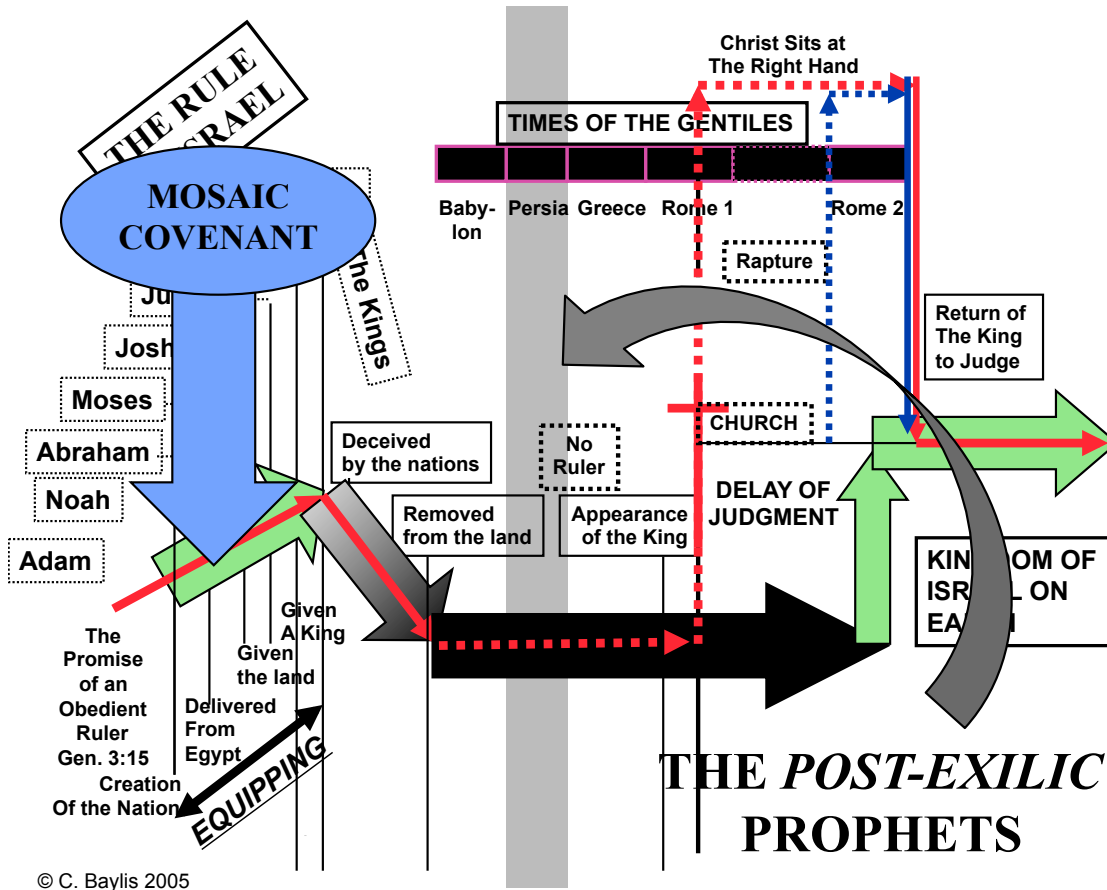


ZECHARIAH

[Note: Refer to the “Introduction to the Prophets for how Zechariah fits into the Biblical Story.]



Background<sup>1</sup>

Author

Zechariah was a Levite, son of Berekiah and the grandson of Iddo the priest (1:1) and thus is reflected his concern over the temple and the city of Jerusalem, and the things that would be Holy to the LORD (chapter 14). He was a prophet and priest. He was born in Babylon (Neh. 12:1,16). His name means 'YHWH remembers.'

Zechariah came from Babylon and lived during the time of Haggai, the prophet, Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest.

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<sup>1</sup> For this background reference Dr. Thomas Constable, “Introduction to Zechariah,” [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)

It should be noted that there is a continuing argument over the single authorship of the book and attributing it to Zechariah the son of Berekiah. This controversy arose rather late (seventeenth century A.D.)<sup>2</sup> While there are many views on this which will not be mentioned here, it should be noted that the controversy is somewhat fueled by Matthew's quotation seemingly from Zechariah 11:12 in 27:9 which he attributes to Jeremiah. This obviously leads some to a concern that some of the latter chapters of the book may have been written by this pre-exilic prophet and appended to the chapters claiming to be from Zechariah (chapters 9—12) do not have an attribution while 1—8 are attributed internally to Zechariah.)

### **History**

Zechariah returned under Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 2) with 50,000 exiles. The foundation of the temple was laid and the sacrifices were reinstated. The Gentile nations surrounding the city of Jerusalem oppressed the returning exiles, and they quit the rebuilding of the temple for about 18 years. Haggai the prophet encouraged them for about four months and disappeared. Zechariah then came on the scene and encouraged them to finish the temple. It was completed in 515 B.C.

### **Date**

Zechariah likely began preaching in Oct./Nov. 520 B.C. in the midst or at the end of Haggai's ministry. Zechariah 7:1 is dated as 518 B.C. Zechariah's prophecy of chs. 9-14 was likely completed after 480 B.C., which would be required if Zechariah is assumed to be the author of the entire book.

Assyrian Conquest of Northern Kingdom	722 BC	
1 <sup>st</sup> Exile to Babylon	605 BC	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Exile to Babylon	597 BC	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Exile to Babylon	586 BC	
Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem	586 BC	
Fall of Babylon	539 BC	
1 <sup>st</sup> Return	538 BC	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Return	458/7 BC	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Return	444 BC	

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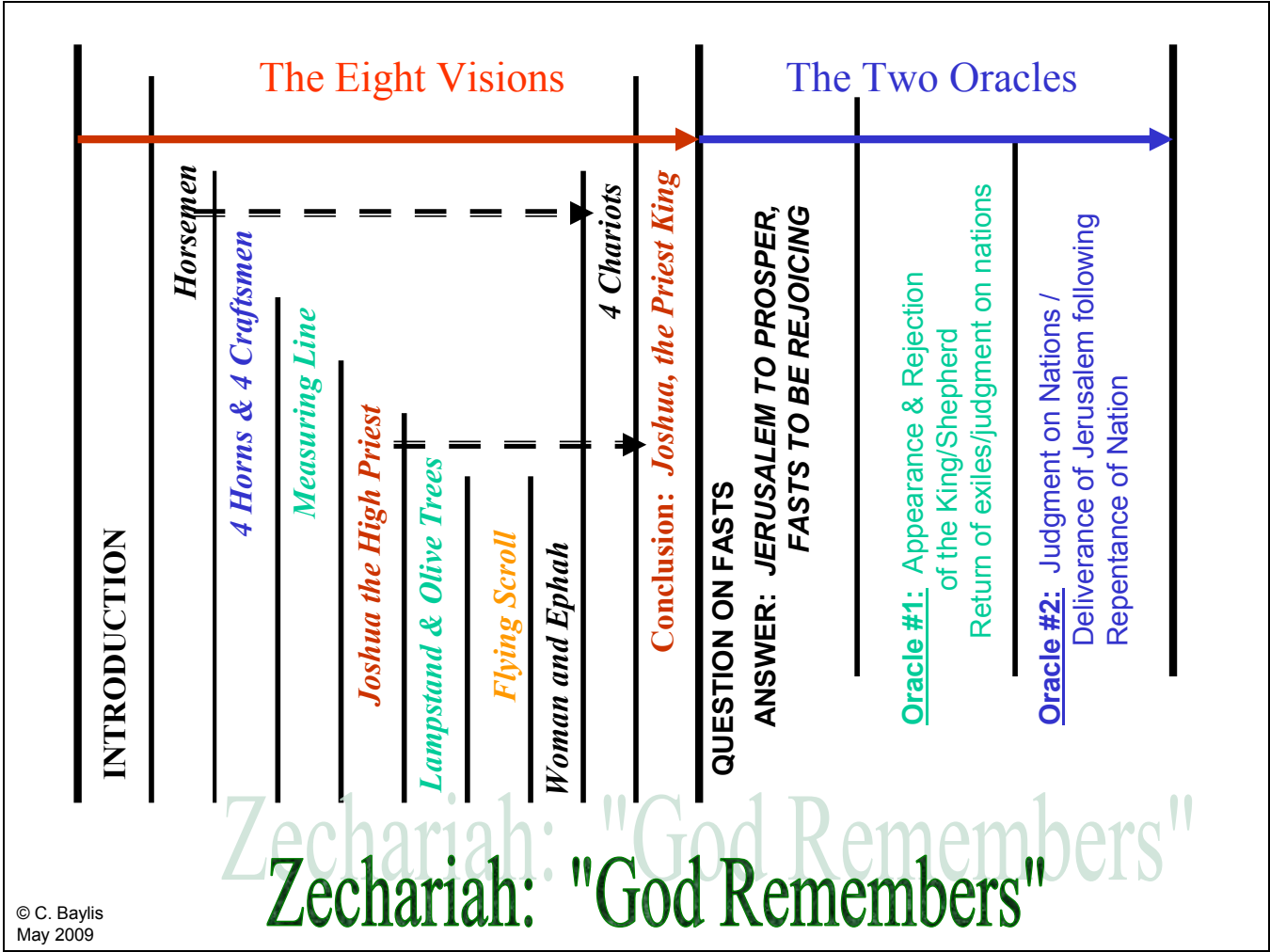
<sup>2</sup> Reference "Word Biblical Commentary", *Zechariah*, under the section "Unity".

(BKC [OT] p. 654)

<b>Chronology of the Postexilic Period</b>				
<b>Persian Kings</b>	<b>Dates of Their Reigns</b>	<b>Biblical Events</b>	<b>Scripture References</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Cyrus	559-530 B.C.	Edict of Cyrus for the return	Ezra 1:1-4	538 B.C.
		<i>First return</i> of 49,897 exiles, under Zerubbabel (to build the temple)	Ezra 2	538
		The altar and the temple foundation built	Ezra 3:1-4:5	536
Cambyses	530-522			
Smerdis	522			
Darius I	521-486	Haggai prophesied	Book of Haggai	520
		Zechariah prophesied	Book of Zechariah	520-518
		The temple completed	Ezra 5-6	515
Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	485-465	Accusation against Judah	Ezra 4:6	486
		Esther became queen	Esther 2:17	479
Artaxerxes I (Artashasta)	464-424	Artaxerxes stopped the rebuilding of Jerusalem	Ezra 4:7-23	ca. 464-458
		<i>Second return</i> of 4,000-5,000 exiles, under Ezra (to beautify the temple and reform the people)	Ezra 7-10	458
		<i>Third return</i> of exiles, under Nehemiah (to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem)	Book of Nehemiah	444
		Nehemiah's second return	Nehemiah 13:6	ca. 430
		Malachi prophesied	Book of Malachi	450-430 (?)

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament Edition, "Zechariah," p. 654, Edited by Walvoord and Zuck, Victor Books.



## **Overview**

Zechariah gave hope to a generation working on the temple, under oppression by the Gentiles in the surrounding areas.<sup>4</sup>

There are basically two sections to the book. The eight night visions form the first part, and the two burdens (or oracles) form the latter part. These sections are both introduced by instructions to Zechariah's generation.

It is this author's contention that there are two intertwining threads which run through the book. These are the purification of the nation Israel, and the subjugation of the Gentiles.

When the book begins, the Gentiles were at rest, ignoring the plight of Israel, which they had caused. The nation Israel, on the other hand, was facing the question of whether it would obey.

By the middle of the book (7-8), Zechariah prophesies that a Gentile will some day long to know a Jew, to be closer to YHWH (8:23). The Jews, however, having had two years pass since the first exhortation, were not identifiably better than their fathers (7:5-6).

By the end of the book, God will subjugate the Gentiles to Himself (14:16-21), while the nation Israel will be purged, repentant (13:9).

There is a certain movement, from general to specific, throughout the book. The visions are general and topical. The first oracle is more specific, while the last oracle is very specific ("...in that day"). Further the Lord becomes very active toward the end of the book, characterized by His bringing events to pass intentionally ("I will gather...", "I am going to make...", etc.).

It seems there is the indication by YHWH that He "will" bring these events to pass, evidenced by the increasing details, as well as the increasing personal activity by YHWH Himself (as opposed to letting Israel determine their future).

## **Statements of the Argument**

### **Message**

The oppressive nations will become subjugated to YHWH, while the nation Israel will become repentant, purged through His personal, active participation in future events, to

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<sup>4</sup> For the Biblical reference to the oppression by the neighboring Gentiles, see Nehemiah 4ff.

culminate in His personal Kingdom presence at Jerusalem.

### **Goal**

To convince a nation of their need to repent, assuring them in their failure, that God Himself will bring about their ultimate repentance.

### **Theological Design**

To reveal YHWH, faithful to His covenant to Abraham, who brings about the repentance of Israel, the subjugation of the nations, and His personal, unfailing protection of Israel.

### **Literary Design**

By using visions and oracles, revealed by God, which in their flow, and in their detail, demonstrate that God will bring repentance and the Kingdom to pass.

## **Commentary**

### **The Eight Visions (1-6)**

#### **Introduction (1:2-6)**

The eight visions are introduced by the instruction of YHWH. At the beginning of the introduction, God told them to "Return to Me and I will return to you." A major emphasis of the message of Zechariah will depend on the return in faith of the nation Israel.

The visions were lacking in criticism of the people, for they had just been offered the chance to follow YHWH. The visions were His outline for them as to what He would one day do for them if they would obey.

One of the main themes of Zechariah seems to be dealing with the Gentile nations. This would historically have been due to the oppression which the builders of the temple were undergoing (Nehemiah 4ff.).

The first vision dealt with God's anger with the nations at rest (while Israel is oppressed), and the last vision dealt with the judgment by God on the nations. In between these two, God revealed visions which insured the blessings.

## The Visions

<b>The Vision</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
The Myrtle Trees	God angry with nations who ruled over Jerusalem and are at rest.
The Horns and craftsmen	Nations that scattered the Jews shall be attacked by nations
The Measuring Line	Jerusalem to be restored to fruitfulness and security
Joshua the High Priest	The Nation to be cleansed
The Golden Lampstand	Continuation of the witness
Flying Scroll	Judgment on Sinners
Flying Ephah	Removal of Wickedness
Four Chariots	Judgment on the Nations

**Vision #1: The Four Horse Riders under the Myrtle Trees (1:7-17)**

The angelic beings on horsemen are reporting after a survey of the earth.<sup>5</sup> The survey has revealed that the Gentile nations that came against Israel are at rest. This, of course, is contradictory because they have been the instruments of judging Israel, but with evil intent. Thus, it becomes apparent that if they are at rest then God's revenge has not arrived.

However, the Lord reminds them that He will avenge them and return Jerusalem to

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<sup>5</sup> There seems to be some question as to whether Jeremiah is seeing these visions as they occur in heaven or on earth. The "hollow" and the myrtle trees suggest that this may have been in the area of Jerusalem, while the gathering of the angelic horsemen bears a similarity to Job 1.

"במצלה" "in the hollow" or "deep" probably refers to the lowest part of the Kidron Valley where there was a garden in pre-exilic times (2 Kgs 25:4). But the word may have a symbolic meaning here also for "distress" of the people (cf.. Ps 88:6; Jonah 2:4). JB translates the phrase "deep rooted myrtles." (Word Biblical Commentary, *Zechariah*)

prosperity. The “seventy years” that God was angry with them is the time allotted by Jeremiah to their captivity in Babylon. However, since this vision is subsequent to the first return under Cyrus, but is prior to the returns of Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the temple (altar and foundation built in the first return, 538 BC), the vengeance of YHWH against the nations that caused it to go into exile is not yet evident.

### **Vision #2: The Four Horns and Four Craftsmen (1:18-21)**

The four horns stand for four unnamed nations (perhaps the directions of the compass (cf. 2:6?) or, as many designate, the four gentile nations and their subsequent destroyers) who have come against Jerusalem and are to be punished as the craftsmen designate.

#### **HORNS (Destroyed)**

Babylon

Medes-Persia

Greece

Rome

#### **CRAFTSMEN (Destroyers)**

Medes-Persians

Greece

Rome

Messiah

### **Vision #3: The Measuring Line (2:1-13)**

The measuring line deals with Jerusalem specifically and reassures Israel that they will once again be prospered by YHWH (Deut. 28:1-14) and dwell in security following a return from the scattering in the nations (Deut. 30:1-9)

#### **Jerusalem prospering and in security (2:1-5)**

A young man is measuring Jerusalem; that is, he is either involved in its rebuilding or is reporting the finished product. He is told that it is to be inhabited without walls, thus indicating that the measuring will be, to a degree, difficult. Because of the lack of walls for defense, it is stated that YHWH will be a fire around them; i.e., their security. They will once again be prosperous.

#### **The remnant is to flee from their captivity and return to Jerusalem (2:6-13)**

They are to flee from Babylon (the north) as God will mete out His judgment on them. The promise is that the day will come when these Gentiles will beg to go with a Jew since



he would be the avenue of a relationship with the Jewish God, YHWH.

**Summary: YHWH will soon judge the nations and return Israel**

The statement of God arising is one of warning, since when God arises, it is for imminent judgment.

**Vision #4: Joshua the High Priest (3:1-10)**

**The Cleansing of the Nation (3:1-5)**

Joshua, the High Priest is found to be in filthy garments.<sup>6</sup> Satan is rebuked in his accusation and Jerusalem is pronounced as a brand plucked from the fire. Joshua is cleansed and given clean clothes and turban signifying the future cleansing of Jerusalem.

**The coming of “the Branch” (3:6-11)**

In this section, the “Branch” is prophesied to come and deliver Israel. Israel will be purged in one day and Israel will enjoy the rest promised them in the kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

**Vision #5: The Golden Lampstand and the Olive Trees (4:1-14)**

This prophecy regards Zerubbabel who is prophesied to complete the Temple, but it will be through the power of the Spirit that he will accomplish this.

Zechariah sees a lampstand with seven lamps each fed by seven spouts. There is a bowl on top of the lampstand which is connected from two olive trees.

The point of this is that Israel (the lampstand) will be supplied by oil from the two olive trees (likely here Joshua and Zerubbabel, but with future Messianic fulfillment) and continue thus her ministry to the world.

**Vision #6: The Flying Scroll (5:1-4)**

The scroll is written on both sides and is 30 feet by 15 feet. It contains the iniquity of

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<sup>6</sup> The word here implies that they are filthy due to being covered with human excrement.

<sup>7</sup> “Sitting under ones vine and fig tree” is imagery of the kingdom throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

Israel and indicates that the curse will be taken on all the violators.

### **Vision #7: The Woman in the Ephah (5:5-11)**

The woman, Wickedness, is representative of these sins of Israel. They are taken to Babylon (Shinar) and placed there. This likely indicates that the source of their sins is secular pagan (i.e., like the pagans) and is taken out of the land, thus purging the land.

### **Vision #8: The Four Chariots**

This section is the *inclusion* back to the first vision with the horsemen. In that vision the horsemen were angelic beings who were patrolling the earth and found the Gentile nations to be at rest (Jerusalem under their dominion). In this vision, the four chariots will take away that rest by inciting war against them.

The north and south directions would seem to refer to Babylon and Egypt as representative of the nations. The two mountains provide a difficulty here and there does not seem to be a consensus on what they indicate. Some have felt they are literal mountains and others figurative for nations.

### **Joshua, the High Priest, crowned (6:9-15)**

At the end of Chapter 6 (vv. 9-15), the prophet closed the visions by taking the crown and setting it on the head of Joshua. This symbolized that the crown and the priesthood would someday come together in One Man, the Branch, the Messiah.

YHWH assured Israel that the temple would be built when that Man came, and that He would incorporate Gentiles into the building of the temple. The materials for the crown came from Babylon, also indicating Gentile participation. This, of course, would be a considerable turn-around.

### **Summary of the Visions**

Further the unity of the visions may be seen in the 'inclusio' (some have suggested chiasm).<sup>8</sup> The first vision indicated horses patrolling the Gentile nations at rest. The last

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<sup>8</sup> Louie claims, as have many others, that the first and eighth visions are concerning the accomplishment of God's purposes through conquering the gentile nations, the second, third, sixth and seventh visions show YHWH's plan as it relates to the political and moral antagonists of Israel, and the middle two focus on the renewed role of Israel as a priestly nation. While these observations are true, there is some question as to whether there is a well defined chiasm.

vision also indicated patrolling horses, but with war chariots to destroy the opposing nations.

Thus one might say that the purpose of the visions is to demonstrate what God will do if the people obey their own promise of returning to YHWH. He will purge and establish Israel, but destroy and subjugate the Gentiles.

### **The Oracles (7-14)**

Following the introduction in 7—8, follow the actual oracles (9—14). While the oracles are overlapping in their events, the subjects are different. The first oracle deals with the strengthening of the people, their return and their conquering the Gentiles through the Messiah/King, but not before they reject their 'Good Shepherd.' The second oracle deals with the spiritual rejuvenation of the nation, represented in Jerusalem, through the striking of the Shepherd.

### **Introduction (7:1-8:23)**

Chapters 7-8 are a unified segment. It begins with the question of fasts and ends with the answer on fasts. Two years had passed since the first exhortation by YHWH to obey. Now came the questioning by the people as to the nature of their fasts; i.e., should they continue?<sup>9</sup>

#### **The question on fasting (7:1-3)**

The people come to Zechariah to ask regarding fasting. The response of God will take the rest of the two chapters and will end with a conclusion (*inclusion*) to their request in 8:18-23 where the Lord concludes with a reference to their question on fasting.

#### **The answer: They are selfish as their fathers (7:4-14)**

Here God answers their question by telling them that they not only fast for

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<sup>9</sup> The fasts were the periods of time relating mostly to the time prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e., the destruction of the Temple (2 Kings 25:8), the city wall was breached (Jer. 39:2), the murder of Gedaliah (2 Kings 25:25, Jer. 41:1ff., Nebuchadnezzar's siege of the city (2 Kings 25:1,2, Jer 39:1). Refer to Baldwin, p. 143ff. (Joyce G. Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary.)

themselves, when they eat and drink they also do that for themselves. Another passage that refers to this issue of fasting in much the same way is Isaiah 58.

Then God tells them that they are no different than their fathers. They were told to dispense justice in the treatment of the orphan and the widow. Yet they did not listen and were judged, scattered into the Gentile nations.

### **The Restoration of Jerusalem and its peoples (8:1-17)**

In Chapter 8, YHWH gave details of the Jerusalem of the Kingdom for the people, so that they might have some hope in their rebuilding, and in their obedience. Again He gave them instructions. They were to dispense justice (unlike their fathers) and YHWH would restore the city to fruitfulness and give them security as He would bring them back from where they had been scattered. They would not be judged again.

### **Conclusion: Fasts will be turned into rejoicing (8:18-23)**

Finally He gave them an answer to their initial inquiry about fasts. He would someday turn the fasts into occasions of rejoicing. YHWH assured them that He would bring about their repentance, then He would do all the things that He had promised, including the restoration of their privilege over Gentiles. Gentiles would appreciate the place of Israel in relationship to YHWH and would long to know one so that they could access the King of kings.

### **The First Oracle (9:1-11:17)**

There is a shift from the 'efforts of the nation' to repent (they chose the worthless shepherd) in the first oracle, to the 'efforts of YHWH' ("I will pour out the Spirit...") to insure their repentance in the second oracle.

**9:1-17: The Conquering YHWH.** This chapter describes basically three sections as follows:

#### **9:2-8: YHWH eliminates the Coastal Enemies**

These verses form a unit as evidenced by their chiasmic structure.<sup>10</sup> While this

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<sup>10</sup> Joyce Baldwin has proposed a chiasmic structure which defends the break between verses 8 and 9. The two halves of the poem are exactly balanced, vv. 1-4 deal with the north and vv. 5-8 deal with the south. The use of 'eye' (of the Lord) in v. 1 and 8

introductory section does not mention the actual means of destruction of these cities, it is attributed to YHWH as the source.

The ruination of the coastal cities is described. After this YHWH protects Jerusalem against any marauding armies.

Historically, a pre-figurement of this occurred in 333 B.C. in Alexander the Great. However, verse 8b states that no oppressor will ever take Jerusalem again. This, of course, did not occur in 333 B.C. and is yet to happen.<sup>11</sup> The nature of the passage is that of judgment on these nations. The result of this conquest is that these nations follow YHWH (9:7).<sup>12</sup> Thus, whether Alexander prefigured this conquest is questionable<sup>13</sup>, for Alexander's conquest did not turn these nations toward YHWH.

The sense of the phrase 'because of an army' is to be taken in the sense of 'against an army (or hostile troop).' Thus YHWH will protect against hostile troops which would desire to go back and forth, as troops have in the past (destroying Jerusalem as they went)<sup>14</sup>. It should be noted that an alternative, and feasible view, would be that the coastland nations of this section are to be conquered by other nations (as Alexander did). This may fit in with the craftsmen of the second vision, as they are raised up to conquer the horns.

The sense here seems to be that the Messiah will return and go to battle against these neighboring nations, and upon His return and residence in Jerusalem, continue His protection forever.

### **9:9-10: Israel to look for Messiah/King**

After YHWH eliminates the threat of the coastal enemies, He will turn to Israel

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seem to form '*inclusio*.' (Joyce G. Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary.)

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Unger, p.152 ff. for a complete description of the Alexandrian conquests as they are applied to this passage.

<sup>12</sup> Baldwin, p. 157.

<sup>13</sup> Although it must be admitted that a conqueror did eliminate these cities, and when he did come to Jerusalem, he did not pass over it (destroy it), but avoided it miraculously.

<sup>14</sup> Refer to Keil, p. 333, for the possibilities of the use of these words.

and they will be told to rejoice for their King is coming to them on a donkey<sup>15</sup>. This had its partial fulfillment at the triumphal entry, when Christ entered Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup>

### **9:11-17: YHWH strengthens the people**

He strengthens their people, and enables them to go out and conquer the Greeks<sup>17</sup> (v.13). Thus it may be inferred, as was in the historical precedent (The Macabees), that the future conquered ones, following the Kings return, includes the Greeks.

### **10:1-12: The Restoring YHWH:**

Zechariah turns to the restoration into the land of the people.

### **10:1: The Merciful YHWH**

Verse 1 indicates that YHWH will bless Israel with rain (always the indication of blessing in the land) when Israel asks.

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<sup>15</sup> It is quite interesting that the first use of the term “donkey” is that of a male ass. The second, seemingly parallel, use is in the feminine, or that of a “she ass”. In Matthew 21:2, Jesus asks the disciples to get him a donkey (in the masculine) and her foal (which is in the feminine), thus two donkeys fitting the Zechariah description. Mark uses the masculine use and mentions only one. John quotes the verse in Zechariah using the masculine and mentions only one (**πῶλον**). But in referencing the historical fulfillment uses a different word for donkey (**ὄνῳριον**) which is neuter.

<sup>16</sup> Gaebelein, p. 86 gives a good demonstration of how the gospels do not quote this passage fully, when demonstrating the triumphal entry. However, Gaebelein feels that the 'donkey' part of the sentence is for the first advent, for He will come on a white horse (Rev. 19), not a donkey, in His second advent. While the Lord will return from the clouds as conqueror on a horse, it is possible that He will enter in His coronation as King, on a donkey, fulfilling 9:9. Note that Solomon entered the city on David's mule in 1 Kings 1:33.

<sup>17</sup> Some feel the four horns of the second vision are the four world powers of Daniel. If this is true, then there could be representatives of these powers in the final battles, which would explain the mention of Greece at this point.

### **10:2: The deceived Israel**

Here YHWH spoke of Israel's situation. It was relying in false comfort provided by seers, diviners, etc. He spoke of removing them from the land.

### **10:3-5: The empowering Ruler**

YHWH described the means through which Israel will be strengthened in order to fight. It is through the ultimate ruler.

### **10:6-12: The strengthening of the nation**

These 7 verses are characterized by 'inclusio',<sup>18</sup> the strengthening of Judah. The result of their strengthening is the return to the land by the people. This is a miraculous return, caused totally by the Lord, and it is so voluminous, and they are so prolific, that they outgrow the land in sheer numbers.

### **11:1-17: The worthless Shepherd: In Chapter 11, YHWH moves to a 'however'.**

Reverting back to 10:3, where He previously mentioned the worthless shepherds of the house of Israel, He enters an explanation of what must occur with the worthless shepherds. Here is that parenthesis. It must be inserted before 10:3. The point is that Israel's state of non-repentance will result in their rejection of the 'Good Shepherd' and their acceptance of the 'worthless shepherd.' While God is willing to strengthen them through the humble King of 9:9, the nation chooses to delay that by selection of the worthless shepherd.

### **11:1-3: The Woe on Israel\_**

Following the prophecy of ultimate excitement, the oracle moves to a woeful chant.

### **11:4-14: The Good Shepherd rejected**

While Zechariah has not mentioned a good shepherd previously in this oracle, he now mentions one. This one is in contrast to the three shepherds (likely the ones

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<sup>18</sup> Strengthening of the people is spoken of in the first and last of this series of verses.

who slay, sell, and own them<sup>19</sup>, v.5), and offers Himself to them, taking care of the afflicted of the flock (v.7). However, the flock rejected the Good Shepherd (v. 8b), and He leaves them to their own desires.

This fulfillment is found in the first advent of Christ, when He offered Himself to the flock, and they rejected Him. This is in stark contrast to that mighty ruler, the conqueror which is found in Chapters 9 and 10.<sup>20</sup>

### **11:15-17: The Worthless Shepherd Accepted**

Now the ultimate contrast to the Good Shepherd is the worthless shepherd, who will essentially ruin Israel. While the Good Shepherd cared for the afflicted (11:7), the worthless shepherd "will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing." (11:16).

#### **Summary: The First Oracle**

The first oracle essentially states that the conquering Israel will be enabled by their King. However, this will not occur until they, in their state of non-repentance, reject their caring Shepherd, and are given over to a worthless Shepherd who will ruin them.

The point of the oracle then rests on the first advent of Messiah, and on Israel's willful hardness.

### **The Second Oracle: (12:1-14:21)**

The second oracle mentions Jerusalem 23 times (first oracle only twice). The nations (*goy*) are mentioned eight times in the second oracle, six times in Chapter 14 alone (first oracle only twice).

The first oracle does not refer to the purging of sin, the holiness of the future Jerusalem or other spiritual matters. Thus this oracle refers to Jerusalem, the subjugations of the nations (spiritually and physically) and the purging of sin from the nation. In addition, the emphasis on the words, "I will... (YHWH will)" points out the sovereign intervention

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<sup>19</sup> For the Biblical reference to the history of the shepherds of 11:5, see Nehemiah 5.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on the shepherd passages here see the interpretation in the class paper by Gary Tuck.



in human history by the Creator.<sup>21</sup>

### **12:1: The Oracle Giver**

While most commentators see this verse as establishing divine authority for the giving of the oracle, it seems to indicate that YHWH is the One who founded all things, including the spirit of man within Him, and thus may alter the course of man (including his repentance). This introduction sets the stage to point out that YHWH will bring about the repentance, the purification, the conquering, and conclude with Himself physically reigning over the earth and the creatures He totally created.

### **12:2-9: The Lord destroys the nations**

This section first points out that the Lord will destroy all the nations that come to battle against Jerusalem in the final day. The battle is won through supernatural intervention, both with miraculous plagues (v.4) and with the strengthening of the peoples to fight.

### **12:9-13:1: The repentance of the nation**

Prior to the return of the Lord, He pours out His Spirit, which prompts the nation to repent as they observe the Messiah, whom they crucified. Here, the families of David and of Levi, representing the kingly line and the priestly line, mourn. No longer is professional mourning acceptable, as each family goes off by itself to devote their time to private true mourning.<sup>22</sup>

### **13:2-6: The removal of false prophets**

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<sup>21</sup> There seems to be a chiasm in this section. Relate 12:2-9 ("all the nations gathered...") to 14:1ff. Relate 12:10-13:1 ('repentance of nation') to 13:7-9. 13:2-6 then would stand by itself, being the cleansing of the land. Chiasms do not necessarily indicate order. Chiasm and its relative '*inclusio*' seem to be throughout this book. For an theory on the chiasm of Zechariah, see Baldwin, p. 74, who explains a theory by Lamarche. While this does present some interesting observations, it seems to press the point in some places.

<sup>22</sup> Baldwin, p. 194.

Here the land is purged of false prophets, as they are ashamed of their ways.<sup>23</sup> Verse 2 controls the following verses indicating that this is the purging of idols from the land. This seems to relate to the vision of the flying scroll (purging of sinful people from the land).

### **13:7-9: The purging of Israel**

The point is that Israel must be purged for its sin before any of these things can take place; for Chapter 7-8 indicated while introducing this section that the people had not really realized their problem. They were still self-centered, and unrepentant.

So YHWH orders for the Shepherd to be struck, so that He might begin the purging of the nation. He brings one-third of the nation through this event so that He might say, "They are My people" and they will say, 'YHWH is my God.

### **14:1-5: The Coming of the Lord**

Here are the final details of the elimination of the opposing Gentiles. Jerusalem has no hope. (vv. 1-2)

Yet in the sky, "the sign of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24) appears and He steps on the Mount of Olives (v. 4a). At that point, the mountain splits, due to a giant earthquake (v.5), which will provide a way of escape for the trapped city dwellers.<sup>24</sup>

### **14:6-11: The New Jerusalem**

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<sup>23</sup> It seems that most commentators take this section as referring totally to false prophets. However, there are similarities to the former section; i.e. the mention of 'piercing' a false prophet (v.3) and the wounds on hands by his friends in v. 6. Verse 6 is particularly felt by some (Unger, p.228-229) to indicate the Messiah, as did 12:10. However, despite his argument of context, it seems more likely that the contrast is that in 'that day' the false prophets will be treated justly, as Christ was unjustly. They treated Him as a false prophet.

<sup>24</sup> The question here is whether the topography changes due to the earthquake, or whether it is a supernatural change which takes place later, due to the Messiah rearranging, not only the topography, but the fruitfulness, etc. of the land. It is this author's view that what is described here is a separate, restoration event.

Changes in the stars cause their light to cease, while now the light comes from YHWH. Verse 8 indicates a parallel to Ezekiel's river. For here in the city, will be a new life-giving river. Spiritual life is indicated as well as physical life by the addition of 'living' to water. Verse 9 indicates that YHWH will now be finally literal King over His domain (12:1). Verse 10 indicates the raising of Jerusalem, as would be fitting for a capital city of the whole earth. Verse 11 indicates security for the city, as the curse is removed.

#### **14:12-15**

Now, the author reveals the plague on the gentile nations.

#### **14:16-19**

The ones left, will submit to the Jewish King.

#### **14:20-21**

Finally, all things will now be as they were designed to be - - Holy.

**APPENDIX I****Comparison of Events**

It has often been noted that the events of the oracles in Zechariah are mentioned in the visions. The following are suggestions.

	Vision	Oracle
<b>Return of the people to the land</b>	Vision of Measuring Rod	10:6-12
<b>Elimination of the opposing Gentile nations</b>	The Myrtle Tree	10:1-17
	Horns and Craftsmen	12:1-9
	Chariots	14:1-21
<b>Purification of sin</b>	Flying Ephah	13:1
	Joshua the High Priest's Garments	
<b>Elimination of sinners from the land</b>	Flying Scroll	13:2-6
		10:2ff.
<b>Israel's witness</b>	Lampstand	14:16ff
<b>Jerusalem restored and secure</b>	Measuring Line	14:8-11

## APPENDIX II

### A Suggested Order of Zechariah's Eschatological Events

This study of Zechariah has suggested some ideas for providing a sequence of events.

#### **The First Event - The Gathering of the Nations**

It would seem that this is the chastisement of Israel. For here Israel is at the bottom rung of its ladder.

However, it seems that the 'all the nations' (14:2, 12:1) may be a sequential, or two stage gathering.

First, would come all the local nations, (i.e., the anti-christ federation, etc.), those who have directly oppressed Israel. (The remainder of nations will come in a second wave, to be discussed later)<sup>25</sup>. However, it is not necessary that this verse be completed in one event, but this may be a description of Israel's subjugation during the last half of the tribulation.

#### **The Repentance of Israel**

This is probably the most difficult of the events to put into sequence. This is the pouring out of the "Spirit of grace and supplication" (Zech. 12:10)

There are several thoughts in Zechariah which suggests that this must be the first event to occur in His eschatological framework. One of these is a main theme of Zechariah, "'Return to Me,' declares YHWH of Hosts, 'that I may return to you" (1:3). The implication is that Israel needs to repent before YHWH will return to them.

Will the repentance take place prior to His appearance in the sky, coincidental with it, or following it, during His descent?

Some feel that the repentance ("look on Me whom they have pierced" (12:10)) is an

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<sup>25</sup> The support for this idea comes from 14:14, where Jerusalem only has the plunder from 'surrounding' nations. This suggests that if 'all' the nations are to be involved; there was yet a second wave to come, i.e., Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38--39.

occurrence which continues during the tribulation.<sup>26</sup> Others feel that it occurs at the moment or soon following Christ's appearance in the sky. The only place this is quoted in the New Testament is in John 19:34 at the crucifixion when the opposing Jews view the crucified Christ and in Revelation 1:7 as the introduction to the book's main theme ("... and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him and all the families of the land will mourn over Him"<sup>27</sup>).

This author would propose that the repentance takes place, prior to (perhaps hours, days, months) the appearance of YHWH in the sky (but in response to the gathering of the nations)<sup>28</sup>. This would fulfill the point that God is returning in response to their true repentance.

This is not to deny that individual repentance will take place during the tribulation. Zechariah seems to indicate that they must follow the 'worthless shepherd' first (the first half of the tribulation). Further, it seems that the Spirit is poured out for the purpose of national recognition of the Messiah. Thus it must precede by some amount of time (although it could be just prior to) the appearance in the sky.

The "look on Him whom they have pierced" in John's gospel is simply a preface to the fulfillment later. In other words, they have now been introduced to their King and they look on Him, but the repentance of Zech. 12:10 has not occurred, only the "look". Revelation 1:7 introduces that repentance and the total fulfillment of that prophecy. The focal verse in Revelation appears to be Revelation 11:13 where the repentance of Jerusalem takes place in the middle of the tribulation.

<sup>13</sup> And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Rev 11:13 NAS)

### **The Appearance of the Lord in the Air**

The nation looks on YHWH, whom they crucified. (12:10). They are totally taken in

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<sup>26</sup> Pentecost, Things to Come, p.304.

<sup>27</sup> This is this professor's own translation as it is closer to the verse in Zech. 12:10. The standard translations translate these words for "families" and "land" too generally ("tribes" and "earth"). This translation is specific to the words and to the OT quotation.

<sup>28</sup> The reason that the repentance is coordinated with the gathering of nations is due to the fact that the nature of YHWH's action in gathering them is to force the repentance, as well as answer the call, and subjugate the opposition.

repentance.

### **The Step on the Mount of Olives**

At this point the Lord steps on the Mount of Olives, causing an earthquake, which releases those trapped in the city.

### **The Conquering YHWH**

Now YHWH gathers His forces, Israel, strengthens them, and goes out to conquer those nations. There is a combination of plagues on the nations; confused men and horses (14:13, 12:4). Further the soldiers of Judah have become strengthened as in Israel's glorious conquering days (9:11-17, 10:3-12, 12:6-9, 14:14).

On their return back to Jerusalem, they conquer the neighboring lands (9:1-8).

### **YHWH enters Jerusalem**

The Lord now returns to Jerusalem from conquering, and begins to restore the land, (removes the curse), and call the Jews from other lands back to Israel. Jerusalem and Israel are instantly prosperous, first from the booty (14:14-15), and secondly from the almost instantaneous restoration of the land by Messiah (14:6-11).

### **YHWH protects Jerusalem**

All the nations have not yet appeared, and now decide to battle with the new King. Thus Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38-39) look down at Israel, (without walls, since they have enlarged beyond them; 2:4), see the booty, and come down against Israel. God demonstrates that He will defend all opposing enemies supernaturally. The same plagues haunt this second wave of attackers (cf. Ezek. 38:21). God demonstrates that Israel is secure (9:8, 14:11).

### **The Mourning is completed**

In this 30 day period prior to the judgment (Daniel 12), the nation completes its sadness over their sin of crucifying their Messiah.

### **YHWH judges the nations**

At this point the Lord sets up His judgment seat (sheep and goats). This is 30 of the 75 day period between Christ's return and the coronation (Daniel 12). All the unbelievers (opposition of Israel) are eliminated (14:16).

### **The Preparation for the Kingdom**

The remaining 45 days are for the preparation for the beginning of the Kingdom. The land restoration is completed. The awarding of land takes place to the re-gathered peoples.

### **The Coronation**

Here finally, Israel rejoices (9:9-10), for her King enters Jerusalem from the "way of the east" (Ezekiel 43:2). The restoration to Genesis 1:26, 28 times, the Seed of the Woman conquering the serpent, has finally occurred. It is present in the King (9:9), Good Shepherd (11:4-14), 'Me whom they have pierced' (12:10), YHWH, my God (14:5).<sup>29</sup>

### **The Kingdom**

Now all the Gentiles are subjugated. All worship YHWH. YHWH makes all things clean (14:16-21).

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<sup>29</sup> It is as though Zechariah lost his control, as the pronoun shifts from YHWH speaking through Zechariah, to Zechariah exclaiming, "YHWH, my God will come..."



## NEW TESTAMENT USE OF ZECHARIAH

Word Biblical Commentary states the following passages as quoted in the New Testament:

From the beginning of the Christian movement some passages in Zechariah have been interpreted messianically. On the night he was betrayed Jesus led his disciples out to Gethsemane and said to them, “You will fall away, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered” (Zech 13:7 quoted in Mark 14:27). F. F. Bruce says that there is “no doubt about the application of the passage in Mark’s passion: the smitten shepherd is Jesus. Moreover, according to Mark, it is Jesus Himself who makes the identification. I have no doubt at all that Mark is right in ascribing this interpretation of the prophecy to Jesus” (F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968] 104). Undoubtedly Jesus’ understanding of his ministry was influenced by several passages in Zechariah along with many other OT passages. In 1952 C. H. Dodd published a work, *According to the Scriptures* (New York: Scribners, 1953) in which he argued that early Christians circulated orally a list of OT scriptures which served as the basis of the Gospel for many NT writers. Among this list are a number of passages from Zech 9–14. For example, 9:9 is quoted in Mt 21:5 and Jn 12:15; 11:13 is quoted in Mt 27:9; 12:3 is quoted in Lu 21:24; 12:10 is quoted in Jn 19:37 and Rev 1:7; 13:7 is quoted in Mark 14:27. Compare also Zech 14:5 with I Thess 3:13; 14:8 with Jn 7:38; and 14:21 with Jn 2:16 (pp. 64–67). There is ample evidence in the NT that many references in the book of Zechariah were interpreted messianically.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Smith, R. L. (1998). *Vol. 32: Word Biblical Commentary : Micah-Malachi* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

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