

# **Zechariah 01 - Introductory Call to Repentance; Vision of Riders & Horses Among the Myrtle Trees; Vision of Four Horns & Four Craftsman**

## **I. Introductory call to repentance (Zech 1:1-6)**

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- (2) Author (1:1b)
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I. Introductory call to repentance (Zech 1:1-6)

(1) Date (1:1a)

(2) Author (1:1b)

**1** In the **eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah** the prophet, the son of **Berechiah**, the son of **Iddo** saying,

**1** In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying,

**1** In the eighth month of the second year of the reign of Darius, this message from the LORD came to Berechiah's son Zechariah, the grandson of Iddo the prophet:

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

- "...eighth month of the second year" - October 27, 520 BC. Haggai had begun in the 6th month of that year and prophesied in September, October, and December, but not November. Zechariah seems to have filled a gap of some kind.

- "...Darius" - one of the kings reigning in Persia; at this point, he had been reigning for 2 years, 8 months

— It is significant that Zechariah dated his prophecy according to the reign of a *Gentile* king, rather than by Judean kings in the line of David

— This was a stark reminder to Zechariah's hearers that "the times of the Gentiles" (Cf. Luke 21:24; Dan 2; 7) were in progress and that no descendant of David was sitting on the throne in Jerusalem (Cf. Hosea 3:4-5).

- "...the word of the LORD came to Zechariah" - this phrase occurs 14x in this book. It is the same expression Haggai used. Here is identified the *real* author of this book!

- "...Zechariah" - means "God remembers"

— He prophesied to the first group of returnees from the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra 5:1; 6:14), along with his contemporary Haggai

— His entire ministry was to encourage this first group to get up and complete the temple construction, after a 15-year hiatus due to persecution

- "...Berechiah" - Zechariah's father; his name means "Yahweh Blesses"

- "...Iddo" - Zechariah's grandfather ; his name means "The Appointed Time"

— He was a priest and Levite (Neh 12:1,4,16). This would make Zechariah a priest also, just like Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3) and Jeremiah (Jer 1:1).

(3) Call to Repentance (1:2-6)

2 "The LORD was **veryangry** with your fathers.

2 "The LORD was very angry with your fathers.

2 "The LORD was very angry with your ancestors.

2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

- "...very angry" - literally "angry with anger"
- There are many examples of the Lord's anger in Scripture:
  - The Israelites 11-day journey into a 40-year nightmare (Ps 95:10; Heb 3:10)
  - Right now, God is angry with the entire world (Rom 1:18-20)
- The reason why God was angry with their fathers is due to the way they treated the prophets before the Babylonian Captivity. They "continually mocked" the prophets, "despised His words," "scoffed at His prophets" until the wrath of the LORD rose against them (2 Chr 36:16).
- This warning telling them to not repeat the errors of their fathers is similar to Paul's in 1 Cor 10:11
- This warning for the present (v2) extended divine grace (v3) and drew its severity from the three-fold lesson from the past:
  1. Disobedience (v4)
  2. Delay (v5)
  3. Doubt (v6)

2 Chr 36:15-17:

- 15 Yet the LORD, the God of their fathers, **sent word to them again and again by His messengers**, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place;
- 16 but **they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets**, until the wrath of the LORD rose against His people, until **there was no remedy**.
- 17 So He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or frail; He handed *them* all over to him.

Zechariah relates the word of the Lord, reminding the returned exiles that their ancestors had purposefully ignored the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant and thereby incurred God's wrath. The not-so-subtle implication of this message is for this generation not to repeat their fathers' grave mistakes. They have the opportunity to incur God's blessings through their obedience to God's covenant and re-establishment of a personal relationship with Him.

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

3 Therefore say to them, 'This is what **the LORD of armies** says: "**Return** to Me," declares **the LORD of armies**, "that I may return to you," says **the LORD of armies**.

3 Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts.

3 So tell them, 'This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "Return to me," declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, "and I will return to you.

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

- God is not leaving His children (Israel) in a perpetual state of discipline, but is exhorting them to get back on the right path. God is a God of anger, but that's not all...His anger quickly turns into mercy and compassion.

- "...LORD of armies" [3x] - also translated "LORD of hosts." Likely refers to a "host" or "army" of angels (2 Chr 18:18); God commands an army of unfallen, holy beings (angels).

- "...Return" - *šûb*, which translated into Greek is *metanoeō* which means "repent" or to "change one's mind." This is a request for them to "return" to their covenantal structure with God, referring to the Mosaic Covenant.

— God opens Zechariah by urging the Jews' repentance to preclude any false security on their part who might think themselves to be the recipients of blessings and promises of God regardless of their spiritual condition.

— Positionally, these Jews were still God's chosen nation (Abrahamic Covenant), but experientially they need to "return" to God in obedience to the Mosaic Covenant

— Repentance was John the Baptist's first command in the NT (Matt 3:2); it was also preached by Christ to 5 of the 7 churches in Rev 2-3. This is a very similar verse to what James says to his readers in James 4:8-9.

### Call to Repentance

4 "Do not be like your **fathers**, to whom the **former prophets** proclaimed, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds."' But **they** did not listen or pay attention to Me," declares the LORD.

4 "Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds."' But they did not listen or give heed to Me," declares the LORD.

4 Don't be like your ancestors, to whom the former prophets proclaimed: 'This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "It's time to turn from your evil lifestyles and from your evil actions," 'but they would neither listen nor pay attention to me,'" declares the LORD.'

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

- "...fathers" - those taken in the Babylonian captivity

- 1 Cor 10:11 talks about Israel's negative history...you can learn a lot by not following the bad example of people. It's true in life and it's true in Scripture as well.
- It is risky business to waste the lessons of previous generations: *History teaches that man learns nothing from history.* [Hegel]
- "...former prophets" - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel; these prophets would show up during times of national disobedience to encourage the king to return to the Mosaic Law.
- The prophets essentially filed a covenant lawsuit (*rîb*) against the king, laying out how he disobeyed the law (Cf. Hosea 4:1-2)
- There were 20 kings in Judah, only 8 were good; in the north there were 19 kings, not one was good
- "...they" - the fathers

### Israel's Judgments

1. Division of the kingdom - 931 BC (1 Kings 12)
  2. Assyrian judgment - 722 BNC (2 Kings 17)
  3. **Babylonian captivity - 586 BC (2 Kings 25)**
  4. Roman invasion - 70 AD (Luke 19:41-44)
- 5 "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?
- 5 "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?
- 5 "Your ancestors—where are they? And the prophets—do they live forever?
- 5 Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?
- Two rhetorical questions which highlight the brevity of human life (and thus the hazard of delay in repentance!)
- 6 But did My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, not **overtake** your fathers? **Then they repented** and said, 'Just as the LORD of armies planned to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.'""
- 6 But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers? Then they repented and said, 'As the LORD of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.'""
- 6 But my words and my statutes that I gave as commands to my servants the prophets—did they not overwhelm your ancestors? And they returned to me: 'The LORD of the Heavenly Armies acted toward us just as he planned to do—in keeping with our lifestyles and in keeping with our actions.'"
- 6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts

thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

- The point here is that the prophets died, and the fathers died, but the prophet's words live on because they spoke the words of God

- The idea is to pay attention to the Word of God because, although the prophets die, God's Word endures, and the proof it endures is that its warnings come true

- God's Word is more lasting than any messenger of His who brings its message

- The kings who disregarded or even killed the prophets thought that they were getting rid of God's Word by getting rid of the prophet. However, God's Word lived on and came back to be fulfilled.

- "...overtake" - it was prophesied in the Mosaic Law that disobedience would result in the "curses" overtaking the people/nation, which is exactly what happened

- "So all these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed..." (Deut 28:45)

- "...Then they repented" - they didn't repent until they began suffering the consequences (curses), i.e. the Babylonian captivity. This is when they figured out that the Word of God is truth and the prophets were right all along.

- The problem is, it was too little too late. It's much easier to repent on the front end and change your behavior and avoid the consequences. It would've been much better for them to pay attention to the prophets initially, when something could've been done to thwart disaster.

The direct fulfillment of God's threatenings were such a reality that Israel had to admit that God's Word was true, even though it was to their own discomfiture. The fathers recognized the Lord's hand in their judgment (Lam 2:17; Dan 9:4ff; Ezra 9:6ff). [Feinberg, Charles L. *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah* (Wheaton: Van Kampen, 1950, p 21)]

## II. Eight Night Visions (Zech 1:7—6:15)

Now are a series of 8 visions given in a single night (Feb 15, 519 BC), which bridge the centuries between the rebuilding of the Temple until the kingdom is restored to Israel under the Messiah (Acts 1:6; 15:16). Each has a similar pattern: introductory words, a description of things seen, a question of the angel for its meaning, and an explanation by the angel. Though God's sovereign intervention enabled His people to return from Babylonian exile, they had not yet experienced the physical or spiritual restoration God intended. The halted work on the temple and opposition to their plans likely caused them to question God's purposes.

The great underlying theme in all eight visions is God's return to dwell among His people, symbolized by the physical restoration of the Jerusalem temple. God's revelation to

Zechariah portrayed Israel's history reaching until end times, with Jerusalem as the pivotal center of God's coming kingdom. God encouraged His people to build with eternity in view.

<b>ZECHARIAH'S EIGHT NIGHT VISIONS</b>		
<b>Vision</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
The Red-horse Rider among the Myrtles	<b>1:7-17</b>	God's anger against the nations & blessing on restored Israel.
The Four Horns & the Four Craftsmen	<b>1:18-21</b>	God's judgement on the nations that afflict Israel.
The Surveyor with a Measuring Line	<b>Chapter 2</b>	God's future blessing on restored Israel.
The Cleansing & Crowning of Joshua the Hight Priest.	<b>Chapter 3</b>	Israel's future cleansing from sin & reinstatement as a priestly nation.
The Golden Lampstand & the Two Olive Trees	<b>Chapter 4</b>	Israel as the light to the nations under Messiah, the King-Priest.
The Flying Scroll	<b>5:1-4</b>	The severity & totality of divine judgment on individual Israelites.
The Woman in the Ephah	<b>5:5-11</b>	The removal of national Israel's sin of rebellion against God.
The Four Chariots	<b>6:1-8</b>	Divine judgment on Gentile nations.

#### (1) Riders & Horses Among the Myrtle Trees (1:7-17)

The first vision (Zech 1:7-17) consists of four angelic riders on four horses of various colors. One angelic rider, the angel of the Lord, dismounts his horse in the middle of a grove of myrtle trees. Although Zechariah asks the interpreting angelic companion the meaning of this vision, it is the angel of the Lord who responds.

The horses and riders have been sent throughout the earth by the Lord to survey his dominion and have found everything peaceful. This elicits a direct question from the angel of the LORD to the LORD as to when the punishment of Jerusalem and Judah, which had lasted 70 years in accordance with the prophetic word of Jeremiah, would end.

The Lord responds to this question with a declaration of passionate love for Jerusalem and promises of renewed mercy and prosperity for the city within which He has chosen to dwell personally. Conversely, His anger has been transferred to the nations who have gone above and beyond their call of duty as overly enthusiastic instruments of God's justice upon Israel.

#### (A) Date (1:7)

**7** On the **twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month**, that is, the month **Shebat**, in the **second year of Darius**, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of

Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:

**7** On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:

**7** On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (the month Shebat) in the second year of the reign of Darius, this message from the LORD came to Berechiah's son Zechariah, the grandson of Iddo the prophet:

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

- "...twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month" - the day the visions came was the 24th day of the 11th (Jewish) month of Darius' second year: February 15, 519 BC.

- The 24th day of the month is significant because this was the day of the month when work on the Temple was resumed (Cf. Haggai 1:15; 2:10,18,20). Israel's obedience seems to be memorialized by further revelations.

- The 24th day of the 11th month was exactly five months (to the day) after the building of the temple was resumed (Haggai 1:14-15; 2:15), three months after Zechariah's first prophecy (Zech 1:1), and two months after Haggai's last prophecy (Haggai 2:20).

- "...Shebat" - the Babylonian name of the 11th month, adopted by the Jews after the Exile

- "...second year of Darius" - 519 BC (Babylon fell in 539 BC!). This vision came three months after God's initial call to repentance (Cf. v1-6).

#### (B) Description (1:8)

**8 I saw** at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the **myrtletrees** which were in the **ravine**, with red, sorrel, and white horses behind him.

**8** I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him.

**8** "I stared into the night, and there was a man mounted on a red horse! The horse was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him there were red, brown, and white horses."

**8** I saw by night, and [behold!] a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.

- "I saw" - a verb of perception, indicating that Zechariah saw these things in a vision. A verb of perception begins each of the eight night visions of Zechariah (Cf. 1:8).

- "...myrtle trees" - common in Persia

- "...ravine" - "in a ditch"; this represents the condition of God's people at that time, who had experienced God's judgment because of their sin. Israel was currently "in a ditch"; a



place of death.

— Israel had no temple (critical for the exercise of their religion), they had no wall (protection, security), and they were being oppressed by the inhabitants of the land. The rest of the world, in contrast, was peaceful and quiet, doing great (Cf. v11).

(C) Interpretation (1:9-11)

(a) Zechariah's Inquiry (1:9a)

(b) Interpreting the angel's answer (1:9b)

9 Then I said, "**What** are these, my lord?" And the **angel** who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are."

9 Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are."

9 Then I asked, "Who are these, sir?" The messenger who was talking to me answered, "I will tell you who these are."

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

- "...What" - notice Zechariah doesn't ask "Who"; he asks "What"

- "...angel" - many good conservative scholars (Feinberg, Dyer, etc.) believe the angel here is the pre-incarnate Christ (Cf. v11)

- The angel's initial response is an argument in favor of literal interpretation...the angel is answering exactly what Zechariah is asking.

— There is never an instance in Scripture, including Revelation, where someone asked an angel something about X and the angel told them about Y. When an angel provided an answer, it is always a direct answer to a direct question.

(c) Angel of the Lord's answer (1:10)

10 And **the man** who was standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, "These are the ones whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth."

10 And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are those whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth."

10 The man who stood among the myrtle trees answered, "These are the ones whom the LORD sent out to wander throughout the earth."

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

- "...the man" - from the description in v8, this was the rider of the red horse

— The job of these horses was to patrol the events, movements, and happenings on the earth

(d) Rider's report (1:11)

11 So they responded to the **angel of the LORD** who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is **still and quiet.**"

11 So they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet."

11 Then they reported to the angel of the LORD who stood among the myrtle trees, "We have wandered throughout the earth—and look!—the entire earth is at rest. Everything is quiet and peaceful."

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

- "...angel of the LORD" - many believe this is the preincarnate Christ, but if that is the case, who is the "LORD of armies" in v12? It is true that "angel of the LORD" is sometimes used to describe the preincarnate Christ (Cf. Gen 16:7-10; 31:11-13; 32:25-31; 32:25-31; Ex 3:2-4; Judges 6:11-22; Hosea 12:3-5; Zech 3:1-2) but that does not seem to be the case here.

— It appears that there are times in Scripture where the angel of the LORD refers to the preincarnate Christ, but also as distinct from YHWH (Cf. v12; Gen 24:7; 2 Sam 24:16)

- "...still and quiet" - *šāqat*, tranquil, undisturbed; the same Hebrew word used in Judges (8:28; 18:7,27) to describe the end of the cycle where Israel serves the Lord and there is peace and quiet in the land

— Everything on earth is humming along great, except Israel: under Gentile power, no temple (religious community), no wall (security), Jerusalem in shambles, and they are being pestered and persecuted by the inhabitants of the land.

— The rest promised upon their return from Babylon remains unfulfilled, and the contrast between Israel and the rest of the world couldn't be more stark.

— God's thoughts are not our thoughts! When the world was busy with its own affairs, God's eyes and heart are upon the lowly estate of Israel and upon the temple in Jerusalem.

You can see as Zechariah is receiving this vision, reeling at the impact this would have on a discouraged community to get busy building something that God cares about. Why should Israel get busy building something that no one else seems to care about? Because it was important to God, and if it's important to God it should be important to us. This is why it's important to understand what God thinks.

This is why there are so many passages in Scripture that encourage us to not be worldly or enslaved by the world...because if you are neck-deep in the world, you will think like the world thinks, not like God thinks. If you're worldly, the world will quickly squeeze you into its way of thinking and doing things.

(D) Explanation (1:12-17)

(a) God's jealousy for Jerusalem (1:12-14)

**12** Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD of armies, how long will You take no pity on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant for these seventy years?"

**12** Then the angel of the LORD said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?"

**12** And the angel of the LORD replied, "LORD of the Heavenly Armies, how long will it be until you show mercy to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, with whom you have been angry for these past seventy years?"

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

- The "angel of the LORD" is interceding to the "LORD of armies" seeking mercy on behalf of Jerusalem after God had inflicted judgment for the past 70 years

— The accusation is: Israel is in a ditch, the rest of the world is doing great, which must mean that you (God) don't really care about Israel. In fact, look at how you've not cared for them the past 70 years.

— If the "angel of the LORD" is the pre-incarnate Christ, then the accuser (the "LORD of armies") here is another member of the Trinity

**13** And the LORD responded to the angel who was speaking with me with **gracious** words, comforting words.

**13** The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words.

**13** So the LORD answered the angel who was speaking to me with kind and comforting words.

**13** And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with* good words *and* comfortable words.

- "...gracious" - after being ridiculously accused of neglect of His chosen people, it's interesting that the LORD responds with grace and comforting words

— These gracious and comforting words are outlined in v14-17, and include:

1. God still loves Jerusalem (v14)
2. God is exceedingly angry with the nations who afflicted Israel (v15)
3. God has purposes of glory, prosperity, and enlargement for Jerusalem (v16-17)

Note: The LORD of armies, the angel of the LORD, and the angel who have been talking with Zechariah are all distinctly separate persons.

14 So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "I am **exceedingly jealous** for Jerusalem and Zion.

14 So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.

14 Then the angel who was speaking to me told me, "Announce this: 'This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "I have a deep concern for Jerusalem, a great concern for Zion.

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

- "...exceedingly jealous " - *qana*, from the Arabic root, *qana'a*, "to become very red." God is spoken of as being "zealous" or "jealous" elsewhere in Scripture (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 5:9).

— God has always cared about Jerusalem, ever since David made it Israel's capital in 2 Sam 5; it has a very special role in the outworking of God's purposes

— God cares, even when it appears that He doesn't because of inaction

(b) God's anger with the nations (1:15)

15 But I am **very angry** with **thenations** who are carefree; for while I was *only* a little angry, they **furthered the disaster**."

15 But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster."

15 I am deeply angry with the nations who are complacent, with whom I was only a little displeased—but they made things worse!"

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

- "...very angry" - pairs with "exceedingly jealous" in v14

— God appears to be angry with people "at ease," who see no purpose for Him in their lives (Cf. Amos 4:1)

- "...the nations" - the Gentile nations oppressing Israel are outlined in Dan 2 & Dan 7

— To Nebuchadnezzar the oppressor, in Dan 2, the statue looks like a beautiful statue made of precious materials; however, Daniel (the one oppressed) sees the exact same vision in Dan 7, as four ferocious, disgusting animals.

- "...furthered the disaster" - literally, "they helped for evil"; although the heathen nations were used by God to punish Israel, they went too far in trying to annihilate her

- God was originally just a "little angry" at the nations, when the nations (Babylon) went too far, beyond God's original design, He got smokin' mad.
- Various passages outline what the nations did "over and above" what God was using them for, as evil against Israel. God kept a record of their cruelty (Is 47:6), and because of it, marked them for destruction the moment they went past the line of God's discipline.
- This goes back to the promise to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3...those who curse you will be cursed. You can see how this would be an encouragement to the beleaguered Jews as they were trying to rebuild the temple, but were being resisted to a certain extent by the Persian Empire.

*They helped with evil purpose to exterminate them. God meant a moderate punishment, but the Babylonians and others reveled in the sufferings of Israel with delight in prolonging them. Babylon, like Assyria, was the rod of God's wrath, but their own hearts designed evil against Israel (Is 10:5,7). Note it is an unfailing Scriptural principle: God's relations to Israel are one thing and the relations of the nations to Israel are another. God is never pleased with the meddling of strangers in His relations with Israel (Is 47:6). It is as though a father were chastening a child, and a stranger began to punish with an iron rod. Some take refuge in the plea that God has predicted these things beforehand. True, but the prediction of the sufferings of Christ and His betrayal at the hands of His own familiar friend mitigated not one whit the crime of the Romans and Israel or that of Judas Iscariot. [Feinberg, God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah, pg 35-36.]*

(c) Jerusalem to be restored (1:16a)

(d) The Temple to be restored (1:16b)

16 Therefore the LORD says this: "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; **My house** will be built in it," declares the LORD of armies, "and a **measuring line** will be stretched over Jerusalem."

16 Therefore thus says the LORD, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it," declares the LORD of hosts, "and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem."

16 'Therefore this is what the LORD says: "I have returned to Jerusalem with compassionate intentions. My Temple will be rebuilt there," declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, "and the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem."'"

**16** Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

- "...My house" - refers initially to Zerubbabel's temple, which was in a state of disrepair, with no building progress going on

- "...measuring line" - prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, God stated that he would stretch "the [measuring] line" over Jerusalem (Cf. 2 Kings 21:13). That line represented destruction that was to come; this line represents restoration.
- The same God who allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed is the same God who will allow Jerusalem to be rebuilt

## Comforting Words

### 1. The Messiah will come to Jerusalem

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

### 2. My house shall be built in Jerusalem

The "second Temple" was only a partial fulfillment. The promise of a Temple (which had never before been seen, Ezek 40-48) will be realized in the future. Zechariah will have more to say on this in Zech 2.

### 3. Jerusalem's boundaries would expand

The ravaging by the Babylonians in 586 BC and the Romans in 70 AD notwithstanding, the surveyor's line would be "stretched out" to measure an enlarged Jerusalem.

(e) Jerusalem's prosperity to return (1:17)

17 Again, proclaim, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies says: "My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and **the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.**"'"

17 Again, proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem."'"

17 "Also announce the following: 'This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "My cities will again overflow with prosperity. The LORD will comfort Zion once more and will choose Jerusalem again."'"

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

- Another prophecy about the millennial kingdom (Cf. Is 65:21-22; Amos 9:13)

- "...the LORD will again comfort Zion" - Cf. Is 40:1

- "...again choose Jerusalem" - this does not imply that God divorced Jerusalem and will one day come back to her; it means that God will again choose Jerusalem for blessing, not adversity (Cf. Deut 28:13).

[1:17 ends Zech 1 in Hebrew Bible]

## Review

This first vision expresses the composite meaning of all eight visions: Israel's sin and God's discipline had not diminished His covenant love for His people. God knew His people needed renewed vision to embrace a bright and hopeful future.

In a day when Israel felt discouraged and forgotten, a young prophet whose name means "*Yehovah* Remembers" rose in their midst to declare a coming day of unparalleled glory. With a power and beauty unmatched since the days of Isaiah, this prophet-priest laid out God's entire panorama, from the rebuilding of the Temple until the coming Messiah who would rule the entire earth from Jerusalem.

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

- Each vision is connected by the Hebrew conjunction (the *waw* connective)
- These visions carry through from the "Times of the Gentiles" until they are restored to their land with their rebuilt city and Temple under Messiah the King.
- Babylonian Talmud: "This man is no other than the Holy One, blessed be He; for it is said, 'The Lord is a man of war.'"
- The peace among the nations did not mean that the blessing of God was upon them. They were at ease in a bad sense: in carelessness and unfeeling security (Cf. Amos 6:1; Is 32:9,11; Jer 48:11; also Ezek 38:8,11,14; 39:6,26)

[1:17 Ends Zech 1 in Hebrew Bible; our English versions follow the Greek (and Latin) versions of the OT]

### (2) Four Horns & Four Craftsmen (v18-21)

The second vision (1:18-21) builds on one motif of the previous vision, that of the Lord's anger toward the nations which have proven hostile to the Jewish people, and makes it the theme. This vision communicates that the Lord will send his supernatural representatives to overthrow these nations for their hostility and instrumentality in the dispersion of the Jewish people from their land. The vision is brief and consists of Zechariah's seeing four animal horns, which represent the power of the particular nations which have, or will have in the future, actively persecuted the Jewish people. These are immediately followed by four craftsmen, presumably wielding the instruments of their craft, who are supernatural agents of God's justice and will be individually employed by Him to destroy these four hostile nations.

#### (A) Four Horns (1:18-19)

##### (a) Description (1:18)

**18** Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, *there were four horns*.

**18** Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, *there were* four horns.

**18** Then I looked up and saw four horns.

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

- "...horns" - typically represents power and pride of a Gentile power who has plagued Israel (Ps 75:4-5; 102:10; Jer 48:25; Amos 6:13-15; Cf. Micah 4:13; Dan 8:3-4,20-21)

— These horns are the Gentile powers that God raised up to trample down His people, for the purpose of discipline

— These are likely the same four Gentile empires that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream (which Daniel interpreted for him, Dan 2), and that Daniel saw in Dan 7: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

### **Numerology: 4**

Note the prevalence of the number 4 in Zechariah:

- Four horses
- Four horns
- Four craftsmen
- Four chariots
- Four winds
- Four subordinate clauses (Zech 3:7)
- Four words of comfort
- Four persons (Zech 6:14)
- Four feast days (Zech 8:19)
- Four admonitions (Zech 8:9f)
- Four-fold guilt (Zech 7:13)
- Four pronouncements (Zech 8:12)
- Four-fold punishment (Zech 8:10)
- Four cities (Zech 9:5,13-15)
- Four verbs (Zech 9:15)
- Groups of 4 things (Zech 10:2)
- Four lamentations (Zech 11:2f)
- Four animals (Zech 14:5)

#### (b) Explanation (1:19)

19 So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he said to me, "These are the horns that have scattered **Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.**"

19 So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."



19 I asked the angel who was talking to me, "What are those?" So he answered me, "Those are the forces that have dispersed Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

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

- The explanation from the angel shows that the four horns were Gentile powers that God used (or will use) to discipline His people for their disobedience of the Mosaic Covenant (Cf. Deut 28:49-50)

- "...Judah" - southern kingdom

- "...Israel" - northern kingdom

- "...Jerusalem" - capital of the southern kingdom

It is argued by some scholars that the horns were all contemporaneous with Zechariah, however that is rebutted by v11 which states that the entire world was at peace during that time. There were not four powers in open opposition to Judah during the time of Zechariah. The opposition they had to face at that time were all subordinate to the Persian Empire.

#### (B) Four Craftsmen (1:20-21)

##### (a) Description (1:20)

20 Then the LORD showed me **fourcraftsmen**.

20 Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen.

20 Then the LORD showed me four artisans.

**20** And the LORD shewed me four workmen.

- "...four craftsmen" - a skilled carpenter or workman; they are essentially the judges of the four horns: Medo-Persia (overthrew Babylon); Greece (overthrew Medo-Persia); Rome (overthrew Greece); and God's messianic kingdom, which will overthrow the Antichrist's kingdom (Rome II).

##### (b) Explanation (1:21)

21 And I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah so that no one lifts up his head; but these *craftsmen* have come to frighten them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up *their* horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

21 I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these *craftsmen* have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up *their* horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

21 Then I asked, "What have they come to do?" He answered, "Those horns that dispersed Judah—so that no one could lift up his head—those artisans are coming to disrupt the

power of nations, tearing them down now that they've come to power and dispersed the land of Judah."

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

- Although God is going to raise up each of these four empires, He's going to raise up another empire after them to ensure that these judges get their judgment

— The problem with these empires, which God ordained to discipline His people Israel, was that they enjoyed trampling down God's people, often going beyond what God ordained (Cf. 1:15). They moved from discipline of Israel to tormenting God's people.

— God kept a record of their wrongs (Cf. 1:15), and put a plan in place to judge each of these "judgers"

From this vision, it is evident that:

1. God takes account of everyone who lifts his hand against Israel
2. He has complete knowledge of the dejected condition of His people and the extent of their injury
3. He has already provided the punishment for every enemy of His chosen ones

It is a matter of history that three of the empires symbolized by the horns have already received the judgment of God (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece).

*The Four Horns*

*The Four Craftsmen*

