

The 8 Cryptic Visions of Zechariah, II

Call for Repentance

1. **Zech 1:3-6**—“**Turn ye. . .**”—the book of Zechariah opens with a call to repent to those who have left off the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem for selfish reasons (**Hag 1:2**)
 - a. God pleads with his people to repent, so they can receive the divine favor that they need to carry on the work of rebuilding the temple
 - b. This call to repent and reform is repeated throughout the book of Zechariah (**Zech 3:7; Zech 6:15; Zech 7:7-10; Zech 8:16-17**)

The Visions of Zechariah

2. The 8 visions of Zechariah present a **connected** prophetic narrative setting forth the purpose of God for the restoration of the Jews upon their return from captivity
 - a. restoration of the temple
 - b. restoration of the city
 - c. most important of all, restoration of the people to divine favor
 - d. conversion of the Gentiles through them
 - e. extermination of their enemies
 - f. establishment of God’s kingdom on earth
3. Zechariah was given this series of connected visions at a time of great discouragement, when it seems that the enemies of God’s people were about to bring the work of restoring the sanctuary to a complete halt (**PK 582**)
 - a. When the people were in state of insecurity and despair
 - b. When the city of Jerusalem was desolate and uninhabited
 - c. When the temple in Jerusalem lay in ruins
4. The amazing thing is, these 8 visions of Zechariah find projections in the book of Revelation; in fact, they serve as the thematic framework for the entire book of Revelation
 - a. The 8 visions of Revelation

The Timeline of the Restoration of the Temple

539 BC—The fall of Babylon
538 BC—First year of Cyrus; Cyrus makes a decree allowing for the return of the Jews to Israel to rebuild the temple (Ezr 1:1-4)
536 BC—The Jews arrive in Jerusalem; work of restoration begins (Ezr 3:8); opposition to the work of restoration begins (Ezr 4:1-5)
530-520 BC—work on the temple brought to a halt (Ezr 4:24)
520 BC—Haggai and Zechariah called to ministry; work of restoring the temple resumes under Darius (Ezr 5:2)
516 BC—temple rebuilding completed (Ezr 6:15)

Vision 1: The horseman among myrtle trees

5. **Zech 1:7-17**—The first vision underscores the fact that God’s plan to restore His people after the captivity at a standstill; the oppressive heathen nations of the earth are “at ease”; the nations are doing nothing to bring relief and help to the people of God, and it seems that even the permission to rebuild is about to be revoked (**Ezra 4:4-5, PK 579, 580**)
6. The vision was designed to give assurance that in spite of the current lowly state of God’s people, God’s promise for their restoration would be fulfilled; that the Gentile nations that have oppressed them would be overthrown;
7. Conditional nature of this prophecy—the fulfillment of this promise was conditioned upon the people doing their part in God’s strength (**Zech 1:7; Zech 6:15**)
 - a. **Vese 7: “eleventh month”**—Zechariah receives his first vision 3 months after he was called to the ministry (cf. **Zech 1:1**)
 - b. **Verses 1:8-11**—“**we have walked to and fro through the earth. . .**”—these heavenly agents have accomplished their mission of assessing the affairs of the earth, particularly with respect to Israel suffering captivity and oppression in the hands of heathen nations round about and are about to give their report to the man riding a horse (the Lord of the Universe)
 - c. **Verses 12-15**—“**sore displeased (to be wroth) with the heathen that are at ease**”—Indeed, God uses the heathen to punish His rebellious people (**Isa 10:5-12**), He but also hold them accountable for their excessively cruel and wicked behavior towards Israel
 - d. **Verse 16**—“**My house shall be rebuilt. . .**”—the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt; the city of Jerusalem and its walls were to be rebuilt as well, but the prosperity here indicated was not fully realized because the people failed to fulfill the spiritual condition upon which their prosperity depended upon.

PROJECTION OF THE VISION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

8. The first vision of Zechariah re-emerges in the book of Revelation as the vision of Jesus walking among 7 golden candlesticks
 - a. In John’s vision, the man riding a horse is now Jesus
 - b. The myrtle trees which represent ethnic Israel are replaced by the golden candlesticks which represent spiritual Israel, the church
 - c. The candlesticks were actually



designed to look like branches of trees (**Exo 25:31-33**)

- d. As the man is described as among the myrtle trees, Jesus is described as walking among 7 golden lamp stands
- e. Jesus gives an assessment of the spiritual condition of the church in the form of letters to the 7 churches
 - i. “I know thy works. . .”
- f. the vision of Jesus among the 7 golden candlesticks is given to encourage the churches to stay faithful in the midst of discouragement, deprivation and persecution
- g. The “good and comfortable words” in the vision re-emerge as the words of encouragement given in the letters to the 7 churches in Revelation

Vision 2: The 4 horns and 4 carpenters

- 9. **Zech 1:18-21**—The second vision reveals what God intends to do with the heathen nations that have oppressed God’s people above and beyond God’s intended limits
- 10. **Zech 1:18**—“four horns. . .”
 - a. defined as the powers that had scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem (see **PK 581**)
 - b. the number 4 may be symbolic here or literal
 - c. literally, the nation of Israel has been “scattered” by 4 global powers at this point in time (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Mede-Persia, the reigning power in the time of Zechariah)
- 11. **Zech 1:20**—“the four carpenters (artisans or craftsmen, in the Hebrew, which means workers with wood, stone and metal)

“Zechariah then saw the powers that had “scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” symbolized by four horns. Immediately afterward he saw four carpenters, representing the agencies used by the Lord in restoring His people and the house of His worship.” (**PK 581**)

- 12. Notice that the work of these agencies at this point is not to destroy, but to merely to “fray” or frighten; judgments are executed against the nations that oppress God’s people over the years but they are tempered with mercy, the final annihilation of the enemies of God’s people does not happen until the 8th and final vision of Zechariah is fulfilled
 - a. In **Dan 7:12**, the powers oppressing God’s people are allowed to continue for a season
 - b. Also, the agencies that God uses to hold in check these oppressive powers are called “carpenters” not destroyers

PROJECTION OF THE VISION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

13. The 4 oppressive Gentile horns of Zechariah re-emerge in Revelation as the beast with 7 heads and 10 horns, the same power described as oppressing God's people (the church) for 42 prophetic months (**Rev 11:2**)
 - a. Same entity as the "little horn" of Daniel 7 and Daniel 8
14. The 4 carpenters re-surface as the 4 living creatures who are positioned around the throne of God and assisting in the work of intercession; they are also directly responsible for relaying commands from the throne to the angels to execute judgments upon the oppressors of God's people over the centuries (**Rev 4:6-8**)
 - a. These judgments are poured out upon pagan and papal Rome as trumpet woes throughout the Christian era
 - b. These judgments are tempered with mercy because intercession is still going on in the heavenly sanctuary (**Rev 8:1-5**)
15. When probation finally closes, the four living creatures commission angels to pour out the vials of God's retributive judgments upon the enemies of God's people (**Rev 15:8**)

Vision 3: The man with a measuring line

16. **Zech 2:1-13**—The third vision expands on the Lord's mandate in **Zech 1:16** that a line shall be stretched forth in Jerusalem;
17. **Zech 2:2**—"to measure Jerusalem"—a symbolic act done to give assurance that the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt (**Dan 9:25**)
18. **Zech 2:6**—"come forth. . .flee from the land of the north"
 - a. **land of the north**—the land of Babylon (**Jer 1:14-15; Jer 4:6**)
 - b. **come forth...**—in connection with the call to rebuild the sanctuary was another call to come out of Babylon;
 - i. This was a call to the Jews who did not return to Jerusalem under the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC (**Ezra 1:1-4**) to come out of Babylon; there were still many Jews in Babylon, not few of whom were living in ease and wealth; their prosperity caused them to shrink from the uncertainty and difficulty which the move to Jerusalem offered; this was a call to flee from the troublous times that lay ahead in the Persian realm
19. **Zech 2:10**—"sing and rejoice. . . ."
 - a. In view of the glorious prospect of restoration, Zion is called upon to rejoice.

- b. If the people had heeded the messages of the prophets, the city would have stood in the pride of prosperity, the queen of the kingdoms (**DA 577**); God would have dwelt in her midst and Jerusalem would have been the diadem of glory.

20. **Zech 2:11**—“many nations shall be joined to the Lord. . .”

- a. God purposed that many nations observing the prosperity of Israel and the advantages of serving the true God, would thereby be led to join themselves to the Lord (**Mic 4:1-2; Isa 14:1; Isa 60:1-5, 11-12; Isa 61:10-11; Isa 62:1-2**)
- b. But since the people of God after the exile refused to heed to the light sent from heaven, God has commissioned the Christian church to preach the gospel invitation to all the world and to accomplish what the Jews failed to accomplish in their time

PROJECTION OF THE VISION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

21. The vision of the man with a measuring line re-emerges in **Revelation 11:1-2**

- a. It is presented right after the commission is given to prophesy again to nations, tongue and people (**Rev 10:11**); this command to prophesy again to nations and people is basis for the proclamation of the three angels messages to nation, kindred, tongue and people (**Rev 14:6**)
- b. The vision is given to assure God’s people living in the time of the end that the sanctuary truth will be restored
- c. The second angel’s message to come out of Babylon is an echo of the call to “come forth. . .flee from the land of the north” in the third vision of Zechariah

Conclusion

22. Again, it needs to be asked, why does John, the writer of the book of Revelation, take the visions of Zechariah and give them applications in his book?

- a. To teach us that the book of Revelation should be viewed as a prophetic narrative which outlines God’s program of restoration for the church after her captivity for 1260 years
- b. That the circumstances and events which will surround the work of rebuilding the sanctuary truth which was cast to the ground (**Dan 8:12**) and trampled underfoot during this period will be very similar to what the Jews in the time of Zechariah went through
 - i. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem find counterpart in the 3 agencies that combine forces to oppose the work of restoring the sanctuary truth in the time of the end—the bear, dragon and false prophet
 - ii. The restoration of the sanctuary truth will be during troublous times just like the rebuilding of the sanctuary in Jerusalem
 - iii. Just as the book of Zechariah begins with a call for the Jews to repent, Jesus call upon the churches to repent in the vision of the 7 churches

1. Faith and repentance were needed on the part of the Jews in the time of Zechariah to fulfill their commission to rebuild the temple, Laodicea desperately needs to heed the call for her to repent
23. The fulfillment of God's promise to the Jews of their restoration was conditioned upon repentance and faithfulness to God's Law; no less today are God's requirements for Laodicea
24. The question is, will God also break His promise to Laodicea as he did to the Israelites in the time of Moses (**Num 14:34**) and to the Jews in the time of Zechariah, because of Laodicea's persistent refusal to heed the call to be zealous therefore and repent over the years? (**Num 14:34**)