

possible, however, for such to become “defiled” by spiritual death.

VERSE 13

“Then said Haggai” — A second question based on the first, is posed to show the importance of the principle of defilement and its effect.

“If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?” — Under the Law, a person was considered unclean if he touched a dead body (Num. 19:14-16), and this ceremonial uncleanness could be transmitted to others touching the person so defiled (cp. Lev. 22:4). This law revealed how easy it was for one to become defiled, or to defile, particularly when contrasted with the law of sanctification. It is far easier to defile morally than to make holy, and this the Law stressed!

The words “dead body” in this place are a translation of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, usually rendered “soul,” so that the word here signifies “dead soul.” The word is used similarly in Lev. 19:28; 21:1; 22:4; Num. 5:2; 6:11 (“the dead”); Num. 9:6, 7, 10 (“dead body”); Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6; 19:11, 13; Hag. 2:13 (“body”).

“And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean” — This clear and definite answer of the priests showed how easy it is to be defiled, and emphasised the need for separateness (holiness) and care in the activities of life.

VERSE 14

“Then answered Haggai” — A further response is given to this important conversation between prophet and priests.

“So is this people” — This statement of Haggai refers to the state of the people before they had commenced to do the work that God required of them. They were both defiled and defiling like the “dead body,” he mentioned; though claiming to be the holy nation they did not transmit holiness like the “holy flesh.” Their previous attitude toward the work of the temple was indicative of their general apathy toward the things of God, and showed them to be spiritually dead (Mal. 2:6-8).

“And so is this nation before Me, saith Yahweh” — Characteristics of apathy and indifference were evident throughout the nation.

“It Shall be Unclean”

Whilst defilement is a physical condition of the human race, uncleanness also results from dishonouring Yahweh by transgressing His laws and commandments. In many respects, the Jews had failed in this latter regard, not the least of which had been their disobedience in neglecting to continue the work of rebuilding the temple. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1Sam. 15:22). The law taught them that defilement was contagious (v. 13). Thus they had failed to consider that in their neglect of the law they not only defiled themselves, individually and nationally, but caused everything they touched to become similarly polluted; even to the earth itself, thereby bringing a curse upon the crops and general produce of the ground, by which they hoped to live. The fleshly mind, assuaged in slumber through ignorance or inattention to the requirements of the Spirit-Word, is oblivious to the reality of divine judgment. Paul taught a similar lesson: “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are...” (1Cor. 3:17).

Whilst these people had concentrated their minds upon their own affairs to the exclusion of their service to Yahweh, they had, in the process, lost sight of the fact that faithfulness to Him will certainly be rewarded. Once spiritually awakened to their responsibilities to Deity, they learned that their fidelity would result in providential blessings descending upon them. What of ourselves? It is needful to constantly “consider” our “ways,” always remaining aware of our duties and obligations to the One whom we claim to serve.

— J.U.

“and so is every work of their hands”

— Their labour had not been productive previously, for though “they looked for much, it came to little” (ch. 1:9). The prophet had already explained that this was because God had cursed it to demonstrate His opposition to the defiling attitude of His people (ch. 1:11).

“and that which they offer there is unclean”

— The very sacrifices they offered on the altar that had been set up fifteen years earlier (Ezra 3:4-5) were unacceptable, because they were not accompanied by acts of faith, thus demonstrating that the offerers understood and applied the lessons of sacrifice.

Present Blessings for the Faithful**— vv. 15-19.**

Those who work faithfully in the service of Yahweh will find that such labour “has promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8). This does not necessarily mean that they will receive material blessings (Paul never experienced such!), though with some this may be the case. When material increase does come, it is our duty to use it faithfully in the service of God.

VERSE 15

“And now, I pray you” — A divine appeal to examine the evidence of their circumstances and to respond faithfully and enthusiastically to the invitation of God.

“Consider from this day” — He bids them to go back in thought some fifteen years when they first interrupted the building of the temple.

“and upward” — Spanning the intervening years, from their original determination to cease work on the temple, to the time then current.

“From before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of Yahweh” — Rotherham renders: “So long as there had not been laid one stone upon another.” Before they began to build upon the foundation which they had already laid (Ezra 3:10). Haggai thus asked them to consider their state from the day that the work had ceased some fourteen or fifteen years ear-

lier, until they resumed it a few weeks back.

VERSE 16

“Since those days were” — The Revised Version renders: “Through all that time.” Compare also Zech. 8:10. They had to become aware of their continuing spiritually and materially unprofitable situation due to their dilatory attitude.

“When one came” — They had given all their efforts to building up their personal resources during the period that work on the temple had lapsed, but their returns remained poor (ch. 1:6), for the divine blessing on their activities had been withdrawn (ct. ch. 2:19).

“to an heap of twenty measures” — Add the ellipsis required by the context: “When one came to *where was expected* an heap of twenty measures...” There was an expectation but not a realisation.

“there were but ten” — Only half of what might have been expected was found.

“when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty” — Even less than half was then experienced. Because they had not “honoured Yahweh with their substance, and with the firstfruits of increase,” their barns were not “filled with plenty,” and their presses did not “burst out with new wine” (Pro. 3:9-10). They were the victims of their own folly.

VERSE 17

“I smote you with blasting and with mildew, and with hail in all the labours of your hands” — It was Yahweh who inflicted the natural calamities upon them, and He did so for their benefit, to bring home to them a realisation of their state of apathy. It was really an act of mercy on His part to prevent them from remaining self-confident, self-sufficient and hardened in their attitude. He inflicted these punishments upon them judicially as He had warned He would (Deu. 28:22), and this had come to pass “in His holiness” (Amos 4:2), for He will not tolerate sin.

“Yet ye turned not to Me, saith Yahweh” — They did not give due consid-

eration to the real cause of their sufferings and adversities, nor considered that Yahweh was punishing them for their good. They had attributed all their difficulties to unfortunate reverses, not acknowledging that the poverty of their service to God was the cause of their poverty in the field (see Jer. 5:3-4).

VERSE 18

“Consider now from this day” — In view of Haggai’s explanation of the cause of their past failures, the people were again asked to carefully consider the events of the past fifteen years.

“and upward” — From that day and forward.

“from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month” — The day the message was delivered to the people (v. 10). The blessings of God would be immediate upon the willing and enthusiastic action of the people.

“even from the day that the foundation of Yahweh’s temple was laid” — Nearly fifteen years had elapsed since the foundation of the temple had been laid (see note on v. 15), and the Jews were asked to carefully review that period. Certain outstanding incidents would have been impressed upon their minds. They would recall the great joy when the foundation was laid (Ezra 3:10-11), followed by the disappointment and frustration as the work ceased (ch. 4:23-24), and finally the revival that had now taken place (ch. 5:1-2) with the site cleared, and when the “stone had been laid upon stone in the temple of Yahweh” (Hag. 2:15). They had experienced times of personal depression and difficulties, with failed crops and the bitterness of defeat penetrating their very homes. Nor had there been much improvement since they had again commenced the work of building the temple, even though Haggai had promised them blessings. Nevertheless they laboured on in faith.

“consider it” — The repetitive theme of Haggai’s exhortation. The people had not only to observe, but also to deeply meditate upon the principles set before them.

VERSE 19

“Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth” — The devastation of famine had been expressed by Joel before the nation was exiled (Joel 1:12), and the people who returned from Babylon had to similarly respond to the divine appeal. Haggai’s message was delivered in the ninth month (v. 10) which was the beginning of winter. Obviously the seed was not yet in the barn, nor was there any indication then as to whether a good crop could be expected. They had to manifest faith that God’s blessing would accompany their loyal reaction.

“from this day will I bless you” — Without waiting for the obvious answer to his question, Haggai added the promise of Yahweh that there would be a spontaneous response. The Law promised abundant crops if the people proved obedient (Lev. 26:3; Deu. 28:2), and the prophet called upon them to look for immediate signs of God’s bounty, in the assurance that they would receive an ample harvest. The exhortation, therefore, was to labour on in the work of the Truth, for Yahweh would supply that which was needful. Such an attitude is always in season (Pro. 3:9-10; Mat. 6:30-34).



CHAPTER 2:20-23**A Message to Assure****Blessings for the Faithful in Future**

This final message was delivered on the same day as the last one. It showed that in addition to the immediate benefits that would accrue from service to God, there were also future advantages of far greater value and significance to consider. Not all the faithful are assured of present material blessings, but all are promised the future blessings of the kingdom if they “endure patiently unto the end” — and this realisation is the greatest incentive to labour, bringing clearly to view “the joy set before them” (Heb. 12:2). It is important that God’s servants should always look to that end, for there are no unmixed blessings now. Moses declared of Israel: “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deu. 32:29). When a son of God does that, he is more likely to “acknowledge God” in “all his ways,” so that God will “direct his paths” (Pro. 3:6). In Haggai’s final message, there was particular encouragement for those who had led the way to the spiritual revival of Israel, and had laboured hard among the dust and debris of the ruins that they might perform the will of God, and build to the glory of His name. They are yet to reap the full fruits of their labour.

**Future Judgments on Israel’s Enemies
— vv. 20-22.**

The nations surrounding the Jews vigorously oppose them in their work of rebuilding the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem. As such, these nations are representative of Gentiles in every age, and their posterity will experience special judgment after the same fashion.

VERSE 20

“And again the word of Yahweh came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying” — This was the same day as the previous message was given (cp. v. 10), but evidently at a later hour, to emphasise a further divine determination concerning the enemies of Israel.

VERSE 21

“Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying” — In organising the rebuilding projects in Jerusalem as governor, he was a type of Christ who will “build again the tabernacle of David” (Acts 15:16; see notes on Hag. 1:1). He had led the way

in the work of rebuilding and would see the successful completion of his labours. His work was accomplished, not by might of man, nor by fleshly power, but through the Spirit of Yahweh of Armies (Zech. 4:6). Thus all difficulties were levelled and the bitterness of trial was replaced by the joy of triumph (Zech. 4:7). In that he typified the work of the Lord Jesus who “shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11; see Zech. 4:9-10).

“I will shake the heavens and the earth” — This is a repetition of the prediction of v. 6. Being limited to the heavens (the governing power) and the earth (the social environment) the prophet indicates that the Gentile nations will be judged, disciplined and reformed.

VERSE 22

“And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms” — No events in Zerubbabel’s time satisfied this prediction, for it shall find its fulfilment at the coming of Christ in glory (Lk. 1:52). For similar predictions of that time, see Zeph. 3:8; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 12:8. The “throne” of kingdoms

relates to rulership.

“and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen”

— This phrase points to the power in opposition to that of Israel and Yahweh, and comprises those nations which refused to accept the judgmental “shaking” of Yahweh (v. 21).

“and I will overthrow the chariots”

— All fleshly weapons of war will be overcome and all war-mongers subdued (Rev. 11:18; Isa. 2:4; Psalms 46:9). The memorial of Pharaoh’s chariots and their overthrow in the Red Sea will be completed in the victories of the Lamb. The same Hebrew word is translated “overthrow” in both Exodus 15:7 and Haggai 2:22, *haphak*, which signifies: to turn about or over; by implication, to change, overturn, return, pervert. So the weapons of the Gentiles will be turned against themselves.

“and those that ride in them” — Those who participate in the violence and who delight in war (Psalms 68:30; Revelation 11:18).

“and the horses and their riders shall come down” — In ancient times

horses were used exclusively for war, and were generally obtained from Egypt. They are therefore representative of Gentile military might. The kings of Israel were forbidden to multiply horses (Deuteronomy 17:16), and in conformity therewith, Joshua houghed, or destroyed, all the horses taken in battle, and burnt all the chariots of war (Joshua 11:6-9). He therefore accomplished in Canaan what the Lord Jesus will do on a worldwide scale in the future. The “riders on horses” (see also Zechariah 10:5) represent the statesmen who seek to guide the destinies of nations and to direct the policies of the governments. The Apocalypse represents the blood of those slain in the national judgments as reaching “unto the horse bridles,” to the very leaders who will be guiding the horses: a symbol expressing the overthrow of present world rulers (Revelation 14:20).

“every one by the sword of his brother” — Mutual slaughter will bring about the annihilation of the forces gath-

ered together for battle at Jerusalem in the Age to come (Zechariah 14:13; Ezekiel 38:19-23; Habakkuk 3:14).

Future Blessings for Israel’s Sons

— v. 23.

The prophet continues his outline of the future, showing that the “goodness and severity of God” (Romans 11:22) will be manifested at Armageddon in that whilst destruction will be poured out upon the nations gathered for war against Jerusalem, the faithful at last receive their promised inheritance.

VERSE 23

“In that day, saith Yahweh of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant” — As governor of Jerusalem, son of David, and builder of the temple, Zerubbabel was a man of sign (Zechariah 3:8, mg), and typified Christ, the builder of both the spiritual (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11) and literal (Zechariah 6:12-13) temples. The Lord Jesus will fulfil this future work as the “servant of Yahweh” (Isaiah 42:1, 6; 49:1-7). The Master gave himself completely to performing the will of his Father (Psalms 40:6-9) and became His medium in bringing salvation to humanity (Acts 5:31). Paul explains this principle in Philippians 2:5-10.

“as a signet” — A signet is a seal of office or status used by those in authority to authenticate any written document. The allusion to Zerubbabel is particularly appropriate because he was set at the head of the nation in the place of his predecessor, Jeconiah, who was so completely rejected from the monarchy, that Jeremiah was sent with the message from Yahweh: “As I live, saith Yahweh, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon My right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence” (Jeremiah 22:24). In his place Zerubbabel was established as Yahweh’s signet or authority in the land (see Genesis 41:42; Esther 3:10; 8:8-10), and became the type of the Lord Jesus, who declared: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father” (Matthew 11:27). In the days of his flesh, the Lord’s words and deeds constituted the divine seal that he was of God (John 6:27);

his subsequent death and resurrection were as a divine seal authenticating the covenants of Promise (Rom. 1:3; 15:8). When Christ returns to the earth, he will exercise such power and authority as to clearly demonstrate that God is with him. Thus he will be as Yahweh's seal or signet, for everything that he will do is by the authority and power that he has received of the Father (Mat. 28:18).

"for I have chosen thee" — This applies not only to Zerubbabel and his antitype, the Lord Jesus, but to all the members of the royal house of David. All are in this category with whom He has made "an everlasting covenant," even "the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:4).

In connection with the building up again of the tabernacle of David, Simeon declared that "God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name." The principles of the "call" are clearly shown in that statement. They involve *Invitation* (God is taking), *Separation* (out of), and *Dedication* (for His Name). It is to that end that the call goes forth. The Lord declared: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (Jn. 6:44). Men are drawn or called by the power of the Word.

"saith Yahweh of Hosts" — Amid all the trials, frustrations and difficulties of life, help and strength can be obtained from Yahweh. Upon Him we must learn to lean.

Judah was taught that lesson through the problems that faced the nation in the days of Haggai. We must learn it today. Soon the storm of which Haggai spoke will burst on the kingdoms of the world, and the nations will be plunged into a catastrophic struggle for survival. But out of the maelstrom of evil will emerge a glorious future: the kingdom of God.

So it is with the personal storms of life. Let us learn the lesson that they provide opportunities to demonstrate our unswerving loyalty to Yahweh, our recognition that His strength is more

Zerubbabel

— Man of Faith and Action

Here was a man of the Truth. He acknowledged the Hand of Providence in his life. "I have chosen thee, saith Yahweh Sabaoth" (v. 23). Though born in Babylon, he had been preserved under the good hand of his God for the work he was to undertake in the divine purpose. He was thus "taken out of the Gentiles" in his calling to serve the "name" of Yahweh (Acts 15:14). Prince of the tribe of Judah, he understood that "the steps of a [faithful] man are established by Yahweh" (Psa. 37:23, marg.) and therefore submitted himself to fulfilling the will of Deity in his life. In this return from exile, only a relatively small number of those who had gone into captivity — or were born in those circumstances — were sufficiently concerned about their heritage so that they desired to return to the land of their fathers. They did so under the most difficult of conditions, probably retracing the route of faithful Abram. A feeble and insignificant company of "strangers and pilgrims" in the eyes of the world. Not since the days of Moses had there been a feat to compare with this: a long and perilous journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, across the hazardous Syrian desert. Zerubbabel led them by example. He demonstrated great courage and commitment to the cause of his God. With resolve and determination, he demonstrated that which could be accomplished when motivated by faith in Yahweh. No doubt because of his great faith, the prophet Haggai addressed his final message to Zerubbabel — personally. Despite the setbacks, the trials, the affliction and suffering, this man of faith — and those who were likeminded — were given an even greater reward than the success of their mission: They were shown that Yahweh would eventually overthrow the thrones of the Gentiles, and re-establish the Kingdom of Israel. In that day, Zerubbabel and those who gave him their full support as men and women of faith, will receive a just reward for their faithfulness; for they will "inherit the kingdom." — *J.U.*

than adequate for all our needs, and so seek Him that we may find Him. Then we will learn the meaning of Paul's exhortation:

"So we may boldly say, Yahweh is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6).

The Apocalypse in Haggai

HAGGAI prophesied about a century after Zephaniah. He was contemporary with Zechariah, and the rebuilding of the temple after the return from Babylon. He stirred up the people to finish it. Zerubbabel, son of David, ancestor of Joseph the husband of Mary, and of Mary and Jesus, was Governor of Judah under the Persians; and Joshua, the son of Josedech, high priest. These were "men of sign;" that is, men representative of ONE, who shall afterwards himself occupy, at one and the same time, the position of Governor and High Priest of the nation. Zerubbabel and Joshua are so regarded both by Haggai and Zechariah. In reference to the apocalypse of the Holy One they typified, Yahweh says in Haggai, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and that to be desired of all nations they shall come (*bahu*, third person, plural), and I will fill this house with glory." And this "yet once more," says Paul, "signifieth the removing of those things which may be shaken as of things that are constituted, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." The heavens and earth shaken in the Babylonian desolation, were shaken "once more" in the Roman. But the time approaches when the heavens, earth, sea, and dry land of the Gentile world, are also to be convulsed. Therefore Yahweh commanded Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel, and say, "I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith Yahweh of armies, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant, son of Shealtiel, and will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith Yahweh of armies" — ch. 2:6-7, 21-23. Now as these things did not come to pass in the lifetime of Zerubbabel, he was either a representative of his descendant, the Son of Mary, who shall be the ensign; or he must be raised from the dead if it is to be personally accomplished in him. Whichever alternative may be accepted, this is certain, that Zerubbabel is to be a living man when the shaking of the nations predicted shall come to pass. The prophecy then, relates to our future, and will be found hereafter to have been incorporated in some of the scenes of the Apocalypse. — *J. Thomas, Eureka.*

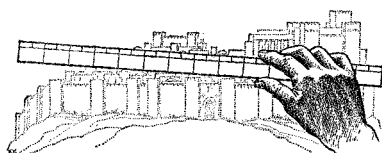
IMPOSSIBILITIES become possibilities when God is helping. Thus Paul could say: "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." But mark! Those only are assisted who recognise the necessity for obedience, and who set to work with a determination to render it. "Yahweh is with you, while ye be with Him." Divine help enabled Noah to perform the superhuman work of maintaining his integrity in the midst of a wholly godless world; it enabled Jeremiah and Ezekiel to testify during a long course of years in the teeth of a rebellious and blood-thirsty nation; it miraculously brought Israel a threefold increase of the earth's products on every sixth year, so that

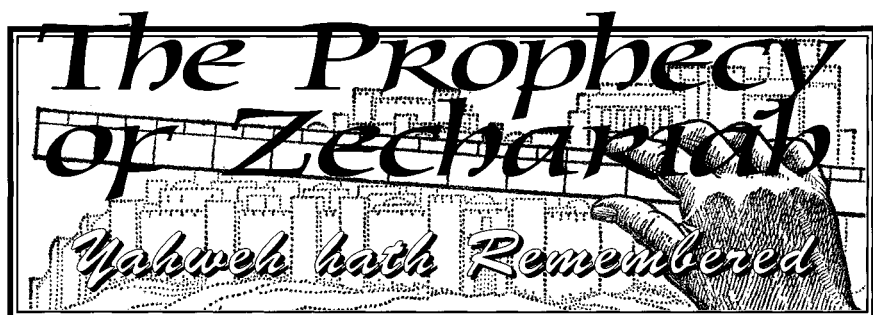
God's command concerning the seventh might be observed. Divine help will, in like manner, enable God's children in this generation to fulfil the precepts given for their rule of conduct. In giving commands, God has taken into consideration the aid He has purposed to afford. He does not mock; that which He has enjoined He will most surely help us to carry through. There is nothing too hard for God. Therefore, in obeying His injunctions, natural consequences must not be taken into account. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong on the behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him." — *A. T. Jannaway.*

The Apocalypse in Zechariah

THE next prophet in the order of the Old Testament is Zechariah; a book which, like all the preceding, is intimately connected with the Apocalypse of the Anointed Jesus. Zechariah was contemporary with Zerubbabel, Joshua the High Priest, and Haggai, and prophesied about 520 years before the birth of Jesus. Like John in Patmos, Zechariah had a Vision of Horses of divers colours — red horses, bay horses, and pale horses, ranged behind a Man upon a red horse, standing among myrtle trees. The branches of myrtle trees were used in the construction of booths under which Israel dwelt in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. In their rebelliousness the Jews are regarded as briers and thorns; but in restoration, because of righteousness, they are olive branches, pine branches, myrtle branches, and palm branches. When, therefore, it is prophesied in Isaiah 55:13, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to Yahweh for a name, for an aion-memorial that shall not be cut off;" and in ch. 41:19, "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the olive-tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together; that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of Yahweh hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel (Christ) hath created it:" — when these things are declared, it not only imports that the land previously desolate shall become like Eden, the Garden of Yahweh (Eze. 36:35), but that all its inhabitants in Messiah's Olahm, the Millennial Aion, shall be trees of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh, that He might be glorified (Isa. 61:3). These considerations fix the time of Zechariah's horses *at rest*, — at the Feast of Tabernacles first ensuing, when the Holy One of Israel, the Man on the Red Horse, shall have completed his conquests, and shall be Prince of Peace in the midst of Israel. He and his cavalry march to and fro through the earth with blood, signified by redness, famine by the bay, and pestilence by the pale or whitish, until the earth is reduced to submission, and obtains rest from these calamities. This vision is reproduced in the Apocalypse, only on a more extended scale, but with the same result. — *J. Thomas, Eureka.*

THE PROPHECY OF ZECHARIAH





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- a. The Coronation of Joshuach. 6:9-15.
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4. The Coming Day of Judgment — chs. 12-14.

- a. Israel to Seek the Good Shepherdch. 12.
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- c. The Glorious Consummation:
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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET

Zechariah lived at a most significant epoch of Jewish history. The seventy years captivity in Babylon, predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2) had come to an end; Babylon had fallen before the Medo-Persian onslaught, and after reigning jointly with Darius for two years (Dan. 5:31), Cyrus had assumed sole authority over the empire.

He immediately introduced a policy of religious tolerance. One of his first acts was to issue a decree inviting the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, and rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2). This fulfilled the two hundred year-old prophecy of Isaiah who had actually named Cyrus as the one who would open the way for the Jews to return (Isa. 44:28).

The greatest excitement prevailed among spiritually-minded Jews in Babylon when the decree was published (Psalm 126). Two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, undertook to organise the return. Zerubbabel was a descendant of David (1Chr. 3:1-19), and the acknowledged leader of the people; Joshua was high priest. Together they represented the civil and religious authority of Israel.

Some 49,697 Israelites (Ezra 2:64-65) of all tribes and classes, including Haggai and Zechariah as Yahweh's prophets through whom He subsequently revealed His purpose, responded to the call. They uprooted themselves from Babylon to commence the long and wearying trek back to the land of their forefathers. A difficult four month's journey lay before them (Ezra 7:9), but full of enthusiasm, they were undeterred by the prospect of it. They were moved by a religious zeal. They knew that Yahweh was with them, and they believed that they had sufficient faith to surmount any problem that might face them. Moreover, they had the full support of the powerful Persian Government. By decree of Cyrus they were not only encouraged to return, but were given the vessels of the Temple that Nebuchadnezzar had seized seventy years earlier, together with a large sum of money to assist them in the work they had set themselves to do (Ezra 1:7).

For what more could they wish? With the backing of the most powerful monarch of the day, with sufficient wealth to establish their project, and with the assured blessing of Heaven above, they could not fail!

The only thing they lacked (but they did not then realise this) was sufficient faith to enable them to "remove mountains." They were to be faced with mountains of difficulties that would test them thoroughly, and find them wanting.

The Work Commenced

On arrival in the land they saw the full extent of the work before them: cities neglected, Jerusalem in ruins, the site of the temple a charred mass of burnt debris. They had expected all this, however, and it did not deter them. Anxious to grapple with the work, they took up their abodes in various places, and awaited the seventh month when, appropriately, they would celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles that commemorated their deliverance from Egypt (Lev. 23:29-43). At this time, also, they set up the altar, arranged for regular services of worship, and made initial preparations for the building of the temple (Ezra 3).

All this activity was viewed with hostility by surrounding nations. And the Jews became increasingly conscious of this. Though still full of enthusiasm for the work before them, it was now intermixed with a measure of fear, as they sensed the growing antagonism manifested by their neighbours (Ezra 3:3). The Jews had many enemies who did not want to see a powerful Judah arise again on their borders.

In this atmosphere of growing hostility the work began. The temple site was cleared of the rubble and rubbish of seventy years of desolation, and the foundations were laid. The people at last saw some tangible result of their labors, and celebrated it with manifestations of the greatest joy. A special service of thanksgiving was arranged, and the people met together to thank Yahweh for His goodness toward them.



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The Man Among the Myrtles

The Divine Scouts and
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Zechariah ch. 1:1 to 1:10

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Continuing from p. 47: The Work Commenced

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR: *Zechariah*

But there were mixed feelings at that gathering. Some, who were old and had seen Solomon's temple in its glory, wept when they saw the state of the ancient site, and the poverty of the new foundations in comparison with the previous glory seventy years before. They could not resist their tears of grief as they recalled the fallen glory of Israel. But their lamentations were drowned by the excited members of the congregation who saw the evidence of something accomplished. Their cries of exultation triumphantly echoed among the hills and valleys of Jerusalem, until the whole city seemed wrapped with the sounds of joy (Ezra 3:13).

A shortlived joy it was! When the adversaries of the Jews, and particularly the Samaritans, heard that the children of the captivity were building the temple, they took counsel together, and laid plans to defeat the project.

They first tried subtilty, cunningly offering to assist in the building, hoping to take the Jews off guard, and sabotage the work from within. But Zerubbabel was too astute to be taken in by these offers of friendship. "*Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God,*" was his reply (Ezra 4:3).

Nothing daunted by this opposition, the adversaries tried other means. "*They weakened the hands of the people, and troubled them in building*" (v. 4). They corrupted the Persian officials with bribes, so that the promised help became tardy and ineffectual (Ezra 4:5, 7). They petitioned the court of Persia, making false accusations against the Jews, and calling upon the Government to stop the rebuilding of the temple.

In the meantime, Cyrus had died, and their representations were given sympathetic consideration by his successor.

It was a troublous time for the Persian administration. The death of Cyrus was followed by the reign of his son Cambyzes who continued for a little over seven years. On his death, the throne was seized by an usurper, known to history as Smerdis, but called Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:7. His position as ruler was precarious, for he was faced by many enemies. Desperately searching for allies, he was not in a position to support such an unpopular cause as that of the Jews. Pressed by the powerful adversaries of Zerubbabel, and seeking to placate them, he issued a decree that the building of the temple should cease forthwith (Ezra 4:21).

It seemed the death-knell to all Jewish hopes. Triumphantly their enemies demanded that the work cease in compliance with the Persian decree. By "force and power" (Ezra 4:23) they saw that it was carried out, probably demolishing all that had been built up (cp. Ezra 3:10 with Hag. 2:18 — 15 years later).

The work thus came to an untimely end. Instead of the temple site being a hive of industry, with people active and happy in the work of Yahweh, the work ceased, the temple grounds became deserted, the people returned to their domestic activities thoroughly discouraged.

A state of depression settled over the nation. The enthusiasm of the people had completely evaporated. They turned from the work of God, and gave themselves to building up their own material resources, spending lavishly on their homes whilst the temple lay neglected (Haggai 1:4). They claimed that "the time had not come for Yahweh's house to be built" (v. 2), thus using Jeremiah's prophecy to justify their indolence and inaction in the work of God.

Why should this happen? Why did Yahweh permit the adversaries of Judah to triumph and His work to languish, even if only temporarily?

The answer is, to test His workmen.

Such questions are often asked as though the work of the Lord should never suffer reverses. Some reason in such a way as though the labor of the Truth should reveal only a triumphant procession from one success to the next. And when temporary defeat comes (for absolute defeat is impossible in the work of God), it is sometimes interpreted as an indication that we should lay down our tools, declare that the "time is not ripe," and turn

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR: *Zechariah*

to other things. Thus the work of Yahweh is permitted to "lie waste."

Actually, the opposition Judah received was the people's opportunity to demonstrate faith and courage. They should have considered it as a test on the part of Yahweh "to see what was in their heart" (Deu. 8:2). Even though the time period decreed had not been fulfilled, there was no need to so completely turn from the work in hand. They should have heeded the example of David. He desired to build a temple, but when told that the time was not ripe, he did the next best thing: he made preparations for the building that Solomon later took in hand (1Chr. 29:2-5). Judah could have done likewise in the days of Zerubbabel, patiently awaiting the time when God would remove the difficulties then facing them. The people let the opportunity to demonstrate their faith and confidence in Yahweh slip from their grasp; their enthusiasm withered away because it rested upon their own strength.

So the work ceased for a time.

It was towards the end of this period that the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah arose to revive the flagging enthusiasm of the people. Ezra 5:1 records that "*Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.*"

These two prophets co-operated together in a wonderful work, supplementing the labours of each other. Zechariah seems to have been a young man (his grandfather had returned to the land with Zerubbabel; Neh. 12:4), Haggai was presumably an old man for he speaks as though he had seen the first temple in its glory (Hag. 2:3). Thus youth and experience worked side by side providing a wonderful example to the people of Israel both young and old. Such co-operation is valuable in every age; it is indicated by the Word, and makes for smoother, more effective work in the service of Yahweh.

The words of encouragement and exhortation proclaimed by the two prophets had the desired effect. They enthused the people to the work. Once again Zerubbabel and Joshua took the lead in reorganising the building of the temple. The people became re-energised by a new-found zeal. The work of building was recommenced, and once again Jerusalem became the scene of enthusiastic labour.

But the adversaries of the Jews looked upon this stirring activity with the greatest antagonism. They challenged the Jews as to their right to commence a work prohibited by the Persian authorities. They threatened that they would lodge a complaint with the government if it continued. But now the people were determined to proceed, come what may, and refused to give heed to these threats. "*The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius*" (Ezra 5:5).

Darius Hystaspes now ruled, and a vast change had taken place in the Persian administration. The adversaries of the Jews had sought the help of Smerdis, the usurper of the throne, thereby forcing the Jews to cease their labors, but he had been overthrown in favor of the legitimate ruler. As enemies of Smerdis, the Jews automatically became the friends of Darius. He refused to take the complaint of the Samaritans on its face value, and made proper investigation into the matter. The archives of Persia were searched, and a copy of the decree of Cyrus was discovered. Darius endorsed this, and added to its provisions in favour of the Jews, by calling upon their very adversaries to assist in forwarding the work (Ezra 6:7-12)!

Here was direct evidence of divine blessing. It caused great rejoicing among the people, and enabled the work to be brought to a successful completion. The record declares: "*The elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel*" (Ezra 6:14).

Finally, through much tribulation, the work was finished, the temple rebuilt, and the worship of Yahweh restored. He determined that this should be so, and the victory was His

and not that of the people. The people's motives in contributing their energy and substance to the project had yet to be revealed, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). The prophecies of Zechariah bear witness to this fact.

They also reveal that the incidents of the time are typical of the work of the Lord Jesus at his first and second advents. As Zerubbabel and Joshua labored to build first the foundation and then the temple, so did he and so will he. He laid the foundation of his spiritual temple in the work he accomplished over 2000 years ago; he will return to complete it and reveal the headstone.

He will also supervise the building of a literal temple in Jerusalem in the Age to come. His work in both particulars is foreshadowed in the stirring, heroic times of Zerubbabel and Joshua when the Jews struggled against tremendous odds to perform the work of God, and bring it to a successful completion. The prophecy of Zechariah, whilst relating to the future, is based upon the history of the past, upon events with which he was very familiar in his day. His visions, built on the events of the times, must have been greatly encouraging, and yet also sobering, to the people. His prophecy is therefore not only predictive of the future, but filled with the drama of the past, and packed with exhortations to faith and courage which are applicable today.

We know very little of the prophet himself apart from the meagre references in Ezra and Zechariah. He was the grandson of Iddo, a priest who returned under Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:16; Zech. 1:1). As both prophet and priest he would have been greatly interested in the completion of the temple, and greatly excited to receive the visions of the glorious temple to be erected in the future. As a priest of the Aaronic order he would be able to serve in the former, and as a king-priest of the Melchizedek order, he will be able to serve in the latter.

May the Divine blessing be with us as we study this wonderful book, that we might stand with Zechariah in that day of glory.

CHRONOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

(See Isaiah 45:1-13; Jer. 25:11-12; Jer. 29:10)

- BC606**First invasion by Nebuchadnezzar. Captivity begins, to last seventy years (Jer. 25:11-12; 27:8).
- BC589-7**Final invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in ninth year of Zedekiah which resulted in two years' siege (2Kgs. 25:1-2; 2Chr. 36:21).
- BC537**Decree of Cyrus. The return organised under Sheshbazzar. The altar is built in the seventh month (Ezra 1:1-8; 3:1-4).
- BC535**2nd month. Foundations of house laid (Ezra 3:8).
- BC535-530** Samaritan opposition — the work ceases until completion of seventy years from final invasion BC587, when the temple was destroyed (Ezra 4).
- BC530**Cyrus died — succeeded by Cambyses his son; then by Smerdis and Darius Hystaspes (522), a relation of Cyrus who reigned 35 years.
- BC520**2nd year of Darius. Prophecy given by Haggai (6th month) and Zechariah (8th month). The work is renewed amid blessing (Hag. 2:19). By a new decree, Darius supports the Jews (Ezra 4:24, with ch. 6).
- BC519**In the eleventh month, Zechariah receives his first seven visions (Zech. 1:7-6:15).
- BC518**Deputation from Bethel (see note Zech. 7:2) on the eve of the completion of seventy years from the destruction of the temple. Zechariah warns against mere formalism in religion, and promises a blessing for true repentance.
- BC516**Temple completed and dedication celebrated (Ezra 6:15).

The Second Year of Darius

The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah are carefully dated. The two prophets labored in conjunction, stimulating the people to labor in the work of Yahweh. This was in the second year of Darius, king of Persia (Zech. 1:1; Ezra 4:24; 5:1). Significant dates of this year are as follows:

6th month — Haggai's first prophecy (Hag. 1:1-15).

7th month — Haggai's second prophecy (Hag. 2:1-9).

8th month — Zechariah's introductory exhortation (Zech. 1:1).

9th month — Haggai's 3rd and 4th prophecies (Hag. 2:10-23).

11th month — Zechariah's seven night visions (Zech. 1:7-6:15).

ANALYSIS OF THE PROPHECY

Theme:

This is enigmatically given in Zechariah 1:1, as expressed in the meaning of the names there supplied: *Zechariah = Yah hath remembered*; *Berechiah = Yah hath blessed*; *Iddo = The appointed time*. These names in conjunction reveal the message, "*Yahweh hath remembered and Yahweh hath blessed at the Appointed Time.*" This is the encouraging theme of Zechariah's prophecy, showing that notwithstanding the difficulties to be faced by the faithful remnant, the divine purpose will be achieved, and His people redeemed.

The prophecy is divided into four parts which should again be subdivided according to their various messages. The main divisions are as follows:

1. A series of seven visions given during one night, whilst the temple was in course of being erected (chs. 1-6:8).
2. A series of enacted parables that are shown to be typical of the future (ch. 6:9—ch. 8).
3. Undated prophecies which reveal the limitations of the work then being undertaken (chs. 9-11).
4. Prophecy of the coming Day of Yahweh, setting forth the glorious consummation of His purpose (chs. 12-14).

Zechariah's prophecies draw largely upon the events of his day as a foundation for his prophetic vision of the future. His message was designed to give encouragement then and now, for it draws a vivid picture of the glory to be manifested upon earth in the Age to come. Certainly his messages affirm that the humble willing service of faithful men and women will not go unnoticed nor unrewarded.

We proceed now to give a more detailed outline of the four parts of the *Book of Zechariah*, which were briefly introduced above.

Part 1: Early Prophecies — chs. 1-6:8

Temple Being Rebuilt.

Introduction: True Repentance will be Rewarded — chs. 1:1-6.

1. Vision: Zion shall see Prosperity — ch. 1:7-17.
2. Vision: Four Craftsmen Terrify Israel's Adversaries — ch. 1:18-21.
3. Vision: Jerusalem's Downtreading is Limited — ch. 2.
4. Vision: A Change of Raiment for the High Priest — ch. 3.
5. Vision: The Whole Earth to be Illuminated by Divine Light — ch. 4.
6. Vision: The Flight of the Storks — ch. 5.
7. Vision: Two Mountains of Brass and Four Chariots of War — ch. 6:1-8.

Some authorities suggest treating chapter 5 as two visions. However, a careful consideration of the matter will reveal it to be a continuous vision, the latter portion developing out of the former.

Notice that these seven visions commence with the statement that Yahweh “*is sore displeased with the heathen*” (ch. 1:15), and conclude (after the four warrior-chariots have completed their mission) with the statement: “*They have quieted My spirit*” (ch. 6:8).

In these seven visions, Yahweh strongly affirms His covenant to redeem and restore His people (“seven” is the covenant number). They are graduated visions, revealing the following interesting sequence: [1] Zion shall see prosperity due to [2] the work of the four craftsmen who will [3] cause the downtreading of Jerusalem to cease. [4] Jerusalem’s glory will be graced by the coming high priest (the Lord Jesus), who [5] will cause the Lampstand of the Spirit to illuminate the world, [6] darkened by apostasy, and [7] through his four warrior-chariots will overthrow the forces of the Gentiles.

Part 2: Enacted Parables — chs. 6:9-8:23.

The seven night visions are followed by:

1. Exiles from Babylon invited to witness the coronation of Joshua — ch. 6:9-12.
2. Deputation from Bethel instructed in the true principles of godliness — ch. 7.
3. Words of encouragement, outlining the future blessing of Jerusalem — ch. 8:1-17.
4. Proclamation declaring that Fasts should be converted to joyful Feasts — ch. 8:18-23.

Again notice the sequence as it applies to the future, when Gentilism will be overthrown by the conquests of Christ as outlined in the seventh vision:

1. The returning exiles from Babylon (Rev. 18:4) will witness the coronation of the Lord Jesus in the temple (Zech. 6:9-12).
2. The nations will be instructed in the true principles of religion (Zech. 7) See Isa. 2:2-4.
3. The divine blessing will rest upon Jerusalem as the city of the great King — Zech. 8:1-17; cf. Matt 5:35.
4. The mourning of the present age will be turned into joyful celebrations in “the future age” (ch. 8:18-23).

Part 3: Later Prophecies — chs. 9-11.

These messages are undated, and were probably given after the temple was completed. They can be sub-headed thus:

1. Human Conqueror or Divine Prince of Peace? — ch. 9.
2. The Future Work of the Good Shepherd — ch. 10.
3. The Rejection of the Good Shepherd and the Scattering of the Flock (an enacted parable) — ch. 11.

These prophecies reveal that Israel would again be scattered, the temple again be overthrown, but that the ultimate redemption of the nation and people of Yahweh is nevertheless sure. Thus Zerubbabel, Joshua and their fellows (together with all who have ears to hear) were taught that they should delight in doing the will of Yahweh in anticipation of the ultimate glory to be revealed, and not limit their spiritual vision to labouring only for the establishing of the temporary restoration then taking place, which would, in due time, be again overthrown. The lesson remains today.

There is nothing permanent in that which is being set up now whether ecclesially or otherwise. All will be replaced at Christ’s return. But if we labor faithfully in these temporary things, with our hopes centred upon that which will ultimately be manifested, our labors will not be in vain in the Lord (1Cor. 15:58).

Part 4: The Final Consummation — chs. 12-14.

These chapters provide a continuous prophecy, but can, for convenience's sake, be divided as follows:

1. Israel to Seek the Good Shepherd — ch. 12.
2. Israel to be Cleansed and Regrafted into the Olive Tree — ch. 13.
3. The Glorious Consummation: Yahweh's Name Universally Honoured — ch. 14.

It is evident that these last chapters are given over to the Day of Yahweh: see ch. 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; ch. 13:1, 2, 4; ch. 14:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21.

In these last chapters, Yahweh is mentioned some 30 times, Jerusalem about 22 times, and the nations approximately 13 times. The Day of Yahweh will see Him elevated over all, will witness Jerusalem magnified over the nations, and the Gentiles humbled before Earth's Future King. That is the theme of these closing chapters of Zechariah's prophecy.

NOTABLE LEADERS

The greatest excitement prevailed among spiritually-minded Jews in Babylonia, when the decree was published (Psa. 126). Three faithful men — two of the royal family, and one of the Aaronic priesthood, took the lead.

Sheshbazzar, called "a prince of Judah" (Ezra 1:8), designated the "governor" (Ezra 5:14; Heb. *pechah*, the prefect of a district) and the "Tirshatha" (Ezra 2:63). He is almost certainly the "Shenazzar" of 1Chr. 3:18. Shenazzar was a son of King Jehoiachin, who was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar (BC598) and imprisoned in Babylon (2Kgs. 24:8-15).

Thirty-seven years later he was released and treated kindly by Evil-Merodach (2Kgs. 25:27-30) in BC568. In captivity he raised a family, two of his sons being Salathiel and Shenazzar. Salathiel (also called Shealtiel) had a son, Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:2). Shenazzar is said by Unger to mean *O Sin* (the moon-god) *Protect*. Sheshbazzar means *Sun god*; *Guard the Son*; or *Lord*. Both are Chaldean names.

Thus Sheshbazzar was heir to the throne of Judah. He made the journey to Jerusalem as the principal administrator and overall controller of the carrying out of the Imperial decree. But this was around BC536, some 62 years after Jehoiachin's captivity. He quickly disappears from the record, and his responsibilities devolve on his nephew, Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel is a Chaldean name, with the meaning of *Offspring of Babel*. He quickly took charge of the restoration, being now in a position vacated by Sheshbazzar, and holding the title of "Governor" in the days of the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 6:7) in BC520.

Joshua (Heb. *Yahshua*) was the son of Josedech, and thus of the line of Aaronic priests. Josedech is called Jehozadak in 1Chr. 6:15, and he was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar in BC587/586. His father Seraiah was the previous serving high priest in Jerusalem. Jehozadak has the meaning of *Yah is Righteous*, and Joshua signifies *Yah is Salvation*.

CHAPTER 1

THE DIVINE SCOUTS AND CARPENTERS

The work of the returned exiles was hindered by the opposition of neighbouring nations who were "at ease" (Ezra 5:3-4), but with all-seeing omniscience, Yahweh overlooked His people for good. His "eyes" were upon them (v. 5). Yahweh Tz'vaoth fought for them through the ministration of the Captain of the Host (Josh. 5:15). All this foreshadowed a greater triumph in the future. The night-visions of the prophet portray the means by which victory will be achieved. The two visions in this chapter depict: [1] The vision of the Man among the Myrtle Trees (Zech. 1:7-11) drew attention to the Feast of Tabernacles, at which time Haggai had stood up with the promise of divine help (Hag. 2:1). [2] The vision of the Four Horns and Carpenters (Zech. 1:18-21) reveals that Israel stood in a peculiar position as the nation protected by Yahweh, by whose power the land would be cleansed of the opponents and the city of Jerusalem rebuilt.

Real Repentance brings Reward — vv. 1-6.

The spirit of God falls upon Zechariah to announce His intentions to the people, calling upon them to heed the lessons of the past and apply them to the present, and to give themselves unreservedly to the service of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"In the eighth month" — Significantly the month *Bul*, following the preparation of the land by ploughing in order to prepare the fields for grain planting. Thus it represents the recycle of labour, and a meaningful month for Zechariah's prophecy to commence. He was to call upon the people to prepare for the work of restoration in Jerusalem.

"in the second year of Darius" — BC520; see chronology on p. 53. Already in the sixth and seventh months of this year, Haggai had exhorted the people to "be strong" in their determination to do God's will (Hag. 2:4), promising that if they laboured in the work of rebuilding the temple to Yahweh's glory, He would be with them to help and bless them (Hag. 1:13).

"came the word of Yahweh" — His voice is authoritative and will perform the

purpose of its Author (Isa. 55:11). The Word has the power to examine hearts and minds, and divide between that which is soulish and spiritual (Heb. 4:12). The prophecies of Zechariah would scrutinize the true intent of the people, that they might respond to its appeal.

"unto Zechariah" — Sig. *Yahweh hath remembered.*

"the son of Berechiah" — Sig. *Yahweh hath blessed.*

"the son of Iddo the prophet, saying" — Sig. *The Appointed Time.* The three names combined together express the theme of the book: "*Yahweh hath remembered and Yahweh hath blessed at the appointed time.*" The seventy years of desolation predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11; cp. Dan. 9:2; 2Chr. 36:21) were nearing their end, and the time of blessing was at hand.

VERSE 2

"Yahweh hath been sore displeased with your fathers" — The opening comment of Zechariah brings to their attention the laxity and indifference of the nation. The words "sore displeased" are emphasised in the Hebrew as: "displeased with a displeasure." The Hebrew *qatsaph* has the

Why Did the Work Cease?

With admirable purpose and with a spirit of dedication, many of the exiles availed themselves of the opportunity to return to the land and restore the temple. Early in the work the Samaritans, moved by a spirit of antagonism, caused the work to cease (Ezra 4:4-5). After a delay of fourteen or fifteen years Haggai and Zechariah, understanding from Jeremiah's prophecy of desolation that the previous negative decree was no longer operative, aroused their people to recommence the work. An inquiry by Tatnai, Persian governor for the territory west of the Euphrates, again halted the work; but Darius confirmed the original edict of Cyrus, verifying that the work should continue. By this time, however, a change had come over the people. No longer motivated by a fervour for "the hope of Israel" and an earnest desire to fulfil the purpose of their God, they were overcome by lethargy and indifference. They presumed that the hindrances in the work of restoration indicated that Yahweh was no longer in the work, and that He had lost interest in the project and had ceased to support them. Why did the work cease? Because the people no longer walked by faith. There is nothing that will destroy faith and works of faith more devastatingly than lethargy, indifference, and a careless insensibility toward obligations and responsibilities. "All things [including the trials, difficulties and set-backs] work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Yahweh permits reversals and calamitous circumstances to hinder His saints, that their faith might be tried and their dedication and determination be made manifest. The same principle applies to the people of God in every age. None have been promised an arm-chair ride to the kingdom. It is "through much pressure" [*Gr., thlipsis*] that we "must" enter into "the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Haggai and Zechariah expounded these spiritual ideals to the people with great vigour and in a spirit of commitment. Their efforts were rewarded. The people responded, renewed in faith. This is a lesson for Yahweh's people in every generation. — *J.U.*

significance "to crack off; be angry" (cp. v. 15). Yahweh was displeased with His people for their infidelity and carelessness in spiritual things. They had neglected the important work of building the temple and directing their attention to divine worship.

VERSE 3

"Therefore say thou unto them"

— Zechariah had to take up a prominent position in order to ensure that the people hear the voice of Yahweh, and recognise their responsibility.

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts" —

See notes on Hag. 1:2, and the exposi-

Yahweh, Sore Displeased

Why was He "very angry" with their fathers? (v2, NASB). It was not simply the neglect of their responsibilities to maintain the work on the temple. It was their general spiritual attitude. Certainly, they had bravely and determinedly made the arduous journey back to their land. But having committed themselves to the work of the Truth they had failed to honour their pledge. Return from exile was not enough to please Yahweh. They had committed themselves to His service, but had neglected to fulfil their word. The Word teaches that a vow to Yahweh must be kept. Thus it was the attitude of mind of the people and their general disposition which displeased Yahweh. Taking "the shield of faith" and the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6: 16-17), they should have "stood fast" and "striven together" without wavering, in the service of their God (Phil. 2:7). Believers in every generation should never forget that they have made a commitment to serve and honour Yahweh by walking in His ways and fulfilling His purpose in their lives. This is the way that leads to the kingdom. — *J.U.*

tion of this militant name of Yahweh. The Hebrew signifies: *He who will be armies*. The name is repeated in the prophecy of Zechariah to remind the people that the mighty army of heaven was at hand: both for judgment and mercy (cp. Rom. 11:22). The angelic forces would come to the aid of those who would turn to Yahweh and seek His help (cp. Paul's use of the term in Rom. 9:29).

"Turn ye unto Me, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The events of the times are typical of events yet in the future, when the full restoration of Israel will take place. At that time, a similar appeal will be made to the Jewish people (cp. Jer. 3:14).

"and I will turn unto you, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The divine response is immediate upon the faithful action of His people (Jas. 4:8). This was the promise through Jeremiah (ch. 25:5; cp. Mic 7:19) and Malachi (ch. 3:7).

VERSE 4

"Be ye not as your fathers" — The tragedy of Israel's history was the failure of the people to hearken to Yahweh's messengers, in consequence of which the threatened judgments fell heavily upon them (see 2Kings 17:13-14; 2Chr. 36:15-17; Jer. 7:25-26). Now the prophet appealed to the people to repent and seek the goodness of Yahweh.

"unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying" — Particularly Jeremiah (Jer. 35:15) and Ezekiel (Eze. 18:30). Though their predictions were opposed by the false prophets of their day, and ridiculed by the people (Jer. 5:30-31; 6:13-14), they were vindicated when the threatened punishment came to pass.

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts" — The militant name of the Deity (v. 3), to bring to the attention of the nation the seriousness of their position. Upon the basis of this great and terrible name (Psa. 99:3; Jer. 20:12) the prophet makes an appeal for spiritual reformation throughout Israel. If they failed to properly respond, then the awesome judgments of Yahweh Tz'va'oth would fall upon the people!

"Turn ye now from your evil ways,

and from your evil doings" — "Ways" is from the Hebrew *derek* signifying a pathway; a road (as trodden); and therefore a

Where are Your Fathers?

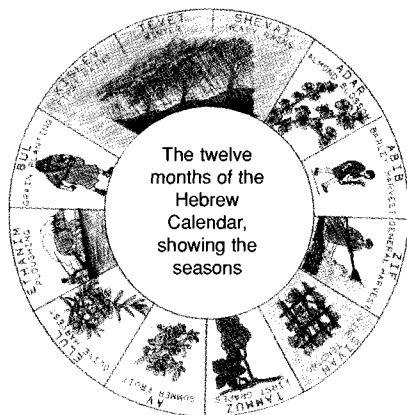
"Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" (v. 5, NASB). The abruptness and directness with which this question is introduced is arresting. Their fathers were dead. And the prophets who had lived in those times were dead also. It is not to be implied here that the "fathers" were not considering the inevitability of death, being engaged too much in following the desires of their hearts. It may have been a case of when they said "peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1Thes. 5:3). But what of the prophets, who were faithful to Yahweh? They had died also. Why? "The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all... A time to be born, and a time to die..." (Ecc. 2:14; 3:2). Hence the reality of Isaiah's words: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth... surely the people is grass..." (Isa. 40:6-7; cp. 1Pet. 1:24). The people of Deity in every age need always to be aware that the days of every individual are numbered. In contrast to man's mortality, "the Word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8; cp. 1 Pet. 1:25). To the generation of Zechariah's day, Yahweh presented a warning that is applicable to His people in every generation: "Your days are numbered. How will you spend those days? To which cause or causes will you devote your time and energies? Remember this: Now is the time to serve Yahweh; now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation. Your fathers failed to heed this warning. Will you be as heedless as your fathers? Or will you have "ears to hear" the word of Yahweh while you have opportunity?" — J.U.

course of life or mode of action. “Doings” is from *ma’alal*, describing an act. Thus both in the direction of life and in specific actions the people disgraced their calling, and caused Yahweh to appeal for a complete change in their attitude.

“but they did not hear, nor hearken unto Me, saith Yahweh” — See the repetition of this warning in Zech. 7:11 when the deputation came to Zechariah regarding the celebration of fasts.

VERSE 5

“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?” — The “fathers,” those *to* whom the Word was spoken, as well as “the prophets” or those *through* whom the Word came, had both passed away, but the Word had proved true. It alone “shall stand for ever” (Isa. 40:6-8). Events foretold and fulfilled in the past bore witness to this fact. Predictions concerning the future would likewise be vindicated in due time. Zechariah was thus able to present the most powerful credentials. Ultimately, the nation will be restored by the visitation of Elijah to those in exile at the coming of the Lord, and the “hearts of the fathers” will be turned “to the children” (Lk. 1:17; Mal. 4:6) by redemption from their former ignorance concerning the ancient covenants, fulfilled in Christ their savior.



VERSE 6

“But My words and My statutes which I commanded My servants the prophets” — The “words” constitute the *dabar*, the expressions and instructions provided through Israel’s leaders and prophets. The word “statutes” are from the Hebrew *choq* which refers to the enactments and commandments legislated, such as the decrees given at Mt. Sinai (cp. Deu. 17:19; 2Kgs. 23:3; 2Chr. 34:31; Ezra 7:11; Zech. 1:6). It is vital, not only to know of the statutes and instructions of Yahweh in obedience but to listen to His words that reveal the mind and character of the Father.

“did they not take hold of your fathers?” The margin has “overtake.” Yahweh’s predicted punishments concerning Israel had been fulfilled, and in this His Word had been vindicated. So complete was the fulfilment, that even those who had initially doubted the warnings of the prophets, had been compelled to acknowledge the truth of their words. See Jer. 7:3. Eze. 36:31. Lam. 2:8, 17. As Zechariah declared, God “had dealt with” Israel according to their ways.

“and they returned and said, Like as Yahweh of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us” — The people recognised the justice of the experiences they suffered, and the complete vindication of His Word. There is a contrast in this response to the voice of Yahweh: His “words” and “statutes” had been ignored; instead Israel had superimposed their own “ways” and “doings” which were antagonistic to the divine principles of life. The Law of Moses testified that it was upon the basis of “doing” the law, that such could “live in them” (Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29).

1ST NIGHT VISION:

THE MAN AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES

Between Zechariah 1:7 and 6:8, the prophet records seven visions that he received during the course of one remarkable night. In the first, he was shown a man

upon a red horse standing among myrtle trees. Behind him were three other riders on horses. From the darkness these four looked out upon the world, and saw with dissatisfaction that whilst the Gentiles were at ease, Jerusalem was in distress. The prophet then heard "good and comfortable words" spoken in regard to Jerusalem and Zion. He heard the promise given that Yahweh's house would be completed, and through prosperity the cities would spread abroad.

As with all the night visions seen by Zechariah, this one had an immediate application to the building of the temple then underway through the supervision of Zerubbabel and Joshua. But the ultimate and complete fulfilment awaits the future, when the Lord Messiah will supervise the erection of the "house of prayer for all nations" predicted in Isaiah 56:7, Mark 11:17.

The vision, therefore, was encouraging to those who were then labouring under difficulties, and in the face of the opposition of neighbouring nations who were "at ease" (Ezra 5:3-4). It revealed to them that their immediate work would be brought to a successful conclusion, whilst also revealing that what they were doing was typical of a greater destiny in the future in which they could share. It demonstrated that from the shadows Yahweh overlooked His people for good. His "eyes" were upon them (Ezra 5:5). Yahweh Tz'va'oth fought for them through the Captain of the host (army) whom Joshua had seen outside Jericho (Josh. 5:15), and who stood in the position that Christ now occupies (Isa. 55:4). Thus the triumph of Zerubbabel and Joshua then, through the aid of the angelic ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), foreshadowed the greater victory and triumph of the future when Christ and the saints assume the work of the angels as the glorious Elohim of the millennium (Heb. 2:5).

The Vision of the Man and the Myrtle Trees — vv. 7-17

The myrtle trees that surrounded the man of the vision are symbolic of the Feast of Tabernacles. Such a feast had been cele-

brated by the Jews that very year in the seventh month, and Haggai had then stood up before the people to proclaim Yahweh's promise of help (Hag. 2:1-2). The Feast of Tabernacles was the feast of harvest, deliverance and rejoicing, and foreshadowed the glory of the millennium (Zech. 14:16. Rev. 7:9-17). Thus the vision had a primary application to the days of Zechariah, and a secondary application to the days of the future Restorer of all things.

The Myrtle

The myrtle is a beautiful, fragrant and ornamental evergreen, noted for a rich hue of its green, polished leaves, and delightful flowers. The myrtle was often used to furnish wreaths of ancient heroes, and victors.

The Hebrew name is *hadas* (from which is derived the name Esther: *Hadassah*), a symbol of Israel in restoration (Isa. 55:13). It was one of the four species of trees the Israelites were commanded to use on the first day of Tabernacles (see Neh. 8:15; Isa. 41:19).

The common myrtle is a native plant growing not only in damp plains like the banks of the Jordan River and the Dan Valley, but also in other parts of the Land.

It is said that the leaves grow in pairs, suggesting an application to Jew and Gentile. They have scented flowers, from which a white five-lobed corolla and many white stamens are exerted. Five speaks of the principle of grace, and the "many" stamens that develop speak of the multitude of the redeemed. The fruit of the myrtle is a blackish-blue berry. The myrtle is a parable of the divine purpose to manifest in the people of Yahweh's choosing, the whiteness of righteousness, and the blueness of God manifestation.



VERSE 7

“Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month” — Three months after the initial message (v. 1), and two months to the day after Haggai’s proclamation of impending blessing (Hag. 2:18). Sufficient time had elapsed to indicate that the divine blessing was being extended to the people promising a bountiful harvest.

“which is the month Sebat” — Approx. February. The Hebrew name for this month is Shevat, a significant month, for the almond trees would be blossoming, and the fig trees began to “put forth.” The almond tree is called “the Awakening Tree” since it forecasts the coming of the spring, figurative of resurrection. The fig tree represents the nation of Israel restored to divine favour. Both symbols indicated that the time was at hand for the blessing of Yahweh to be experienced (Jer. 1:11-12. Song. 2:13).

“in the second year of Darius, came the word of Yahweh unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying” — See notes on v. 1.

VERSE 8

“I saw by night” — This was to be a singular night of visions, as a series of seven revelations were presented to Zechariah. They conveyed different elements of the divine purpose as it relates to the restoration of Israel. Thus “night-visions” are one of the “divers manners” mentioned by the apostle Paul in Heb. 1:1.

“and behold a man” — Heb. *ish*, an upright, prominent man, most commonly rendered “husband” on account of his authority in the family. He is described as the messenger (“angel,” v.11), and apostle (“one sent,” v. 10) of Yahweh. A number of angels are involved in this vision: “the angel of Yahweh (1:8, 10, 11, 12; 3:1, 3, 4, 5, 6); “the angel that talked with me” (1:9, 13, 14, 19, 21; 2:3; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 5, 8, 11; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:4); “the angelic horse-riders” (1:8, 11); “another angel” (2:3); “those that stood before him” (3:4).

Jude states that “the angel of Yahweh” was Michael, the one in charge of Israel’s affairs (cp. Dan. 10:21; 12:1). Then the

“angel that talked with me [Zechariah]” might well be Gabriel, the divine communicator (Dan. 10:16). The others could be subordinate angels “sent” forth to “walk to and fro through the earth” to accomplish the divine purpose with mankind in general, and with the saints.

The angel-figure points to Christ (Heb. 3:1), who stands as the commander and leader of those behind him (Isa. 55:4), vested with the authority of the angel initially placed over the nation (Exo. 23:20-21. Josh. 5:14). See Heb. 2:5-10.

“riding” — Therefore controlling the beast upon which he was travelling.

“upon a red horse” — Controlling the circumstances of bloodshed and war, for in ancient times the horse was only used for battle, and is frequently used in Scripture symbolically for an army (Job 39:19-25; Zech. 10:3; Pro. 21:31; Jer. 8:6; Rev. 19:11-16).

There were four horses seen by Zechariah, answering the fourfold division of Israel (see Num. 2:3, 10, 18, 25), and the foursquare encampment of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16). In Rev. 19:11-16, the saints are revealed in belligerent manifestation riding to war with Christ at their head, a similar representation to that seen by Zechariah. Into the hands of the saints will be given the future judgment of the nations (Psa. 149:5-9; Dan. 7:14-18; Rev. 2:26-27) and through the outpouring of this will come about the redemption and peace of Jerusalem.

“and he stood among the myrtle trees” — “The myrtle has been commonly associated with love, peace and immortality from time immemorial” (*Plants of the Bible*.) As “thorns” are symbolic of rebellious Israel (Heb. 6:8), so the myrtle is symbolic of restored and repentant Israel (Isa. 55:13. 41:19. 61:3). Branches of the myrtle were used for decorative purposes in the Feast of Tabernacles which commemorated the deliverance from Egypt in great rejoicing (Lev. 23:40-43; cp. with Neh. 8:15). The myrtle is thus emblematic of peace and restoration. These horses among the myrtle trees show forth the ultimate purpose of God: to establish peace

after the judgments of war. They are like scouts surveying the work of conquest against the opponents of Israel, that is presented as completed in the final vision received by Zechariah that night (Zech. 6:1-8).

“that were in the bottom” — Rotherham renders this as “the shade.” They were sheltering under booths made of the myrtles branches (Neh. 8:15), emblematic of the Feast of Tabernacles and the coming epoch of deliverance and peace.

“and behind him” — As these are behind him, the “man” stands forth as their commander-in-chief. Behind him there are three other horses: thus four in all. The literal Hebrew is: “behind him were horses: red, speckled and white” (see R.V.). These four horses represent the saints in belligerent manifestation, figurative of the cherubim (Eze. 10:14). There are four because the saints comprise spiritual Israel (Eph. 2:12-13; Rev. 7:4-8), and thus take their pattern from the Israel of the past which was divided into four groups when it marched through the wilderness. Judah then led the tribes (Num. 10:14), and the Lion of the tribe of Judah will lead the saints in the future (Rev. 5:5, 19:11).

Thus, those following the man among the myrtle trees (Christ) are his saints who have “followed his steps” (1Pet. 2:21) in their preparation for the divine work. He is therefore the captain of their salvation (Heb. 2:10).

“were there red horses” — This represents a time of bloodshed (cp. Jer. 25:33). The Hebrew is *adam*, ruddy; thus red. See notes above.

“speckled” — From the Hebrew *saruq*, signifying “bright red” therefore arresting to the sight, so spotted with bright red, an extension of bloodshed. The margin renders “bay,” and in Arabic “bay,” or sorrell,” was considered an omen of ill. The colour can well represent the after-effects of the war and bloodshed, such as a disastrous famine.

“and white” — Heb. *laban*, used for the white of leprosy (among other things; see Lev. 13), signifying pestilence. The millennium will be preceded by a time of

intense trouble (Dan. 12:1), in which war, famine and pestilence (Hab. 3:5; Eze. 38:22; Zech. 14:12) will ravage nations which refuse to acknowledge the mercy of Yahweh (Isa. 60:12; Jer. 25:33; Dan. 7:11). As a result of these disciplinary judgments even the most obstinate of nations will be ultimately humbled before Yahweh, that the blessings of the kingdom might follow (Isa. 26:9).

VERSE 9

“Then said I, O my Lord, what are these?” — Zechariah spoke during the vision, addressing the angel as *adon*, master, lord. The prophet recognised his authority to control the fulfilment of the dramatic visions, and now sought for an explanation of their meaning. This was similarly the keen desire of Daniel (10:12, 14; cp. v. 17), and John (Rev. 5:4).

“And the angel that talked with me” — The vision was supervised by a presiding angel (see note on v. 8), even as events are supervised by them for the benefit of the elect (Heb. 1:14).

“said unto me, I will shew thee what these be” — Zechariah is now to understand the significance of the vision, in order to record it for others.

VERSE 10

“And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom Yahweh hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth” — The prophet is introduced to those angelic beings described as “they” who undertake the ministering work of the Deity amongst mankind constituting the “eyes” of Yahweh (cp. Zech. 4:10). The angels have acted in this capacity to assist in the development of the people of God (Gen. 18:21; 2Chr. 16:9; Dan. 4:17; Ezra 5:5), and in the future, the saints will so act (Heb. 2:5; Zech. 4:10). Rotherham renders “walk” as “go.” The saints shall go to and fro throughout the earth, as the eyes of Yahweh, subjecting mankind to the dominion of Christ until “all the earth sitteth still and is at rest.”



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THE COMFORT FOR
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THE MEN OF ZECHARIAH 2.



Zechariah ch. 1:10 to 2:13

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Analysis of the Prophecy

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Before the actual outpouring of judgment in the future begins, the work of conquest will first be surveyed by the saints as they are gathered with the Master at Sinai (Isa. 40:10. Hab. 3:6). From that site, the "Rainbowed Angel" will go forth to accomplish the divine determination against the nations (Deu. 33:2; Hab. 3:3; Rev. 10:1-3).

Thus the millennium is preceded by a time of intense trouble (Dan. 12:1), when war, famine, pestilence ravages those nations who refuse Yahweh's mercy (Isa. 60:12; Jer. 25:33). Such judgments are necessary to discipline and humble the nations, so that they are prepared to receive the blessings of the divine kingdom (Isa. 26:9).

VERSE 11

"And they answered the angel of Yahweh that stood among the myrtle trees" — The "man" of v. 8 is here styled "the angel" because he is representative of Christ the Lord clothed upon with divine nature (Lk. 20:36). He is described as being "among the myrtle trees" to distinguish him from the presiding angel who explains the vision to Zechariah (vv. 12, 13).

"and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth" — See notes, v. 10.

"and, behold" — An expression calling attention to the vision being presented. It is an amazing prospect that the world of turmoil and violence (Isa. 57:20) will yet be subdued to conform to the laws of the Spirit.

"all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest" — The ultimate vision, following the angelic work amongst mankind throughout the ages. The words "at rest" come from the Hebrew *shadat*, signifying, "in repose." Thus the kingdom is established, the violence of the ages is suppressed and peace is established (Psa. 72; Heb. 4:9-11).

VERSE 12

"Then the angel of Yahweh answered, and said" — The angel who stands among the myrtle trees (v. 11) discusses the

meaning of the vision with Zechariah (v. 13), and reveals the divine purpose in collaboration with the angel representing Yahweh (v. 13).

"O Yahweh of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?" — This has been

"How Long Wilt Thou Not Have Mercy?" — v. 12

Although the Jews had returned to the Land of Promise at the end of the seventy years captivity, this question (v. 12) is still highly relevant. Why? Because it is "a day of small things" (4:10). The nation of Israel remained in a pitiable state, the majority of the people still scattered among the nations in accordance with Deu. 28: 64-67. The grand restoration of the nation under the guidance and authority of Messiah remained in the distant future. Yet for all that, the angel here shows a keen sentiment of tender mercy and sympathy for the Hope of Israel. The angel's question is related to that hope, for it is an expression of great joy. The angel found it saddening to contrast the state of Israel's downtrodden people with the tranquil circumstances of the Gentiles. He therefore besought Deity for an assurance concerning the future that could be conveyed to the people to encourage them. It gave Yahweh no pleasure to see His own people under trial and enduring persecution, however much deserved. Though "displeased" with them (v. 15), Yahweh identifies Himself with the interest of His people. In harmony with the supplication of this angel, God's faithful servants throughout the ages have echoed this appeal to Him (Rev. 6:10, etc.). We are "saved by the hope," a hope that is not "seen" as yet (Rom. 8:24); therefore the prayers of the saints ascend to Deity with the consistent plea that "the set time to favour Zion" might soon become a reality (Psa. 102:13-16); for then "He shall appear in His glory" for the redemption of His people.— *J.U.*

the continuous and unremitting cry of the saints down the ages (Dan. 12:6; Rev. 6:10; Hab. 1:2; Psalms 74:10; Rev. 13:10). We are instructed to pray for the "peace of Jerusalem" (Psalms 122:6) that it might be restored to harmony with He who declares himself as the Husband of Israel (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:32).

"against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years" — The period of seventy years since the captivity of Babylon (see Jer. 25:12). The Jews had claimed that the

Encouragement for the Faithful

"Yahweh then replied with very consoling words to the angel who was talking to me" (v. 13, J.B.). In accordance with the need to console and hearten the people, the angel was thus enabled to speak to Zechariah "good words and comfortable words." These words of comfort which now follow, give an assurance of:

1. Yahweh's unchanging choice of the city of Jerusalem
2. His continued zeal and jealousy for Israel
3. His great displeasure with the nations
4. His ultimate return to Jerusalem with mercy
5. The temple will be rebuilt
6. The ruined city will be restored
7. The eventual prosperity and well-being of the cities of the land

Now, at the end of Gentile times, the faithful saints of Yahweh are still encouraged and enthused by these very things, promised so long ago. Since the promises were made to the fathers, the Hope of Israel has remained unchanged and has continued to inspire men and women of faith, stimulating and impelling them toward their grand objective. "Reaching forth unto those things which are before", they "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). — *J.U.*

time-period had not yet been fulfilled (Hag. 1:2), and had turned from the work of God. But the seventy years had now fully elapsed since the destruction of the temple (Jer. 25:11; 2Chr. 36:19, 21), and Zechariah's contemporaries were to witness its restoration, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the revival of the nation. As Jeremiah's prophecy of desolation neared its end, Daniel had prayed for the restoration of the nation (Dan. 9:2), and he had been told that whilst the prophecy would, indeed, be fulfilled, it would be followed by the prophecy of seventy "weeks," at the end of which there would be witnessed the "finishing of transgression, the ending of sin offering, the making of reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing of the vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the Most Holy" (Dan. 9:24). All this was accomplished by the Lord Jesus at his first advent as an earnest of things to come. The prophecy, however, seems to call for a double application, so that the second advent will bring the final fulfilment of that initiated at the first. In the Hebrew, the word "weeks" is literally "sevens" without specifying the period, whether weeks, years, or jubilees are intended. Thus "seventy sevens" are "determined upon thy people." As seventy *weeks* on a day for a year principle (see Gen. 29:27; Eze. 4:6), the prophecy was fulfilled at the first advent. But as seventy *jubilees*, it will be fulfilled at the second advent, numbering the beginning of the jubilees from the time when all tribes had been allotted their portion of the land by Joshua. In Lev. 25:8, the jubilee is described as a "week of sabbaths," or seven sabbaths. It has been suggested that seventy of such sevens reach from the distribution of the land to the tribes to the epoch of the establishment of the Kingdom in the near future (see W. H. Carter in *Prophecy and Chronology*). It is significant that Daniel should have been drawn to consider Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years (Dan. 9:2), and then immediately be given the prophecy of the seventy sevens (v. 24). This suggests some link between them. The link seems estab-

lished by Zechariah's report of the angel's words, for they revealed that whilst there was a preliminary fulfilment of the vision then, the final and complete fulfilment is reserved for the future. Meanwhile, the vision would encourage them in the work they were attempting despite the discouragements they had experienced. They would understand that Yahweh was overshadowing their labours providentially, and would come to their help in time of need.

Thus the imminent millennium will be preceded by a time of intense trouble (Dan. 12:1), when war, famine, pestilence will ravage those nations who refuse Yahweh's mercy (Isa. 60:12; Jer. 25:33). Such judgments are necessary to discipline the peoples, humble them, that they might be prepared to receive the blessings of the divine kingdom (Isa. 26:9).

VERSE 13

"And Yahweh answered the angel that talked with me *with good words and comfortable words*" — These were words that the prophet could take back to the people to encourage them, impressing them with the realisation that they were labouring to bring to completion a work that foreshadowed God's ultimate purpose with Israel and Jerusalem. The word "good" is from the Hebrew *towb*, signifying that which is pleasant, translated as "prosperity" in v. 17. The word "comfortable" is from the Heb. *nichuwm*, that which is consoling.

VERSE 14

"So the angel that communed with me said unto me" — The angel of v. 9, commissioned to explain the vision to the prophet.

"Cry thou saying, Thus saith Yahweh of hosts" — The words "cry thou" are in the Hebrew *qara*, signifying call out; proclaim (so rendered by Rotherham), and draws attention to the very important divine principle by which the vision will be achieved. The words are repeated in v. 17; 6:8.

"I am jealous for Jerusalem" — The Hebrew *qana* is also translated "zealous."

Yahweh's "jealousy" or "zealousness" for the holy city entails that He has separated Jerusalem for His exclusive use. His zeal for the city will preserve the remnant of His people (Isa. 37:32), cause Him to arm His warriors against the enemies of His people and land (Isa. 59:17), supervise the successful prosecution of the coming war of conquest (Isa. 42:13. Zech. 8:2), gather the nations together for judgment (Zech. 3:8), and establish the throne of David in glory (Isa. 9:7).

"and for Zion with a great jealousy" — The holy city and the holy mount, which Gentiles cannot oppress with impunity (Joel 2:18). When the Gogian power establishes the "tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45), it will incur the fury of the Almighty, and occasion the destruction of the Russian hosts who dare insult the righteousness of God.

Notice that there was "jealousy" when the nations challenged Jerusalem, and "great jealousy" when the threat came against Zion. Thus there is a development of the emotion of the Deity against of the increasing ungodliness in the nations. Yahweh's purity will be upheld as He arises to thresh the nations.

VERSE 15

"And I am very sore displeased with the heathen" — He is very displeased with the nations, for although He prepares them for the task of rendering due punishments upon His people for their wickedness, the nations exceed that charter (see Isa. 47:6; Eze. 35:10, 15). This was manifested at the time of Zechariah by the bitter antagonism of such as the Samaritans and Arabians (cp. Neh. 4:7).

"that are at ease" — The word "ease" is from the Heb. *sha'anan*, and signifies to act securely, generally in a bad sense. It comes from a root word *sha'an* to be peaceful; to be idle, in a way that is completely worthless.

The nations were at ease in the days of Zechariah, and indifferent to the struggles of the Jews to re-establish themselves in the land. In fact, they helped forward the

affliction brought about by their adversaries, by putting every obstacle before the work in hand.

The same attitude has been adopted by Gentiles towards the work of the Truth in every age; and is the stance manifested by the world today toward the revival of Israel. It is not right in Yahweh's sight that those who oppose His work and purpose should be "at ease," enjoying their opposition to His ways, benefiting from His goodness in the blessings of nature. In the days of Zechariah, Yahweh moved to vindicate His purpose with Judah, to restore the temple, and to frustrate those opposing the work. In our days He shall do likewise, thus bringing His work to a successful consummation to preserve His people. Thus there was encouragement for the labourers of Zechariah's day in this vision, as there is for us today.

"for I was but a little displeased" — With the attitude and folly of Israel, which had brought about the dispersion of Jewry into Babylon in the days of Daniel.

"and they helped forward the affliction" — The "affliction" (Heb. *ra'*, to bring evil against) describes the judgment of Yahweh against the people (Isa. 45:7), but this punishment was so increased by the violent opposition of the surrounding peoples to the people of God, that it offended Yahweh and His purpose (see Jer. 2:3. 30:16. 50:7. Eze. 26:2-3; Oba. 9-16).

VERSE 16

"Therefore thus saith Yahweh; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies" —

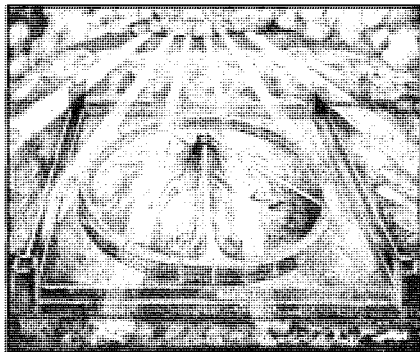
This was true then, and will be true of the future (Luke 21:24. See Isa. 54:7. Jer. 30:18) when the overshadowing lovingkindness of Yahweh will be revealed in the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant that will come through Christ.

"My house shall be built in it, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The work to which the prophets and the people had put their hands in those times would be brought to a successful completion. That is the primary application of this statement, and therefore must have been of great encouragement to the prophet as well as to the people when

he relayed to them Yahweh's message. But it also has its future, and more important, application. Yahweh's house, the future temple of Zion, is yet to be established as a "house of prayer for all nations" (Mk. 11:15-17; Isa. 56:7). It will be built according to divine plans, like the temple of Solomon that foreshadowed it, and with the aid of foreign labour (Isa. 60:10). The work will be supervised by Christ (Zech. 6:12), who shall officiate as King-priest (Psa. 110; Zech. 6:13). His immortalised followers will be associate king-priests (Rev. 5:9). All nations, and people, will assemble there for worship (Zech. 14:16. 8:22-23. Isa. 2:2-4). The divine effulgence, once revealed by the Shekinah Glory shining in the Most Holy (Psa. 80:1) will in the future be manifested through the immortalised saints (Eze. 43:1-5. Dan. 12:3. Matt. 13:43).

"and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" — Extending the borders of the city beyond those of the past. The Heb word for "line" (*gar*) signifies "a cord (as connecting), used especially for measuring (see ch. 2:1). These "lines" or measurements, are to determine the limit for destruction permitted by Yahweh against the city that had desecrated His Name (cp. Eze. 24:2).

Ultimately, the enlarged Jerusalem of the future will be measured off as a huge temple-city "built to Yahweh" (Jer. 31:38-39), revealing the glory that Yahweh intended from the very beginning of Israel (Exo. 15:17).



VERSE 17

“Cry yet!” — That is, lift up your voice in a loud cry. The Hebrew is *qara*, to address by name. The prophet had a thrilling message for those times when the people were struggling against opposition to rebuild the temple. That thrilling message remains for us to proclaim today, to remind ourselves and others of the joyous future for Jerusalem, beyond the present trials and distresses being experienced by latter-day Jacob.

“saying, Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad” — Rotherham renders: “Shall overflow with blessings.” Not only Jerusalem, but all Israel will be rebuilt. The word “prosperity” comes from the Hebrew *towb*, meaning that which is “good” (so translated in v. 13; 11:12), “cheerful” (ch. 8:19). The great city of the future will bring joy and happiness to Israel, and blessings to all nations.

“and Yahweh shall yet comfort Zion” — Zion will be comforted from the troubles of the centuries as its opponents are destroyed and its past bitterness forgotten (Isa. 51:3). The word *nacham* (“comfort”) has the idea of sighing, to breathe strongly with emotion, to regret in a favourable sense. Thus it speaks of God’s enduring love for Zion, and His determination to rescue the city from the destruction of the past and restore it in glory.

“and shall yet choose Jerusalem” — Jerusalem will be elevated above all other cities, becoming the centre of divine worship (Psa. 48:2) and the place from whence the law will emanate in the millennium (Isa. 2:2-4). The Psalmist describes the elevation of Jerusalem above its surroundings (Psa. 68:16).

**2ND NIGHT VISION:
THE FOUR HORNS AND THE FOUR
CARPENTERS**

This vision describes the conflict that would face Jerusalem throughout the ages. It prepares the prophet for an outline of the divine work with His people. Zechariah’s attention is drawn to four horns, and he is told that these represent Israel’s enemies.

He is then shown four carpenters, and is told that these would overthrow the oppressors of Israel.

VERSE 18

“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold” — Describing a new dramatic and arresting vision, as to how the purpose of v. 17 would be accomplished. The word “behold” is designed to draw attention to what is now presented.

“four horns” — These represent nations (Dan. 8:21-22; Rev. 17:12). The angel’s interpretation (Zech. 1:19) shows

**Yahweh Shall Yet Comfort
Jerusalem — v. 17**

In the days of Zechariah it was a great comfort for the Jews to be assured that Yahweh was still actively concerned and zealous for the welfare of their nation. Though Yahweh had commissioned the Gentile nations to administer judgment upon Israel, He had not forsaken them (Rom. 11:1). It remains an immutable fact that “Yahweh shall yet comfort Zion!” This is a thrilling message to all who understand and wholeheartedly embrace the Hope of Israel. The Gospel represents “good tidings of great joy” to all who receive its message with singleness of heart and with resolute commitment to its cause. The dawn of the Messianic Age — the Kingdom of God on earth — will see this firm and earnest promise brought to fruition. “For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did Yahweh behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; To declare the name of Yahweh in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem” (Psa. 102:19-21). In these final days of Gentile darkness may saints everywhere raise their voices in earnest prayer, supplicating Israel’s God with the plea: “Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem!” (Psa. 51:18). — J.U.

that they represent the four great world powers of the Gentiles, featured in the Image of Daniel 2.

VERSE 19

“And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these?” — The vision caused the prophet to seek for further information to understand the divine purpose with his people. It is an attitude to be highly commended. Those keen to apprehend the way in which the Spirit will achieve glory in Zion, give urgent and diligent attention to all aspects of the divine revelation.

“And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem” — The various attacks against the holy people and the desecration of the sanctuary were accomplished by the horn-powers of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.

VERSE 20

“And Yahweh shewed me four carpenters” — Lit. “artificers” or “craftsmen.” Heb. *charash*, a designer of any material; thus to make, to build. The word is translated “engraver” (Exo. 28:11), “craftsmen” (1Chr. 4:14), etc. Their duty is to plan, organise, and provide for the building of the proposed temple (cp. Neh. 2:17-18). The symbol was appropriate to the times, for there were many such who were faithfully labouring to rebuild the temple and to strengthen the city. They represent the glorified saints of the future, who labour to reveal the work of God in the restoration of His kingdom (see 1Cor. 3:9-10).

The honour reserved for them, as for all the chosen and faithful of every age is to “execute judgment upon the nations” (Rev. 2:26; Psa. 149:5-9). The “Carpenter of Galilee” has led the way (Mk. 6:3; Mat. 13:55).

The number “four” identifies these craftsmen with Israel. There were four Cherubim (Eze. 1), four Living Ones (Rev. 5:8), the four-sided new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16). In Bible numerics, four represents creative works, as is suggested by the

Hebrew root of the word. The sun appeared on the fourth day, pointing forward to the “Light of the world” (Jn. 8:12) who appeared in the fourth millennium from creation to lay the foundation of the “new creation” (Rev. 3:14). Israel was divided into four encampments, under the standards of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan (Num. 2) with the tabernacle in the midst, and thus became the symbol of the true Israel of God (Eph. 2:12) surrounding its spiritual tabernacle, the Lord Jesus (Heb. 9:11).

VERSE 21

“Then said I, What come these to do?” — The four carpenters, or artificers, appear not merely to subjugate the horns, but re-shape the world upon the enduring foundation of divine law and wisdom.

“And he spake, saying” — The response of the interpreting angel (cp. notes, v. 11).

“These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head” — The oppressing powers of the Gentiles were so dominating that there was no man of Israel and Judah able to completely challenge them. God’s people were prostrate before the oppressor. This will also be the case when the Gogian power comes from the north against Israel (Dan. 12:1; Zech. 14:2; Eze. 38:12).

“but these are come to fray them” — Heb. *charad*, to cause to shake; to tremble with fear. The word is an abbreviation for “affray,” and signifies to “terrify” or “put to fear,” for which see Micah 7:16-20.

“to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horns over the land of Judah to scatter it” — By this means the proud powers of the nations will be disciplined, and the action perpetrated against Judah will return upon their own heads (Rev. 18:6; Jer. 50:15; Psa. 137:8). The sense of the Hebrew is “over [against] the land...” The nations had acted like wild animals treading down the people of God, and tossing them to the political winds, but Zechariah was shown that such actions would be certainly punished by the spiritual craftsmen.

THE NIGHT OF SEVEN VISIONS

CHAPTER TWO

Future Destiny of Jerusalem

In his first vision, Zechariah saw that Yahweh, from the shadows, guided the destiny of Israel, and through His divine army would oversee its experiences, and move for its redemption. In the prophet's second vision, he was shown the means whereby the Gentiles would be terrified and overthrown. Now, in this third vision, he is shown that Jerusalem's persecution is limited, and its ultimate exaltation to the supremacy of Yahweh's throne is sure (Jer. 3:17).

3rd Vision:

JERUSALEM'S DOWNTREADING LIMITED

The prophet saw a man with a measuring line, and learned the purpose of his labours: Jerusalem shall be inhabited, Israel shall be restored, and the glory will return. Again, the vision of the night has relation to the labours of the day of Judah's re-establishment, for "a man with a measuring line" must have been a familiar figure to the workers in the temple. The vision also provides a message of encouragement throughout the generations to our own time.

The Men of Zechariah 2

- Zechariah, the prophet, himself: vv. 1, 2.
- The man with the measuring line: vv. 1, 4.
- The angel that explained the divine purpose to Zechariah: v. 3.
- The angel that ran with the instructions: v. 4.

The Third Vision

- Israel's punishment limited; the nation to be regathered: vv. 1-2.
- Israel's enemies to be punished: v. 9.
- The kingdom established: v. 10.
- All nations then to be blessed: v. 11.
- Jerusalem elevated: v. 12.
- All flesh humbled; Yahweh glorified: v. 13.

The Man with the Measuring Line — vv. 1-5.

The vision reveals to Zechariah that some time would expire before the four carpenters (ch. 1:20) could commence their work of salvation.

VERSE 1

"I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked" — During this remarkable night of visions, the prophet is directed to a further dramatic revelation.

"and behold" — The word indicates to "take careful note." The fortunes and misfortunes of Israel and Jerusalem are signs which every true son of God observes with the greatest interest.

"a man" — The angel in control of Israel's destiny, representing the Lord Jesus Christ, who will ultimately deliver Jerusalem from all its enemies (ch. 1:8).

"with a measuring line in his hand" — The Hebrew for "line" is *chebel*, which signifies "a twisted rope," thus strengthened for the purpose for which it is used. It is a different word from that used in Eze. 40:3 or Zech. 1:16, where the word occurring indicates a measure as to size. Here, *chebel* is used in the sense of measuring off with a rope for punishment (2Sam. 8:2; Amos 7:8, 17). In 2Sam. 8:2, David measured the Moabites, one part for death and the other part for slavery. Israel has itself suffered such a "line" at the hands of the Gentiles throughout the ages.

VERSE 2

"Then said I, Whither goest thou?"

— The angel was evidently dedicated to a mission, drawing the attention of the prophet to the activity to be accomplished by the man with the measuring line.

“And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem” — This indicates that a time limit is placed upon Jerusalem’s afflictions, and though the time is not here specified, such a “set time” to favour Zion is indicated elsewhere (Psa. 102:13; Heb. 11:3 cp. Diag. Acts 17:26; 1:7; Lk. 21:24).

“to see what is the breadth and what is the length thereof” — The *extent* as well as the *duration* of Israel’s affliction is limited. No matter how men might try, they will never destroy the nation (Jer. 30:11).

VERSE 3

“And, behold” — This arresting word is repeated (v. 1), drawing attention to the dramatic vision.

“the angel that talked with me” — The angel who supervised the visions, explaining them to Zechariah (ch. 1:9, 13, 14, 19; 1:11). He revealed to Zechariah the divine will concerning Jerusalem, which position is now assumed by the Spirit-Word, the only means by which the divine purpose is declared (Rev. 2:7; 1Pet. 3:22; Rev. 1:1).

“went forth” — Lit. “came forward,” to meet and direct another angel coming upon the scene.

“and another angel went out to meet him” — Either the superior personage from under the Myrtle Trees (ch. 1:11), or an angel sent from him with fresh instructions to help Zechariah understand the divine purpose.

VERSE 4

“And said unto him” — That is, the “other” angel said unto the angel explaining the vision to Zechariah.

“Run” — To hasten with all diligence to check the prophet’s fears. The young man had been measuring the city (v. 2), but it was now to be limited and Jerusalem changed in accordance with the divine purpose.

“speak to this young man, saying” — To the measuring man of v. 1, calling upon

him to cease measuring for judgment, for the time of blessing had come. A sense of urgency is suggested in the word “Run.” He was to hasten to limit the period of the determined persecution. There was a partial fulfilment of this in the prophet’s day, as both he and Haggai had revealed that the time of blessing had come to the people of the restoration (see note Zech. 1:1); but the fulness of the vision awaits the future when the greater Redeemer will complete the measuring of the city.

“Jerusalem shall be inhabited” — Jerusalem is here used representatively of the nation of Israel as a whole, as also in other places: e.g. Eze. 23:4; Zech. 8:8.

“as towns without walls” — The plural term for Jerusalem indicates the wider application to all the cities of the Land (cp. Eze. 38:11).

“for the multitude of men and cattle therein” — Indicating a very prosperous condition (Eze. 36:10).

VERSE 5

“For I, saith Yahweh” — His supreme authority is the reason as to why the future of Jerusalem is declared to be so secure.

“will be unto her a wall of fire round about” — Israel will not need the “walls” of fleshly protection (cp. v. 4), for God will be her safeguard. This wall of fire represents the divine power that shielded Israel in the past. Such a strong “wall” safeguarded the people when the nation left Egypt (Exo. 14:19-20; 13:22). It served as a visible token of the divine presence and put a division between Israel and the persecuting Egyptians (Exo. 8:23).

The divine presence and protection will again be manifested in the restoration of the latter-day Israel (see Isa. 26:1; 4:5; 60:19). Symbolically, “new Jerusalem” will be enclosed by a Jasper-Wall of immortality (Rev. 21:12, 14, 16).

“and will be the glory in the midst of her” — In the most holy of the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple, the *shekinah* glory of Yahweh was manifested by a brilliant light above the mercy seat and between the cherubim. But this declaration in the vision of Zechariah could not refer to his days, as

the glory had long vanished. In a time of great apostasy, Ezekiel saw the Glory of Yahweh depart from the temple and city (Eze. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23) and the people left to their own resources. But he also predicted the return of the Glory at the coming advent of the Lord, when the glorious “house of prayer for all nations” shall be erected. However, the returning Glory will be in a different form from that which departed. That of the past was a resplendent light; that of the future will be the manifestation of Yahweh in a great company of glorified ones, the chief of whom declared that he is the “light of the world” (Jn. 8:12). So Ezekiel predicted: “The glory of the Elohim [mighty ones] of Israel came from the way of the east [the direction in which it had departed (Eze. 11:23)]; and His voice was like the noise of many waters [i.e., a great multitude] and the earth shined with His glory” (ch. 43:2). Here is divine glory manifested in a multitude. It was the hope of Paul that he should attain unto it (Rom. 5:2). We are called to that Glory, for Yahweh is taking “out of the nations” a people for His name (Acts 15:14), that is, for His glory (Isa. 43:7; 40:5; 66:18-19). That is His purpose with Israel both national and spiritual (Jer. 13:11), and is yet to be accomplished (Jer. 33:8-9).

“Save Thyself, O Israel” — vv. 6-7.

The appeal of Yahweh is extended to the nation as opportunity is given to the people to escape from the hand of the oppressor and to obtain redemption at the hand of the Saviour.

VERSE 6

“Ho, ho” — A dramatic call to arrest the attention of careless Israel to the danger threatening them, and to urge them to return to the land so that this vision might be accomplished.

“Come forth, and flee” — The appeal to Jews in exile to return to the Land in accordance with the divine purpose and the Abrahamic covenant. Christ will “build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down” (Acts 15:16) by a complete

national restoration “as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11). The services of Elijah and his associates will be used to that end. They will convey the divine invitation to scattered Israel to return home to the land of their fathers (Mal. 4:5-6), and the full ingathering will then take place (Eze. 39:25; Rev. 18:4). Israel will not only be saved but converted and transformed (Eze. 20:33-38; Rom. 11:26).

“from the land of the north, saith Yahweh” — In context of all points of the compass, for Yahweh continues: “I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven.” To the Hebrew, the north was the place of obscurity. The original word *tsawphon* signifies “hidden; dark; unknown,” from a root meaning to hide by covering over, to hoard, or reserve. All these ideas are expressed in the word “north” as used in this verse. Israel was scattered into the land of obscurity and was there hidden, reserved, or hoarded for Yahweh’s purpose. From the same root as the word “north,” comes the Hebrew expression translated “hidden ones” in Psa. 83:3. So from the place of obscurity, where Israel has been hidden or reserved, the people will be called back home.

“for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven” — This was ultimately fulfilled in AD70, when Rome exiled the Jews into all parts of the earth (Jer. 16:15-16).

“saith Yahweh” — Rotherham: “urgeth Yahweh.” There is an urgent appeal and encouragement for Israel to respond to the divine calling.

VERSE 7

“Deliver thyself, O Zion” — The Revised Version renders: “Ho Zion, escape thou!” In the days of Zechariah this was an appeal to those Jews in Babylon who had not returned under the decree of Cyrus. They were urged to respond to the prophet’s appeal, and return to the Land. But the prophecy relates primarily to the future, when Babylon the Great shall come into judgment. Before the full weight of divine vengeance will be unleashed against Catholic Europe, the Jews will be invited

back home (see Rev. 18:4).

“that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon” — Thus in exile, and in contrast to “the daughter of Zion” (2Kgs. 19:21, Mic. 4:13, etc), or “the daughter of Jerusalem” (Zeph. 3:14). The comment by Yahweh seems to accuse the Jews in exile of an attitude of indifference to the need to support the work of rehabilitation in the ancient city of David. In its latter-day fulfilment, Jewry will receive an invitation through Elijah the prophet to migrate from the lands of their occupation and return to that of their fathers (Mal. 4:5-6).

Retribution on the Gentiles — vv. 8-13.

The vision of Zechariah looks down the centuries to the ultimate work of God with mankind. It foreshows the return of Jewry to the Land, and the ultimate glorification of Jerusalem. Christ will be seen on the throne of David, and all the wonderful prophecies of the past will be accomplished.

VERSE 8

“For thus saith Yahweh of hosts” —

The militant title of Deity now introduces a further feature of the prophecy: His work amongst the Gentile nations. None can treat the divine Power with impunity, and the vision now demonstrates how Yahweh responds to those who challenge His determination.

After the glory” — This dates the fulfilment of the prophecy as after the return of Christ to the earth and the manifestation of the glorious Multitudinous Christ in power, at the commencement of the millennium (1Tim. 6:15-16; Rom. 5:2; 2Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:12). The judgment of the Household precedes that of the world (1Pet. 4:17), and after Christ is glorified in the saints (2Thes. 1:10), he will give attention to the world at large. The “Glory” will go forth to prepare the whole earth so as to receive the divine Word.

“hath He sent me” — Yahweh of hosts (armies) is the speaker. Christ is the manifestation of Yahweh, and the Commander of the Armies to be revealed (Isa. 55:4). The saints comprise the armies

“Come Out from Among Them, and Be Ye Separate!”

With the fulfilment of the seventy years captivity in Babylon, the Jews in that city and surrounding areas had the opportunity, with the good hand of their God upon them, to leave behind forever the pagan environment of an evil empire and return to the land of their fathers. Of all who were granted this opportunity through the grace of God, how many sufficiently valued their heritage in the Truth to respond with commitment and gladness of heart? This was the same invitation as had been extended to Abram: “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee!” (Gen. 12:1). The Bride of Christ has received the same summons: “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house...” (Psa. 45:10). Similar words of invitation and warning are given elsewhere: “Depart ye! Depart ye! Go ye out from thence [Babylon]! Touch no unclean thing! ...Come out from among them, and be ye separate... Come out of her [latter-day Babylon] My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins...” (Isa. 52:11; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4). The people of Deity are to accept their humble standing as “strangers and pilgrims” in an evil world (1 Pet. 2:11), whilst keeping themselves “unspotted from the world...” (Jas. 1:27). This is one the greatest challenges of our present times; yet one with great promise of reward. “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:10-11). — *J.U.*

under him (2Tim. 2:4; Rev. 19:14). As an army marches in the name of its commander so in this verse the unnumbered

multitude of saints is classed under the single word “me.” Each one of them will be a manifestation of divine glory, united in attributes and in nature with their head, even Christ, and Yahweh, their Father.

“unto the nations which spoiled you”

— The Christ-Body will present the “gospel of the [new] Age” to the nations (Rev. 14:6-7), urging them to respond to the call for submission to the divine Will. Their former animosity against the people of God, both natural and spiritual, will no longer exist; they will be required to accept the elevation of Israel above the nations. They receive judgment according to the way they have acted towards Israel in the past (Rev. 18:6-7; see also 2Thes. 1:6).

“for he that toucheth you” — Heb. *naga*, to touch, to lay the hand upon, to strike. This expresses the antagonistic action of the Gentiles against the people of God.

“toucheth the apple of His eye” — This expression is very tender. Israel is very precious to Yahweh, and the national focal point of His work amongst mankind. He seriously objects to those who vex and harass His people, for the terms of the covenant He made to Abraham ensure the ultimate protection of his natural and spiritual seed.

The word “apple” should be “pupil,” from the Heb. *babah*, signifies, something hollowed, an aperture or gate, and thus the very centre. This is the only occurrence of the word in Scripture (the word in Lam. 2:18 and Psa. 17:8 is *bath*, daughter; the word in Deu. 32:10 and Pro. 7:2 is *iyshown*, the “little man”). The pupil of the eye is the most tender part of the body, and the one that reacts immediately to any foreign matter touching it. None can touch the people of God with impunity. See Jer. 12:14; Eze. 36:22-24; Psa. 105:8-15; Isa. 54:17; Rom. 11:28.

VERSE 9

“For behold” — A further exclamation to draw attention to the importance of what follows (see vv. 1, 3).

“I will shake Mine hand upon them”

— In threatening aspect of judgment

against the enemies of Zion, who dare to touch the “apple of His eye” (v. 8). The expression is used elsewhere as a symbol of the outpouring of divine wrath (Isa. 11:15; 19:16).

“and they shall be a spoil to their servants” — The enemies of Israel who have reduced them to slavery will become their slaves in turn. See Isa. 51:22-52:6; 60:14-15.

“and ye shall know” — See Exo. 29:46. Israel as a nation never came to really “know Yahweh,” for to “know” Him is to understand His character and purpose, and to lay hold of eternal life (Jn. 17:3). To “know” in the true sense is to be begotten by Yahweh’s seed, His Spirit-Word, in such a way as to produce fruit to His glory (1Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18; 2:18-20). When Israel shall see the fulness of divine glory and power in the Lord Jesus and the saints, they will recognise how far they have failed to appreciate the goodness of Yahweh (Rom. 11:22). The apocalypse of Christ will make this manifest, and draw them close to their God.

“that Yahweh of hosts hath sent me”

— The voice of the Multitudinous Christ, representing the power of Yahweh, and effecting His purpose to redeem Israel and to rescue the people from the hand of the oppressor.

VERSE 10

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion” — The overthrow of Israel’s persecutors will result in a song of joy. The word “sing” (Heb. *ranan*) signifies a strident sound of shouting, indicating a time of great delight. The word “rejoice” (Heb. *samach*) suggests the spirit of merriment. For the term “daughter of Zion” see comments on v. 7.

“for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Yahweh” — This was Yahweh’s purpose when He called His people from Egypt (Exo. 29:45). He demonstrated this in the parable of the tabernacle, arranging for it to be placed in the centre of the nation (Num. 2:17). Although throughout the centuries Israel has refused to hear (Jer. 13:11), His pur-

pose will be fulfilled in the future age (Jer. 33:9; Rev. 21:3).

VERSE 11

“And many nations shall be joined to Yahweh in that day” — To be “joined” (Heb. *lavah*, to twine, unite, remain) signi-

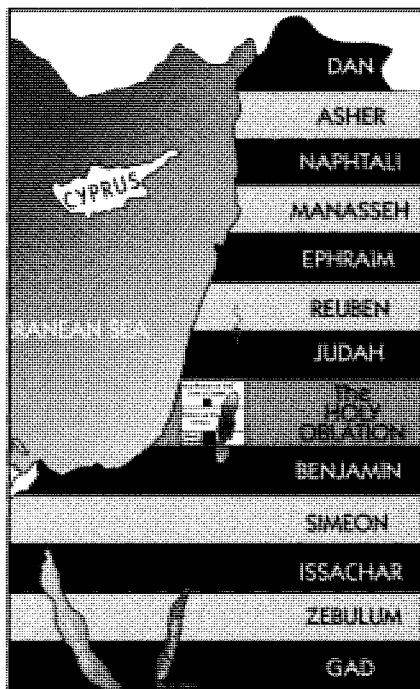
“I Will Dwell in the Midst of Thee!”

This promise embodies a complete conception of God manifestation. The key to the significance of the terminology is found in John’s gospel: “The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father...” (John 1:14, Gr.). The picture presented is that of God manifested in flesh. Paul takes it further, applying the same principle to all believers who reveal (though imperfectly) the character of the Son of God in their lives: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God? ...Whose house are we...” (1Cor. 3:16; Heb. 3:6). Peter confirms the usage of this terminology: “Ye also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house...” (1Pet. 2:5, Gr.). This idiom to define God manifestation has its foundation in that which Yahweh stated concerning the purpose of the tabernacle: “I will walk among you, and will be your God...” (Lev. 26:12). However, when Paul quotes this passage he makes a subtle but significant alteration: “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them...” (2Cor. 6:16). As the divine name teaches, it is Yahweh’s purpose to manifest Himself in a multitude of the redeemed: “He who will be [manifested in a multitude]”. Thus, when Yahweh tells Israel, through the prophet Zechariah, “I will dwell in the midst of thee” it may be seen that He speaks of the time when Christ and all the redeemed will be manifested as the true spiritual Israel, to bring recovery and enlightenment to Israel after the flesh. — *J.U.*

fies “converted” (see Jer. 3:17-18; Zech. 8:22-23). The nations will be given an ultimatum to submit to the divine rule: to determine whether they will be accepted into the kingdom, or given over to destruction (Isa. 60:12). The nations accepting the divine covenant of peace, will find blessedness in the kingdom of God on earth, and thus the promise to Abraham will find fulfilment (Gen. 17:4; Rom. 4:18).

“and shall be My people” — Being brought into the family covenant of Abraham, based on the memorial Name of Yahweh: “I will be manifested in those whom I select.”

“and I will dwell in the midst of thee” — See Eze. 48:8-13 where a section of territory is described as the “holy oblation,” to be selected out of the midst of the Land for the exclusive purpose of Yahweh. He will dwell in the midst of Israel in the personage of Christ and the saints (Mat. 23:39; 13:43; Eze. 48:35).



VERSE 12

“And Yahweh shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land” — The tribe of Judah shall be located north of the Holy Oblation in the holy land of the future, and thus is identified with it.

In *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, Brother Sulley shows that the area occupied by the Lord will include the territory that was originally given to the tribe of Judah. There will be a new allocation of land for all the tribes in the kingdom, so that Ezekiel (ch. 48:8-13) and Zechariah (Zech. 2:12) are shown to uniformly agree in this interesting and significant prophecy.

“and shall choose Jerusalem” — The city was chosen for the place of Yahweh's throne in the days of David (1Chr. 11:4-5), but became the city of trouble and bloodshed. It will be elevated to the true *City of Peace*, no longer to experience the trauma of the past. Cf. Mat. 5:35; 2Chr. 12:13; Psa. 132:13-14; Isa. 49:14, 16.

“again” — It had already been chosen in the days of the prophet as the people returned from Babylon and established their city and nation, so that this statement

implies that the people were yet to be scattered again (as they were by the Romans) and regathered (as they will be finally regathered after Christ's return). Their final regathering and restoration will be experienced under the hand of the Messiah.

VERSE 13

“Be silent, O all flesh, before Yahweh” — An arresting demand to all the nations to respect the power and authority of the King on the throne. Flesh in its various manifestations, in individuals and in its social, religious and political institutions, will be humbled before the glory of Yahweh manifested in His Son and His elect.

“for He is raised up out of His holy habitation” — Note the margin. As the manifestation of Yahweh, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be elevated in Zion, and before him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. See Phil. 2:9-11. This vision was the focal point of the Song of Moses on the shores of the Red Sea (Exo. 15:17), and the fulfilment of the oracles concerning Jerusalem in the Law and the Prophets.

“Be Silent, O All Flesh”

With the establishment of the kingdom, Jews and Gentiles will become aware of their past ungodliness and foolishness. More than this, they will come to a shocked realisation that their forebears, generation after generation, conducted themselves — and educated their children — in the same ways of sin, treating Yahweh and His Word with contempt. “Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely, our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit” (Jer. 16:19). Little wonder that they will bow in reverence before the Mighty One of heaven and earth, heeding the command: “Be silent, O all flesh before Yahweh: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation...” If this is to be the attitude displayed during the Kingdom Age by previously wicked and ignorant Jews and Gentiles, what, we might ask, of the Ecclesia of today? Is Yahweh held in the awe and reverence that is His due? Are brethren and sisters mindful — as, for example, when they come before the table of the Lord — of the reality that they are in the presence of Deity, through His angels? It is so easy to be very careless and oblivious to the need for reverence in divine worship. Paul offers sober words of advice for all: “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling...” (Phil. 2:12). — *J.U.*





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JOSHUA IN THE SOILED
GARMENTS OF PHYSICAL
LABOUR.

A CHANGE TO GLORIOUS
APPAREL.

MEN OF SIGN.

THE PROPHETIC VISION OF
THE MULTITUDINOUS
LIGHTSTAND.



Zechariah ch. 3:1 to 4:6

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THE NIGHT OF SEVEN VISIONS

CHAPTER THREE

THE CORONATION OF THE HIGH PRIEST

The saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ was typically revealed to Zechariah in the personage of Joshua, the high priest. Historically, this vision, like the others, is based upon the events recorded in Ezra 4-6. There, Joshua the high priest, is mentioned as being engaged in the building of the Temple (Ezra 4:1-6), a work that was so strenuously opposed by the adversaries ("the satan") of Israel, that it temporarily ceased (v. 24). Joshua, with the aid of the prophets and others, instituted a reform, and gave an example to his contemporaries by resuming once again the building activity (Ezra 5:2). The adversary ("the satan") continued to oppose the work, but now the "eye of their God" was upon the elders of Israel (Ezra 5:5), so that the work was successfully completed. The high priest, with garments soiled by labouring among the debris of the temple, would be a familiar figure to the other workers, for he toiled with them to build the house.

But when the work was finished, and the temple built, a "change of raiment" was given to Joshua, and he officiated in the temple, he helped to build, wearing his priestly garments "for glory and for beauty."

What an apt figure for the Lord Jesus Christ. At his first advent, we see him in the soiled garments of humanity, figuratively down in the debris, labouring to build the foundations with the "eye of God" approvingly upon him. The work being brought to a successful completion, the Lord received a "change of raiment" to immortality (Phil. 3:21).

It is obvious from the comment in v. 8: "I will bring forth My Servant the Branch," that this vision related to the Lord Jesus. At his first advent, he laboured to lay the foundation of the spiritual temple which is being built upon that which he then established (see v. 9; Eph. 2:20; 1Pet. 2:6). In this work, he constantly had satan (the adversary) at his right hand to resist him, but in spite of all such opposition and temptation, he succeeded.

The vision follows the preceding one in natural sequence. Chapter 2 gave a vision of Yahweh dwelling in Jerusalem, and filling it with divine glory. Chapter 3 reveals the qualifications and nature of the Priest who will "bear the glory" (Zech. 6:13).

The labours of Joshua and Zerubbabel in building the temple in the days of Zechariah are typical of the work of the Master in building his spiritual temple (2Cor. 6:16), so that Zechariah and his associates are set forth as "men of sign" (Zech. 3:8 — margin).

4th Vision: YAH'S SALVATION

Joshua in Soiled Garments — vv. 1-3.

Joshua is called to present himself to

the angel of Yahweh, and is challenged by the satan alongside. In a parabolic display, Joshua is required to change his defiled garments of labour and toil caused by the

work of establishing the temple for Yahweh's glory. He is given garments of glory to demonstrate the ultimate purpose of redemption for mankind.

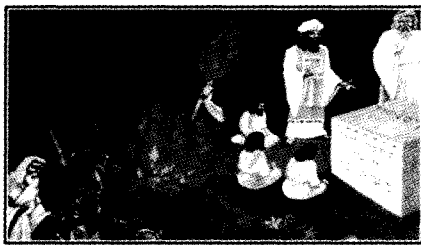
VERSE 1

"And he shewed me" — The angel who was interpreting the vision to Zechariah (ch. 2:3). However, the Septuagint suggests the words should be: "The Lord showed me." This vision is obviously connected with the former, as an explanation of the means by which ultimate glory will come to Zion.

"Joshua the high priest" — *Yahoshua*, or *Yahshua*, is the Hebrew form of *Jesus*, compounded of two words: *Yah* and *Salvation*, thus, "Yahweh's Salvation," or "Yahweh will save." His name is written "Jeshua" in Ezra 2:2, and he was the first of the high priests after the Babylonian captivity. By hereditary right he succeeded his father Josedech, who had died in Babylon. Thus, in a way, this appointment to the position of high priest was the commencement of a new era in the priesthood, and typical of the "great high priest" who would be raised up in the place of the priests of the old covenant (Heb. 1:8-12; 3:1; 5:10).

Joshua is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:26), whose atoning work elevated him to the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:15-22), so that the power of God brought him from the grave and strengthened him with immortality. Paul taught that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2Cor. 5:19). Thus the salvation wrought was Yahweh's salvation, and all was an expression of His love (Jn. 3:16).

"standing before the angel of Yahweh" — Ezra records that the "eye of God" was on the work of Joshua (Ezra 5:5). The "eye of God" constitutes the angels who are ministering spirits overseeing human affairs for the benefit of the elect (Heb. 1:14). The overshadowing presence of the angels was evident during the ministry of the Lord Jesus. In time of need they were there to "minister unto him" (Mat. 4:11), to "strengthen him" (Luke



22:43).

"and Satan" — The margin correctly has "adversary." In the days of Joshua the Samaritans constituted the adversary against the Jews, who sought to destroy the work being accomplished by those who

Cleansing the Nation and the Priesthood

The previous visions have spoken of blessings to come upon Israel, despite punishment, trial and tribulation. Promises of restoration are contingent upon Israel's humble obedience and their cleansing from moral and mental corruption. A morally polluted priesthood had brought distress and affliction upon the nation. Herein (ch. 3) it is demonstrated that not only must the nation be cleansed, but the priestly office must also be cleansed and restored to Yahweh's favour. The removal of Joshua's "filthy garments" typified not only the personal cleansing of Messiah through a change from sin-nature to divine nature, but also the cleansing of the priestly office through the elevation of the Son of God to the Melchizedek priesthood. Only through the gracious hand of Yahweh could all these things be accomplished. The climax of the vision is expressed thus: "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (v. 9). Israel's wickedness is to be removed, the kingdom and the Melchizedek priesthood established, and Yahweh's glory established in the earth — all brought to fruition through Yahweh being manifested in "the Servant... the Branch... the Stone..." (vv. 8-9). — *J.U.*

had remained faithful in Israel (Ezra 4:1-5). Similarly, in the days of the antitypical Joshua (the Lord Jesus), the Sadducees and Pharisees assumed that role.

“standing at his right hand” — The place of power (see Psa. 109:6, 31). The adversaries used their influence against Joshua in a similar way to the satan of Job who sought the support of Yahweh against His servant (Job. 1:6).

“to resist him” — The Hebrew repeats the word *satahn*, thus to indicate that this adversary intended to “satanise” Joshua. The sentence could read: “The adversary stood at his right hand to oppose him.” Both Joshua and Jesus experienced this from their opponents.

VERSE 2

“And Yahweh said unto Satan” — According to Jude 9, it was Michael the arch-angel who said these words. He did so as Yahweh’s representative. Michael is the angel described as Israel’s prince (Dan. 10:21), the captain of Yahweh’s army (Jos. 5:14), Yahweh’s name-bearer (Exo. 23:20), into whose hands the care of Israel was placed (Exo. 23:20-22). That authority and status is now vested in Christ, who likewise bears the name of Michael (Dan. 12:1; 1Thes. 4:16; 1Pet. 3:22).

“Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan” — The word “rebuke” is from the Heb. *ga’ar*, meaning to chide. This petition was fulfilled both in the days of Joshua (see Ezra 6:7), and in the days of Christ (Luke 21:20-24). Thus punishment fell upon those who tried to hinder the work of the Lord.

“even Yahweh that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee” — The purpose of Yahweh’s opposition to the Satan is based upon His purpose with the city of Jerusalem. Notice the repetition of “rebuke” in this verse to emphasise the anger of God against such opposition to His work.

“is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” — A Hebraism signifying one rescued from impending destruction. This refers to Joshua, who faced tremendous challenges (Hag. 1:1, 12). The Lord was also one such, and led his followers from

the fire that engulfed Jerusalem and its people in A.D. 70 (Acts 2:19-20).

VERSE 3

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments” — Joshua laboured in the dirt and debris of the destroyed temple, in order to lay the foundation of the new building. During this period, he worked as a layman, later to re-assume the office of a priest. This work he had undertaken in the service of the Truth, brought Joshua into a state of physical defilement; his garments were “filthy.” The Hebrew is *tsow*, signifying soiled, and here is a symbol of fallen human nature, from whence come the promptings of sin (Mk. 7:20-23; Rom. 7:18). In common with all humanity Christ bore such a nature, for it is said of him that he was touched “with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). But he overcame and triumphed over that nature when he “bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pet. 2:24). The “iniquity of us all” was laid upon him (Isa. 53:6, 11). Thus Christ came in the nature common to humanity, a nature death-stricken because of sin (Rom. 5:12). He was “made sin for us, who knew no sin” (2Cor. 5:21), and in this way found himself under the “law of condemnation” (BASF, clause 8).

“and stood before the angel” — So his greater antitype, the Lord Jesus, was strengthened by an angel of Yahweh in the garden of Gethsemane as he was involved in the labour of salvation (Lk. 22:43).

Joshua’s Change of Raiment — vv. 4-5.

As the high priest stands before the angel, the divine messenger instructs those observing the drama, to replace the filthy garments with those of “glory and beauty.” There continues a spectacular demonstration of triumph for Joshua in the work he has undertaken. As such he is a representative of the greater High Priest.

VERSE 4

“And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him” — The “filthy garments” represent a covering

of sin, either active in transgression or of "sin's flesh." But the time had arrived when Joshua's garment was contaminated because of the work to which he was committed. In fulfilment of the type, the Lord Jesus came in the form of "sin's flesh" (Rom. 8:3), being "made [*ginomai*, to come into existence; origin; constituted. See occurrence in Gal. 4:4] sin for us" (2Cor. 5:21). In this way, the Son of God was brought into the arena of mortality, and identified with those who are to be recipients of God's salvation.

"And unto him he said" — The angel, representing Yahweh, speaks concerning the divine purpose in Joshua (Yahoshua). This was expressed in the words heard at the Jordan, when the voice from heaven declared: "This is My Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased" (Mat. 3:15). Thus "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2Cor. 5:19).

"Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee" — In the case of Joshua the high priest, the "iniquity" (Heb. *avon*, perversity) speaks of the unclean garments he wore. This same word appears in Isa. 53:6, 11. Thus it speaks of the perversity of the nature that transgresses, and although the Lord Jesus never transgressed, he bore the same nature as his fellows. Zech. 3:8 shows that the vision applies to the Lord Jesus. Therefore "iniquity" as applied to the Lord Jesus can only relate to the nature he had, which is identical with that possessed by all mankind (see 1Pet. 2:24), and which in all others is revealed in actual transgression. Jesus never sinned, and in his sinlessness he completely triumphed over the flesh. In David's Messianic Psalm (Psa. 31), Christ is represented as saying: "My life is spent with grief... because of mine iniquity" (v. 10). The word here rendered "iniquity" comes from a root signifying "to be bent," or "crooked," and thus relates to human nature, and not necessarily to active sin. Human nature will lead us to sin if we follow its desires; and it would have done the same in the case of Jesus, but he resisted it and submitted to the will of the Father — "not my will but Thine be done." This load

burdened the Lord, as the Psalmist shows. But he "was upright before Him" (i.e. God), and kept himself from "his iniquity" (Psa. 18:23). In other words, he did not allow the flesh to have dominion over him; though bearing our nature he did not submit to its promptings.

"I will clothe thee" — This was a divine instruction, providing Joshua, as high priest, with garments of honour and glory suitable for his representative responsibility. Moses was commanded to make special garments for the high priest and his sons designed for "glory and beauty" (Exo. 28:2-4). These pointed forward to the excellent character of the Melchisedec high priest. The Mosaic priests were washed and ceremonially cleansed before putting on these garments (Lev. 8:1-9). Thus, in fulfilment of all these types, the Lord became subject to a change from mortality to immortality (2Cor. 5:4) that he might be an appropriate high priest for his people.

"A change of raiment" — Lit. "robes of state" (Roth., Gesenius); "rich apparel" (RV). These robes of state were the high priestly garments for "glory and beauty," called "holy garments" (Exo. 28:2), that Joshua was destined to wear when he would minister in that capacity in the reconstructed temple. This would follow the completion of his working in the environment of dust and soil. It was at the conclusion of the Lord's activities in the realm of sin's flesh, that he received the "change of raiment" to immortality, and is now constituted "separate from sinners," and made appropriate to officiate as high priest on behalf of his followers (Heb. 8:4-6).

VERSE 5

"And I said" — As a type of the saints, Zechariah applauds the honour paid to the Son of God, depicted in the vision he received. Ginsburg, however, in his Notes to the Hebrew Text, states that some mss. have "he said." The Vulgate renders it in that way, and it seems more appropriate to the circumstances.

"Let them set a fair mitre upon his head" — The high priest wore a linen

mitre on his head upon which was placed a band of gold engraved with the caption: "Holiness to Yahweh" (Exo. 28:36-39). White linen speaks of righteousness (Rev. 19:8); the gold speaks of faith (1Pet. 1:7). Both are combined in this mitre which represents "a crown of glory" upon the head, pointing to an intellect dedicated to divine glory and upholding the righteousness of Yahweh (Rev. 14:1).

"and clothed him with garments" — The action of transformation was completed in the vision, as after the third day in the grave, the Lord Jesus received immortality and glorification.

"And the angel of Yahweh stood by" — Rotherham renders, "stood up." This would be in approval and reverence. An angel was present to greet the Lord Jesus at his resurrection (Mat. 28:2-4), and angels are now subject unto Christ for the redemption of his people (1Pet. 3:22). The angels desire to look at the wonderful progress of the divine purpose through the Son (1Pet. 1:12).

Joshua's Ultimate Glory — vv. 6-7.

A declaration is now given concerning the ultimate divine purpose to be accomplished in the antitypical Joshua, as judge and priest in the future temple of the Age to come. Zechariah watches an august ceremony of divine appointment.

VERSE 6

"And the angel of Yahweh protested unto Joshua, saying" — The Hebrew *'uwd* signifies to repeat; to emphasise; thus "to solemnly declare." The RSV has "enjoined."

VERSE 7

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, If thou wilt walk in My ways" — It is upon this basis that Yahweh will accept His servants, and elevate to glory those who respond faithfully (Deu. 5:33; 10:12). Christ's answer is given in Heb. 10:7 as he willingly gave himself to honouring his Father's will.

"and if thou wilt keep My charge" — The Hebrew for "keep" is *shamar*, with the

idea to fence around, as with thorns; thus to guard and protect with every means possible. The word for "charge" is *mishmereth* signifying to watch; the act of protecting and preserving. The instruction draws attention to the great value of Yahweh's wisdom, and the urgent need to protect it from injury.

"then thou shalt also judge" — The word signifies to rule, or judge as an umpire. It is used in the following places: Gen. 49:16; Deu. 32:36; 1Sam. 2:10; Psal. 50:4; 72:2; 110:6. The use of this word in relation to a priest indicates royal authority in addition to priestly dignity. In other words, a king-priest.

"My house" — Joshua saw Yahweh's temple completed, and took his place therein as high priest. The prophecy had a preliminary application to him; but its true significance is to Christ, who is establishing his "house" of faithful ones, constituting the ecclesia (Heb. 3:6).

"and shalt also" — To protect the courts of the temple in addition to ruler-

"Walk in My Ways... Keep My Charge"

To "walk" in the "ways" of Deity is to possess a moral comprehension of His truth, together with a wholehearted commitment to the cause of manifesting godliness. To "keep" His "charge" means faithfully honouring those responsibilities and obligations which are appropriately required of His sons and daughters. It may also be said that to "walk" in His "ways" is a personal and individual matter; whereas "keeping" His "charge" may relate to ministerial duties in service to both God and man. In all respects, the Son of God, the antitypical Joshua, was the perfect embodiment of these attributes. As the Word made flesh, the Lord was a perfect, living example of Paul's wise counsel to all Christ's followers: "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee...*" (1Tim. 4:16). — J.U.

ship. The Lord Jesus will attend to the matters of worship as well as judgment.

“keep my courts” — There will be courts of judgment in the House of Prayer in Zion to be set up in the Age to come, over which the Lord will preside (Psa. 122:4-6). Christ’s brethren will assist him to rule over those who shall appear before them to have matters of concern determined in accordance with divine wisdom (Lk. 22:30; 1Cor. 6:2). The Psalmist speaks extensively of these courts of judgment (Psa. 65:4; 84:2, 10; 92:13; 96:8; 100:4. See also Isa. 62:9, etc.). Of course, not only the spiritual temple, but the material one of the future Age is also brought into view: for Christ provides judgment in ecclesial matters today, as well as concerning his purpose in the future.

“and I will give thee three places to walk” — The RSV, Rotherham translate: “I will give thee right of access.” Joshua is invited to become part of the divine family. This “right of access” among the heavenly company of angels was granted him because of his victory over the flesh (1Pet. 3:22).

“among these that stand by” — The angels, who were standing by Joshua in the vision. Since Joshua represents the Lord Jesus Christ as high priest, the vision speaks of his immortality and elevation into the angelic company. Similarly, those “in Christ” have the promise of being made equal with the angels (Luke 20:36), destined to take over duties now performed by the Elohim (cp. Heb. 1:14, with 2:5).

The Branch and the Stone — vv. 8-10.

The vision now reveals the elevation of Joshua and his companions and their induction into the authority of the future kingdom of peace and glory. It speaks of the glorious transformation to divine nature and the manifestation of Yahweh in flesh.

VERSE 8

“Hear now” — An invitation to Joshua to consider the divine pronouncement to the exaltation of the high priest, which was now to occur in the dramatic vision. Christ similarly was required to

“hear” the voice of the Spirit (Heb. 10:7; Isa. 50:4-5).

“O Joshua the high priest” — This title is mentioned twice in this chapter, typifying the two advents of the Lord Jesus, in his priestly work. The first occurrence (v. 1) attests to his work in establishing divine righteousness in flesh, his struggle in the dust of labour for the honour of his Father, his challenge by the Satan power, his needing a change of raiment in order to present himself in the presence of Yahweh, and to manifest himself as our “great high priest” (Heb. 3:1; 4:14). The second occurrence of this title appears in this verse, and speaks typically of the elevation of Christ together with “his fellows” into the royal priesthood of the future Age (Rev. 5:10).

“thou” — Joshua stands first in authority, as does the Lord Jesus (Heb. 1:5; 2:11). He first hears the voice of the Father, and conveys it to his friends (Jn. 12:49-50).

“and thy fellows” — Joshua was associated with the governor Zerubbabel (ch. 3:7) and his co-labourers (ch. 6:10-12). Combined they typified the multitudinous Christ, redeemed by the work of the great High Priest.

“that sit before thee” — They gathered around their great leader in fellowship and study of the Word, representing the attitude and actions of the “fellows” of Christ (Heb. 2:11-13) who gather at his Table and listen to the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14).

“for they are men wondered at” — Notice the margin: “men of sign,” who represent the authority of their commander, and draw attention to him. Joshua’s companions were typical men, representing the Lord Jesus and his brethren. For other examples of “men of sign” see Isa. 8:18; 20:3; Eze. 12:11; 24:24, etc.

“for behold” — This exclamation introduces an important statement (see its use in ch. 2:1; 3:8-9).

“I will bring forth” — Yahweh will do it, thus implying the divine parentage of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:32-33). This statement indicates the means by which Yahoshua would be developed, and by

which his “fellows” would be formed. The antitypical Joshua was “brought forth” into life (Gal. 4:4), brought forth to Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51), and brought forth from the grave (Rom. 1:4; Psalms 30:3). It is all the work of Yahweh (2Cor. 5:19).

“My servant” — The Lord Jesus as Yahweh’s servant will accomplish His purpose to bring forth judgment upon the Gentiles (Isa. 42:1), restore Israel (Isa. 49:6), and be a saviour unto men (Acts 5:31). Yahweh is the Redeemer of mankind, who is accomplishing His work of redemption through His servant, the Branch (2Cor. 5:19).

“The Branch” — Heb. *tsemach*, “branch” or “sprout.” Not as Isa. 11:1, but as Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15. Thus the Lord Jesus is the beautiful branch, the righteous sprout of Yahweh, developed from the good Israel tree. In Zechariah’s vision the Branch was first revealed as a servant, and then as king (Zech. 6:12).

VERSE 9

“For behold” — A further use of the exclamation (cp. ch. 2:1; 3:4, 8:9). On this occasion, attention is directed to the glorious signet set before Joshua.

“the stone that I have laid before Joshua” — Joshua and his companions were labouring to restore the foundations of the temple in the days when the prophecy was given. It was customary to

lay a corner stone on the foundation, and then to place the stones in accordance with the important corner stone. The corner stone became the substratum of the building, as Yahweh declared of His creative work (Job 38:6).

It is significant that the Hebrew word for “stone” is *eben*, a cognate word to *ben* (son) and *bath* (daughter), while

“house” is from the Hebrew *beth*. A stone is part of a building, as a son or daughter is part of the family house. So it is with the spiritual house of faith constructed from “living stones” (1Pet. 2:5) of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone (v. 6).

The laying of the stone by Joshua in the temple in Jerusalem points to the foundation stone in the spiritual temple, even the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20). That stone was rejected by the Jewish builders of Yahweh’s spiritual house (see Mat. 21:42; Eph. 2:20; Isa. 28:16; 8:14; Gen. 49:24), but is yet to be honoured as the glorious headstone (Zech. 4:7). Saints are called upon to “behold” that stone, and to shape their lives according to its specifications (see 1Pet. 2:4-9).

The foundation stone placed before Joshua was also later associated with Zerubbabel (Zech. 4:9). Thus a relationship was established between it and them. This “stone” was to be both king and priest, for the civil and religious authority was vested in Zechariah the governor, and Joshua the high priest.

The stone is also revealed to be Yahweh’s signet (Hag. 2:23), upon which He has “engraven the graving” (Zech. 3:9). The inscription ascribes *Holiness to Yahweh* (Exo. 28:36), which is engraven by the Deity Himself.

“upon one stone shall be seven eyes”

— Seven is the number of completeness, and here represents the complete multitudinous Christ, as one with the Christ-Stone (Jn. 17:21). The word “seven” in Hebrew (*sheva*) is the same word as for “oath,” and points to the fact that the multitudinous Christ is bound together as one by the oath of the covenant. The saints are portrayed as the “eyes of Yahweh,” for they will be sent throughout the earth to supervise all things on His behalf (see Zech. 4:10). They will therefore perform work previously undertaken by the angels, who acted as the eyes of Yahweh in the past, supervising events on His behalf, and guiding them according to the divine will (see Gen. 11:5; 18:21; 2Chr. 16:9; Dan. 4:17).

It is significant, that in Hebrew, the same word is used for “eyes,” as for “foun-



tain" (*'ayin*) because the eyes are the fountain of the body, which in times of stress pour out tears. The multitudinous Christ is likened to a "fountain of living water" (Jn. 4:14; 7:38; Isa. 32:2), refreshing mankind with the doctrines they proclaim. But these same eyes can become as "fire" against the wicked who refuse to heed the gospel message (Isa. 30:27; Dan. 10:6).

"behold" — A further exclamation (see note v. 8), to draw attention to the work of Yahweh in the engraving of the Stone.

"I will engrave" — Yahweh shaped the Foundation Stone (the Lord Jesus into whom the eyes are fitted; Jn. 17:21), and determined to engrave His personality in His Son as His own work, by which "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2Cor. 5:19). Christ first reflected the moral qualities of his Father, as Yahweh manifested Himself in flesh (1Tim. 3:16). Flesh unaided could not accomplish what the Son did, and therefore he is revealed as the one whom Yahweh "made strong for Himself" (Psa. 80:17). The Spirit, poured upon him without measure, made him of "quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh" (Isa. 11:1-3), so that by the "indwelling of the Father" (Jn. 14:10), who figuratively "held his hand" (Isa. 42:6) he triumphed over the flesh. The victory revealed the mutual co-operation of Father and Son to that end (2Cor. 5:19). As God shaped the Stone, so the "eyes" (the saints) must seek divine strength from above (Phil. 4:13), for they, too, must reveal the "workmanship of God." See Isa. 60:21; 1Cor. 3:16; 2Cor. 4:6-7.

"the graving thereof, saith Yahweh of hosts" — Bro. Thomas comments: The writer, or engraver, is the Seven-Horned and Seven-Eyed Spirit (Rev. 4:5; 5:6) who "engraves the graving thereof" (Zech. 3:9). When the dead body (of Jesus) prepared for the Spirit (Heb. 10:5) was restored to life, and had come forth from the sepulchre, the Spirit "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," engraved upon it, or impressed it with, every attribute necessary to constitute it "the Lord from the heaven." He made it "both Lord and Christ." The

precious stone had come out of the earth, whence all precious stones also come, but it had to be cut, polished, embroidered and adorned, to bring out all the beauties of which it was susceptible. This is the Spirit effected in the operation of "raising" the resurrected body to final consubstantiality with the Deity. Now, it matters not whether it be one man to be made "the Lord from heaven" or a countless multitude of earth-borns to be made the Holy Jerusalem "descending from the Deity out of heaven," the operation is the same. Every individual is subjected to a like polishing, embroidering and adorning, as saith the Spirit who will do the work. In the operation he is married to the Spirit in so close and intimate a union, that he becomes one body, flesh and bones, with the Spirit; so that all the earthiness and corruptibleness of his grave-body is "swallowed up of life;" it loses its similitude to the nature of the first Adam; and acquires "the heavenly image" of the Lord from heaven. (*Eureka*, vol. 5, p. 343-344).

"and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" — Previously Joshua was clothed in filthy garments, described as "thine iniquity" (v. 4). Now the land itself is described as bearing iniquity, for the whole nation was affected by the same condition as the high priest. Thus, the priest (Joshua) and the land (the nation) find themselves in iniquity. This is fulfilled in the work of Christ for the redemption of himself and his people. What he did for himself, he did on behalf of others (Heb. 10:14; 7:27; 9:28). His sacrifice not only atoned for the sins of spiritual Israel, but provides the means whereby national Israel will be gathered to him again (see Jn. 11:49-53; Zech. 13:1). The full scope of Christ's labours will not be revealed until the remarkable prophecy of Isa. 66:7-8 is fulfilled. Zion is to "bring forth her children" by resurrection. From the graves there shall come forth those who will constitute the multitudinous Christ, and from the national grave there will be raised the national Zion of the future. Then will be fulfilled the words: "As soon as Zion tra-

veiled, she brought forth her children.”

VERSE 10

“In that day, saith Yahweh of hosts”

— The day of redemption and glory, when the work of Messiah will be demonstrated to all mankind. It is the day for which Yahweh looks, described by the Psalmist as “the day which Yahweh hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24).

“shall ye call every man his neighbour” — All war, feuds, antagonisms will be brought to an end, and perfect peace will be established. No longer, for

example, will the distinction that Jews set between themselves and Gentiles exist, but mutual co-operation will be the order of the day. The “royal law,” as the golden rule of love, will become the foundation of human relationships (Mic. 4:4; Contrast Psa. 28:3).

“under the vine and under the fig tree” — Symbols of Israel in peace, prosperity and security. All the nations will see in Israel, the “first dominion” in the earth, and the means by which the divine laws will go forth from Zion (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:4).

THE NIGHT OF SEVEN VISIONS

CHAPTER 4

The Coming Triumph of the Light



5th Vision: THE LAMPSTAND, OLIVE TREES, AND GREAT MOUNTAIN

The prophet is figuratively awakened out of the sleep of death, to be shown the Lampstand of the Spirit whose light destroys the darkness of the world. The lampstand is fed by the oil of two olive trees, one on either side. The figure then changes, and instead of the lampstand destroying the surrounding darkness, Zechariah sees a great mountain the presence of which hinders the work of Zerubbabel in building the temple. The problem is solved, however, as the mountain is levelled to a plain, and the headstone of the temple is brought forth with shouts of acclamation. In the face of this crowning glory, the prophet hears words of exhortation and encouragement: “Despise not the day of small things...”

Chapter 4 has its historical basis in the events even then taking place. These are typical of future developments. The opposition the Jews were receiving at that time constituted a “great mountain” of difficulty that threatened to prevent their labours reaching a successful completion. There was a need for a revelation of hope to dispel the darkness of depression and trouble that hemmed them in, and this vision provided it. It showed that the light of divine truth would assuredly conquer all opposition, that the temple would be completed, and a literal lampstand would shed forth its golden light in the holy place.

But that was only the type; and though it encouraged those who were then engaged in the work, Zechariah was shown that the true fulfilment awaits the future, after the resurrection. Then a glorious divine light will shine forth to destroy the darkness that will rest heavily upon the Gentile world (Isa. 60:1-2), and the great mountain of power that will develop out of the crisis of the latter days to oppose the “little stone cut out” therefrom

(*Dan. 2*) will be levelled to a plain. Finally, the glory of the headstone of God's spiritual temple will be set up amid shouts of acclamation and praise.

The lampstand of the vision was seven-branched and of gold. It stood between two olive trees that were connected to it by two branches joined to two golden pipes. Through these pipes the golden oil was transmitted from the branches to the bowl of the lampstand for the supply of the lamps. By this apparatus of light, Jerusalem shall be made to shine, shall become a praise in the earth, and the face of the world shall be changed.

According to the vision, these things are to happen before Zerubbabel's eyes (*Zech. 4:7*). To that end, he must be raised from the dead, to play his part in "overthrowing the throne of the kingdoms and destroying the strength of the kingdoms of the nations" (*Hag. 2:22*). At that time, the lampstand with its light (Christ and his immortalised brethren) will illuminate all the earth, and bring the blessings of divine administration to all nations.

Awakened Out of Sleep — vv. 1-5.

This vision is unique, as *Zechariah* is awakened from sleep, and the vision is then presented to him. This circumstance indicates that the aspects of this vision apply to events to occur after the return of Messiah and the resurrection of the faithful, of whom *Zechariah* is a type.

VERSE 1

"And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me" — This evidently is the angel of *ch. 3:1*, representing the "ministering spirits" sent forth by the Spirit to call those of a *Zechariah*-disposition to salvation. Being awakened by the angel typified the resurrection, indicating that the fulfilment of the vision will be in the future when *Zechariah* is raised from the dead. Such a typical enactment was experienced by Abraham (*Gen. 15:12*), Daniel (*Dan. 10:9*) and three of the apostles (*Lk. 9:32*), after which all were treated to an explanation of the glory to follow.

"as a man that is wakened out of his sleep" — That is, from a particularly deep sleep, typifying death, as in the case of the ruler's daughter (*Lk. 8:52*), and the Lord's friend, Lazarus (*Jn. 11:11*).

VERSE 2

"And said unto me, What seest thou?" — The enquiry indicates the importance of observing the vision; of focussing on the divine work, and looking to the future redemption.

"And I said, I have looked, and behold, a candlestick" — The Hebrew

word *menowrah*, signifies a chandelier; or more correctly "lampstand." The light came not from candles but from oil lamps supplied by oil from the two olive trees which *Zechariah* also saw. The figure is drawn from the tabernacle, in which the darkness of the holy place was illuminated by the seven-branched lampstand that stood over against the table of shewbread (*Exo. 26:35*), the light of which enabled the twelve loaves of bread which stood upon the table, and which were representative of the Hope of Israel, to be clearly seen. In fulfilment of the symbol, Christ called upon his followers to let their light shine before men (*Mat. 5:14-15*), a light that should reveal the Hope of Israel.

The lamp of the tabernacle was replenished by oil supplied by the children of Israel, being obtained from the olive trees by striking the branches, and crushing the berries to produce the "golden liquid." Then the priests conveyed it to the holy place to maintain the lamp's illumination (*Exo. 27:20*).

In the symbol that *Zechariah* saw, however, two branches connected with two olive trees performed the work of the priests, for through them the oil poured from the trees to the reservoir of the lampstand.

The Lord Jesus is the lampstem and lamp-bowl or reservoir, from whence the oil is distributed to the burners (the saints) who radiate the Light of Truth after a process of combustion (see *Rev. 1:12*).

"all of gold" — The symbol is of a tried faith, and not mere faith in the

abstract (1Pet. 1:7; Pro. 17:3; Job 23:10). In Lam. 4:2, the “precious sons of Zion” are compared to “fine gold,” being men of active faith. In Jeremiah’s time, however, those who should have revealed this quality proved themselves to be but “earthy,” and were esteemed as but “earthen pitchers.” In the millennial Age, this lampstand of gold, representing the complete community of the righteous, will illuminate the earth with divine wisdom and understanding. “The righteousness of Zion shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth” (Isa. 62:1). By this means, all men will come to “know Yahweh,” for “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).

“with a bowl upon the top of it” — A container at the end of the lampstand, symbolising the reservoir of the Spirit, the source of divine light manifested in the multitudinous Christ (Mat. 5:16; Phil. 2:15). Like the lampstand, the bowl typifies the Lord Jesus, but in the work of the Word taught: “There [in Zion] I will make to spring a horn for David; I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed” (Psa. 132:17).

“and his seven lamps thereon” — The number seven represents the Abrahamic Covenant. The Hebrew for seven is *sheva*, which is also used for “oath” and is related to the “covenant” light. In Rev. 4:5, this symbol represents the Spirit of God in multitudinous manifestation. The saints, in the Age to come will be Spirit-beings (1John 3:2; John 3:6; 1Cor. 15:45-46) being clothed upon with divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). They will then be “equal unto the angels” (Luke 20:36) who are described as “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14). They will thus “excel in strength, hearkening unto the voice of Yahweh’s Word,” being “ministers of His, that do His pleasure” (Ps. 103:19-22).

“and seven pipes to the seven lamps” — In the Hebrew (see margin), these seven lamps (or burners), are represented as being fed by “seven sevens” or forty-nine pipes (thus seven pipes establish the connection between each lamp and the reservoir of oil, the “bowl”). In Revelation 1,



the ecclesias are represented by seven lampstands, each, apparently, with seven lamps, making forty-nine in all. These seven lampstands represent the one true ecclesia dispersed throughout the world. In Zechariah’s vision these ecclesias are gathered together in one, represented by forty-nine pipes feeding the seven lamps. How brilliant then will be the illumination when the “true worshippers” of all ecclesias throughout the ages, are brought together to unitedly enlighten the world!

“which are upon the top thereof” — Thus prominently displayed for all to see.

VERSE 3

“And two olive trees by it” — The prophet saw two olive trees on either side of the lampstand. The two branches coming from the trees pour oil into the bowl or reservoir of the lamp to feed the lights above, and illuminate the whole vision. This is in harmony with Bible symbology which speaks of two olive trees, one a good olive, the other a wild olive; the former representing Israel, the latter representing the Gentiles (Hos. 14:6; Rom. 11:17). The two olive trees associated with the lampstand thus represent Jews and Gentiles drawn to one centre after Christ’s return and, like Israel of old, providing oil for illumination through the lampstand.

But the prophet noted that though the trees had many branches, only two (one out of each tree) connected with the golden lampstand, to pour oil, through two golden pipes into the bowl (v. 12). Whilst the two olive trees represent Israel and the Gentiles in a national sense, the two branches represent those who have been separated from both as a people for the Lord (Acts 15:14). Thus the “sons of oil” represent the true Israel irrespective as to their nationality by

birth, for "they are not all Israel which are of Israel," but "the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:6-8). In this vision, they represent the royal priesthood of the Age to come, who will convey the "oil" of all nations, on a basis of faith in Christ (the golden pipes leading to the reservoir) to shine forth as light through their ministrations (the seven lamps).

If a similar vision were required to represent the Mosaic institution alone, there would be only one tree representative of Israel, and the branch would be representative of the Levitical priesthood which was separated from the nation, for the purpose, among other things, of conveying the prepared oil of the nation to the golden lampstand in the tabernacle.

Two trees speak of the induction of the faithful of all nations into Christ through the ministry of the royal Melchizedek priesthood yet to be revealed in the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

Yahweh's Spirit shall Conquer and Triumph in the Earth — vv. 4-7.

Zechariah seeks an explanation for the remarkable vision, and is informed concerning the results of the dramatic work of the Deity among men. It is to be achieved only through the means of the spirit of Truth in the hands of the governor. This vision thus adds to that of chapter 3 in which the high priest was featured. Now the governor Zerubbabel is elevated. Together they represent the king-priest work of the future.

VERSE 4

"So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying" — Rotherham renders: "I responded." The dramatic vision called forth such a response from the prophet. He was keenly interested in the outcome of the vision.

"What are these, my lord?" — The prophet desired to know more of the meaning of the vision, and the subsequent verses reveal this. His attention is first drawn to its basic meaning and application to his day. As the light of the lampstand destroyed the prevailing darkness about it,

so the Spirit of God would be adequate to conquer the problems that were then facing the returned exiles who were striving to build the house of God in the face of great difficulties and opposition. The "despised day of small things" (v. 10) would witness a glorious consummation: the mountain of difficulty that faced the people would be levelled to a plain if they would but trust in God; the lampstand would be set up in the completed temple and bring light to the darkness of its interior if they continued to labour in faith. The vision was therefore designed to encourage the people at that time, as well as setting forth a glorious

"What are these, my Lord?"

This question from the prophet indicates an enquiring state of mind towards the Word. It is so easy to read the Word daily as either a duty or a mechanical habit, perhaps both. There is little value in this. The daily reading of the Word should be out of a desire to serve Yahweh by absorbing into the mind that which is being read. To absorb the Word requires a keen interest therein, together with an enquiring mind. The Lord Jesus offered his disciples this wise advice: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Mat. 7:7). This statement implies a deficiency on the part of the Lord's disciples. Seeing his followers will never attain to a state in this present existence where they can claim to "know it all", their deficiency will be ever present; therefore their need will remain, and they must constantly and regularly take steps to correct their insufficiency. "Ask... seek... knock..." A combination of prayer and Bible study, practised with humble perseverance, will renew the mind with the things of the Spirit. Only by this means will the mind of the Spirit be developed. Throughout the ages, faithful men and women have learned to approach every passage of Scripture with the attitude: "What are these, my Lord?" — J.U.

symbolic prophecy of the future.

VERSE 5

“Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, saying, Knowest thou not what these be?” — As though to say, You should really know! An understanding of God’s purpose will enable us to see more clearly what is required of us, and to put confidence in God to help us. We thus become “strengthened by the Spirit [Word] in the inner man” (Eph. 3:15-19).

“And I said, No, my lord” — Zechariah was perplexed by the vision, and could not comprehend its real significance. Daniel (Dan. 8:27; 12:8), Habakkuk (Hab. 1:2) and others, experienced a similar reaction in like circumstances.

VERSE 6

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Yahweh unto Zerubbabel, saying” — The vision now introduces the governor of Jerusalem, whose name signifies *A Shoot (or Offspring) from Babylon*, indicating that he was born in captivity. In Ezra 3:2 he is given as the son of Shealtiel, but in 1Chr. 3:19, his father’s name is given as Pedaiah. He is thought to have been the son of the latter, but adopted by Shealtiel his brother (1Chr. 3:17-18), whose name means *Asked (or Named) of El*. Known as “Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel” his name signifies *The Seed from Babylon who became the Son Asked (or named) of God*. (cf. Hag. 1:1). Zerubbabel’s full name, therefore, is suggestive of the Lord Jesus as the Branch of Promise shooting forth from the withered stem of Jesse (Isa. 53:2. Isa. 11:1).

Zerubbabel thus represented the Davidic monarchy (Hag. 2:20-23), and was an ancestor of the Lord Jesus (Mat. 1:12-13; Lk. 3:27). Zerubbabel led a group of exiles back to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:1-64; Neh. 7:5-7; 12:1-9), and in company with the high priest Joshua, commenced restoration of the ruined temple. Ultimately he became the governor under authority of the Persian Darius, and after much delay, succeeded in rebuilding the temple (Zech. 4:1-

14). He stands as a type of the Lord Jesus in his regal authority, as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16).

“Not by might” — That is, not by the strength of the flesh.

“Nor by power” — Nor by the influence of authority.

“But by My Spirit” — By divine help (Isa. 59:16), and not by reliance upon the might of men or the power of flesh, all difficulties, all opposition, both now and in the future, will be conquered. That was the lesson that Zerubbabel, and all saints, must learn. Zerubbabel and his associates faced a “mountain” of opposition in the building of the temple, but this vision revealed that it would be conquered and levelled as a plain, if they drew upon the means that Yahweh was prepared to make available to them.

Paul learned the lesson, and taught that he could do “all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). Strength is available for us from the same source, because “the testimony of Jesus” constitutes God’s spirit (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1John 5:6; John 17:17) by which power, the saints have been enabled to conquer (Rev. 12:11).

In the future, a mountain of Gentile opposition to the establishment of the kingdom of God will arise, to be likewise levelled to a plain by “God’s Spirit.” All political power is destined to be humbled before the feet of the Lord Jesus and his followers. Bro. Thomas comments: “But this will not result by the power and strength of Israel under any organisation they might constitute; for at that crisis their power and strength will have been utterly scattered; but it shall be accomplished by Yahweh’s Spirit, which will raise Zerubbabel and his companions from among the dead, to be the captains of Israel together with the living believers; and will be the strength and power energising them all to the complete reduction of the Great Political Mountain of the Gentiles to the level of a summer threshing-floor; even to cause to go forth the Head, or Chief Stone, with shouting of ‘Grace, grace unto him!’ “ (*Eureka* vol. 1, p.65).



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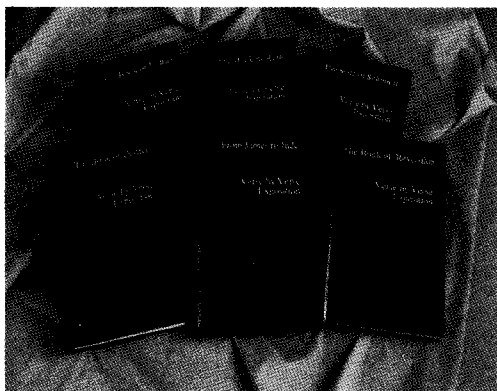
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ZERUBBABEL AND THE
HEADSTONE.

DESPISE NOT THE DAY OF
SMALL THINGS.

TWO SONS OF OIL.

THE APOSTATE HOUSE IN
SHINAR.



Zechariah ch. 4:6 to 5:11

A **LOOKS** MAGAZINE

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As the light of the lampstand in the vision of Zechariah destroyed the darkness of the night (Zech. 4:2), so will Yahweh's Spirit manifested through His immortalised saints, destroy Gentile darkness at Christ's return (Isa. 60:1-2).

"saith Yahweh of hosts" — The familiar expression in this prophecy, establishing the authority of the declaration (see comments on ch. 1:1, 3). This title of Deity is significant in the light of the context, for Yahweh of hosts (armies) is expressive of Deity in belligerent manifestation. The armies comprise Christ and the saints clothed upon with the Spirit of God, exercising its power (Hab. 3:3-5; Rev. 19:11-14), and overcoming all resistance, by which it subdues all nations.

VERSE 7

"Who art thou, O great mountain?"

— The book of Ezra shows how a great mountain of difficulties opposed the labourers of Zerubbabel in the building of the temple. The surrounding nations bitterly resisted the Jews and were determined that their labours should fail. Those circumstances prefigure the opposition that will be raised from the Powers of Darkness at the setting up of the kingdom at Christ's return. A symbol of Babylon was that of a great "mountain" (Jer. 51:25-26), and ancient Babylon has its modern counterpart (Rev. 17:5). This great mountain of political and religious wickedness, to be headed by Gog (Eze. 38:1) and the Papacy (Dan. 8:25), will stand as the great opponent of Truth, and will be reduced to a plain by the antitypical Zerubbabel, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

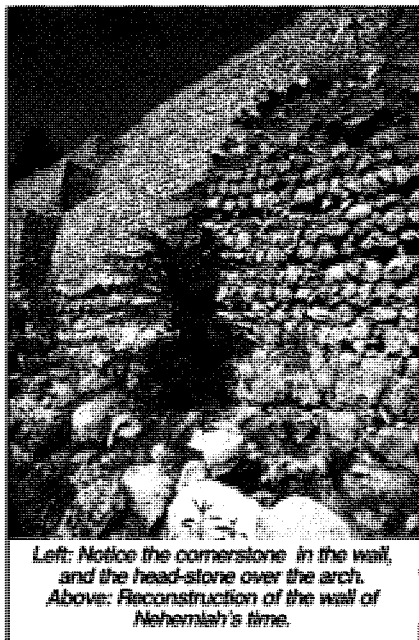
"before Zerubbabel" — Zerubbabel was an associate of Joshua the high priest, and therefore a "man of sign" (Zech. 3:8; mg). As Leader of Israel, Son of David, Governor of Judah, and Builder of the Temple, Zerubbabel was a fitting type of the Lord Jesus in his royal power, whilst Joshua represented him in his priestly office. Combined, they foreshadowed the royal-priesthood of the Lord, when, in him, those offices will be combined (Zech. 6:13).

In addition to the typical, there is a literal application of this prophecy that should not be overlooked. It was to be fulfilled "before Zerubbabel," implying his resurrection. In *Eureka* vol. 1, Bro. Thomas comments:

"Many of Zechariah's and Haggai's countrymen, who had witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon by the Chaldeans, had lived to see the fall of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty, and the completion of the new temple. They knew that the Burnt Mountain (Jer. 51:25-26) was among the things of the past; and that Zerubbabel had had nothing to do with its burning and its downfall from the rocks; what, then, could the Eternal Spirit mean by the 'great Mountain' he apostrophized, as destined to become a plain before Zerubbabel after his resurrection from among the dead? It was not the Chaldean, nor the Bear, nor the Leopard for they saw by Daniel that all these were removed by conquest in the ordinary way. What else could it be, then, but that Fourth Beast dominion which is to be destroyed by the Saints? (Dan. 7:7-14)... Here, then, is a work still to be accomplished. A great mountain to be levelled in the presence of Zerubbabel; and consequently, to be levelled after his resurrection, when he shall have awakened out of his sleep" (pp. 66-67, 59).

"thou shalt become a plain" — So reduced in influence, prestige and power. The mountain of Gentile power ("Babylon the Great" in Rev. 18; ct. Isa. 40:3), shall be levelled to a plain before the might of the antitypical Zerubbabel (the Lord Jesus Christ). He will put down "all rule, authority and power" (1Cor. 15:24), and do this "not by might [of man], nor by power [of flesh], but by My spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

"and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof" — The encouragement was first to Zerubbabel personally. He was assured by these words that faith would conquer every difficulty and bring to a successful completion the work of God to which he had put his hand. But the main purpose of the vision was prophetic. It



Left: Notice the cornerstone in the wall, and the headstone over the arch.
Above: Reconstruction of the wall of Nehemiah's time.

showed that Christ would not only lay the foundation of the spiritual temple as the antitypical Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:9), but as Zerubbabel, the prince and ruler of Jerusalem, he would complete it by bringing forth the headstone. Christ is both the foundation of the spiritual temple (1Pet. 2:4-7), and its crowning glory (Heb. 12:2), so that the whole house will conform to his pattern, being an extension of himself (John 17:21-23).

“with shoutings, crying” — Observers were excited by the scene, and responded with great acclaim, typical of the glorious ovation that will result from the exaltation of Zion over Babylon (Rev. 18:2, 20)

“Grace, grace unto it” — Joy accompanied the completion of the temple in the day of Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:22), foreshadowing the joy of the future when the “headstone” will make his appearance, and the temple will be completed. Christ will then be revealed as the root and offspring of David (Rev. 22:16), the alpha and omega (Rev. 1:8), the first and the last (Isa. 41:4), the author and finisher of faith (Heb. 12:2),

the foundation stone and headstone of the building. The fulness of grace will then be revealed, to be received with highest acclamation by those privileged to witness it (2Thes. 1:10; Rev. 5:9-14; 19:1-7; Phil. 2:9-10; Mat. 23:39). The context of this last reference, based on Psalm 118:26, has a close connection with the prophecy of Zechariah, for in v. 22, natural Israel is represented as declaring: “The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner.”

Despise Not the Day of Small Things

— vv. 8-10

Many of the returning exiles from Babylon see the work of Zerubbabel and Joshua as being only a poor reflection of the glory of Solomon's era. They feel that Yahweh delights in the excellence of material matters and the beauty of a temple of gold in Jerusalem. They do not realise that the greater work of the Truth is in the conversion of hearts and minds to things divine. In these things Yahweh is pleased and glorified

VERSE 8

“Moreover, the word of Yahweh came unto me, saying” — In order to explain further details of the vision, and to present the prophetic importance to Zechariah.

VERSE 9

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it” — Zerubbabel was foremost in the work of restoration of the temple (Ezra 4:2-3; 5:2; Zech. 4:10), and this declaration is a confirmation that he would complete the labour. It is also true of the work of the Lord Jesus, who established the foundation of the spiritual House (Heb. 3:6) in the great work of his sacrifice in Jerusalem, and is yet to return to complete that work (Rev. 21:2-3). There is a certainty that all the work that Yahweh blesses will be accomplished (see Psalm 127).

“and thou shalt know that Yahweh of hosts hath sent me unto you” — The re-occurring statement of the prophecy that affirms the accuracy of its words (see notes ch. 3:9).

VERSE 10

“For who hath despised the day of small things” — The tendency of flesh is to despise such days on the ground of their lowly aspect. Workmen for the Truth experience such contempt now. Men of flesh fail to comprehend that such an epoch of “small things” will lead to a glorious consummation of great things in the coming Age, and therefore they see little purpose in performing a small work faithfully that gives no prospect of immediate return or respect from others (cp. Hag. 2:3). The man of faith, however, like Moses, has “respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Heb. 11), and thus labours on in hope (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

Both Haggai and Zechariah stressed the importance of labouring faithfully in the service of God with the vision of ultimate glory ever before the mind. Both knew that the temple the people were striving to restore would eventually be again

overthrown, and the nation scattered (Zech. 5:9-11; 11:6), but both taught that if the people worked with the idea of giving God pleasure (Hag. 1:8) they would find their reward in the day when the latter-day temple will be built under the personal direction of the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorified associates. To that time, and not the present, they were to look, and with it in mind, see the value of the work done as an offering to Yahweh.

“for they shall rejoice” — When they recognise the work as being unto Yahweh, and not for the glory of the flesh, they would find joy and true satisfaction. The Hebrew word, *samach*, signifies “to brighten; to be joyful.” In the future Age, when the antitypical Zerubbabel shall build the temple, all mankind will rejoice (Zech. 6:13).

“and shall see the plummet” — The plummet is a measure used to check the vertical dimension of a building; it checks the correctness of the structure. The Lord Jesus is the builder of both the spiritual and the literal temples (1Pet. 2:4-8), and the means by which those buildings are properly constructed depends upon the accuracy determined by the “plummet” in both spiritual and literal spheres. In spiritual matters, the plummet is represented in the foundation doctrines of the Word of Truth, which ensures the correctness of the structure (Eph. 4:12-16). The “measure” Christ holds will be used at the Judgment Seat to exclude the wicked and incorporate the righteous within the building (see Isa. 28:17). It is foolish to “measure” our actions or lives on any other standard (cf. 2Cor. 10:12). Those who have despised not the day of small things, will rejoice in that day, for they shall see a vindication of their labours on behalf of the Truth.

“in the hand of Zerubbabel” — As the governor and controller of the work; Zerubbabel is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “author and finisher of faith” (Heb. 12:2).

“with those seven” — The RSV commences a new sentence at this point: “These seven are the eyes of Yahweh...” The angel explains the vision to Zechariah,

and now continues to reveal the meaning of the seven-branched lampstand. He identifies it with the "seven eyes of Yahweh... which run to and fro through the whole earth." Those seven eyes represent the Spirit of God in multitudinous manifestation. The same symbol is reproduced in the Apocalypse where seven lamps and seven eyes are both said to represent the "seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 4:5; 5:6). There is only "one Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:4), but in order to represent that one spirit diffused through a multitude, the number seven (representing that which is complete and yet manifested multitudinously) is used. The "seven eyes of Yahweh" in the past and present are revealed as the Elohim of heaven. In the future Age, however, a new race of angelic beings, who were once sons of Adam, will take their place (Luke 20:36; Heb. 2:5). See notes on Zech. 3:9, and contrast with those on ch. 4:6.

"they are the eyes of Yahweh, which run to and fro through the whole earth"

— They represent the overshadowing power of the Almighty, as He observes all the activities of mankind. His eyes distinguished between the evil and righteous in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:8); they watch over those who seek Him (2Chr. 16:9; 1Pet. 3:12); for destruction of the evil (Amos 9:8); and are particularly focussed on His Land (Deu. 11:12).

The Two Sons of Oil — vv. 11-14.

Zechariah seeks an explanation for the vision presented to him, and learns that the divine purpose embraces both sons of Adam: Jew and Gentile. Ultimately all mankind will be drawn to appreciate the strength and stimulation of the golden oil of Truth.

VERSE 11

"Then answered I" — Roth. "responded." The angel's statement regarding the seven eyes of Yahweh had again directed Zechariah's attention to the lampstand, and he responded with a question to seek a fuller explanation.

"What are these two olive trees?" — The Hebrew word for "olive" (*zayith*) is

from a root signifying "to illuminate." Paul uses the symbol of two olive trees (a good and a wild olive) to represent Israel and the Gentiles, the two great families of God. The former is His firstborn as Pharaoh was reminded (Exo. 4:22); the latter is yet to be incorporated into His family, and "cultivated" for His pleasure (see Rom. 11:17; Hos. 14:6 for the use of the symbol).

The *Dictionary of Life in Bible Times* comments: "Ten years must elapse before the olive tree gives its first harvest, thirty years before the best. The exploitation of an olive orchard is therefore a long-term affair. The harvesting of the fruit takes place before it is fully ripe, sometimes it is picked, but most often the trees are shaken or beaten. Any extraction of the oil necessitates a preliminary bruising of the fruit. For this they were pounded in a mortar or crushed with a stone roller."

The olive tree is presented with "all the trees" in the Lord's prophecy as a figure of Israel (Lk. 21:29), a token of the return of Messiah. As such it "illuminates" those watching the signs of the times, so that they can prepare for the revelation of all things at the coming of the Lord.

"upon the right side of the candlestick [lit, lampstand] and upon the left side thereof?" — The prophet noticed that the olive trees proceeded from both sides of the lampstand, as the two great divisions of mankind which are redeemed through the work of the Lord Jesus. The basis of their redemption will be an understanding of and acknowledgement of the redemptive work of the Lord, and the need to associate together in Truth (cp. Zech. 14:16).

VERSE 12

"And I answered again, and said unto him" — A further explanation is needed, following the revelation of the two olive trees.

"What be these two olive branches?"

— The two trees stood one on each side of the lampstand so that they were both close to the centre of illumination. The oil, however, passed into the lampstand through particular branches which represent those who are separated out of the nations (both

Israelitish and Gentile), and therefore constitute what Paul calls the “ecclesia (called out ones) of firstborns” (Heb. 12:23; Diaglott). Before the appointment of the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron to the priesthood, it was the privilege of all the firstborn of the families in Israel, irrespective of their tribal descent, to perform the service of a priest (cp. Exo. 24:5 with Num. 3:12-13; 8:16-17). This privilege will be restored to the “firstborns” (i.e., the Redeemed, cp. James 1:18) in the Age to come, who, as a royal priesthood, will bring all nations to Christ and to Yahweh. Under the Law, it was the duty of the people to provide the oil for the lampstand in the tabernacle (Lev. 24:2; Exod. 27:20), and for the priests to tend the lamps, replenishing them with it (Exo. 27:21. 2Chr. 13:10-11). The light in the darkness of the holy place, was therefore a token of the illuminated state of the people who were “of a willing heart to give” the oil, although they had no personal access to the tabernacle. In the future Age, the royal priesthood will bring “the oil” of an enlightened world unto Christ and to the Father. Thus the oil (of the Word) is represented as flowing through the branches along the pipes (the nations) into the lampstand (the Lord Jesus as the illumination of mankind).

“which through the two golden pipes” — These two pipes represent the Jewish and Gentile elements of the Redeemed through which the divine knowledge is distributed to all people in the Age to come. The pipes are golden, portraying the principle of *Faith*, by which the Truth must be accepted by those who hear. See Rom. 11:23; Zech. 8:23.

“empty the golden oil out of themselves?” — There is no word for “oil” in the Hebrew text; the word *zahab* signifies “the gold.” Under the Mosaic order, Israel had to provide “pure olive oil beaten for the light.” This oil was produced by harvesting the fruit of the trees, extracting the liquid therefrom by beating or bruising, and purifying it by immersion in boiling water. This separated all impurities from the oil and caused it to float on top,

enabling “pure golden oil” of supreme quality to be skimmed off. Such oil caused the lamps to burn brightly. Figuratively, the lamps are generated by the “gold” of a tried faith (1Pet. 1:7).

All Mosaic institutions served as parables and “shadows of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5) which were to be manifested later. Thus Israel and the nations shall yet bring forth fruit to the glory of Yahweh. Having been enlightened by the Spirit Word, they “will be willing in the day” (Psa. 110) when the “Lampstand” shall have been set up in Jerusalem. They shall readily give of their substance, as a token of their faith, after they have been “shaken” and bruised and purified like olive trees to reveal their fruit (Hag. 2:7). Zechariah saw this spontaneous flow of “gold,” a token of faith, toward the Lampstand (the Lord Jesus). Isaiah 60 seems to illustrate the same principle: The Christ-Lampstand radiates its light from Jerusalem destroying all darkness (v. 1); The Gentiles bring gold and incense with willing and enlightened hearts (v. 6); Israelites do likewise, recognising the Holy One of Israel (v. 9); No more need for figurative sun or moonlight, for “Yahweh [manifested through the Lampstand] shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy Elohim thy glory” (v. 19).

VERSE 13

“And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord” — A further question is posed to draw Zechariah’s attention to the vital question, that still evaded him.

VERSE 14

“Then said he, These are the two anointed ones” — The reference is to the two branches and golden pipes that empty the oil into the lampstand (v. 12). The word “anointed” is from the Hebrew *yitshar*, derived from *tsahar*, to glisten. It signifies the light-producing ones, and thus “sons of oil” (see margin: a “son of oil” is literally one “filled with oil”), who represent the purified and immortalised Redeemed gathered together in one. There are two such

"sons" because they have been drawn out of the two great families of the human race: Israel and the Gentiles. They are sons of oil because they have been begotten by the Spirit-Word (1Pet. 1:22-25), and have been clothed upon with spirit-nature (1Cor. 15:44).

"that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" — The word "Lord" is from the Hebrew *adon*, signifying the sovereign; ruler. The *Adon* is appointed as governor throughout the earth, and is thus the anti-type of Zerubbabel, governor of Jerusalem at the time of the prophecy. The vision is therefore future, to be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ is the divine Sovereign Ruler over all the earth. He is the Lampstand, for the Lampstand is Christ in multitudinous manifestation, as "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Zechariah's vision of the golden lampstand portrays Christ as both Light of mankind, and Lord of the whole earth, at a time when Israel is restored, and the Redeemed have assumed their status of privilege as a royal priest-

hood, first subduing the nations, then educating them, and finally causing the light of Truth to shine brightly in all parts of the world.

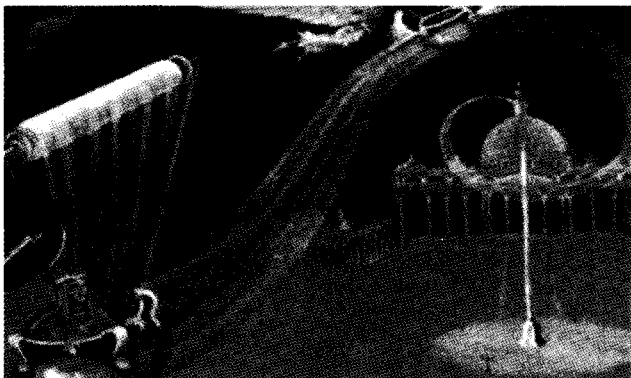
This vision was well calculated to encourage Zerubbabel the builder and his co-labourers to be active in faith, in the certain knowledge that Yahweh supervised their work through "His eyes" which roved "to and fro through the whole earth." He knew of their problems, their strivings, their difficulties. But now Yahweh had revealed to them, that their labours were important, and provided a living parable of His purpose. As the temple would be completed, the Lampstand would be set up in its place, and the priests would minister before it, so will the greater glory be manifested when Christ as "the Lord of the whole earth," will be surrounded by his "sons of oil" to minister the things of God before all mankind, both Jew and Gentile. It was a grand, encouraging vision for Zerubbabel; it remains a grand encouraging vision for us, today!

The Flight of the Storks

CHAPTER 5

6TH VISION: THE APOSTATE HOUSE SET UP IN SHINAR

Hitherto all had been consoling and encouraging in the visions given to the prophet, but now there is a change. This is the sixth vision, and six is the number of man, thus of flesh (Rev. 13:17-18). In it, Zechariah was shown how flesh would



again corrupt God's way, and pervert that which was even then being set up. Apostasy would sweep Judah, Jerusalem would be overthrown, and wickedness would set up its house in the land of Shinar. There is a close connection between this vision and the one

preceding it, for from the land of Shinar was to develop the "fourth beast" whose latter-day manifestation will constitute the "great mountain" of fleshly domination that the antitypical Zerubbabel will level as a plain (Dan. 7:7-11). In harmony with the warning of Haggai 2:6, Zechariah was thus taught that the temple then in course of erection was not the ultimate divine glory, but merely a means to an end. The work in which they were then engaged upon so faithfully, would sadly end in wickedness. A "falling away" had to be expected; lawlessness would rear its head. Yet the faithful were taught not to be discouraged, for their labours were not in vain (1Cor. 15:58), as the future will reveal. Meanwhile it was necessary to show that to build a material temple was of little value unless a true spirit motivated the people. The building meant little if the people refused to heed the Law or obey the will of God. In the development of apostasy, the divine curse would fall upon the guilty.

The Flying Scroll — vv. 1-4.

A new vision is introduced as the prophet's attention is directed to a dramatic picture of a flying scroll. He is told of certain events which would occur to challenge the work of Yahweh in which the prophet is engaged. Thus, it must always be borne in mind that the work of the Truth is subjected to the defiant opposition of enemies.

VERSE 1

"Then I turned" — The Heb. *shub* signifies "to turn (back)," hence "away." The prophet takes up a new position as this vision is introduced. Whereas previously he was looking forward into the millennium (see notes ch. 4:1), he now looks back to observe what would occur following his own times and leading to the resolution of the work of the enemy.

"and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold" — Indicating the dramatic nature of the new vision.

"a flying roll" — A scroll which is identified with "the curse that goeth forth" (v. 3), and is thus seen flying to indicate that the curse would not be limited to one place, but

would extend to wherever the Truth was corrupted.

VERSE 2

"And he said unto me, What seest thou?" — Zechariah is required to identify and examine the vision presented to him. Though the meaning might be obscure, he had to ponder the vision and seek its significance. It is vital for us, like Zechariah, to constantly examine the vision of Truth, and to become aware of the divine purpose (cp. Eph. 1:17).

"And I answered, I see a flying roll"

— He identified the subject-matter of the vision, and then continued to describe the size of the scroll.

"the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits" — These were the measurements of the holy place in the tabernacle, which figuratively represented the ground or basis upon which Yahweh met with man. Attention is thus directed to the divine law.

VERSE 3

"Then said he unto me, This is the curse" — Jer. 29:18 describes the terrible circumstances resulting from the wickedness of Israel. The people not only



became a curse to themselves, but among all people where they were driven (Zech. 8:13). The great apostasy developed out of the superimposing of Judaism on the Truth (Acts 15:1-3) and so destroying the doctrines and inner meaning of the Spirit-Word.

“that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth” — The RV has “land.” The curse went forth first over the land of Israel and from there became co-extensive with the habitable (Luke 2:1). In this it represented the Adamic curse which commenced in the trespassing pair, and affected the whole earth (Gen. 3:17-18).

“for every one that stealeth” — This is seen in the way in which ecclesiastical thieves rob Yahweh’s words of their power (Jer. 23:30-31), or Him of His dues (Mal. 3:8). Israel stole from Yahweh by offering defiled and injured animals, so desecrating the holiness of His altar.

“shall be cut off as on this side according to it” — This should be rendered as in Rotherham’s translation: “Every one that stealeth hath been let off as on this side of it.” The measure of Israel’s iniquity was the way in which the Law had been relaxed (Hab. 1:4). “Thieves” had been let off the punishment prescribed by the Law (the flying scroll) as recorded on “that side of it.” The eyes of Israel’s leaders had been closed to the iniquity of these thieves (Jer. 5:27-28) and opened to ungodly commercialism, referred to in Zech. 5:6.

“and everyone that sweareth” — This refers to those who according to v. 4, were “false swearers” (Mal. 3:5), taking Yahweh’s name in vain (Lev. 19:12).

“shall be cut off as on that side according to it” — There was to be no avoiding the divine judgment. Nor could any expect to avoid the consequences of their actions while accounting for others the condemnation of the Law.

VERSE 4

“I will bring it forth, saith Yahweh of hosts” — Yahweh declares His intention of exacting punishment according to the deserts of those who desecrated His name

and brought upon themselves the curse of the Law.

“and it shall enter into the house of the thief” — Divine judgment was expressed by the Lord Jesus when he stood up to publicly warn the ecclesiastical thieves that the curse would quickly fall upon their house. “How can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna?” he enquired of those who sought the guarantee of the temple in Jerusalem... “Behold, *your house* is left unto you desolate” (Mat. 23:33, 36-39). The prophecy of Zechariah indicates that the judgment would not pass quickly by, but would “enter in” as though to remain in the house until its purpose was completed. The judgment upon the wicked was based upon their defiled worship in the temple, and extended to embrace to the whole nation.

“and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by My name” — In their actions the people took the name of Yahweh in vain, ultimately rejecting the Son whom He had sent into the world for their redemption, and demanding for themselves the gifts of the temple (cp. Mat. 23:16).

“and it shall remain in the midst of his house” — The curse would take up its lodging in the house of Israel until the purpose of judgment against their wickedness is accomplished.

“and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof” — This was the fate of a house infested with the plague of leprosy under the Law. The priest was sent to inspect the house, and if it did not respond to required treatment over the course of seven days (typical of the period of sin and death in the earth), it was proclaimed unclean. “He shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place” (Lev. 14:45). After the prophets had reported the evil condition of the house of Israel, God sent His Son (Mat. 10:6) to inspect its state and to see whether there was a “fretting leprosy in the house,” or whether it would be amenable to treatment. It was revealed

so bad as to be beyond treatment: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," he declared (Mat. 23:38). Thus it was broken down and the nation exiled in the destruction of AD70. Note the warning words of Jer. 8:11-12. The "time of visitation" was the time of inspection to provide opportunity for restoration, or to pass judgment on a leprous condition when the house was "cast down" (Isa. 10:3; Lk. 19:44).

The Woman Shut up in the Ephah

— vv. 5-8

The first part of the vision showed that Israel had defied the Law, so that Yahweh's Name was profaned, and His requirements flouted. Now the cause of this is revealed. Zechariah is shown a hollow measure. The covering is removed, and a woman named "Lawlessness" is seen sitting comfortably therein. As she endeavours to escape, the cover is replaced, and the measure is borne off by two women with the wings of storks to the land of Shinar. There a house is established upon its own base. The woman and measure symbolise the wickedness of Israel which is set up in a different form in the land of Shinar.

VERSE 5

"Then the angel that talked with me went forth" — To develop the vision so as to describe to the prophet the ultimate destiny of the sin that characterised the nation of Israel.

"and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth" — Zechariah typifies the Lord Jesus, who carefully examined the spiritual condition of the people to whom he was sent, to ascertain their attitude to divine things. This vision continues that of the flying roll (vv. 1-4), showing the result of the spiritually leprous condition of Israel.

VERSE 6

"And I said, What is it?" — Zechariah was surprised by the unusual aspect of the vision; he did not clearly discern the character of this new representation. Israel said the same of the manna in the wilderness because they did not recognise it as the heavenly food (Exo. 16:15), nor did they see that sustenance in the anti-typical manna (Jn. 6:49-51). In this case, however, the mysterious vision was the destructive spirit of wickedness, soon to be revealed in its grotesque character.

"And he said, This is an ephah" — The ephah stands related to the "curse" of v. 3; but whereas the latter was the judgment to fall upon guilty Israel, the ephah represents the spirit of depravity that would overtake mankind. The ephah was the most common Jewish measure of grain, and therefore a symbol of trade in general. The ephah was about a bushel in size, and probably was shown here in the form of a basket, for the prophet next saw a woman sitting therein.

The ephah symbolised the "measure" of Israel's iniquity (see Mat. 23:32), for everything the people did was done for gain, both in material things and for personal reputation, even their service at the temple. They made merchandise of religion (2Pet. 2:3; Mal. 1:10; Amos 8:5). Christ condemned those attending upon the temple services because they had converted Yahweh's house "into a den of thieves," trading in sacrificial animals and money, introducing commercialisation into their worship (Mark 11:17). It was this element of covetousness that strengthened the Catholic system to develop in the early centuries, and resulting in the present-day Apostasy. Those with a love of Yahweh will prevent every form of "the ephah" from entering into the activ-



ities of the ecclesia.

“that goeth forth” — Manifested in activity; determined to accomplish its evil designs.

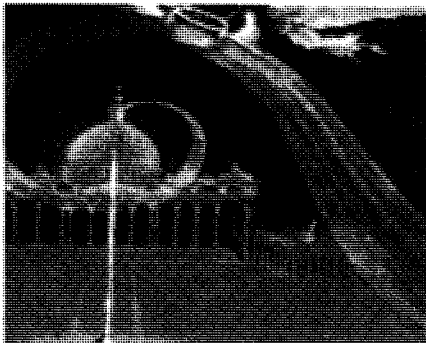
“He said moreover, This is their resemblance” — The word “resemblance” in Hebrew is *ayin*, translated “fountain” or “eye” (see Psa. 119:121-128). The eye of all Israel focused on the measure: ungodly commercialism governed all their aims and thoughts, even their service at the temple.

What a contrast to the seven eyes of ch. 4:10 that are destined to run to and fro through the whole earth on Yahweh’s behalf! The RSV renders “resemblance” as “iniquity,” thus indicating the “evil eye” (cp. Pro. 23:6; 28:22; Mk. 7:22). The iniquity was that the eye of Israel was intent upon the measure, upon the principle of gain, instead of being intent upon Yahweh. Thus the Law was relaxed, and thieves and false-swearers blasphemed God with impunity.

“through all the earth” — The wicked spirit takes control of mankind and spreads its contamination. Compare this with the “eyes of Yahweh which run to and fro through the whole earth” (ch. 4:10). Ultimately, the power of the Truth will overcome the seed of the serpent, but meanwhile Zechariah is taught that the power of iniquity would predominate.

VERSE 7

“And behold, there was lifted up a talent” — Heb. *kikkar*, “a circle.” Evidently the ephah had a circular cover.



“of lead” — A base metal (see Jer. 6:28-29), providing a contrast to the gold of the lampstand (ch. 4:2) and the golden mercy seat that covered the ark, representing the righteousness of Yahweh in the tabernacle (Exo. 25:17). The glory of Yahweh is represented in the value of gold; the glory of mankind is seen in valueless lead.

“and this is a woman” — The symbol of a woman is used both for the chaste virgin of Truth (2Cor. 11:2), and for the profligate woman of Evil (Isa. 57:3; Eze. 16:28; Rev. 17:1, 15). In this vision she stands for all that is opposed to truth. The RSV clarifies this statement: “Behold the leaden cover was lifted up, and there was a woman sitting in the ephah.” This woman was at the very heart of the religious commercialism of Israel, and represents the ecclesiastical spirit of Babylon (Isa. 47:7-8. Jer. 51:7). The people of Israel had brought back with them some of the ways of Babylon under whose influence they had remained for over seventy years. This found expression in a materialism that made them reluctant to sacrifice present advantage for the Truth (Hag. 1:4), and later encouraged some of their leaders to form unlawful alliances with the enemy (Neh. 13:28). This Babylonish influence permitted the ecclesiastical “thieves” and “false swearers” of vv. 3-4 to flourish.

But for a time it was not openly manifest that this influence was Babylonish in character. All that was obvious was a growing commercialism throughout the land, even in the worship of Yahweh, as the eye of all Israel was fixed upon the Ephah.

But a closer examination revealed the real cause of all this, the importation of ideas and practices identified with Babylon. With the lid of the measure taken off, and the woman at last revealed, she tried to escape from the restricted lodging place to which even a nominal observance of the Law confined her. Thus, the ideas and practices imported from Babylon would become more open and blatant throughout the land, a warning to those who consciously sought to do the will of God.

“that sitteth in the midst of the ephah” — In the Hebrew, the verb “sitteth” (*yashab*) signifies to settle down comfortably; to dwell contentedly. The spirit of the evil Woman found a ready acceptance in the faithless ecclesia.

VERSE 8

“And he said, This is wickedness” — The woman is named, “Wickedness,” or, more correctly, “Lawlessness,” or the Lawless One (see also Mic. 6:10-11). Paul seems to cite this prophecy in 2Thes. 2:8: “Then shall that Wicked [*for Lawless One*] be revealed...” Before this was openly revealed as such in Israel, or later in the ecclesia, the “mystery of iniquity” was working, leavening the work of the Truth. In the case of Israel, this happened during the period when the ephah was first seen, and before the woman was revealed sitting therein. Later, in the ecclesia, it was the secret working of the “mystery of iniquity,” during apostolic times. However, Zechariah’s prophecy is concerned only with Israel at this stage.

“And he” — The angel describing the vision dramatises the meaning of the prophecy.

“cast it into the midst of the ephah” — The RV has “her.” The ministry of the prophets and of the Lord Jesus Christ, lifted the cover of the ephah and revealed the presence of the woman. They showed the true nature of Israel’s wickedness. Their words of warning and rebuke, however, resulted in a greater activity on the part of the “woman” (the Babylonish influence within the nation). The prophets, and the Lord, were vigorously opposed by those who had embraced these principles. But divine judgments (climaxing in that of AD70) violently flung the woman back into the obscurity of the ephah, which was then closed up, and conveyed out of the land of Israel to that of Shinar (v. 11).

“and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof” — The Babylonish influence was shut up and limited by the opposition of the prophets and the Lord Jesus, and ultimately by the judgment of God.

VERSE 9

“Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold” — The prophet is directed to see a further development in the dramatic prophecy (cp. v. 1).

“there came out two women” — Both Jeremiah (ch. 3:6-10) and Ezekiel (ch. 23:4-5) liken apostate Israel and Judah to two adulterous daughters, and they are reproduced here as possessing wings like a stork.

“and the wind was in their wings” — Divine judgment and power, often manifested in war and invasion (Jer. 4:11-13; 51:1-2; Dan. 7:2). Such was to drive the women from the land.

“for they” — Though the nation was known only as Judah, representatives of the northern tribes were found therein, both in the days of Zechariah as in the days of the Lord (1Chr. 9:1-2; Ezra 6:17; Mat. 10:6, 23). Thus both apostate daughters of Israel were found mingled together in association with the ephah.

“had wings like the wings of a stork” — The stork was accounted unclean under the Law of Moses (Lev. 11:19). It is a bird of passage, migrating from country to country, and with the appearance of power and rapidity of its flight. Thus, both in its uncleanness, and in its migratory habits, it is an excellent symbol for apostate Jewry which has been driven from country to country since the divine judgment of AD70. Moreover, the Hebrew name for the stork is in the feminine (*chasidah*) and signifies that which is “pious.” The word has been rendered elsewhere as “holy;” “saint;” “good,” etc. Consequently the stork appears a “religious” bird, representing the apostate ecclesia!

“and they lifted up the ephah” — Indicating complete support of the evil seen in the ephah. A false concept of the Law of Moses (in Judaism) caused the Jews to oppose the Lord Jesus, and finally to put him to death. It also planted the seeds of error in the early ecclesias, for the first heresy was an attempt to superimpose Judaism upon faith in Christ (Acts 15:1-5; 2Thes. 2:3; Gal. 2:4; 4:17). After the overthrow of Judah’s commonwealth in AD70

and the development of the Apostasy, the traditions of Judaism were taken up by the Church, and led to gross commercialism. The clergy was developed as a privileged class on the pattern of an apostate Levitical priesthood (cp. 2Pet. 2:3). Mere formalism in worship, tithing based upon the Law, and a wrong conception of the Mosaic covenant became accepted practice. The purity of the faith was abandoned and the great Apostasy developed.

Thus the two women, representative of a false concept of the true worship of Yahweh, lifted up the ephah with the woman of Babylon inside it, and bore it throughout the world.

Bro. Thomas comments: "*When the Apostasy in Judea was fully matured, the Ephah contained the woman under the Talent of Lead, and when the Mosaic Law and institutions had vanished away as the result of the desolation of the Temple (AD70), all that were not slain or imprisoned, became sojourners in the lands of the Little Horn of the Goat. This national dispersion of the Jews was the flight of the two women into the countries of the Fourth Beast dominion, then pagan. In their flight, the Judaic Apostasy from the Christian Faith was not left in Judea, to grow up into a papacy there. But having been formed and organised in that country, and propagated from that centre, it was expelled from thence, and driven by the national calamity, the wind in the storklike wings of the two women, out of Canaan, that 'they might build for her a house in the land of Shinar'.*" (Eureka vol. 1, pp. 71-72).

"between the earth and the heaven"

— In symbolic language, the "earth" refers to the common people and the "heaven" to the supreme rulers. Those in political authority embraced and supported the Apostasy (Rev. 12:5). Ultimately, the saints, with the everlasting gospel, will replace those who presently occupy this position of authority (Rev. 14:6).

VERSE 10

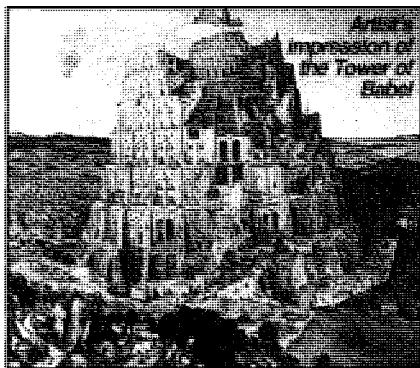
"Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?" — Concerned at the vision,

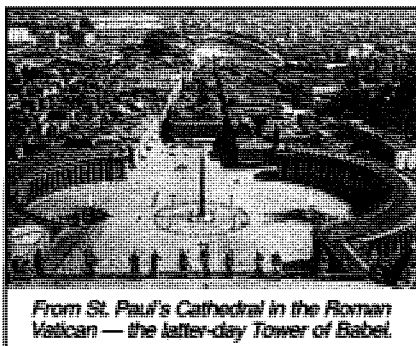
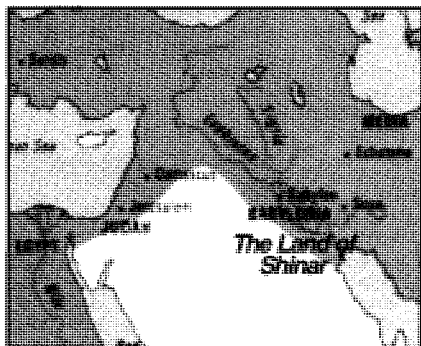
Zechariah seeks to know the extent of the lawless spirit.

VERSE 11

"And he said unto me, To build it an house" — The house of the thief and the false swearer, i.e., the false prophet (see Zech. 5:4 and Rev. 16:13). Such a "house" signifies a false form of religion which is "built" by the folly of the apostate ecclesia.

"in the land of Shinar" — The tower of Babel (Sig. *Confusion*) was built at Shinar (Gen. 11:2), and to that area, later known as Babylonia, Judah was carried as a captive by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:2). The name "Shinar" is compounded of two Hebrew words: *shin*, a tooth, and *tsar*, an enemy; thus it is *The Land of the Enemy's Tooth*, which relates to the serpent power (Gen. 3:15). Daniel's fourth beast, symbolic of the Roman Empire, is described as having "great iron teeth" (Dan. 7:7), and is pre-eminently the "land of the enemy's tooth." In AD70, Rome broke in pieces and devoured Israel, scattering the Jews into all parts of the earth. Its warlike influence can thus be likened to the wind in the storklike wings of the two women who carried the ephah, driving them into "the land of Shinar," not now the site of ancient Babylon, but the mystical Babylon of the Apocalypse (Rev. 17:4-5), the city of Rome. Here, in the "land of the enemy's tooth," the mystical "land of Shinar," a house was built to the Apostasy: the perverted form of the Truth. Driven by adversity from the land of Judah, the Apostasy





From St. Paul's Cathedral in the Roman Vatican — the latter-day Tower of Babel.

established its own base in Rome, and became known in due time as the Papacy.

“and it shall be established” — The RV has “she.” The woman was to be let out of the ephah to allow the fullness of her wickedness to be revealed. The spectre of her lawlessness is so graphically revealed in Rev. 17:3-4. Roman Catholicism developed out of the Judaizing heresy of those who “claimed they were Jews, but were not, and did lie” (Rev. 2:9; 3:9; Gal. 1:6-8).

“and set there upon her own base”

— Establishing a centre of operations, such as is evident in the Apostate Catholic Church, with its headquarters in the Vatican.

This sixth vision seen by Zechariah, thus traced the spiritual decline of Israel until a commercialised Judaism arose, to supplant the true spirit and purpose of the Law by a deadening formalism, and to superimpose itself upon the truth in Christ causing the great Apostasy to arise in spiritual Babylon.

The Ultimate Triumph

CHAPTER 6

7TH VISION: THE VICTORIOUS CHARIOTS OF YAHWEH

As six is the number of flesh, and seven is the number of the covenant, it is appropriate that the sixth vision should reveal the temporary triumph of the flesh in the house of Shinar, whilst the seventh vision reveals the ultimate and eternal triumph of the Spirit over the flesh.

In this, the last of the night visions (Zech. 6:1-8), the prophet sees four chariots going forth between two mountains of brass. He is told that they represent the “four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord (Adon or Ruler) of all the earth” (v. 5). This expression links this vision with that of the Two Olive Trees and Branches of Zechariah 4, for the former are likewise represented as “standing by the Lord of the whole earth” (v. 14). But whereas the Sons of Oil are “standing still,” the chariots are shown in a state of activity — “going forth.” And, instead of “two branches (representing those called out of Jews and Gentiles) there are “four” chariots, identifying with the true Israel of God.



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THE EXPOSITION OF HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI

— Based on the notes of
Bro. H. P. Mansfield, and the
expositions of our pioneer
brethren.

THE VISION OF THE FOUR
CHERUBIC CHARIOTS & TWO
MOUNTAINS.

GLORIOUS CORONATION OF
JOSHUA.

MANIFESTATION OF "THE
BRANCH."

A QUESTION OF FASTING.



Zechariah ch. 6:1 to 7:4

A **LOGOS** MAGAZINE

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OCTOBER 2002

NUMBER 8



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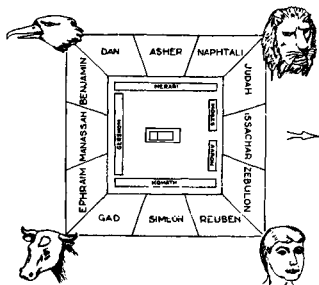
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Honouredch. 14.

These four cherubic chariots, wrote Bro. Thomas, "represent the resurrected saints in the execution of the judgments written (Ps. 149:9). The reason why there are four, and not three or five, is because in the military organisation of Israel, the twelve tribes were set off into four camps: the Camp of Judah, the Camp of Reuben, the Camp of Ephraim, and the Camp of Dan (Num. 2). The standard of Judah's camp was a Lion; that of Reuben, a Man; that of Ephraim, an Ox; and that of Dan, an Eagle; and the faces of these four were united in the Two Cherubim of the Most Holy Place (see Ezekiel 1:10).



"Now, as the Saints, without regard to the accident of their fleshly descent, are all Israelites by adoption through Christ, their organisation is based on that of the twelve tribes; so that they come thereby to be represented by the standard of Israel's camps" (Eureka vol. 1).

The four chariots are seen by the prophet going forth from between "two mountains of brass." In Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 2), the brazen thighs were representative of the power of Grecia. Later in his prophecy, Daniel traced the development of Grecian influence from the time of Alexander the Great to the time after his death when the empire he had established was divided into four parts (Dan. 8:21-22). Two of those parts are called the King of the North and the King of the South (Dan. 11:4, 9, 13) and answer to the Syrian and Egyptian powers of those times. But in the same revelation recorded in the chapter, the prophet was shown that there would be a "latter day," or "time of the end" manifestation of these two divisions that originally arose out of the united power of Greece (Dan. 11:40). The latter-day powers of the North and south, will be headed by the Russian and Anglo-American confederacies which will comprise the "two mountains of brass," for, in Bible symbology, a mountain represents a nation or empire. It will be when these two great confederacies are manifested in all their power, that the four chariots of the Spirit shall go forth from between them, to bring mankind under Christ's rule.

But whilst the vision relates to the future, it also had a message of encouragement for those days. Zerubbabel and Joshua, with Haggai and Zechariah, were called upon to do the work of Yahweh in the face of discouragement and great opposition, which were as mountains of difficulties threatening to destroy the work attempted. This vision reminded them that they were working for Yahweh, and even as the four spirits of the political heavens of the age to come, would reduce the mountains of Gentile power to a plain, so in those days, every difficulty would be overcome and truth would triumph in the land.

Bro. Thomas wrote: "Zechariah saw the Four Chariots of Cherubim 'going forth from between' these two mountains of political geography. He must, therefore, have seen them going forth from the Holy Land, which occupies that position. They first stand by the Ruler of all the earth as the Two Anointed ones... filled with the Spirit as a lamp is filled with oil... But the Four Chariots in motion are

'the called, the faithful, and the chosen', in company with the King of kings, in actual conflict with the nations of the earth (Rev. 17:14)... They invade the north and the south, and then make their expeditions into all other parts of the earth..." (pp. 77-78).

"But it would seem that there is an established order after which the conquest of the nations is to be affected; Zechariah seems to intimate that 'the north country' (Zech. 6:6) will be first invaded; and then 'the south country' (i.e., the confederacies of the North and South of the latter days)... The north and south being subdued, the time comes 'to fly upon the shoulder of the peoples towards the west, and to spoil the children of the east together' (Isa. 11:14)..."

"Thus Zion's four chariots finally overthrow her enemies, and 'consecrate their commerce to Yahweh, and their wealth to the Ruler of all the earth'... No longer under the dominion of ambitious rivals, seeking to increase the glory of their dynasties by international wars and spoliations, the populations of the world will live in peace and good will; and will circulate freely and safely from land to land (Isa. 19:23-25)" (Eureka, vol. 1, pp. 82-83).

The Vision of the Four Chariots

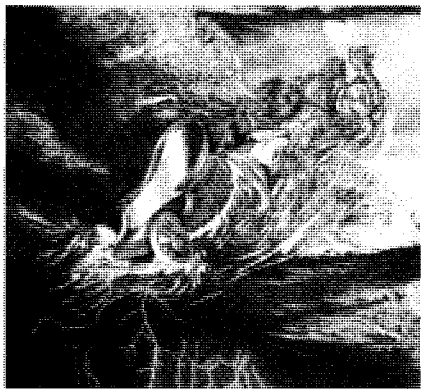
— vv. 1-3.

A further vision confronts Zechariah during this night of revelations. Four chariots appear from between two mountains, and the prophet is instructed concerning the times that must pass before the elevation of the antitypical Joshua will be accomplished.

VERSE 1

"And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold" — Indicating a new vision in which the prophet viewed a new aspect of the divine purpose. See note ch. 4:1; 5:1.

"there came four chariots." — Representing the power of Spirit beings (v. 5), which are the ministering spirits of the Deity (Heb. 1:14). The number "four" points to the camp of spiritual Israel (Rev. 20:9; 21:16), for the saints comprise the true "commonwealth of Israel" (Eph. 2:12-13). In the wilderness, Israel marched in four companies (Num. 2:3, 10, 18, 25) with the standards of the leading tribes (identifiable with the four faces of the Cherubim in Eze. 1) flying at the head of each section. The term "chariot" also links the symbol before us with the Cherubim (see 1Chr. 28:18), for Yahweh inhabits the Cherubim as a charioteer drives his vehicle (Ps. 80:1; Psa. 18:10). The resurrected and glorified



saints will be filled with divine power, for Yahweh will dwell in them (Ps. 99:1-2), and through them will execute His purpose in the earth.

"out from between two mountains" — Note what is said concerning them in v. 5, and compare this with Zech. 4:14. This identifies the chariots with the olive branches. Both symbols relate to the saints, but whereas in chapter 4 they are shown as resurrected, glorified, and surrounding the Lord as his ministering priests, in this chapter they are shown in belligerent activity (i.e., as military chariots) against the powers that be (Ps. 149).

"and the mountains were mountains of brass" — As brass is used as a symbol

for the flesh, and for Greece (Dan. 2:39), and as the latter-day kings of the north and south (Dan. 11:40) are linked in prophecy with Greece (Dan. 11:2-5; Zech. 10:5-6), so these great mountains represent the two

The Vision of the Four Chariots

What a dramatic and awe-inspiring vision was revealed to the prophet to conclude the series of night visions! As Daniel had seen four mighty world empires that would reign over the nations, so Zechariah is shown four chariots of war that would destroy those same empires, grinding them to powder that the kingdom of God might be set up in their place. The rule of flesh brought to an inglorious downfall, and the reign of Yahweh Sabaoth established in richness, and with great rejoicing on the part of the redeemed.

Four is the number of the multitudinous Christ-body. There were four horns upon the altar of burnt offering, representing Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation; four horns upon the altar of incense, also called the golden altar, representing the cleansing process of Christ and the saints in prayer; the four faces of the cherubim upon the mercy seat; the four standards under which Israel marched; the four living creatures of Ezekiel's prophecy, representing the redeemed raised from the dead and set in belligerent manifestation against the body and horns of the Greco-Roman dragon; the four carpenters of Zechariah; the four living creatures of the Apocalypse bearing the four faces of the cherubim. Also worthy of note: the four days Lazarus spent in the tomb, from which Christ brought him forth, thereby typifying the resurrection of all the saints. Zechariah's vision of the four chariots represents the triumphant victory of the immortalised saints who go forth as manifestations of the Spirit, to gain their promised inheritance by conquest over the nations. "This honour have all His saints" (Psa. 149:9). —*J.U.*

great confederacies of the time of the end under both Russian and Anglo-American control: the kings of the north and south (Dan. 11:40-45). It is on the platform of the divine purpose that the powers of the flesh will be manifested, in order that they might be humbled before all, and Yahweh exalted in His saints.

VERSE 2

"In the first chariot were red horses"

— Indicating bloodshed; a period of hostility and warfare.

The horses of the chariots represent the forces commanded by the saints, and the colours of the horses, their operations upon their enemies. They are not literal horses, for Yahweh declares that Israel will be saved by Yahweh their Elohim, not by actual horses or horsemen (Hos. 1:7; Ps. 20:7). It is indicated in Scripture that Judah shall fight under the control of the saints, thus becoming "Yahweh's goodly horse in the battle" (Zech. 10:3). They shall fight and confound their enemies, because Yahweh is with them (vv. 5-6). They shall go forth against the kings of the north and south that these Gentile dominions may "give up" the people of God, and keep them back no longer (Isa. 43:6). Finally, all the tribes of Israel will be re-engrafted into their own national olive tree.

Notice that the Revelation sets out four horsemen of the apocalypse, with a similar historical development of four stages in Gentile times (Rev. 6:1-8; see *Expositor: Revelation*).

"and in the second chariot black horses" — Indicating famine and ravages consequent upon war (Jer. 14:1-6; Lam. 5:10). This will occur following the battle of Armageddon, when the devastation will overtake and humble mankind.

VERSE 3

"And in the third chariot white horses" — See note Zech. 1:8. White is the colour of leprosy, here used to symbolise pestilence and distress among the nations (cf. Hab. 3:5).

"and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses" — Eliminate "and"

which is in italics, and notice the marginal rendering “grisled, strong horses.” The adjective “strong” probably relates to the strongly defined color of the “grisled” horses.

The word “grisled” is from the Hebrew, *beruddim*, “hail-spotted;” from *barud*, “hail.” These horses indicate the final outpouring of judgment that will sweep away the last remains of Gentilism. See Isa. 28:17. 32:19. Ps. 18:13.

The word “bay” is from the Hebrew *‘amots*, signifying a strong color, such as red, indicating a period of intense trouble and anguish.

The four horses thus represent the effects of the war that shall be initiated by the saints at the time of Armageddon and its aftermath. Those nations that resist will be finally overcome by judgments that will bring bloodshed, famine, pestilence and storm.

The Vision Explained — vv. 4-8.

Having seen the dramatic vision, the prophet is now treated to an explanation of its meaning. He is shown the divine purpose that will ultimate in the kingdom of God established on earth, and the way in which God’s purpose will be accomplished.

VERSE 4

“Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord?” — Zechariah is anxious to understand the remarkable events which are set before him, and seeks an interpretation of the dramatic scene that unfolds.

VERSE 5

“And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens” — The armies of the political heavens of the Age to come (Rev. 19:14). The number “four” is used because the military organisation of Israel was based upon the four-fold divisions of the tribes. They are as chariots in which Yahweh will ride to overthrow all opposition by the power of the spirit wielded belligerently (ch. 4:6; See Hab. 3:8, 12).

“which go forth from standing

before the Lord of all the earth” — They are the ministering spirits of the future, continuing the angelic work of the present (Heb. 1:14). The word “Lord” is from the Hebrew *adon* which signifies “ruler; sovereign,” and represents God manifest in the Lord Jesus (see notes ch. 4:14). Christ is the commander of the spiritual army of saints (Isa. 55:4). Daniel’s prophecy describes him as the “Prince of princes” (thus, Commander of commanders; Dan. 8:25). The saints will appear before the great commander at the judgment seat, and will then be sent forth on the mission to disseminate the divine judgments throughout the earth.

VERSE 6

“The black horses which are there go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them” — Two chariots go toward the north where Israel’s most powerful and ruthless enemies are found (cp. Mic. 5:5-6). The “black” speaks of the judgment upon the evil and corruption of the northern hosts; the “white” has the idea of leprosy, by which the opponents of Christ will be stricken (cp. Zech. 14:12).

“and the grisled go forth toward the south country” — A further horse goes toward the south where the nations are more amenable to divine influence (e.g. Isa. 60:9). The word “grisled” (Heb. *barud*; see v. 3) has the idea of “spotted, to hail,” and speaks of the outpouring of judgments which will bring the peoples to conform to the divine law and precepts.

Only north and south are referred to because only two mountains are to be levelled, but these two mountains will incorporate the whole world at the time of the end.

VERSE 7

“And the bay went forth” — This seems identified with the “red” of v. 2 in contrast to the “grisled-bay” of v. 3. The Hebrew (*‘amots*) signifies to be of strong colour, which could apply to the red horses. The word has the significance of that which is alert, colourful, active.

“and sought to go” — They were

"restive; nervy." The Hebrew, *baqash*, signifies to "search out," to "strive after." So these horses were ready to search out and destroy the last remnants of resistance against Christ.

The vision suggests that Christ will conduct specific campaigns against those nations that resist him, invading the countries incorporated in the confederacies of the north and south, compelling them to submit. The going forth of the bay horses imply a final "mopping up" process after the previous horses have done their work to bring the last remnants of Gentile resistance under the control of Christ (Mic. 4:3; Ps. 72:9; Ps. 149:9; Rev. 14:7).

"that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth" — This is said of the horses in Zech. 1:10, the eyes in ch. 4:10, and now the chariots. All are symbols for the saints in various manifestations. The horses of ch. 1 are as scouts, surveying the work of conquest; the chariots of this chapter bring their labours to a successful completion, for the army of Christ will go forth in every direction to complete the work of conquest. Their activity will finally establish the rulership of Yahweh throughout the earth (Isa. 9:7).

VERSE 8

"Then cried he upon me" — The Hebrew *za'ak*, signifies to shriek, or proclaim loudly as a herald; to announce or proclaim publicly. A public proclamation will loudly announce that the period of warfare is over, and the millennium is about to commence. It will be a worldwide declaration of peace after the terrible warfare of Micah 7:15-20.

"and spake unto me, saying, Behold these that go toward the north country" — The attention of the prophet, representing the multitudinous Christ, is directed toward the work of conquest in the north, against the terrible power that has persecuted the nation of Israel in the past.

"have quieted My spirit in the north country" — Zech. 1:15 announced that

Yahweh's spirit was disturbed at the report that persecuting Gentiles were at peace, whilst Israel remained oppressed. But with the subjugation of the former and the elevation of the latter, His spirit will be quieted. The north country, as the arena of Israel's most antagonistic enemies will first feel the weight of divine anger, but ultimately all nations will be humbled that they also may be exalted in the reign of peace that shall follow (Isa. 2:2-4).

The Coronation of Joshua: vv. 9-15.

The vision of the four chariots going forth into the all the earth, and of the spirit of Yahweh being quieted in consequence of victories won, fittingly concludes the night visions seen by Zechariah in this singular evening. This seventh vision takes the prophet to the epoch of the seventh millennium, when for Yahweh's oath's sake, Israel shall be saved, and the nations sub-

Walking To and Fro Through the Earth

Abraham was promised that he and his seed should inherit not only the Promised Land, but that they should become "heir of the world" (Gr., *kosmos*, "the order or arrangement of things"; Rom. 4:13). The multitudinous Christ-body has been made "heirs according to the promise" with Christ and faithful Abraham. Therefore, all "kings" and "judges" of the earth will be brought into subjection to the authority and power of Christ and the saints. They will be called upon to submit to Christ's reign as the "king over all the earth" and will be called upon to "serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling" In bringing this wondrous divine purpose to fruition, (Zech. 14:9; Psa. 2:10-11), the saints, with all the power and authority inherent in divine nature, will go "to and fro through the earth" until the nations have submitted or been subdued, and the kingdom established in peace throughout the earth. — *J.U.*

jected under Christ.

On awakening from his dreams, the angel gives important instructions to Zechariah which are parabolic in their teaching and dramatise the purpose of God. He is told to accept the gifts offered by certain exiles from Babylon and invite them to witness the coronation of Joshua the high priest, who obviously types the Lord Jesus. In the hearing of all, the title and work of the antitypical Joshua is announced. He would be called the Branch; he will grow out of his place and build the temple of Yahweh; he will combine in his person the dual offices of King-Priest.

Instructions were given that a crown be made for the purpose of the coronation, and that the exiles whose gifts had been accepted should witness the crowning of the priest. The crown should afterwards remain displayed in the temple as a memorial to those exiles who had returned.

All this would doubtless be enacted as instructed. But what did it mean? A brief explanation of the parable is then given. It is intended to show that men "afar off" will one day come and build in the temple of Yahweh, and that to such, suitable rewards will be given. It is therefore a parable with an exhortation to all who have come out of Babylon (Gentilism), encouraging them to build their characters in line with the Foundation Stone that has been laid, that they might become "living stones" in the spiritual temple that the Lord is constructing (1Pet. 2:5).

VERSE 9

"And" — Rotherham renders as "Then..." It was probably the following morning after the seven night visions, that the following instruction was given. This would be appropriate, for having been given visions that point forward to the future glory, the drama the prophet was called upon to enact the following morning, would indicate the type of person in whom the glory will be revealed.

"the word of Yahweh came unto me, saying" — Zechariah received a further visit from the angel with instructions to

enact a significant drama for the people of Jerusalem.

VERSE 10

"Take of them of the captivity" — The Hebrew *laqach*, signifies to accept. The men described had brought gifts from Babylon for the temple and the prophet was told to accept those gifts. These men typified true Israelites who leave spiritual Babylon for association with the Truth and who bring their gifts of faith and obedience to the Christ-Altar (Rom. 11:29). The future will see a repetition of this action, as the friends of Israel will transport the "gift" of an exiled people back to the Land (Isa. 60:9-11).

"even of Heldai" — Sig. *Lasting; Durable*. A very important principle that looks beyond the time of exile to the day of the return.

"of Tobijah" — Sig. *Yah is Good*. That goodness was experienced by those who returned from the exile to re-establish the temple worship in the Land.

"and of Jedaiah" — Sig. *Yah Knoweth*. The meaning of these names gives added significance to the verse, and in the Septuagint Version, they have been incorporated into the text as common words, thus: "Take the things of the captivity from the chief men, and from the useful men of it, and from them that have understood it; and thou shalt enter in that day into the house of Josias, the son of Sophonias, that came out of Babylon..." In this translation, Heldai is rendered "chief men;" Tobijah appears as "useful men;" Jedaiah as "understanding men." These names express the character of true Israelites, of those taken out of the Gentiles, who are useful in their labours for Yahweh, and who delight in His Word. From such Zechariah accepted the gifts they had to offer.

"which are come from Babylon" — Emphasising their changed status. They had left their former state in order to serve Yahweh.

"and come thou the same day" — There was to be an immediate response to the instruction. No delay was permitted.

The work begun, had to be continued until it was completed.

“and go into the house of Josiah” — Sig. *Yah Heareth*. Nothing more is known of this man.

“the son of Zephaniah” — Zephaniah means, *Yah hath hidden*. So “Josiah the son of Zephaniah” can be understood to mean that “*Yahweh heareth him who is filled with that which He hath hidden.*” Yahweh has hidden Himself in those of His choosing (Pro. 25:2). It requires the deliberate action of worthy men and women to discover the presence of the Almighty, and to obtain an understanding of His eternal purpose.

All these men whom Zechariah was to gather together were typical men, and their names had a significance in the enacted parable. They were men of faith who left Babylon because of the call of God, therefore they typify every man, whether Jew or Gentile, who separates himself from his environment in order that he might worship the Almighty in truth.

VERSE 11

“Then take” — Zechariah was to accept the gifts of these men for the purpose of appointing Joshua, the high priest, in his duty. It was common for such gifts to be brought from Babylon by the returning exiles to beautify the temple (cf. Ezra 1:4, 6; 7:16; 8:25-26. This will again be repeated in the future when the spoils of the nations will be dedicated to the glory of God (Isa. 53:12; Hag. 2:8).

“silver” — Whilst these exiles brought literal silver, and whilst this metal will undoubtedly be used by Christ in the Age to come to beautify the temple in Zion, it also has a spiritual significance. Silver is the metal of redemption, for every Israelite had to pay a half shekel of silver for this purpose (Exo. 30:12-16; Lev. 5:15) as the price of redemption (cp. 1Pet. 1:18). The silver provided by the Israelites was then used to beautify the tabernacle (Exo. 38:25-27), and in this way, it typified the Redeemed, who become the spiritual “temple of the living God.”

“and gold” — This typifies a tried

faith (1Pet. 1:7; Lam. 4:2; Job 23:10). Gold is purified through fire, by which any refuse comes to the surface and can be easily removed by the assayer. Silver and gold in combination thus speak of redemption perfected by faith, by which the impurities of the flesh are removed. These gifts we too must offer for the beautifying of the spiritual temple that Christ is building.

“and make crowns” — Heb. *‘atarah*, from the root *‘atar*, to encircle; thus crowns or circlets, such as kings (*but not priests*) occasionally wore (2 Sam. 12:30; 1Chr. 20:2; Est. 8:15; Eze. 21:26). The term is used figuratively as the symbol of glory and respect (Eze. 23:42; Lam. 5:16).

Though in v. 11 the noun is in the plural, the verb is in the singular in v. 14. Rotherham renders the word in the singular as “crown.” There was evidently one crown made, but it was formed of several circlets, thus the use of the plural. Notice the statement of Rev. 19:12, “On his head were many crowns.” Doubtless this refers to the same thing, namely many circlets, each indicating a further victory, woven into one crown. So the crown to be made for Joshua celebrated the triumph of these returning Jews over the distressing circumstances of their exile. It was a single crown made up of several circlets, even as Christ is set forth as both an individual and a community. He won the victory over sin and death first for himself and then for the people (Heb. 5:3, 9).

Three “crowns” are referred to in the New Testament: the crown of life (Rev. 2:10; James 1:12), the crown of righteousness (2Tim. 4:8), the crown of glory (1Pet. 5:4). These are like circlets in the multiple crown that the Lord figuratively wears. They indicate his threefold ministry: on earth when his victory opened the way to life; in heaven where his intercession assures the justification or righteousness of saints; in the future when he will “make known” the power of the gospel by assuming his lofty position as king-priest in the temple-city of Jerusalem.

“and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest” — Eliminate the word “them”

which is in italics denoting that there is no equivalent word in the original. The single crown was placed on Joshua, and in the act of placing this crown on Joshua there is foreshadowed the coronation of the Lord Jesus. He has gained the victory for his people over the enemy of sin and death.

Joshua was a *priest*, yet he was crowned with a crown reserved for *kings*. Thus the parable foreshadowed the time when the high priest would be also king. The Lord Jesus is our great high priest, and is yet to be acknowledged as king. Those two offices will be combined in him when he returns and takes up his great power to reign over mankind (1Cor. 15:25). He will be high priest after the order of Melchizedek, being both "King of righteousness, King of peace" (Heb. 7:2).

Joshua's name is significant. As *Yahshua*, it is the Hebrew form of Jesus, and signifies *Yah's salvation*. Josedech means *Yahweh hath cleansed*, or justified. When combined together the names teach the principle that "Yahweh hath saved for Yahweh hath cleansed." When the Lord was raised from the grave, and given divine nature, he was physically redeemed, and set before mankind as the only means of salvation and of justification. He was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

VERSE 12

"And speak unto him, saying" — As a typical man Joshua stood as representative of the Lord Jesus, upon whom all the words of all the prophets converge (1Pet. 1:10-12).

"Thus speaketh Yahweh of hosts" —



This signifies: *He who will be armies*. As we have noted throughout Zechariah's prophecy this is a militant title of Deity (see Isa. 9:7), and is appropriate here, for it will be through the manifestation of divine anger in judgment upon the nations, that men will finally acknowledge the authority of the Son (Isa. 60:12; 26:9; Isa. 2:19; 31:7-9).

"saying, Behold the man" — Consider him! These are the very words used by Pilate when he led the Lord Jesus before his subjects 2000 years ago, presenting him as "the king of the Jews" (John 19:5). The king was then crowned, but mockingly, with a circle of thorns cruelly forced down upon his head. But the very nation that rejected him then will be glad to behold him as their King and Deliverer in the Age to come (Mat. 23:39) and witness his glorious coronation (Psa. 118:22-26). For this reason, the Jews will be brought through a night of trouble, termed "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), to prepare them for the grand vista of their king.

"whose name is The BRANCH" — See note ch. 3:8, where the Branch is referred to as a bond-servant laying the foundation of the temple. Here he is seen as the Man (Heb. *ish*) who is crowned king-priest. Thus the servant becomes the king.

The Hebrew word here used for "branch" (*tsemach*, sprout) is not that which is used in Isaiah 11:1 (where it is *netser*, a shoot), but is that used to describe the Branch of Yahweh (Isa. 4:2); the Branch of David (Jer. 23:5); the Branch of Righteousness (Jer. 33:15); the Servant (Zech. 3:8) who becomes high-priest and king (ch. 6:12).

"and he shall grow up" — The Hebrew *tsamach*, signifies to sprout; to spring up (Isa. 45:8); to bud (Isa. 55:10). The development of the "sprouting Branch" by the divine Husbandman will result in righteousness (Jer. 33:15). Christ declared that such comes through the process of death (John 12:24), demonstrating the purpose of his sacrifice. Similarly, Joshua was to manifest this teaching, having been rescued from the darkness of Babylon.

“out of his place” — The dry ground of Israel provided the place in which the great work of restoration occurred; both in Joshua, and in the greater Branch, the Lord Jesus (Isa. 53:2).

“and he shall build the temple of Yahweh” — A typical fulfilment was seen in the days of Ezra (Ezr. 3:10); the fulness of this prophecy is in the work of the Lord Jesus (Eze. 40). There is an application to both a literal and spiritual temple appointed by Yahweh. David was promised both a spiritual temple of a righteous seed (2Sam. 7:11) as well as a literal building (v. 13). Both will be fulfilled in Christ: the literal temple of Zion (cp. Isa. 56:7, with Mark 11:17) and the spiritual edifice of living stones (1Pet. 2:5; 2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22). As a servant, the Lord Jesus laid the foundation stone (Zech. 3:9); as a king-priest he will complete the building. The foundation was laid 2,000 years ago when he triumphed over sin and death (1Pet. 2:6; Eph. 2:20); the completion will be manifested at his return when he will stand as chief of a glorious company of the redeemed.

VERSE 13

“Even he shall build the temple of Yahweh” — These words are repeated (v. 12) for emphasis, indicating that there are two features involved; two advents in which the Lord Jesus will complete the work of building both the spiritual and literal temples mentioned above.

Joshua had been seen in filthy clothing, soiled because of the nature of the work he had been doing in building the temple in Jerusalem (Zech. 3); now he appears glorified and crowned. So with the Lord Jesus. Despite the poverty, obscurity, and humility of his first advent, despite his rejection, shame, and crucifixion as a criminal, he is to be crowned and honored before all mankind at his second appearing (Phil. 2:9-10).

“and he shall bear the glory” — The word “bear” (Heb. *nasa*) signifies to lift up as an ensign; to hold aloft. As he was “lifted up” on the stake in the work of redemption at his first advent, so he will be

The Great King-Priest

Verse thirteen states that the Branch shall “rule upon his throne” and “be a priest upon his throne.” These phrases speak unmistakably of the antitypical Melchizedek priest, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 14:18; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:14). The wording here is so specifically in harmony with similar passages of Scripture that the meaning surely cannot be misunderstood. These two offices of king and priest were generally so diverse, the one from the other, that they were usually incompatible and inharmonious. In the Lord Jesus Christ, however, the two offices come together in extraordinary splendour, uniting the two roles of civil and spiritual pre-eminence in the only one who has fully manifested perfection of character and wisdom in overcoming the flesh. He will be acknowledged as “king of righteousness” and “king of peace.” Through that which he has accomplished, his immortalised brethren, who will also bear the divine glory in the kingdom, will “reign” with him as “kings and priests on the earth” (Rev. 5:10). The Son of God, as King of kings and Lord of lords, will have the highest honour ascribed to him by all flesh, as they render homage to Yahweh manifested in His Son. Indeed, “he shall bear the glory...” (v. 13). — *J.U.*

upheld in majesty, honor, and beauty at his return. The word for “glory” (Heb. *howd*) is used almost exclusively for divine splendor (see Psa. 8:1; 45:3; 148:13; Heb. 3:3. 1Tim. 6:16; Rev. 19:16).

“and shall sit and rule upon his throne” — The servant-branch shall become king-branch. Because he humbled himself, he has been exalted (see Phil. 2:7-10). To “sit” indicates the aspect of a judge, presiding over his court, or a king whose throne is established in power (cp. Mat. 20:21). To “rule” suggests the extension of the laws and teachings designed to complement his kingdom (cp. Mat. 8:11).

“and he shall be a priest upon his throne” — A king-priest, governing both the religious and secular affairs of his people. Similarly, the immortalised followers of the Lord in the day of his glory will act as king-priests under his authority (Rev. 5:9-10). Thus Christ will be like Melchizedek who was both king and priest (Heb. 6:20-7:1; Gen. 14:18).

“and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” — A complete fusion of kingly authority and priestly dignity without the antagonism that often disgraced these offices in the past.

The word “peace” is the Hebrew word *shalom*, from a root signifying “to be at one; complete; entire.” Often the two sections of state and judiciary today are in conflict with each other, but the singular union of those offices in Christ will bring all mankind both into subjection to God and into fellowship with Him. Mankind will enjoy true peace — not merely the cessation of war, but a state of union with Yahweh through Christ by means of the wise laws that will emanate from Zion (Isa. 2:2-4; Eph. 2:14; Psalms 85:8-10; Luke 2:14).

VERSE 14

“And the crowns shall be to Helem” — Lit: “And the crowns, it shall be.” As mentioned on v. 11, there is one crown, made up of several circlets, and with this Joshua was to be crowned as a memorial to these men. Helem is known as Heldai in v. 10, which signifies *Lasting; Durable*.

“and to Tobijah” — Sig. *Yah is Good* (v. 10).

“and to Jedaiah” — Sig. *Yah Knoweth*.

The Septuagint renders these names by their meanings, drawing attention to the characteristics displayed in the names: “The crown shall be to them that *wait patiently*, and to the *useful men* of the captivity and to them that have *known it*.” Those who are to be associates of Christ in his glory are expected to manifest these characteristics now, in the time of their labouring for the future temple: *Hope, Action, Understanding*.

“and to Hen the son of Zephaniah”

— The name Hen means *Grace*, or *Favor*; whereas Zephaniah signifies *Hidden of Yah*. The Revised Version renders the name by its meaning: “for the *kindness [hen]* of the son of Zephaniah [Yahweh’s hidden one — cp. Isa. 49:2].” His name is added to those repeated from Zech. 6:10; thus *grace* is added to the other characteristics of *hope, action and understanding* (see notes, Zech. 4:7; cp. Ezra 3:11).

“for a memorial in the temple of Yahweh” — After Joshua was crowned, the crown was placed in the temple as a memorial of the coming glory of Messiah, the king-priest of the future. It became a memorial to such men as are described in this section of the prophecy because such will participate in the glory then revealed. It was a memorial that the faithful labors of men who know the will of God and wait patiently for the manifestation of His glory will not be in vain. Their work in the past, though it was later destroyed in the subsequent apathy of Israel, was a testimony that it will be revived in the latter work of the greater Joshua, the Lord Jesus.

VERSE 15

“And they that are far off” — This goes beyond the time of Ezra and Joshua, to portray the ultimate glory of all labours in developing the work of God. All mankind is “afar off” as far as true worship is concerned (Eph. 2:13; Deu. 5:14-15); only a remnant seek for the glory of God at present. The promise given on the day of Pentecost was an invitation to any “afar off” to associate with the message of Truth (Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:17). The building of the literal House of Prayer on Mt. Zion will bring all nations together in one common worship and hope; and “they that are afar off” will come to Zion for that purpose (Isa. 2:2-3; 60:1-7, 9-10).

“shall come and build in the temple of Yahweh” — The call of the gospel is an invitation to build upon the foundation of Christ in the spiritual temple Yahweh will inhabit (Eph. 2:20), and to form “living stones” therein (1Pet. 2:5); in like manner, the nations will be invited to assist in building the literal temple under the direction of

Christ in the future age (Isa. 60:10).

“and ye shall know that Yahweh of hosts hath sent me unto you” — This is the purpose of the divine work. Israel never really “knew” Yahweh in the way He desired (cp. Jdg. 2:10; 1Sam. 2:12). It is only this knowledge that brings immortality (Jn. 17:3). To “know” (Heb. *yada*, to ascertain by seeing; to recognise) Yahweh in the true sense is to be begotten by His “seed” in such a way as to produce fruit to His glory (1Pet. 1:21; Jas. 1:17; 1Jn. 3:6; 5:18).

For use of the divine Title, *Yahweh Tzvaoth*, see comments on v. 12.

“And this shall come to pass” — The “knowing Yahweh” would be brought about by the means now set forth in the following words.

“if ye will diligently obey the voice of Yahweh your God” — Obedience on the part of the saints is necessary if they are to find a place in the spiritual temple to be erected, and obedience will be required of the nations if they are to be incorporated into the kingdom that Christ will set up (Isa. 60:12).

The words “diligently obey” are from the Hebrew *shama*, to hear intelligently; to obediently attend. *Shama* is translated “Hear...” in Deu. 6:3-4, forming the great

declaration of Israel: “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as Yahweh Elohim of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Yahweh our Elohim is one Yahweh.” Favour with Yahweh is based upon a common understanding of His purpose, and a uniting with His character expressed in His Name.

What a wonderful conclusion to the night of visions experienced by Zechariah! From the aspect of one man riding on the red horse (ch. 1:8), through the different experiences to be faced by Israel, the visions conclude with the work of victory, as “Yahweh’s spirit is quieted” (ch. 6:8). Then followed the drama of the coronation of Joshua, the high priest, type of the greater Branch of Yahweh’s planting, with mankind joined in harmony and righteousness with Yahweh. These experiences must have excited the prophet as he realised that the hand of Yahweh Tzvaoth continued active in the affairs of his people, and the nation will ultimately achieve its great destiny under the hand of the Messiah, who will stand up as the king-priest over all mankind.

The Fast Yahweh Approves!

CHAPTER 7

SHALL WE FAST AS HITHERTO?

This chapter commences a new section of the prophecy which continues to the end of chapter 8. Two years had passed since the night of the visions culminated in the enacted parable of the coronation of Joshua, and great progress had been made in the building of the temple. To the joy of the people, they could see some results for their labours. They had experienced the blessings of Yahweh in bountiful harvests. In view of this wave of prosperity, a deputation was sent to the prophet to enquire as to whether the people should maintain certain fasts that had been celebrated for seventy years since the city of Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed (vv. 3-5). The question gave the prophet opportunity to show the people how little they had taken to heart the chastening they had received from the hand of Yahweh. The natural heart cannot long endure sorrow; it seeks to escape its burden, and with the passing of time the fasts had lost their significance. The manner in which they had been kept did not express true repentance and humility, for they had deteriorated into a mere external show of formalism and self-pity. The true spirit of

the festivals of Yahweh had been replaced by a ritual observance, without real or lasting significance. They were a matter of "works" in which "faith" played no part. The prophet warned the people of their real spiritual state (v. 6), directed their attention to the state of mind in which alone Yahweh finds delight (v. 9), and drew from the experiences of the past a warning for their times (v. 11).

Chapter 7 is answered in chapter 8. The burden of ch. 7 is that the people should fast by denying themselves, and doing the things in which Yahweh finds pleasure (vv. 9-10); the burden of ch. 8 is that mere formal celebrations of these fasts should cease in view of the blessings already received from on High, and further ones shortly to be revealed.

A Deputation is sent to Jerusalem

— vv. 1-3.

A further revelation is received by the prophet Zechariah concerning the actions and attitude of the people. The work of building the temple has continued, and the people enjoy considerable prosperity with increased harvests. To some it seems inappropriate that the feasts of repentance and affliction should be maintained, since it is obvious that blessings are now experienced. The response of the prophet show that the people are not acting consistently with their calling, and that there was a need for Israel to seek for a greater spiritual understanding.

VERSE 1

"And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius" — Nearly two years had elapsed since the first vision (Zech. 1:1). The restoration of the temple was going on apace (it was completed in the sixth year of Darius; Ezra 6:15). Throughout Judah, prosperity had replaced the previous adversity (contrast Hag. 1:6 with ch. 2:19).

"that the word of Yahweh came unto Zechariah" — The prophet had doubtless observed the complacent attitude of the people, and was now stirred by the Spirit to present an urgent and vital warning. This was exercised by the action of two men who approached the temple with some questions concerning the observance of the fast of the fifth month.

"in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu" — This month commences the period of increased rainfall. Perhaps the ample rain at the time gave indication of yet another good year, such as was being experienced during the rebuilding of the temple.

VERSE 2

"When they had sent unto the house of God" — The title "God" is *El* in the Hebrew, and the phrase can be rendered: "Now they of Bethel." The temple is never called the "house [beth] of God [El]," but always the "house of Yahweh" (v. 3). The temple had not been completed at this stage, and therefore was not open for worship. This deputation, however, was sent from Bethel in the north to Jerusalem to enquire of the priests whether the fasts of previous years should be maintained.

"Sherezer" — Sig. *Protect the King.*

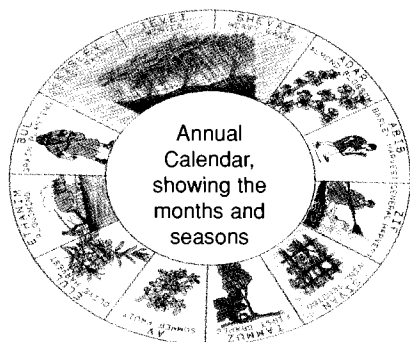
"and Regem-melech" — Sig. *Friend of the Prince.* The men were evidently high officials associated in some way with the governor, Zerubbabel. Though Zerubbabel did not rule as a king, he was heir to the throne (1Chr. 3:17-19).

"and their men" — Servants in attendance upon the officials. They acted as ministers to assist the enquiry on behalf of the people.

"to pray before Yahweh" — See the margin: "to entreat the face of Yahweh." They had a request to make to Yahweh, and sought out the priests in order to convey their entreaty to the throne of Grace. The attitude of the people of Bethel was commendable. Concerns about personal or ecclesial actions need to be addressed first to the Father, that guidance might be obtained. Such requests, of course, must conform to His will (Phi. 4:6; 1Jn. 5:14; Rom. 8:27).

VERSE 3

"And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of Yahweh of hosts, and to the prophets, saying" — The deputation sought for a general conference between priests who were occupied in the



general worship of the people, as well as the prophets, as to the matters of concern.

“Should I weep?” — The lamentation and fasting indulged in by the Jews had become a meaningless ritual in the face of great blessings received. The progress made in the rebuilding of the temple and nation, the prosperity that was slowly manifesting itself among all the people, made constant lamentation unrealistic. Nor was it of much use. Yahweh did not want His people to indulge in an orgy of self-pity, or to continually express remorse, but to reveal characteristics such as are outlined in vv. 9-10 of this chapter.

The same matter was expressed by the apostles on the day of Pentecost, to an audience stricken with remorse at the wicked action of the nation in crucifying their Lord. The people were “pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:38), whereupon Peter urged them to “repent” (v. 38). The word here means to turn around; to take a different course. It was a matter of faithful action, not merely of sorrow, that was required. Similarly, in the Age to come, after the Messiah has brought home to the Jewish community the real nature of their crime, causing them to mourn (Zech. 12:11), there will be a need to redeem themselves by cleansing (ch. 13:1) and to act in a faithful manner (vv. 2-9). This same requirement was placed before the Jews of Zechariah’s day in the divine answer to their question.

“in the fifth month” — The Jews instituted certain fasts to memorialise dark and terrible incidents that had taken place in their history. This fast was a memorial of

the overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. In the fifth month, BC587, the destruction of the temple had taken place (2Kings 25:8-9; Jer. 52:12), and this had subsequently been commemorated by a yearly fast. But now that the temple was rapidly being rebuilt, the fast seemed out of place. Hence the request.

The Answer: Your Fasts have been Hypocritical — vv. 4-7.

They had kept the fast as a meaningless ritual; a requirement that was completely unnecessary, and a burden to their own prosperity. The prophet now indicts the people for their insensibility to the hand of Providence in the great blessings they are enjoying, and urges them to recognise what is needed to honour their Benefactor. In that they did what the apostle Paul warns believers against: “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily...” (1Cor. 11:27). The word means “to treat as common or unnecessary,” and to follow it as a mere ritual without applying its principles into action in a sacrificial life. The voice of Zechariah in his day is an appeal to sincerity in worship; the same appeal needs to be upheld today.

VERSE 4

“Then came the word of Yahweh of hosts unto me, saying” — Zechariah is aroused to declare the divine warning to the people. The use of the militant name of the Deity is significant (see notes ch. 1:3; 6:12; etc). It constituted a warning that if no heed was taken to the admonition, retribution would result!

VERSE 5

“Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying” — The deputation had approached the priests for an answer in the matter, but they were involved in the general apathy of the people, and unable to give a proper answer. It remained for the prophet to show both the people and the priests where they had been at fault.



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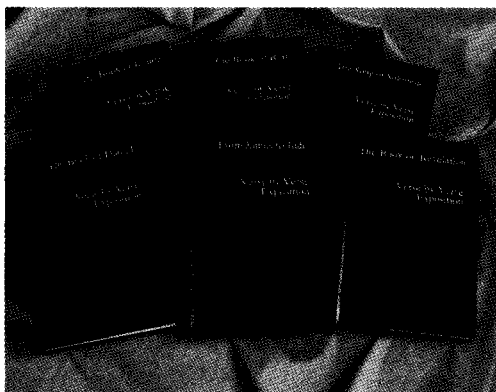
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DESIRES.

PRESENT BLESSINGS
FORESHADOW FUTURE
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THE JOY OF RESTORATION.

DWELLING IN JERUSALEM.



Zechariah ch. 7:5 to 8:22

A **LOGOS** MAGAZINE



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“When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month” — The seventh month celebrated the murder of Gedaliah, the ruler of the remnant who had been left in the land after many of the people were deported (2Kings 25:25; Jer. 41:1-3). His murder resulted in the ruination of the “remnant of Judah.” Fearing the wrath of the king of Babylon as a result of that action, they fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them (Jer. 43:6), where they perished (though some escaped: Jer. 44:14, 28). This national disaster had likewise been commemorated with a fast.

“even those seventy years” — Jerusalem was destroyed in BC587 (cp. v. 1); the 4th year of Darius was in BC518; thus sixty-nine of the seventy years predicted by Jeremiah had passed away. The fact that the fasts are connected with this time show that they had relation to the destruction of the city. The exiled Jews are said to have instituted four such fasts: one in the fourth month (June) in commemoration of the breach made in the wall during the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:7); one in the fifth month (July) in commemoration of the burning of the temple (Jer. 52:12-13); one in the seventh month (September) for the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41:1-2); and one in the tenth month (December) in commemoration of the beginning of the siege (2Kings 25:1).

However, the Jews made enquiry only concerning the fast of the fifth month because the calamity it recalled was being repaired, but Zechariah incorporated all the fasts (see v. 3; ch. 8:19). The Jews were not as concerned with the spiritual aspects of their remembrances as with the formal appearance they were manifesting; thus the question now arose as to the necessity of continuing the practice.

“did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me?” — Notice the repetition, for emphasis. The fasting was conducted in a spirit of self-pity, not in true repentance to Yahweh. The Jews fasted because they suffered, not because they acknowledged their wickedness. They mourned the loss of the temple in the days of the Babylonian oppression, the destruction of the city, the scattering of

the nation, but they did not recognise the cause of these calamities — their rejection of the Word of Yahweh (Hos. 4:6), their own wickedness and apostasy. Thus, very much like believers in every age, they were blind to their own shortcomings. Their fasts were a form of voluntary humility in the way condemned by Christ in Mat. 6:16 and the apostle Paul in Col. 2:23.

VERSE 6

“And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?” — They had no reverence for Yahweh in the celebration of their festivals either. Their religious exercises — both feasts and fasts — did little more than satisfy their own ego, their own pleasure or self-pity. The same attitude of self-indulgence was condemned by the apostle Paul: “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken” (1Cor. 11:20-21).

VERSE 7

“Should ye not hear the words which Yahweh hath cried by the former prophets” — The Jews had sent a deputation with the enquiry, “Shall we continue to fast as we have done?” The prophet takes up these latter words, and replies in the words of God in effect: “There is no need for you to enquire this of Me! Seek what the Word says. Listen to the warnings and reproofs of the prophets of the past, and apply to yourselves the things they spoke.”

The fasts (like the bread of the Lord’s memorial feast) provided the people with the opportunity to carefully assess their own personal conduct, to see in the disaster that had befallen the city and nation, a reflection of their own folly, and thus seek to amend their ways, mourning their personal shortcomings before Yahweh. The feasts (like the wine of the Lord’s memorial feast) provided them with an opportunity to rejoice in their divine inheritance, and in remembrance of Yahweh’s goodness to them, cause them to turn to Him in

loving obedience.

But that was not the case. The fasts and the feasts had degenerated into mere religious formalism without power. The Jews had enquired: "Shall we do as we have been doing?" (v. 3). The answer was an emphatic "No!" They were to change their ways, to exercise true repentance from the heart, and not to rely upon mere formalism in their worship before God. Zechariah counselled them to seek the Word of Yahweh for an answer (Deu. 10:12-13; 1Sam. 15:22-23; Mic. 6:7-9). He called upon them to change their hearts, and not merely their fasts!

"when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity" — The word "prosperity" is from the Hebrew *shalev*, to be safe, at rest. The people had returned from the oppression of Babylon, and found prosperity in the land, a result of their obedience to the Word (Psa. 35:27), and a contrast to the ruinous state of the city that resulted when they turned from that Word (see Hos. 6:5-6). Their faithful response to the invitation of God to return to the land and to rebuild Jerusalem had resulted in their privileged situation. It therefore was inappropriate to mourn at that time.

"and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?" — The surrounding areas had likewise received the divine blessing, extending to the "south" (Heb. *negev*) and the "plain" (Heb. *shephelah*).

The Fasting that Yahweh Desires — vv. 8-10.

The nation recognised the blessings received, but remained unconcerned that Yahweh was looking for hearts and minds that were continually responsive to His will. They had to understand the true nature of His character, and to manifest those same characteristics to one another.

VERSE 8

"And the word of Yahweh came unto Zechariah, saying" — A further revelation was necessary to make the people aware of His will. The prophet was again commissioned to go forth with an urgent

message; an exhortation for faithfulness (see v. 5).

VERSE 9

"Thus speaketh Yahweh of hosts, saying" — The words that follow (cp. v. 11) reveal that the basic mistake of the people taken into captivity had been their failure to carefully heed the Word of Yahweh, and the manifestation of a cold, empty formalism in their worship. The same blunder, warns Zechariah, was still being made.

"Execute true judgment" — Show your feelings in actions worthy of repentance. In Isaiah 58:3-7, Yahweh had revealed that the fast in which He truly delighted was not a negative, merely formal abstinence, but a positive denial of self to uphold divine righteousness in the way of giving help to others. They had to reveal the same qualities that they had received from Him in the blessings they enjoyed (cp. Mat. 25:40).

The first answer to the question posed by the deputation, therefore, was, Yes, fast before Yahweh, but let your fasting be of the kind in which He can find delight, as He has set forth in the earlier prophets.

"and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother" — This is the fast He requires: denial of self to help one another, as a reflection of the divine character seen in Him. The Hebrew word for "mercy" is *cheched*, and has the idea of bowing to acknowledge and assist the other in need. Similarly the word "compassion" is from the Hebrew *rachamin* from *rehem*, "the womb," thus, "to fondle; care about," and implies the bond of love and affection that should be manifested between members of the same family. Israel comprised the family of God, from the figurative womb of Sarah (cp. Isa. 51:2; 54:1) and therefore was bound to mutual help by the brotherly covenant (Amos 1:9) that should have united them as one, to the glory of the Father.

VERSE 10

"And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor" —

Including all those without the support and protection of husband, father, or family. They were dependent upon Yahweh for protection. Refusal to help those in need would bring the action of their Redeemer against them, as Moses declared: "Yahweh your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deu. 10:17-19). These principles were clearly enunciated in the Mosaic Law (Exo. 22:22; 23:6, 11, etc.), by which the nation was to develop the characteristics of the divine Family.

"and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart" — Yahweh desires a complete change, not only externally, but internally as well (cp. Ps. 51:6). To "imagine" (Heb. *chashab*, to weave; to intrigue; penetrate) has the idea of a destructive spirit against the reputation of brethren (Mat. 5:22-24).

The Cause of Their Condition

— vv. 11-14.

The true condition of the people is now revealed by the prophet. It might not have been apparent to them as to how Yahweh viewed their religious devotions, so Zechariah speaks plainly to bring the seriousness of their position to their attention. It was not so much in externals, as in their attitude to the divine ways. The Lord Jesus spoke of the same blindness to his generation: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (Jn. 9:41).

VERSE 11

"But" — An arresting declaration; boldly, and without hesitation Zechariah points to the real reason why the people have had to "fast" for seventy years under the hand of the Babylonians!

"they refused to hearken" — The first cause of God's displeasure. He has elevated His Word above His holy name

(Psa. 138:2), and for man to refuse to listen is a reprehensible offence. Yahweh's Son came as "the Word made flesh" (Jn. 1:14), but that generation, like their fathers, refused to listen (Jn. 8:44-45).

"and pulled away the shoulder" — See margin. They withdrew their shoulder from the yoke of the Law, and refused to conform to its restriction. The metaphor is taken from refractory oxen that refuse to put their necks under the yoke, and that must be disciplined to force them to do so (see Hos. 4:16. Neh. 9:29, and compare Mat. 11:29). For this reason Israel had been brought under the Babylonian oppression, but it seemed that the lesson had not been learned.

"and stopped their ears, that they should not hear" — See mg. This was a deliberate refusal to hearken; a wicked demonstration of their stubbornness. The same characteristic was revealed at the testimony of Stephen (Acts 7:57).

VERSE 12

"Yea" — An exclamation to emphasize the terrible nature of their action.

"they made their hearts as an adamant stone" — No intreaty or instruction could make any impression on such a hard surface (cp. Jer. 17:1; Eze. 3:9). The word "adamant" (Heb. *shamiyr*) has the idea of a thorn; to hedge about, so to disallow any effect. Thus they manifested a thorn-like attitude that would allow nothing to penetrate its tough surface. There was no "meekness" (the ability to mould the character to conform to a superior).

"lest they should hear the law" —

The Hebrew *shamah* signifies to hear intelligently, implying not merely the action of hearing, but the doing as well (cp. Pro. 19:20-21; cp. 2Kgs. 17:14). Their first king was told: "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of Yahweh, He hath also rejected thee from being king" (1Sam. 15:23). The generation of Zechariah's day was following the same example.

"and the words which Yahweh of hosts hath sent in His spirit by the for-

mer prophets” — This was not only the Law, but also the continuous pleading of Yahweh through such as Jeremiah, seeking for a wholesome response by the nation (cp. ch. 25:3-4; 35:14; 44:4; Neh. 9:30).

“therefore came a great wrath from Yahweh of hosts” —

This was manifested in His discipline against the people, resulting in their exile in Babylon for seventy years (cp. 2 Chr. 36:16).

VERSE 13

“Therefore it is come to pass, that as He cried, and they would not hear” —

The spirit of Yahweh had constantly appealed to the people through His prophets (Jer. 7:25), but there was no true response. Yahweh desires the loving service of His people at all times; and in return He has promised, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (cp. Josh. 1:5-7; Deu. 31:6-8). In their dispersion, Israel had learned that lesson, and the prophet now took the opportunity of reminding the people of their former state, in the hope that it would generate a continuing response. The specific answer to their question is given in Zech. 8:19. See Jer. 11:11, 14; 14:12; Isa. 1:15; Pro. 1:27-28.

“so they cried, and I would not hear, saith Yahweh of hosts” — In times of trouble, Israel turned to Yahweh, but He refused to hearken to their cry because it did not express true repentance; they had only turned to Him because there was nowhere else to turn for relief from their distress. This was shown by the fact that in times of prosperity they refused to heed His Word. God responded to them, as they had responded to Him.

VERSE 14

“But I scattered them with a whirlwind” — Though this was accomplished by the Babylonians, Yahweh had actually done this; the Babylonians were His servants to this end (Jer. 27:6). They were merely the medium by which His purpose of discipline was accomplished. Moses had



prophesied that this would be the case (Deu. 4:27-30).

Yahweh scattered them for a purpose. The word in the Hebrew is *zarah* and signifies to whirl, storm, or to winnow. The scattering was for the purpose of winnowing the nation, in order that the chaff might be destroyed, and the grain retained. Jeremiah had told those who went into captivity that they had been so treated “for their good” (Jer. 24:5), and Amos makes the point that in the scattering of Israel Yahweh will never let the least grain be destroyed (Amos 9:9). Thus there is an assurance for the remnant that He would overshadow their circumstances for good (Nah. 1:3).

“among all the nations whom they knew not” — They were not to be identified with the nations amongst whom they found themselves (Deu. 28:33; Jer. 5:15).

“Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned” — The oppressing nations poured into the land and brought desolation and destruction in their path. This was prophesied by Moses in Lev. 26:33-34.

“for they laid the pleasant land desolate” — The land was “pleasant” (Heb. *chemdah*, delight) to Yahweh (Dan. 8:9; Psa. 106:24), as His eyes are continually upon it, for it is the centre of His purpose to beautify the earth with His glory (Deu. 11:12).

CHAPTER 8

PRESENT BLESSINGS FORESHADOW FUTURE ONES

In chapter 7 Zechariah had given a negative answer to the Deputation from Bethel; in chapter 8 he provides them with a positive one. In ch. 7 he showed that external fasts, and religious formalism are useless in the absence of a true conversion of the heart; in ch. 8 he reveals that when true repentance is manifested, wonderful blessings will be experienced. In ch. 7 he told the deputation that Yahweh did want them to fast, but the fast was to be a spiritual one (vv. 9-10); in ch. 8 he explains that the mere formal fasts, their orgy of self-pity in which they were indulging, should cease.

Ch. 8 is divided into two parts, prefaced by the statement: "The word of Yahweh came..." (vv. 1, 18). These two parts are separated into a series of divine proclamations: vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23. The first section proclaims the promise of ultimate glory for Israel which was typified in the revival then taking place. In view of this wonderful future, it calls upon the people to put away evil, and submit to Yahweh in word and deed. The second section gives the specific answer to the question stated in ch. 7:3, as to whether the fasts of the previous seventy years should be continued. It provides the reason why they should be replaced by festivals of greatest joy. In this Zechariah's message typifies the approaching millennium of joy, following the dark hours of probation for the saints. Though now in spiritual exile, we are called upon to anticipate the glory ahead. Paul declared: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Cor. 4:17-18).

Full Restoration Promised — vv. 1-8.

Five declarations of the divine purpose are now delivered to the prophet, to remind the people that, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances through which they had passed, Yahweh was still a present help in time of trouble. The vision shows that the city of Jerusalem will not only be restored, but would become the centre of glory and peace, with its saving teachings permeating the whole world.

VERSE 1

"Again the word of Yahweh of hosts came to me, saying" — This militant title of Deity occurs four times in this section of the prophecy (vv. 1, 2, 4, 6), and it is significant that it is used in connection with the prophecies Zechariah now delivers. The title relates to the angelic army of heaven that will guarantee the fulfilment of all that is proclaimed. Paul uses the title in Rom. 9:29 in that way. But the title relates

not to the past or present merely, but is prophetic of the future. *Yahweh of armies*, signifies "He who will [become] armies," and is therefore a term of purpose and intent. The saints will become the great Elohim of the future, to accomplish the restoration of mankind in the kingdom of Christ. These armies in which Yahweh will reveal His power are defined in Rev. 19:11-21 with Christ at their head. It will be through the victories of the multitudinous Christ that the judgments written will be executed (Psalm 149), and by which the city of Jerusalem will be finally elevated (Psa. 48:2; see RV, RSV).

VERSE 2

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts: I was jealous" — The R.V. changes this to the present tense: "I am jealous." Yahweh does not change in His attitude towards Jerusalem and Zion and will accomplish its restoration (cp. Jer. 3:13, 23; Mal. 3:6).

The word "jealous" (Heb. *quinah*) has the idea of great zealousness for the object of that affection. This "jealousy" demands that Yahweh uphold His exclusive love for Zion, and repel any influence that would challenge that affection. See notes on Zech. 1:14

"for Zion with great jealousy" — "Great jealousy" emphasises the divine emotion, for Yahweh has an absolute affection for the place that He selected above all others to place His name. Zion (sig. *Prominent; Elevated; Monument*) represents the foundation of the prophecy of Zechariah, significantly appearing eight times (the number of the covenant; see chs. 1:14, 17; 2:7, 10; 8:2, 3; 9:9, 13). It was the site of the throne of Melchizedek, king-priest of Salem in the days of Abraham, who received blessings from the superior Monarch (Gen. 14:18). Zion is sited on the hills of Moriah, where the great sacrifice of Abraham was enacted, typical of the work of God in His Son (Gen. 22), through whom the promised blessings would extend to all peoples (cp. Gal. 3:13-14). When he led the redeemed people from Egypt, Moses foresaw God's elevation of Zion as the "mountain of Thine inheritance... the Sanctuary which Thy hands have established" (Exo. 15:17). Compare Deu. 11:12 with Psalm 132:13-14.

"and I was jealous for her with great fury" — Again, the emphasis is stressed in the word "great." The word translated "fury" is the Hebrew *chemah* from a root signifying to be hot, hence "heat," or "warmth," signifying passion, affection. Yahweh feels keenly the desecration of His land and people, and this arouses His jealousy against those who oppress the "apple of His eye" (Deu. 32:10; Lam. 2:18; Zech. 2:8). The passion of a friend or husband, springs from love and concern for the object of his choice, and manifests itself in anger against those who would harm it (cp. David's expression to Jonathan expressive of a love beyond natural feelings (2Sam. 1:26). Thus Yahweh punished the nations that touched Israel, although Israel was worthy of discipline (cp. Nah. 1:2). He did so with perfect justice, for the motives of

Israel's oppressors were those of personal aggrandisement; God was not in their thoughts (see Isa. 10:12-13; Jer. 25:3-4; Eze. 25:3-4).

VERSE 3

"Thus saith Yahweh, I am returned unto Zion" — For a time, God had turned away from Zion, for its people had rejected Him (Psa. 48:2; Jer. 31:23); but at the "set time" Zion will be favoured and restored (Psa. 102:13). Some translate the phrase "I will return..." construing the verse as a prophecy of future intention.

"and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem" — The word "dwell" is from the Hebrew *shakham*, from whence is derived the work *shekinah*, or in-dwelling; thus to permanently abide. Yahweh abode in the tabernacle in the "midst" of Israel in the past (Num. 5:3). In the centre of the nation, the *shekinah* glory shone between the cherubim and above the mercy seat in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon, but was absent from the temple built by Zerubbabel (see note Zech. 2:10). However, in his vision of the future temple in the Age to come, Ezekiel saw the glory return (Eze. 43:1-2), but whereas, in the tabernacle and temple it appeared as a light shining in the darkness of the Most Holy (Psa. 80:1), in the future Age it will be revealed in the company of immortals, all of whom will manifest the glory of the Father (Rom. 5:2). Thus, describing the glory of the God of Israel, Ezekiel declared: "His voice was like a noise of many waters;" as the sound of a multitude (Eze. 43:2). The prophet thus described a multitude (many waters) in one, and so joined together as to constitute the multitudinous Christ-Body, revealing the glory of Yahweh (Rom. 5:2) both in character, in nature (2Pet. 1:4), and in name (Rev. 3:12). In this glorious community will be seen the fulfilment of Christ's prayer: "I pray for them which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have

given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:20-22). This is the immortal *shekinah* glory that will flood the temple of the future.

"and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth" — It will become the centre from whence will emanate divine Truth for the guidance and elevation of all mankind. See Zeph. 3:13; Jer. 3:17; 31:23; Isa. 1:24-27; 2:2-4; 4:2-4; 26:1-3. The word "truth" is from the Hebrew *emeth*, which is the root of *amen*, signifying that which is absolute; guaranteed. Not only will Truth be disseminated to mankind through the laws that go from Zion, but the city will be established as the monument of divine assurance; the complete embodiment of Yahweh's character (cp. Isa. 65:16).

"and the mountain of Yahweh of hosts the holy mountain" — Again, a repetition emphasises the principle of certainty. Yahweh's principles will be elevated before mankind in a mountain "set apart," as the word *qodesh* (translated in this verse as "holy") signifies. The mountain will be dedicated to divine holiness when the glorious temple of the future Age is set up for the righteousness of Yahweh to be displayed to all nations (see Isa. 2:2-4; Eze. 43:12). Jerusalem will become "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth" (Psa. 48:2, where the Hebrew *nowph* translated "situation" should better be "elevation"). The hills around Zion will be reduced by the earthquake of Zech. 14:4, so that they will no longer "glory" over Jerusalem (Psa. 68:16), and to permit the future Zion to be elevated in the Land (Zech. 14:10).

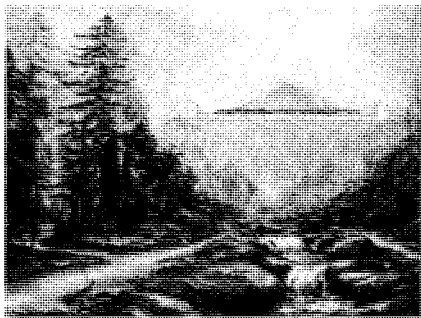
VERSE 4

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women" —

The verse introduces a further divine revelation indicated by the divine title (see previous notes, ch. 1:4). Here it presents a picture of peace, security and longevity in the millennium when life will be greatly extended. Cf. Isa. 65:19-22. This is in contrast to the present condition of mankind which is noted by the uncertainty of life.

"dwell in the streets of Jerusalem"

— In this prophecy "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are used in two ways: firstly, to indicate the literal places so named; secondly, for the nation as a whole. "Zion" is used in this latter sense in ch. 2:7, and Jerusalem in ch. 8:8. In the verse before us, it is sometimes thought that the "streets of Jerusalem" should be understood literally. However, the Hebrew word for "streets" (*rechob*) signifies open spaces, not streets as we know them. Davidson explains the word, "To become wide, open extended;" "to make broad, enlarge." In Isa. 30:23, 33, it is rendered "large" i.e., enlargement, describing the whole area of the city. Aged men and women are described as



"dwelling" in the *enlargement* of Jerusalem (they would hardly dwell in the streets!). Jerusalem, itself, will not have streets, for it will be a temple-city for worshippers to find a place of sanctuary and teaching. Ezekiel saw it as "a frame of a city" (Eze. 40:2), comprising a mile-square range of buildings enclosing a circular temple on Mt. Zion. Adjacent to the *enlargement* of Jerusalem will be the houses of the mortal Levites (Eze. 45:5; 48:13-15) in which will be found all elements of the family: old men and women, with young children, experiencing peace and pleasure without danger.

"and every man with his staff in his hand for very age" — The "staff" is the support needed to assist the elderly as they move about. This provides a picturesque description of a contented community, respecting the aged in safety (Isa. 65:20). Israel kept the passover in Egypt

with “staff in hand” (Exo. 12:11), indicating the impending redemption of the nation from their overlords, through the pathway of life that Moses would provide. Typically, this speaks of the longevity of the manifestation of Yahweh’s Truth in the lives of the people.

VERSE 5

“And the streets of the city” — The broad-places (see note v. 4).

“shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof” — In addition to the elderly (first mentioned in v. 4), younger people will find happiness, joy and contentment in the environment of Jerusalem. This speaks typically of the spiritual regeneration of the nation and its restoration to divine blessing.

VERSE 6

“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts” — This introduction again emphasises that the prophetic picture will be fulfilled through the “zeal” of the multitudinous Christ (Isa. 9:7). The description is continued to demonstrate that what the people might anticipate for the future, should also be represented in their present experiences.

“If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people” — The word “marvellous” (Heb. *pala*; to separate; to distinguish) is explained in the margin, as “hard,” or “difficult.” A cognate word (*pele*) is translated “wonderful” in Isa. 9:6. Sometimes the magnitude of the visions of Scripture are so amazing, as to cause some to wonder at the possibility of any fulfilment.

“in these days” — The R.V. renders this in the context of the future: “those” days; i.e., the days of Jacob’s trouble when Israel shall feel itself distraught because of the opposition of powerful Gentile enemies as the Gogian confederacy crushes the nation (Jer. 30:7; Eze. 38:4). At that time, the solution will appear to be beyond human ability, but Yahweh’s power will be adequate for the purpose (Eze. 37:25-28; Mic. 7:15-20). It matters not what seems difficult to overcome; faith sees beyond the day of trial to the times of refreshing (Acts

3:19).

“should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes? saith Yahweh of hosts” — What might seem impossible with men is entirely possible with God (Mat. 19:26). Yahweh sees beyond the present to the glorious future, and His power will achieve its ultimate purpose.

VERSE 7

“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Behold” — An arresting statement, to draw attention to the marvellous work that will be ultimately accomplished by the Elohim of strength.

“I will save My people” — A significant Hebrew word *yasha* is used by the angel describing these events. It is the root word of *Yahshua*, the salvation of Yah. It was used by Moses in redeeming the people from Egypt (Exo. 14:13), in calling upon them to look upon, with the eye of faith, the dry path of the Red Sea as the way of salvation through Messiah, the true source of redemption ultimately revealed to them. The future salvation of this people will follow the manifestation of Christ and the saints, and the recognition of the work of Yahweh in the Son (Zech. 12:10).

“from the east country” — Heb. *me’eret misrah*, the “Land of the rising sun.” From wherever the sun shines, the Jews will be brought back to the Land. Figuratively, this indicates the beginning of the “day” of Israel’s redemption, when Elijah commences to bring the knowledge of the appearance of Messiah to his countrymen, and urges them to return to the Land (Mal. 3:1).

“and from the west country” — *me’eret mebhoh hashshamesh*, the “Land of the going down of the sun” (see mg.). The work of Elijah will continue until all the exiles have been restored from all parts of the earth. See use of the phrase in Ps. 50:1; 113:3; Mal. 1:11.

VERSE 8

“And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem” — Obviously this cannot refer to the city alone, as it would be impossible and

impracticable for all the Jews restored from all parts of the earth to occupy the temple city of Jerusalem. But by metonymy the city of Jerusalem stands for the land which it commands, being its spiritual and political head. The people, though physically occupying all the Land in its various cantons (Eze. 48) will spiritually dwell in Jerusalem as revealed in *Psa.* 90:1 and 91:1. Thus they will populate the whole land, as the "enlargement" of the city (see *vv.* 4-5).

"and they shall be My people, and I will be their God" — This indicates their changed status, by which they will acknowledge God and His Son, and Yahweh would respond by accepting them as His children. See *Hos.* 1:10-11; 2:23.

"in truth" — Accepting the truth in Christ Jesus, and identifying with the marks of crucifixion that will be revealed to them. Thus they will mourn their past folly and the wickedness of the nation as the basis for their repentance and acceptance as the first dominion in the Land (*Zech.* 12:10; 13:1). The gospel proclaimed by the apostles in the Day of Pentecost, first caused the people to mourn, and then to "repent" in a changed life consistent with the Truth declared (*Acts* 2:37). Thus the people in the future having accepted "the truth" (*Heb. emeth*), will be identified with the "city of truth" (*v.* 3).

"and in righteousness" — The word signifies justification. The Truth must first be understood before righteousness is possible. The people shall be justified on a basis of faith and elevated to become the first dominion in the earth by which the righteousness of Yahweh will be displayed to others (*Jer.* 4:2; *Rom.* 11:23, 26-27).

Encouragement for the Present

— *vv.* 9-13.

Zechariah continues his address to the deputation from Bethel introduced in ch. 7:2. He explains that the blessings then experienced by the exiles from Babylon should be viewed as a guarantee of blessings yet to come, and therefore they should not be dissuaded by seeming difficulties.

VERSE 9

"Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Let your hands be strong" — In view of the wonderful future that Yahweh promised the nation, the prophet encouraged the people, as Haggai had done before him (*Hag.* 2:4). He called upon them to labour faithfully, courageously, and patiently, in the work before them in spite of current difficulties, in the assurance that Yahweh will bless such labours by granting those who manifest them a participation in the joys of the future Age.

The word "strong" is from the Hebrew *chazaq*, meaning "to fasten upon; thus to seize, be strong." The people were urged to seize every opportunity to labour in the things of God; they had to "fasten their hands" upon the work of the Truth, and proceed with courage and determination.

"ye that hear in these days" — The people had to give heed to the voice of Yahweh's prophets. Haggai had also promised immediate blessings for his Jewish contemporaries (*Hag.* 2:19), and there was a need to respond to that appeal.

"these words by the mouth of the prophets" — Haggai and Zechariah.

"which were in the day that the foundation of the house of Yahweh of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built" — The prophets presented their message upon the background of plain evidence of the divine blessing. The foundation of the house was laid; the temple building had recommenced. This evidence guaranteed that God would react to the faithful labour of an ecclesia committed to His work.

VERSE 10

"For before these days" — Zechariah could point to an improvement in the condition of the people resulting from the way they had laboured in the work of Yahweh. The blessings even then received (and which prompted the question posed by the deputation from Bethel of *ch.* 7:2) were tokens of the greater blessings to come when the fulness of *ch.* 8:3 will be manifest in the earth.

"there was no hire for man nor any hire for beast" — They had been plagued

with unemployment because of the depressed attitude of the people (Hag. 1:6). Both "man" and "beast" are mentioned to emphasise the depth of the situation.

"neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction" — Unsettled conditions were experienced due to the antagonism of surrounding nations (Ezra 4:4). It was a period of complete distress affecting all parts of society.

"for I set all men everyone against his neighbour" — Domestic strife and dissatisfaction resulted. In this statement the prophet testifies that the trouble was brought about by God's control of the circumstances. Where necessary He "creates evil" (Isa. 45:7) as a punishment against folly.

VERSE 11

"But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The faithful response of the people had "changed" the divine determination to punish their folly by bringing evil circumstances upon the nation (2Chr. 15:2). Their repentance deflected the threatened judgment. The "remnant" comprised the faithful among the community. Seeing that the work was proceeding with a good spirit, immediate blessings were promised: "The seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things" (v. 12). Haggai promised the same blessings (Hag. 2:19), and the former advantages were again experienced.

VERSE 12

"For the seed shall be prosperous" — The margin has "of peace," from the Hebrew *shalown*, to be safe; to have peace. The seed shall be sown in peace without the ravages of war which would destroy the work of peace.

"the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew" —

Indicating the three areas of concern to the husbandman: his vineyard; the ploughed ground; and the seasons. Previously the land and the orchards suffered the effects of drought (Hag. 1:9-11), but now all nature had responded to the divine blessings. These things were recognised by faithful Jews as coming from Yahweh (cp. Ruth 1:6).

VERSE 13

"And it shall come to pass" — All the blessings then being received were but tokens of greater ones that the future will yet reveal. As Yahweh was good to Israel then, so He will be in the future restoration.

"that as ye were a curse among the heathen" — The Hebrew *gelalah* signifies a reviling; that which is lightly esteemed. The people had experienced anti-Semitism from the nations, resulting from their own apostasy against God (see Isa. 43:28; Jer. 42:18; 24:9; Eze. 36:20).

"O house of Judah, and house of Israel" — Incorporating the whole nation; see Eze. 37:21-22.

"so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing" — Yahweh originally called His people out of Egypt that they might reflect His glory, but as Jeremiah declared (ch. 13:11), "they would not hear." They rejoiced in the liberty granted them, but refused to accept the principles and obligations of the Truth. Nevertheless, this purpose, solemnly promised to the patriarchs, shall be fulfilled when Messiah appears (Jer. 33:6-9). The national redemption of Israel will be followed by blessings that will extend through Israel to all nations (Jer. 3:17; Isa. 2:2-4; Psalm 68:29; Psalm 72). This will be accomplished through the Lord Jesus (*Yah's Salvation*) for "I [Yahweh] will save you."

"fear not, but let your hands be strong" — The encouragement given to Joshua as the nation entered the Land previously (Josh. 10:25), is now repeated to the returning exiles. While Yahweh is with them, there is no need to fear any opposition.

Fear Ye Not! — vv. 14-15.

The people are now called upon to

recognise that Yahweh had been angry because of the intolerable attitude of the whole nation, but are encouraged by the revelation of His mercy toward them.

VERSE 14

“For thus saith Yahweh of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith Yahweh of hosts” — The attitude of the people was completely abhorrent to the righteousness of the Deity, and drew His indignation. They had mocked His prophets, and ignored His principles (2Chr. 36:16).

“and I repented not” — Heb. *nacham*, to sigh; to breathe strongly; to feel pity; be grieved. Because of the continuing extreme folly of the nation, He refused to bend to their whims and delivered them to Babylon as a form of punishment, in order that they might return to Him and seek redemption.

VERSE 15

“So again have I thought in these days” — The days of Zechariah, when the people had returned to Judah from the Babylonian captivity.

“to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah” — Israel is excluded and only Judah is addressed, and would be blessed at this time. Therefore the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem in Zechariah’s day, were tokens of the future full restoration of the whole nation, as expressed in v. 13.

“fear ye not” — An expression of the confidence that the faithful could place upon the divine purpose. This statement is often pronounced at a time of national concern, as it was in the days of Moses (Exo. 20:20) and of Joshua (Josh. 8:1).

What Yahweh Delights — vv. 16-17.

It is important that the people of Judah clearly understand their responsibilities, and observe exactly what Yahweh requires of them. The foundation of divine favour is now set before them.

VERSE 16

“These are the things that ye shall

do” — They were not merely to hear the words, but to be doers of the Word (Jas. 1:22). Faith comes by hearing the Word (Rom. 10:17), but faith must be enlivened by works developed through that faith if it is to be acceptable to God (Jas. 2:17; Heb. 11:6).

“Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour” — All their conversation with each other was to be of a godly character (1Pet. 1:15; 2Pet. 3:11). They were to be energetic in setting God’s truth before the notice of their contemporaries. The wise man declared that “the lip of Truth shall be established for ever” (Pro. 12:19), thus declaring the basis for immortality.

“execute the judgment of truth” — They were to make decisions in life based upon the clear expressions of Truth. The Hebrew for “truth” is *emeth*, which embraces the idea of trustworthiness, fulfilment, complete certainty. The future millennium will be based upon the “God of truth” in all the affairs of society, both in labour and in oaths (Isa. 65:16).

“and peace in your gates” — The word “peace” is *shalom*, the common greeting shared by Jews today, and signifies to be at one; to be united; to share a common welfare. At the very gates of the city this must be the characteristic of its inhabitants.

VERSE 17

“And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour” — Such an attitude was manifested in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5), and is natural to man. But the instruction of the prophet was to exclude inward thoughts of wickedness so that Truth dominates the heart, eradicating all evil secret thoughts one towards another. They were thus to *speak* the Truth, *do* the Truth, and *think* the Truth, instead of manifesting the mere empty formalism of their fasts. On the other hand, false oaths, secret evil, warfare among brethren, hypocrisy that *professes* but does not *act* upon the Truth, and a fear to confess it before men, are “things that I hate, saith Yahweh” (v. 17; Psalms. 19:14). The intents of the heart are known only to Yahweh, and

the person producing such evil; coming from “within, it defiles the man” (Mk. 7:21).

“and love no false oath” — They were not to harbour deceit or perjury, but allow the principles of the Truth to so rule them, that false actions would be automatically excluded, and so become part of the thinking process of the faithful (cp. Rom. 2:14).

“for all these are things that I hate, saith Yahweh” — They were to bear in mind the reason they should avoid these evils, and so identify more thoroughly with the divine mind (cp. Phil. 2:5). By so doing, we learn to hate those things which Yahweh hates (Psa. 119:104; 139:22; Pro. 6:16).

Fasts Converted to Joyful Festivities — vv. 18-19.

With a fuller understanding of the divine principles, the people willingly respond to Zechariah's appeal. He sets before them the benefit of rejoicing in their activities, and of a wholesome respect to the instruments of their services.

VERSE 18

“And the word of Yahweh of hosts came unto me, saying” — The declaration concerning the festivals (v. 19) is based upon the divine declaration of the militant title of the Deity (see notes ch. 1:3).

VERSE 19

“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts” — Repeated from v. 18 for emphasis, and to underline the vital need to reflect the principles demonstrated in the festivals of Yahweh. There must be an acknowledgement of the divine blessings being received, and an expression of joyful thanksgiving. There were four major fasts, relating to the Babylonian onslaught that took the nation into captivity over seventy years earlier.

“The fast of the fourth month” — This recalled the breaching of the walls by Nebuchadnezzar in the eleventh year of Zedekiah through the famine that desolated the city (Jer. 38:2-3; 52:6-7).

“and the fast of the fifth” — The destruction of the city and temple by the Babylonian attack is here recollected (2Kings 25:8-9; Jer. 52:12-13).

“and the fast of the seventh” — To remind them of the slaying of Gedaliah with the consequent final evacuation of the land (Jer. 41:1-3).

“and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah” — The beginning of the siege in the ninth year of Zedekiah (2Kgs. 25:1; Jer. 39:1; 52:6-7).

“joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts” — Festivals in which the people rejoiced in the goodness of Yahweh to them. Through His mercy and bounty their fasts of sad reflection were converted into feasts of joyful confession.

“therefore love the truth and peace” — The ultimate purpose of sacrifice, confession, and reflection is to elevate Yahweh's bountiful provisions, reflected in the performance of truth, and the harmony of peace. The instruction of v. 16 to “execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” is now seen in the sincere delight of the people. The word “love” is from the Heb. *ahab*, which signifies a deep affection which will be seen reflected in truth and peace.

This Transformation Typical of Future Changes — vv. 20-23.

Amos proclaimed that the feasts of Yahweh would be converted into fasts because of the folly of the people (Amos 8:10). He spoke of a terrible famine that would come and be the cause of mourning: a famine not of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh. On the other hand, Isaiah predicted the time when the fasting and mourning of true Israelites will be converted into joyous celebrations of Yahweh's goodness and mercy (Isa. 61:2-3; 65:19; Jer. 33:10-11). A token fulfilment of this happy time is now seen in the days of Zechariah.

VERSE 20

“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; It shall yet come to pass” — The phrase is not in the original text, but required as an intro-

duction to the following prophecy. The converting of the fasts of Judah into joyous festivals became a type of what shall be revealed throughout the world when Christ returns.

“that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities” — Speaking of the age when the Land will be enlarged, and the company of Jews much greater than the small remnant in the days of Zechariah. Both Judah and Israel will be restored under Messiah, and rejoice together as a united people (cp. Eze. 37:10, 16-17).

VERSE 21

“And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another” — This appears to be a voluntary service as distinct from the compulsory national worship of Zechariah 14:16 involving all mankind. A city in the kingdom of Christ might experience some outstanding blessing, and the inhabitants decide to show their heartfelt appreciation to Yahweh, by a voluntary pilgrimage to the land to worship before the King in Zion. Other, neighbouring cities, hearing of these circumstances, join the company for the same purpose. Similar voluntary services are implied in Isa. 2:2-4; Psalm 122. In addition to these voluntary pilgrimages and the compulsory worship prescribed in Zech. 14:16, there will be special monthly and weekly services as shown in Isaiah 66:23, as well as other services referred to by Ezekiel in his temple prophecy (chs. 40-48). Such services of varying nature will be constantly conducted in the temple in Jerusalem.

“Saying, Let us go speedily” — The desire of one community to ascend to Jerusalem for worship will spread to others, and widespread enthusiasm will result, as worshippers throng towards Zion. The word “speedily” (Heb. *halak*) has the idea of walking; to go about, suggesting a meditative and thoughtful approach to the holy hill of Zion.

“to pray before Yahweh, and to seek Yahweh of hosts”

— The first reason is to present

the petitions of thanksgiving, and to acknowledge the blessings of heaven received in the past. The second is to petition for the divine blessings, both natural and spiritual, to continue in the future.

The word “seek” (Heb. *baqash*) signifies to search out; thus to diligently apply the mind to the instruction of the teachers in Zion (Isa. 2:2-4; Psal. 34:14; Mal. 2:7).

“I will go also” — The desire of the community is reflected in individual decisions to associate in the worship of Yahweh.

VERSE 22

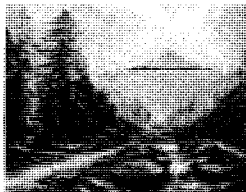
“Yea, many people and strong nations” — Not merely those of a timid character. All nations will rejoice in the liberty and joy of a world given over to the benefits of divine truth. There will be a remarkable transformation from the fleshly demands of the present age in which national pride and prestige are promoted (Joel 3:10; Mic. 4:3).

“shall come to seek Yahweh of hosts in Jerusalem” — The militant title of Deity, *Yahweh Tzvaoth*, so constantly employed in the prophecy of Zechariah, signifies Yahweh manifested through His army of glorified saints with Christ at their head (Rev. 19:14).

The people of the future Age will throng to Zion to seek the divine community of the saints and to discover the true wisdom. These worshippers will recognise that the benefits they experience in the millennium are due to the warfare successfully waged by Yahweh Tzvaoth against the former oppressors of mankind. The righteous laws will govern the hearts and minds of mankind, elevating divine principles where once the human spirit ruled mankind.

National pride having been humbled, the people learn to fear Yahweh and to honour Him (Pro. 8:13).

Flesh, being aware of its limitations and utter helplessness, shall seek Yahweh, the fountain of wisdom, the source of strength. Only when mankind seeks God first, shall they be blessed (2Chr. 15:2-4).





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THE AMAZING EXPLOITS OF
ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

TWO MIGHTY LEADERS
CONTRASTED.

THE KING WHO SAVED
HIMSELF.

A GRAND PROPHECY OF
THE FUTURE.



Zechariah ch. 8:22 to 9:17

A **LOGOS** MAGAZINE

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- b. Future Work of the Good Shepherd — ch. 10.
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Yahweh's Name
Universally Honoured — ch. 14.

Conversion of the Nations

Zech. 8:21 and 22 draw upon Isa. 2:2-4. Both verses speak of the nations diligently offering prayer to the Most High. This indicates that a profound depth of conversion will affect the Gentiles who survive the period of judgment. The consistent offering of prayer suggests a oneness of mind among the mortal populace that will result from their rejection of the principles of the flesh and their wholehearted acceptance of the Truth. Such a wondrous spiritual environment will be in complete contrast to the ungodly state of affairs which existed in the days of Nimrod, when "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech" (Gen. 11:1). In their folly, the people were united philosophically in their attempt to create the Kingdom of Men. The Tower of Babel was to be their centre of self-worship, in defiance of the God of heaven. On the other hand the Kingdom of God will be based upon the elevation of Yahweh to His rightful place of honour and glory, and this will be reflected in the enlightened and submissive minds of the mortal population. A worldwide hunger and thirst after righteousness will occur, eradicating the spirit of flesh which will have brought the nations to the brink of total annihilation. Christ and his immortalised saints will "sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isa. 28:17) upon which society has been established, and will cause "Gentiles to come... from the ends of the earth" to "seek Yahweh and live..." (Jer. 16:19; Amos 5:4, 6). In the meantime, Christ's Bride is devoted to the cause of "making herself ready" for that wondrous day (Rev. 19:7). — *J.U.*

“and to pray before Yahweh” — The Heb. *chalah* signifies, to beseech, deprecate, not just to pray habitually as did the scribes and Pharisees (Mat. 6:5; 23:5). Mankind will recognise Him as the Giver “of every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17), and with repentant hearts beseech Yahweh for His blessing (cp. the same word in 2Kgs. 13:4). Such prayers will be expressed in the glorious temple in Zion, when all who pray before the great High Priest in Jerusalem will be considered as praying before Yahweh (cp. Deu. 19:17; 1Sam. 1:9-10, 15). They will acknowledge Yahweh as manifested in His Son, the mediator of the Age to come.

VERSE 23

“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass” — See note on v. 20 in regard to the italicised words.

“that ten men” — This number is used in the Bible in the general sense of completeness (see Amos 6:9; Dan. 1:20; Ecc. 7:19; Lev. 26:26; Gen. 31:7; Num. 14:22, etc.). The Hebrew word, *ezer*, comes from a root signifying “accumulation,” that is, to the extent of single digits. Ten represents completeness, for it is another first after nine. Thus “ten men” is a general term signifying “men everywhere.”

The term can also signify a tithe (a tenth), in which the smaller number represents the whole. Yahweh demanded the gift of a tithe from Israel (Lev. 27:30), as representative of a complete offering. The tithe of the future exhibits the importance of “all flesh” presenting itself to Yahweh (cp. Eze. 21:5; Joel 2:28; Zech. 2:13).

“shall take hold out of all languages of the nations” — All nations will not at first accept Christ, and those that remain obstinate will perish (Isa. 60:12). The words, “out of” imply the total overthrow of apostate systems (Dan. 7:11-12), and the salvation of other nations. These will comprise the ecclesia (called out ones) of the millennium.

The words “take hold” are from a primary word, *chazaq*, which signifies to fasten upon; hence to seize, be strong. Thus

the attachment of Gentiles to the Hope of Israel must be sincere and absolute.

In stating that these men come out of “all languages,” the verse implies that, whilst each ethnic group may retain its own form of speech, the official, universal language of the future Age will be Hebrew (Zeph. 3:9) bringing true unity, in contrast to Gen. 11.

“even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying” — In this way mankind will renounce their national relationship and identify themselves with the Hope of Israel, upholding the principles of the Abrahamic covenant (Isa. 3:6-7; 4:1), and walking in a way compatible with divine teaching.

Israelites were commanded to make a ribband of blue on the borders of their garments, to remind them of their heavenly calling and to call attention to the commandments of Yahweh. They were instructed to “look upon it and remember...” (Num. 15:38-39). The woman diseased with an issue of blood was healed by the Lord Jesus when she “touched the hem of his garment” (Mt. 9:20), clearly recognising the importance of this ordinance. It was upon the manifestation of her faith that she was healed. The heavenly calling of Israel, illustrated in the ribband of blue, will be recognised by the nations in the Age to come, when they figuratively take hold of the “skirt of him that is a Jew,” identifying with the principle of God manifestation first in His Son, then in his saints, and in the “first dominion” of Israel (Mic. 4:8).

“We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” — The Almighty will be manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, described in Mat. 1:23 as Emmanuel, “God with us” (see also Eze. 43:7). In so doing, the nations repeat the action of the Queen of Sheba who presented herself to Solomon to enquire concerning the glory of Yahweh (2Chr. 9:1-2).



The Human Conqueror *contrasted with* The Divine Prince of Peace

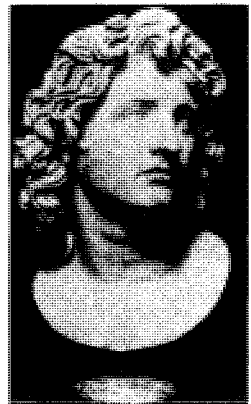
CHAPTER NINE

THE CONQUESTS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

There is no obvious break in Zechariah's prophecy at Chapter 9. Though no date is given, it seems as if the work of the temple must have been completed, and in view of this a new series of visions relating to the time of the end, engages the attention of the prophet.

In this chapter, the proud and haughty Greek warrior, Alexander the Great, as an instrument in the hands of Yahweh to effect His purpose, is contrasted with the humble though all-powerful King of the Jews. The former was ruthless in power; the latter full of grace and mercy. The former rode pompously against Jerusalem on a high-spirited steed; the latter entered the city upon an ass. The former was humbled outside the city walls; the latter was applauded and honoured as he entered its precincts.

Alexander was an amazing general. Against great odds he won remarkable and decisive victories. His conquests spread his power swiftly throughout the then-known world bringing powerful nations under his rule. But, remarkably, Judah escaped the terrible devastation that was experienced by other nations who resisted him. This remarkable deliverance is outlined in this prophecy, illustrating the divine protection that overshadowed the people of God.



Alexander the Great

The chapter traces the progress of Alexander the Great when he invaded the Middle East after the battle of Issus in south-eastern Asia Minor (BC333). Alexander inflicted such a defeat upon the numerically greater forces of the Persian Darius, as to immediately manifest himself as the next world ruler. The victory opened Syria and Palestine to his lightning-like conquests, and exposed Egypt to his victorious advance. A detachment of his forces quickly overran the land of Hadrach, taking the key towns of Damascus and Hamath. He fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel 26 by destroying Tyre, and he overwhelmed nations that had previously oppressed Judah.

In advancing against Egypt, he demanded tribute of the Jews, and when it was refused, he threatened to destroy Jerusalem. Marching on the city for this purpose, he was met by the high priest and his companions dressed in their robes of state. They had emerged from the city in procession to plead with Alexander not to destroy it. The haughty conqueror was so impressed with the sight of this procession of unarmed priests with Jaddua at their head, courageously advancing to meet him in all their regalia, that, descending from his horse, he prostrated himself before them. When asked why he should do this, he declared that he had received a vision of this procession in a dream at Dios in Macedonia, before leaving on his campaign of world conquest.

Thus Jerusalem escaped the bloodshed and devastation that fell on other cities such as Gaza.

At verse 9, the prophecy breaks off to contrast Alexander with the greater Victor, the Lord Jesus Christ. The just and lowly King of Israel who comes not for violence at his

first appearing, but for salvation, is considered against the background of the violent, haughty king of Grecia. Christ is revealed as a true king and deliverer; not a human conqueror at the head of invincibly marching forces and leaving a trail of violence and bloodshed behind him, but a divine Prince of Peace — not one who inspires fear and dread, but one whose coming calls forth songs of greatest joy — not a foreign tyrant, but Israel's own King — not cruel and oppressive, but infinitely righteous — not slaying people indiscriminately, but providing salvation — not glorifying the flesh, but meek and lowly — not astride a prancing steed, but riding upon a humble ass, an animal not of war, but of peace.

He comes in fulfilment of the hope of Israel, and through his leadership Israel's forces will triumph over the world power of Grecia. Glorious victories, greater and more enduring than those of Alexander, are predicted for Israel when Yahweh shall save them as a flock, the people of His pasture. The prophecy ends with a song of joy consequent upon vast changes that shall then be brought about.

It is said that Alexander died at the age of 33 as the result of a drunken orgy when celebrating yet another victory in Babylon. In contrast the Lord Jesus who also died at the same age, and figuratively in the same city (Rev. 11:18), but for a completely different reason. Through his death He gained the victory over death (Heb. 2:14), making it possible for the "prisoners" to emerge "out of the pit wherein is no water" (i.e. the grave). The chapter is a thrilling one of vivid contrasts between Alexander the human conqueror, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the divine Prince of peace.

Alexander's Sweeping Victories

— vv. 1-7.

A change occurs in the prophecy of Zechariah. He sees a new vision, described as a "burden," a revelation concerning the uprise of a new conqueror, a remarkable victor, whose prowess sweeps the world, and brings all peoples under his control.

VERSE 1

"The burden of the word of Yahweh" — The word "burden" is from the Hebrew root *nasah*, meaning to lift up; thus to reveal. It can signify the lifting up of the hand in threatening aspect. It therefore is an oracle of doom.

"in the land" — The R.V. has "upon the land." The prophecy related to the land of Hadrach; it was not given in that land, for Zechariah was to look towards the east (as did Ezekiel; e.g., ch. 35:22).

"of Hadrach" — This area has been identified as Hatarika mentioned by Assyrian kings as an Aramean district near Damascus and Hamath, to the north of the land. The decisive battle of Issus in which Alexander defeated the Persians, laid open Syria and Palestine to his attack. He invaded the land of Hadrach, occupied

Damascus, and from there moved against Tyre and Sidon.

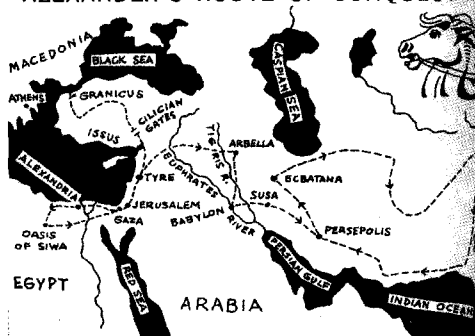
"and Damascus shall be the rest thereof" — The R.V. has "Damascus shall be its [i.e., the burden's] resting place." The divine judgment was pointed to the nations that had previously afflicted Israel and would rest heavily on Damascus for its opposition against the people of God.

"when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward Yahweh" — Rotherham, and the R.V. more correctly render this: "Yahweh hath an eye upon men, and upon all the tribes of Israel." His "eye," manifested through His angelic messengers, overlooks the affairs of men and nations, and He moves for the protection or the vindication of His people Israel. His action with the nations revolves around His purpose with Israel, for "the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28). See Jer. 32:19-23; Psa. 14:2; 66:7; Heb. 4:13; Pro. 15:3.

VERSE 2

"And Hamath also shall border thereby" — The RV renders this: "Hamath also which borders thereon." Hamath was adjacent to Hadrach and Damascus. It was a city on the Orontes, the capital of a por-

ALEXANDER'S ROUTE OF CONQUEST



tion of Syria, forming, at one time, an independent kingdom of the same name. It is mentioned in Num. 34:8 as portion of the northern border of the land granted to the tribes. So the prophecy shows that Alexander would move south ever nearer to the land of Judah.

“Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise” — The clever diplomacy of these people in strengthening their position would avail nothing when the power of Alexander is exercised, as God determined. Despite their reputed wisdom (see Eze. 28:2-3), they would not avert the battle against the Grecian forces.

VERSE 3

“And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold” — The word for “strong hold” is *mazor*, and is used to identify a tower; i.e., the element of its power and authority. But this was ineffective against the forces of her enemies. The prophecy of the destruction of Tyre is given in Eze. 26. Nebuchadnezzar initiated the attack, and destroyed the city on the mainland. But the

Tyrians removed their wealth to an island off the coast of Syria, continued to defy their enemies, and built up again their power. However, Ezekiel had predicted that Tyrian power would be irreparably destroyed, the stones, dust and timber of the city would be thrown “in the midst of the water,” and the site made “like the top of a rock” (vv. 12-14). So complete would be the destruction of Tyrian power, that the city would be “built no more.” Alexander fulfilled this to the very letter. Though Tyre “built itself a strong hold” in its island fortress, and the

Macedonians lacked the naval power to destroy it, Alexander built a wide causeway connecting the mainland with the island, using the ruins of the mainland city to accomplish his purpose, and so “throwing the stones, dust and timber into the waters.” Across this ramp his forces marched to overthrow Tyre completely. These events comprised the remarkable and detailed fulfilment of Ezekiel’s prophecy. The wealth and power that insular Tyre had accumulated since the destruction of the mainland city by Nebuchadnezzar were taken over by Alexander and his Grecian forces.

“and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets”

— Indicating the powerful and glorious reign of the Phoenicians. The wealth of the nations was gathered in the ships of Tyre, and graced the city with their glory.

VERSE 4

“Behold” — The word suggests an exclamation of amazement: “Look!” as though as to impress upon the mind the remarkable fulfilment of Ezekiel’s prophecy. The word always appears when a significant statement is about to be made.

“the Lord” — Heb. *adonai*, lords. The *Sopherim* changes this to Yahweh (see *Phanerosis*, p. 15). Here it refers to Alexander, who, like Nebuchadnezzar, was but a tool in the hands of God who guides the destiny of nations (see Jer. 27:6; Deu. 28:49; Zeph. 2:12). It is in the plural to represent the authority of Alexander expressed



through his subordinate captains and officials.

“will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea” — Alexander’s policy was the complete destruction of the city and its people. Tyre was confident and proud, believing that her wealth and fortifications would save her — even when she rebuilt her city as an island power — but in this she was mistaken, for Yahweh’s “oracle” had determined her future.

“and she shall be devoured with fire” — After a seven months’ siege this was fulfilled and Tyre was destroyed.

VERSE 5

“Ashkelon shall see it, and fear” — The name signifies *The Place of Weighing*. It was one of the five main cities of the Philistines (cp. 1Sam. 6:17). The remarkable overthrow of Tyre, the energy and skill of Alexander in war, the manner in which he overcame every obstacle in his path, put fear in nations, that stood in the way of his progress south. The Philistine cities next occupied his attention and were defeated one by one. The order of the cities mentioned is the same as in Jer. 25:20.

“Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful” — Or, “severely distressed.” Gaza (which signifies *She is Strong*) chose to oppose Alexander and stubbornly resisted him, but was decisively overthrown after a five months’ siege. To teach a lesson to surrounding nations, Alexander treated the citizens extremely harshly. After the city had surrendered, he ruthlessly slew 10,000 of them, and had the king of Gaza dragged to death through the streets of the city behind a chariot. Thus “the king perished from Gaza.”

“and Ekron” — The name means *Uprooting*.

“for her expectation shall be ashamed” — The hope of any assistance from Tyre would not materialise, for the power of Alexander would destroy both. After the fall of Tyre, Alexander continued his march southwards toward Egypt, subduing the cities on his way.

“and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhab-

ited.” — All these cities would experienced complete destruction.

VERSE 6

“And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod” — The Septuagint renders the Hebrew *mamzer* as “a foreigner.” It defines a child of a Gentile father and Jewish mother, and thus a mixed community (cp. Deu. 23:2, where the Septuagint identifies “one of a harlot birth”). The RSV has “a mongrel people.” The term suggests the gradual national decline in once powerful Philistia. Foreigners took over where once the Philistines proudly ruled.

“and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines” — The Philistines migrated after BC1200 from Illyricum (now Serbia) to Crete, thence as the “Sea Peoples” who raided the eastern Mediterranean, established Ashdod, Askelon, Ekron, Gaza and Gath. The decline of the Philistine empire occurred because of the judgment of Yahweh on behalf of His people. So the “pride” (*ga’own*, arrogance) of the Philistines would be wiped out, and this age-old enemy of Israel removed from its former position.

VERSE 7

“And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth” — The metaphor is that of beasts of prey gorging themselves with flesh so that the blood drips from their mouths, but not entirely consuming the prey because it is taken away by the power of Yahweh. In this case, Alexander and his Macedonian soldiers are the beasts of prey, and the Philistines comprise the victims. A remnant of the nation remained after the desolation by Alexander had been completed.

“but he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God” — The remnant of Philistia that remained after being humbled by Alexander was ultimately conquered and converted by the Jews under the Maccabees (BC175-163) to whom God granted “a little help” (Dan. 11:34-35).

“and he shall be as a governor in Judah” — The RSV has “as a clan in

**Portrait of
Alexander on a
Macedonian
coin**



Judah," however, the Septuagint has "head over a thousand." Philistia became a province of the nation established by the Maccabees, the borders of which extended almost as widely as those of Israel in the days of David. They therefore governed their area, under the authorities of the Maccabees.

"and Ekron as a Jebusite" — Ekron (sig. *Uprooting*) is used as a name comprising all the Philistines who were subdued and converted by the Maccabees as David subdued the city of Jebus, and converted the prince Araunah. See 2Sam. 24:15-25; 1Chr. 21:18-29, and also Josephus, *Ant.* iii. 13:4.

VERSE 8

"And I will encamp about Mine house" — The term "house" can relate to both the land and people of Israel, as well as to the temple itself (Hos. 8:1; 9:15). A remarkable protection overshadowed Judah during the invasion of Alexander, as it did later when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the land. Alexander marched against Jerusalem, determined to destroy it, but being met by the procession of priests from the city headed by Jaddua the high priest (Jos. *Ant.* xi. 8:3-5) he recognised this as a vision he had seen prior to leaving Macedonia, and instead of avenging himself, he made obeisance to the priest. After the terrible destruction and bloodshed that had been experienced by the surrounding nations, the remarkable deliverance of

Jerusalem could only be attributed to divine protection. A similar invasion of the land was experienced shortly after BC170 when Antiochus Epiphanes returned from his Egyptian campaign to take Jerusalem by storm. He was determined to absolutely destroy the power of Judah, and did bring upon it great distress and bloodshed, but ultimately it was his power that was broken, and Judah arose greater than ever.

The distress that Antiochus brought upon the country was followed by the revolt organised by the Maccabees, a family of priests that refused to submit to the Grecian dictator.

Gathering supporters around them they retired from the cities to commence a guerilla warfare against Antiochus Epiphanes. Remarkable victories were won by them, despite the fact that they lacked the arms and trained soldiers of the Syrians under Antiochus. Ultimately the power of Antiochus was broken, and the Maccabees ruled the greatly extended nation for approximately a century, reigning as king-priests, until BC37.

The events of this time are used in Scripture as typical of those when Christ shall overthrow his enemies and reign over a greatly extended empire. Both during the invasion of Alexander, and the war with Antiochus, it was made abundantly evident that Yahweh "encamps around His house" (see Psalm 34:7).

"because of the army" — Yahweh's angelic forces would repel any invader who sent his hostile forces against "His house."

"because of him that passeth by" — Alexander the Great, leading his vanquishing army would not find victory against Yahweh's people, and would move past the area (see v. 8).

"and because of him that returneth" — This identifies Antiochus Epiphanes with the prophecy, as well as Alexander. Whereas the latter marched against Jerusalem when he first entered the land en route for Egypt, Antiochus did so on his return from attacking Egypt. Antiochus is therefore "him that returneth."

The Contrast Between Alexander and Christ

Alexander was a victor of the past; Christ is the one of the future. They both represent an army of power; the former demonstrated the power of the flesh, whereas the latter is Captain of those of the Spirit of Truth. There are five points of contrast in verse 9 between Alexander and Christ. They are as follows:

[1] "*He cometh unto thee*" — Christ comes to redeem Israel, not to crush it as did Alexander.

[2] "*He is just*" — The chief virtue of a king is the ability to manifest justice for his people (2Sam. 23:3; see Isa. 11:3-5; Psal. 45:6-7. Jer. 23:5-6. Isa. 9:6-7). In contrast to this, Alexander was capricious and violently unjust, especially against those who offended his towering ego.

[3] "*He is a saviour*" — Contrast this quality with Alexander's action against Gaza and other places where he asserted his authority, not by saving, but by destroying. See Psalm 18:27.

[4] "*He is lowly*" — The Hebrew word (*aniy*) signifies submissive, approachable and suggests the attitude of one subjecting himself to the affliction of evil men. Christ was always submissive to the Father (Phil. 2:5-8), and put his trust in Yahweh. The proud, dashing, impatient Alexander was the very opposite, harnessing the power of the flesh to dominate his policies.

[5] "*Riding upon an ass*" — The animal of peace and a symbol of Israel; it represents the peaceful burden-bearer. Josephus says that foreigners identified the ass with Israel (*Against Apion*, ii.7). This animal was used by the judges and kings of Israel as a symbol of their rank (Jud. 5:10; 10:4; 12:14. 2Sam. 16:1-2). When David wanted to impress upon the people that Solomon was to be king, he commanded that he ride his mule through the streets of the city (1Kings 1:33, 38). The ass is a high-spirited animal, an excellent worker, and the only animal whose *firstborn* could be redeemed (by a lamb!) under the law (Exo. 13:13), all other *firstborns* being either destroyed or offered in sacrifice. Thus the ass was chosen as a symbol of Israel who can be redeemed by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

In contrast to this peaceful animal, the powerful horse (as used by Alexander) was the animal of war, imported from and identified with Egypt. As a proud-stepping animal the horse symbolises the haughtiness of flesh.

What a drama is thus presented in this verse (Zech. 9:9) when the King of Israel on the animal of peace, is contrasted with the Grecian monarch on his high, uplifted, prancing steed. Jewish kings are shown riding the ass, but Christ rode the colt and led the ass. This is a symbol of the King in power. The full-grown ass speaks of the natural Israel; the colt speaks of the true Israel of God. When Christ manifests himself as King he will be associated with the true, spiritual, glorified Israel, and lead Israel after the flesh, so that it will become the "first dominion" throughout the world (Mic. 4:8). Consider also Gen. 49:11. When the Lord rode into Jerusalem on the ass at the end of his first ministry, the people recognised his kingly dignity, for it was the appropriate animal for the circumstances, but they did not appreciate the spiritual import of the Ass and the Colt — spiritual and natural Israel of the future, both acknowledging their king; both obtaining victory through the wonderful work of the great Messiah.

“and no oppressor shall pass through them any more” — Following the attack of Antiochus, Judah rose to a greatness that caused her neighbours to fear, but subsequently were brought under the power of Rome as a province of the empire. In AD70 Judah was destroyed by Rome. In the initial stages of Roman power in the East, she entered as a “friend” and not as an enemy, so that in a sense these words could apply to those times. It is obvious, however, that the events of this chapter are typical of events that are yet to occur when the power from the North shall re-enact the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes, and will lay hold on Egypt, returning to besiege and devastate Jerusalem, only to be ultimately destroyed and overthrown for ever by the Lord Jesus who shall return as King of kings and Lord of lords. These events are predicted in Daniel 11:40-45, and Zechariah’s comment shows conclusively that the fulfilment of this prophecy is still in the future.

“for now have I seen with Mine eyes”

— Yahweh looks toward His people to deliver them. See similar expression: Exo. 3:7.

The Credentials of Israel’s King — v. 9

Having shown how Yahweh can deliver His people in the remarkable escape of Jerusalem in the face of Alexander’s impending attack, and having predicted that He will encamp about His people (though they would not entirely escape invasion and bloodshed) in the later attack by Antiochus Epiphanes, which is typical of the Russian invasion of the last days, the prophet is now shown the credentials of Israel’s King as the true source of salvation. The King appears first as one seeking salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass. But the victory he gained for himself then laid the foundation for national victories to be won in the future: victories over death, the grave, and over Israel’s enemies.

VERSE 9

“Rejoice greatly” — The Hebrew word translated “rejoice” is *giyl*, which has the idea “to spin round” under violent emo-

Rejoice Greatly!

The people of Israel who were domiciled in the land at the Lord’s first coming were called upon to “rejoice greatly” at the prospect of meeting their King, even though he would come to them in “lowly” form. The account recorded in Mat. 21:1-11 may give this impression. *“All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet...”* (v. 4). But did the people really appreciate that the words of Zechariah were being fulfilled before their eyes? Did they “rejoice greatly” at seeing their King? Certainly they cried out *“Hosanna!”* (“save now!” — quoting from one of their most well-known Psalms, Psa. 118:25). They recognised him as the One promised to David: *“Hosanna to the Son of David!”* They then returned to the same verse from Psa. 118, *“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Yahweh!”* Mark adds that they shouted: *“Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord!”* (Mark 11:10). That is, the kingdom promised to David. But when the question was posed: “Who is this?” the reply given by the “multitude” showed little understanding. Instead of answering: “This is the Son of David, the Son of God, our promised redeemer!” they replied: *“This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.”* (vv. 9-11). This was on the tenth day of Abib. Four days later they were shouting at Pilate: *“If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend! Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar! Let him be crucified! His blood be on us, and on our children!”* (John 19:12; Mat. 22:22, 25). Their emotional display on the tenth of Abib was of no consequence. Conversion to the Truth must be based on sound knowledge which produces a firm conviction. Despite their rejection of their Saviour, the time will come when a different generation will indeed “greatly rejoice” and recognise him as the one promised: the Son of David, the Son of God. — *J.U.*

tion as in excess of joy. This verse captures the excitement, joy and boundless relief at the manifestation of Israel's Saviour and King. The prophet looks beyond the circumstances of national events, to the singular work of God in a leader of His choosing.

"O daughter of Zion" — This phrase highlights the unique position of those protected by the Deity, and refers to the saints who are "born in Zion" for "of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest himself shall establish her" (Psa. 87:5). See use of the title "daughter of Zion," in 2Kgs. 19:21; Psa. 9:14; Zech. 2:10.

"shout, O daughter of Jerusalem" — This term is used to include natural Israel, in contrast to the previous phrase. See this title in Mic. 4:8; Zeph. 3:14.

"behold" — An exclamation to draw attention to the following declaration.

"thy King" — Cited in Mat. 21:5. The use of the appellation by Zechariah emphasises the majesty of the coming victor over sin and death. Ironically, when the Lord Jesus declared himself to be their King (Jn. 18:36-37), his people crucified him! But his second appearance will vindicate his authority, and fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah.

"cometh unto thee" — He would appear for their benefit, not like Alexander to conquer and destroy them.

"he is just" — He would manifest divine righteousness, unlike Alexander who only sought for his personal aggrandisement and the honour of Greece.

"and having salvation" — Notice the A.V. margin, more correctly has: "saving himself." The Lord saved himself from the impact of sin's flesh that he might save others. As the Good Shepherd, he laid down his life on behalf of Yahweh's saints that he might take it up again in immortality in order to save his sheep (Jn. 10:11). It would not have been no purpose in the shepherd merely dying, for that would only have demonstrated the victory of sin. He had to die the death of sacrifice in order to live. That is what the Lord declares in John 10:17, "*I lay down my life, that* [Gr. *hina*,

with the design, purpose, or result] *I might take it again... This commandment have I received of my Father.*" The Lord's dedicated life ensured that he would obtain redemption from the body of sin (Rom. 6:6) in which he came. His sacrifice ensured his personal resurrection to glory (Heb. 13:20) as well as the salvation of all who come unto God through him. By thus conquering, he provided the means whereby others could conquer the flesh as he did. So, in saving himself, he saved others (Rom. 4:25).

The Jews, however, esteemed him only as "smitten of God" (Isa. 53:4). The very fact that he died on the tree was to them an evidence that he was not the king of Israel but an impostor. They quoted this very Scripture (Zech. 9:9) to disprove his claim: "*He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him*" (Mat. 27:42). "*Save thyself and come down from the cross... himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe*" (Mark 15:30-32). "*If thou be Christ, save thyself and us*" (Luke 23:39). All these sayings are related to Zechariah 9:9, and were used by the Lord's detractors as scriptural evidence to refute his claim. It was this matter which added to the apostles' confusion and lack of faith (Mk. 16:11, etc.).

"lowly" — Heb. *aniy*, depressed, in mind or circumstances. The character of the King would be forged through the circumstances of humility in the application of the Word (Jn. 1:14). The apostle Paul describes the Lord's first ministry as one of "no reputation," and "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8). His humble submission to the will of Yahweh fitted him for a rulership far greater than Alexander, who only rejoiced in his own fleshly prowess and authority.

"and riding upon an ass" — Though lowly in character, he was majestic in purpose. Riding the ass into Jerusalem in the last week of his ministry (Jn. 12:14-16), he

demonstrated his royal destiny, for the ass was used by the rulers of Israel as the insignia of authority (Jud. 5:10; 10:4; 12:14, 2Sam. 16:1-2). The ass was also used for religious purposes (see comments on p. 153).

“and upon a colt the foal of an ass”

— This prophecy was fulfilled by the Master (Mat. 21:4-7; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:35-38; Jn. 12:14-15). The Lord rode the colt (fig. of spiritual Israel), and led the ass (fig. of natural Israel). The ass was the symbol of the ancient pastoral condition of the nation of Israel, and was used by Abraham (Gen. 22:3, 5), Moses (Exo. 4:20), etc. The humble ass was despised by the Egyptians, and Israel was generally identified with it. In his action, the Lord Jesus prophesied that he would eventually bring the ass-nation into the glory of the Kingdom, through the work of the young colt upon which he rode: typical of the Bride of Christ.

The King Saves Others — vv. 10-11

After achieving his own salvation in order to uphold the divine righteousness as a true manifestation of Yahweh, his Father, the prophecy reveals that he will work for the redemption of his companions. In this way, his faithfulness and care for his brethren is achieved.

VERSE 10

“And I” — The Septuagint, Rotherham and Gesenius render this as “he,” referring to the King of v. 9.

“will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem” — This indicates the complete destruction of Israel’s enemies, the full restoration of Israel in the Diaspora to the land (Ephraim), and the deliverance of the city (Jerusalem). Micah 5:10 shows that prior to Christ’s return the Jews will put their trust in these “horses and chariots” there described as “thine,” representative of the arm of flesh (Jer. 17:5), but they will find that no power of their own will accomplish their salvation. It is only the divinely appointed King who accomplishes it (Eze. 37:21-25).

“and the battle bow shall be cut off” — All the enemy’s weapons of war shall be destroyed.

“and he shall speak peace unto the heathen” — Permanent world peace can only be achieved on the basis of righteousness, which will come to pass when the King of righteousness and peace rules on his throne (Ps. 72:3; Heb. 7:2). The verse thus speaks of total world disarmament (“cut off the chariot”) and the establishment of world peace. He speaks peace by proclaiming it authoritatively (Isa. 9:6; Ps. 85:8; Isa. 32:17).

“and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea” — This is a quotation from Psalm 72:8 showing that the Psalm is Messianic in character. It formed part of the prayer of David, expressing his longing desire for the establishment of this future kingdom (Psalm 72:20; 2Sam. 23:1-7). The Holy Dominion will constitute the throne of the Lord, and extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf (cp. Gen. 15:18).

“and from the river even to the ends of the earth” — Thus indicating the universal extent of the kingdom (Amos 8:12; Mic. 7:12).

VERSE 11

“As for thee also” — That is, Zion (v. 9). The vision now speaks concerning true Israelites who are identified with Zion (Psalm 87:5; Heb. 12:22).

“by the blood of thy covenant” — The sacrificial blood provided by the King for the salvation of his people is the purpose expressed in verse 9. See Luke 22:20; Heb. 13:20. The work that he accomplished for his own redemption was also on behalf of his associates.

“I have sent forth thy prisoners” — Those shut up in the prison-house of sin and death; prisoners in the memorial graves. See Isa. 49:8-9; Rev. 1:18.

“out of the pit wherein is no water” — Both Joseph (Gen. 37:24) and Jeremiah (Jer. 38:6) were placed in such a pit typifying death, the grave. As those worthies of the past came out of the pits in which they were placed (cp. Mat. 27:52-53), so true

Prisoners of Hope

At the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the Jews were unable to discern that he had come to save them from their sins. Blindness, in this respect, affects the nation to this day (Rom. 11:25). Had they hearkened to the prophet Zechariah, they would have understood. *"Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope..."* (v. 12, NASB). They were "prisoners" to King Sin, as are all unenlightened humanity. Israel would remain captive to sin, with no way of escape apart from a humble submission to this gracious invitation. As this verse states, they have "the hope" — the hope of Israel; and yet, throughout their generations they have spurned the grace and mercy which their God has repeatedly extended to them. What of spiritual Israel? In these present trying and difficult times how many appreciate the enormous privileges they have been granted. *"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises [virtues, marg.] of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"* (1Pet. 2:9). These words of Peter were once applied to the nation of Israel (Exo. 19:5; Deu. 7:6). What of those to whom these words now apply? Is there not a great danger in falling into a pattern of life where the Truth is largely taken for granted? Is not this the very area in which the Jews have failed so abysmally? The Truth is not a matter of mere academic knowledge. It is a way of life. Israel never really understood this. Does spiritual Israel? We, too, have "the hope of Israel". Do we live our lives day by day in preparation for the coming fulfilment of that hope? We are "saved by the hope" (Rom. 8:24), but only if it is the living, motivating power that produces an unquenchable commitment to the cause of Christ. — J.U.

sons of Zion shall be liberated from the power of the grave to receive life eternal (Hos. 13:14; 1Cor. 15:55-56).

VERSE 12

"Turn you to the strong hold" — Yahweh is the tower and strength of His people. We must lay hold on Him in confidence of future blessings. See Nah. 1:7; Ps. 27:1; Pro. 18:10; John 17:11-12).

"ye prisoners of hope" — The literal Hebrew has "prisoners of the hope." It does not relate to those with just any hope, but only those upholding the exclusive Hope of Israel (Acts 26:6; 28:20).

"even to day do I declare" — This declaration was made in a day of great distress, when every circumstance seemed to be contrary to their expectations. They were told that in contrast, they would receive care, comfort and restoration from the open hand of Yahweh.

"that I will render double unto thee" — This is the privilege of the firstborn under the divine Law (Deu. 21:17), and, since Israel is the firstborn nation of Yahweh (Exo. 4:22), it was a promise given to the nation. Those who embrace the hope of Israel in Christ assume that position in place of natural Israel who have been deposed from that high privilege because of the way they treated the Son of God (see Heb. 12:23, Diag.; James 1:18; Rom. 9:6-7). However, the coming restoration of Israel will see its opponents suitably judged (Rev. 14:4). But the privilege of firstborn also brought a double share of responsibility, so that whilst a double portion of inheritance is granted those who grace their position, a double portion of punishment will be meted out to those who disgrace it (see Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18; Isa. 61:7).

The Maccabean Struggle as Typical of Israel's Ultimate Victory — vv. 13-15

The Maccabees (a Levitical family who led a revolt against Syria in bc168) defeated the power from the north (Antiochus Epiphanes) that had taken the city of Jerusalem. Led by Judas Maccabee, they set up their authority in the city as king-priests, and from Jerusalem extended their boundaries on all sides, until they incorporated the

nation's previous enemies. These were either converted or put to the sword. The Edomites were one such nation incorporated within the borders of the greatly-extended State of Israel, and Herod the Idumean who reigned in the days of Christ was a descendant of those who had been converted to Judaism at that time. These events are here shown to be typical of Christ's future conquests.

VERSE 13

"When I have" — The verbs of this verse are in the prophetic perfect tense, and may be rendered as a prophecy of the future. The past victories of the Maccabees are typical of those to come under the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"bent Judah for Me, filled the bow with Ephraim" — Judah is represented as the bow, and Ephraim as the arrow of Yahweh: together forging opposition to the enemies of Yahweh's people. In the days of the Maccabees, Judah provided the main support, though there were many of the northern tribes who had returned to the land, and fought for it. This will be repeated at Christ's return. He shall save Judah first (Zech. 12:7), and they shall "fight at Jerusalem" against the power from the north (ch. 14:14). In these verses, Judah is a political term, and relates to the people in the Land. The Jews in dispersion are accounted as Ephraim, the ten tribes scattered abroad (cp. 1Pet. 1:1). Ultimately all tribes are to be restored to the land (Rom. 11:26; Eze. 48). Ezekiel 20:23-37 declares that exiled Israel will fight its way back to the Land under the guidance of Elijah (Mal. 4:5). Christ will save Judah first (the Jews in the Land), and use them as his bow in battle, as Zechariah declares, and then regather those who remain scattered (Ephraim), whom he will use as his arrow against the opposing Gentile forces. This will occupy considerable time (Mic. 7:14-17). See *Eureka*, vol. 2, pp. 141-142; vol. 3, p. 177.

"and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece" — The circumstances of the Maccabean revolt against the Grecian power of the north are

thus shown as typical of events at the time of the end. The Gogian "king of the north" (Dan. 11:40) is shown by the prophet to be a latter-day manifestation of Grecian power (see notes on Zech. 6:1).

VERSE 14

"And Yahweh shall be seen over them" — The glorified saints will have the name of Yahweh named upon them and form the overshadowing angel of protection, as did the Elohim in the days of the passover (Exo. 12:23; cp. Acts 15:14; Rev. 3:12; Isa. 30:27), and will strengthen the Israelites in their conquest over the Gentiles.

"and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning" — See Psalm 144:5-6. Lightning speaks of Yahweh's spirit power (as in the judgments of AD70, Mat. 24:27), and it will be by the manifestation of this that victory will come to the saints as Israel's future rulers, the king-priests (like the Maccabees) of the Age to come (Zech. 4:6; Rev. 5:9-10).

"and Adonai Yahweh" — This title signifies "the Lords of He Who Shall Be Manifested." It identifies the majestic rulers appointed by Yahweh for His judgmental work against the sin powers of flesh.

"shall blow the trumpet" — The *shophar* trumpet, which in times past was used for alarm in war (Num. 10:9), and in sacred ceremonies such as the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:9). Armageddon will not only manifest the judgments of God in war against sin, but will comprise a day of national atonement for mankind in general (See notes, *Expositor: Revelation*, at Rev. 15:8).

"and shall go with whirlwinds of the south" — The divine army of the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorified followers recruited out of the judgment seat in "the south," and ascend north from Sinai (Deu. 33:1-2; Hab. 3:3-4), and thus relate to the glorified followers of the Lord. The word "south" (Heb. *teyman*, thus Teman in Hab. 3:3) comes from the root *yaman*, signifying "right hand" (the Israelite always accounted the east as the front). These are

"whirlwinds of the Right Hand" for the Commander of this army (Isa. 55:4), comes from the "right hand" of the Father (Ps. 80:17). Bro. Thomas explains: "*This sudden and unexpected attack of a hitherto unheard of power will come upon the Dragon, the Beast, the False Prophet, the Kings of the earth and of the whole habitable 'as a thief' (Rev. 16:15). The situation will be an astounding novelty in the 'balance of power.' The Christ in fulness in the Great City Babylon and none suspecting even that the Lord Jesus had individually descended from heaven! Could any surprise be more complete!*" (*Eureka*, vol. 5, p. 239). These "whirlwinds of the south," having come through the judgment seat of Christ, are made powerful by the change to spirit nature, and are enabled to execute the judgments written against the Gentile sin powers (Psa. 149:9).

VERSE 15

"Yahweh of hosts" — This title is now re-introduced here, following the use of *Adonai Yahweh* in v. 14. The "Lords" (saints) are made mighty to accomplish the divine purpose of bringing salvation to the tribes of Israel, and of executing the needed judgments against opposing Gentile powers.

"shall defend them" — The Heb. *ganan* signifies to defend by throwing a completely protective cover around and over anyone. This was the case when the Maccabees won their victories, for Daniel declares that they were "holpen with a little help" (Dan. 11:34), having the cover of divine blessing upon their labours to defend Jerusalem from the Gentile powers. How much more will this divine power be revealed when Christ and the saints exercise the power and authority over the forces of humbled, disciplined and regenerated Israel.

"and they shall devour" — Fulfilling Num. 23:24, where Israel is compared to a lion, eating of the prey and sacrificially drinking of the blood of the slain. The saints will complete the offering of mankind to Yahweh by this means, as revealed in Eze. 39:17-20.

"and subdue with sling stones" —

The A.V. margin is more correct: "subdue with stones of the slings." The R.V. has: "tread down the sling stones." The sense of the passage is that the weapons used against the divine army prove powerless (Isa. 54:17), as they did against the Maccabees formerly. The sling stones of Israel's opponents miss their mark and fall harmlessly to the ground where they are trodden contemptuously in the mire by the victoriously marching hosts.

"and they shall drink" — The rest of this verse expresses the tokens of sacrifice. In drinking wine, the warriors identify themselves with the blood shed, recognising the righteousness of such warfare. It is the answer of the ancient cry of Abel, whose "blood crieth to Yahweh from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). Armageddon is related by Ezekiel to a great national sacrifice to which the birds and beasts of heaven and earth (the nations) are invited to partake (Eze. 39:17). Those that are prepared to do so acknowledge the righteousness of Yahweh in defending His city in such fashion, by submitting themselves to the authority of the Son incorporated in the kingdom he will establish throughout the world. Those who refuse to partake of this sacrifice will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12).

"and make a noise as through wine" — To rejoice with exhilaration. The wine speaks of the poured out blood of sacrifice, which provides the basis for the rejoicing of the Redeemed.

"and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar" — The blood of sacrifices was caught in bowls and splashed upon the four horns of the altar (Exo. 24:6; Lev. 4:18). This blood represented a life dedicated to Yahweh. Figuratively this verse indicates that the victories won by Israel will cause the conquered Gentile powers to submit to Christ, dedicating their national lives to him.

There were four horns of the altar, representative of the four divisions of Israel, and thus the blood of the conquered splashed on the horns of the altar, is typical of the salvation of Israel through the victory of the Lamb over the nations.



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— Based on the notes of
Bro. H. P. Mansfield, and the
expositions of our pioneer
brethren.

THE STONES OF A CROWN.

THE CORN AND THE WINE.

THE DIVINE DELIVER OF
ISRAEL IDENTIFIED.

CAUSE & CURE OF ISRAEL'S
APOSTASY.

SHEPHERDS AND THE FLOCK.



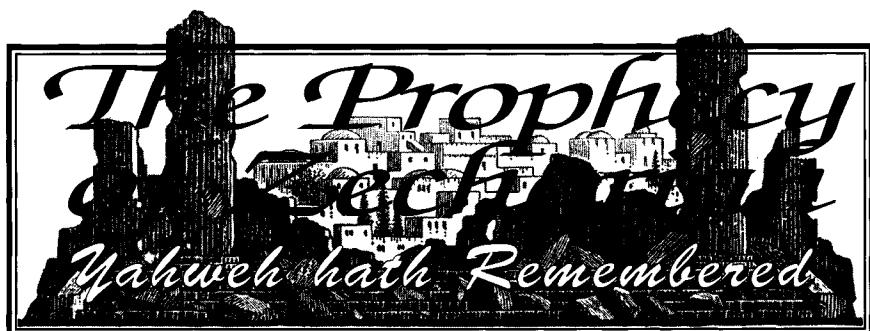
Zechariah ch. 9:16 to 11:6

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NUMBER 11



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Bro. Thomas wrote: "*The Brazen Altar, which was foursquare, had four horns of brass, one at each corner; and in sacrifice, the blood was applied to the horns by the priest's finger; and the rest was all poured out beside the bottom of the altar.*" He gives as reference, Exo. 29:12, which indicates that the blood of the animal was shed as a sin-offering. He further expounds: "*These Horns represent the same thing as the four Cherubim, the four Carpenters, the Four Living Ones... only in the Brazen State, which precedes the... Millennium. As horns of brass they 'execute the judgment written,' as a consuming fire...*" (*Eureka*, vol. 1, p. 177).

VERSE 16

"And Yahweh their God shall save them in that day" — Deity is represented in His Son and the Saints, who, having been saved themselves (ch. 9:9), now go forth to redeem Israel as the "first dominion" in all the earth (Mic. 4:8).

"as the flock of His people" — The nation of Israel will be restored to its former privileged status (see Psa. 80:1) under the Good Shepherd (Eze. 34:20-23; Psalm 100; Isa. 40:10-11).

"for they shall be as the stones of a crown" — In contrast to the enemies of Israel who are represented as sling stones trodden underfoot in the mud (v. 15). The word "crown" is *nezer* in the Hebrew, and signifies an object set apart or a dedication such as of a priest or a Nazarite. The word is used of:

[1] The golden band on the high priest's mitre ascribing *Holiness to Yahweh* (Exo. 29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9; cp. Jer. 2:3).

[2] The king's insignia of office (2Sam. 1:10; 2Kings 11:12; 2Chr. 23:11; cp. Psa. 89:39; 132:18).

[3] The Nazarite's badge of unshorn hair, the hair of consecration

Yahweh Elohim Shall Save Them!

Despite the rebellious spirit which has characterised the nation of Israel throughout their history (see Acts 7), Yahweh always remembers His covenants. Men may fail, but Yahweh does not. "Yahweh shall save them in that day;" they cannot save themselves, and this they must yet learn. Although under the dominion of Gentile powers for 2,500 years, the people of Israel have remained "prisoners of hope" (v. 12) that is, "the hope of Israel." With the coming of their Messiah in power and glory, and their humble acknowledgement of him as their deliverer and king, they will eternally benefit from his intervention on their behalf. Although their physical deliverance is essential to the fulfilling of the covenant, it is their spiritual deliverance from darkness that is of the greatest importance to Deity. With true enlightenment and submission thereto, they will become "like the stones of a crown" (v. 16); as may be worn by a king to demonstrate the glory associated with his reign. While the enemies of Yahweh will be crushed underfoot, the transformed people of Israel will be like precious stones. As "bowls, like the corners of the altar" (v. 15) they will become holy, sacrificial instruments in the service of Yahweh; not for their own purposes, but in selfless dedication to their great Messiah. As the restored natural seed of Abraham, they will demonstrate their reunion with their God: "O Yahweh, our Lord! How excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens!" (Psa. 8:1). Manifesting this disposition, Israel will become "His people, and the sheep of His pasture." With what joy will they "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise," confessing "Yahweh is good! His mercy is everlasting! His truth endureth to all generations!" (Psa. 100:3-5). It is only through an understanding of "the hope of Israel" and the Israelitish nature of the hope that God extends to perishing humanity, that the wondrous things revealed in the latter section of this chapter may be correctly understood. The coming kingdom of God on earth becomes a living reality to those who comprehend these truths, and live in earnest anticipation of the coming of the Great King. — J.U.

(Num. 6:7, 9; Jer. 7:29; Num. 6:4-5, 8, 12-13, 18-19, 21).

Thus the term implies that Israel will be elevated as the royal-priestly nation dedicated to Yahweh as were the Nazarites in the days of their vows. Nationally, Israel will rise to the status promised in Exo. 19:5-6, a status enjoyed to an even greater degree of honour and glory by the immortal saints (1Pet. 2:9), the king-priests of the millennium (Rev. 5:9-10), who lead mankind through identification with the Hope of Israel, unto redemption Gal. 3:8; Acts 3:25-26).

"lifted up as an ensign upon His land" — The R.V. has "lifted on high" or as in the margin, "glittering on high." The R.S.V. has: "They shall shine." Berkeley: "brilliant." Israel will stand out as an ensign in the Land, the purified remnant (Zech. 13:8-9), a separated, royal, priestly nation commanding the deference and admiration of all nations, drawing them to the one unifying worship of the future Age (Num. 23:9; Jer. 33:9).

Israel Sings the Praises of Their Great King — v. 17.

A great sound of adoration springs from the heart of the prophet as he contemplates the future glory. This verse is linked to the beginning of chapter 10, where Zechariah shows the connection of the joy of the harvest bearers with the divine blessing of rain, sun and life.

VERSE 17

"For how great is His goodness" —

An ascription of praise and joy. It is seen in the redemption Yahweh brings mankind individually and nationally (Rom. 11:22; Psa. 31:19; Ps. 145:7). It is hidden from most in the present circumstances in which mankind dominates his own affairs;

"and how great is His beauty" — The royal, priestly dignity, upholding the divine Majesty and Authority he will reveal (Isa. 33:17; Ps. 45:2).

"corn shall make the young men cheerful" — Grain and wine are symbolical of prosperity and truth (Deu. 33:28. Ps. 4:7. Isa. 55:1). The word "cheerful" is from the Heb. *nub*, to grow, be fruitful. The R.V. has: "flourish." It describes the wonderful difference between what is experienced today during the universal reign of wickedness and sin, and that of the future when Messiah will control all the circumstances of life.

"and new wine the maids" — Both "young men" and "maids" share together the blessings of harvest and produce, representing the spiritual blessings of both food and drink: the aspects of offerings and sacrifices. Under Messiah, Israel will flourish as never before. As v. 10 is a quotation from Psalm 72:8, this verse seems to be a reference to Psalm 72:6, 16.

The Divine Prince of Peace

CHAPTER TEN

THE DIVINE DELIVERER OF ISRAEL

This chapter illustrates what the apostle Paul expresses in Romans 11:26, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." According to the prophet's words, Israel would go through a time of spiritual drought and great stress, and is admonished to seek Yahweh, who is able to provide bountiful "rain and grass in the field" for rich pasture, and restore the nation to prosperity. Therefore the flock, which was to be scattered due to the negligence of the false shepherds, is not left without hope. The Good Shepherd is to be revealed in due time who will lead the nation to its final

restoration. Zechariah sees him regathering, restoring, and leading Israel's scattered flock from all parts of the world back to the fold which he has prepared for them. This chapter brings to attention the work of the Good Shepherd in the Age to come when the nation of Israel shall be raised from the abyss of threatened extinction to the height of glory and triumph as Yahweh's people. They will be elevated from the despised of the nations to become the "first dominion" (Mic. 4:8), a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

An Appeal for Divine Blessing — v. 1.

The prophet urges the nation to seek divine benefits in the impending harvest as the only means for their restoration. They had to seek beyond their own ability and achievements, for the blessings of the Creator. This opening verse should be linked with the last verse of chapter 9, as a response to the prophecy of the promised harvest.

VERSE 1

"Ask ye of Yahweh" — Their prayer for help should be directed to the divine Benefactor, and not to the gods of the nations (v. 2). Dependent for some time upon the political abilities of their leaders, and the skilfulness of their national negotiators, they must reject such powers, and seek for Yahweh's goodness. Former reliance on their southern neighbour have resulted in distress (Isa. 31:1; Jer. 37:7), and so it will be for all who seek to spiritual Egypt in any way (cp. Rev. 11:8).

"rain" — Only Yahweh can give this (see Jer. 14:22; Ruth 1:1; note particularly v. 6). Rain is figurative of the blessings of the Truth (see Deu. 11:13-14, 32:1-2), whilst apostasy is likened to spiritual drought (see Amos 8:11-13). The blessings of a bountiful rain (the outpouring of God's Spirit-Word) are promised in Hos. 6:1-3. Joel 2:28. Recognising their need, Israel is told to ask, or pray, for it. Such a prayer will bring a blessing to the nation, in contrast to the idolatry of v. 2 which results in sorrow. In addition to this figurative rain (the Truth) that shall be poured out upon Israel at Christ's return (Eze. 36:25-28), there will also be bountiful literal rain granted the land, even as it is promised in Isa. 30:23, causing the deserts to "blossom

as the rose" (ch. 35:1). The Hebrew word used is different from that used later in this verse. Here it is *matar*, a word conveying the fact of rain, as different from the other word rendered "rain" in this verse.

"in the time" — Everything is appropriate to the divine schedule, for rain out of season can cause damage to the harvest. The latter-day outpouring of the figurative rain will be revealed at Christ's return.

"of the latter rain" — Heb. *mal-qowsh*, which speaks of the spring rain; figurative of the outpouring of the Word of Life that will be demonstrated in the millennial time. The latter rains that fall in Israel swell out the grain and thus perfect the harvest (cp. Hos. 6:1-3). The outpouring of the Truth will do this for natural Israel when their stony heart will become flesh, pliable to the moulding hands of Yahweh (Eze. 36:26-27). This latter rain will "strengthen them" (v. 12) to do His will.

"so Yahweh shall make bright clouds" — The margin has: "lightnings." This is the Spirit unveiled in striking power, which shall be revealed through Christ and the saints. As lightning causes rain (Jer. 10:13; Ps. 135:7; Eze. 11:19), so the Spirit revealed through the glorified followers of Christ will result in "rain," the proclamation of the divine purpose in Truth.

"and give them showers of rain" — This is the blessing of the Good Shepherd (see Eze. 34:26). These showers will cause the "pasture" to grow to feed the flock (see Deu. 32:2).

"to every one grass in the field" — The verse presents a glorious image of spring, with the golden grain ripening after bountiful rains, of lush pasture in the fields

for the sheep to consume, and with widespread joy and thanksgiving in the revelation of divine goodness.

The Cause of Israel's Apostasy

— vv. 2-3.

The prophecy examines the opponents of righteousness, exposing a generation of evildoers, whose every action is antagonistic to the divine righteousness in Yahweh. But they will ultimately be brought to judgment and the upright are relieved of their influence.

VERSE 2

"For the idols" — The word in the Hebrew is *teraphim*. These were small household oracular divinities (Eze. 21:21; Jud. 17:5; Hos. 3:4), that, in some cases, were evidence of title deeds to property, or inheritance, as seems the case in regard to Rachel (cp. Gen. 31:19, 30, 34). Although *teraphim* were foreign to the pure worship of Yahweh (1Sam. 15:23; 2Kings 23:24), they are referred to repeatedly in Israel's history (e.g., Gen. 31:19, 34). Archaeology has shed light on the *teraphim*. From the site of ancient Nuzu, south-east of Nineveh, and not far from modern Kirkuk, have come the Nuzu documents, found in excavations conducted between 1925-1941. These have shown that possession of such household gods implied leadership of the family, and in the case of a married daughter the possession of them assured her husband of the right to her father's property. ("*Light from the Ancient East*," p. 55). In Israel's case, it will be revealed in the future that their trust in such *teraphim* have been in vain. Possession of *teraphim*, in any form, will not entitle them to any claim of the land of their forefathers. The right to the Land of Promise is conditional, and Israel has not lived up to these conditions and terms. In times past their claims to the Abrahamic Land has been tentative, but at Christ's coming, it will be clearly revealed that not Israel, but Yahweh is the titleholder of the Land (Lev. 25:23; 1Chr. 29:15). He shall give it as a possession to those He has found worthy of it (Acts 7:5; John 8:39; Gal. 3:29), and natural Israel

They Went Their Way as a Flock

They "went their own way" because "there was no shepherd" — no sound, courageous leadership within the ecclesia. The words of Ezekiel re-echo down to every generation: "They were scattered, because there is no [true] shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered... My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them... Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require My flock at their hand..." (Eze. 34:5-10). But, there was another reason why "they went their way as a flock." It was because the individual members of the flock did not themselves have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Truth to courageously stand aside from their weak, faithless shepherds, and make a stand for the Word. Tragically, it was a case of "like people, like priest" (Hos. 4:9). This was because "there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land..." (v. 1). How often history has revealed declension from the Truth not only because of the destructive influence of false shepherds, but because of mindless, uncaring "sheep" who are quite content to follow the lead of their faithless, rebellious shepherds (2 Tim. 4:3-4). — *J.U.*

will be resettled in the land for Abraham's sake (Lev. 26:41-42; Rom. 11:28).

"have spoken vanity" — They gave worthless, misleading, empty responses to the dupes who hearkened to them.

"and the diviners have seen a lie" — Heb. *gasam*, to distribute, i.e., to determine by lot or magical scroll; to divine. Deceivers who claimed authority to forecast, apart from Yahweh. The word signifies to cut, or divide, the idea being to cut or divide an animal victim to discover certain omens, and so forecast events. See Eze. 21:21 and compare with Isa. 44:25-26. But their "visions" were mere fabrications; lies; of no consequence whatever

(Isa. 8:19-20).

"and have told false dreams" — Led their followers astray, by painting false pictures. The false prophets in Israel were proficient in their treacherous teachings (Jer. 27:9). Jude speaks of "dreamers," as teachers in the ecclesia, who would bring their victims into error, defilement and destruction.

"they comfort in vain" — Because they promise much, and perform nothing.

"therefore they went their way as a flock" — Moved by false visions and ideas, they pursued their own course, rather than seeking Yahweh's way. But "their way" was the way to death (cp. Jer. 36:3; Eze. 33:8), and they pursued that course as sheep blindly follow their leader. They despised the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16; 18:15), and chose the broad field wherein they make their own paths and have ample room to wander.

"they were troubled" — The Heb. *anah* signifies, to be "bowed down;" thus, to be severely afflicted through the oppression and persecution of their enemies (see Eze. 34:5).

"because there was no shepherd" — The lit. Hebrew is more direct and startling (omit the italics): "because no shepherd"! There was no true shepherd able to lead the flock in a caring and godly manner (see Eze. 34:5 in contrast with v. 23 and John 10:1, 8).

VERSE 3

"Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds" — Though there were no true shepherds, those who had been appointed to that position, "sat in Moses' seat" (Mat. 23:2), abusing their positions of responsibility and destroyed the flock instead of feeding it (Eze. 34:2).

"and I punished" — The R.V. has in the future tense: "I will punish." It was the threat of impending judgment. Similarly, latter-day Israel faces the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) as a disciplinary action of divine mercy.

"the goats" — The Heb. *'attuwd* relates to he-goats (as translated in the R.V.), fully grown, and thus figurative of

the leaders of the people. See use of the word in Isa. 14:9, margin; Eze. 34:17; Jer. 50:8. The leaders of the nation were more guilty than the people, and will receive the greater punishment at Christ's coming, as he warned those of his day (Lk. 13:28).

"for Yahweh of hosts hath visited" — Yahweh had visited the nation through the instrumentality of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 27:6), and would do so again in the person of His Son, to discipline and then to bless (cp. Ruth 1:6; Lk. 1:68-75).

"His flock the house of Judah" — A tender expression of the Master Shepherd, who owns the flock and cares for its future. Yahweh is portrayed as the "Shepherd [*ra'ah*] of Israel" in Psa. 80:1. The congregation brought out of Egypt was constituted as the flock of Yahweh (Num. 27:17), and as sheep follow the voice of their shepherd, so Israel should have done similarly.

"and hath made them" — The R.V. puts this verse in the future tense, and has "will make..." The prophecy awaits the future for its fulfilment.

"as His goodly horse" — Heb. *sus howd*, the horse of His majesty. As "sheep" Judah should have followed in the path of the Shepherd; as the horse of majesty, the people were to manifest the power and authority of their glorious "Rider," Yahweh.

"in the battle" — Judah will be disciplined and regenerated, and go forth to battle against the enemies of Israel like a war horse suited for the Lord of divine glory to ride majestically to victory as Conqueror of the World. Zechariah speaks of Judah as disciplined and humbled (Zech. 13:9); as educated and cleansed from wickedness (Zech. 12:10, 13:1); as victorious over the nations (Zech. 9:13-15). Note how Christ's army will be associated with symbolical horses in his conquests against the nations as explained in *Expositor: Revelation*, on Rev. 19:11-14; see also Zech. 1:8, 6:2-8).

The Cure of Israel's Apostasy — v. 4.

The prophet now reveals the means by which victory would be achieved through Judah, in four stages.

VERSE 4

"Out of him" — Out of Judah, the subject of v. 3.

"Came forth the corner" — The R.V. has "the cornerstone," a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, the basis of Yahweh's building (Heb. 3:6; see Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20). The cornerstone is the stone which forms the corner and foundation of a building, uniting together that which would otherwise be diverse and disjointed. It set the true line and direction for the walls that were an extension of the stone which needed, therefore, to be true and square.

Christ is the support and foundation of true Israel, and will stabilise the nation in the future. The Hebrew word is *pin-nah*, elsewhere rendered "chief" (Jud. 20:2; 1Sam. 14:38 mg.), "stay" (Isa. 19:13). Christ is the chief and stay of Israel. But because Israel stumbled at the stone set by Yahweh (Rom. 9:32-33), they have been set aside until the time for their restoration arrives.



The Cornerstone

"out of him the nail" — The word *yathed* implies a stout peg upon which to display articles of value or glory (Eze. 15:3). It implies one who will consolidate and uphold the political constitution of Judah. Christ, as the chosen nail from the tribe of Judah, does and will display the glory of his Father's house (Isa. 22:23; Zech. 6:13).

"out of him the battle bow" — The One who will skilfully and successfully wage war against the enemy (Psa. 45:5 with Psa. 64:7; Rev. 19:11; Ps. 2:110, etc.).

"out of him every oppressor together" — Better rendered: "every ruler." These are the king-priests of the coming Age who will direct the affairs of mankind in the millennium (Rev. 5:9-10).

Victory in Contrast to the Defeat of Apostasy — vv. 5-7.

Thus strengthened by Yahweh, and under the direction of the Messiah, Israel and Judah are seen to triumph over their enemies.

VERSE 5

"And they shall be as mighty men"

— The men of Judah shall be as *gibborim*, a mighty army in battle (Zech. 14:14).

"which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle" — Expressive of the victorious battle against the opponents of Israel; they are described as mere dust in the streets: completely vanquished and their power destroyed.

"and they shall fight because Yahweh is with them" — The power of Yahweh is manifested through Christ and his glorified followers (see ch. 14:3). The result will be a national triumph (Deu. 32:43), which will demonstrate the power of the Spirit over flesh. For this reason Emmanuel (*El with us*) was manifested, and in his victory over sin through the power of his sacrifice, led the way for the overcoming of all opposition to the divine righteousness. In him, will the victory over the "sin of the world" be ultimately taken away (Jn. 1:29).

"and the riders on horses shall be confounded" — See margin. The riders on horses are those Gentile rulers who govern and direct the war-horse of the flesh. These shall be confounded at the might of Judah and ashamed at the defeats they will experience. No longer will Israel be despised; no longer will Judah boast in their accomplishments. The victory in the battle will reflect the glory and might of Yahweh (Mic. 7:15-16).

VERSE 6

"And I will" — Notice the constant reference in this verse to the divine determination, "I will... I will... I will... I have mercy... I am... and will hear..." These continued phrases indicate the certainty of the future victory.

"strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph" — The

two stages of restoration. The "house of Judah" relates to those Jews presently dwelling in the Land (ch. 12:7), who will be "strengthened" (i.e., elevated). Those of "Joseph" refer to the Jews in exile, who will be regathered (saved) under the hand of Elijah, and restored to the fold of Israel (Mal. 4:5).

"and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off" — In this, the covenant to David is affirmed. Yahweh declared to him: "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime" (2Sam. 7:10).

"for I am Yahweh their God" — The covenant name of God, proclaimed when He was about to save Israel from Egypt through Moses, and which, in its significance, guarantees the perpetuity of the nation. The name Yahweh signifies, "*He who will be*," and thus proclaims the future purpose of Deity. The title "God" (Heb. *Elohim*) attaches those who are His: the "mighty ones" strengthened by Yahweh to perform His will. The *Elohim* of the future are the Saints who are joined with Christ, the "mighty El" (Isa. 9:6).

"and I will hear them" — Implying Jewry's conversion, and their appeals to the throne of Grace, subsequent to their acknowledging the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus (ch. 12:10). The means are outlined in Zech. 13:1-4; Rom. 11:23; Micah 7:18-20.

VERSE 7

"And they of Ephraim" — The northern tribes, Israel scattered abroad throughout Gentile lands. While not many members of the northern kingdom returned at first from the Babylonian captivity, the prophet triumphantly speaks of the greater exodus through the work of Elijah at the coming of Christ.

"shall be like a mighty man" — Scattered Israel will have to fight their way back to the Land, demonstrating their com-

mitment to the promises, as directed by Elijah the prophet (Eze. 20:33-38; Mal. 4:5-6).

"and their heart shall rejoice as through wine" — They will be stimulated and cheered by the amazing victories they shall achieve under the guidance of Elijah (Mic. 7:15-20). They are refreshed and strengthened as with wine (ch. 9:15; Psa. 78:65-66). Their intentions are misunderstood, for as the land of Israel is then invaded by the power of the north, it will seem as though they want to return merely to join in battle against Russia in the Land. Such attempts will be resisted by the European confederacy, so that the Jewish communities throughout these areas will have to force their way out. In this they will be assisted by Adonai Yahweh, as Eze. 20:33 shows, and succeed in doing so in the face of tremendous odds.

"yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in Yahweh" — They will be converted, and the whole nation, young and older, families together, will respond to the restoration (see Eze. 20:37-38; 37:26).

The Flock Restored — vv. 8-9.

The restoration of Israel is revealed before the nations as the wonderful work of God, calling His people from the lands of their exile, to respond to His appeal.

VERSE 8

"I will hiss for them, and gather them" — The Hebrew word *sharaq* has the idea of whistling or hissing, in order to catch the attention of the flock. Thus it signifies to "pipe" for them, such as a shepherd does to gather together his flock, using a rough reed or bamboo pipe for the purpose (see Isa. 5:26). This chapter, therefore, reveals the work of the good Shepherd gathering together his flock, "piping" for them so that they come running to Him. His voice is heard in the Spirit-Word today, and will be reflected in the *Elohim* of the future Age as they go to the "four winds" to invite Yahweh's people to return home.

"For I have redeemed them" —

Following their acknowledgement of past follies, national Israel will be brought back into the covenant of Yahweh, and be elevated to become the “first dominion” in the earth (Mic. 4:8).

“and they shall increase as they have increased” — The RSV renders, “as in the past.” This increase was demonstrated in the experiences of Israel in Egypt (Exo. 1:8-22), to be repeated in the future.

VERSE 9

“And” — This verse summarises the means employed to humble and restore Israel. The One who brought them to political death to punish them, will also regather them. In that day it will be seen that the punishment was an act of mercy designed to bring home to the people the enormity of their offence, so as to reclaim them.

“I will sow them among the people” — To sow is to bury in the earth, thus speaking of the political death of Israel dispersed among the Gentiles (see 1Cor. 15:36).

“and they shall remember Me in far countries” — With his associates, Elijah will be sent out before the onset of the battle of Armageddon to proclaim to scattered Israel that Messiah has come, and that they must return to the Land to present themselves to him (Mal. 4).

“and they shall live with their children” — Implying a political resurrection, and the establishment of the nation in cantons during the millennium, so that the family line and life will be elevated and all will find fulfilment in the activities of everyday existence (Eze. 37:12-14; 48; Jer. 31:17).

“and turn again” — The Hebrew signifies “return” (as in the R.V.); i.e., a return of the nation both to the Land and to Yahweh. They shall do what Yahweh demands of all who desire His blessing and who seek for His goodness. His appeal is: “Turn ye unto Me, and I will turn unto you” (Zech. 1:3).

The Manner of the Return — vv. 10-12.

Israel will be led by Elijah and his

companions along a path through the turmoil that will envelop the world following the trauma of Armageddon. This journey will constitute the “second exodus” and reflect the course of the nation when Moses led them through the wilderness of Sinai in the past.

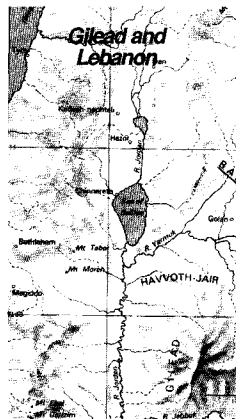
VERSE 10

“I will bring them” — The struggle of the Jews from the lands of their dispersion will be the work of Yahweh, and will reflect to His glory

“again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria” — The Jews of the dispersion will be restored from countries at all points of the compass (Deu. 30:3-4), and be gathered to enter the Land from either the north or south (Isa. 11:11, 16; 27:12-13). Accordingly, they will then pass through either the River Euphrates or the River Nile, so that they will be nationally baptised after the example of Abraham (who was led over the Euphrates (Gen. 12:1, 4), and Moses, who brought the people through the Nile (1Cor. 10:1). Both rivers are incorporated into the great covenant given to Abraham, fulfilled in the kingdom under the hand of the greater Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 15:18).

“and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon” — Gilead is northeast and Lebanon northwest of the Jordan. They are very fertile areas. Jacob entered into Gilead on his return from the area of Laban (Gen. 31:21). So, entering from the north or south, the Jews shall spread out east and west on both sides of the Jordan, occupying the area designated to the seed of Abraham (Gen. 15:18).

“and place shall not be



found for them” — They shall grow into a numerous and powerful nation, being the “first dominion” in the empire of Christ (Mic. 4:8; see Isa. 49:20).

VERSE 11

“And he” — The greater than Moses, even the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 11:15; Acts 3:22). In bringing his people back, the Lord will repeat the miracles of the Exodus.

“shall pass through the sea with affliction” — The R. V. has “of affliction.” The Septuagint has “in a strait sea.” His people will be subjected to the strictures of the path of probation, as were the tribes under the leadership of Moses. By this means the Jews will be suitably prepared to meet their Messiah, to be humbled by their ultimate acknowledgement of his personage (Zech. 12:10). It is only by tribulation and affliction that any are prepared for the future glories (Acts 14:22).

“and shall smite the waves in the sea” — They shall go through dry-shod, as in the days of Moses, thus being nationally baptised (1Cor. 10:2). As baptism is a symbol of death and burial, so the sea becomes a “sea of affliction” expressive of the trials and ordeals of life (Mic. 7:19). This sea is the Red Sea through which Israel passed under Moses in order that the spirit of Pharaoh might be overcome (Exo. 15:3-4). In the day to come, the spirit of worldliness and pride will be reduced in the redeemed people, to prepare them to occupy the land of Promise. What was never really accomplished under the hand of Moses, will be achieved in the work of his greater anti-type, the Lord Jesus.

“and all the deeps of the river shall dry up” — The river Euphrates is now identified. It was through this river that Abram crossed from Chaldee into the Land of Canaan. The waters of this river shall also be parted, to allow the Israelites who enter the land from this direction, to pass through (Isa. 11:15-16). The drying up of these rivers is expressive of the humiliation of those Gentile nations which have been guilty of opposing God’s people in the past.

“and the pride of Assyria shall be

brought down” — Assyria is used prophetically to represent the latter-day northern confederacy (Mic. 5:5-6). Its pride will be demonstrated in the imminent northern thrust against the Holy Land, but is ultimately to be reduced by the victories won by Israel returning to the Land. Thus “he [the power of the latter-day Assyrian] shall come to his end, and none shall save him” (Dan. 11:45).

“and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away” — A new order of rulers (the glorified followers of Christ) will take over the governing of the nations. Egypt, known as “the king of the south” prophetically, relates to the southern confederacy of nations, including the Anglo-American powers. Their power (sceptre) shall depart away. Egypt as a nation will be brought into subjection to Christ (Psa. 68:30-31; Isa. 19:23-25), and the type established in the days of Joseph’s elevation to the throne of Egypt, will be fulfilled in the greater King of the future Age.

VERSE 12

“And I will strengthen them in Yahweh” — The complete conversion of Israel after the flesh is achieved through their change of heart finally appreciating the goodness of Yahweh manifested through His illustrious Son. See Jer. 31:33; Eze. 36:26-27; Zech. 13:9; Hos. 2:23; 3:5; Rom. 11:26.

“and they shall walk up and down in His name” — This phrase implies journeying throughout the world as representatives of Yahweh’s “goodness and severity” (Rom. 11:22; see Zech. 1:10; 6:7). The complete conversion of Israel will be displayed throughout the world as a powerful testimony to all nations, influencing them to likewise seek the favour of the King (Jer. 33:9. Zech. 8:23). This will be accomplished for “Yahweh’s sake” (Isa. 48:11), for this “He waits” (Isa. 30:18), and in its fulfilment He will be glorified (Isa. 44:23. 46:13).

“saith Yahweh” — So concludes this remarkable prophetic chapter of the great restoration of Israel. The divine declaration confirms its fulfilment.

The Shepherds of Israel

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE REJECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND THE SCATTERING OF THE FLOCK



Zechariah Chapter 10 prophesies concerning the regathering of the flock by the Good Shepherd (see v. 8); Chapter 11 reveals why the flock was scattered before that restoration will be achieved. It commences with a figurative description of the devastation that swept away guilty Judah in AD70. Sweeping down from the north, from Lebanon (v. 1), Rome would come against Bashan and Gilead in the east, descending to the lower Jordan valley (v. 3), and onwards to Jerusalem. The prophet's words vividly describe the swift destruction of the land, the despair of the appointed shepherds in consequence, and the fear of the flock.

Condemnation is heaped upon the so-called shepherds of Judah who failed to care for the flock, in consequence of which they were cut off. The prophet then enacts the parable of the Good Shepherd (vv. 4-14), dramatises the conflict which would ensue between the Lord and the pseudo-shepherds of his day, predicts his betrayal, the scattering of the flock, the breaking of the brotherhood of Judah and Israel, the manifestation of a "foolish shepherd," and finally, the vindication of the Good Shepherd in the punishment that shall be heaped upon the "idol shepherd" who deserts and wastes the flock.

In this prophecy, Zechariah himself enacts the parable of the Good Shepherd, thus dramatising the "determinate counsel" of God with the Lord Jesus. The Master would have pondered these words, and be strengthened in his commitment to uphold the divine righteousness as a result.

The chapter also reveals three shepherds. The true shepherd (v. 4) was revealed in Zechariah as the type, and the Lord Jesus as the fulfilment. The false shepherd (v. 5) was seen in the leaders of Israel. The idol shepherd (v. 17) describes the worldly and religious Gentile powers. Thus, all mankind are brought together in the contest of the Shepherd-powers.

The Overthrow of the Jewish State in AD70 — vv. 1-3.

The drama of the Jewish distress, following their rejection of their Messiah, is set out by the prophet. He portrays the powerful forces from the north that would devastate the land, and bring the Jewish State to an end. The reason for this is attributed to the corrupt and foolish leadership that confused the flock, and led the people into their rejection of the Good Shepherd himself.

VERSE 1

"Open thy doors, O Lebanon" — Lebanon is at the northern extremity of the Land, and is here invited to open its doors to the northern invader (Rome) who was to come from that direction. Lebanon signifies *The White One*, an apt name for the tall Lebanon mountain range with its peaks covered in snow. It is used in Scripture to symbolise Israel's glory (Isa. 10:34), the crowning feature of which was the temple in Jerusalem (Luke 21:6). Both the land of

Israel and the temple are probably here referred to, so that the Romans, sweeping down from the north, destroyed the glory of Jewry when they overthrew the temple. Lebanon is addressed as the walls of a fortress, and invited to open its doors to allow the destroyer from the north access to the "glorious land" (Dan. 11:45). The mountains of Lebanon gave access to the pasture lands in the south.

"that the fire may devour thy cedars" — The cedars of Lebanon symbolise the leaders or chief ones of the nation (Isa. 37:21-24; Eze. 17:22-24). The prophecy shows that these would be overthrown by the fire of war.



VERSE 2

"Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen" — The lesser trees, representing associated nations who observe the approach of the Roman legions and their devastation of Lebanon, are invited to lament at the overthrow of the chief ones, as the fire sweeps along threatening them also.

"Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan" — In Isa. 2:13 these are used as figurative of people. Bashan is southeast of Lebanon, so that the fire of war is represented as sweeping southward to encompass the whole land — as it did when Rome invaded Judah and destroyed it in AD70. The figurative language of this verse expresses the wailing of the wind through the trees as it fans the fire of judgment. The prophet hears it howling in the branches, and feels the heat of the flames fanned by the wind and fed by the timber. It represents the fierce action of the invading Roman forces against Yahweh's Orchard.

"for the forest of the vintage is come down" — The RSV has "The thick forest has been felled!" The fire of war and judgment has swept through the forest of Judah and destroyed it. The literal Hebrew has:

Fire Devours

Fire is a biblical symbol for divine judgment and also for cleansing. In this context it relates to the former. There is probably no more chilling judgment recorded in the Law of Moses than that related to apostasy. It is the only communal crime for which total annihilation is demanded. The Law said that "If thou shalt hear in one of thy cities... certain men of Belial say... Let us go and serve other gods... Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein... and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for Yahweh thy Elohim: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again" (Deu. 13: 12-16). There was no greater communal punishment under the Law than that for apostasy. Paul states: "Our God is a consuming fire," citing Deu. 4:24 as his authority. Yahweh may "consume" in one of two ways: either in the act of accepting an agreeable sacrifice, or as an act of condemnatory judgment. When the priests were first inducted into office "a fire came out before Yahweh, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." This was an act of acceptance. A mere two verses later, "there went out fire from Yahweh, and devoured" Nadab and Abihu. This was a case of condemnation and rejection. What of those who have introduced apostate doctrines into the ecclesia, undermining the pure teaching of the Truth? Can they expect any lesser judgment than that decreed by the Law? The teaching and acceptance of apostate doctrine excludes from the kingdom. Let every Christadelphian be assured in their own mind and conscience that they fully understand the fundamental doctrines of the Truth, and that they are ready and prepared to give an adequate confession of the One True Faith to the Son of God, when they appear before the Great Judge. — *J.U.*

Howling Shepherds

Whilst chapter 10 foretold the restoration of the flock by the Great Shepherd, chapter 11 identifies the reason for the earlier scattering of the flock. The professing spiritual leaders of the nation are roundly denounced for being faithless to their God and irresponsible in their failure to care for the flock. The “shepherds” are described as “howling” because they must look upon the result of their faithlessness: the devastation that came upon the people and the land at the hands of the Romans in the final overthrow of the Jewish State in AD70. The same words of condemnation which will be applied to the spiritual leaders of the Gentiles in the day of judgment, are here applicable to those responsible for the downfall of Jewry: “Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves *in the ashes*, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel... the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape...” (Jer. 25:34-35). The scathing words which Jeremiah and Ezekiel applied to Israel’s false shepherds fit the circumstances described here (vv. 2-3): “Hearken not ye to your [false] prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish... Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith Adonai Yahweh...” (Jer. 27:9-10; Eze. 22:31). Why did the people of God go “their [own] way, rather than remain faithful to their God and His Word? Because there was “no shepherd;” those who were responsible to care for the welfare of the flock had repudiated their accountability, and had abandoned the flock to their fate. For such faithlessness Yahweh would bring judgment upon the betrayers of His Word. What of those shepherds of subsequent generations in the ecclesia, down to these present times? All are answerable to Yahweh and will face the Great Judge to give account of their stewardship over the flock of God. Let all such be sure that they understand the Truth clearly and soundly, and apply the teaching of the Word within the ecclesia, without fear or favour. — *J.U.*

“the inaccessible forest,” for it must have seemed that the nations of the Middle East could have withstood the invading forces. But such a perception proved false.

VERSE 3

“There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds” — The words in italics indicate that they have no equivalent in Hebrew. The original conveys the drama and panic of the invasion in its style: “Listen! The howling of shepherds...” The destruction spread from the north southwards along the Jordan valley, and drew the noise of battle as well as the horror of onlookers.

“for their glory is spoiled” — The figure is that of a fire sweeping the forest, destroying the tall trees, and eating up the pasture beneath. The shepherds are the spiritual leaders of the people, and in Isaiah 40:6, the people are likened to grass. All this is represented as being destroyed by the fire of warfare.

“a voice of the roaring of young lions” — Figurative of the tribes of Israel found amongst the nations of the Middle East (Eze. 19:1-2), here seen as roaring in anguish at the destruction that involves them.

“for the pride of Jordan is spoiled” — The pride, or splendor, of the upper Jordan is the lush growth of its banks. This was once the haunt of lions (1Sam. 17:36). The figurative language of the chapter represents the fire as sweeping down to consume the “glory of Jordan,” forcing the lions to vacate their haunts, and thus driving them away. The judgment of AD70 did this to the remaining tribes of Israel (the lions), for they were driven from their haunts and scattered throughout the world.

The Cause of the Calamity — vv. 4-8.

An appeal is made to the leaders of Judah to prevent the threatened calamity. They were required to care for the flock as representatives of the Great Shepherd, but instead the leaders neglected their responsibilities. So the nation would receive the results of their folly.

VERSE 4**“Thus saith Yahweh my God” —**

The following verses reveal that Zechariah was called upon to enact the parable of the Good Shepherd. Notice that he speaks of Yahweh as *“my Elohim.”* Zechariah remained faithful, though he prophesied of the unfaithful character of the chosen people. He must have enacted his assignment, by carrying with him the instruments of a shepherd, and going through the motions of all that is referred to in these verses, cutting asunder his staff (v. 10), demanding his price (v. 12), casting the money to the potter (v. 13), and so forth. If this is recognised, the significance of this prophecy will be better appreciated. His parable reveals the cause of the calamity that he predicted would come upon the people: the rejection of the Good Shepherd.

“Feed the flock of the slaughter” —

The word “feed” signifies “shepherd,” from the Hebrew *ra’ah*, to rule as a shepherd. The “flock of slaughter” are those destined for slaughter by the mighty of the land. See the use of the term in Psalm 44:22, and notice how Paul uses this figure of speech in relation to the ecclesia in Rom. 8:35-36. So Zechariah was told to shepherd or feed the flock that its rulers had accounted good only for slaughter and consumption (see Eze. 34:1-3).

VERSE 5**“Whose possessors slay them” —**

The Gentiles had become possessors of the flock of Yahweh (see Jer. 50:7), and ravaged many of the Jews as their forces dominated the Land.

“and hold themselves not guilty” —

They claimed the right to the Land they

occupied, and saw no wickedness in so treating the flock.

“and they that sell them say, Blessed be Yahweh” — The leaders of Judah who, by their folly, allowed this Gentile influence into the Land hypocritically pretended divine pleasure at their action, boasting that their apostasy was acceptable to Yahweh. The nation later endorsed this, by rejecting the Good Shepherd, and professing loyalty to the rulership of Caesar (cp. Lk. 23:2; Jn. 19:12, 15).

“for I am rich” — The leaders claimed that they benefited by delivering the nation into the hands of its oppressors. For an example of this, note words of Caiaphas in John 11:49-50.

“and their own shepherds pity them not” — The spiritual leaders of Judah had no concern for the flock as both Ezekiel (ch. 34) and the Lord (John 10:13) declared. They were motivated by self-interest and the preservation of their position of power under the hand of Rome, rather than urging the people to follow the teaching and example of the Good Shepherd.

VERSE 6

“For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Yahweh” — In fact, the people were little better than their leaders, for the nation followed them in their wickedness, and thus deserved the punishment heaped upon them. See Jer. 5:31; 2Kgs. 24:3.

“but lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour’s hand” — This speaks of factional strife and bloodshed, and these evils characterised the fall of Jerusalem in AD70, which was a divine punishment upon the guilty nation (Mat. 21:41; 22:7,11). Whilst the Romans were hammering at the walls of the city, the Jewish defenders inside were quarreling and fighting amongst themselves, and blood was daily shed by those who should have been united against the common enemy.



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MANIFESTATION OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD.

THE POOR OF THE FLOCK.

THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.

FUTURE SIEGE OF
JERUSALEM.



Zechariah ch. 11:6 to 12:7

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“and into the hand of his king” —

The Jews had rejected Jesus and claimed that Caesar was their king (John 19:15), therefore into the hands of this tyrant king, claimed as their own, they were given!

“and they” — The Roman legions under the command of Vespasian and Titus.

“shall smite the land” — As they did in one of the worst sieges in all history. The word “smite” is from the Hebrew *kitteth*, from a root signifying “to beat in pieces” as with repeated blows of a hammer. These repeated blows on the part of the iron hammer of Rome brought the Jewish State to its complete destruction in AD135, following the Bar Kokhba revolt, which was the final act of rebellion that caused the Roman power to raze the city of Jerusalem and exile the remaining people from the Land.

“and out of their hand I will not deliver them” — The absolute declaration of God that Israel had gone beyond all means of redemption, and would be committed to exile. This situation was to last 2,000 years, until the latter-days, when the merciful hand of Yahweh would again be over His people.

Zechariah Enacts the Parable of the Good Shepherd — vv. 7-14.

To emphasise the warnings of Yahweh, and to portray the means of His redemption of the flock, the prophet assumes the position of the Good Shepherd, and becomes a type of the great Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 7

“And I will feed” — The R.V. is in the present tense: “So I feed” (i.e., to shepherd, from the Hebrew *ra'ah*; see v. 4). He symbolically

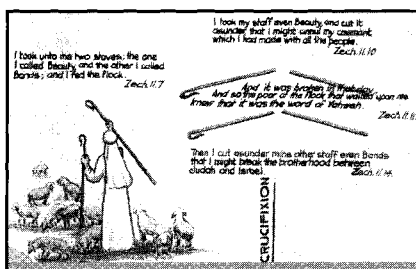


enacted the part of a shepherd to the people, doubtless appearing in their midst with the instruments of a shepherd and explaining to the curious, who may have enquired the reason for his appearance, what was meant by the performance.

“the flock of slaughter” — The flock destined for punishment, because of the apostasy that had been allowed to develop in the nation.

“even you, O poor of the flock” — Notice the marginal rendering, “Verily the poor of the flock.” Zechariah enacted the work of Christ who went to the “poor in spirit” to set before them the principles of Yahweh. For the use of this expression see Psalms 10:2, 9; 14:6; 18:27; James 2:5; Mark 12:42-43; Isaiah 66:2.

“And I took unto me two staves” — Heb. *maggel*, from an unused root meaning to germinate; thus a shoot or stick, used by a shepherd to control his flock. Shepherds used a “rod and staff,” though sometimes these were combined as one implement (Psalms 23:4). The rod was for beating off wild beasts (1 Samuel 17:34-35), and for counting the sheep (Leviticus 27:32). The staff was armed with an iron hook at the end, to pull in and hold straying sheep. Should one fall into a bog, the hook could be used to drag it out. Figuratively, the rod and staff spoke of defence and counting, and were for guidance and assistance in trouble. The prophet equipped himself with these (typical of the law of Yahweh) in order to guide the Israel-flock.



“the one I called Beauty” — Heb. *no'am*, agreeableness, thus, delight, suitableness, splendour or grace. Yahweh's grace was manifested toward Israel when He brought them out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land, but it was broken when the people rejected the Messiah (Matthew 23:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16).

“and the other I called Bands” — Heb. *chebel*, a rope, twisted, thus a noose

of cords; figuratively a company (as if tied together). Thus the name of Zechariah's staff speaks of unity (see margin) and fellowship in Israel, founded upon the things of Zion (Isa. 25:7; Jer. 3:17-18). But true unity depends upon a common understanding, and a mutual sympathy. Because Israel rejected His righteousness and the Shepherd He sent to them, there is no hope of unity for natural Israel until Jerusalem is restored (Eze. 37:16-22).

"and I fed the flock" — The prophet doubtless gathered around him those who were interested and expounded to them the prophecy that had been revealed unto him. In so doing, Zechariah typically fed them, and this prophecy will be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus who manifested Yahweh's power when he fed the 5,000 who followed him (Mk. 6:44), and the 4,000 in the desert (Mk. 8:9). In such actions, he demonstrated that he could provide "living water" (Jn. 4:14), and spiritual "meat" (v. 32), and ultimately sustain his true flock with immortality.

VERSE 8

"Three shepherds also I cut off" — Who these were typically as far as Zechariah is concerned, is not revealed. Perhaps his enactment of this prophecy brought Zechariah into verbal conflict with some of the appointed "shepherds" (leaders) of the nation. Later, the Lord Jesus disputed the authority of the leaders of his day, and the three shepherds whom the Lord "cut off" would relate to the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes, the pseudo-shepherds of Judah. The Hebrew *khakad* rendered "cut off," signifies either to destroy or to disavow, and probably the latter idea is expressed here.

"in one month" — The idea is of a short period of time. The closing weeks of the Lord's ministry witnessed an increasing hostility between him and the so-called shepherds. His indictment of them became more public and outspoken until they could bear it no longer and clamored for his crucifixion.

"and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me" — Thus is

The Poor of the Flock

Though the people are usually as culpable as their leaders, in the case of apostasy within the ecclesia, it is generally "the poor of the flock" who suffer most. Here, they were not even "pitied" by their shepherds who were too busy looking after their own interests. Their leaders had no more concern for the "flock" than did their Gentile oppressors; hence they became a "flock" of "the slaughter." Here, indeed, was a picture in complete contrast to that presented by the prophets concerning the Age of Messiah's reign, when Christ will "gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith Yahweh... Behold! Adonai Yahweh will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him... He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young..." (Jer. 23:3-4; Isa. 40:10-11). The return of the Lord Jesus Christ — the One whom they so utterly rejected, continuing in that vein to this very day — represents the only hope for the survival and regeneration of the nation; yet, they know it not. — *J.U.*

expressed the mutual antagonism that existed between the Lord and the false shepherds of his day during the closing weeks of his ministry. The word "loathed" (Heb. *qatsar*, to dock off, i.e., to curtail) signifies to "become impatient," and the impatience of the Lord erupted into the open rebuke and forthright denunciation of the leaders that is recorded in Matthew ch. 23. Publicly he indicted them for the folly of their ways, until they seethed with anger and indignation against him.

Addendum to Chapter 11

In vv. 7, 11, "the poor of the flock" are so described if the A.V. and the R.V. are followed. However, the Companion Bible, Rotherham, and the RSV, following the Septuagint, join two Hebrew words together to form one, and make the word the "sheep-merchants," linking it with the word "Canaanite" in ch. 14:21.

In our notes in that chapter, we identify the Canaanite with the spiritual merchants who have desecrated the things of Yahweh, and a similar usage of the word would be appropriate in the chapter before us. Thus Christ, as the good shepherd, ministered to the "flock destined to slaughter" in the face of the merchants (the spiritual merchants) who were only too ready to "sell" the flock that they might be made rich. In verse 11 they are represented as "watching" him, as he went about his shepherd duties, and verse 12 would be addressed to them.

When we come to Zech. 14:21, however, the statement is made that "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts." The Canaanite was there when the Lord visited it during his ministry on earth, for the word "Canaanite" signifies a trader, and is frequently used in the Bible for the spiritual merchants who are an abomination in the sight of Yahweh (Rev. 18:11-12). If the word "Canaanite" or "merchant" is adopted in Chapter 11, the prophecy teaches that whereas the Lord had to minister in the sight of these spiritual merchants at his first advent, and, indeed, found that they had converted the House of Yahweh into a den of thieves (Mark 11:17), they will not be tolerated at his second coming, when the glorious House of Prayer for all nations shall be established. The Canaanite will no longer be permitted either in the House of Yahweh, or outside of it, for his existence, as a spiritual merchant will cease (Zech. 13:3-5).

Thus the alternative rendering is very attractive, but there are one or two features that mitigate against it.

First of all, the reading is said to be doubtful, and only possible by manipulation of the Hebrew text. And even granted that, there remain difficulties. According to this rendition, the Lord, as the good shepherd, tended the flock *for* the sheep-merchants," which was hardly the case, and later on (v. 11) those same "sheep-merchants" or Canaanites, are said to "know" that it was the word of Yahweh. Now this was recognised by the "poor of the flock," but was it recognised by the shepherds and spiritual merchants of Christ's day? The Revised Version renders: "thus the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me knew that it was the word of Yahweh."

This, indeed, was the astounding revelation that came to the "poor of the flock." The death and resurrection of the Lord brought home to them as never before the truth of what he had proclaimed. One almost would believe that the Lord had Zechariah 11:11 in mind when he told his disciples: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

Both renditions are susceptible of remarkable and beautiful interpretations, but that presented in the A.V. and R.V. seems to highlight more completely the different characteristics of the groups involved: the flock, the buyers, the sellers, the false shepherds, the good shepherd, and the "poor of the flock" who (v. 11), alone came to know that the things happening before their eyes were the fulfilment of the word of Yahweh in truth.

VERSE 9

“Then said I” — Zechariah is still enacting the part of the good shepherd, and apparently came into conflict with some of the leaders of his day. The fulfilment of the parable is found in the words and actions of the Lord Jesus.

“I will not feed you” — Jewry had its opportunity, and the prophet had set before the people the principles and actions required. The nation was rejected when it did not respond; it had turned from the Shepherd, and the Shepherd could do nothing more for it (cp. 1Sam. 15:26).

“that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off” — Israel was cast off as a nation. Both death and captivity (“cut off”) became the lot of the people. The nation would go into exile, and its political life cease.

“and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another” — In the siege of AD70, famine and want were so much in evidence that this literally took place, as Moses had predicted (Deu. 28:53) and Josephus recorded. In his *History of the Jews* he relates how, in their extreme privation and distress, mothers ate their babies in the siege, so terrible was the want of food. Intestinal feuds filled the city with bloodshed, and added to the horrors of the famine.

VERSE 10

“And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder” — In a desperate and dramatic action, the prophet broke the staff, indicating that grace (the significance of the name; see v. 7) would be cut off from the nation, for it had rejected God.

“that I might break My covenant” — Set aside, or annul it (Roth.). The divine grace had ensured the protection of the nation from Gentile oppressors, but now that restraint would be removed, and Gentiles allowed to overthrow Jewry (see Mat. 22:7). Yahweh had covenanted with the Gentiles to prevent the nations from going beyond their allowed position in the disciplining of His people, but “they helped forward the affliction” (ch. 1:15), by going beyond what Yahweh desired of them.

“which I had made with all the peo-

ple” — Heb. *hammim*, peoples, in the plural, a term reserved for Gentiles. The covenant with the Gentiles was to restrain them from oppressing Israel, but with the breaking of the staff Beauty, or Grace, this was annulled, and the withholding hand of Yahweh was withdrawn.

VERSE 11

“And it was broken in that day” — i.e., when the staff was cut asunder by Zechariah as a demonstration of the divine disfavour toward his people. As the staff represented divine grace, which was personified in the Lord Jesus, the breaking of the staff symbolised the crucifixion of the Lord by the Jews and Romans. Having thus repudiated the Good Shepherd, grace was no longer available for the nation. They had broken His instrument to help, and left themselves open to divine vengeance.

“so that the poor of the flock that waited upon Me” — This defines the type of the humble who rested in the protection of their God, and who were fed (v. 7) and so helped in the time of trouble. The phrase “waited upon Me” has the significance of “that gave heed unto Me.” The punishment inflicted upon Israel resulted in a small remnant, recognising the hand of Yahweh, who paid respect to His Word (see Mal. 3:16). Though the apostles of the Lord Jesus originally doubted his resurrection (Mark 16), their humility of spirit gave them a renewed understanding, so that they became vehement in upholding Yahweh’s Word, and “waited” upon Him (see Acts 4:13; 5:29).

“knew that it was the word of Yahweh” — The remarkable events associated with the death of the Lord, and his subsequent resurrection revealed beyond all doubt that his crucifixion was appointed of God (see John 19:35-40; Acts 2:23).

VERSE 12

“And I said unto them” — Zechariah is still enacting the parable and providing a type of the work of Christ. His prophecy has antagonised certain of his contemporaries, particularly the leaders of the people, and apparently they rejected the impli-

cations of his message, so now he demands his price for bearing the message to them.

"If ye think good, give me my price"

— He emphasised that he was no hireling! He was not a false shepherd, destroying the flock, or using it for his own benefit. He was a true shepherd, and had revealed the facts of the matter to the nation. For this, he should have been paid for his work as shepherd.

"and if not, forbear" — There is a rebuff in this statement, as though the shepherd is indignant that he should be doubted. He is aware of their ingratitude and contempt, and puts a challenge to them. In similar fashion the Lord Jesus asked his contemporaries: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (Jn. 8:46-47).

"So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" — This was more grossly insulting than no pay at all. It was the price of a slave gored by an ox (Exo. 21:32), and was the price paid by the priests to Judas to betray the Lord (Mat. 27:3). Though grossly insulting and contemptuous of the labours of both the prophet and the Lord, it was appropriate to the circumstances, for both acted in the capacity of a slave to Yahweh. Christ is Yahweh's slave to perform His work (Isa. 42:1), and he was gored by the Israel ox, in their antagonism against him and his words. So he declared through the prophetic words: "Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round..." (Psalm 22:12). They gored him when they crucified him.

VERSE 13

"And Yahweh said unto me, Cast it unto the potter" — The ellipsis elaborates the meaning: "Cast it down that it might go unto the potter." This addition is indicated by the subsequent action of the prophet: "I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of Yahweh." He cast them down in the temple that the potter might have them, thus anticipating

The Wise Shall Understand

Only the godly minority realised the significance of the events that were transpiring before them. It has ever been so. "The wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). The word rendered "wise" is the same as occurs in v. 3, and means "the circumspect, intelligent" ones. In other words, those who have their minds upon the Scriptures of Truth; reading, searching, meditating. They use their intellect to correctly and wisely conduct the activities and affairs of their lives, directing their thoughts and actions in harmony with the things of the Spirit. Those whose attention was upon the voice of Yahweh, as revealed through the prophets, could understand the signs of the times. The Lord's warning was not lost on them: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand)... when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh..." (Mat. 24:15; Luke 21:20). The little flock who hearkened to the words of the prophets and the warning of the Lord Jesus, fled to Pella as the stormclouds of judgment hovered over the doomed city. The rest remained blinded by their own ignorance or disinterest, and most suffered a dreadful and fearful fate. There is, in the circumstances described in these verses, a sober warning for the saints of this present generation. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh..." (Mat. 25:12).

— J.U.

the very action of Judas in Mat. 27:3-10. Notice that Matthew attributes the prophecy to Jeremiah, not to Zechariah: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet..." Matthew's words are doubtless literally true. He was quoting a saying of Jeremiah not recorded in his prophecy but retained in memory by

the Jews as an unwritten prophecy. This was not unusual. Jude quotes the sayings of Enoch in vv. 14-15 of his epistle, that are not recorded elsewhere, and in Acts 20:35 Paul quotes a saying of the Lord Jesus that is not recorded in any of the Gospels. Internal evidence indicates that Zechariah was greatly influenced by the writings of Jeremiah, and perhaps this "saying" of the earlier prophet is incorporated in the writings of Zechariah. It is suggested that the words of Jer. 19 might well be the basis for this prophecy. In vv. 1-2, 11, the incident typically foreshadowed the nation's spiritual suicide illustrated by Judas' fate (Acts 1:16-19). The "east gate" in Jer. 19:2 is translated as "potsherd gate" in the RSV. To the Jews it became known as the "potter's field," bought by Judas and which became the place of his suicide. It was situated above the rubbish dump of Jerusalem (*Gehenna*) where the potter's sherds from the city workshops were thrown.

"a goodly price that I was prised at of them" — The prophet is using the language of irony before flinging the money down in the House of Yahweh. The people despised his faithfulness, and contemptuously ignored his services.



The Breaking of "Beauty" and "Bands"

The final disintegration of the kingdom of Judah in the days of Zedekiah was the inevitable result of Israel's countless crimes against Yahweh and His Word. However, some 600 years later their ultimate act of infamy and betrayal was committed when they repudiated God's Son and resolutely demanded and obtained his death. Although Jews existed in the land which, at that time was nothing more than a Roman province, their habitation in the land promised to their fathers came to a horrific and ignominious end at the hands of the Romans. These were "the days of vengeance" (Lk. 21:22). The Roman siege of Jerusalem was one of the great horrors of history. All that had been foretold in Scripture fell upon the Jews. "Beauty" and "Bands" were broken. "Beauty," which represented the grace of God, and "Bands," which symbolised fellowship with Deity, had now lost all meaning in the relationship between Yahweh and His people. Through their ignorance and rebellious spirit they had cut themselves off from God. Their city was destroyed. Their temple was burned to the ground. They were exiled from the land. They were scattered abroad among the nations. What a profound lesson is to be learned from the breaking asunder of Beauty and Bands. It is necessary to constantly serve Yahweh in a spirit of humble submission, that we might be recipients of His grace, and that we might eventually attain to a complete state of fellowship with Him. To disregard, or to treat with casual indifference, our obligations and responsibilities in regard to our service to Him, is to lose sight of, and perhaps deny completely, the incalculable wonder of that which Yahweh offers to those whom He calls to be His saints: *grace and fellowship.*

— J.U.

“And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of Yahweh” — To the very end, Zechariah fulfilled his commitment, and obeyed the instruction of his God; as did his greater counterpart, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his words on the stake: “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30).

VERSE 14

“Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands” — The prophet publicly performed the act to underline the significance of his prophecy. Bands signifies unity (see v. 7), and no longer was unity appropriate to a nation that had disregarded their responsibilities. Both grace (Beauty) and fellowship (Bands) were denied the nation when the prophecy enacted by Zechariah was fulfilled in the days of the Lord Jesus.

“that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel” — The unity of the nation and its fellowship with Yahweh were destroyed by its rejection and crucifixion of the Good Shepherd. The nation was completely broken up as a result and scattered among the Gentiles, and the semblance of unity that once existed, and the temple which was the symbol to Israel of unity with God were completely overthrown.

The Worthless Shepherd — vv. 15-17.

A further element is now introduced to the prophecy, for following the destruction of the nation of Israel, and the desolation of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem, another shepherd-power is revealed. The prophecy thus sweeps down the centuries to indicate the sad condition of the people of God throughout Gentile times.

VERSE 15

“And Yahweh said unto me” — Zechariah now enacts a further parable as other factors are revealed.

“Take unto thee the instruments” — Zechariah was to repeat his previous action (v. 7) and play the part of a shepherd, but this time it was quite different from the former; he now reveals the appearance of a foolish shepherd.

“of a foolish shepherd” — The word “foolish” in Hebrew is *‘eviliy*, which signifies wicked, silly, or impious. This foolish shepherd had all the appearance and claims of the good shepherd, but was a deceiver, and is fulfilled in the false prophet of Rev. 16:13, the “wicked one” of 2Thes. 2:3-8.

VERSE 16

“For lo, I will raise up” — God permitted the development of the Roman apostasy in order to test and strengthen His true servants (2Thes. 2:11; 1Cor. 11:19; Jn. 10:4-5; Rev. 13:5-8). What God permits He is said to do (see Rom. 4:17).

“a shepherd in the land” — The Papacy, whose development stemmed from the spirit of Judaism in the early ecclesias, and whose power remained throughout the centuries against the true brethren and sisters of faith.

“which shall not visit those that be cut off” — He will not help those who are driven away from the flock and are in danger of wild beasts. He will not perform the functions of a good shepherd though he might claim to be such and have all the appearance of such. Thus, he is a hireling (Job 7:2; Jn. 10:12-13), working for wages and not for honour, as those of 2Pet. 2:1.

“neither shall seek the young ones” — The particular responsibility of the shepherd is to care for the lambs (cp. Jn. 21:15). However, the word “young” can also apply to those who are scattered, as in the parable of Mat. 18:12-13.

“nor heal that that is broken” — Those with limbs broken, or bruised. The true shepherd cared for such (Isa. 42:3; Lk. 4:18).

“nor feed that that standeth still” — Those that are in need of sustenance and help. The hireling cares only for his own benefit, and not that of his flock.

“but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces” — So rapacious will this hireling be that he shall consume everything that comes his way, leaving nothing remaining. The RSV renders: “tearing off even their hooves.” Thus the complete destruction of their victims (Mat. 23:27-29).

VERSE 17

“Woe” — The doom of this system is announced not only by Zechariah, but by Paul (2Thes. 2:8), and by the Revelator (chs. 17, 18).

“to the idol shepherd” — The word “idol” in Hebrew is *‘eliyl* which signifies “good for nothing,” “worthless,” and is so rendered by the R.V. The shepherd is worthless, like the idols Rome worships (see Isa. 44:10). Job spoke of “physicians of no value” (ch. 13:4); that is without any ability to assist, to heal or to guide.

“that leaveth the flock” — Ignoring his responsibilities, and putting the flock in danger of the enemy, as the Lord pointed out to his disciples (Jn. 10:12).

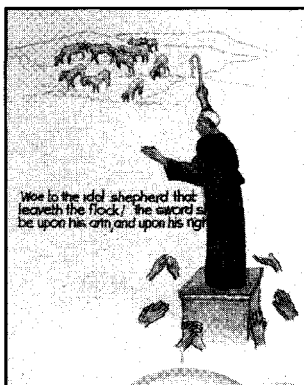
“the sword shall be upon his arm” — The sword will be wielded by the saints (Psa. 149:6-9; Rev. 19:15) against the worthless shepherd, and cutting off his arm they shall leave him powerless to fight. The arm of Rome

is its secular power which shall be completely overthrown by the conquests of the saints.

“and upon his right eye” — The “right eye” of Rome is its ecclesiastical power, known as the Holy See, which secretly examines the events in society, and reports them to the Papacy. This influence is to be utterly darkened, so that Roman Catholicism in both its secular and ecclesiastical departments will be completely overthrown.

“his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened”

— The arm that ought to have defended the flock shall be withered, and the eye that should have watched for their safety shall be blinded. With the foolish shepherd thus rendered powerless and blind, the Jews will be released from the perversion of Judaism, and the Gentiles from the evil of Catholicism and be converted to Christ.



Israel to seek the Good Shepherd

CHAPTER 12

THE COMING DAY OF YAHWEH

Chapter 12 commences a new prophecy that continues on to the end of the book of Zechariah. The theme of this long, extended prophecy is the Coming Day of Yahweh; a Day when Yahweh will be vindicated by the outpouring of certain and necessary judgments (Eze. 39:8; Isa. 2:10-22; Isa. 13:1-6; Zeph. 1:7). The Day of Yahweh does not refer to the return of Christ to his saints, but speaks primarily of His judgments against an evil world, executed by His hosts. There have been similar Days in the past (Isa. 13:1-6; Zeph. 1:7, and such as AD70, when the king's army was dispatched against guilty Judah, Mat. 22:7), as there will be in the future.

Notice the significant repetition of the phrase “In that day,” contained in this section of Zechariah's prophecy: Chapters 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:4, 6,

8, 9, 13, 20, 21. *For this Day, Yahweh “waits.” Isaiah declares: “Therefore will Yahweh wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you; for Yahweh is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for Him” (Isa. 30:18). In that Day, also, He shall repair the breach made when Jewry rejected the Good Shepherd, and when the staves Beauty (Grace) and Bands (Unity) were severed. In that Day, also, Israel will learn that everything that has been done has been for the ultimate good of the nation — even its punishment. Ezekiel 14:22-23 declares: “Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem ... and they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith Adonai Yahweh.”*

As is appropriate, in these closing chapters of Zechariah’s prophecy which deal with that Day, Yahweh is mentioned some 30 times, Jerusalem some 22 times, and the nations some 13 times. It is emphatically His Day. As He will dominate events, so His Name dominates the prophecy; it is the Day when Jerusalem will be elevated to glory, thus constant reference is made to it; and it is the time when the nations will at last be humbled under His power, so they too are brought into the picture.

That Day will soon be revealed in the earth. It will be the time when the followers of the Lord will be glorified, so that every care should be taken in studying the wonderful events then to take place in the earth.

The Authoritative Character of the Message — v. 1.

The prophet commences a further prophecy setting forth the divine purpose of Yahweh with Israel by which the nation is reminded of the great Creator’s work of salvation.

VERSE 1

“The burden” — Heb. *massah*, to lift up that which is heavy. To lift up the hand in threatening aspect or a message, with weighty warnings, judgments or sometimes promises (cp. Isa. 15:1; 17:1; Zech. 9:1).

“of the word of Yahweh for Israel, saith Yahweh” — This dependable Word inevitably accomplishes the purpose for which Yahweh declares it (Isa. 55:11). Thus the divine purpose concerning Israel is guaranteed fulfilment.

“which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth” — A common form of introduction (Isa.

44:24-28; 42:5-6; Dan. 4:35; Amos 4:11-13), indicating that as Creator, Yahweh has the power to perform His purpose. His omnipotence, revealed in natural creation, demonstrates His ability to accomplish the redemption of Israel (Psa. 147:1-5; Jer. 33:20-26). Heavens and earth are frequently used in Scripture to symbolise or represent political orders on earth. The “heavens” speak of the administration and government authorities; the “earth” refers to the society of the ruled. The time is coming when the political “heaven” and social “earth” will be as much Yahweh’s creation as the literal heaven above and earth beneath (Psa. 19). Then, the political heavens and earth will reflect the glory of God as the literal heavens and earth did at the epoch of creation. Isaiah declares that God did not create the earth in vain, but that He has a purpose with creation (Isa. 45:18; Num. 14:21).

“and formeth the spirit of man within him” — Hebrew for “spirit” is

The Spirit of Man Within Him — v. 1

It is this *ruach*, or instrumentally formative power, together with the *neshemeh* or breath, which keeps them all from perishing, or returning to the dust. Thus, “if God set His heart against man, He will withdraw to Himself *ruachu veneshemetu*, i.e., *His spirit and His breath*; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust” (Job 34:14). In another place, “by the *neshemet el*, or *breath of God*, frost is given” (Job 37:10). Speaking of reptiles and beasts, David saith, “Thou withdrawest *ruachem*, i.e., *their spirit* — they die; and to their dust they return. Thou sendest forth *ruhech*, i.e., *Thy spirit* — they are created” (Psa. 104:30). And again, “whither shall I fly, *meruhech*, from Thy spirit” (Psa. 139:7).

From these testimonies it is manifest, that the *ruach* or spirit is all pervading. It is in heaven, in sheol, or the dust of the deepest hollow, in the uttermost depths of the sea, in the darkness, in the light, and in all things animate, and without life. It is an *universal* principle in the broadest, or rather, in an illimitable sense. It is the substratum of all motion, whether manifested in the diurnal and ellipsoidal revolutions of the planets, in the flux and reflux of the sea, in the storms and tempests of the expanse, or in the organism of reptiles, cattle, beasts, fish, fowls, vegetables, or men. The atmosphere expanse is charged with it; but it is not the air: plants and animals of all species breathe it; but it is not their breath: yet without it, though filled with air, they would die.

The atmosphere, which extends some forty-five miles in altitude, and encircles the globe, is styled the expanse, by Moses; and the breath of God, in Job. It is a compound body, consisting when pure of nitrogen and oxygen, in the proportion of 79 of the former to 21 of the latter, in 100 parts. These are considered as simple bodies, because they have not yet been decomposed; though it is probable they have a base, which may be the *ruach*. This may exist free or combined with the elementary constituents of the *neshemeh*. Uncombined, it is that wonderful fluid, whose explosions are heard in the thunder, whose fiery bolts overthrow the loftiest towers, and rive the sturdy monarch of the woods; and in less intensity gives polarity to light, the needle, and the brain. These three together, the oxygen, nitrogen, and electricity, constitute “*the breath*” and “*spirit*” of the lives of all God’s living souls.

Thus, from the centre of the earth, and extending throughout all space in every direction, is the *Ruach Elohim*, the existence of which is demonstrable from the phenomena of the natural system of things. It penetrates where the *neshemet el*, or atmospheric air, cannot. When speaking, however, of the motivity and sustentation of organized dust, or souls, they are co-existent within them. In this case, the *ruach Elohim* becomes the *ruach chayim*, or “spirit of lives;” and the *neshemet el*, the *neshemet chayim*, or “breath of lives;” and both combined in the elaboration and support of life, the *neshemet ruach chayim*, or “breath of the spirit of lives.” Living creatures, or souls, are not animated, as physiologists and speculative “divines” erroneously imagine, by “*a vital principle*,” capable of disembodied existence as the ghost of a man, or the transmigrating spectres of other animal species; — ghostly things, the laws and functions of which in the animal economy physiologists are unable to discover; and theologians are non-plussed to prove the existence of from the word of God. On the contrary, “*souls*” are “*made living*” by the coetaneous operation of the *ruach chayim* and the *neshemet chayim* upon their organized tissues according to certain fixed laws.

— *Elpis Israel*, pp. 34-35.

A Cup of Trembling and a Burdensome Stone

Since the proclamation of the Jewish State in 1948, the eyes of the nations have never strayed far from the city of Jerusalem. After the Jews seized control of the Old City on June 8, 1967, the intensity of world attention focussed even more so upon this ancient city. The "cup" is a familiar symbol in Scripture to represent the wrath of Yahweh (Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 13:13; 25:15-28; 51:7; Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 18:6). The "wickedness" of the nations is "great" (Joel 3:13), and will be revealed as such in the day when Yahweh's "fury" will be unleashed against them as they attempt to take hold of Jerusalem as they would a cup (Eze. 38:18; Zech. 14:2). In their endeavour to destroy Jerusalem and its people, the nations will "tremble" ("reel," Gesenius) in hopeless terror and disarray as the wrath of Yahweh, manifested in Christ and his immortalised brethren, descends upon them. When the metaphor changes from "a cup of trembling" to "a burdensome stone" the meaning is that the nations who come against Yahweh's city will display a test of strength, in that they will feel confident in being able to rid the Middle East of the pestilent Jew once and for all. But the task will prove beyond them when they find themselves in a contest against divine power. Their confidence will turn to horror. There will be no escape for them. "I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone... Then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle..." (Eze. 38:22; Zech. 14:3). All who love Yahweh and strive to serve Him, "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," knowing that "they shall prosper" who see, with the eye of faith, Yahweh's coming victory over the nations, when "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh" (Psa. 122:6; Num. 14:21; Psa. 72:19). — *J.U.*

ruach. The spirit of God is all-pervading, the sustaining power of the universe (Psa. 139:7), and without it man could not live on earth (Job 34:14). This spirit is here called the "spirit of man" because it is loaned to man for the duration of his life (Ecc. 12:7; Job 37:10; Psa. 104:30). This spirit is as necessary to life as is the breath of life and the blood that courses through the veins of man. It is the cohesive force of all creation, and is thus styled as being "within man."

The Future Siege of Jerusalem

— vv. 2-4.

The prophet portrays the tremendous drama that envelopes the city of Jerusalem, as the Gentile powers gather around her like eagles descending upon the prey. As a result of their action, the city faces a terrible crisis, a siege of outstanding proportions.

VERSE 2

"Behold" — An introductory exclamation to draw attention to the remarkable circumstances of the vision presented.

"I will make" — It would be a divine work, representing a time of judgment against the city that rejected Yahweh's appointed Redeemer. It is Yahweh that proposes (Isa. 45:18).

"Jerusalem a cup of trembling" — See margin. The Septuagint translates this phrase as "a shaking threshold." The word "cup" is from the Heb. *cuph*, which is translated "threshold" in Eze. 40:6, and elsewhere rendered "bason," "bowl," etc. It is a symbol of Yahweh's presence in holy power (Isa. 6:4) and of the manifestation of His judgment (Amos 9:1). Thus Jerusalem will be the "threshold" to world dominion desired by the nations, a "cup" which will be given them in the circumstances of the last days. The cup was one of poison or of slumber. Criminals were given a cup of mixed wine to dull their senses before execution (for which reason Jesus rejected the cup offered him on the cross: Mat. 27:33-34). Jerusalem will become such a cup to be offered to the Gentile nations gathered

around the city. The nations will be hopelessly intoxicated with the thought of the prize as they look upon the possession of the Holy Land for their own benefit. This will encourage them to drink the cup of doom (Jer. 25:27-29; Psa. 75:8).

“unto all the people round about” — This does not relate to AD70 when Rome only besieged the city; it refers to the future siege of Jerusalem when all nations will be gathered against it (Zech. 14:1-2).

“when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem” — The R.V. renders this: “And upon Judah shall it be in the siege against...” The nations will be intoxicated with madness for possession of Jerusalem, and set to destroy the Jews in the Land. Thus the prophet predicted that Judah would be re-established nationally in the Land in the last days, and would be in dire straits because of her enemies, implying that a spirit of anti-Semitism will dominate the latter-day invaders (Eze. 37:11-13; 38:10-12; Jer. 30:5-8; Deu. 4:30 — R.V.).

VERSE 3

“And in that day” — This phrase reoccurs in chs 12-14. It highlights the “Day of Yahweh” (Isa. 2:12; Eze. 30:3; Joel 2:1, etc.) as a day of divine judgment, leading to the introduction of the kingdom of God on earth (see its use in Zech. 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, etc.).

“will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people” — A stone so weighty that the combined efforts of all flesh to lift it only results in it falling upon and crushing those who struggle against it. Already the nations have found the Jewish problem is beyond man’s ability to solve. It has given rise to the increasing threat of terrorism and suicide attacks in recent times.

“all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” — No endeavours or skills of political negotiators will overcome the insurmountable problem of the existence of Israel, working against the divine purpose. Those who attempt to solve the issue, only

find themselves discomfited in the attempt.

VERSE 4

“In that day, saith Yahweh, I will smite every horse with astonishment” — The Hebrew for “astonishment” (*timmahown*) signifies “panic; consternation,” whilst the horse symbolises the war-machine, the armies of the invaders. Alarm and dismay will overcome them as they endeavour to grapple with the crisis surrounding Jerusalem (see Eze. 38:20-21; Zech 14:13).

“and his rider with madness” — The political leaders and defence forces will be unsuccessful in the combat for the Middle East. The word “madness” (Heb. *zshigga’own*), indicates complete insanity. In attempting to grapple with the escalating Middle East conflicts, the nations will suffer great distress.

“and I will open Mine eyes upon the house of Judah” — Yahweh will look with favour upon His people, to accomplish their restoration, as He has promised. This restoration commences with Judah, represented in the Jewish people who occupy the Land of Israel in the latter days.

“and will smite every horse of the people” — Plural, “peoples,” i.e., the Gentiles. See note ch. 11:10.

“with blindness” — Blind to the divine purpose and ignorant of the hand of Providence in international affairs, they will blunder into irreparable disaster (cp. Eph. 4:18). See also Isa. 30:28; Mic. 4:12.

Judah Rallies Against the Enemy — Vv. 5-6.

The appearance of the great King of Israel, introduced in ch. 9:9, occasions the revival of the nation to become the conquering army against the oppressing Gentile powers.

VERSE 5

“And the governors of Judah” — R.V. has “chieftains,” from the Hebrew *‘alluwph*, also signifies a bullock, as the leading animal in the field. The phrase identifies the leaders of Judah outside of

the besieged city of Jerusalem which will be under the dominion of the Russian Gog (Dan. 11:45).

“shall say in their heart” — With deep conviction (Mat. 12:34), as they witness the amazing overthrow of Gog and its confederate powers (Zech. 14:3-4), and will recognise this as divine intervention (see Zeph. 3:16-17).

“The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in Yahweh of hosts their God” — The margin represents the voice of the governors as declaring: “There is strength to me and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Yahweh of hosts.” The manifestation of divine judgment against the warring hosts outside of Jerusalem will impress all Jews in the Land of the reality of the God of Israel. Whilst the Gentiles are struck with blindness (v. 4), Jewish eyes will be opened to the Truth. They will see the manifestation of Yahweh of hosts (*Tzvaoth*, armies) in the power of Christ and the saints (Rev. 19:14). The divine Name and titles signify: “He who shall be [*Yahweh*] the gathered [*hosts*] of the mighty ones [*Elohim*] of Israel: the multitudinous Christ who will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4), and reveal the divine victory over the flesh.

VERSE 6

“In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood” — Note the introductory phrase (see v. 3). The Jewish forces in the Land will be organised by the Saints to complete the destruction of Gog after the initial judgment at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase “hearth of fire” appears in the R.V. as a “pan of fire,” thus a caldron into which the nations will be placed. Judah shall fight at Jerusalem, destroying the remnant of the invading army as a pan of fire consumes the wood. Previously, the Gentiles had put Judah in the caldron of destruction (Eze. 11:3, 7, 11), but now they experience the fiery judgments of Israel’s God against them.

“and like a torch of fire in a sheaf” — So rapidly will the fire of divine judgment burn through the nations.

“and they shall devour” — Victory will come to the armies of Zion as they pursue their enemies (ch. 9:15; 14:14).

“all the people round about” — The word “people” (Heb. *‘anim*) is in the plural in the Hebrew text, and identifies all the Gentile powers ranged against Jerusalem (see note ch. 11:10). The armies of Judah will overthrow the remaining Gentile powers after the destruction of Armageddon.

“on the right hand and on the left” — Completing the judgment against the nations.

“and Jerusalem inhabited again in her own place” — After the siege, for during that time, the Jews will be driven from the city and many will be destroyed (ch. 14:2). Ultimately, both city and people will be restored.

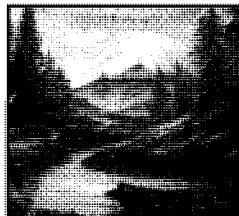
“even in Jerusalem” — Repeated for emphasis.

Elevation of Jerusalem and Judah — Vv. 7-8.

The manifestation of Israel’s Messiah will introduce the full restoration of the nation, and the manifestation of Christ and the Saints. Judah will first be saved; then Israel will be brought back to the Land. A great reformation will be brought to fruition as Christ and the Saints re-educate the children of Abraham.

VERSE 7

“Yahweh also shall save” — Salvation will not only be from the overwhelming power of Gog, but also from Israel’s past transgressions and rebellion against their King, which separated them in times past (Isa. 59:2). Then, the promises to the fathers of Israel will be achieved. The word “save” is from the Hebrew *yasha*, the root form of the name Yahoshua (Jesus). This salvation will require the Jews to acknowledge and acclaim the Lord Jesus as their Messiah (Phil. 2:10).





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SAVING THE TENTS OF
JUDAH.

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING
AND REMEMBRANCE.

THE DOOM OF ISRAEL'S
ENEMIES.

THE DAY OF YAHWEH.



Zechariah ch. 12:7 to 14:3

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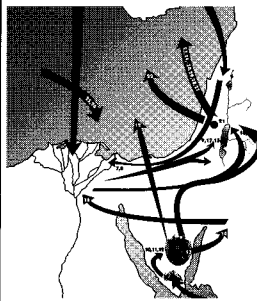
“the tents of Judah” — The term “Judah” is used of Israel in its national and not its tribal sense. The Jews in the Land at the return of the Lord Jesus are accounted as Judah, as was the case in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, even though representatives of all tribes were then present (Neh. 4:10, 16; 6:7, 17, 18), as is also shown by the record of 1Chr. 9:2-3, and Ezra 6:17.

“first” — Thus following the type of David, who first reigned over Judah in Hebron (2Sam. 5:3; 2:1-4), and later extended his rule over all Israel. His forty years of warlike reign subdued Israel’s enemies and paved the way for the peace and prosperity of Solomon’s reign and the building of the great temple. This was typical of the work of the greater David and Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be both man of war and man of peace; who will rule first over Judah, then over all Israel (Eze. 37:22), and ultimately over all nations (Zech. 14:9), and will build the millennial temple of Yahweh. As in the days of Moses and David, forty years will be occupied in subduing the nations and for the restoration of Israel (Mic. 7:15).

“that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem” — Glory is here used in the sense of prestige. The “house of David” referred to will not have any greater prestige than the rest of the Jews of Jerusalem, for this glory will be taken from those who delight merely in fleshly descent, and given to the immortal rulers, who are truly the House of David as promised in 2Sam. 7:11 and Isaiah 55:3 (Mat. 21:43). God told David, “I will make *thee* an house,” referring to those who would embrace David’s hope, emulate his faith, and would be the immortal associates of His Son in the Age to come. This immortal house of David is referred to by Zechariah in v. 8. It is obvious from this verse, and those succeeding, that at Christ’s return the tribes will not only be restored, but some of the principal families of previous ages as well. Though some may be able to claim relationship with David, there will be no glorying in the flesh; they will not be able to assert them-

The Tents of Judah First

Having come up from Arabia and then moved to destroy Gog’s forces in Egypt, Christ and the saints will then move up into the land of Israel. The words, “Yahweh also shall save the tents of Judah first” are indicative of outlying areas outside the city of Jerusalem. This is how the march of the conquering divine army will proceed. Not one area will be favoured against others, so that none will be able to boast against their brethren that they were specially esteemed. Coming from the southwest out of Egypt, the victorious Rainbow Angel will advance as would be normal according to their geographical progression. The inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be able to “magnify themselves against Judah;” that is, against any of the other inhabitants in the area. Divine power will be unleashed in the Promised Land at that time, on a scale never previously witnessed. Woe, indeed, to Gentile forces who set themselves against the Mighty God of Jacob! With the destruction of the armies of the alien (v. 9), Yahweh will then “pour” spiritual blessings upon the surviving dwellers in the Land. The one greater than Joseph will make himself known unto his brethren. This will require bringing enlightenment to the Jewish people, and their acceptance of Christ as their Messiah and King (v. 10). It is Yahweh who will do this, manifested in His Son together with his immortalised brethren (v. 7). — *J.U.*



March of the Rainbow Angel sets out from Sinai, and moves northward along the eastern Jordan, to enter the Land in the area of Jerusalem.

selves over other inhabitants of Jerusalem.

“do not magnify themselves against Judah” — RSV renders: “may not be exalted over that of Judah.” All will be humbled before Yahweh and His divine family headed by the Lord Jesus. There will be no exaltation of flesh (1Cor. 1:29).

VERSE 8

“In that day shall Yahweh defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem” — The great success of Israel over the antagonistic nations will be revealed as a work of Yahweh, for all the skills of the Jews put together would never be able to achieve such a remarkable victory. The word “defend” is from the Hebrew *ganan*, to hedge about, to fence, so as to protect.

“and he that is feeble among them at that day” — Note the margin. The word “feeble” is from the Hebrew *kashal*, to totter or waver through weakness of the legs; by implication to falter, stumble, faint or fall. The people will be made feeble through fear. Jer. 30:7 speaks of the “time of Jacob’s trouble” introduced by the powerful opposing nations, that will cause fear to be manifested by the people. Thus natural Israel is to be humbled in defeat, as it will later be strengthened in victory.

“shall be as David” — Suddenly energised with strength for battle and faith in Yahweh, even as David was when he fought with Goliath. They will be thus changed because they will realise that Yahweh is with them in the person of His Son (Zech. 9:14; Mic. 7:16), and the promised blessing of Moses will be fulfilled (Lev. 26:7-9; Deu. 32:30).

“and the house of David shall be as God” — The immortal house of David comprising the Saints (2Sam. 7:16; Isa. 55:3; 1Pet. 2:5) will be as the Elohim, the angels (see Luke 20:36). The word *elohim*, here translated “God,” is rendered “angels” in Psalm 8:5, a translation endorsed by Paul’s use of the word in Heb. 2:7. Clothed upon with divine nature (2Pet. 1:4), manifesting the glory of God (Rom. 5:2), and bearing His name (Rev. 3:12), they will be seen as a new race of angelic beings.

“as the angel of Yahweh before

them” — In the past the affairs of Israel were placed in the care of angels, chief of whom, as far as this authority over the nations was concerned, was Michael (see Exo. 23:21-30; Josh. 5:14, mg. Dan. 10:21). But the work of the angels will be taken over by the glorified followers of the Lord in the coming Age (Heb. 2:5). In leading the nation to war, and later ruling them in peace, the saints will be “as the angel of Yahweh before them,” in their sight (cp. Zech. 9:14).

The Doom of Judah’s Enemies — v. 9

The prophet now reveals the means by which the tremendous devastation of the powerful Gentile powers will occur. The political conflict between Spirit and Flesh is finally answered in the city of Jerusalem.

VERSE 9

“And it shall come to pass in that day” — Continuing the important prophetic statement (see. vv. 4, 6, 8, 9, 11) that emphasises the day of divine judgment that will bring Yahweh’s righteousness to all mankind.

“that I will seek to destroy all the nations” — All Judah’s enemies will be sought out and discovered. The word “destroy” is the Hebrew *shamed* and signifies to desolate, to pluck down. It is rendered “overthrow” in Pro. 14:11. All the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1) will be overthrown and humbled, but not all will be completely destroyed. Not satisfied with defence, the divine army, using also the Jewish people, will go into attack to “rebuke strong nations afar off” (Mic. 4:3; Isa. 2:4; Zech. 9:13; Psal. 149). Those who absolutely refuse to submit will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12).

“that come against Jerusalem” — The city that witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, will witness the divine judgment against the nations that will assemble around Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2). It will be at Jerusalem that the decree of Yahweh will be testified, and mankind will witness the righteous discipline against those who will seek to challenge His will (Psa. 2:7-9).

Judah is Humbled and Mourns**— vv. 10-14**

The prophecy turns to the restored exiles, who have returned to the Land, to meet their Messiah and to rest in His mercy. They experience the distress of realising that the nation murdered Yahweh's Son, their Redeemer. They are instructed in the divine means of restoration.

VERSE 10

“And I will pour upon” — Here is a contrast to the “destroying” of the previous verse, demonstrating the wonderful mercy of Yahweh. The expression “pour upon” indicates the extent of that mercy, as though Yahweh covered His people with His blessing. The word is used for the blood “poured out” at the altar in dedication (Exo. 29:12; Lev. 4).

“the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem” — These phrases are descriptive of the whole nation, both high and low. Whilst those who come against Jerusalem are humiliated, Judah will be elevated (see Eze. 39:29; 36:25-29; Jer. 31:31-34). As the Jews experience the divine goodness, and come to recognise their past blindness and folly they are completely humbled. The revelation granted them will call for a national day of humiliation, by which they recognise their guilt, and that the land has been defiled by blood (Num. 35:33). This will require some formal ceremony of expiation, such as is suggested by the requirements of the Law in connection with an unsolved murder (Deu. 21:1, 5) and the plea that follows (v. 7). Some such ceremony seems suggested by the remaining verses of this chapter.

“the spirit of grace” — This was rejected when the staff “Beauty” was cut asunder (ch. 11:10). But with the repentance indicated in the following verses, the Jewish people will recover this divine blessing by the revelation of the truth concerning their former action against the Lord Jesus (Eze. 36:26). It will cause them to “sorrow for the burden of the King of Princes” (Hos. 8:10), particularly when they learn of Yahweh’s favour and how it

was rejected by the nation in the past.

“and of supplications” — The manifestation of divine grace will cause them to seek the other Staff: Bands (ch. 11:14), speaking of fellowship and unity in the bonds of the Davidic covenant.

“and they shall look upon” — R.V. has “look unto...” The same verb is used in Num. 21:9 to indicate the importance of the brazen serpent placed by Moses on a pole. The people in the wilderness had to “behold” the serpent in order for them to receive health and life. Similarly, the people will look unto Yahweh for help, to behold in His manifestation in Christ, the means of their redemption.

“Me” — Throughout this chapter the first person pronoun (“I” in vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10) is intermixed with the third person pronoun (“Yahweh,” vv. 4, 5, 7, 8). The Lord Jesus Christ is Yahweh in manifestation (see Mat. 10:40; John 13:20; 5:23).

“whom they have pierced” — When the Jews rejected the Lord of Glory (1Cor. 2:8), they rejected Yahweh; when they crucified him, they crucified Yahweh, for he was “God with us” (Mat. 1:23), “God manifested in flesh” (1Tim. 3:16). The terrible revelation that the nation has been guilty of such a sin against Almighty God, will come home to the Jewish people with stunning force, bringing about the abject mourning predicted in this chapter; a mourning that will humble every Jew to the dust, and make him pliable to the divine restoration and guidance. See *Eureka* vol. 1, pp. 100-105 for outstanding comments on this theme of Sonship and God manifestation.

“and they shall mourn for him” — Manifesting a proper reaction to the crime perpetrated. All their wicked works (Acts 2:23), and their terrible iniquity against Christ and his believers, down the ages, will constitute the reason for their time of mourning.

“as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” — Emphasising the extreme sorrow that Israel will manifest, an emotion which represents that of the Father, for they crucified “His

Son," His "firstborn," and they, by this experience, will be subject to a similar agony.

A National Day of Repentance and Mourning — vv. 11-14

An outstanding day of grieving will be established as a national expression of repentance. Jewry recognises the iniquity of their history, and seeks restoration to the divine favour.

VERSE 11

"In that day" — See note on v. 3, etc.

"shall there be a great mourning" —

Like the death-wail in Egypt (Exo. 11:6) when the nation found itself in terrible straits because of the oppression of Pharaoh. The expressions indicate the depth and bitterness of the pain when they recognise their nation's previous folly. Paradoxically, the future mourning will be because of former Jewish oppression of Christ and his followers. Israel will at last recognise its folly, and realise that all the pain and persecution of the past could have been avoided if they had sought God in truth. They will mourn their lost opportunities as they recognise their past blindness. Such mourning will not be limited to Israel, but will be the lot of all nations (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 1:7). They will see the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven, surrounded by his glorified followers, then elevated to his associates in the ruling of the nations. (Further comments can be found in *Eureka*, vol. 1, pp 148-150).

"in Jerusalem" — This is an appropriate site for the future judgment of Israel, as it was in Jerusalem that the people rose up against Yahweh's Messiah to crucify their Saviour. He is to return to that city and cause the people to reflect upon their past, and to seek his forgiveness.

"as the mourning of Hadadrimmon"

— This was the mourning of the nation for Josiah (2Chr. 35:24-26). A specific day was set aside and a special service was conducted, a service in which Jeremiah participated. This suggests that there will be a specific ceremony of mourning and repentance in the future, when Israel will

publicly humble itself before Christ and seek divine help for its rehabilitation. Such a service of induction for the broken-off branches to be brought back into the good Israel olive tree, is indicated in Romans ch. 11 and Ezekiel ch. 43. See also Eze. 16:60-61.

"in the valley of Megiddon" —

Translated as Megiddo in 2Chr. 35:22. Some suggest that "*Adad-remmon is a city near Jerusalem, which was formerly called by this name, but is now called Maximianopolis, in the field of Mageddon, where the good king Josiah was wounded by Pharaoh Necho*" (Keil and Delitzsch). The word signifies *Place of Rendezvous*, indicating that the tribes of Israel will be gathered together to express their distress at the history of the nation.

VERSE 12

"And the land shall mourn" —

Though the ceremony of national mourning will take place in Jerusalem, all Israel will participate in the event, so that the humbling will be effected throughout the Land.

"every family apart" — Each family will be separated by itself so as to permit the greatest heart-searching, and manifestation of deepest contrition.

"the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart" — The royal house, to whom was delivered the great covenant of 2Sam. 7, and which is the first to receive the outpouring of mercy (Zech. 12:10). They are representative of the ruling class.

"the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart" — Perhaps representative of the prophetic class (2Sam. 7:2), and of those who were foremost in expounding the Scriptures to the people.

VERSE 13

"The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart" — The priestly class.

"The family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart" — This cannot be identified, but perhaps refers to the Shimei of

David's association, a "mighty man" who remained loyal to David (1Kgs. 1:8). If so, he represents the strength of the people. He is not to be confused with the Shimei of 2Sam. 16:5-10.

VERSE 14

"All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart" —

The identity of families as well as of tribes will be revealed in the day that Yahweh restores the "tabernacle of David as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11; Eze. 48). The

royal house (David), the prophetic class (Nathan), the priestly tribe (Levi) and the mighty men Shimei) will lead the national repentance. The significance of the four names mentioned in v. 12 in conjunction form a sentence: *The Beloved* (David), has been *Given* (Nathan), to be *Joined* (Levi), to the *Famous* (Shimei). These names thus spell out the story of Israel's restoration. As the *beloved* nation the people will be *given* to be *joined* to him who will then be *famous* in all the earth.

The Effect of Righteousness

How will the enormity of the sins of the nation be brought home so forcefully to the people of the generation depicted in these verses? Their long history of crimes against Yahweh are legion. From the times of Moses they have rebelled against Him, treated His Word and His true servants with contempt (Acts 7), made alliances with Yahweh's enemies, worshipped other gods, and followed every evil way — culminating in the ruthless murder of His Son, and their derision against him which has remained since that day. How will the magnitude of their sinful state be brought home to them in such a way as to change them completely, causing them to repent bitterly, and with total conversion to the Truth? Only by seeing the crucified Christ and learning from the Word how and why they have denied their God throughout the ages. Finally, they will humbly accept words which they have consistently repudiated: "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The awesome fulfilment of the Apocalyptic prophecy when "he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" — will bring all peoples, Jew and Gentile alike, to their knees. This will virtually begin the process whereby all nations will become transformed through the light of the glory of Yahweh, seen in Christ and his saints, and in the divine teaching they will proclaim. "Behold! A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment... And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever..." (Isa. 32:1, 17). — *J.U.*



The Cleansing of Israel

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FUTURE GLORIOUS REDEMPTION

Lamentation and repentance pave the way for forgiveness and cleansing which now takes place. But it was not merely a ritual observance, but a truly heart-rending experience, as Israel recognise their Messiah, are convinced of the wickedness of their fathers in crucifying their Lord and Saviour, and seek to redeem themselves before him.

A Fountain for Cleansing — v. 1.

A glorious panorama opens, as Israel is brought under a new covenant, in order to restore the people to divine favour, and to prepare them for the great work of the kingdom. The Mosaic covenant by which they were to be "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" was frustrated by sin, but will be achieved through the work of the Redeemer.

VERSE 1

"In that day" — The day of national judgment against sin and the redemption of Israel through the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus. The phrase introduced in ch. 2:11, is now repeated constantly as the prophecy reaches its climax (see its use in chs. 3:10; 9:16; 11:11; 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; 13:1, 2; 14:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21).

"there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David" — The cleansing by water was typically seen in the laver of the tabernacle in which the priests washed daily (Exo. 30:18). But the fountain speaks of living water, the spiritual refreshment that brings continual cleansing to the mind (Jn. 4:14). It will be opened to the house of David, as the beginning of the new royal order of Israel, who shall be the "first dominion" of the kingdom (Mic. 4:8), as part of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David as in the days of old (Amos 9:11).

"and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" — They are representative of the whole nation (see ch. 8:8; 2:7). All

Jews in the Land "dwell in Jerusalem" in a spiritual sense, as the saints are "born in Zion" (Psa. 87:5).

"for sin" — Heb. *chattah*, to miss the mark; to be an offender. The word also includes the unclean condition of mankind through transgression, so that the propensities are defined as "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). The physical condition is the *root* from which comes the "works of the flesh" as the *fruit* of wickedness.

"and for uncleanness" — Heb. *nid-dah*, to reject, from a primary word *nadad*, meaning to wave to and fro; thus to rove, flee, drive away. Thus it speaks of the waywardness of flesh, which constantly drives a person to wickedness. Under the Law of Moses, even unwitting contact with death was accounted as defiling, and when it occurred, an elaborate ceremony of cleansing was prescribed. This included sprinkling with running water the person or object accounted unclean (Num. 19:17-18), a teaching of the Law which figuratively taught the vital need for the cleansing doctrine of Truth (John 15:3; Psalm 119:9). A figurative fountain of living water was opened at the first advent of Jesus, as he revealed, when speaking with the woman of Samaria at the well (John 4:14). In rejecting the Lord, however, the Jews closed up that fountain of benefit to themselves, refusing to "submit to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). The opening of the figurative fountain at the second advent, will demonstrate to the people that

they are guilty of the blood of Jesus, causing them to recognise the need to seek forgiveness. The doctrine of Christ (the fountain of living water) will provide the means, and this will be opened at Jerusalem for all who like to avail themselves of its cleansing power. Paul taught, "They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again" (Rom. 11:23). The fountain will provide them with divine knowledge and understanding, and on the basis of faith they will be restored back into the good Olive tree.

False Teachers Destroyed — vv. 2-5.

Part of the restoration of Israel will be the repudiation of false teachings and ungodly activities. There will be a complete change from the attitude manifested in former times, when they "shed the blood of the righteous" (Mat. 23:35), and crucified their Messiah. All the "golden calves" of Israel's apostasy will be "cut off," never again to be found among her people.

VERSE 2

"And it shall come to pass in that day" — This phrase "it shall come to pass," occurs frequently in the prophecy since ch. 8:13. It expresses the absolute determination of the Deity to accomplish His purpose. Note its repetition in vv. 3, 4 and 8, as drawing attention to the great day of God Almighty, the "day in which He will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31).

"saith Yahweh of hosts" — The militant Name of Yahweh is here expressed indicating that there will be a thorough purging of the hearts of the people of Israel.

"that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land" — "Name" is synonymous with power and influence (cp. Acts 3:6; Rev. 13:17), so that the power of idolatry will be completely eradicated. But idolatry is not limited to paganism or the worship of literal idols, for Paul teaches that "covetousness is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). All such worship of materialism or self-aggrandizement will be destroyed. The

facts of Israel's past idolatry will be brought home to the nation (Eze. 43:7, where the "carcasses of their kings" signifies the idolatry of the rulers of Israel) in order that it might be repudiated as part of the terms of the new covenant by which they will be restored to favour.

"and they shall no more be remembered" — Instead, the worship of the one true God will replace the apostate teachings of the past.

"and also I will cause the prophets" — All false teachers will be destroyed, including **"the false prophet"** of the Roman apostasy, the mother church of Christendom (Rev. 16:13).

"and the unclean spirit" — All false teaching. The word "spirit" is frequently used for teaching (see John 6:63; 1John 5:6; Eph. 6:12; 36:26) both true and false (1John 4:1-3). Spirit is the impulse which moves a person consequent upon belief, whether it be the "spirit of uncleanness" or "the spirit of supplications" (Zech. 12:10). A complete end will be brought to false teaching, to the "unclean spirit."

"to pass out of the land" — To no more contaminate the land. As the transgression of Adam and Eve brought a curse to the earth, reflecting the result of their folly, so the removing of evil and false teachers is represented as no longer bringing disgrace to the land.

VERSE 3

"And it shall come to pass that when any shall yet prophesy" — This does not necessarily mean to foretell future events, but includes the idea of teaching and preaching in general (see 1Cor. 14:3). False teaching, in both prophetic and doctrinal matters is the idea expressed.

"then his father and mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live" — There will be such revulsion against error in the day when the Law shall go forth from Zion, and people everywhere will be seeking God in truth (Isa. 2:2-4), that a person's closest relations will be the first to accuse and execute a false teacher. The principle laid down in the Law will thus be restored (Deu. 13:6-9). The result

of setting forth error against the Spirit Word of Truth, is to repeat the divine decree given against Adam: death results from such folly.

In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas states: "If the ecclesiastics were to be dealt with upon this principle at the present time, not a soul of them would escape death on the spot; for it is their craft to 'speak lies in the name of Yahweh,' and to wear peculiar garments for professional deceit. The world that now fawns upon and flatters their vanity, and glorifies their foolishness, will then cause their memorial. In that day of affliction to the Apostasy, it is testified that 'the Gentiles shall come unto Yahweh from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanities, and things wherein there is no profit' (Jer. 16:19). This is what they will say of Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, Methodism... all false, vain and unprofitable. The fall will be the ruin of the clerical demons, who, like Othello, will then find 'their occupation gone.' Then 'they will weep and mourn; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more' (Rev. 18:11). Place, power, position, and wealth will all be dissipated; and the saints who will have subdued them, will take possession of all their good things, and 'send them empty away.' Then, woe betide the clergyman or rabbi, who shall attempt to dole out his old foolishness to the people..." (see Zech. 13:3-4).

"for thou speakest lies in the name of Yahweh" — This is the gravest sin of mankind, for it reflects against the righteousness of the Creator. To represent the Righteous Father with lies and untruths will bring a complete retribution from even the closest of family.

"and his father and his mother that begat him, shall thrust him through when he prophesieth" — At the very time that this matter is brought to their attention, they will exercise judgment against their son. This was seen in the action of the tribe of Levi at the time of Israel's folly with the golden calf. Moses commanded: "Thus saith Yahweh Elohim of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp,

and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses..." (Exo. 32:26-27). Their faithful action at that time brought Levi closer to God in dedicated service, as they were separated from all other tribes to serve Him.

VERSE 4

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed"

— The manifestation of divine glory and truth in the person of the Lord Jesus will cause all false prophets to be ashamed of their error (see ch. 12:10, and compare with Eze. 43:11 — Those so ashamed (the Hebrew *buwsh* signifies to be pale) will be forgiven, and invited to seek the cleansing waters of the Covenant of Truth to be opened up in Israel.

"every one of his vision when he hath prophesied" — The word "vision" (Heb. *chizzayown*) signifies a revelation; a declaration, usually through a dream. Those in the days of Jeremiah led the nation astray when they ignored the prophet's advice to seek protection in Babylon (Jer. 27:9), and perished in the ensuing conflict. Notice the words of Jude (v. 8) of those "dreamers" who "defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities" by their antagonistic attitude to the Truth.

"neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive" — The margin has: "a garment of hair." The Hebrew is *abbereth*, as in 2Kg. 2:8 and Josh. 7:21, 24) and refers to a distinctive garment such as prophets sometimes wore (2Kgs. 1:8; 2:13). This was to make them distinctive to others, and thus to draw attention to their individual importance. The clergy of Christendom wear a distinctive garment, in which they pride themselves with a supposed righteousness. But their position and teaching only brings disrepute upon the Truth, and "deceives" those who might otherwise seek Almighty God (see Mat. 23:13, in regard to the clergy of Israel).

VERSE 5

"But he shall say" — A suspected

false prophet being accused of propounding error will have opportunity to repudiate any such learnings, and give token of his true occupation.

“But he shall say” — The man accused responds to avoid the implications of his utterances.

“I am an husbandman” — A tiller of the ground, an occupation incompatible with the duties of a prophet as Elijah revealed to Elisha (1Kgs. 19:19-21). Such a declaration forms part of the defence of the suspected false prophet, by which he seeks to assert that he is not guilty of the crime.

“for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth” — The R.V. renders this: “For I have been made a bondman from my youth.” In his defence a suspected false prophet will have to give conclusive proof that the accusation is wrong. So he states that from youth he has been in a state of bondage which makes false propheting impossible. This claim is an example of the reason for which a defence might be advanced in repudiation of the accusation that he is a false prophet.

Christ's Identity Revealed — v. 6.

False teaching will be eradicated from Israel by the revelation of the identity of the great King. As the apostle Thomas was convinced by seeing the wounds in the hands of the Lord (John 20:27), so Israel will likewise be convinced of truth by the same means. This verse is placed in this position in a proper context to show the means by which false teaching will be destroyed.

VERSE 6

“And one shall say” — As representing all Israel. The word “one” is not in the original, indicating that it is those, such as the person under pressure to denounce false teaching, that will “look upon Me whom they have pierced...” (ch. 12:10). The manifestation of Christ as the victor of Armageddon will be followed by some such question on the part of those who look upon him as a remarkable deliverer (Rom. 11:26).

“unto him” — To the main subject of this prophecy: the smitten Shepherd-King.

“What are these wounds?” — The first thing noticed is the significant marks of crucifixion, which was the evidence that convinced Thomas of the identity of the risen Christ (John 20:27). The Hebrew word is *makkah*, indicating a violent blow.

“Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded” — The Hebrew for “wounded” is *nakah*, which means “to strike.”

“in the house of my friends” — He does not say that he was wounded *by* his friends, for that would be incorrect, but *in* the “house of his friends.” They were not friends who pierced him (see Psalm 22:16; Zech. 11:4, 7, 10-14), for the Lord Jesus referred to those who refused his cause as “enemies” (Lk. 19:27).

Why He was Wounded — vv. 7.

Zechariah now sees a graphic portrayal of the crucifixion of Messiah, which was perpetrated by the Jewish and Roman enemies of Christ, and yet was in accordance with the divine purpose that salvation might come to the remnant of Israel.

VERSE 7

“Awake, O sword” — The explanation of the previous verse is continued, with two commanding expressions: *Awake!* and *Smite!* as the divine decree is stated. Now is explained the reason why the Messiah was wounded, that his death was not mere murder but was divinely required (John 11:51-52; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Phil. 2:8) in order that ultimately salvation would come to those whom Yahweh approves (Zech. 13:9). If it were not for this overriding principle, the action against Christ would not have succeeded. This statement is cited in Mat. 26:31.

“Against My shepherd” — Christ is the Good Shepherd, appointed by Yahweh to rescue the flock of Israel from the Gentile wolves, in the way required. He received a commandment from the Father to lay down his life in order that he might take it up again (John 10:18). This was necessary in order to effectively act the

part of the good shepherd. A dead shepherd is useless to the flock, but the sacrifice of Christ was for the express objective of receiving life once again with greater power. This he clearly explains in the parable of the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10). The word "that" in the statement: "I lay down my life *that* I may take it up again," is the Greek *hina* and signifies, "to the end that," with emphasis on purpose, design, and result (Bullinger). The curiosity of the Jews having been aroused concerning the wounds in the hands of the Lord when they see him again, it will be explained to Jewry and then brought before all mankind the real significance of such piercing, and the true nature of his atoning work.

"and against the man" — The Hebrew *geber* signifies "a mighty man," a man of war. The word appears in the Immanuel prophecy as "the *mighty* God" (*El Gibbor*; Isa. 9:6). Christ firstly gained a victory against the power of sin in enduring the trial which took him to the cross, and will yet manifest himself as mighty in battle against the foes who will oppose him at his second coming.

"that is My fellow" — The Hebrew *hamith*, means to associate; to be a kindred, comrade, or relation. The terms "Father" and "Son" illustrate the intimate family relationship. Both co-operated together (John 10:30; 16:32) to make the victory against sin possible. The term "fellow" implies divine parentage, and indicates that God was manifest in the flesh for the purpose of revealing Himself as a Redeemer and near-kinsman (2Cor. 5:19). To save mankind, Yahweh had to reveal Himself as such a kinsman, and He did so through the Lord Jesus, for he was begotten by Spirit through the virgin who was of the same nature to those he came to save.

"saith Yahweh of hosts: smite the shepherd" — The militant Name of the Deity is employed to reflect the commanding power of God against those who illtreated His Son. In this the prophecy of ch. 12:10 is emphasised: that in "smiting the shepherd," Yahweh himself would be affected.

The Hebrew word for "smite" (*nakah*) is derived from the same root as the word for "wound" in v. 6. These words are cited in Mark. 14:27.

"and the sheep shall be scattered" — This relates to the disciples of the Lord. They, as the sheep (not goats) of the flock were scattered in consequence upon the shepherd being smitten (Mat. 26:56). This was fulfilled as the Lord Jesus was conveyed to Golgotha, and the dismayed followers saw him crucified in shame and ignominy. They declared: "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done" (Lk. 24:21). They "forsook him and fled" (Mat. 26:56), not understanding the prophecy of Zechariah, or the reasons for the apparent disaster.

"and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones" — See Mat. 18:10. There is a divine overshadowing of the followers of the Lord, even in affliction (see Isa. 1:25; Mat. 26:32). The phrase "I will turn..." signifies to bring back to their original position of privilege, after having suffered the trauma of attack by enemies.

Israel to be Humbled — vv. 8-9.

The Great Shepherd declared that Israel will not see him until the people say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mat. 23:39). This will be accomplished through "the time of Jacob's trouble" that shall overtake the nation in



the latter days. It will humble Israel, and cause the nation to seek the intervention and help of Almighty God, thus preparing them to acceptably receive the Messiah as indicated in Jer. 30:7.

VERSE 8

“And it shall come to pass” — As Yahweh overlooks spiritual Israel for good, so He also works on behalf of the nation to bring about their restoration (Amos 9:9) in accordance with the covenant He made with their fathers (Gen. 12:2-4).

“that in all the land, saith Yahweh”

— This prophecy incorporates those Jews who have returned to the land in the latter-days and are accounted as of the tribe of Judah (ch. 12:7).

“two parts therein shall be cut off and die” — This indicates the extent of the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). When Russia sweeps down through the land, the Jews will be inexorably swept aside. Russia will claim absolute power, establishing its headquarters in Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45; Zech. 14:2). In their desperation, the Jews will attempt to resist, but this will only result in greater devastation and bloodshed. Two-thirds of the people in the Land will thus be destroyed. It will be a time of general distress, brought about by the attitude of the Gentile forces who “curse the seed of Abraham,” and who will therefore be devastated even more sorely (Dan. 12:1; Jer. 25:29).

“but the third shall be left therein”

— The remainder will be spared to glorify God, for they will constitute the true grain (Amos 9:9), forming the basis of the redeemed Israel to occupy the Land as the “first dominion” in the future kingdom (Mic. 4:8).

VERSE 9

“And I will bring the third part through the fire” — The remnant of Israel in the Land will be led through the fire of affliction, after the example of Moses, the deliverer of the people out of Egypt.

“and will refine them as silver is refined” — Silver is the metal of redemption. The refining is through the applica-

tion of heat, by which the pure metal is extracted (see note on Zech. 6:11; compare Lev. 5:15). The people will be disciplined, purified and finally redeemed by acknowledging the folly of their past history, and by embracing the Truth in Christ Jesus.

“and will try them as gold is tried”

— The previous symbol of silver indicated redemption; the symbol of gold points to a tried faith (1Pet. 1:7; see note on Zech. 6:11). A tried faith is one which is revealed in faithful actions, and upon this basis they will be again engrafted into the good Olive tree.

“they shall call” — This indicates an enthusiastic response by the people, who, being spiritually renewed, turn to God in spirit and in truth (see Eze. 6:9-10; Hos. 8:10; John 4:24). “Call unto Me and I will answer thee,” saith Yahweh (Jer. 33:3), an attitude on the part of the people that will be abundantly blessed (vv. 6-8).

“on My name” — Jews decline to use the divine Name today, but they “profane” it nonetheless as Eze. 36:20-23 shows. In the future Age they will use it with understanding, and rejoice in its significance. It will become their family name (Ps 68:3), since it signifies *He who shall Become*, indicating that Yahweh will become a multitude of Spirit-beings, whom natural Israel will honour.

“and I will hear them” — Yahweh covenants to respond to a faithful call to Him for help and guidance (Isa. 55:2).

“I will say, It is My people” — When His people turn to Him in truth and righteousness, He will acknowledge them as His people (Jer. 32:38; Eze. 37:23-28; Hos. 1:9-10; Isa. 59:20-21; Rom. 11:26), incorporate them into His family, so that they will bear His name as previously (Num. 6:27).

“and they shall say, Yahweh is my God” — This wonderful conclusion will be the fulfilment of the divine plan of salvation with Israel, bringing them into the Age of Messiah’s reign. This declaration by the people will be more than a mere expression of religious piety; it will be the fervent response of faith, by a nation redeemed.

THE COMING DAY OF YAHWEH

CHAPTER 14

The Glorious Consummation

The final vision commences with a dark picture of war, siege, spoil, violence and bloodshed, but it concludes with a glorious vista of triumph and victory as Yahweh's power is recognised throughout the earth. A remarkable victory outside Jerusalem, tremendous upheavals of nature, a transformed world unified by a common rulership, a common worship, a common ideal, all provide the foundation of the glorious millennial reign of Christ. Jerusalem, in which is established a more glorious temple than that of Solomon or Zerubbabel, becomes the centre of the world. To it the nations ascend in worship, and there they see a dedicated city, wholly given over to Yahweh, so that HOLINESS TO YAHWEH (the caption on the plate of gold worn by the high priest, Exo. 28:36) is stamped on all its institutions, whilst from its precincts the Canaanite is totally excluded. In this glorious vision of the future, Zechariah was shown the ultimate result of all his labours at that time. Though the temple the Jews were then building at the time of Zechariah would be overthrown, though the nation then in the stages of a partial restoration would be again scattered, though the enemy would temporarily triumph, they could labour on in hope, in the sure and certain conviction that Yahweh's purpose will ultimately be realised and His glory will flood the earth as the waters cover the sea. The glorious consummation revealed in this last chapter of Zechariah's prophecy is nothing less than the fulfilment of the gospel preached to faithful Abraham: "In thee shall all nations shall be blessed" (Gal. 3:8).

Last Gentile Triumph over Jerusalem — vv. 1-3.

VERSE 1

"Behold" — The introductory statement is designed to draw attention to the dramatic events to be revealed.

"the day of Yahweh cometh" — This is the theme of the prophecy which speaks of the imminent time of divine judgment against rebellious mankind, ushering in the peaceful reign of the Lord Jesus. It is the day when ultimately the glory of Yahweh will cover the earth as the waters do the sea.

"and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee" — Jerusalem will fall to the impending Russian onslaught (see further details in Eze. 38; Dan. 11:40-45; Joel 3; Rev. 16:17). In Zech. 9:8 (see comments), the prophecy was showing that the invading army of the latter days will encamp against Jerusalem, and will be "returning" from an attack on Egypt, and the prophet's words there show undoubtedly that Dan.

11:40-45 relates to that time. The King of the North will sweep down in a lightning attack on Egypt which shall not escape, but then, due to "tidings out of the east and north," he will make his way northward to Jerusalem to besiege the holy city. These tidings out of the east could well be the presence of an unusual force at Sinai (east of Egypt) as Christ and the saints are being assembled for the work of destroying the antisemitic forces, whilst in the north the Western powers attempt to consolidate their position at Jerusalem, in order to cut off the reinforcements and logistical support of the Russian Gog. Russia's bold and confident drive on Jerusalem will bring the armies of all nations there to battle. Initial success will be to Russia. Jerusalem will fall, and the spoil of the city will be divided among its conquerors, who will set up their "palace in the glorious holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45) whilst the Jews will be taken into captivity or driven from the city (see Zech. 12:6). At this apex of Russian success, however, divine intervention will

snatch away the fruits of victory (v. 3).

VERSE 2

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” — Yahweh will bring the forces of all nations to Jerusalem for the purpose of international judgment (Zeph. 3:8). The city which witnessed the humiliation of the Lord Jesus at the hands of Jews and Gentiles two thousand years ago, will see the manifestation of his glory and power (Zech. 12:9; Psa. 76:1-3, 12). Such a crisis is necessary in order to first humble the Jewish people preparatory to elevating the nation. See Eze. 39:25-26; 14:23. Deu. 4:30.

“and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished” —

Note the development. Like the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Roman forces in times past, the Russian consolidated power will come from the south against the city and dominate it. Entering the city, the enemy will attack the homes and families of the Jews. Then, as a terrible climax to their atrocities, even the women will be subjected to terrible indignities.

“and half of the city shall go forth into captivity” — An attack is made on the city of Jerusalem, and half of it is defended, whilst half is destroyed.

“and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city” — Jerusalem will be strongly defended, so that half of it remains. Evidently there will be hand to hand fighting as fierce attempts will be made on the part of the Jews to defend it, and by the invading enemy to conquer it entirely. The fall of Jerusalem will be an element of despair to Jews as part of the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:5-7), a period that will involve all nations in turmoil (Dan. 12:1; Jer. 25:29-33).

VERSE 3

“Then” — At a time when complete despair sweeps Israel, when all seems lost, and the enemy appears brutally triumphant.

“shall Yahweh go forth” — The moment for which all saints have longed, as expressed by the Psalmist: “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a

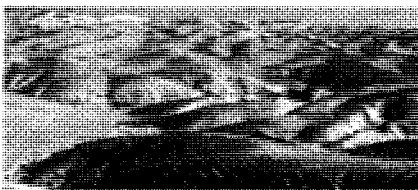
two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints” (Psa. 149:6-9).

As a “Man of War” Christ and the saints will repeat the victory experienced by Moses over Pharaoh (Exo. 15:3), and reveal the true power that has overcome sin in the individual lives of his immortal companions. As the great Army of Yahweh, the multitudinous Rainbowed Angel will be gloriously manifested.

“go forth” — From his place of hiding at Sinai, following the judgment seat, and the elevation of the faithful to glory and immortality. Isa. 26:21 declares, “Behold, Yahweh cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” (see also Deu. 33:1-3; Hab. 3:1-2). Yahweh is represented as “going forth” before the hosts of Israel in the past (Jud. 4:14; 2Sam. 5:24; 1Chr. 14:15) as their Commander. Now He does so in the person of His Son (Isa. 55:4; Hab. 3:13; Rev. 19:11-16).

“and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle” —

Once again the earth will witness manifestations of divine power as it did in ages past. The silence of centuries will be broken as the roar of Judah’s lion is heard (Isa. 42:14; 17:12-14). In the past, Yahweh manifested Himself belligerently through His heavenly host (Exo. 23:20; Josh. 5:14; 10:14; 23:3; Jud. 4:15). In the future, He will do so through the multitudinous Christ, then clothed upon with divine nature, made equal unto the angels (see Isa. 9:7). The Name of this army of the future is **Yahweh Tzvaoth**: “He who will be (manifested) armies.”





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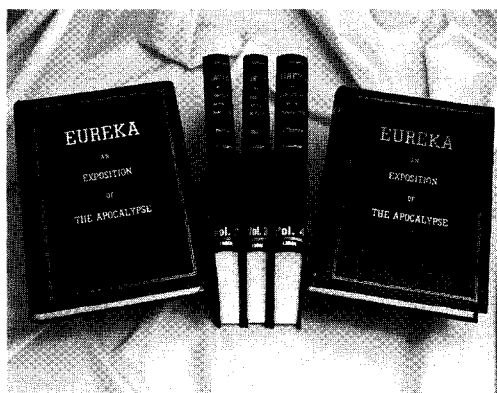
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HOLINESS TO YAHWEH A
REALITY.



Zechariah ch. 14:4 to 14:21

A **LOOKS** MAGAZINE

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OCTOBER 2003

NUMBER 14



Analysis of the Prophecy

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Honouredch. 14.

The name "Jerusalem" appears TEN times in Zechariah 14. This is significant in view of the prophecy in ch. 8:23, that in the millennium "*ten* men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that Yahweh is with you." This attitude will replace the opposition of the *ten*-toed kingdom of men (Dan. 2:42), and establish Jerusalem as the centre of divine rulership.

The Earthquake And Its Effect

— vv. 4-5

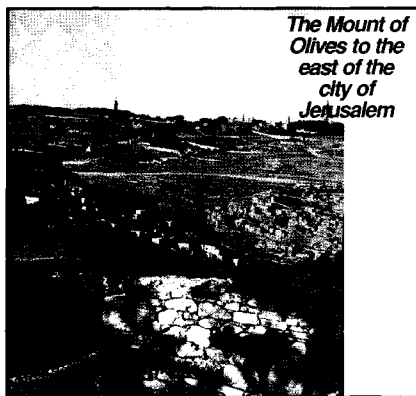
The divine army moves north from Sinai, on the eastern side of the Jordan, following the trail of Joshua and the company of Israel in time past. Some of the saints move into Arabia to discipline the Arabs; others move west to destroy the Gogian forces in Egypt. From the area of Moab (modern Jordan) the multitudinous Christ moves west to occupy the Mount of Olives. Here the most remarkable natural phenomenon takes place: the great earthquake that splits the mountain.

VERSE 4

"**And His feet**" — Yahweh's "feet" (v. 3), manifested in the form of the multitudinous Christ-Body. Yahweh's "feet" are mentioned in Exo. 24:10 in the glorious vision which accompanied the confirming of the covenant with Israel through Moses. The Scriptures make reference to Yahweh's "hand" and "arms" (Isa. 40:10; 52:7, 10). "eyes" (Zech. 4:10), "name" (Isa. 30:27), and "feet." As the Eternal Spirit has a bodily existence, so these characteristics are seen in the created, reflecting those of the Creator. The name of Yahweh will be named upon all who "overcome" (Rev. 3:12), and they will then comprise one united Body (John 17:21) working in complete co-operation and harmony, each part contributing to the work of the whole (Eph. 4:16), and all subject to the Head, which is Christ. Each part of the Body will apparently be given different duties to perform. Some will be sent to pour out the judgments

of God in war; others will be given duties of a different nature. Here the "feet" of the multitudinous Christ, being Yahweh in Flesh, are seen standing on the Mount of Olives, having been sent forth to destroy the nations gathered to battle. The "feet" describe those of the future Elohim dedicated to the overthrow of the Gentile powers. Whilst the "feet" are thus engaged, the "eyes," and "arms," etc., of Yahweh, may well be occupied in other duties elsewhere.

"**shall stand in that day**" — They stand in military array in preparation for the execution of the great judgments of Yahweh upon the desolating power of Gog, and to commence the work of



The Mount of Olives to the east of the city of Jerusalem

establishing the divine authority of Christ in the earth. This reflects the picture of the heavenly Elohim who were set against Ahab (1Kgs. 22:19), and the authority invested in the angel Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias (Lk. 1:11). The martyr Stephen was granted such a vision as he defended the faith in Jerusalem and spoke of the glory of God reflected in His Son (Acts 7:55).

"**upon the mount of Olives**" — The central eminence of the long line of limestone hills extending over a kilometre north and south. It rises almost 60 metres (200 feet) above Mt. Zion, but will ultimately be overshadowed by it as a result of the great earthquake described here by Zechariah, and alluded to by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 2:2). It was on this mountain

that the Lord ascended to heaven at the conclusion of his earthly ministry (Acts 1:10-12).

“which is before Jerusalem on the east” — Here the glory left Jerusalem in the vision of Ezekiel (Eze. 11:23) and later in the form of the Redeemer (Acts 1:12), and from here it is to return (Eze. 43:1-2; Acts 1:11). The appearance of the multitudinous Christ in regal array against the forces of evil occupying portion of Jerusalem, will fulfil the prophecies of the returning Messiah.

“and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof” — Terrific seismographic upheavals will tear the mount from its foundations, causing fear and panic throughout the assembled armies (Eze. 38:19; Isa. 30:25; Isa. 2:19; Joel 3:16). A vast valley will be formed where now a line of hills exist. Significantly, a rift feature can be seen today in the mountain opposite the temple area, in preparation for the time when Yahweh’s “Feet” will touch the mountain and initiate the earthquake which will violently alter the contour of the whole land, as Zechariah goes on to reveal.

“toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley” — Graphically describing the shuddering split that will occur forcing the whole of the contour of the land to be changed. Ezekiel speaks of the waters of the Dead Sea returning to the Mediterranean (Eze. 47:15-20), thus necessitating a lift of over 300 metres (1,300 feet) from the present level of the Dead Sea to that of the “Great Sea.”

“and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” — This will be a remarkable and dramatic scene, as the whole of the land will shudder, and slide north and south to create a huge plateau of approximately 70 kilometres in length (cp. v. 10).

VERSE 5

“And ye shall flee” — The Jews in Jerusalem shall flee, both from the enemy domination and from the severity of the natural earthquake. They fled from

His Feet on the Mount

In view of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to the Father’s right hand from the Mount of Olives, the words of the angel, “[He] shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go...” appear to be a direct reference to Zech. 14:4. Daniel also makes clear reference to that to which Zechariah would later allude, when he says, “one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven...” (Dan. 7:13). The Lord himself makes direct reference to Daniel’s prophecy on more than one occasion. “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...” (Mat. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27). Paul also refers to the Old Testament prophecies in both epistles to the Thessalonians. “Wait for His Son from heaven... The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...” (1Thes. 1:10; 4:16; 2Thes. 1:7). It seems evident, however, that the two O.T. prophecies referred to above, have their root and foundation in the most quoted Old Testament verse in the N.T., “Yahweh said unto my Lord [Adon], sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool...” (Psa. 110:1). It must be understood that Zechariah is speaking not of Christ personally, as a personal manifestation of Yahweh, but of the entire army of the redeemed; for “the saints” are to “execute the judgment written...” (Psa. 149:5-9). The glorified saints are revealed in the Apocalypse as the “four and twenty elders,” the “four living creatures,” the “redeemed,” the [spiritual] “virgins;” and in the awesome prophecy of the Rainbow Angel, etc. (Rev. 4:4, 6; 5:9-10; 14:3-4; ch. 10). As the multitudinous Christ-Body, together with their Lord they will “reign on the earth.” — *J.U.*

Jerusalem in the days of the Roman invasion (Mat. 24:16), and those circumstances will be repeated in a greater extent when the Gogian confederacy enters the Land.

“to the valley of the mountains” — Eliminate the word “to” which is in italics to indicate that it is not in the original. The Jews will not flee “to” the valley formed by the earthquake, but they shall flee from it, they shall “flee the valley.”

“for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal” — See margin. This word is from a Hebrew root signifying “to separate,” and the margin indicates that the valley spreading from the east shall extend to the “place separated.” This identifies Jerusalem, for scientists have established that Jerusalem is surrounded by four fault lines that divide or separate it from the rest of the country round about. The earthquake will apparently divide Olivet and form a large depression throughout the land adjacent to Jerusalem (see v. 10). Jerusalem, itself, however, will not be depressed, but rather elevated. Mt. Zion will then become “beautiful for elevation” (Ps. 48:2, as the Heb. text has it), and as the place separated, will constitute the Most Holy on Zion (Ps. 24:3-4; Eze. 43:12).

“yea, ye shall flee” — This phrase is repeated for emphasis, illustrating the awful nature of the great earthquake, and the terror of the inhabitants of the city.

“like as ye fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” —

There is only incidental reference to this earthquake (Amos 1:2; Isa. 5:25, etc.), but the narrative of 2 Chr. 26:15 states that Uzziah was “marvellously helped, till he was strong.” It could be that this is a reference to the earthquake by which he was helped against his enemies, with such a power that even the “posts of the door moved...” (Isa. 6:4). The “great earthquake” of the future will exceed those of former times, for not only will it alter the contour of the Land of Promise as indicated in Zech. 14, but will set off a chain of earthquakes, causing tremors and tidal waves, etc., with devastating consequences throughout the globe that will cause fear and consternation in all parts of the world,

and will plunge Rome into the eternal abyss (Rev. 18:21-22; 8:21).

“Yahweh my God shall come and all the saints” — “Yahweh my Elohim” indicates Yahweh manifested in a multitude as the multitudinous Christ. The conjunction “and” should be rendered “even...” The character of the people comprising this host is revealed in the word “saints” (Heb. *kadesh*, separated, sacred) signifying a body of people separated from the world, and dedicated to Yahweh, the honoured and glorified members of those whom the Gospel has separated “out of the Gentiles, a people for His name” (Acts 15:14).

“with thee” — The multitudinous Christ will appear to the help of natural Israel (ch. 10:7).

Yahweh’s Own Day — vv. 6-7.

The great day of divine judgment will witness the majesty and mastery of Yahweh revealed in His company. The period from the time of the manifestation of the Lord Jesus on the mount of Olives, until the establishment of Yahweh’s glory throughout all the earth, and the completion of the great temple of worship, is now described by the prophet, as “the day of Yahweh.”

VERSE 6

“And it shall come to pass in that day” — The wonderful “day of Yahweh” introduced in verse 1, repeated in vv. 4, 6, 7, 13, 20, 21.

“that the light shall not be clear, nor dark” — Bro. Thomas translates this: “And it shall be in that day, there shall be no brightness, the splendid ones drawing in.” The R.V. supports this by rendering the words as “the bright ones shall contract themselves.” The “bright ones” are the glorified followers of the Lord. They will then be “equal unto the angels” (Luke 20:36), and like them able to shine forth in glory as the angels did at the sepulchre of the Lord (Mat. 28:3), or “contract” themselves as they did when they appeared unto Abraham and Lot as men (Gen. 18, 19). The glorified followers of the Lord shall “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father” (Mat. 13:43), but will also be

able to withdraw that glory when necessary to accomplish the divine purpose. As in a typical figure, the glory of Yahweh in the face of Moses faded by time (2Cor. 3:13-16).

VERSE 7

“But it shall be one day which shall be known to Yahweh, not day, nor night”

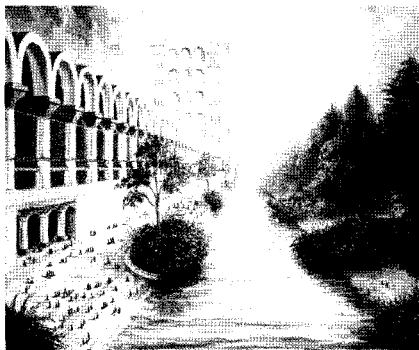
— This is Yahweh’s day, a unique period of time when He will be vindicated before all flesh, and His purpose in creation will be partially consummated through judgment of the nations and the establishment of His authority (it will not be completely fulfilled until the end of the thousand years’ reign of Christ: 1Cor. 15:28). Bro. Thomas translates this verse: “And it shall be one day that shall be known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it shall be at the time of evening there shall be brightness.” There will not be a “day *and* night,” for the whole period here indicated will be the continuing of Yahweh’s purpose, leading from the advent of the Lord on the mount of Olives until the temple is established. It is thus a period of increasing control by the multitudinous Christ throughout the earth. The battle of Joshua in the valley in which day and night became as one period of sunshine (Josh. 10:12-13), and which gave way to the victory of Israel over their enemies, is a typical foreshadowing of the greater battle of Christ against the Gentiles. At that time “Yahweh fought for Israel” (v. 14), and will do so again.

“but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” — The



shining forth of brightness, as far as the “splendid ones” are concerned will be seen at “evening time,” that is, at the *end* of a period of judgment and to introduce the *beginning* of the epoch of the millennial reign of Christ. The “evening” is at the beginning of the new era because a Bible day commences with the evening: “the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5).

At this “evening time” therefore, the saints shall shine forth in the fulness of glory, though prior to that (when they are subduing the nations), the saints will “contract themselves.” Bible prophecy indicates that a Jubilee period of about 50 years will elapse between the return of Christ to Sinai and the beginning of the millennial thousand years of peace (Rev. 20:6). This will be a period of judgment, first in relation to the household (1Pet. 4:17), and then, by the hands of the saints, in relation to the world at large (Psa. 149:7-9). During this epoch, the Kingdom of God will be established as a “stone” to grow into a mountain filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). During this time, also, the Millennial temple will be built (Isa. 60:10), and Israel restored in its fulness (Mic. 7:15). Then will follow the “evening,” the beginning of the millennium when the Lord Jesus and his glorified followers will enter the completed temple at a ceremony of inauguration (Psa. 2; Eze. 43:1-2), filling it with glory. Until then, the saints will “restrain themselves” as far as the shining forth of glory is concerned, and will appear as normal humans, as the angels did to Abraham, Lot, or the inhabi-



tants of Sodom. But with the judgments over, such restraint will be unnecessary, and their full glory will be seen. Ezekiel describes how the glory shall come from the way of the east and fill the temple at its inaugural ceremony (Eze. 43:4) at the beginning of the glorious millennium.

Living Waters Heal the Desert — v. 8.

Not only will the great earthquake alter the contour of the Land, but will also open the hidden waters and springs that will burst forth to bring new life and vitality to the previously parched earth and desert lands.

VERSE 8

“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem”

— In previous ages a stream of water issued from under Jerusalem to feed the Pool of Siloam that was constructed at the time of Hezekiah to provide water for the besieged city (2Kgs. 20:20). This will be increased in the future when the earthquake will open up new springs throughout the Land (Isa. 43:20). From Mt. Zion a tremendous river of water shall gush forth from under the threshold of the temple, and, flowing east, will heal the waters of the Dead Sea (Eze. 47:8). Ezekiel gives a graphic account of this in ch. 47:1-12, whilst other prophets also refer to it (Joel 3:18; Psa. 46:4; Isa. 30:25; 33:21; 41:18; 43:19-20). This is symbolic also of the divine purpose in the Lord Jesus. The altar represents Christ (Heb. 13:10), and from him gush forth streams of living waters consisting of the teaching and laws he provides for the education and control of mankind (John 4:10-11; John 7:37. See also Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Isa. 2:2-4), and this shall have the effect of healing the nations, who are figuratively a “sea of death” (Isa. 57:20).

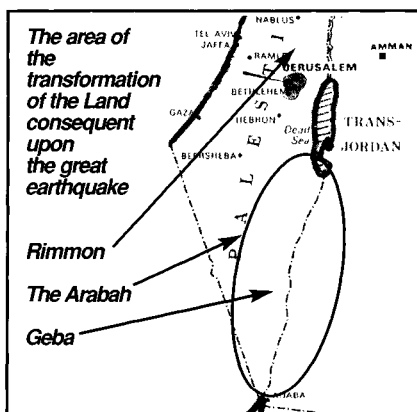
“half of them toward the former sea and half of them toward the hinder sea”

— The “former” sea is the Dead Sea (see margin); the “hinder” sea is the Mediterranean. The water that will issue forth from Zion will be divided into two streams (Eze. 47:1-2, 9; margin), both of which first flow

eastward (Joel 3:18). One pours its waters into the Dead Sea so that it is healed (Eze. 47:8), the other apparently flows east and then north-west to finally empty its waters into the Mediterranean. The present Jordan Valley (greatly changed by the earthquake) will possibly form into a great inland lake of fresh water.

“in summer and in winter shall it be”

— These waters will not be dependent upon rain or seasons, but will be fed by the spring that shall gush forth from Mount Zion. It teaches that the true refreshment of the Spirit-Word is not a natural phenom-



ena, but comes from the divine “earthquake” effecting the personal lives of believers continuously.

Universal Monarch Honoured and Respected — v. 9.

The whole earth will ultimately be brought under the control of the new King, and divine laws will become the order of the day. The natural rearrangement of the Land is reflected in the moral regeneration of the people.

VERSE 9

“And Yahweh shall be king over all the earth” — See Eze. 37:27-28; Psa. 2:5-6; 72:8-11; Isa. 2:4; Isa. 54:5; Zech. 4:14; 6:5. This will be declared in the great day of Inauguration, when the Lord Jesus is proclaimed by the voice from Heaven, as

declared in Psa. 2:6-7. The proclamation that Yahweh reigns on earth as universal monarch in the person of His Son will be made in the temple in the presence of representatives of all nations (Eze. 43:7).

“in that day shall there be one Yahweh, and His name one” — The R.V. renders: “Yahweh shall be one, and His Name one.” Yahweh will be manifested in a vast multitude of glorified ones who will bear His name (Rev. 3:12), His nature (2Pet. 1:4), and His glory (Rom. 5:2). Though numbering “ten thousand times ten thousand” (Dan. 7) they will comprise one Family, upon which will be named the Name of Yahweh (Isa. 30:27). His name is that of a family, signifying “He who will become...” testifying to the fact that His purpose is that of the manifestation of His characteristics in creatures of His approval. As the king-priests of the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10) the saints will be spread throughout the world (Mal. 1:11), and yet they shall comprise a unit, being “one” with God and His Son because they are the manifestation of the divine wisdom (John 17:21). This unity in multiplicity is expressed by Zechariah as a great number of the redeemed bound together as one: the fulfilment of the purpose of the Gospel (see John 17:17-23).

The Exaltation of Jerusalem

— vv. 10-11.

The elevation of the Name of Yahweh is the basis upon which the whole world will be redeemed. This will first be seen in the restoration of the Land so that the great temple can be built upon the elevated Mount Zion.

VERSE 10

“All the land shall be turned as a plain” — The effects of this tremendous earthquake will be widespread, and completely change the contour of the Land. The R.V. renders this: “The land shall be made like the Arabah.” The *Arabah* is the present depression of land in the Jordan valley running from the southern section of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Elat, and this statement declares that all the land south of

Jerusalem shall be changed from its present hilly state to form a vast depression or plain. This will accentuate the position and height of Jerusalem which will appear greatly elevated in consequence. The natural “faults” surrounding Jerusalem, referred to above (v. 5), will permit this to happen without the city itself being dragged down with the plain.

“From Geba” — Geba was in the territory of Benjamin, 10 kilometres (6 miles) north of Jerusalem (1Chr. 6:60). It was from this place that David smote the Philistines and took control of the south (2Sam. 5:25).

“To Rimmon south of Jerusalem” — Rimmon was about 53 kms (33 miles) south-west of Jerusalem, situated on the southern border of Judah (Josh. 15:21, 32) and noted for its conspicuous rock formation (Jdg. 23:13).

The territory thus defined from “Geba to Rimmon” is to be set apart for divine use (Zech. 2:12), and styled by Ezekiel the “holy oblation” (Eze. 48:9-12), being the territory separated for worship in the Age to come. The great city Yahweh Shammah (Eze. 48:35), south of Jerusalem, which will accommodate worshippers converging on Jerusalem to visit the temple, will be set up within this territory.

“and it shall be lifted up” — Mount Zion itself will be elevated above the present surrounding hills, to dominate the whole country (Psa. 68:15-16), calling the people to worship (Deu. 33:19).

“and inhabited in her place” — Notice the margin: “Shall abide in her place.” The word “place” literally translated indicates “underparts.” The tremendous earthquake will affect the rest of the countryside, but due to the natural fault underneath Jerusalem, Mount Zion itself will not be shifted out of place by the earthquake, or desolated by the opposition of Gentile forces, but is to be elevated, remaining stable. See note v. 5; Psa. 125:1.

“from Benjamin’s gate” — On the northern side of the ancient city. See Jer. 31:38-40. The new city to be built will be a temple-city, dedicated “to Yahweh” (Jer. 31:38).

“unto the place of the first gate” — Probably the place known as the “old gate” in Neh. 3:6; 12:39, toward the southwest.

“unto the corner gate” — See 2Kgs. 14:13.

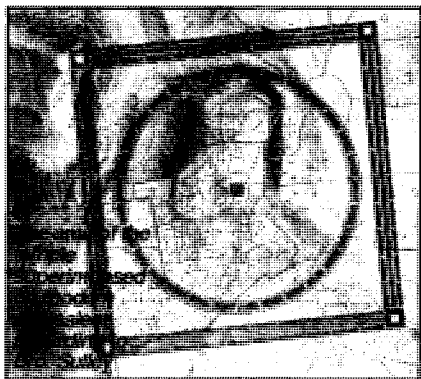
“and from the tower of Hananeel” — The elevated plateau will extend from the tower of Hananeel (signifying *El has favoured*) which was on the north-eastern corner, to the hill Gareb (sig. *Scabby*; see Jer. 31:39) which cannot be identified, to compass about to Goath (sig. *Lowling or Bellowing*) which can be identified with Golgotha. In *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, Bro. Sulley defines the area of the temple site (see illustration).

“unto the king's winepresses” — More correctly, “the king's gardens,” on the southern side of the city.

Jer. 31:40 indicates that the whole of the Valley of Hinnom on the southern side of Jerusalem shall be incorporated in this new temple-city as well as the Kedron, all being “holy unto Yahweh.” The borders of the new boundaries of the city defined by Jeremiah and Zechariah exceed those of any previous time.

VERSE 11

“And men shall dwell in it” — Ezekiel describes how both mortal and immortal priests will be found attending to the service in the temple. The word *yashab* suggests the sitting down; thus to settle, dwell. The picture presented is one of delightful harmony, and a secure environment.



“and there shall be no more utter destruction” — Heb. *cherem*, lit. “a curse.” The status of Jerusalem shall be completely changed, becoming a blessing and no longer a curse as in previous times (Zech. 8:13).

“but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” — The word “safely” is the Hebrew *betach*, signifying a place of refuge; a feeling of security. It is the word used in Eze. 38:11, describing the Holy Land at the time of the Gogian confederacy. Though then with only an *opinion* of security, the age to come will see a safe environment that will not be infringed.

Israel's Enemies Overthrown — vv. 12-15.

The events leading to the establishment of the great temple in Zion will bring all mankind into subjection to the divine laws. Because of the nature of flesh, however, the disciplines of judgment will be needed before men will comply to the laws of Zion. The prophet now depicts the terrible consequences of fleshly opposition to the divine will.

VERSE 12

“And this will be the plague where-with Yahweh will smite all the people”

— Heb. *amim*, lit. “peoples” or Gentiles. See Psalm 110:5-6; Isa. 34; Isa. 66:15-16; Mic. 4:11-13. The word “smite” is the Hebrew *nagaph*, signifying to push, gore, inflict. The manifestation of divine majesty will be comparable to the effect of a pestilence affecting all mankind in rebellion against God (see 2Thes. 1:7-9).

“that have fought against Jerusalem” — Their folly in attacking the city of David will be answered by the powerful forces of nature wielded by Yahweh's Spirit-power in Christ and the saints.

“Their flesh shall consume away” — The invasion of Israel on the part of the confederated Gentile powers was a manifestation of fleshly power in opposition to God, and now flesh will be humbled before the majesty of heaven. Such terrible effects were seen in the detonating thermo-nuclear devices as used against Hiroshima and

Nagasaki. Yahweh will use the powerful elements of nature to effect His judgment as was seen in times past (e.g., 2Kgs. 1:10). Zechariah's statement is the first of three expressions relating to the works of the flesh (see 1Jn. 2:16). Here, the "lust of the flesh" is answered by divine punishment.

"while they stand upon their feet" — At the very moment of their aggressiveness, they will be smitten by the power of Christ.

"and their eyes shall consume away in their holes" — The eyes speak of the "lust of the eyes," used to seek for the benefit of self (1Jn. 2:16). These Gentiles had "gloated" over the ruin of Zion, and are now suitably punished by eternal blindness (see Mic. 4:11).

"and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" — They had spoken blasphemous words against the city and its king, as an expression of the "pride of life" (1Jn. 2:16), but are now silenced forever. Thus appropriate judgments are poured out upon all forms of rebelliousness.

VERSE 13

"And it shall come to pass in that day" — See note on this repetitive phrase, v. 1.

"that a great tumult from Yahweh shall be among them" — The Heb. for "tumult" is *mehumah*, "confusion; panic; uproar." The manifestation of Christ in power, the tremendous upheavals of nature, will cause this (see Eze. 38:21). As a result, the confederated Gentile forces will turn their weapons one against another as they did in the days of Gideon (Jdg. 7:22).

"and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour" — Complete confusion in the ranks of the opponents of Yahweh will result in their self-destruction.

VERSE 14

"And Judah also shall fight" — The remnant of the Jews after the trials of the Gogian invasion (Zech. 13:9) will be strengthened to attack the enemy in posses-

sion of the city.

"at Jerusalem" — The Septuagint renders this as "in;" some translate "for;" the RSV has "against." All are correct. The Jews will fight for and in the city, and against the enemy who will have taken possession of it (v. 2). The very city that saw the humiliation of the Lord Jesus crucified on Golgotha's hill, will be the site of his victorious conquest of the nations.

"And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together"

— The wealth of the Gentiles will be devoted to the glory of the great temple in Zion (Isa. 60:9; Hag. 2:8-9).

"gold, and silver, and apparel" — As Israel took the wealth of Egypt (Exo. 3:22; 12:35), and the valuables of Jericho for the treasury (Josh. 6:19).

"in great abundance" — Thus indicating the great extent of the wealth that shall be offered to the king in Zion.

VERSE 15

"And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague" — As the transgression of Adam affected the lower creation (Gen. 3:17-19), so the wickedness of mankind will result in the devastation of the animal world around them.

Millennial Worship — vv. 16-19.

The glory of Zion will provide for heartfelt worship by mankind who are left after the devastation of Zion. Mankind



The traditional Feast of Tabernacles as celebrated by the Jews today, to memorialise their deliverance from Egypt

shall attend the wonderful ceremonies that will be instituted in the temple.

VERSE 16

“And it shall come to pass” — A phrase usually found in the context of restoration from a time of devastation (cp. Ruth 1:1, when famine led to the restoration of Ruth in union with Boaz).

“that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem”

— This does not mean every individual, but every nation that is left. This is shown by the context where is a reference to the “family of Egypt,” etc. There will be various forms of service to the honour of the great King in the Age to come. Some will be voluntary, as is indicated in Zech. 8:20-23; others will be compulsory, like that described in the verse before us. Doubtless different representatives will be sent up each year, so that gradually all will have the opportunity of ascending for worship (Isa. 2:2-4; Isa. 66:23). Some nations (such as the Gogian powers), however, will not survive the judgments and be excluded from the Kingdom (Isa. 60:12).

“shall even go up from year to year to worship the King” — This will be a compulsory instruction, indicative of the requirement to submit to the authority of the great King. The word “worship” is

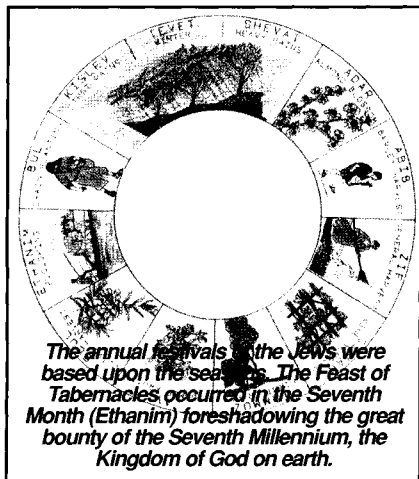
from the Heb. *shachah*, to prostrate; to do homage. Psa. 2:12 declares: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” The word “kiss” (Heb. *nashaq*) in this verse can be translated “to prostrate before; to be attached to.”

“Yahweh of hosts” — Heb. *Yahweh Tzvaoth*. The militant name of Deity, composed of both masculine (*Yahweh*) and feminine (*Tzvaoth*) gender, manifested in the exalted Christ and his Bride. Thus the multitudinous Christ becomes the medium through whom the nations will honour the Deity.

“and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” — This was the Feast of Ingathering or Harvest (Lev. 23:33-44; Deu. 16:13-15) when the people “rejoiced before Yahweh” (Lev. 23:40), in full realisation of divine blessing as seen in the harvest. It was celebrated by Israelites dwelling in booths when they were redeemed from Egypt and journeyed towards the Promised Land. In Rev. 7:9, the feast is identified with the millennium as the Redeemed are pictured with “palms in their hands,” having been successful in the journey through the probational wilderness of life. Thus, the Feast originally celebrated the joy of deliverance after the anxiety of the Passover period (Lev. 23:43), and prophetically expressed the same principle for the future.

At that time, the invitation will be extended to all nations remaining after the divine judgments have been poured out, to associate together in such worship (Isa. 45:20-22). For that purpose they will ascend to Zion where the King in his beauty will preside (Isa. 33:17), that they may worship at Yahweh’s footstool (Eze. 43:7).

Under the Mosaic order, the time of keeping the Feast was governed by the harvest of the Land (Lev. 23:39), and this could well remain a principle of its future observance. As the harvest ripens at different times in various parts of the earth, this would provide for a constant succession of worshippers ascending to Zion — a picture



suggested by Isaiah 66:23. These nations will comprise the fulness of the harvest to Abraham, constituting him the "Father of many nations."

VERSE 17

"And it shall be that whoso will not come up" — Some may flout the divine mercy and refuse the instruction to attend the temple in Jerusalem. Thus rebellion will be a possibility, even during the glorious millennium, even though the saints will exercise an iron control over the people (Rev. 2:26-27), and instruct them in the various centres of the earth (Mal. 1:11). Isaiah declares that the wicked will deal unjustly, even "in the land of uprightness," and refuse "to behold the majesty of Yahweh" (Isa. 26:10).

"of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts" — Notice the emphasis by repetition (v. 16) of the majestic and glorious Name of the multitudinous Christ.

"even upon them shall be no rain" — That which is normally a blessing, and the source of production of food, will be denied those who refuse the spiritual "waters" of the divine laws of the millennium found in the teachings of the Lord Jesus (cp. Jn. 4:14). This will be a disciplinary action, as nations who refused the laws of Zion will already have been destroyed (Isa. 60:12).

VERSE 18

"And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not" — Ever since Egypt was the land of bondage and slavery of the people of Jacob it has been associated throughout Scripture with rebellion and sin. See Isa. 30:1-2; Rev. 11:8. If the Egyptians refuse to conform in the Kingdom to the divine instructions they will be singled out for special discipline.

"that have no rain" — See margin. There is no word for "rain" in the original. The Septuagint renders: "Then upon them shall be the overthrow..." The sternest measures will be taken on such a persistently rebellious nation, for its very preservation in the Kingdom is itself an act of mercy.

"there shall be the plague, where-with Yahweh will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" — So the people of Egypt would again experience a plague, reminiscent of the power revealed through Moses when he was sent to redeem Israel from Egypt. Instead of the blessings of the feast of tabernacles celebrating the joy of redemption from the spirit of Egypt, there would be the plagues of destruction.

Israel the Priestly Nation — vv. 20-21.

The grand conclusion of this dramatic prophecy portrays the final picture of millennial glory. No longer the distressing voice of harsh criticism from the opponents of Israel (ch. 1), the fearful battles of chs. 2-4, the apostate woman of ch. 5, or the distressing effects of the power of the flesh unrestrained. Now the picture is one of purity, fulfilment and joy.

VERSE 20

"In that day" — The final picture is the day of Yahweh's glory, beyond the cleansing wars of Armageddon, and the judgment of the nations. It is the day of Zion's glad morning, the day of Messiah's victory, the day of righteousness and peace.

"there shall be upon the bells" — Margin: "the bridles." It was usual to decorate horses in times of rejoicing and victory, and such an occasion seems suggested here. The "bridles" rivet attention upon that which controls and guides the horses. Previously these horses illustrated the power of the flesh; now they are brought under the control of the glorified elect who will exercise this power and guide the nations (see Zech. 10:3; Rev. 19:14; Rev. 5:9-10).

"of the horses" — The symbol of national power and war. This will be controlled and directed by the "riders" of



the future age: the associates of Christ, as they exercise dominion and authority upon all peoples.

"Holiness unto Yahweh" — This was the inscription on the plate of gold worn by the high priest (Exo. 28:36), and indicated that the wearer was separated and dedicated to Yahweh in thought and action (see Jer. 2:3). Thus it denotes a priestly community such as Israel will constitute, both spiritually and nationally.

It was Yahweh's purpose in calling Israel out of Egypt to constitute the people a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exo. 19:5-6; Jer. 13:11), and His purpose with them in that regard will yet be accomplished (Jer. 33:9). When Israel failed, the

prerogatives will be vested in Israel. To Israel will be granted a double portion of inheritance (Mic. 4:8), as well as the priestly dignity and royal authority. As a nation it will set before men the principle of *"Holiness to Yahweh"* thus drawing all peoples to the true worship (Zech. 8:23) based upon a separated and dedicated life before Yahweh.

"and the pots in Yahweh's house" —

The objects in the former temple dedicated to divine service and used in the worship of the people, thus indicative of the priestly functions (see 1Kgs. 7:45). These pots were later taken into captivity, as were the people (2Kgs. 25:14).

"shall be like the bowls before the altar" —

Elevated to association with the altar sacrifices themselves (Num. 7:84). Israelites, both immortal and mortal, will receive the sacrifices of the people, as the bowls received the blood of the offerings. See note Zech 9:15.

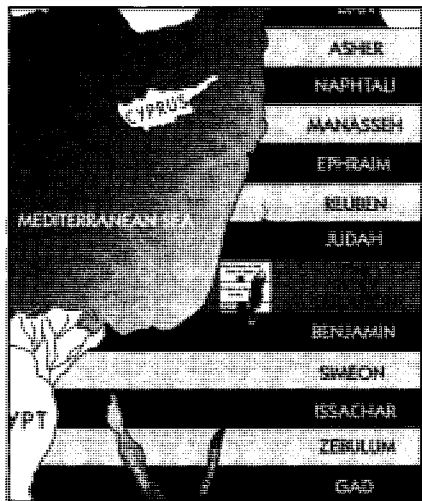
VERSE 21

"Yea" — Emphasising by repetition the consummation of the glorious vision of Zechariah. His vision is centred on the altar in the centre of the great temple on Zion, and the principle of sacrifice and offering that will be conducted by Messiah the Prince (Eze. 46:2-5; 43:18-27).

"every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto Yahweh of hosts" — This territory is within the borders of the Holy Oblation, the territory set apart as the special inheritance of Christ in the Age to come (see notes Zech. 2:12). All life there will be dedicated to Yahweh (Eze. 48:10-12). For use of the divine Name and title see notes Zech. 14:16.

In addition, this phrase indicates that life in Jerusalem and Judah will be completely dedicated to Yahweh's service, so that the very pots, symbolising food consumed, will be holiness unto Him, for the strength derived therefrom will be devoted to His work (Isa. 25:6; 56:7; Eze. 46:22).

"and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them" — This requires the restoration of animal offerings in the temple of the future age, as is taught in



same call went forth to Gentiles (1Pet. 2:9), calling upon them to separate themselves from their previous associations, and to identify themselves with Israel (Eph. 2:11-12). In the future age, Israel as a nation, with the saints as king-priests, will form the channel of approach in worship of Yahweh for all other nations. Israel will then be the "holy nation" in fact, Yahweh's firstborn national son, and as the position of firstborn conferred the privilege of the double portion of inheritance (Deu. 21:17), the priestly dignity (Num. 8:14-16), and the royal authority (2Chr. 21:3), all these

many other prophecies of the Scripture (Isa. 60:7; 19:21; 56:7; Jer. 33:17-18; Eze. 44:11, etc.). Those who attend the temple for worship will identify by this means with the sacrifice of Christ, as we do in the memorials of bread and wine today. When the altar is re-established in the place Yahweh chooses (Deu. 12:5, 11, 14), then the sacrificial code of the "last supper" will be extended to include the typical sacrifice of the animals mentioned in Eze. 43:21; 46:4, etc. Such a form of sacrifice will be necessary in order to graphically impress the people of that Age, when sin, as it is so blatantly and arrogantly practised in these present times, will be greatly diminished through the influence of the Word, and the lives of mortals will be appreciably extended, with the fact that there is need to approach God through the Lamb of His providing. There could be a tendency otherwise for people to feel self-sufficient and self-righteous, and not see the need either for the sacrifice of the Redeemer, or for their own identification therewith (cp. Heb. 7:27). The literal shedding of animal blood in sacrifice will dramatically impress worshippers with the fact of man's mortality and need of redemption. In such ritual lessons, the true nature of a "living sacrifice" is demonstrated in which the life-blood is devoted to Yahweh's service (Rom. 12:1).

Such sacrifices are not designed to supersede the Lord's actual offering, but will serve as a memorial of it, as the communion of bread and wine does now. Sacrifice was discontinued when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Gentiles, because the temple erected in Jerusalem had been appointed of God as the sole centre for such offerings (Deu. 12:5-7; Psa. 132:13-14). For centuries, the city has been trodden down of the Gentiles, but when their time has concluded (Luke 21:24) and the temple is restored, animal sacrifices will again be required.

"and seethe therein" — The word *bashal* signifies "to boil;" hence to cook, to complete. It has been translated "brought forth" (Gen. 40:10), "baked" (Num. 11:8), and "boiled" (1Kgs. 19:21). It appears as "boil" in the prophecy of the future temple,

referring to the preparation of the offerings in the corner courts: Eze. 46:20, 24. The expression implies not merely sacrifice, but the sacrificial feast of fellowship by which the offerer is joined in communion with Yahweh. Such a sacrificial feast is suggested in Isa. 25:6-7.

"and in that day" — The final, triumphant, use of this phrase, as if to indicate the glorious result of all that has occurred in the Day of Yahweh, from the Judgment in Sinai, to the Victory in Jerusalem, and the inauguration of the grand temple on Zion.

"there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts" — The term "Canaanite" is used in this verse for ecclesiastical traders, such as the clergy of Christendom, and all purveyors of religious error and apostasy. The use of this word throughout Scripture illustrates that fact. When Abraham entered the Land of Promise, the record states that "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6). The word "Canaanite" comes from a root *kana* signifying "to bend the knee," hence to pretend humility, and thus a trader seeking to persuade his client to purchase his wares. Because of this, the RSV renders the word in Zech. 14:21 as "trader."

The Canaanites were a people cursed of God (Gen. 9:25), and thus typical of the enemy of the righteous. They are a fitting type of the spiritual traders, the ecclesiastical merchants of the world (Rev. 18:11), who trade in the "bodies and souls of men" (v. 13, mg.), and are prepared to "bow the knee" in humiliating themselves to gain an advantage. There were many such in the house of Yahweh, when the Lord visited it at his first advent, and drove from its precincts the traders in religion who desecrated that holy place. He indignantly told them that they had turned the holy place into a "den of thieves" (Mk. 1:17). This action indicates the abhorrence of Yahweh to those within the ecclesial "house" who use the Truth for a form of personal prestige (cp. 3Jn. 1:9), or for material advantage (Mat. 23:13-16). Even the grasping of the repute and praise of their fellows is a form of such trading (Psa. 49:18).

This form of ecclesiastical trading will be rigorously suppressed in the millennium, whilst normal, legitimate trading (under different principles to those manifested today) will continue (Isa. 23:18).

It is significant, that whilst the clergy are described as Canaanites, or merchantmen, their churches are scripturally described as “bazaars” or places of business in which trading for the development of the religious system is encouraged and developed. In *Exposition of Daniel*, Bro. Thomas makes this point when expounding Dan. 11:39, declaring that the term “most strong holds” in which a strange god was to be acknowledged with “gold, silver, precious stones,” etc., by the Apostasy is from the Hebrew, *Mivtzahrai Mahuzzim*, which signifies “Bazaars of Guardians,” the guardians being the patron saints of Rome and its harlot daughters.

Peter warned of these “Canaanites” who, he declared, would make “merchandise” of the followers of the Lord (2Pet 2:3). His prophecy was fulfilled, so that their numbers in the earth today are legion, because error is in the ascendancy, and men fear not Yahweh. Even within the Brotherhood there is a danger of allowing such an influence to permeate the arrangements of ecclesial labour. Any evidence of “trading,” exchanging, and monetary benefits need to be removed from activities, so that only the “sacrifice” of a “willing offering” is seen (cp. Exo. 35:29).

The time is hastening when the judg-

ment of Yahweh of hosts will be poured out upon these wicked perverters of the Truth, so that both they and the systems of error they control, shall be removed.

The outpouring of this judgment on Babylon the Great will cause “the merchants of the earth to weep and mourn; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more” (Rev. 18:11). Men will then turn to Yahweh in truth, rejoicing in the glorious benefits of Christ’s reign, and particularly in the elevating influence of divine worship. With joy will they turn to one another and say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3).

May the time soon come when the death-knell of Apostasy in all its forms shall toll out the iniquitous system with its Idol Shepherd and its harlot daughters, when the shackles of slavery to sin and religious superstition shall be snapped for ever, because “*Yahweh of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously*” (Isa. 24:23). Then “*Yahweh is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of His land*” (Psa. 10:16).

May the glorious vision of Zechariah soon be a reality in the earth, and **Holiness to Yahweh** the centre and focus of all mankind!

“Holiness Unto Yahweh”

These words are drawn from the Law, and provide an intimation indicating that the Law of Moses, in a modified form (i.e., Eze. 43:27) will become the foundation of law and divine worship in the Kingdom Age (Isa. 2:3; 42:21; 56:6-7; 60:7; Jer. 33:14-18; Mal. 3:1-4, etc.) These key words, with their full emphasis upon the principles of divine worship, will not only be widely displayed in the Kingdom Age, but in large measure will constitute the whole theme of the Kingdom. This will bring about a rejuvenated world. The “refuge of lies” (Isa. 28:17) will be swept away, leaving the earth spiritually and morally cleansed. The attitude of mortals will be directed by the Word as they see the immortalised saints as perfect manifestations of the Eternal Spirit, for they shall be made “equal unto the angels” (Lk. 20:36). May the remaining time pass quickly, if it be the Father’s will. And the vision will become the reality. “Even so, come Lord Jesus!” — *J.U.*



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THE STATE OF THE ECCLESIA
OF THE RESTORATION.

WHO IS THE FATHER, AND
MASTER?

WHERE IS FAITHFULNESS TO
BE FOUND?



Malachi ch. 1:1 to 1:13

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THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI

THE APOCALYPSE IN MALACHI

THE Apocalypse is contained in Malachi as well as in all the rest of the prophets; that is, the same development of the divine purpose is exhibited in Malachi's predictions as in the Patmian revelation. Malachi informs us that "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same Yahweh's name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to His name, and a pure offering for His name shall be great among the nations, saith Yahweh of hosts." John testifies the same thing in saying, "every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for the Aions of the Aions" (Apo. 5:13). This is a universal ascription, which ascends from every place as incense and a pure offering to His name, which is "dreadful among the nations" at that time.

This name is not dreadful now, but a by-word in the lips of the profane. This, however, will not always be. Malachi directs our attention to "the day of the coming of the Messenger of the Covenant" as to a day that few will be able to abide. "Who," saith he, "may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand up when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." In this day men will be taught to venerate this name, and not to take it lightly into their lips. The Apocalypse treats of this same great and terrible day of the Lord's coming, and of its effect upon the wicked: "Behold he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Apo. 1:7). And, "behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (ch. 16:15). And again, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (ch. 22:12). And when this coming is manifested, "the Ark of God's Testament" is seen, and there are "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Apo. 11:19). These judgments make the day a dreadful one; and, as Malachi testifies, a day burning as an oven, in which the proud and wicked doers of the epoch shall be destroyed as stubble, and neither root nor branch of them be left behind. This total and utter extirpation of the world-rulers is attributed to the saints both by Malachi and John in their postresurrectional operations. Malachi predicts their resurrection in these words, saying, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his beams; and *ye shall go forth*, and grow up as calves of the stall." Being thus raised, the work they have to do is expressed in the words, "and ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do, saith Yahweh of hosts." The Apocalypse teaches the same doctrine. It sets forth the prerogal resurrection of the saints, and their postresurrectional judgment of the world-rulers and their hosts. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection * * * they *shall be* priests of the Deity and of the Anointed; and *shall* reign with him a thousand years." Having part in the first resurrection, "they sit upon thrones, and judgment is given to them." The execution of the judgment appointed puts them in possession of the thrones; and in executing the judgment written, they bind the Dragon, cast the Beast and the False Prophet into a lake of fire, overthrow Babylon, and torment with famine, pestilence, and sword, the worshippers of the beast and his image, and the receivers of his mark in their forehead, or in their hand. Thus apocalyptically "they tread the wicked as ashes under the soles of their feet," as foretold by Malachi, and by conquest establish their right to rule all nations as kings of God, seeing that they will have subdued them by His spirit energizing them with the might of omnipotence. — *J. Thomas, Eureka*, pp. 83-85.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALACHI THE PROPHET

The concluding book in the Old Testament brings to finality Yahweh's work of restoration in Israel, following their return from exile. It was the remnant of the nation He had brought out of Egypt; the rest remained scattered abroad among the Gentiles. He had endured this people for a thousand years, since their exodus from Egypt. With the exception of scattered bouts of repentance and faithfulness, they had proudly rejoiced in their privileged position as "the chosen people" whilst treating with disdain the responsibilities associated with their high calling. The prophets had constantly rebuked them for their waywardness, urging them to recognise and honour their responsibilities. Jeremiah testified: "Yahweh hath sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear... I sent unto you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!" (Jer. 25:4; 44:4).

But they would not hearken. They rejected the blessings Yahweh had bountifully bestowed upon them. With their return from exile in the days of Ezra, Yahweh had offered them the opportunity of a new beginning. Babylon was behind them. They came to Jerusalem under the guidance of Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor. They returned with enthusiasm and rejoicing, and in anticipation of restoring their temple and city in preparation for the coming of Messiah. Ezra, the priest and administrator, and Nehemiah the governor, followed Zerubbabel. They added their encouragement and dedicated labour in the work of restoration.

In the early days it all seemed so promising, even though some of the aged men wept at the deficiencies of the second temple as they compared its inadequacies with the glory of Solomon's building (Ezra 3:12). In this, they failed to appreciate that Yahweh delights not in the grandeur of ostentatious glory, but rather in the humble dedication and commitment of faithful men and women, who consistently reveal their love for their God and His Word.

Following the exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah, Nehemiah was sent to restore the spirit of the people, and to stimulate and encourage them to rebuild the walls and gates that should have protected the city. He inspired them to a keen response. In reacting favourably to his stirring exhortation they were moved to exclaim: "Let us rise up and build!" (Neh. 2:18).

Nehemiah remained in Jerusalem for twelve years (Neh. 2:6; 5:14), during which time he retained control over the affairs of the nation, despite the attempts of enemies — both within and without — to undermine his work and his influence. At the end of the twelve years, as previously agreed, he returned to the court of Persia. He thus went into a "far country" (cp. Luke 19:11-12), and during his absence his enemies led the people astray, so that standards of both belief and practice deteriorated drastically. Eliashib, the priest, who was "allied" to his Gentile friend, Tobiah, had installed this enemy of the Truth in the precincts of the temple; the needs of the Levites were no longer provided for; labour and trading had been introduced on the Sabbaths; Jewish men were marrying Gentile women, casting aside their covenanted wives. In these dreadful circumstances, the voice of the faithful prophet Malachi was raised in vigorous protest at the ungodly behaviour of the people. He urged them to repudiate their evil ways and to regain the fervour manifested during Nehemiah's restoration. Malachi prophesied at a time after the completion of the events described in Neh. 12, and before the return of the governor from Persia in ch. 13. He promised them that their "Lord" would come "suddenly to his temple" — thus foretelling the "second coming" of Nehemiah, as a type of Messiah (Mal. 3:1). In these last days, faithful brethren and sisters of Christ await the hour when he, indeed, will come "suddenly to his temple," to purify the sons of Levi, to offer sacrifices in righteousness, and to reward his faithful followers with an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

With the conclusion of the prophecy of Malachi, there is no further divinely inspired record from the voice of either prophet or priest, as a period of darkness overshadowed the people of Judah for a period of more than 400 years, until the birth of Israel's Messiah. It is appropriate that the Old Testament should conclude with the warning of further divine judgments to come: "Lest I come," saith Yahweh, "and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:6). As the Old Testament concludes with a curse (a reminder of the curse of sin and death in Eden); so the New Testament commences with the announcement of the birth of One who would bear away the curse, bringing blessings to both Jew and Gentile. Thus, righteousness, or justification cannot come by the ritual of the Law — therefore the blindness of heart in the people of the Book did not allow them to turn to him who died to deliver from the curse and burden of the Law (Rom. 11:22).

Thus, the short, but fiery prophecy provides clear insight into the real needs of the Laodicean times — Jewish and Gentile — and contains a stern reproof of the leaders, the priests themselves. Its bold exposition of eternal Truth, and of the certainty of ultimate national judgment and vindication of righteousness, the series of prophetic books closes with Malachi in a manner worthy of its lofty predecessors.

IMPORTANT DATES

The prophecy of Malachi was delivered in the period of the Persian empire, and the following events are significant:

BC536 — Cyrus issues a decree permitting the Jews to return from exile in Babylon. They were led back to Jerusalem by Zerubbabel (Ezra 1).

BC520 — The messages of Haggai and Zechariah sound forth, urging the people to respond to the appeal to labour in the divine service, and to build the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

BC457 — The second return of the exiles under Ezra (Ezra 7).

BC444 — The twentieth year of Artaxerxes; Nehemiah's work commences.

BC430 — Approximate time when the prophecy of Malachi was delivered to the nation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME

The name "Malachi" (מַלְאָכִי) signifies *My Messenger*, from the Hebrew *malak*, to despatch a message as a deputy with authority. Nothing is known of the background of the prophet. He presented the Voice of Yahweh during the absence of the Governor, and thus is typical of the true remnant of faithful believers in the Gentile times. He is represented as a *true prophet* (ch. 1:1), as a *true priest* (ch. 2:7), as the *forerunner to John the Baptist* (ch. 3:1), as the *Messiah to Israel* (ch. 3:1-3), as the *spirit of Elijah* (ch. 4:5).

Five messengers are presented in the prophecy.

- Malachi himself, who prepared the people for the return of Nehemiah, as representative of the prophets (ch. 1:1);
- the priests, who should have borne the Voice of Yahweh to the people (ch. 2:7);
- John the Baptist, who introduced the Lord's ministry (Mat. 11:10; Lk. 1:76; Mat. 17:12);
- Elijah in his great work to restore Israel in preparation for the kingdom (Mal. 4:5); and
- the Lord Jesus Christ as the "messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1; Dan. 9:25), and the "Word made flesh" (Jn. 1:14).

THE THEME OF THE PROPHECY

The book contains one single prophecy, the character of which is condemnatory throughout. Describing the great love which Yahweh has shown to His people (ch. 1:2-5), the prophet by appealing to the history of the nation, demonstrates that not only do the priests profane the Name of Yahweh by an unholy performance of the service at the altar (1:6; 2:9), but the people also repudiate their divine calling both by heathen associations

and divorce (2:10-16), and by their murmuring at the delay of the judgment. Soon, Yahweh will reveal Himself as a just Judge, send His messenger to warn the ungodly and urge them to repentance, appealing to the history of the nation. He will suddenly come to His temple as the expected Angel-Messenger of the covenant, to refine the sons of Levi, punish the sinners who have broken the covenant, and by removing the wicked, but blessing the godly with salvation and righteousness, make the children of Israel the people of His possession (2:17 to 4:6).

The contents of the book therefore arrange themselves into four sections, like the four horns of the altar.

1. A Call to Israel in View of Present Sins: ch. 1.

- a. Israel is Called Upon to Acknowledge its Privilegesvv. 1-5.
- b. Israel Despises the Divine Lovevv. 6-11.
- c. Israel Profanes the Name and Holy Things of Yahwehvv. 12-14.

2. The Privilege and Responsibilities of the Priests: ch. 2.

- a. Threatened Punishment for the Priestsvv. 1-10.
- b. The People Reproved as Covenant Breakersvv. 11-16.
- c. Impending Divine Judgmentv. 17.

3. A Call to Israel in View of Impending Judgment: ch. 3.

- a. The Approach of the Judgevv. 1-6.
- b. Condemnation for Slighting Institutions of Divine Worship.....vv. 7-12.
- c. Israel's Blasphemous Wordsvv. 13-15.
- d. The Righteous Thoughts of Yahweh's People.....vv. 16-18.

4. The Approaching Day of Redemption: ch. 4.

- a. The Declaration of Judgment Against Sinv. 1.
- b. The Elevation of the Righteousvv. 2-3.
- c. A Warning from the Pastv. 4.
- d. The Coming Work of Elijahvv. 5-6.

THE EIGHT QUESTIONS OF MALACHI TO THE NATION

Ch. 1:2 — Where is your love of Yahweh, the Father and Master?

Ch. 1:6 — Why do you despise Yahweh's Name?

Ch. 1:7 — Why do you offer polluted bread on Yahweh's Altar?

Ch. 2:14 — Why do you not uphold Yahweh's marriage covenant?

Ch. 2:17 — Why do you weary Yahweh with your actions?

Ch. 3:7 — Why do you question Yahweh's appeal to return to Him?

Ch. 3:8 — Why continue to rob Yahweh of His rightful demands?

Ch. 3:13-14 — Why speak against Yahweh's character and purpose?

These eight Questions correspond to the eight Beatitudes presented by the Lord Jesus in his policy speech of the kingdom at the beginning of his ministry (Mat. 5:1-10), and to the eight Woes that he expressed at the conclusion of his time with the people (Mat. 23). They demonstrate the Laodicean spirit evident in the days of Malachi. As the ecclesia of the Apocalypse "knew not" their perilous spiritual state (Rev. 3:17), so the ecclesia in the days of the prophet were ignorant of their foolishness. They did not recognise that Yahweh would not accept a service and worship without the true spirit of honour to Him in every aspect of life.

The prophet appeals to the nation to redeem itself from the apostasy that was settling in to the hearts of the people. That his work was successful to a small degree is evident inasmuch that at the coming of the "Servant Messenger," some four hundred years later, there were some "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Lk. 2:25).

THE MILITANT NAME IN THE BOOK OF MALACHI

The divine identity, *Yahweh Tz'vaath*, occurs 24 times in the prophecy. This is significant because the name is a combination of masculine and feminine genders. *Yahweh* signifies *He Who Shall Be*, and is in the masculine gender; but the title *Tz'vaath* is feminine. Together they express the unity of the Father and the Word (the divine covenant, described as "Jerusalem from above, the mother of us all" — Gal. 4:26).

The word *Tz'vaath* ("hosts") is the militant title of the Deity, appropriate to the prophecy of Malachi, as words of divine judgment pour forth upon a nation called by Yahweh, but who were not manifesting the qualities of the chosen people. Israel was under the eyes of the great Judge (ch. 2:17), for "who shall abide the day of his coming?"

It is further significant that its occurrences in the book of Malachi (24) express the formula: 2 x 12, representing the tribes of Israel doubled (cp. Rev. 7:4-10), comprising both Jews and Gentiles.

THE TEN OCCURRENCES OF THE NAME AND THE FACE

The word "name" (Heb. *shem*) appears in the following places: chs. 1:6 (x2), 11 (x3); 14; 2:2, 5; 3:16; 4:2.

The word "faces" (Heb. *panim*) also appears ten times as follows: chs. 1:8, 9 (see mg); 2:3, 5, 9 (x 2, as in mg); 3:1, 14, 16 ("before"); 4:5 ("before").

WHO MAY ABIDE THE DAY OF HIS COMING?

CHAPTER ONE

AN APPEAL IN VIEW OF THE SIN OF THE PEOPLE

Malachi is called from obscurity to express the warnings of Yahweh at the attitude of the nation. It had received great benefits through the work of His labourers since the days of the restoration from Babylon. Much work had been achieved in the rebuilding of the temple under Joshua and Zerubbabel and the city walls renovated by the guidance of Nehemiah. At first, the people were enthusiastic, and responded to the appeals of the voice of faith, but the seeming delay of the return of Nehemiah from the "far country" of Persia, led to a neglect in spiritual things. The people became spasmodic in their attendance to the divine worship; thoughtless in upholding the standards of life that had been set before them by the pioneers; and soon drifted into apostasy.

It needed the stern warning of the final prophet of Judah to bring a realisation to their conscience; and his appeal for a resurgence of faithfulness was vital and urgent.

Israel is Called Upon to Acknowledge Its Privileges — vv. 1-5.

The nation had been redeemed from the oppression of Babylon's seventy years domination, and had been given faithful leaders to bring them to a state of favour before their God. It now should respond in faithful worship and service in apprecia-

tion of the great blessings that had been poured upon it.

VERSE 1

"The burden" — Heb. *massa*, a load, tribute, or oracle. It was to be a declaration of warning and rebuke, to bring before the notice of the people their responsibility to

uphold the purity of Yahweh's teaching.

"of the word of Yahweh" — The voice of authority, bearing the power of the message. The Word would accomplish its designed purpose (Isa. 55:11), and must be heeded (Amos 3:8).

"to Israel" — To the nation, with a desire to redeem them from their fall into ungodly behaviour. The statement is contrasted elsewhere when the prophet conveys Yahweh's judgment "against" the enemies of Israel (cp. Eze. 29:2; 39:1).

"by Malachi" — Sig. "My Messenger." Thus his name is appropriate to the duty to which Yahweh called him. As the messenger of Yahweh he was a type of the Lord Jesus, who was the "Word made flesh" (Jn. 1:14; 7:15; Heb. 1:2; 3:1).

VERSE 2

"I have loved you, saith Yahweh" — A divine characteristic, for true love is only of Him and is a quality of His nature (1Jn. 4:8). It was the reason for the work of God in redeeming His people from Egypt (Hos. 11:1), and now the same point is made to the nation emancipated from Babylon. Thus He loves Israel "for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28), notwithstanding the difficult circumstances through which the nation has passed (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; Mal. 3:17; Deu. 7:8; 10:15; 33:3).

"Yet ye say" — Not so much in words, as by action and attitude. It is proper to express gratitude for benefits received, but the Jews were so involved in their own activities and rituals, that they were unable to recognise the divine love.

"Wherein hast Thou loved us?" — They demanded proof of the divine love. Though compassed with difficulties, they lacked the vision to see beyond their own circumstances, and to perceive the ultimate purpose of Yahweh in their redemption from Babylon. They failed to see that they themselves created the difficulties that existed. Their redemption from Egypt and Babylon and privileged position amongst the nations constituted one of the greatest proofs of Yahweh's love. They had the Rock of Israel upon which to lean in time of trouble.

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Yahweh" — Yahweh reminds them of their origin. Esau and Jacob were twins, born to Isaac and Rebekah, and therefore could claim the same rights and blessings.

"yet I loved Jacob" — Inasmuch as the divine foresight could see the relative characteristics of both sons, and selected Jacob for the spiritual qualities he later developed. In this, "God, who quickeneth the dead, calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). The subsequent history of two peoples show how wise was Yahweh's choice.

"I Have Loved You"

These words appear to be a reference to the Law in Deu. 7:7-8; 10:15; 33:3. Yahweh had provided indisputable proof of His distinctive love for Israel. Hence the whole nature of the Truth is Israelitish: "the hope of Israel." Those who are not associated with the Hope of Israel are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (Acts 28:20; Eph. 2:12). Yahweh had offered immeasurable blessings to Israel under the terms of the covenant (Deu. 28; Lev. 26); but these blessings — in accord with the terms of the covenant — had been withdrawn when Israel proved faithless to the covenant (ch. 3:10). We should note the application of these words to spiritual Israel. How richly Yahweh has revealed His love for us! But do we respond, as have the faithful ones throughout the ages, or do we react to His goodness and grace as did Israel in the days of Malachi? Do we doubt His love? Do we fail to recognise the evidence of His love? Are we careless and slothful in our attitude toward divine worship? Do we treat our obligations to Him with casual indifference? We must answer all these questions critically, as we examine ourselves, correcting any aspects of our lives that are contrary to His will; otherwise the questions will be answered for us at the Judgment Seat of Christ. — *J.U.*

“Wherein Hast Thou Loved Us?”

Such a question could only come from a people who lacked spiritual discernment and understanding of the Truth, and who were sadly deficient in faith. Because they did not manifest love for God they thought He lacked love for them. Their attitude was: “Give us proof of your love!” They had forgotten past and present blessings; they had no awareness of the presence of Yahweh amongst them through His angels; they lacked a vision of that which the future held in relation to the coming of their Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom. This question is the cry of a petulant and disappointed people; almost like the cry of a sulking, chastised child: “My father does not love me any more!” They had insufficient depth of spiritual understanding, and therefore failed to recognise that all their present troubles were entirely of their own making. This question represents the inward thought of the nation at this time. This was a reflection of their true disposition. No love for God; no love for His Word; no recognition of His proven love for them. — *J.U.*

VERSE 3

“And I hated Esau” — This does not express an enmity which is unreasonable, but that Esau was “less loved” than Jacob. When he manifested ungodly qualities of antagonism against Jacob, Esau was rejected by God, and left to his own scruples and fate. Thus the phrase indicates a relative preference for one in comparison with the other (see use of the expression in Mat. 6:24; Jn. 12:25; Gen. 29:30-31). Although born into the family of faith, and the elder of Jacob, Esau was a “profane man” (Heb. 12:16), showing that the “flesh profits nothing.”

“and laid his mountains and his heritage waste” — By the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, as prophesied by Jeremiah (ch. 27:3-8). Esau’s descendants

settled in the Arabian Peninsula, and formed themselves into the mighty nation of Edom, concerning whom Obadiah pronounced complete destruction.

“for the dragons of the wilderness” — The whole area became a desolate wilderness inhabited by “jackals” (as the RV translates the word “dragons”); see Isa. 34:11-15. In its religious association, Edom is reflected in spiritual Babylon, which similarly is destined to be inhabited by the figurative wild beasts (Rev. 18:2).

VERSE 4

“Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places” — With the downfall of Babylon, Israel saw the uprise of Idumea (Edom), but it did not prosper for long, being finally absorbed by the Maccabees (BC175-135), in accordance with Dan. 11:34.

“thus saith Yahweh of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down” — Daniel declared that Yahweh rules in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:17), and flesh can do nothing to alter His determined purpose.

“and they shall call them, The border of wickedness” — It formerly was known as the “border of Edom” (Josh. 15:1), but being invaded and destroyed, it would be known in history for its former evil policies and its antagonism against the people of God.

“and, The people against whom Yahweh hath indignation for ever” — The divine judgment levelled against Edom and its people. Edom’s destiny typi-

The Principle of Election

This election had relation to the purpose of God revealed in the promises of God to Abraham and Isaac. He purposed to make ‘a mighty nation’ of their posterity, out of whom ‘He should come that shall have dominion’ (Num. 24:19). This purpose could not be accomplished if left to the undirected will of man.

— *Elpis Israel*, p. 270.

fies Yahweh's ultimate purpose to overthrow Gentilism and elevate Israel. Edom was given a choice of either accepting the Jews' religion or destruction: to be converted or overthrown. This will be the fate of all Gentile powers. Israel should have borne in mind their great privilege, and to have rejoiced in the glorious future as the nation of Yahweh's calling.

VERSE 5

"And your eyes shall see" — There would be clear evidence of the divine judgment against the enemies of Israel. This will again be the case at the return of the Lord Jesus, when he reveals his power and authority to all mankind. The future will see him as "he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

"and ye shall say, Yahweh will be magnified from the border of Israel" — This occurred in the years BC175-136, when the Jewish Maccabees extended the power of Judah on all sides. The victory of the Maccabees was typical of the greater triumph when the Lord Jesus converts the Jewish community, and extends his power over the Gentile world (Eze. 25:14; Zech. 9:13; 10:5-6. The centre of the future society will be Zion, from which Yahweh will be "magnified" to the ends of the earth (Isa. 2:2-4). The word is from the Heb. *gadal*, signifying "to cause to grow; to be brought up; become great." The borders of Israel will be extended until the law from Zion incorporates all nations.

How Israel Despised the Divine Love — vv. 6-11.

In view of the declaration of Yahweh's enmity against the Edomites, and His selection of Jacob rather than Esau, Israel should have been absolutely committed to upholding the divine righteousness, and to responding in gratitude for the blessings showered upon the nation throughout its history. But it refused to recognise the honour of their God, and set aside the principles of His love.

Identity of Malachi

Much has been written in relation to the identity of this prophet. It has been suggested that he is Ezra, Mordecai, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah or even John Baptist. That none of these are correct is evident when we consider his name, message and the time of writing. Malachi wrote after the temple was rebuilt, a work that was commenced by Joshua and Zerubbabel many years earlier. Having completed the work of rebuilding the walls, restoring the true worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem and settling the people during a period of twelve years, Nehemiah then returned to Persia (Neh. 5:14; 13:6). During his absence, the people and the priests, through the instigation of those who were Nehemiah's sworn enemies, became very corrupt and degenerate. It was at this time that Yahweh brought Malachi onto the scene, in order to show, that even though Nehemiah was absent, their God was not. Malachi reproved the people for their ingratitude, their neglect, their contempt of His worship and the breach of His laws. In doing this he elevated their minds to the expectation of the Messiah and his forerunner, John the Baptist. Their thinking was of the mould: "Where is the promise of his coming?" With a comparison of the way in which the Truth is being weakened today, by the listening to "teachers, having itching ears," the book of Malachi has undoubtedly a powerful Message for believers of the last days.

Comparisons of Malachi and Nehemiah

Non-payment of tithes: Neh.13:9-10 = Mal. 3:8.

Temple services not kept up: Neh. 13:10 = Mal. 1:7; 12; 13.

Not keeping the Sabbath: Neh. 13:15 = Mal. 3:14; 4:4

Marriage out of the Truth: Neh. 13:23 = Mal. 2:11-16.

— G.H.

Does A Son Honour His Father?

The commandment that a son should honour his father was clearly set forth in Exo. 20:12 and Deu. 5:16. But Israel should have understood that loving respect for parents was to be recognised as a type of the filial love they should have manifested for their greater Father in heaven. The natural was to be a type of the spiritual. Israel had rejected Yahweh's love (v. 2) and were therefore not honouring Him, as their position of Sonship demanded. Israel was Yahweh's son (Exo. 4:22; Hos. 11:1, 4.) Note also the discourse between the Lord and the Jews in John 8:32-44. The lesson is clear: We cannot claim God for our Father unless we earnestly strive to reflect His likeness, manifesting His characteristics. We are to teach our children the same principles (Eph. 6:1-2) and to remember the same lesson ourselves. Every time we address God in prayer as "our Father" (Mat. 6:9-13; Isa. 63:16), we face the challenge of what we ourselves should be. Malachi asserts that these people of Israel had neither learned the truth of this matter, nor applied the principle to themselves. The question is: *Have we learned and applied these requirements in our own lives?* — J.U.

VERSE 6

"A son honoureth his father" — Because a father is both the source of his life, the protector and helper in his development, and the continual example to whom the son should respond.

"and a servant his master" — Because the servant is nourished by the master, and is provided with the means to maintain his life by the service he provides.

"if then I be a Father, where is Mine honour?" — Israel is God's son, born from the womb of Egypt (Exo. 4:22; Hos. 11:1), and sonship brings responsibilities. A son should render obedience and love, manifesting due reverence. Such an attitude on the part of children, is acceptable, being "well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col.

3:20). Yahweh is the "heavenly Father" of whom "all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14).

"and if I be a Master," — A servant is expected to loyally serve his master, and to fear offending him. Thus, Israel should have honoured the service of Yahweh, and have continued obedient to His laws. But they yielded a cold, dispassionate, grumbling service, not with the attitude the apostle Paul commended to the Colossians: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, *fearing God*" (Col. 3:22).

"where is My fear?" — The word signifies to have respect; to offer honour. A servant should offer to Yahweh the service of homage, and uphold in every respect His commandments. By "the fear of Yahweh men depart from evil" (Pro. 16:6).

"saith Yahweh of hosts" — The first of 24 occurrences of this Name in Malachi's prophecy. See notes on p. 232. Use of the title shows Yahweh's concern for His children. The angelic "hosts" encamp around those called to manifest divine glory (Psa. 34:7), overlooking their destiny. But the same power that could help Israel, can also punish! The people had the choice of either help or discipline (Psa. 44:9-10).

"unto you, O priests, that despise My name" — The priests had a special responsibility to instruct and lead the whole community in spiritual matters. The word "despise" is from the Heb. *bazah*, to hold in contempt; to set lightly by. The word is translated "contemptible" in v. 7. By their slack example they declared that the demands of worship could be relaxed. They gave God second thought, not realising their laxity. The same attitude can be seen in believers, as the apostle Paul indicated in 1Cor. 11:27, 29, where the word "unworthily" signifies "to treat with contempt; without any concern; as unnecessary or common." Therefore, to act in a way by which the identification with the sacrifice of Christ is deemed of little importance.

"And ye say, Wherein have we

despised Thy name?" — In so declaring, they were completely blind to their real state (cp. Rev. 3:17).

VERSE 7

"Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar" — The flesh, fat and meal consumed upon the altar were considered as "the bread of Yahweh" (Lev. 21:6, 17; Num. 28:2). His food (Lev. 3:11) was consumed by the "fire" of His altar (Lev. 9:24; 6:12; Mk. 9:49). The altar is thus considered as the "table of Yahweh" (cp. 1Cor. 10:21). "Polluted bread," therefore, refers to unacceptable sacrifices, such as described in Mal. 1:8. Each person is identified with his offering, consumed by the fire (spirit) of Yahweh.

"and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?" — This bold declaration was demonstrated by their actions (cp. v. 12), and by displaying a casual attitude to the holy things of God (Eze. 8:12; 11:21; 14:3).

"In that ye say, The table of Yahweh" — The altar, established by the instruction of Yahweh (Exo. 20:24), as a medium through which believers could acceptably approach the Deity.

"is contemptible" — They treated the solemn principles of Yahweh's instruction as unnecessary, as do those today who "forsake the assembling of themselves together" (Heb. 10:25). Jews in the days of the Lord Jesus, were similarly guilty in declaring that the "gift" was more important than the altar. (Mat. 23:18-19). In that, they affirmed that salvation of the individual ("gift") is more important than the Christ-altar established to honour the work of God. It is the Altar that sanctifies the offerer and offering; thus individual salvation depends upon the element of God-manifestation seen in the Altar! To deny this makes the Table of Yahweh contemptible.

VERSE 8

"And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" — The

Acknowledging The Rights Of A Master

Whereas use of the term "father" speaks of Yahweh's rightful entitlement to receive love and honour from those called to be His sons and daughters, the word "master" speaks of the need for obedience and loyalty. Israel was the servant of Yahweh, as well as His national son (Deu. 32:15, 36, 43, cp. Isa. 43:10; Neh. 1:10). The word rendered "servant" in ch. 1:6 also occurs in ch. 4:4 where it is used favourably of Moses. But whilst Moses was a faithful servant in God's "house" (Heb. 3:5), Israel was not. They continually forgot that they had been elevated from being "bondmen in the land of Egypt" to become the servants of the Living God (Exo. 13:3; Deu. 15:15). Thus the Lord Jesus Christ "pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3) because he was in bondage to serve his Father. Similarly, we are "not our own" (1Cor. 6:19-20). The magnitude of this principle and calling should not escape us, as it did Israel. Yahweh was understandably challenging His people when He asked: "Where is Mine Honour?" A pointed reference to the fifth commandment. When a child is well educated from birth, they are taught — as was Israel — that they must honour their father, respect his authority, and be obedient to those things he requires of them for their own wellbeing. The child soon learns that if he develops and manifests love, respect and obedience for his parent, the parent will respond with love and protection and wise guidance. But Israel failed to learn these lessons, which were taught them in the Word, and even in nature itself. As a result, they constantly and repeatedly found themselves alienated from their heavenly Parent, who loved them and always sought their wellbeing. Israel gave greater honour to a Gentile governor than they did to their Heavenly Father (v. 8). It is so easy to allow other interests and objectives to overshadow the love and honour we should give to our Father. — *J.U.*

Law expressly forbade damaged, sick or lame beasts for the sacrificial offerings (Lev. 22:22-23). Wholeness was an essential principle of sacrifice, whether in the daily burnt offering, or the sin and trespass offerings, because they were all typical of the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

“offer it now unto thy governor” — Heb. *pechah*, a word of Persian origin, indicating the appointed representative. The governor appointed by the Persian monarch was Nehemiah, who was noted for his determined actions, and forceful reaction to those who opposed the divine will (cp. Neh. 13:7-11).

“will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith Yahweh of hosts” — Israel was prepared to pay greater respect to an earthly governor, than to the Monarch of the heavens. They lacked spiritual vision to see the power of Yahweh.

VERSE 9

“And now, I pray you” — This verse is an ironical statement in line with Jdg. 10:14, expressed by Yahweh, and not by the prophet (see end of verse). The words indicate: “What is the use of your prayers, your beseeching to your God, since He will not accept your persons.” What was required was not the outpouring of empty words of prayer, but a change of heart and mind.

“beseech God” — Heb. *El*, strength, power, such as befitting a governor over the nation. This title occurs three times in the prophecy, each time against the background of the nation’s apostasy and folly (see also, ch. 2:9, 10).

“that He will be gracious unto us” — But how could they expect the Deity to look favourably on the people, while they rejected His requirements?

“this hath been by your means” — Heb. *yad*, the hand. The situation they experienced was as a result of their own actions, and not that of their fathers, or their enemies.

“will He regard your persons? saith Yahweh of hosts” — The divine Voice addressed the people in a way to draw their

attention to their responsibilities. See notes on the divine title: v. 8.

VERSE 10

“Who is there even among you” — i.e., the priests (v. 6). There seemed to be no service or ritual that they would do faithfully in love without seeking for some reward.

“that would shut the doors for nought?” — They were besotted with expectation of reward for service. It was similar in the Lord’s days, when the money-changers and dove-sellers held their merchandising bazaars within the area of the temple, and they used the worship of the people as a means for their own wealth. So stinginess in God’s service was universally manifested (Heb. 9:22). In contrast, David was not prepared to offer Yahweh that which cost him nothing (2Sam. 24:24).

However, others (see Houbigant & Newcombe; Septuagint) render the Hebrew *mi* (“Who”) as *ki* (“Surely”), to read: “Surely the doors shall be closed against you, neither shall ye kindle a fire on Mine altar.” Read this way, it predicts that the Aaronic priesthood, and the temple services instituted under the old covenant, would be removed, and thus leads appropriately into the next verse.

“neither do ye kindle fire on Mine altar for nought.” — See comments on the previous phrase.

“I have no pleasure in you, saith Yahweh of hosts” — He sums up with an entire rejection of this people on account of their rejection of the spirit of His Word.

“neither will I accept an offering at your hand” — Yahweh would reject the ritualistic, thoughtless approach to the sacrificial principles established in the altar, and in offerings. Isaiah declared: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (ch. 57:15).

VERSE 11

“For” — The prophet now introduces

a dramatic contrast with the evil, lazy attitude of the people. Compare the context of Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14, which similarly is set against a background of the nation's failure to uphold the divine righteousness. It is against the background of the inadequacy of the flesh to measure up to the divine requirements, for Yahweh's purpose will prevail, notwithstanding the power of the flesh.

"from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same" — Expressive of the continual burnt offering that introduced and concluded the daily routine of Israel (Num. 28:23).

"My name shall be great among the Gentiles" — The name of Yahweh indicates His eternal purpose: *He Who Shall Become*. It was declared at the national birth of Israel, brought out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1), by the miraculous hand of power through Moses (see Exo. 3:13-16). The Name will be again declared at the future restoration of the Gentiles, through the hand of Christ, and universally acknowledged by all mankind: Psa. 50:1; 113:3; Isa. 59:19; 54:5; Psa. 22:27-31; 98:1-3; Isa. 45:22-25; Phil. 2:9-11

"and in every place" — Where places of worship will be established, as in the past (cp. Deu. 16:2, 6). Such places would be under the care of the Saints, superintending the affairs of divine worship (cp. Isa. 19:19).

"incense shall be offered unto My name" — Incense represents prayer, for it ascended from the coals taken from the altar of burnt offering in the tabernacle of Moses, and the temple of Solomon. The burning incense speaks of the ascending prayer to God, as indicated in Psa. 141:2; Lk. 1:10; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4. Such prayer will be offered in the name of the Son (Jn. 14:14). The fate of Nadab and Abihu, who disgraced the incense offering in the tabernacle, and were destroyed by Yahweh as a result (Lev. 10:1-2), is evidence of that.

"and a pure offering" — Speaking of faithful actions. Contrast this with the profane offering of Israel in the days of Malachi. In the future kingdom, a pure (faithful) offering will be brought to the

great temple at Zion (Zech. 14:16; Isa. 56:7; 60:7; Jer. 33:17-18). Israel, as well as all Gentiles, will be required to make this offering (Mal. 3:3-4).

"for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith Yahweh of hosts" — This is the ultimate purpose of the Deity. His Name of *Yahweh* will be exalted and revered (v. 14; Psa. 114:7), because of the mighty works that shall inaugurate the kingdom and vindicate His Name (Psa. 46:6-11).

Israel Profaned the Holy Things — vv. 12-14.

Malachi summarises the attitude of the nation by revealing their refusal to uphold the divine principles in worship, and instead continued in a rebellious spirit, treating the holy things of Yahweh as common and mere ritual.

VERSE 12

"But ye have profaned it" — By treating all the laws of Yahweh as being commonplace. The text is in the continuous tense: "are continuing to profane it..." Yahweh desired a fulsome commitment to His ways: Lev. 10:3; cp. Eze. 36:22-23.

"in that ye say, The table of Yahweh is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible" — They said this in actions, more than in words, and thereby sinned in their hearts. It was the result of their daily attitude to divine matters; by their careless response to Yahweh's demands.

VERSE 13

"Ye said also, Behold" — An exclamation drawing attention to that which follows. This cry of the people emphasises their foolish attitude.

"what a weariness is it!" — They manifested an attitude of complete indifference to their responsibilities. The word *matt la'ah* signifies: toil; hardship. They claimed that Yahweh's requirements were an unnecessary burden (cp. Amos 8:5).

"and ye have snuffed" — The word (Heb. *naphach*) signifies to breathe upon; to sniff at; to blow away. Thus to treat the whole matter with contempt.



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THE GREAT KING WHOSE
NAME IS "DREADFUL."

THE TERRIBLE CONDITION
OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

IMPORTANCE OF THE
MARRIAGE COVENANT.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT
REVEALED.



Malachi ch. 1:13 to 3:1

A **LOGOS** MAGAZINE



Analysis of the Prophecy

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“at it, saith Yahweh of hosts” — At the altar, which represents the divine means of redemption, by which the people would learn the nature of flesh and the importance of redemption. The altar represents God manifest in flesh, and seen in the Christ (Heb. 13:10), who can be treated with contempt by those imitating the Judaistic attitude.

“and ye brought that which was torn” — This describes animals which were taken by violence, or as a result of contest or battle; thus an imperfect animal. The meaning of “torn” is taken from the animal being carried off by beasts, the eating of which was forbidden (Exo. 22:31; Lev. 7:24; 22:8; Eze. 4:14; 44:31). It represents the principle of wrong judgment, of deliberate conflict with the poor, or open violence: thus speaking of the power of the flesh. As such the animals were unacceptable as an offering to God, representing gifts obtained by violence and robbery against His chosen. A desire for personal power or prestige can be disguised by a seeming religious spirit, but in reality will be treated at the judgment seat of Christ as the offerings of torn beasts.

“and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering” — The offerings they brought were inferior, damaged, diseased. It was not the condition of the animals, so much as their own attitude to the divine things.

“should I accept this of your hand? saith Yahweh” — What reason can be advanced for Yahweh to accept such offerings? These offerings did not represent the best of all the goodness that Yahweh had given them.

VERSE 14

“But cursed be the deceiver” — Heb. *nakal*, to beguile; deceive; act craftily. His fraudulent character is the reason for his action which is now described. His despicable offering was first conceived in his mind; he set himself out to profit from the sacrifices required of him. It was not the mind of a man who refused to do anything for God, but of one who desired to seek His approval on as easy terms as he could. He

even went beyond what the Law required in making vows, probably for some temporal advantage, and thus substituted for that which had typical perfection, the less

They Brought an Offering

In claiming to keep the Law, the people “brought an offering.” Again, the word is *minchah*, which was compulsorily offered with the burnt offering and the peace offering. The meal offering spoke of One who dedicated the fruit of their labours, the work of their hands, to Yahweh. The offerings here were a mere mockery of their true significance. They claimed to be worshippers of Yahweh, but what did they offer Him? Virtually, nothing. They were selfish, self-centred, blind to their responsibilities, pursuing their personal interests whilst ignoring the demands their God made upon them. All sacrifices offered under the Law represented a man offering himself. But what were these people “offering” to Yahweh? The “torn” (indicating that the offerer was blemished in character), the “lame” (they were immobile in the Truth, not progressing toward godliness), the “sick” (they were in an appalling state of health, spiritually). Understandably, Yahweh posed the question: “Should I accept this of your hand?” Of course not. The Law made this plain. “Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Yahweh thy Elohim any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for this is an abomination unto Yahweh thy Elohim... Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you” (Deu. 17:1; Lev. 22:20). Israel expected a great deal from Yahweh; but gave Him little. Similarly, we ask so much of Him: His daily blessing to watch over us and keep us in His way; to forgive our sins of commission and omission; and to bring us ultimately into His kingdom. How much do we give, in return for all we ask? — *JU*.

valuable animal.

“which hath in his flock a male, and voweth” — That which a worshipper offers as a freewill vow was regulated under the Law (Lev. 22:19), showing that a person could not offer just anything to Yahweh; it had to be in accordance with the divine requirements. Under the law, a person could offer a freewill offering above that normally required, but the Law also specified what that offering should be. These restrictions on freewill offerings show that worship is a serious matter, not to be taken lightly. Yahweh is not to be treated with the easy familiarity of a mortal; He is above the greatest in the land. Thus offerings must recognise His majesty and honour.

“and sacrificeth unto Yahweh a corrupt thing” — Some were making vows for ostentatious purposes (cp. Mat. 23:28), to demonstrate to others their liberality in divine things, although not living up to their profession.

“for I am a great King, saith Yahweh of hosts” — He is pre-eminent and omnipotent. His majesty will be acknowledged by all mankind (Zech. 14:9).

“and My name is dreadful among the heathen” — It will ultimately be honoured by all, and we should worship Him now, as though it had already been fulfilled (cp. Rom. 4:17). The word “dreadful” is from the Hebrew *yare'*, signifying to revere; be fearful. Thus the divine Majesty must be honoured by all mankind, and this will ultimately occur. God has always upheld His Name as a matter of worship and reverence, declaring: *“I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and for Thy truth: for Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name”* (Psa. 138:2), and therefore there is the need to “Circumcise

The Deceiver Voweth

Yahweh is here reminding His people that the vow offering was in fulfilment of a pledge. It is amazing that, in view of the spiritual condition of the people, many were even attempting to make this particular offering. It doubtless speaks of their endeavours to fulfil the requirements of the Law, yet with extremely limited understanding of its significance and spirit (cp. Ecc. 5:4). The vow offering was one of the peace offerings, and was therefore related to fellowship with Deity. No offering was to be taken lightly; thus we dare not take Yahweh or His Word lightly, nor the vow we have made to offer our lives in service to Him. Nor can we hope to worship Him on our own terms. We must not defy or provoke Him by treating our obligations to Him with a casual attitude or an easy familiarity. Like Israel, we, too, have made a vow (Rom. 16:26; Eph. 5:1, etc.). Yahweh always remains faithful to His Word. And so must we. — *JU.*

therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. For Yahweh your Elohim is Elohim of elohim, and an Adon of adonyim, a great El, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward” (Deu. 10:16-17).

That the name of Yahweh must be revered and upheld is clearly demonstrated in the following warning: *“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, YAHWEH THY ELOHIM; Then Yahweh will make thy plagues wonderful...”* (Deu. 28:58-59).

WHO MAY ABIDE THE DAY OF HIS COMING?

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRIESTS

As Yahweh's representatives within His nation, the priests bore a peculiar obligation. They were required to uphold the Word of God and to teach the people concerning His wisdom. When they neglected that responsibility, they allowed the nation, once called by divine invitation from Egypt, to return to the "weak and beggarly elements" (Gal. 4:9) from which Yahweh had rescued it. Malachi saw such a situation; he recognised that the people who had been redeemed from Babylon had similarly deteriorated as did the generations before them. Malachi drew attention to the priests' responsibility, and warned the people of impending judgment for accepting a way of life incompatible with the divine principles. The chapter commences with a challenge to the priests, and concludes with the imminent approach of the God of Judgment.

Dire Warning to the Priests

Vv. 1-9 is an admonition directed specifically at the priesthood; although all the people should have absorbed these words and acted upon them. "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart," warned Yahweh. He would send dreadful judgments upon them. These words are taken from Deu. 28:1, 15. "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Yahweh thy Elohim, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that Yahweh thy Elohim will set thee on high above all nations of the earth... But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy Elohim, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee..." They were not only to "hear" the voice of Deity, they were to "lay" the things they heard "to heart." This was a reminder that mere theoretical knowledge in the minds of His people, is not sufficient to please Yahweh. The Truth must lodge deeply within us, causing us to walk in the ways of Deity, the power of the Truth becoming the motivating power in our lives. Failure to do this will result in blessings being turned into cursings. — *JU*.

Admonition for the Priests — vv. 1-10.

The priests stood in a privileged position to Israel, as Christ's brethren are in this present society, and should have set the nation an example.

VERSE 1

"**And now**" — There was an immediate need for action on the part of the priests.

"**O ye priests**" — They were responsible for the spiritual welfare of the community. In that capacity they acted as God's representatives in the nation. In a sense, believers today constitute "a royal, holy priesthood" (1Pet. 2:9; 1Tim. 3:15), with the responsibility to uphold the divine will in every way.

"**this commandment is for you**" — The book of Malachi constituted the direct commandment of Yahweh to that generation. It was a commandment in regard to the Law of Yahweh and

brought to their attention the divine requirements of responsibility, based upon the declared Law of Moses.

VERSE 2

"If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto My name, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The authoritative voice of the Militant Deity. It is the "hearing ear" that is the means of understanding the divine will (Rom. 10:17). Having heard, they must "put it to heart," by applying its principles in the actions of faith.

"I will even send a curse upon you" — They had already received threatened curses from God (Hos. 4:6-10; 9:11-14), and had been affected by the challenge of the Edomites (Mal. 1:4), and were now to receive further indictments from Him.

"and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart" — They had experienced unfruitful seasons (ch. 3:9), a foreboding of future difficulties if they remained obdurate.

VERSE 3

"Behold" — Introducing a particular warning (see its use in ch. 1:13).

"I will corrupt your seed" — A Hebrewism to emphasise the result of their disobedience before Yahweh. Yahweh is represented as personally reproving the seed in the ground, and refusing to allow any fruit to develop. Thus: "I will refuse you your harvests."

"and spread dung upon your faces" — A more intense expression, indicating complete abhorrence. So corrupt were the practices of the priests that Yahweh represents the refuse of their sacrifices as being thrown back on their faces.

"even the dung of your solemn feasts" — As refuse, it was usually taken without the camp and burnt (Lev. 8:17; 4:12).

"and one shall take you away with it" — The action of removing the refuse from the presence of Yahweh in Israel. Antitypically, unrepentant Israel would be carried off, separated from fellowship with

God. This was fulfilled nationally in AD70 when Judah was removed from the Land by Rome, and its worship ceased.

VERSE 4

"And ye shall know" — An expression used often by Ezekiel (see chs. 6:7; 7:4, 9; 11:10, etc).

"that I have sent this commandment unto you" — The commandment for obedience (ch. 2:1) was to the priests, who should have conveyed it to the people.

"that My covenant might be with Levi, saith Yahweh of hosts" — Yahweh had established a covenant of the firstborn, who thereby was the medium through whom the family could worship Him (see Exo. 13:11-16). But when the nation had apostasized in the days of Moses, Levi was appointed instead of the firstborn (Num. 3:45; 8:13-18), because the tribe was prepared to stand faithful to Yahweh (Exo. 32:26-29), and, taking the sword of punishment in hand, smote those of Israel who had gone astray. On this occasion, Levi showed a greater zeal for Yahweh than for fleshly relations, and this constitutes the true spirit of the Levitical covenant (see Num. 25:5; Deu. 33:9). The name Levi means *Joining*, and significantly the tribe was *joined* to Yahweh through the covenant He made with them, whilst they, in turn, "joined" the people to Him by instructing them (Lev. 10:11; Deu. 17:9-11; 33:10). An example of a true priest is shown in Ezra 7:10. Contrast this with Jer. 2:8.

VERSE 5

"My covenant was with him of life and peace" — The divine covenant assured Levi of a continued existence ("life") as well as a position of harmony with Yahweh ("peace"), based upon the covenant of Noah (see Isa. 54:9-10). This was maintained while Levi upheld their heritage of faithful support of Moses (see notes v. 4). The tribe of Levi constitute a parable of what all Israelites should be (Deu. 33:19; Num. 25: 12-13). They did not receive any inheritance in Israel, for Yahweh was their inheritance. Thus their lives were entirely devoted to His service,

A Covenant of Life and Peace

The tribe of Levi had been singled out as the priestly tribe because of two great acts of faith and loyalty to Yahweh. These were, firstly, in relation to the shocking incident involving the golden calf (Exo. 32), whilst the second concerned the seduction of the men of Israel by Moabite women (Num. 25). In the first case, it became evident that there was division in the camp. Moses made a plea to the people: "Who is on Yahweh's side? Let him come unto *me*. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him" (v. 26). This issue involved the question of *spiritual* purity; making an uncompromising stand in upholding the righteousness of Yahweh — a necessary attribute in all who would become faithful servants of Deity. The second case in point involved *moral* purity. Phinehas "rose up from among the congregation" and took positive action to uphold Yahweh's moral standard. His action was categorical and unflinchingly courageous. In so acting he "turned away the wrath of Yahweh from the children of Israel." Wherefore, said Yahweh, "I give unto him My *covenant of peace*" and "an everlasting priesthood." Why? Because "he was zealous for his God..." (Num. 25:7-13). A third instance may be favourably cited. Following the rebellion in which the children of Israel refused to exercise faith and enter the Promised Land, they then, with typical perversity, changed their minds. They "presumed" to go, having been warned by Moses against such foolish action. They paid a tragic price for their mutinous behaviour as the Amalekites and Canaanites swept down upon them. Throughout the unfolding of this drama, Levi remained loyal to Yahweh and to Moses. When the people went out to war the Levites refused to permit the Ark to leave the camp (Num. 14:44). Hence Yahweh stated: "*My covenant was with him [Levi]: it stood for life and peace*" (Mal. 2:5, J.B.). But how could Yahweh compare the generation of priests in the days of Malachi with those of their faithful forebears? Whereas in earlier generations the Levites had "respected" Yahweh, and "stood in awe" of His "name" (J.B.), these priests of Malachi's day were faithless and lacking in both sound knowledge and commitment to their calling. They had "departed out of the way" [*turned out of the way of the Truth*]. Also, they had "caused many to stumble" [*led people away from the Truth*] and had "corrupted the covenant" [*perverted the Truth*] (v. 8). What of those today, who are "being built up a spiritual house, an *holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"? (1Pet. 2:5). What is the standing of this present generation of spiritual Israelites, in the eyes of Yahweh? — *JU*.

and their welfare consisted in following His ways. The presence of Levi in the midst of the other tribes taught the people that they too, should put Yahweh first in all their considerations, and that if they did that, He would see that they prospered, even as His priests prospered. We should appear in like manner among the people with whom we dwell, giving ourselves to His service, and so pleasing Him. That will bring us "life and peace."

"and I gave them to him" — That is, the covenant to Levi, as an expression of divine pleasure and reward.

"for the fear where-with he feared Me, and was afraid before My name" — Levi did this on the occasion when Moses returned from the Mount and found that all Israel had defiled themselves because of an attitude of apathy and indifference during the absence of Moses. At the appeal of Moses, the tribe of Levi, Moses' own tribe, separated itself from the rest of Israel, and "stood on Yahweh's side," and by so doing upheld the Name of Yahweh, which expresses that He would be "manifested in whom He would be manifested" (Exo. 3:14). In consequence of this action, Yahweh's covenant was made with this tribe. See Exo. 32:28 for the historical background.

"Ye Have Not Kept My Ways"

In this section (vv. 1-9) Yahweh issued an imperative call for repentance on the part of the priests. "O ye priests, this commandment is for *you*!" It was a call to moral and spiritual renewal. A major reformation was urgently needed. They were to understand that they were not only in desperate need of a sound understanding of the Truth, but also that they needed to *walk* in the way of the Truth. If they continued to refuse hearing the voice of Yahweh, He would curse their blessings. To this very day Yahweh continues to warn and remonstrate. If He is not heard and heeded, the corrupting process will continue unabated, leading to greater manifestations of apostasy. The curse will continue to ripen, until the judgment of Yahweh breaks forth, as in the days of Malachi. These verses contain a most powerful warning: When the spiritual leaders of ecclesias become both fountain and support for spiritual indifference and the weakening of doctrine, the ecclesias stand in a position of grave peril. — *JU*.

VERSE 6

"The law of truth was in his mouth"

— For Levi not only stood apart from the apostate nation, but responded with clear support for the appeal of Moses. They "did according to the word of Moses" (Exo. 32:28).

"and iniquity was not found in his lips" — Levi did not join in the voice of wicked Israel who cried: "Make us gods, which shall go before us..." (Exo. 32:23).

"he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" — In Levi's action of obedience to the call of Moses, and in the example of faithful adherence to duty, they provided encouragement to their fellows to separate from iniquity.

VERSE 7

"For the priest's lips should keep

knowledge" — Priests appointed by God were required to be the recipients of divine law (Lev. 10:11; Neh. 8:8; Eph. 3:9; Rev. 22:17).

"and they should seek the law at his mouth" — That is, the people of Israel were to be educated and instructed by the priests, who were scattered throughout the nation. They had a responsibility having received the Word, to disseminate it to others. Believers "in Christ" are accounted priests (1Pet. 2:9), so that the admonition of this verse applies to them also. As the tribe of Levi was taken "instead of the firstborn" and thus inherited the privileges of the firstborn in Israel, so, in Christ, those who have entered into covenant relationship with God through the Lord are accounted as the "ecclesia of firstborns" (Heb. 12:23, Diaglott; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4).

"for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts" — The word "messenger" (Heb. מַלְאָכִי, mal'ak), is the name of Malachi, and as such is typical of the work of the Lord Jesus (see ch. 3:1).

VERSE 8

"But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The priests of Israel failed to live up to the responsibilities of their privileged position. Cp. Mat. 25:2-4; 23:13 with Mat. 16:19. Notice the three accusations, each one adding to the former. They had "departed," then caused others to "stumble," and finally "corrupted" Yahweh's covenant.

VERSE 9

"Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept My ways, but have been partial in the law" — Yahweh threatened the people with the same attitude that they had manifested to His law. They had corrupted the divine Word; He would ensure that Israel was treated accordingly. Actually, although presented in the past tense, Yahweh had not fulfilled these words at that time, but when

He has determined upon a certain course of action, He speaks as though it were accomplished (Rom. 4:17). The Jewish leaders were made vile in the sight of the people by the public strictures of the Lord Jesus (Mat. 25).

The People Reproved Because of Divorce and Heathen Marriages

— vv. 10-16.

From verse 10, the prophet turns from the priests and indicts the people because of their wickedness. Divorce and heathen associations were rife in Israel, whilst the people were free with excuses to justify their conduct. By their philosophising, they made evil appear as good, and accused Yahweh of injustice.

VERSE 10

“Have we not all one father?” — The question expresses the complaint of Israel, and not mankind in general. Israel constitutes the national Son of God (Deu. 14:1; 32:6; Isa. 43:7; 44:1, 2, 24; Hos. 1:10), and now claims that they act as family members. This was repeated in the days of the Master (Jn. 8:41), but were shown to be, instead, the children of the diabolos (v. 44).

“hath not one God created us?” — Referring to the origin of the nation, when they were brought from the womb of Egypt through Moses, and constituted the nation of Yahweh (see Hos. 11:1).

“why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother” — A rhetorical question in an attempt to ridicule the complaint of the prophet. Yet, it was true!

“by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” — Whilst the priests had defiled the covenant that they had with Yahweh, and this received the condemnation of the prophet, the people are now reminded that they, too, are under covenant with Him, and that similarly they had broken the covenant. The covenant made with the people is expressed in Deu. 5:2-3; Exo. 24:3-4. This covenant demanded separateness from the surrounding nations (Deu. 7:3), a separateness that was being broken by the people in their marriages with pagan women (see Ezra 9:12).

VERSE 11

“Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem” — The context of this verse shows the manner in which this had been done. Many had divorced their Jewish wives, and had taken alien women. In doing this, they had ill-treated their brethren by their ungodly attitude (v. 10). The covenant of Yahweh was thus violated. Marriage amongst mankind, based upon the declaration made in Eden (Gen. 2: 23-24), is a type of marriage with Him (Jer. 3:14), and reflects the prophetic union of Christ with his Ecclesial Bride (Eph. 5:25-33). The loyalty and love which should be manifested between husband and wife is a type of the loyalty and love which should exist between Yahweh and His people. But the loose way in which the people in the days of Malachi were treating the solemn ordinance of marriage, was but a reflection of the loose way in which they treated Yahweh. If they refused to honour their earthly contracts — such as the marriage vow — how could they honour their heavenly contract (cp. Lk. 19:21)!

“for Judah hath profaned the holiness of Yahweh which He loved” — The word “holiness” (Heb. **קִדְּשׁ**, *kadish*) signifies “separateness.” Yahweh had called Israel to such, and He delights in the separateness of His people, for He has taken them out of all nations to Himself, as a man might take his bride from all other women unto himself. As the bride has been separated unto her husband, so Yahweh looks with displeasure on those who fail to maintain that separateness to which He has called His people. It is thus possible to indulge in spiritual adultery, by compromise in doctrine, or association with worldly organisations (see Jas. 4:4).

“and hath married the daughter of a strange god” — They had contracted marriages with heathen wives and thereby became yoked with a “strange” (**נֶכֶר**, *nekar*, foreign, alien) deity. The gods of the pagans were looked upon as the fathers of those who worshipped them, as Yahweh was considered a Father to Israel.

VERSE 12

“Yahweh will cut off the man that doeth this” — He will severely punish those who teach that these practices are lawful.

“the master and the scholar” — Note the rendering of the margin: “him that waketh and him that answereth.” One who instructs another is as one who awakens another to the teaching being expressed. Thus he opens the ears of his disciples (see Isa. 50:4). The Lord Jesus repeated the saying: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mat. 11:15; 13:9; 13:43). Both master and scholar share the same responsibility for teaching and upholding error, and consequently will be cut off by divine judgment.

“out of the tabernacles of Jacob” — Thus there was a need for great care on the part of all in Israel, both teachers and taught (the scholars), so that the dwellings of Jacob are preserved. The use of the name “Jacob” is significant, speaking of the struggles of the people who are threatened by the political Esaus of life. As Jacob remained faithful to the covenant established at the brook Jabbok (Gen. 32:30), so the apostate teachers and students will be removed from the protective tabernacles of Jacob.

“and him that offereth an offering unto Yahweh of hosts” — Religious worship is of no avail in the absence of practice. What is the use of attendance at meetings if we refuse to do the things that Yahweh demands of us? Hence the prophet warns the people that it was little use offering an offering in the absence of sacrificing their personal desires to God’s will. If whilst they performed their religious exercises they continued to break His laws in a flagrant manner, they, too, would be cut off.

VERSE 13

“And this have ye done” — Add the ellipsis: “This, also, have ye done...” Darby translates: “This further have ye done...” Malachi elaborates upon his complaint against the people.

“again” — “The second time” (R.V.

margin). Ezra had dealt with the people in the matter of false marriages (Ezra 10:10-13), as also had Nehemiah (Neh. 9:1-2), but again the same sin had reared itself in Israel. Malachi warns the people that it was

Treachery and Betrayal

Yahweh was a “witness” against the contention of these men who claimed to be sons of God. He witnessed them bringing their offerings into the temple, and He witnessed their conduct away from the precincts of the temple. He sees all. Nothing can be hidden from His sight. He condemns them for their betrayal of “the wife with whom you have broken faith” (J.B.). Marriage is a binding covenant, and is a lifetime commitment, instituted by no lesser One than Yahweh Himself. Selfishness and lust had displaced love and warmth and affection toward their wives. “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth!” is the enthusiastic advice found in the Word (Pro. 5: 18). Note that it does not say: “Rejoice with thy wife *in* the days of thy youth.” The wisdom of the Proverb stresses that even in later, advancing years, a husband should always remember that the woman whom he loved and felt such tender affection for in the days of youthful devotion, *is still the same woman* to whom he vowed his life-time love and loyalty. They had forgotten or cast aside the reality that their wife became such “by covenant.” The Word counsels: “Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest *all the days of the life* of thy vanity, which He hath given thee under the sun, *all the days* of thy vanity: for *that* is thy portion in this life...” (Ecc. 9:9). How tragic to see, perhaps particularly in this modern age, these wonderful and commanding divine principles treated with disdain by some, and cast aside as being insignificant. All who are answerable to the Great Judge should remember His words: “Yahweh *will cut off* the man that doeth this” (v. 12). — *JU*.

not the first time they had been reproved in this matter, and they should remember the historical corrections that were divinely made at that time.

“covering the altar of Yahweh with tears, with weeping, and with crying out” — They had done this through their cruel action in divorcing their wives. These wives, in turn, had appealed to Yahweh to vindicate their cause. They had “wept before Yahweh,” and thus figuratively covered His altar with their weeping (cp. v. 11).

“insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand” — The Law had strictly warned against contracting heathen marriages (Exo. 34:11-16; Deu. 7:2-4), but the people having broken this law, and with the appeals and the weeping of the wronged wives in His ears, Yahweh refused to look acceptably upon the offerings of the hard-hearted Jews. Such sacrifices and offerings were abhorrent to the purity of Yahweh.

VERSE 14

“Yet ye say, Wherefore?” — The offenders were blind to their sin, and this constituted perhaps the greatest offence. By their attitude they implied that Yahweh should be pleased with all they did. In this regard they manifested a Laodicean attitude (Rev. 3:15), which will be a condition of the Brotherhood in the last days of the Gentiles (Lk. 18:8; 1Tim. 3). Many do not recognise their real spiritual state, because they have closed their ears to the exhortation of the Word.

“Because Yahweh hath been witness” — The word *wud* signifies to testify against; to protest. Yahweh observed the way in which His marriage covenant established in Eden was being perverted by the action of many in Israel.

“between thee and the wife of thy youth” — The wife selected in the flower and beauty of youth. They were reminded that the wife they had wronged was divinely regarded as still being their true wife; and that the covenant they had then made was still divinely recognised as the

only true covenant of marriage.

“against whom thou hast dealt treacherously” — The wife chosen in youth was deserted or neglected as age took its toll, and youthful beauty was no longer evident. In this the husbands chose to ignore the faith and support of their wives, and the responsibilities of the life-long covenant of marriage. In a flagrant way, the Jews manifested disloyalty both to their wives, and to Yahweh’s covenant; an attitude hateful to the Father. Even though some might have claimed the right to divorce upon the basis of Moses’ law in Deu. 24, as was later claimed by the opponents of the Lord Jesus (Mat. 19:3-9), this claim was unjust and inconsistent. For that reason, Malachi condemned the practice, and revealed that the divine purpose was frustrated by the action of his contemporaries.

“yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant” — Two reasons are now given. The first regards the service and support given by the wife over many years; the second recognises the marriage vow given, in which each commits themselves to their spouse for life. The marriage vow is a solemn covenant or agreement that should not be broken. The choice of a wife is binding for good or ill, and this must be understood when marriage is contracted.

VERSE 15

“And did not He make one?” — God made of one flesh man and wife, uniting them as one in the Edenic marriage contract (Gen. 2:18-23). Because of the essential unity of man and wife in marriage, none have any right to divide asunder. This unity of husband and wife is typical of the unity between Christ and his Ecclesia, based on his redemptive work (Eph. 5:23-33). To break that unity is to ignore the antitype, and to frustrate the prayer of the Lord for the unity of himself with his companions (Jn. 17:21-23). To so destroy the type of the fulfilment of the divine purpose is to act in an ungodly and wicked spirit.

“Yet had He the residue of the spirit” — Notice the margin, “excellency,” indi-

cating the quality and power inherent in Yahweh. The excellency of the Spirit is with His, and thereby He made marriage a complete unity, and a continuing contract between husband and wife.

“And wherefore one?” — What was the purpose and principle of marriage? It was designed to provide for the development of the man and woman in spiritual qualities, so that the mental and emotional characteristics of each might be merged together. The man was made for direction, leadership and guidance; the woman for understanding, sympathy and care. When these qualities are united in a covenant, both are enabled to develop the lovely characteristics that uphold and honour the Creator.

The union was also designed to produce a godly seed, in a generation of righteous ones fit to inherit the earth, and to reflect the divine glory (Num. 14:21). Without marriage, Yahweh’s purpose with mankind could not be consummated. It was therefore essential to provide a faithful seed. But mankind generally has caused the marriage relationship to degenerate into mere lust, and so destroyed its meaning. It fails to encourage the married couple to work unitedly that godly characters might be developed. Every marriage, every home, should be built upon the principle of providing a “godly seed.” Thus the Truth should be the basis of happy marriage, and close, loving family associations. Children should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of Yahweh. The Bible should be the most prominent and familiar aspect of home life. Its study should be encouraged, and the things of the Truth elevated as the most important duties of life. Marriage on foundations other than these has no basis of permanent happiness.

But, in addition to providing a “godly seed,” marriage was originally designed to produce *the* seed: the Saviour of the world. He was to be the “seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15) in order to challenge and destroy the serpent-spirit, and it became the hope of all godly women to give birth to a line from which would come that promised One. Eve apparently thought that

she was giving birth to the promised Son when she gave birth to Cain (see Gen. 4:1), but her disappointment was revealed in later years. Yet she saw the promise partly fulfilled in the birth of Abel and Seth.

This desire to mother the promised seed seems to be expressed in 1Tim. 2:15, where the apostle Paul states that godly women “shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” In the Greek, “child-bearing” is given the definite article as *“the”* childbearing.” Mothers in Israel (spiritual and natural) will be saved by the Child born to Mary, 2000 years ago, the One to whom all mothers looked with pleasure, as pre-eminently a son of glory.

Paul taught that Eve was first in the transgression (1Cor. 11:3). A stigma thus rests upon woman, expressed in their subordinate position to that of man. From this state the Truth alone can deliver them, and that Truth is vested in the birth of the promised Seed, the Lord Jesus. The Truth elevates women into equality with man as “joint-heirs” with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:28), but an equality which is not fully reached until the spiritual marriage with Christ. Meanwhile, the position of women in the Truth is expressed by Paul in Eph 5:24. Husbands are subject to Christ in similar fashion.

If the recipe of Paul is followed for happy marriage as expressed in this chapter (Eph. 5:23-25), a godly marriage will find the wife submitting to her husband, the husband caring for and loving his wife, and both co-operating toward each other’s eternal welfare. When such a spirit moves marriage, the awful picture of Mal. 2:14-16 will not occur. Some excellent comments on this subject are to be found in *Elpis Israel*, pp. 47-51 under the heading: “THE FORMATION OF WOMAN.”

“That He might seek a godly seed” — They had to be aware that, in Yahweh’s eyes, they had acted treacherously against both the wronged wife, and the divine Author of the covenant of Gen. 2:24. Therefore any children resulting from adulterous actions, could not be regarded as “holy” to the marriage, by Yahweh. and

were therefore excluded from the inheritance promised.

Whilst the Lord Jesus constituted the “godly seed” in the singular sense of the phrase, spiritual Israel (whether Jew or Gentile) comprise the godly multitudinous seed. In Ezra 9:2 Israel is styled a “holy seed.” But of that multitudinous seed, there was one son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was pre-eminently *the seed* of promise (Gal. 4:4), born of a woman. Marriage was designed for this development. It is still “honourable” (Heb. 13:4) for the providing of the former “seed” in the development of godly children.

“Therefore take heed to your spirit”

— “Spirit” in the Hebrew is רֹּחַ *ruach*, rendered “mind” in Gen. 26:35; Dan. 5:20; Hab. 1:11. Yahweh called upon those husbands dealing so treacherously with their wives, to consider their attitude of mind, and see if it agreed with the principles of He who hath the excellency of the spirit.

“and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth” — The word “treacherously” is from the Heb. בָּגַד *bagad*, signifying to act deceitfully, unfaithfully. Marriage has often been cursed by two evil principles: [1] Domination by the wife; [2] Unfaithfulness on the part of the husband. Such unfaithfulness is not necessarily associated with “other women;” it can be caused by other interests causing the husband to neglect wife or family. Note that the word “treacherously” is rendered “unfaithfully” in the margin.

VERSE 16

“For Yahweh, the God of Israel” —

A significant declaration, indicating the family title: “He who will be manifested in the Mighty Ones (Elohim) of Israel.” Thus it speaks of the overshadowing care of Yahweh for His family.

“saith that He hateth putting away”

— Heb. שָׁלַח *shalach*, “to send off; send away; cast out.” Even the act of “putting away” must be seen as an act of treachery against the marriage covenant. Divorce is hateful to Yahweh because it is the nega-

tion of His purpose in marriage, and destroys the type of the original creation of Adam and Eve, as well as that of Christ and his Bride. The unity and loyalty demanded of husband and wife is typical of the unity and loyalty that should exist between Christ and the Ecclesia (Eph. 5). “Putting away” is not advocated by the Law of Moses as some have imagined, but was permitted by Moses “because of the hardness of heart” in the people (Deu. 24:1-4), and condemned by the Lord Jesus (Mat. 19:8). Moses’ restriction protected a woman from the passing whim of an angry man, and not because Yahweh advocated it. He “hated it” for any reason — and His attitude toward it should govern our attitude also.

See further comments on Deu. 24:1-4 by Bro. H. P. Mansfield, in *Expositor: Deuteronomy*.

“for one covereth violence with his garment, saith Yahweh of hosts” — Eliminate the word “one,” given in italics, which indicates that there is no comparable word in the original. Not only does Yahweh hate divorce, but also hates the principle of “covering” or “hiding” evil so as to justify it. The Jews of Malachi’s day, covered their violence toward their wives in ruthlessly divorcing them under a cloak of seeming legality. They doubtlessly followed the strict letter of the Law in giving a “bill of divorcement,” etc. (Deu. 24), but they completely broke its spirit. Moses’ restriction was limited to those who “found some uncleanness” in the wife, which clearly limits the cause to the early days of the marriage, when some previous injury or defilement might have appeared.

“therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously” — The appeal urged the nation to uphold the principles of Yahweh in their family environment.

Impending Divine Judgment — vv. 17-3:6.

Malachi shows that all the wickedness in Israel will have an inevitable result:

Where is the God of Judgment?

This was a sober question from a rebellious people. But did they realise the enormous implication in their question? The rest of Malachi's prophecy is devoted to answering this question! Whilst these Jews challenged the concept of a Deity who would bring judgment upon them, they remained blind to their own true state. Yahweh thus provides a devastating answer to their question, in chapters 3 and 4. He shows that judgments will indeed be manifested, and that only the faithful will be delivered and vindicated in that day. — *JU.*

Yahweh will vindicate the helpless, and punish the wicked because of their guilt. Terrible judgments were threatened.

VERSE 17

"Ye have wearied Yahweh with your words" — What He desired was action not words! The attempted justification of their action of "putting away" the wife of their youth had wearied Yahweh, for what they had done was evil in His sight, despite their reasons and excuses. Some even acted as if

they did not believe that Yahweh was aware of the evil they had committed against Him. Yahweh was "wearied" in the sense that He would not tolerate their continued folly.

"Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him?" — They were completely ignorant of their true state, as were the Laodicean Ecclesia in the first century (cp. Rev. 3:15).

"When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Yahweh" — They did not appreciate the truth of Mal. 1:2-3. They envied the prosperity of the wicked, and contrasted it with their own adversity, concluding that Yahweh blessed the evil and cursed "the good" in that they, themselves, suffered. They were blind to the fact that they were evil, for they did not recognise or admit their own sin. See Psa. 73:3-17. Contrast with Amos 3:2.

"and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" — Blind to their own sin and wickedness, they accused Yahweh of injustice or of indifference. Rhetorically they called for the God of judgment, but in the following chapter, Yahweh revealed how judgment would, indeed, fall upon those who desired it!

CHAPTER 3

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT REVEALED

Having set Yahweh's complaint before the nation, and reminded them of their obligations as the covenant nation, Malachi now reveals the divine judgment facing the people. Historically, Nehemiah had visited the city of Jerusalem, spending some time in reconstructing the walls and setting the community in order. He confirmed them in a covenant with their God (Neh. 10). He then returned to a "far country," to report to the monarch on his activities. In this Nehemiah, the governor, was a type of Messiah. Approximately twelve years later, Nehemiah returned to inspect the nation for the second time. He came as governor, and exacted judgment against the evil that he found in the nation. The message of Malachi sounded forth during the

governor's absence, warning that generation to prepare for his return. The prophet now reveals the divine attitude to that wicked generation.

The Judge Revealed to the Nation

— **vv. 1-6.**

In a dramatic declaration, Malachi sets before his hearers the imminent day of judgment that will reveal the true nature of their religious observances. It will be a time of separation of the "sheep" from the "goats," when the divine principles are upheld, and a purity of conduct is taught and required. Judgment is made upon the basis of the unchangeable character of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"Behold" — An exclamation to draw attention to the following statement. These words are cited by the Master in Mat. 11:10, explaining the purpose of the appearance and message of John Baptist, his forerunner.

"I will send" — The voice of Yahweh. It is His judgment against the people He had called from Egypt as "His son" (Hos. 11:1), and later delivered them from the captivity of Babylon. He now desired to examine their response, as to their faithfulness to His Word.

"My messenger" — In the first place, divine judgment was conveyed to that generation through Malachi, the "messenger," whose message was designed to prepare the nation for the return of the governor, Nehemiah (Neh. 13:7). Malachi stood as a type of the greater messenger who was to be sent as the forerunner of the Lord. Concerning John the Baptist we read: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6), and "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (Luke 7:28). John was Yahweh's messenger, inasmuch that Yahweh was revealed in His Son, and through Him visited His people. Thus, Zacharias declared of John that he would "be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" (Lk. 1:68). Later the

people recognised the important status of the Master, for "there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people" (ch. 7:16; see also Mat. 1:23; Lk. 9:45; 10:22; Jn. 3:2; 15:20; 15:21; 14:9).

"and he shall prepare the way before Me" — This was the work of Malachi in the days of Nehemiah, of John as forerunner of the Lord, and it will also be the work of Elijah at the second advent of Yahshua. All are brought into view in this verse, as they are in the parallel passage in Isaiah 40. Their work of preparation was, and will be, to introduce a new epoch. Malachi set forth his message to urge the exiles to repent of their errors; John Baptist went to Judah to prepare the people to receive the Lord Jesus; Elijah will soon go forth to the tribes of Israel scattered abroad to educate them in the fact that the One who will then have returned to the earth is the Messiah, and to call upon them to receive him. The work of John the Baptist is briefly set forth in Mat. 11:10; Luke 1:76; Mat. 17:12; that of Elijah in Mal. 4:6; Mat. 17:11; Mark 9:12; John 1:21. The work which John commenced so well will thus be completed by Elijah in the Age to come. See notes on Malachi 4:6.

"and the Lord" — The Hebrew is **אֲדֹנָי** 'adon, ruler, sovereign. This title is used to emphasise that the Judge would have complete authority to execute His determinations. This action was seen in three stages. [1] Nehemiah was the governor in the days of the prophet, and would soon return from his absence to exact judgment on the people of Jerusalem (Neh. 13). [2] The Lord Jesus came to examine his "temple" at his first advent and to warn the people of impending judgment that was executed by the Romans (Mat. 22:7). [3] When Christ returns to the earth, he will reveal himself as the appointed judge of mankind (Acts 17:31).



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THE MESSENGER OF THE
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EIGHT PERTINENT
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

THE FOOLISH CLAIMS OF
ISRAEL.

THE FAITHFUL REMNANT IN
ISRAEL



Malachi ch. 3:1 to 3:18

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“whom ye seek” — The people in Malachi’s day professed to uphold Yahweh’s laws, but they had apostatized during the absence of Nehemiah in Persia. They claimed to be ready for his return, but in action they were inconsistent. Similarly, in the days of the Master, the Jews were anticipating the Messiah, but refused to accept the Lord Jesus when he appeared (Isa. 53:1-4).

The statement here does not imply that the people would accept the divine messenger when he came! Rather, it challenged the veracity of God to His Word, in the sense of a challenge as to whether such a God of judgment would appear — similar to the voice of scoffers in the ecclesia: “Where is the promise of his coming...” (2Pet. 3:4). The Jews in Malachi’s day had been asking, “Where is the God of judgment?” (ch. 2:17), complaining that they did not receive just treatment, expressing doubt as to the reality of the “God of Judgment.” Malachi’s reply, “the Lord whom ye seek,” is in answer to their hypocritical query. He whom they asked for would come and execute judgment — but not in the way they desired!

“shall suddenly” — In spite of general anticipation of Israel’s Messiah, the first advent of the Lord was sudden and unexpected to the nation, for he did not appear as they expected (Isa. 53:1-3). So, likewise, the Jews (and also many believers!) will not be expecting his second coming (Mat. 24:29; Luke 18:8; Rev. 22:12).

“come to his temple” — The Lord Jesus came to the Israel-temple 2,000 years ago (John 1:11), but when his people rejected him, he commenced the work of building a new temple with living stones (1Peter 2:6-8) drawn from both Jews and Gentiles (2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22).

“even the messenger of the covenant” — The Lord Jesus Christ is the messenger (Malachi) of the covenant. 2,000 years ago he appeared as the sacrifice, confirming the covenant made to the fathers (Rom. 15:8; Heb 9:15), but the work is not yet completed, until the second coming of the Lord will see it consummated (see Zech. 9:11; Jer. 31:31-34; Eze.

20:37-38).

“whom ye delight in” — An ironical statement, for the people did not truly delight in God’s law, or His authority vested in the governor. They had conveniently ignored their own lax conduct by enquiring: “Where is the God of judgment?” (Mal. 2:17), whilst remaining completely satisfied with their Laodicean condition (see Rev. 3:15), unwilling to change their life style. There are many who profess a desire for the coming of Christ, but who

The Message of the Messenger

The word *malak* (messenger) occurs three times: twice in this verse and in ch. 2:7. Nehemiah, as a man raised up by Yahweh for the work that was to be done, was the first type of Christ related to this narrative. Malachi (“My messenger”) was a second; and John Baptist a third. It was written of the latter that he was “a man *sent* from God” (John 1:6). The second coming of Nehemiah and the coming of John, were in direct fulfilment of this prophecy (Mat. 11:10). His “message” was that the promised seed of David and Abraham was about to appear (John 1:23). But his message was more than that. Like Nehemiah after his return to Jerusalem, John condemned moral decadence, and the religious hypocrisy of his day. He taught that all should repudiate sin and forsake the ways of ungodliness. John’s message was not political, but spiritual and moral, as was that of Nehemiah upon his return. Their messages were very similar. They both berated the people because of their lack of *individual responsibility before Yahweh*. “Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire” (Mat. 3:10). Thus, the question posed here: “Who shall stand when he appeareth?” is really asking: “Who will stand before him in *moral and spiritual purity?*” — *JU*.

live in a way inconsistent with it (see Mat. 7:22; 25:11; Luke 13:25).

“behold, he shall come, saith Yahweh of hosts” — The statement is both a challenge and an appeal; both a threat and an exhortation. The title *Yahweh Tz’vaoth*, is continually used by Malachi expressing the militant title of Deity, and is here employed to indicate the attitude of the coming “Messenger of the Covenant.” It speaks of His manifestation in an army, the commander of which is brought into view in Isa. 55:4 and Rev. 19:11. The use of this title in this verse is as a hint, warning guilty Israel of the absolute Power they were opposing.

VERSE 2

“But who may abide the day of his coming?” — The word “abide” (Heb. כָּוַל *kawl*) signifies to contain, feed, sustain, with the idea of measuring out. Thus the question begs the possibility that not all will “abide” the judgment, either in the days of Malachi, or at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Both advents of the Lord Jesus witness a time of intense trouble for Israel (Dan. 12:1). For the troubles of the first advent see Mark 13:19; Luke 21:24. For those of the second, see Jer. 30:7; Deu. 4:30; Hos. 8:10; Jer. 29:12-14; Jer. 3:21 to 4:2.

In this last reference, a very beautiful outline of the call of Yahweh and answer of His people in the last days is revealed. The troubles of Israel, at the second advent are outlined in Jer. 3:21. Both the call of Yahweh, and the answer of His people are given in vv. 22-25. Israel will, at last, acknowledge that in Yahweh alone is salvation to be found. In ch. 4:1 the conditions of return are placed before them, and they are told to accept Him in whom all the nations shall bless themselves. The trouble of the last days shall purge out the unfaithful from among Israel (Zech. 13:8-9) by such judgments that the question may well be asked: “Who shall abide?”

“and who shall stand when he appeareth?” — The second question draws attention to the ability to stand approved in the day of judgment. To stand

is to be justified, to be shown to be upright. See Psa. 1:5; Dan. 12:13. The word has been translated “appointed; stand; stay,” etc.

“for he is like a refiner’s fire” — The refiner applied fire to his equipment in order to separate and bring the impurities to the surface, so that they could be removed, and the metal purified. Similarly, fiery judgments shall be poured out on both Jews and Gentiles to purge the world of iniquity. See Isa. 1:25; Zech. 13:9 and contrast with Jer. 6:30.

“and like fullers’ soap” — An alkali derived from a herb found in the Middle East, and used for cleansing (Isa. 1:18; Psa. 51:7). The Septuagint has “as the grass of washers.” It thus stands here as a symbol for the cleansing of Israel, both natural and spiritual, that Christ will effect at his coming (Zech. 13:1).

Purifying Levi Awaits the Appearance of the Messenger

Levi after the flesh has been in apostasy for ages, and will continue to be so until “Yahweh, the Messenger of the Covenant,” shall come. When the time appointed arrives, he will suddenly come in, and proceed to the work of purifying the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness (Mal. 3:1-4). From this future time “they will keep the covenant”, even the New Covenant of which Jesus, not Moses, is the Mediator. — *J.T. (Eureka, vol. 2, p. 329).*

When thus purified from dross in this glowing furnace (Eze. 20:33-38), the Jewish nation will be brass and silver well refined (Mal. 3:2). The rebellious dross will have been cleaned out, and Anti-Mosaic Judaism, by which they are now caused to wander out of the way, will have been destroyed from the earth. — *J.T. (Eureka, vol. 1, p. 180).*

VERSE 3

"And he shall sit" — As a judge in session (cp. Gen. 19:1; Joel 3:12).

"as a refiner and purifier of silver" — Both separating and purifying the metal by removing the dross of sin and transgression. Silver is the price of redemption (Exo. 30:14-16), and thus stands for restoration and redemption.

"and he shall purify the sons of Levi" — As those appointed to represent Yahweh to Israel. The priests were to set an example of faithfulness to the people, in teaching the principles of holiness and obedience. So judgment appropriately begins at the "house of God" (Eze. 9:6; 1Pet. 4:17). The purifying consists not only in removing all elements of evil, but of establishing what is right and good.

"and purge them as gold and silver" — Both metals are significant. Gold is the symbol of a tried faith (1Pet. 1:7). The precious sons of Zion, being men of faith, are compared to refined gold (Lam. 4:2). Israel will be redeemed on a basis of faith. The significance of silver is seen in the previous comment, and represents the principle of redemption. The result of this purification as far as Israel is concerned is revealed in the beautiful symbolism of Psalm 68:13.

"that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness" — But how can sinful Israel be righteous? Only by the forgiveness of their sins, and that is implied in the passage before us. See also Mic. 7:18-20; Eze. 37: 25-27; Deu. 30:6; Rom. 11:25-26. Having been forgiven their sins, and thus justified on a basis of faith, Jewish Levites will serve in the temple that the Lord Jesus will erect in Zion (Eze. 44:10-11). The word "offering" is the Heb. מִנְחָה *minchah*, a grain offering, given as a voluntary gift to Yahweh, as an expression of appreciation for the blessings received.

VERSE 4

"Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem" — Note the two identities, the former having relation to the land, and the latter to the city. See their use in the latter-day restoration in Joel 3:1.

Who May Abide?

The words "offering in righteousness" refer pointedly to the *spiritual and moral* character of those making the offerings. In this verse (v. 3) Malachi was demonstrating to the brethren of his day that an offering — to be acceptable to Yahweh — must reflect the righteous character of the offerer. The offering must be an action that is the out-working of godly principles *at work* in the daily life of the one making the offering; and not merely the ritual fulfilment of a tiresome requirement of the law of Moses (cp. Gen. 4:3-5). The test of every offering is: Will Yahweh be pleased with it? In his final words to Israel, Moses required of them: "They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer *sacrifices of righteousness*..." (Deu. 33:19). The Psalmist had taught them: "Offer the sacrifice of *righteousness*, and put your trust in Yahweh" (Psa. 4:5). These required principles in all offerings to Yahweh, apply to believers in every generation. Including these present times. So far as Israel is concerned, nationally, they will rejoice when they eventually come to know and understand these tenets for divine worship. This rejuvenation of the nation will occur when they are "grafted in" on the basis of faith (Mic. 7:18-20; Eze. 37:25-27; Deu. 30:6; Rom. 11:23-26). What a glorious future is in store for Israel. But upon Yahweh's terms, not theirs. — *J.U.*

"be pleasant unto Yahweh, as in the days of old, and as in former years" — Thus it taught the restoration of Israel and Zion to its former place of favour in the sight of Yahweh. For confirmation see Amos 9:11, which indicates that the nation will be restored as in the days of the Davidic monarchy.

VERSE 5

"And I will come near to you to judg-

ment" — In order to apply the decision of judgment. This will yet occur at the second advent of the Lord.

Malachi warned the people that though divine judgment may be slow in coming, as men account time, it will undoubtedly come. And it will be terrible in its power and reality. See Nahum 1:6-7; 1Cor. 3: 12-15; 2Tim. 2:19. Spiritual Israel as well as natural Israel will be the subject of this judgment, the former being called before the Lord at Sinai for that purpose (see 1Pet. 4:17; Rev. 3:14), and the nation later to be assembled to face their Messiah (Zech. 12:10).

"and I will be a swift witness" — God would be to both spiritual and natural Israel; bringing to attention all matters of their conduct in regard to His commandments. It is "swift" inasmuch as it will be applied immediately judgment is made (see Eze. 3:20; 33:13). This action will be revealed through the Son, the Lord Jesus, on behalf of his Father. Who will be able to gainsay such a witness? He will need none apart from the Word to reveal to us our actions (Jn. 12:48), thus all mouths will be dumb before him.

"against the sorcerers" — Heb. כַּשָּׁפִי *kashaph*, to practise witchcraft, sorcery.

"and against the adulterers" — Heb. נֹאֲפִי *na'aph*, thus covenant breakers, by ignoring the responsibilities of the marriage vows.

"and against false swearers" — Heb. שֹׁבְעֵי שֶׁקֶר *sheqer shaba*, those who turn aside from what is Truth.

"and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages" — Heb. עֹשֵׂי אֲשָׁק *ashaq*, to oppress, defraud, to do wrong to another. In this case they were taking advantage of the employee, and exerting undue pressure on him.

"the widow" — Heb. אִלְמָנָה *'almanah*, one desolate. In the days before the so-called welfare State, widows were often destitute, and had to depend upon the charity of family or friends.

"and the fatherless" — Heb. יָתוֹם *yathowm*, from a root, to be lonely.

"and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith

Return Unto Me

This verse (v. 7) appears to be a reference to the appeal made by Zechariah: "Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith Yahweh Tz'vaoth; turn unto me, saith Yahweh Tz'vaoth, and I will turn unto you, saith Yahweh Tz'vaoth" (ch. 1:3). The repetitive use of the name with this title (*He Who Will Be Armies*), is indicative of the power of God to restore His people, providing they come to Him in repentant humility and love. It also draws attention to the ministry of Zechariah and the wonderful prophecies revealed through him. It is necessary for man to reach out toward God if he desires to be a recipient of the grace of Almighty God. An individual moving away from Yahweh, in a direction contrary to the way of Deity, is showing scant concern for divine grace and mercy. It is the Word that prompts us and moves us in the direction that Deity would desire us to follow. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you..." (Jas. 4: 8). Malachi is here issuing a plaintive call for a spiritual and moral reformation. They had turned from Yahweh to other things, particularly self-interest. Lack of spiritual perception will lead people to consider that their own affairs are of prime importance. Yahweh has uttered His voice, through His Word, throughout the ages, for the purpose of drawing His people back to Him. That voice may still be heard today in these closing times of the Gentiles. — *J.U.*

Yahweh of hosts" — The final catalogue of sin has two elements, positive and negative. To turn the stranger away is to deny him his God-given rights, and to refuse to help him in time of need. To "fear not Yahweh" is to act in a disrespectful way to His laws, and to ignore the responsibilities obedience to Him demands. These words summarise all the sins enumerated in this verse, which can apply both figuratively and literally. What Yahweh desires in His

true sons and daughters is expressed in Isa. 66:2; Ezra 9:4; Pro. 28:14.

VERSE 6

“For I am Yahweh, I change not” —

This is a challenging conclusion to the divine accusation against the nation. Since Yahweh does not change, His laws are just and unswerving. The people could therefore depend upon what He has stated, without controversy.

Yahweh is the covenant name of Deity, the guarantee that what He has promised He will perform. All those who place their trust in His promises are assured by this Name that He will not fail them. In a word it expresses all the divine purposes and intentions with man. The time will come when men everywhere will realise this (Jer. 16:19). Meanwhile, He is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14) whose peculiar characteristic is the thoughts they express upon it (Mal. 3:16). His covenant name was first proclaimed to Moses when about to extend Himself for the deliverance of His people (see Exo. 3:14 and compare with Eze. 36:22).

“therefore” — Because of the guarantee of the covenant name (see Psa. 105:7-10).

“ye sons of Jacob” — The phrase “sons of Jacob” is its only occurrence in the prophecy. It speaks of natural Israel in a state of oppression, as was Jacob when facing Esau (Gen. 32). But as Jacob struggled with the angel at the brook Jabbok, and received the divine blessing of a change of status and protection against his brother (vv. 27-29), so the phrase indicates the continuing divine protection that pertains to the “sons of Jacob.” The name Jacob signifies *Supplanter*, and by the covenant of Jabbok his name was changed to Israel, *Prince with El* (see notes, *Expositor: Genesis*).

“are not consumed” — Heb. כָּלָה *kalah* signifies “to destroy completely; accomplish; fulfil.” Therefore the sons of Jacob are not completely destroyed, though brought under great affliction (cp. Rom. 11:1-2; 26-29).

Eight Pertinent Questions and Eight Divine Answers

The book contains answers to eight questions, the nature of which reveals a complete lack of spiritual perception on the part of the people, and the sad condition that was evident at the close of Old Testament times — the parallel of which was evident at the conclusion of Apostolic times (e.g., Acts 20:28-30; 2Tim. 1:15; 3:1-9; Rev. 3).

[1] ch. 1:2 — Wherein hast Thou loved us?

— *Recognise Yahweh's Love.*

[2] ch. 1:6 — Wherein have we despised Thy name?

— *Honour His Name.*

[3] ch. 1:7 — Wherein have we polluted Thee?

— *Treat the Table seriously.*

[4] ch. 2:13-14 — Why dost Thou not accept our offering?

— *Remain aware of the weakness of the flesh.*

[5] ch. 2:17 — Wherein have we wearied Him?

— *Match your words with actions.*

[6] ch. 3:7 — Wherein shall we return?

— *Learn to repent.*

[7] ch. 3:8 — Wherein have we robbed Thee?

— *Pay God His dues; responsibilities must be met.*

[8] ch. 3:13 — What have we spoken so much against Thee?

— *Recognise the privileges and rewards of service.*

Israel Condemned for Slighting the Institutions of Divine Worship — vv. 7-12.

This section of the prophecy reveals the complete blindness of Israel. They failed to see in what way they had turned from Yahweh, how they had robbed Him, why they were cursed. This spiritual blindness comprised their greatest error, and because of this, instead of being a blessing, the nation was cursed before all men.

VERSE 7

"Even from the days of your fathers"

— From the beginning of the history of the nation, when it was drawn forth from Egypt by the mercy of Yahweh, through the instrumentality of Moses.

"ye are gone away from Mine ordinances" — They turned aside from the instructions of God. This occurred early in the exodus from Egypt when they found liberty on the other side of the Red Sea, but quickly murmured against their Redeemer (Exo. 15:24). So it has been throughout their history as persistent disobedience was manifested, and because of this God had turned from them.

"and have not kept them" — Jer. 26:3; Eze. 7:22)

"Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith Yahweh of hosts" — The appeal of *Yahweh Tz'va'oth* is significant. The militant Name is employed to indicate the vital urgency of the petition. They had to first co-operate with God to receive the divine blessing. This appeal was constantly heard from God's prophets: Jer. 3:22; 4:1; 15:19, etc.

"But ye said, Wherein shall we return?" — This was the answer of Israel to the exhortation of the prophet. In what direction shall we return? Where have we done wrong? But they were blind to their own sin. Notice that this question is set in the past tense in the A.V. (and the Septuagint): "Ye have said..." In the R.V. and RSV it is given in the present tense, "Ye are saying..." Accepting the AV rendering, it would appear that the whole prophecy is given as the answer to this question. See panel on p. 263 for the eight questions and answers in this prophecy.

VERSE 8

"Will a man rob God?" — This might seem incongruous, for the "cattle on a thousand hills" are His, and God has the power of life and death. But in fact, Israel were robbers inasmuch as they refused to render to Yahweh what was rightly His. The statement is a challenge: "Will a man dare to rob God!"

"Yet ye have robbed Me" — A direct

Tithes and Offerings: v. 8

Yahweh charges the people with having robbed Him. They had ceased paying their tithes, leaving the priests destitute. Perhaps, because of their lack of knowledge (ch. 2:7) they had become disillusioned, feeling that they had delivered their tithes and offerings but in turn received no response from Yahweh. However, although we are here dealing with the *legal* requirement of the Law, the root cause of their bleak state was related to their "spirit" or disposition (ch. 2:15, 16). It was not simply that they were neglecting their obligations as required by the demands of the law. A correct spirit in the Truth would have been reflected in a correct spiritual attitude towards their lawful responsibility to Yahweh. In the case of these people, had they been striving to worship Deity "in spirit and in truth", they would have been willingly and joyfully paying their tithes. In our own case, a correct spirit in the Truth will be replicated in a ready willingness to fulfil our vows and our commitments in the service of our God. We will support the activities of the ecclesia, we will engage happily and gladly in the work of the Truth, fulfilling all our duties without question. We will devote ourselves to the regular reading and study of the Word; and we will help and encourage one another, setting an example that others might follow. — *J.U.*

and absolute accusation from Yahweh must have startled the priests and people. They did not imagine that their religious formalism constituted such a theft.

"But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee?" — They objected to the accusation, for they were ignorant of their real spiritual state, as was the Laodicean Ecclesia later (Rev. 3:15).

"In tithes and offerings" — These tithes and offerings belonged to God and not to the people (Deu. 18:4; see Neh.

13:10). When a Jew offered his tithes to the priest, he was really giving back to Yahweh that which was His in the first place (see Num. 18:26, where the words “heave offering” signify that which is “levied”). All that Israel had belonged to Him, and when He levied a tenth of what they had received, it was as though He said: “You can have nine-tenths of what is My own. I will only take one-tenth!” It was a token acknowledgement that all their possessions were gifts from God, and the tithes and offerings should have been seen as a “willing sacrifice” offered to Him. In Malachi’s day, however, the Jews were withholding even that tenth, and so were robbing God. They did not see this as robbery, because they looked upon tithing (as do most people even today) as something given *by* them *to* Yahweh, whereas the truth is that it was not theirs to give in the first place. It belonged to Him, and there was no real virtue in them presenting their tithes (for the “cattle on a thousand hills is His” (Psa. 50:10)! — howbeit there was a real evil in the people withholding the tithes and offerings).

Our own donations to the work of the Truth should be seen in a similar light: as a response to the continuing gifts of Yahweh to His people. A miserly attitude in such matters reveals an ignorance of divine principles, and a reckless disregard of our responsibilities to Him.

VERSE 9

“Ye are cursed with a curse” — The Hebrew is emphatic, by combining the word “cursed” (אָרָר *‘arar*; the same word is used of the ground in Gen. 3:17) and “curse” (מְאָרָר *m’erah*) in the same sentence: thus drawing attention to their real condition. They did not really prosper in thus withholding these tithes and offerings, but suffered; for Yahweh, in turn, withheld the blessing of heaven from the produce of the ground.

At the same time it must be recognised that wealth of itself is no guarantee of the divine blessing, as Asaph discovered (Psa. 73:1-17), and as the Laodicean Ecclesia was instructed (Rev. 3:15).

“for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation” — The sacrilege was not limited to one class only, but was widespread throughout the nation; both priest and people were apostate in this matter, an attitude which is as bad as idolatry (see Rom. 2:22).

VERSE 10

“Bring ye all the tithes” — The Jews of Malachi’s day were commanded to fulfil the terms of their covenant that they had agreed to with Nehemiah (Neh. 10:29). The principle of tithing is an acknowledgement that we owe Yahweh for all things, and in His mercy He only requires that a tenth be returned to Him (see Pro. 3:9). So Yahweh demanded “all” the tithes, not just a portion of them.

“into the storehouse” — The treasury in Jerusalem, that supported the work of the priests and Levites. It was a practice that permitted the work of the Truth to be maintained in Israel, as the tribe of Levi had no formal inheritance of land, and were supported by the gift of God, rendered by the people. See Neh. 10: 38-39; 13:5, 12, 13. Thus the tithe is a token of the divine blessing, and of the people’s co-operation with God to that end.

“that there may be meat in Mine house” — The means by which the levitical tribe can be sustained and the rebuilding of the temple and city be achieved. The apostle Paul taught that those who are called to minister about holy things may be supported by those who so benefit (1Cor. 9:13; Num. 18:21).

“and prove Me now herewith, saith Yahweh of hosts” — A challenge to their faith. If they fulfilled their responsibilities, Yahweh would certainly respond to their acknowledgement of His goodness.

“if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing” — They probably argued that they were justified in the withholding of Yahweh’s tithes on the grounds of a prevailing dearth (see Neh. 5:3), without understanding why they thus suffered (cp. 2Chr. 31:10). The prophet exhorted them that if they turn to Yahweh, He will return to them.

“that there shall not be room enough to receive it” — The divine blessing would not merely be food, but an abundance, with copious floods of rain.

VERSE 11

“And I will rebuke the devourer” — In Joel 1:4 the “devourer” referred to locusts, and most likely does in this place. They consumed what harvests did appear. Now Yahweh would not only provide for a harvest, but guard it against the locust invasion.

“for your sakes” — So that the people would be encouraged in their service to Yahweh, recognising the benefits that accrue from a true worship.

“and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith Yahweh of hosts” — The divine guarantee of blessings, with the produce of the harvests protected from invaders.

VERSE 12

“And all nations shall call you blessed” — The Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:3) seen in a token form by those who observe the divine blessing upon a righteous nation.

“for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Yahweh of hosts” — This was once the case (Deu. 8:7-10; 11:12), and so it will be again (Isa. 62:4; Jer. 33:7-9). Then, the status of Israel will be changed (Zech. 8:13). Meanwhile, the sins of Israel affected both the status of the people and the condition of the land (Lev. 26:43). The

A Change in the Fortunes of Israel Mal. 3:12

As to Israel, the Lord will have gotten them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame; and have made them a name and a praise among all the people of the earth. Instead of being a bye-word and a reproach, as at this day, the Gentiles will glory in their patronage. — *Elpis Israel*, p. 467.

The Name of Yahweh in the AV

The name of Yahweh is rendered in the A.V. as both “LORD” and “GOD” printed in small capitals as in Malachi 3:16 to discriminate from other words similarly translated (for there are at least six different Hebrew words all indiscriminately translated “Lord” or “God”). See the way in which the word “GOD” is printed in Ezekiel 37:27, and compare it with the way it is printed in ch. 38:3. In the first place, where it is printed in the lower case, the word in Hebrew is *Elohim*. In the second place, where it is printed in small capitals, the word is *Yahweh*. Notice, too, the difference in the printing of the word “Lord” as it appears in ch. 38:1 and ch. 38:3. In the former place it is *Yahweh*, printed in small capitals; in the latter place, the word is *Adonai*, lords. In *Eureka*, vol. 1. Brother Thomas expounded at length upon the subject of the Name of Deity (see pp. 87-111 under the heading: “The Mystery of Godliness Apocalypsed in Symbol”). He has further explained the beauty of this subject in *Phanerosis*, and we thoroughly recommend that this book be carefully read. *Logos Office* can supply an edition which lists all the places where the different titles of the Deity occur.

curse of God had rested on it, as it had on all the earth through Adam’s transgression (Gen. 3:17).

Israel Condemned Because Of Blasphemous Words— vv. 13-15.

Israel had murmured against the disciplinary principles of Yahweh, and had received the just results of their attitude. They had acted in an ungodly manner, completely uncaring that Yahweh remained their God.

VERSE 13

“Your words have been stout” — i.e., “bold,” or “hard” (Heb. *chazaq*,). See Jude 15.

“against Me, saith Yahweh” — They

had spoken against their true Benefactor, ignoring the fact that He had delivered them from Egypt, cared for them in the wilderness, and provided them with the hope of national glory.

“Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee?” — They could not understand, or recognise, that their attitude and conversation amongst themselves was contrary to Yahweh’s. They complained about the lack of harvests; the distressing times; the absence of the normal comforts of life, but they could not see that failure to offer the sacrifices they should have given to Yahweh were the cause of their troubles.

VERSE 14

“Ye have said” — Not so much in word (see v. 13), but in heart and by deed.

“It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before Yahweh of hosts?” — They complained that their difficulties were ignored, and their pleas unanswered. Their worship was equated with the blessings received, and when these were withdrawn, they saw no profit in worship.

VERSE 15

“And now we call the proud happy” — The arrogant, who seemed to enjoy all the privileges of life. Asaph recognised the apparent comfort of those who reject these divine wisdom (Psa. 73:1-14), and now the murmurers repeated the same jealous expressions.

“yea, they that work wickedness” — Their sinful actions were a constant exercise. The word “work” (Heb. *asah*) signifies to exercise, to keep, perform. They became expert in wickedness, constantly repeating such actions.

“are set up” — Heb. *banah*, to build; i.e., they prosper and develop their wicked ways. It may have appeared to the observer that the wicked prospered, but not to those who understood the divine purpose (see Psa. 73:17-18).

yea, they that tempt — They were “testing” God by limiting His power (Ps. 95:9). The word “tempt” (Heb. בָּחַן

Stout Words Against Yahweh: v. 13

“You say harsh things about Me...” (JB). “Your words have been arrogant against Me...” (NASB). In speaking so disparagingly of their God, where was their reverence? Where was their humility before the Great God of heaven and earth? Where was their understanding of His glory, majesty, perfection and power? Their attitude alone indicated that they had lost their understanding of the true identity and flawless perfection of the One whom they had been called to worship. Their “spirit” indicated not merely a lack of knowledge and true understanding; not merely a rebellion against the Word; but an exhibition of *easy familiarity* in dealing with the Most High. This was nothing more nor less than open blasphemy. This attitude was a sign of deep-rooted spiritual sickness. Yet they could not see this, and claimed: “We are not guilty!” We dare not treat the Great Creator with the nonchalance and careless indifference that will cause us to be banished from the presence of His glorious Son, at his coming. — *J.U.*

bachan) signifies to try, prove, examine. God cannot be “tempted” to sin (Jas. 1:13), but the people were “testing” His patience by their lax attitude to His service.

“God are even delivered” — This was not true, for if it were, then God would appear unjust. Ultimately, Yahweh will judge His people in righteousness (Acts 17:31), and if Israel had honestly sought to understand such Sabbatical Psalms as Psa. 92:6-7, that point forward prophetically to the coming rest of the millennium, and the destruction of the wicked, they would have recognised their folly.

The Ultimate Prosperity of Yahweh’s People— vv. 16 to ch. 4:1.

The prophet now contrasts the attitude of the faithful few in Israel who constantly meditated upon the things of Yahweh with the ignorance of their contemporaries. He shows that by so doing the faithful would

be preserved in the day of judgment that will utterly consume the wicked.

VERSE 16

"Then they that feared Yahweh" —

In the midst of the nation there was a remnant (as there is today in the ecclesia) who faithfully served Yahweh in spite of the prevailing apostasy (see Isa. 65:8; Amos 9:9). They withdrew themselves from the state of affairs existing about them, and strengthened themselves in the contemplation of the Covenant Name, seeing in its significance the hope of their ultimate deliverance. The prophet shows that Yahweh will not fail them. The word "fear" (Heb. **יָרָא** *yare'*) has the idea of revealing reverence in view of the majesty and awesome character of the Almighty.

"spake often one to another" — They were constant in their attendance to the study and discussion of the Word. This faithful remnant gathered in groups to encourage each other in the service of Yahweh, notwithstanding the laxity evident in the nation generally. This conforms to the instruction of the Master, that the memorial of his sacrifice should be remembered *"as oft"* as possible (1Cor. 11:25), and the apostle Paul urged that we do "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

"and Yahweh hearkened" — His ears are always inclined to the cry of His servants (Psa. 17:6; 18:6; 34:15; 130:2; Isa. 37:17; 1Pet. 3:12; Jas. 5:4).

"and heard it" — The word **שָׁמָע** *shama*, signifies more the understanding of a statement than just the sound. It is the basis of the divine instruction to Israel in Deu. 6:4, "Hear, O Israel..." Thus to hear with attention.

"and a book of remembrance" — A symbolic book held in the mind of Yahweh (Rev. 3:5; Phil. 4:3). The figure is drawn from the custom of kings in ancient times of recording in a book the notable deeds of their subjects in order that they might be suitably rewarded (see Est. 6:1-3 and com-

The Book of Remembrance Mal. 3:16

"Yahweh said unto Moses, 'Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.' The Spirit in David says, 'Are not my tears in Thy book?' that is, 'Are not my sorrows in Thy remembrance?' Hence "book" and "remembrance" are associated in Mal. 3:16, where it is styled "a book of remembrance." This is evidently the book of the life, or the Ledger. Such a book is for remembrance of deeds. Hence the name given to the book of life in Malachi (which in the Old Testament includes both the Day Book and the Ledger), "a Book of Remembrance." — *Eureka*, vol. 1, p. 362.

From the institution of sacrifice in Paradise till the death of Jesus on the cross, he was typically slain; and the accepted worshippers, being full of faith in the divine promise, like Abel and Enoch, understood to what the slaughtered lambs referred. Their names were consequently written in the remembrance of God as inheritors of the kingdom. — *Elpis Israel*, p. 128.

pare with Exo. 32:32; Dan. 12:1). The figure applies to various "books" held in the divine Memory (Rev. 20:12). The Spirit is the Remembrancer, noting and recording the activities of Yahweh's people (John 14:26). A daybook records the daily actions of those worthy of a place therein, as well as the book of life (Isa. 30:8; Jer. 36:2; Rev. 3:5). The final account is as a balanced ledger, in which the whole life of the individual is counter-balanced. When God says He will remember our sins no more, it is equivalent to Him saying that He will blot out from the "day-book" of records, those things found on the debit side of the account (Isa. 43:25). See *Eureka*, vol. 1, p. 360 under "Book of Life."

"was written before Him" — The angelic work through which the activities of the faithful are overshadowed and noted

(see the example of king Ahasuerus in Est. 6:1-3).

“for them that feared Yahweh, and that thought upon His name” — Two important characteristics that commend a person to Yahweh. To “fear” (יָרֵא *yare*) is to revere His authority and characteristics. The expression “thought upon” (חָשַׁב *chashab*) means to deeply consider; to be mindful of; to esteem. This faithful group in the days of Malachi continually focussed upon the wisdom of Yahweh, and looked for Him to provide the means for their redemption (as did those like Simeon (Lk. 2:25) and Anna (Lk. 2:36))

The Name of Deity was revealed to Moses as הָיָה *hayah*, a verb, in the first person, “I will become,” when Moses was called to deliver Israel from the oppression of Egypt, by which the nation became known as Yahweh’s “son” (Hos. 11:1). The Name, therefore became a family name, expressive of the purpose of the Deity to be revealed in those who develop a character that reflects the divine Mind. They are separated from all others into that Name (Acts 15:14). As a noun in the third person, *Hayah*, becomes the name *Yahweh*, יְהוָה, *He who becometh*.

The Lord Jesus said that he both manifested and declared the Name to his disciples (John 17:6, 26), and he prayed the Father that they might be kept “in the Name” (v. 11). Hundreds of references to the Name appear in the sacred records, and they all enjoin a reverential, understanding attitude toward it.

The Scriptures define the Name of Yahweh as “a strong Tower” in which there is safety (Pro. 18:10); as a Protection (Psa. 124:8); as a Heritage (Psa. 61:5,8; 69:36); as a Source of Confidence (Psa. 9:10); as the means of Elevation (Psa. 91:14). We are exhorted to “despise not the Name” (Mal. 1:6); to exalt (Psa. 34:3-4), extol (Psa. 68:4), remember (Psa. 20:7; 45:17), fear (Psa. 86:11-12), praise (Psa. 113:1-3; 145:1-2; 44:8; 54:6; Isa. 12:4), love (Psa. 119:132; 5:11; Isa. 56:6), bless (Psa. 96:2; 100:4; 103:1), know (Isa. 52:6), publish (Deu. 32:3), sing to (Psa. 61:8; 66:2-4; 69:30), and pray unto (Psa. 140:13; 116:4;

The Jewels of Yahweh

Mal. 3:17

The elements of the wall (of New Jerusalem), and the precious gems, are built upon the jewels of the foundation. The reality incorporated into this symbol is found in the words...” (see Eph.2:20). — *Eureka*, vol. 5 page 349.

80:18) the Name of Yahweh. Psalm 68:4 explicitly declares: “Praise Him by His name YAH.”

Thus we are exhorted to “think upon the Name” as did the faithful remnant in the days of Malachi. We do not do this merely by repeating the Name *Yahweh*, any more than by avoiding this glorious and wonderful Name. We do it by learning its significance, understanding how to apply it, and appreciate its beauty. By this means we uphold and honour our heavenly Father, by identifying with Him in a very personal way: as we do with the members of our immediate family. We have the wonderful encouragement that He who is above all is pleased with the mental exercise of His children in trying to understand His Name and its implications.

A name in Scripture is of greater significance than among Gentiles. Usually names were an index to the character or purpose of the persons bearing them. Sometimes the names of men were changed to conform to the change of circumstances in their lives. Thus Abram’s name was changed to Abraham because God’s purpose with him had been enlarged (Gen. 17:5), as also was Sarai’s (v. 15). Jacob’s name was changed to Israel to show how he was to be elevated through the persecution of enemies (Gen. 32:28). Achan’s name signifies “trouble” and he was a “troubler” of Israel; Nabal’s name means “folly” and he proved to be a fool! Saul of Tarsus changed his name to Paul because of his altered disposition as a believer (Acts 13:9).

A name is thus indicative of character or purpose. It is even more so with Yahweh who declared the Name by which He would be known to His family (Exo. 34:5-

The Memorial Name

...the Spirit imposed upon Himself a name, and embodied it in a *Memorial*, by which He was to be known henceforth. Some 430 years before He had said to Abraham, *ani Shaddai*, "I, the strength of the Mighty Ones" (Gen. 17:1), i.e., "All those Mighty Ones of whom you have heard, recently confounded the speech of all the earth, and are about soon to overwhelm Sodom and Gomorrah — I AM THE POWER by whose spirit they did it all; therefore walk before ME, and be thou perfect..."

The *memorial*, in its simplest form, is *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, "I will be who I will be." *Asher*, "who," the relative pronoun in this memorial, is both singular and plural, masculine and feminine. It will, therefore, stand for "ten thousand times ten thousand," as well as for two or three persons. The other two words of the memorial are the first person singular, future tense of the verb *hahyah*, to be. In this memorial the Eternal Spirit is the "I," and the *Elohim* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are the "*who*," of whom it is memorialized they "*shall be*." The reader will observe that it is not "I will be who *tihyenah*, they shall be," but "who I will be;" for although "*who*" refers to a plurality, that plurality, when developed, is but the manifestation of the One Eternal Spirit.

When this Spirit-manifestation is developed, it contains *the name for an Olahm*. The word, *olahm* signifies anything *hidden*. The name is, for a period, still *hidden in the future*; and, therefore, without defining the length of the period, termed simply *olahm*, hidden. The name is multitudinous, embracing "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 5:11), at the head of whom is He who is "altogether lovely" (Song. 5:16); nevertheless, all One Spirit out of whom, and for whom "they are manifested."

— J.T., *Phanerosis*, pp. 66-67.

7). Because this is His Name, and because in its meaning it illustrates His purpose with Israel, both natural and spiritual, therefore, Malachi could say, "the nation was not entirely consumed" (Mal. 3:6), for the "Name of Yahweh" would not permit that to happen; His name is bound up with Israel (see Exo. 3:14)

But the Name of Yahweh is also indicative of God's character (Exo. 34:6-7). Thus character and purpose is bound up in its meaning. The call of the Gospel is designed to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). They are separated from all others to be bearers of His character, and to manifest His glory — as Israel was called from Egypt and separated to become the national "son" (Hos. 11:1). Isaiah 43:7 states that those who are His Name-bearers, have been created for His glory. Thus the significance of this Name has an application to our spiritual state today, as well as our hopes for the future.

The name Yahweh signifies *HE WHO WILL BE*, or *HE WHO WILL BECOME*. It announces the purpose of the Creator to extend His family to embrace children who shall have a family likeness (both in character, and ultimately nature) to Himself. These children are selected from mankind, educated in His Word, called to manifest to His character, and ultimately to attain to His physical glory (Rom. 5:2; 2Pet. 1:4). Thus the Name of Yahweh reveals what He who has announced Himself as "*He who shall become...*" intends to do for His children. We honour Him by seeking out the things of the Name, and thinking upon them.

VERSE 17

"And they shall be Mine, saith Yahweh of hosts" — This comprises the true Israel, the Bride Yahweh will take to Himself, as a husband (Isa. 54:5). They will separate themselves from all others, and cleave unto Him.

"in that day when I make up My

jewels — The word “jewel” should not appear here; the margin has “special treasure” (compare with Exo. 19:3-5). The Hebrew is **צִגְלָה** *cegullah* from a root signifying “to shut away,” or to “seclude” as one would special treasure. The Hebrew is in the feminine gender, passive, thus relating to the Bride of Christ, Yahweh’s special treasure.

The day spoken of is the day of Yahweh’s judgment (Mal. 3:2, 5). That judgment against evil would also be the means of redeeming the righteous.

“and I will spare them” — They would be spared in the day of judgment (v. 5). The word signifies “to have pity; to care; to spare,” showing that even the “special treasure” of Yahweh has need for forgiveness, for “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

“as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” — The prophet thus shows that the emotions and feelings of Yahweh in the highest heaven are reflected in the closest circumstances of family life.

VERSE 18

“Then shall ye return” — The work of Elijah after the second coming of Messiah (Mal. 4:5) will cause Israel to return both to the land, and to their senses. They will recognise their past blindness of heart, and realise how foolish they have been, and their mourning will be sincere (Zech. 12:10-14). They will appreciate what they have previously lost in departing from the way of Yahweh, and will recognise their privileged status as those selected by Yahweh (Isa. 63:16).

“and discern” — In the glory that shall accrue to the Bride of Christ, Yahweh’s “special treasure,” the people will recognise the basis of their redemption: in the condemnation of evil and the elevation of righteousness. In that day, Israel will see the folly of their former reasoning.

“between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not” — In the imminent day of judgment, the character of Yahweh, outlined to Moses in Exo. 34, as

the balance of “goodness and severity” (see Rom. 11:22), will be clearly revealed, and true Israel will identify with that judgment.

They Spake Often One to Another:

v. 16

A faithful remnant, having demonstrated that they genuinely “feared” Yahweh, continually “conversed with one another” (Roth.). It should be noted that they did not hold conversation with others (vv. 13-15), because “others” were not at all interested in discussing the things of God, since the remnant were not willing to compromise the things they believed. A great gulf had developed between two parties within the ecclesia. United during the period in which they were bonded together under the leadership of Nehemiah, they now no longer had much in common! The attitude of the two groups toward the principles of the Truth was so different that there was no true fellowship between them. It would appear from the text that by the time Malachi rose up to speak, the faithful remnant had become more or less isolated from the majority. No doubt the remnant had tried, like Malachi, to restore their brethren to the way of the Truth, but had been repelled and renounced. No “door of utterance” was left open to them. To the faithful ones, no doubt it was something like “the days of Noah” and “the days of Lot” (Luke 17:26-30). They could no longer hope to eradicate the doctrinal and moral corruption that had eaten into the heart of God’s people. They could only strive to maintain their own integrity before Yahweh; to try and manifest lives of holiness and devotion to the things of Deity, for which they held such a wholehearted love, the result of clear understanding and commitment. This brings us to the great tragedy of the book of Malachi. “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of the many [the majority] shall wax cold...” (Mat. 24:12). — *J.U.*



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THE APPROACHING DAY OF
JUDGMENT.

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PROCLAIMED.

FUTURE WORK OF ELIJAH
AND THE RETURNING
EXILES.

"LEST I SMITE THE EARTH
WITH A CURSE!"



Malachi ch. 4:1 to 4:6

A **LOGOS** MAGAZINE



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CHAPTER 4

The Impending Day of Yahweh

Malachi draws his prophecy to a conclusion with a dramatic, though brief, outline of the final work of judgment. It is the answer to the challenge of Gen. 3:15, and the means by which the "enmity" brought to life because of the transgression of Adam, will be answered in the work of redemption by the Lord Jesus.

The Declaration of Judgment Against Sin — v. 1.

The final chapter opens with a dramatic call for Israel to be aware of the impending divine judgment. The patience of Yahweh is not inexhaustible; He labours long to redeem His people, but there must inevitably come a day of decision, that will remove the wicked and redeem the righteous.

VERSE 1

"For, behold" — This dramatic introduction occurs twice in this chapter: here, to draw attention to the impending judgment, and in v. 5 to introduce Elijah's work of redemption.

Malachi turns to the future, and reveals the result of the folly of natural Israel and the glory of spiritual Israel, comprising both Jews and Gentiles who serve Yahweh in their particular era.

"the day cometh" — The day of judgment (Acts 17:31), in which Israel will find itself arraigned before the Court of Assize, out of which there will be developed a faithful Bride, and a repentant nation.

"that shall burn as an oven" — Yahweh is represented in Scripture as both a Sun and Shield (Psa. 84:11) which consumes or protects. He maintains His holiness that requires a willing response to the needs of His people, but the annihilation of enemies to His righteousness. He will burn up the wicked, but heal and protect the righteous.

The full manifestation of divine glory at the appearance of the Lord Jesus shall be

felt as the scorching sun blazing in the political heavens. This political Sun (Christ) and Moon (Christ's true Bride) — the beginning of the greater creation of Yahweh; Col. 1) — is depicted in Isa. 30:26 (obviously not referring to the planetary system). As with the natural sun and moon, the political and religious bodies of the future will bring to bear a dramatic effects upon mankind (Isa. 66:15-16; 2Thes. 1:7-8; Mat. 25:41).

The rays of this political Sun are either healing or destructive on mankind — dependent upon the attitude of the people toward the things of God whether He responds with healing or devouring.

"and all the proud" — Connect with ch. 3:15. In the days of the prophet, many in Israel looked upon the proud with envy, stating that they appeared happy and prosperous. But the prophet revealed the end of their apparent success in life (Psa. 73:13, 17-20). True happiness and prosperity is only found in the way of Yahweh. The proud are those who are presumptuous in attitude, and pompous in character.

"yea, and all that do wickedly" — These comprise those antagonistic to the faithful remnant, who dedicate themselves to the service of Yahweh (ch. 3:16); in the greater sense it applies to the worldly (1Jn. 5:19), and those of a religious bent who oppose the principles of faith (cp. Mat. 22:18).

"shall be stubble" — The most brittle of chaff, ready for instant destruction (cp. Mat. 3:11-12; Isa. 47:14; Jer. 13:24). Paul warned that some working within the

ecclesia will be of this class (1Cor. 3:12).

"and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Yahweh of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" — The divine judgment will be thorough; there is no future for those who willingly reject the divine Mercy. Their foundation (root) and activities (branch) shall be put to the flame of judgment, and nothing will remain.

Coming Elevation of the Righteous

— vv. 2-3.

The wicked being removed, God's mercy, love and strength will be extended to the faithful remnant. The spiritual "Sun" which destroyed the godless, will be the means of restoration and health for the godly.

VERSE 2

"But unto you that fear My name"

— See comments ch. 3:16.

"shall the Sun of righteousness" —

The Sun of Righteousness who will rule in the political heavens of the future, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is termed "righteous" because he has been redeemed through his obedient sacrifice, and by resurrection to immortality was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4). "Righteousness" necessitates a cleansing (see Jer. 33:8-9), such as the Lord will effect in that day toward both Jew and Gentile who are prepared to accept him. As the power of the sun's rays destroys disease and gives health, so the Lord will effect these things in a spiritual sense to the nations of the earth. Ultimately, through his work the whole world will be redeemed and cleansed of sin and death, so that Yahweh will be "all in all" (1Cor. 15:28).

"arise with healing" — The sun is the source of good health, joy, light and beauty. Its rays reveal the beauty of God's handiwork, as its light penetrated the darkness in the days of creation, and revealed the glory of the angelic work. Apply these terms in a spiritual sense to the Lord Jesus. He is the source of spiritual health, light and beauty. As the sun in heaven destroys

The Great Day of Yahweh in Mal. 4:1-3, as seen by Bro.

Thomas

- The great day, styled in Joel 2:31, "the great and terrible day of Yahweh," and here in Malachi, "the day that shall come," "burning like a furnace" — *Eureka*, vol. 1, p. 158.

- These kings that are "the risings," are aggregately the Sun-power of the Millennial Heavens, "from whose face the earth and heaven" of the Apostasy "flee away" (Rev. 20:11). They are the Millennial Sun-Power, because they are emanations from "the Sun of Righteousness, whose beams have healed them in quickening them with incorruptibility and power." Having become elements of this power, they go forth and tread down the wicked of the earth and sea. — *Eureka*, vol. 2, pp. 289-291.

- Every king is an individual rising, emanating from the Sun. The formula is the symbolization of the oracle in Mal. 4:2 — *Eureka*, vol. 2, p. 304.

- It is this "Great Light" once seen by them "who sat in the region and shadow of death" which is styled in Mal. 4:2, "THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS," who arises with genial influences upon all who fear the Name of Yahweh Elohim; but with intensely scorching effect also upon the wicked who serve Him not. — *Eureka*, vol. 5, p. 180.

- While "the war of that great day of the Almighty Deity" is in continuance, the Beast and his False Prophet, and the ejected wicked, slothful, and unprofitable, servants of the One-Talent class of saints, are all being scorched and tormented in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: who shall tread these wicked as ashes under the soles of their feet (Mal. 4:3), which are then "as pillars of fire," "burning in a furnace" (Apoc. 10:1; 1:15) — *Eureka*, vol. 5, p. 85.

Ashes under the Soles of the Righteous — Mal. 4:3

If we suppose the edifice, call it temple, or palace, to be now finished, the architect would next order the rubbish, the materials which were left as unfit to work into the building, and therefore worthless, such as broken bricks, splinters, shavings, sand, and so forth, to be cast out to be trodden under foot, to burn, etc. Thus the edifice is built out of the accumulated materials, according to the outline of the draught, or purpose of the Builder; and the work is done. — *Elpis Israel*, p. 171.

The nations shall be as wood, or as sheaves, subjected to the action of fire. They may resist, but they are as certain of being subdued without further power of resistance... Their conquests will begin with the countries contiguous to Judea. — *Elpis Israel*, p. 461.

The Work of Elijah in Redeeming the Exiles — Mal. 4:4-6

The person with whom they will have more immediately to do in their Second Exodus is Elijah. There would seem to be a fitness in this. In the days of their fathers, when they forsook the LORD and abolished the law of Moses, Elijah was the person whose ministerial life was occupied in endeavouring to “restore all things.” Though he did much to vindicate the name and law of Yahweh, he was taken away in the midst of his labours. For what purpose? That he might at a future period resume his work and perfect it by restoring all things among the ten tribes according to the law of Moses, preparatory to their being planted in their land under a new covenant to be made with them there. — *Elpis Israel*, pp. 464-465.

the gloom of the night, so he will destroy the powers of darkness, and illuminate the earth with Yahweh’s marvellous Truth (see Isa. 60:1-3).

“in his wings” — Heb. כנף *kanaph*, extremities, borders. Thus depicting the

rays or beams that emanate from the source: the sun. The figurative “beams” speak of the power of the Word, manifested in the “Word made flesh,” and which beam upon the people of his mercy.

“and ye shall go forth, and grow up” — Heb. פוּשׁ *puwsh*, with the idea of “springing about; scattering; to spread out.” There will be an enlargement of those who benefit from the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness. The word is used of a horse galloping (Hab. 1:8).

“as calves of the stall” — The phrase speaks of animals that are well fed, healthy, and contented. Such animals were used to thresh out the corn in the time of harvest. Their hooves were shod with plates of metal for that purpose, and in Micah 4:13 the symbol is applied to the sons of Zion, who are invited to thresh the harvest of the earth. Thus Malachi says they shall “tread down the wicked” (see also Psalm 58:10-11).

VERSE 3

“And ye shall tread down the wicked” — Judah, restored by the Lord Jesus in the Land, will become the “goodly horse” (Zech. 10:3) and battle-axe of Yahweh (Jer. 51:20) to overcome the Gentile oppressors who seek to destroy the redeemed nation.

“for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” — The divine guarantee that this will be accomplished. They who were once oppressed and overcome by the power of wickedness now become the “first dominion” in the earth (Mic. 4:8).

“in the day that I shall do this, saith Yahweh of hosts” — The Hebrew is in the future tense: “in the day which I am preparing.”

Concluding Warning to Israel — v. 4.

As Malachi presented his prophetic outline of the future, he urged the people to respond with enthusiasm for the work of Yahweh, and to willingly embrace His wisdom. This brings an awareness of the vital need of the nation to reflect upon the Law that they previously had ignored. In this Malachi co-operated with Nehemiah in his

labour to bring them to obedience (Neh. 9:38; 10:29).

VERSE 4

“Remember ye” — They had to remember the cursings and blessings of the Law which constituted warning and encouragement to Israel. The Law will yet be re-instituted in the Age to come, forming the basis for the system of worship in the millennium (see Deu. 30:6-8; Isa. 42:21).

“the law of Moses My servant” — Moses not only rescued the people from

the oppression of Egypt, but provided the nation with the Law at Sinai. That Law was the basis of the divine covenant of salvation.

“which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments” — Moses conveyed the wisdom and will of Yahweh to all the people, and urged them to obey implicitly all the requirements of the Law. This was in “statutes” (צִוִּי *choq*), which defines ordinances and decrees for the development of Israel, and “judgments” (מִשְׁפָּט *mishpat*), the enactments and measures of the Law.

The Law — v. 4

“Remember... the law of Moses...”

This was a clear reminder of the covenant, with its blessings and cursings (Lev. 26; Deu. 28). “Here is the way. Walk ye in it” (Isa. 30:21). How sublime that the *final* inspired writer of the Old Testament endorses the *first*. Thus the Word of God is One; a unity of expression and revelation. Its true voice is from one source; one guiding Hand has controlled and directed the apocalypse which is unfolded in the Holy Oracles. In his final words, the prophet makes a moving appeal for the nation to remember the Law. This appeal, therefore, stresses the overall message of Malachi, which has been a call to his people to *walk in obedience* to the requirements of Yahweh, as revealed in His law, and to do so “in spirit and in truth.” They rejected his appeal. Their attitude was in complete contrast to the appeal of the prophet. They considered themselves to be worshippers of Yahweh whilst neglecting both the commandments and the spirit of the Law. The Law would continue to be a “schoolmaster” until Christ had come and his mission had been accomplished (Gal. 3:24; John 5:47). But how many would follow the example of faithful Malachi, and his brethren who “feared Yahweh and thought upon His Name... and spoke often one to another...”? — *J.U.*

The Future Work of Elijah — vv. 5-6.

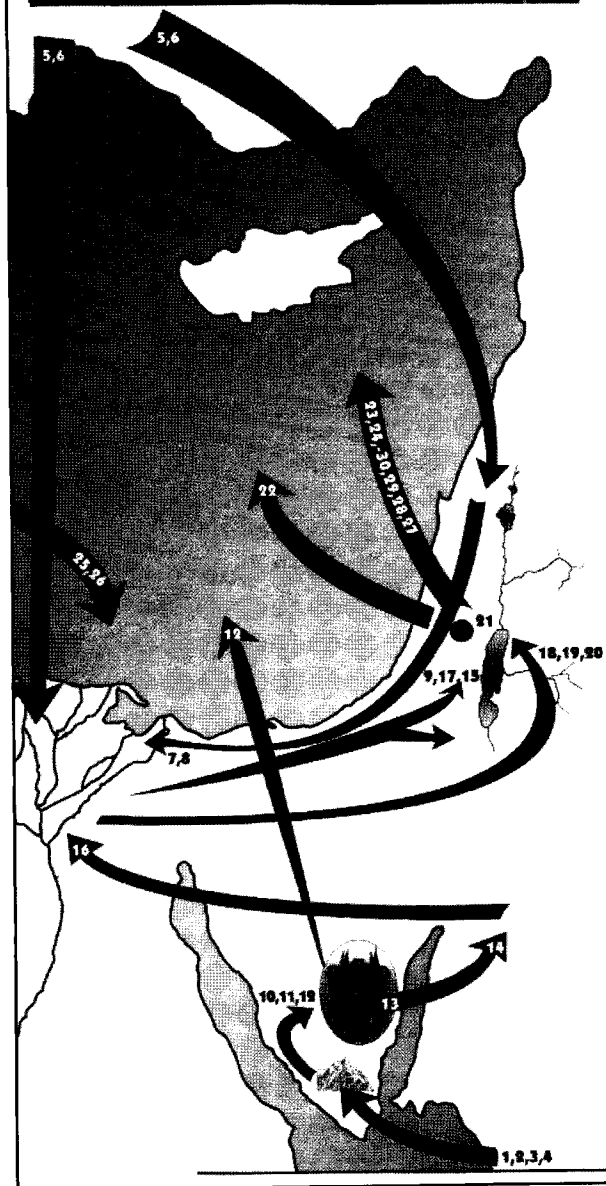
Following the resurrection of the responsible, the selection of the glorified Bride, and the Marriage of the Lamb, certain groups of the saints will be despatched to various parts of the world: to proclaim the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14:6); to care for the needy out of the battles of the nations; and to call the dispersed of Israel back to the Land. For the latter duty, Elijah and his companions will be sent forth.

VERSE 5

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet” — He laboured during the term of king Ahab and his pagan wife Jezebel, with the ten tribes of Israel. He destroyed the priests of Baal, and restored the broken-down altar of Yahweh (1 Kings 18). Yet at his death his work was incomplete. John Baptist came in his spirit (Luke 1:17; Mat. 11:7-17), but did not supersede or perform the work Elijah must yet accomplish (Mark 9:11-13; John 1:21). This work, yet to be accomplished, is expressed in Malachi in chs. 3:1 and 4:5, and by Isaiah in ch. 40:1-11. After the Lord has returned, the judgment held, and the approved receive immortality, Elijah is to be sent forth to the Jews scattered abroad. He will prepare their minds to receive their Messiah, and lead them back to the land of Promise.

This work of the redemption of Israel is revealed in the following prophecies: Jer. 33:6-9; Eze. 36:21-29 (where the work is set forth in general terms), Eze. 20:33-38 (revealing that the Jews will be regathered

Events Subsequent to Christ's Return



1. Return of Jesus Christ to the earth.
2. Resurrection of the dead.
3. Judgment Seat at Mt. Sinai.
4. Rewards and Rejections.
5. Russian overthrow of Turkey.
6. Europe confederated by Gog.
7. Russia dominates Egypt.
8. World-wide trouble.
9. Russia besieges Jerusalem.
10. Perfected Multitudinous Christ.
11. Marriage of Lamb to Bride.
12. Elijah's work of Restoration.
13. The Cherubim: Yahweh Tzva'oth.
14. Arabs subjected to Christ.
15. Western powers humiliated.
16. Smiting and Healing of Egypt.
17. Russia triumphant: Great Image.
18. Armageddon: Valley of Judgment.
19. Christ revealed; Mt. Olives splits.
20. Kingdom established in Zion.
21. Great Middle East changes.
22. Millennial Gospel proclaimed.
23. Nations reject Christ's Ultimatum.
24. Judgment; Wars of Destruction.
25. World-wide Second Exodus of Israel.
26. Established in Bonds of Covenant.
27. Nations subject to Zion's king.
28. House of Prayer for all nations.
29. Universal rule; millennium begins.
30. The Glory of Yahweh revealed.

under tribulation, and will fight their way out of the countries of their dispersion, finally being brought into the bonds of the covenant). The rebellious among them will be rejected in the "wilderness of the peoples," when nine-tenths of the Jews will be removed in judgment, being brought "under the rod" of judgment (Eze. 20:37; Isa. 6:12-13). Then the people will be inducted into the new covenant of the millennium: Jer. 31:31-38; Rom. 11:23.

Jews will only be accepted on the basis of their conversion and humble repudiation of their past sins, similar to the terms of the Gospel-covenant today. They will respond with a ready answer to the invitation of Elijah: Jer. 3:12-4:2; Isa. 40:10; Rev. 18:4. They will be led back to pass over the rivers of Euphrates (in the north) or the Nile (in the south): Hos. 8:10; Isa. 18; Isa. 11:11, 16; Isa. 27:12-13; Hos. 1:6, 9, 11; 2:14-19. They will appreciate how blind they have been. Ps. 110:3 sets forth their willingness to submit to the ordinances of the Lord. Mic. 7:14-17 describes the "mighty deeds" they shall accomplish in fighting their way back to the Promised Land. Then the nation will be settled in their several cantonnments (Eze. 48), ruled over by twelve princes (Mat. 19:28).

"before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh" — This is not the day of the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, but the Day of Yahweh's vindication of His righteousness in the great national judgments that will convulse the world at Armageddon and afterwards (Isa. 2:11). This will occur probably ten years after the return of the Lord Jesus (based on the suggestion of a fifty-year period between the return of Christ and the commencement of the millennium; see the dating of Eze. 40:1, suggesting a jubilee period between the passover of Josiah and the prophecy of the temple, less a forty-year period required for the return of exiled Israel; see Mic. 7:15). Christ will first judge the responsible at Sinai, and with the removal of the rejected, and the confirmation of the marriage covenant in immortality, as the Rainbowed Angel (Rev. 12; Dan. 10), will proceed northward, along the course previ-

ously undertaken by Moses and Joshua, to enter the Promised Land from the east, and "stand upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:4). There, the multitudinous Christ will see the Gogian power in occupation of Jerusalem, and will commence the attack upon the enemy in the great judgments of Armageddon, in which the nations will be subjected to the natural disturbances of earthquake (v. 4), as well as self-imposed destruction (Eze. 38:21).

VERSE 6

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers — The Hebrew word "to" can be rendered "with," so teaching that the "hearts of the fathers will be turned WITH the children," speaking of a reformation in Israel that will apply to all, both old and young alike. It can also indicate that the pioneer fathers of Israel will respond to the later generations. There will be a mutual affection between all tribes as a basis for the millennium (Rom. 11:26-30).

"lest I come and smite the earth" — The "earth" thus spoken of is not the physical globe, which will never be destroyed (Psa. 119:90; Ecc. 1:4), but the Jewish "earth" of Isa. 1:2, which refers to the society of the land (cp. 2Pet. 3:10, etc). Apart from such reformation, the judgments of the day of Yahweh would consume the Jewish "earth" by the burning rays of the "Sun" of v. 2, revealed in the multitudinous Christ.

"with a curse" — It is significant that the Old Testament should end with these three words, so that the New Testament commences with the good news of the birth of him who would bear the curse away, bringing blessings to all, both Jew and Gentile.

These concluding words of the O.T. Scriptures should impress all Jews that righteousness, or justification, cannot come through the Law. Yet in their blindness of heart, Jewry still refuses to turn to him who can help deliver them from the curse of the Law. As we ponder this, let us apply the lessons and exhortations of this

wonderful prophecy to ourselves (see Rom. 11:22). Let us meditate upon its teaching, see its hope of glory, reach forward to that vision of the future Age to which it can lead us. Otherwise we, too, will experience the curse. Thanks be to

Yahweh, that He has caused our hearts to be enlightened to His Truth. Let us think upon His Name, and glorify it before men in full assurance that "HE WILL NOT CHANGE" (Mal. 3:6)

A Curse...

Contrast these closing words with those with which the book opens: "I have loved you..." But Israel had rejected the divine love, and have since paid a heavy price for so doing. They rejected the divine love because of three principal weaknesses: **Ignorance** (ch. 1:2); **Indifference** (chs. 1:8, 13; 2:17; 3:14); and **self-seeking** (chs. 1:13; 2:11; 3:5, 8). Let us be diligent in seeing that we make our "calling and election sure," that we do not fall "after the same manner of unbelief" (2Pet. 1:10; 3:13-14; Heb. 3:12). Let us endeavour to be numbered among the few who "fear Yahweh... and think upon His Name..." Only those who fit this pattern will "abide the day of His coming..." The principles for divine worship stated in this book are as important to us today as they were to the generation to whom they were originally set forth. "My little children, with whom I am again in travail, until *Christ be formed in you*... We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, *are being changed into his likeness* from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit..." (Gal. 4:19; 2Cor. 3:18, RSV). Who will "abide the day of his coming"? Those who "fear Yahweh, and think upon His Name..." — *J.U.*

Expositions by Brother Thomas on the Prophecy of Malachi

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEADERS

Thus, under the law of Moses, it was divinely appointed that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and Israel should seek the law at his mouth: for he was the messenger of the Lord of Hosts."

The priests, however, became so corrupt and ignorant, that Israel sought in vain for knowledge at their lips, and therefore perished for lack of it. The LORD charged this home upon them by the hand of Malachi. "Ye are," says He, "departed out of the way, O ye priests; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept My ways, but have been partial in the law" (Mal. 2:8-9). This was precisely the state of

things when "THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT" made his appearance in Judea. He denounced them for their corruptions. "Ye have made," said he, "the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Hypocrites that ye are, ye draw nigh to God with your mouth, and honor Him with your lips, but your heart is far from Him. But in vain do ye worship Him, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Among these hypocrites were the lawyers, who, feeling the keenness of his reproaches, remonstrated against it. But, he turned upon them, and said, "Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Lk. 11:52).

— *Elpis Israel*, p. 202.

THE MISSION OF THE MESSENGER

The reader will by this time perceive that the making of a New Covenant with the two Houses of Israel is not the work of a day, as if on Pentecost, but of forty years. A nation may be politically born in a day, as Israel from the Red Sea; but they can know very little of human nature who suppose a nation of uncircumcised hearts can be intellectually and morally, that is, spiritually regenerated in so short a time. At the end of forty years, then, the “*regeneration*” of the nation, spiritually, as well as politically, is complete and the following testimonies find their *full accomplishment*.

“Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall *suddenly come* to his temple even THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, *that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness*. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, *as in the days of old, and as in former years.*”

I do not forget what the Lord Jesus said of John the Baptist, and what Mark and Luke say concerning him. Matthew says that John was he of whom Isaiah spoke; and Luke makes the same reference. Mark quotes both Malachi and Isaiah to prove that a *messenger and a proclamation* were to precede the appearance or manifestation of the LORD; and having said this he proceeds with his history of events. Speaking of John, the LORD says, “This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.” But in Malachi’s prophecies above quoted, “a great and terrible day” is spoken of, even in the day of LORD’S coming and appearance as a

refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap. Now before *that day*, says the prophet, a messenger shall be sent; and at the close of his prophecy tells us his name in these words, “Behold, I will send you *Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD; and he shall restore the heart of the fathers to the children, and (*hashiv*, understood, restore, turn) the heart of the children to their fathers, *lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*”

Now the contemporaries of Jesus understood this in its obvious sense, namely that the identical Elijah who was translated, should return to Palestine [*today known as Israel—Ed.*] on a mission to Israel before their being made to pass through the refining and purifying process on the day of terror.

This appears from the question put by the disciples to Jesus after seeing Elijah on the Mount with Moses, “Why then say the Scribes that Elijah must first come?” This was a reason urged by the Scribes for rejecting Jesus. As if they had said, “This Jesus cannot be the Messenger of the Covenant, for Elijah has not yet made his appearance.” The disciples were in a difficulty. They acknowledged Jesus to be Christ, but they had seen him before Elijah, which did not harmonise with Malachi’s testimony. Jesus admitted that the Scribes were right about the coming of Elijah; for he said, “Elijah *truly shall first come and restore all things*. This is a truth that must not be lost sight of. Elijah’s mission is to restore all things when he comes. What things? Not things pertaining to the Gentiles; for there is nothing Gentile worth restoring. Destruction, not restoration, is to come upon the things of the Gentiles both ecclesiastical and civil. The things to be restored are the things of Moses’ law, as far as compatible with faith in the blood of the New Covenant, constituting the *amended law*. Hence, in the verse preceding that about Elijah, the LORD says to Israel, “Remember ye the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded unto him in

Horeb for all Israel, even the statutes and judgments." These are the civil law of the nation, the law of the State, the existence of which is quite compatible with the New Covenant to which it will be accommodated in the time of emendation.

On a former occasion Jesus said to the multitude, "If ye will receive it, John is the Elijah being about to come (Mat. 11:14). I understand Jesus to say in these words that Elijah's coming is still future. He says, too, "*John is Elijah*," — but in what sense are they identical? Let the angel of Yahweh who appeared to John's father, answer the question — "John shall go before the LORD Israel's God in *Elijah's spirit and power*, to restore to posterity the fathers' dispositions, and disobedient ones to just persons' mode of thinking; to make ready a people prepared for the LORD" (Lk. 1:17). Then "*Elijah's spirit and power*," like his mantle on Elisha had fallen upon John; and hence the identity, which, however, did not at all affect the proper coming of Elijah at the appointed time. In this sense Jesus said to his disciples, "But I say unto you (though there is truth in what the Scribes say) that Elijah once came (*elthe*, 2. aorist) already, and they did not know him, but have done to him whatever they listed" (Mat. 17:12). John said of himself plainly, "I am *not Elijah*" (John 1:21).

The appearances, then, of the Messenger of the Covenant to the nation are preceded by messengers sent by Yahweh to Israel — messengers, individually two, but *officially and spiritually one*. The power and spirit of Elijah, viz., *one spirit and power* through whomsoever manifested, the operation of which in regard to Israel prepares them for the appearance of the Messenger of the Covenant in their midst. This *one spirit power* is exhibited in the history of Elijah. On comparing it with John's, their identity evidently consisted in both being possessed of the same *spirit* of prophecy and a like *authority* in Israel, which appears to have been "the power" referred to by the angel. The word of the LORD came to them both while sojourning by the Jordan, and thence their influence was felt among all

ranks and classes of the nation. But "John did no miracle" (John 10:41). Elijah performed many of great magnitude: John's identity in power with Elijah was, therefore, not wonder-working. Christ's mission to Israel was covenant-confirming, and individually enlightening and converting (Luke 5:32); not political: his political mission pertains to the future (Jer. 23:5). Yahweh's messengers who precede and introduce His king's appearing, have each a mission corresponding to Christ's. Hence John's mission in Elijah's spirit-power was confirming and personally enlightening and converting; while Elijah's, when he comes in his own proper person to Israel, will be nationally enlightening, converting, and political. The combined result of the Elijah-spirit-power mission, is the spiritual and political restoration of all things before Christ's manifestation to the Twelve Tribes as their king, sitting on David's throne in Zion. The restoration effected by this power through John, was a spiritual restoration affecting the hearts of *many* (Luke 1:16) of the people, not of all; a restoration of the Abrahamic mind and disposition in his contemporaries. Beyond this nothing was restored. But, through "Elijah the prophet," the same spirit-power will "restore all things," and, among these the tribes of Israel, when its mission will be complete.

Such appears to me to be the Scripture teaching concerning Elijah. He has a work to perform in the midst of Israel, before they are permitted the honour of a personal interview with their Lord and King in his glory. The angel in the bush did not go down into Egypt in person to meet Israel there, and preach to them. On the contrary, He sent Moses to bring them to Him in the wilderness, where He would meet them as the representative of the Invisible Majesty. When they arrived in Horeb He met them, but though they had heard His voice, He did not permit them to see His personal glory. This was a privilege accorded only to the nation's chief men, not to the tribes at large. Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, were alone permitted to ascend Mount

Sinai; but of them only Moses and Joshua were allowed to approach the LORD's glory on the top. The rest were restricted to a lower altitude.

After being with them on this part of the mountain for six days, Moses and Joshua left them, and were absent above toward the top during forty days and nights, leaving Aaron and Hur to attend to matters below. During the six days they saw above them the glory of the God of Israel. The testimony is, "And they saw the God of Israel; and, under His feet as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven for clearness. But against the nobles of the children of Israel He stretched not forth His hand, though they saw God and they did eat and drink" (Exo. 24:9-11). This arrangement was afterwards represented in the tabernacle — Moses and Joshua admitted to the *Most Holy*; the elders, etc., to the *Holy Place*, and the tribes in *Israel's Court* below. But what we refer to this scene for is to show that the arrangement of things for forty days in Israel after crossing the Red Sea, is a miniature representation of the ordinal relations which will exist for forty years when the tribes of Jacob shall have been brought into the wilderness of the peoples, under the Leader we have hinted at before.

In order to bring the matter out so as to exhibit the ordinal relations then subsisting between Yahweh, the Lord Jesus, Elijah, and the saints, and the twelve tribes in the wilderness of the peoples, we must change our position and survey the subject from a different point of view, "John is Elijah," as "this bread is my body;" that is, he is the type or representative of Elijah in the discharge of the spiritual part of his future mission to Israel; hence, as John made proclamation to Judah, that the Messenger of the Covenant was then about to appear, so Elijah will make proclamation to all Israel that the same personage is about to manifest himself to them in great power and glory. In other words, as Moses preached the gospel concerning the covenant-land to be typically and temporarily inherited, to Israel in the literal Egypt;

so Elijah will proclaim the same gospel to be antitypically and everlastingly realised, and therefore everlasting to the twelve tribes scattered abroad in "the Great City figuratively called Egypt." That there is to be a proclamation of that kind is a point easily proved; and to save words, we affirm, that it is to be made subsequently to the advent of Jesus, the resurrection of the righteous, and the battle of Armageddon, and before the passing of Israel through the refiner's fire in the wilderness of the peoples, which is to them and the nations "the great and terrible day of the LORD." Now for the proof.

In the last chapter of Isaiah it is written, according to Lowth and others, "Behold, the LORD shall come as a fire (to Zion — Isaiah 59:20) and His chariots as a whirlwind: to breathe forth His anger in a burning heat, and His rebuke in flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword shall the LORD execute judgment upon all flesh; and the slain by the LORD shall be many... It shall come, that I will gather all the nations and tongues together; and they shall come and see My glory, and I will place a *Wonder* among them (Israel), and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, Meshech, Tubal, Javan, to the far distant coasts that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall proclaim My glory; among the nations. And they shall bring all your brethren from all nations, for an oblation to Yahweh to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD" (Isa. 66:15-16, 18-20).

In view of the above testimony, we would ask, where shall the nations be gathered to in the providence of God? Yahweh replies, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken." And what then? "The LORD shall then go forth and fight against those nations, *as when He fought in the day of battle*" (Zech. 14:2-3; Joel 3:2, 6-17). How did He fight in the day of battle? Read the History of Joshua, who says, "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all others they took in battle.

For it was of the LORD to *harden their hearts*, that they should come against Israel to battle, that He [the LORD] might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour." "The LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And as they fled from before Israel, the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them, and they died; there were more that died with the hail-stones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (Josh. 1:19-20; 10:10-11). This is the way the LORD fought in the day of battle; and so He declares He will fight again (Eze. 38:21-23; Zech. 14:14; 10:5, 3), for "Judah shall fight at Jerusalem, because the LORD is with them; and they shall be as His goodly horse in battle." And how will the battle against the gathered armies end? He will leave but the sixth part, for Gog shall fall upon the mountains, and his multitude shall be buried in the valley of Hamon-Gog (Eze. 39:2, 4, 11).

This is the victory of Armageddon.

Who are those that escape among whom the "*Wonder*" is placed? The third part of those Jews residing in the land during the war which is consummated by the victory of Armageddon. Of these it is written, "In all the land, saith the LORD, two

parts therein shall be cut off, and die; but the third part shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is My people: and they shall say, the LORD is my God" (Zech. 13:8-9). Who is the wonder or sign whom Yahweh will place in the midst of this refined third part? He who in prophecy says, "I was a *wonder* to many" (Psa. 71:7), and of whom it is testified "His name shall be called Wonderful" (Isa. 9:6). Joshua, the high priest, and his fellows, who were typical of the Branch, and his associates are styled "*men of wonder*," or sign (*anshai mophai*th); and the prophet says, in words applied by Paul to Jesus and his brethren, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me, *are for Signs and Wonders in Israel*, from Yahweh of hosts, who dwelleth in Mount Zion" (Isa. 8:18). The answer then to the question is, that the Lord Jesus is the Wonder, whom Yahweh will place in the midst of the third part; and that he with his refined third and the risen saints, will constitute the little stone-kingdom in Judea, which after a lapse of forty years will by war and conquest have become as a great mountain filling the whole earth.

— *From Mystery of Covenant and the Holy Land Explained.*

THE PURPOSE OF THE IMPENDING JUDGMENT

Such is the pandemonianism of the world. Sin in its most heartless and hateful deformity reigns the universal despot of the nations. It is enthroned, and decorated with crowns, tiaras, coronets, and mitres; and is gathering strength by fraud, hypocrisy, and murder, for a last and final effort to crush all future endeavors to cast it out unto the earth, and its angels with it. A corrupt and vicious press is the ignoble and servile apologist of its treachery and blood. It flatters the grim assassins of the people, the soul of whose institutions is the ignorant stolidity and cruel superstition, of a dark

and iron age. Its sympathies are with profligate kings, blasphemous priests, and savage generals; while no epithet is too vile, or opprobrious, for those who, having endured to the uttermost the debasing and ruinous oppression of their destroyers, seek to break their bonds, expel them from their thrones, and to diffuse truth and science among the people. While a christian would take no part in the armed *melée*, he is convinced that nothing but violence in the beginning, in order to punish and crush the tyrants, can prepare the way for the amelioration of society. This is the order, as I shall show, which God has ordained as

preliminary to the setting up of His kingdom. But the conductors of the press do not understand this. It is not more corrupt and vicious than it is blind to the scriptural philosophy of the things of which it treats. It cannot see afar off, and the objects which are near it cannot comprehend. How applicable to its scribes is the exclamation of the Lord, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but how is it ye cannot discern the signs of the times!" — signs, which are announcing to the nations with a voice of thunder, that Yahweh has aroused Himself in His holy habitation; that the time has at length come when He will be still and refrain Himself no longer; but that He will make bare His holy arm, and "destroy them that destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18), or oppress mankind.

But, though the Lord hath a long time held His peace, He hath not been unmindful of His people, nor heedless of human affairs. The great incidents of history which have given rise to successive kingdoms and dominions, from the overturning of the kingdom and throne of God and of David, His anointed, in Judea, by the Chaldeans, to the present time, are but events predetermined and arranged in the purpose of God, and revealed in the "sure word of prophecy." Not a kingdom has been established, nor a king dethroned, but it has formed a move, which has contributed to the maturity of the present crisis which will ultimate in the introduction of the kingdom of God. This truth is beautifully expressed in the words of the prophet, saying, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are His: and *He changeth the times and the seasons*: HE REMOVETH KINGS AND SETTETH UP KINGS: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: *He revealeth the deep and secret things*: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him" (Dan. 2:20-22). It is He to whom all things are subjected; "for He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and *setteth up over it the basest of men*" (Dan. 4:17). This is the

reason why men and women with so little wisdom, or rather possessed of so much positive folly and imbecility, are able to rule the nations without "setting on fire the course of nature." When their wickedness and stupidity become obstacles to His purpose, He removes them out of the way, and introduces other actors upon the stage. In this way, He controls and regulates the world's affairs; but in every interference He shapes the course of events towards the consummation predetermined from the foundation of the world.

In ages past, God has had among the nations a people of His own. These are wise in the wisdom of God, and venerate His word above all things. Though not His counsellors, He has graciously condescended to inform them what He intends to do before it comes to pass. Hence, it is testified by the prophet, that "the Lord God will surely do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Am. 3:7). This revelation is made that His people's faith may be confirmed and enlarged; and that in every generation they may know the times and seasons to which they stand related. Knowing the signs they are enabled to discern the times; and while consternation and dismay cause men's hearts to fail, they are courageous, and rejoice in perceiving the approach of the kingdom of God. This is the proper use of the prophetic word. It was thus that the ancients used it, and were enabled to live in advance of their contemporaries. This appears from the exhortation of the apostle who says, "We have a sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first that no prophecy of scripture originates of one's own prescience. For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but the holy men of God spake being moved by the holy spirit" (2Pet. 1:19). Some were not unmindful of this exhortation, which is as applicable to us as to them; for the day has not yet dawned, nor has the day-star arisen. Were it not for the prophetic word, the "heirs of the kingdom" would be in as

outer darkness as gaol-chaplains, who burn the flesh to cure the soul; or administer the "sacrament" to gallows-thieves about to die! The sure prophetic word is itself a shining light, but, having been "put under a bushel," mankind are left enshrouded in Egyptian night. "Be mindful," saith the scripture, "of the words spoken before by the holy prophets;" and on the ground that this was the case, the apostle adds, "Therefore, beloved, *seeing ye know these things before*, beware lest ye, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2Pet. 3:2, 17). The words of the prophets to which he referred, related to the destruction of the Hebrew commonwealth. His brethren were acquainted with these prophecies, and therefore knew what was about to happen, though not the day or the hour. Hence, this knowledge was to be their caution and security against being led away by the spiritualizers of the time, who wrested the scriptures to their own destruction (v. 16).

From these premises we may conclude,

that as the Lord has also revealed what is to come to pass in these latter days, it is both our duty and privilege to make ourselves acquainted with it, that our faith may grow and be strengthened; our affections be detached from the fleeting present, and set more firmly on things to come; that our minds may be fortified against error; and that we may be prepared to meet the Lord as those who have kept their garments, and shall not be put to shame (Rev. 16:15). It is our own faults if we are not "light in the Lord." He has plainly set before us what is happening in our day, and what is yet to occur. Hence, while the priests of the State Church are drowsily exclaiming, while war and political murders abound, "Give peace in our time, O Lord!" — and while peace-societies are with infidel voices crying, "Peace and safety:" — they who take heed to the prophetic word "know before," that the hour of God's judgment is come, and that destruction is at the door.

— *Elpis Israel*.

It is comforting to know that the Lord, at his coming, finds some that are ready (Mat. 25:10); some who will not taste death (1Cor. 15:51); some, who in the midst of a general forgetfulness of the Lord's coming, will be "found watching" (Luke 12:37) — and, therefore, some who will steer safely through all complications, snares, pitfalls, and dangers of the latter days, and remain steadfast to the end in the one faith and practice of the apostles. If "some" are to be found of the Lord at his coming in this blessed case, we may be among them. To be so found will require the exercise of vigilance and great circumspection: the more so as God has permitted the uprise of clever perverters, capable, almost, of deceiving the very elect. Those who slacken their vigilance are in danger of being taken captive to their destruction. — *R.R.*



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